Erasmus+ Sport Programme
Collaborative Partnership

DEVELOPING SPORT ADMINISTRATION COMPETENCES (ADMINS)

Customized Curriculum for Sports Administrators

Intellectual Output 3

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MODULE 5. BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

Business correspondence means the exchange of information in a written format for the process of business activities. Business correspondence can take place between organizations, within organizations or between the customers and the organization. The correspondence refers to the written communication between persons. Hence oral communication or face to face communication is not a business correspondence.

In other words, in businesses, written communication is an important medium for passing information. This form of written communication used for business purposes is termed as Business correspondence. The correspondence in business communication can happen within the organization, between different organizations, or between client and organization.

The importance of business correspondence lies in the fact that it is the formal way of exchanging information by which professional relationship is maintained between organizations, employees, and clients. Since it is in a written form, it can serve as a future reference for the information being communicated.

Business correspondence happens daily in the lives of businessmen in the form of letters to suppliers, letters of inquiry, complaint letters, job application letters, and a few other forms.

The importance of Business Correspondence

Business correspondence is essential in realizing organizational goals. Meeting people personally can be quite a time-consuming job hence business correspondence helps businesses with:

- **Maintaining Proper Relationships –** The significance of business letters is governed by the fact that it facilitates effective communication which does not cost the business much. It strengthens the business by making communication, within and outside the organization, clear and concise.

- **Acts as Evidence –** The importance of business correspondence is further solidified as it lets businesses keep records of facts that can serve as evidence at a later point in time.

- **Creating Goodwill –** A company's growth increases due to business correspondence. It creates goodwill between business and clients since any letter like a complaint, feedback, or suggestion promotes a healthy relationship.

- **Costs Very Less –** Business correspondence is an inexpensive mode of communication in terms of money as well as time. This method of correspondence in business communication is very convenient for businesses.

- **Removes Ambiguity in Communication –** It is a formal correspondence between the involved parties which helps in unambiguous communication.

- **Helps Businesses Expand and Grow –** A business can have a seamless flow of information regarding any product or resources through business correspondence. This helps in proper utilization of manpower and time management, which in turn leads to expansion and growth in business.

Types of Business Correspondence

A business typically uses many kinds of business correspondence in its day to day activities. There are six most common kinds of business correspondences in the business community as defined below:

1. **Internal Correspondence –** The flow of information between employees, departments, branches, and units of the same company is termed as internal correspondence. They can be formal or informal.

    a. Some examples of formal internal correspondence are promotion letter, a formal request for approval, memorandum, etc. They are mostly printed on paper.

    b. A routine or informal internal correspondence can be a quick instruction between a manager and subordinate, which are mostly in the form of emails.

2. **External Correspondence –** The communication between 2 different organizations or between an organization and a client comes under external correspondence. This type of correspondence in business communication is usually made to suppliers, existing and prospective clients, government offices, etc.

3. **Sales Correspondence –** Any communication related to sales is called a sales correspondence. It is not only concerned with the sale of a product or service but encompasses many other activities. It includes marketing letters, invoices, discount letters, statements of accounts, etc.

4. **Routine Correspondence –** Such correspondence happens routinely like orders, inquiries, invitations, replies, etc.

5. **Personalized Correspondence –** This involves personal and emotional factors. Some of the examples of this type of correspondence are letters of gratitude, congratulation letters, appreciation notes, letter of request for a recommendation, etc.

6. **Circulars –** This type of correspondence is used when a business has to convey a common matter to a large audience. Few examples are notices of tenders, change in contact information, etc.

Common components of a Business Letter

The common format of a business letter is:

- Heading – This contains the writer's address and the date of writing the letter. It does not include the writer's name.
- Inside address – This shows the name and address of the recipient. This is a required part as it helps in avoiding any confusion and also if the recipient has changed addresses, then this can help in determining what needs to be done with the letter.
- Salutation – This is a direct address to the letter's recipient, which is followed by a colon. A comma is used in the place of the colon if the tone of the letter is friendly or sociable.
- Subject – The subject line conveys the main objective of the business letter.
- Body – This is the actual message.
- Complimentary close – One closes a business letter with complimentary close notations like "sincerely yours", "cordially", "respectfully", and other formal but non-wordy closing formats.
- Signature block – This comes four lines after the complimentary close which has your name and signature. Your name can have the designation or position you hold in your business.
- Initials – This is the initials of the writer all in capital letters.
- Enclosures – If you are enclosing anything with the letter then that needs to be mentioned in the following format: "Encl: Resume" or "Enclosure: Resume."
- Copies – The end notations must also indicate if copies of the letter are sent to others. You mention this as: "cc: Mr., attorney."

What are some of the important Business Correspondences in practice?

Business correspondence includes the following forms:

- CV or resume
- Letter of application
- Confirmation of reservation
- Email communication
- Invitation card
- Newsletter
- Motivation letter
- Cover letter
- Letter of Claim or complaints.
- Demand – demand response like proposal or bid
- Business contract
- Urgency – respond to urgencies
- Reminder
- Direct marketing
- Printed advertising and marketing materials like brochures, leaflets, etc.

- Notice of Termination of employment
- Letter of recommendations

While writing a business letter, what are the ways to make the paragraphs Effective?

A paragraph in business letters must consist of the following features:

- A topic sentence - It should begin with the main idea of the paragraph following by supporting content.
- Unity - The paragraph must focus on only one idea.
- Coherence - Sentences in the paragraph must be linked logically and are related to one another.
- Development - Give examples, evidence, facts to develop the idea of the paragraph.

Following the completion of the Module, the participant will be able to:

- Acquire the basic knowledge to set up, with an appropriate structure, both internal (employees, workmates, etc.) and external (customers, suppliers, etc.) communication in an efficient and effective way.

- To create solid, sincere and honest relationships with the different stakeholders.

Table 6. Module 5: Business correspondence

TOPICS		CONTENT	LEARNING OUTCOMES	WORKLOAD
1	Business communication and business culture	• The concept of business communication and business culture • Work culture and behavioral culture • Attitude towards superiors, other employees and clients • Work discipline and addressing among employees	• Explain the concept of business communication, business culture and business etiquette • Describe work culture and behavioral culture • Describe the relationship with superiors, other employees and clients • Explain work discipline and addressing between employees	2 T 4 P
2	Verbal and nonverbal communication	• The concept of verbal communication • The importance of verbal communication in human relationships	• Explain the concept of verbal communication • Recognize the importance of verbal communication in human relationships	2 T 4 P

		• The concept of paraverbal communication • Characteristics of paraverbal communication in a telephone conversation • Paraverbal features of electronic communication	• Explain the concept of paraverbal communication • List the characteristics of paraverbal communication in a telephone conversation • Use paraverbal features of electronic communication	
3	Nonverbal communication	• The concept of nonverbal communication • Body language • Influence of body language on communication • False recognition techniques • Simple techniques of communication empathy	• Explain the concept of nonverbal communication • Evaluate interlocutors according to body language • Distinguish the stated untruth in communication • Use simple communication empathy techniques	2 T 3 P
4	Written business communication	• The concept of business written business communication • Basic principles of written business communication • Styles in written business communication • Rules for writing a business letter • Enveloping and addressing of written items - terms and rules	• Explain the concept and state the basic principles of written business communication • List styles in written business communication • Apply the rules of writing a business letter • Describe enveloping and addressing written items • Apply the rules of enveloping and addressing written items	2 T 2 P
5	Business trips and meetings	• Preparation and organization of business trip	• Explain the preparation and organization of a business trip	2 T 2 P

		• Travel order and business trip report • The concept, types and ways of organizing meetings • Business correspondence related to meetings and gatherings - invitation to the meeting, minutes from the meeting	• Prepare a travel order and business trip report • Explain the concept, types and ways of organizing meetings • List the corresponding acts related to meetings and gatherings • Prepare an invitation to the meeting and minutes of the meeting	

Teaching Methods:
Verbal methods (oral presentation method, method of lecturing and teaching, writing method, method of conversation, case display method, method of discussion, problem solving method) and practical methods (practical working method, method of independent learning, learning in an online environment).

VLE Delivery:
VIDEO CONTENT – video materials intended for each of the module's topics;
THEORETICAL CONTENT – reading materials created in order to broaden the video content;
PRACTICAL CONTENT – various exercises that will foster the learning process;
KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT – short quizzes; uploads of completed tasks will be expected.
Note: The ratio will depend on the type of the module's topic, as it will put greater emphasis on e.g. theoretical content when the topic is introductory / practical content when the topic offers the greater opportunity to introduce various tasks.

Staff prerequisites: trainer in the field of the module in question trainer in the field of the module in question.

Literature and other information sources for students: Instructional Materials according to the Curriculum.

Literature and other information sources for teachers:

- Gibson, R. (2002). Intercultural Business Communication: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Intercultural Business Communication for Teachers, Language Trainers, and Business People. Oxford University Press.
- Dowling, Grahame (1994) Corporate reputations: strategies for developing the corporate brand. London: Kogan Page.
- Dessler, G. (2016). Fundamentals of human resource management. Pearson.
- Riggio, R. E. (2005). *Business Applications of Nonverbal Communication*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Ugbah, S. D., & Evuleocha, S. U. (1992). The importance of written, verbal, and nonverbal communication factors in employment interview decisions. Journal of Employment Counseling, 29(3), 128-137.

- Colţa, A. S. (2010). The importance of non-verbal communication in business. *Anale. Seria Ştiinţe Economice. Timişoara*, *16*(16), 776-781.
- Kaushal, S. (2014). Contribution of Non-Verbal Language in Communication: A Study of Non-Verbal Communication. *Asian Journal of Advanced Basic Sciences*, *2*(1), 15-21.
- Gabbott, M., & Hogg, G. (2001). The role of non-verbal communication in service encounters: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *17*(1-2), 5-26.
- Woodcock, B. E. (1979). Characteristic oral and written business communication problems of selected managerial trainees. *The Journal of Business Communication (1973)*, *16*(2), 43-48.
- Mascle, D. D. (2013). Writing self-efficacy and written communication skills. *Business Communication Quarterly*, *76*(2), 216-225.
- Stevens, B. (2005). What communication skills do employers want? Silicon Valley recruiters respond. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, *42*(1), 2-9.
- Jones, C. G. (2011). Written and computer-mediated accounting communication skills: An employer perspective. *Business Communication Quarterly*, *74*(3), 247-271.
- Aguilera, A. (2008). Business travel and mobile workers. Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, 42(8), 1109-1116.
- Toffel, M. W., & Horvath, A. (2004). Environmental implications of wireless technologies: news delivery and business meetings.
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-CONTENTS-

Topic 1. Business communication and business culture

1.1. Business Communication

Business or corporate communication is that which is carried out in an organised way by a company and is aimed at the people and groups in the social environment where it carries out its activity. Thus, if the company is national, it will communicate throughout the country; if it is local, in its city or municipality; and if it is international, in those countries where it is active. The main objective is to establish quality relations between the company and its public, making itself socially known and projecting a public image appropriate to its aims and activities.

Business communication must transmit the personality of the company and the values and philosophy on which it is based. There are three possible images -which do not always coincide- in a company's communication: the desired image, the real image of the institution and the perceived image. Good corporate communication seeks harmony between the three, avoiding that the image that is communicated does not correspond to reality or that the company is perceived in a misleading way.

This is why communication professionals in some companies have to work hard in some situations. For example, Coca Cola is the image of happiness and we all perceive it as such. However, when there has been news of redundancies or closures of distribution platforms, this perceived image has been undermined by the real image, which does not correspond to the happiness to which we consumers are accustomed.

For good business communication, we must analyse the company, design a communication plan with specific objectives and draw up a strategy that will help us to achieve the company's goals. To achieve this, companies have tools such as press releases, social networks, corporate websites, blogs, etc. but also the brand, the logo, its corporate image or participation in events, fairs, conferences, etc.

The big difference between communication and advertising is that in the former, the company wants to inform about its activity, news, products... and in the latter, the aim is to increase sales. It is true that communication can also help in this task, but it has other objectives such as positioning the company, making itself known to potential consumers or cultivating a good reputation.

Communication should be an area of every company, regardless of its size and budget. To this end, companies can choose to create an internal department or use an external agency. Currently in the market we can find professionals specialised in all areas and with rates for all companies.

1.1.1. General objectives

The objectives of business communication are easy to understand. Internally, on the one hand, it allows for a coherent organisation and the sharing of information and the results obtained by the different departments or workers, as well as the generation and transmission of the company's objectives and corporate vision.

It also facilitates the understanding of what is expected of each of the workers, as well as the understanding of the realities that each of them must face. It also makes it easier for everyone to work in the same direction, and to learn new ways of carrying out one's responsibilities.

In terms of communication with the outside world, business communication is essential in order to contact the media and generate a positive image of the company itself, as well as to analyse the target public and assess their needs. It also helps to learn how to attract potential clients and to assess the changes of the dynamic and fluid society in which we live, which is essential in order to foresee and face possible difficulties and to be able to adapt to the environment.

In order for communication to be efficient, it is necessary for the company itself to create effective channels for this purpose, as well as to promote the transmission of information through its actions, generating means for communication and actively working so that there is no uncertainty as to what is being requested and sought within the organisation.

It is also important to work on both formal and informal aspects, as well as to value the needs and thoughts of the different workers. Empathy is also essential, as well as good regulation and planning of communication mechanisms.

1.1.2. Different types of business communication

Not all companies and organisations communicate in the same way, and there are different typologies and classifications of business communication according to various criteria.

1. Internal and external

The first of these is that which establishes the distinction between internal and external communication, the former being that which takes place between the different departments and employees of the company itself and the latter that which is aimed at establishing communication with the environment.

2. Bidirectional and monodirectional

Likewise, we can also find styles of business communication with a greater or lesser level of interactivity, ranging from the most common two-way communication in which sender and receiver interact and exchange information to one-way communication in which only one message is sent, generally from positions of power, to a receiver who does not have the option of replying.

3. Upward, downward and horizontal

Within an organisation's internal business communication, we can find three main types depending on the point from which the information originates and the position between the sender and the receiver of the same communication. We speak of top-down communication when the communicative act is carried out from a sender with a higher position than that of the receiver.

When it is the subordinate who sends the message to his or her superior, we speak of ascending communication. In both cases we would be dealing with a type of vertical communication, that is to say, a communication in which the subjects involved in the communicative act have an unequal relationship in terms of power (there is a hierarchy between them).

The other major type of communication is horizontal communication, which is established between individuals who have the same position and are at the same level in the hierarchy.

4. Formal and informal

Finally, it should be noted that there are two different types of communication channels in business communication: formal and informal. In the former, technical and task-related aspects are usually dealt with, being a type of communication that is respectful and focused on reason and the company's objective.

Informal communication, however, tends to be more flexible and natural, focusing primarily on interpersonal relationships and often having the greatest effect on well-being at work. The latter varies greatly depending on who is doing the communicating and can transcend the workplace and is difficult for the organisation to control.

1.1.3. Possible threats to good communication

Efficient business communication is essential, but it is not easy. This is because there is a high level of variability in the situations that can arise, as well as the existence of misunderstandings, misuse and difficulties in a company's own communications.

1. Lack of consistency

One of the factors that most influences whether communication is really useful is the credibility of the sender and the consideration shown towards the receiver of the message. An example of this may be the existence of dissonance between what is said and what is done, with senders not maintaining a way of acting consistent with the messages issued.

The latter can happen in any of the company's employees, regardless of their hierarchical position or whether they are talking to a superior, subordinate or someone at the same level in the hierarchy, and generates serious repercussions both for the subject (who depending on the situation could end up being badly regarded or even dismissed) and for the organisation (generating a lower level of trust in the person and in the case of having a high position even in the organisation).

Similarly, for example in the case of large companies with a large number of departments, if there are divergences between the figures of authority or reference within the company, this could probably generate a situation in which the worker does not really know which leadership to follow, something that can generate frustration and mistrust.

It is also necessary to be very careful with the interpretability of messages, as the existence of ambivalence can lead to different departments or workers interpreting opposite things. The aim of business communication is precisely to ensure internal organisation and coherence, which is why unclear messages with different interpretations can lead to uncertainty and doubts for the recipients of the message.

2. Lack of emotional connection

Another problem can be found in the way communication is produced. For example, in some organisations there may be a difficulty in generating a sense of emotional connection, which in workers may lead to less commitment and productivity and in users a lack of interest and the search for other alternatives. It is necessary to appreciate that everything that is done, and even what is not done, is basically communicative.

Thus, it is not only the message itself that is important, but also the way in which it is transmitted: an email is not the same, nor does it offer the same sensations as a face-to-face meeting or the search for a real contact.

3. Not understanding the context

The appropriateness to the current situation and social developments, as well as to the particularities of the situation itself, must also be assessed. For example, in an increasingly globalised society where new technologies allow immediate communication with a large number of people at the same time, it may be necessary to analyse and invest in communication policies that consider the power of social networks and how to correctly transmit the desired information, as well as to value contact with potential clients in other regions of the world.

It is also necessary to assess the company's own situation in order not to undertake more than they can handle, considering the situation of the company as a whole.

Another problem could be the content of the messages that are issued: it is possible that although communication exists, it does not transmit or does not convey the content that needs to be transmitted. It may focus on rather supplementary aspects, for example, and may ignore the orientation or objectives of a given position, or may take for granted the existence of knowledge that has never been made explicit.

4. Isolation and lack of communication

Finally, perhaps the most important problem, and one that can be extrapolated from all of the above, is the possibility of a lack of real communication.

The clearest example is the stable and continued use of one-way communication, which can lead to a situation of stagnation and a lack of understanding of what is going on in the organisation itself. Fortunately, today it is the least used precisely because it is the least efficient and useful.

It is also possible that different positions do not have adequate mechanisms to contact each other even if their opinions were to be heard, with fewer possibilities for feedback, or even that different parts of the company do not have contact with each other. Such interaction needs to be actively encouraged.

1.2. Business Culture

Business culture is a set of norms, values, beliefs and ways of acting, thinking and feeling shared by the members of an organisation. It is formed from the habits and behaviours that the members of a company acquire on a day-to-day basis. On the other hand, corporate identity, dealing with suppliers or customer service also form part of this concept.

The importance of corporate culture is very clear. Two out of three managers say it is as important, if not more important, than the company's strategy or operating model. Each organisation has its own corporate culture, which gives it its own personality and differentiates it from other companies.

TECHNICAL DEFINITION
Business culture is the set of basic assumptions and beliefs shared by the members of a company.

Elements that make it up:

Symbology

When we speak of symbols in corporate culture, we refer to those people who personify the potential of the company and who are a source of motivation for the rest. Symbols, also called "heroes", act as a point of reference and their function is mainly communicative and leadership.

Values and beliefs

A company's beliefs are formed by the ideas it has about its situation in the market, as well as its mission and future forecasts. Based on these beliefs, the members of the organisation behave in a certain way.

The values of a company, on the other hand, constitute the principles, norms and models that govern the shared behaviour of the organisation's members. Within these values, we can find concepts related to tolerance, respect, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, among others. When we add beliefs and values together, we obtain ideology.

Communication

Corporate culture is reflected in the internal and external communication of the company. This means the way the company communicates with its employees, customers, suppliers and others. This category also includes the types of media, formal or informal, used to transmit information.

Language, on the other hand, is one of the aspects that form part of a company's communication. It is key to understanding its culture and those who use it.

Structure

The structure of a company comprises the set of rules that govern the functioning of the organisation. On the other hand, it also determines the degree of supervision and/or control that must be applied to ensure compliance with these rules. Individual autonomy is a concept that refers to the level of delegation, independence and participation of the members of the organisation; it is closely related to the culture of a company.

Identity, mission and vision

A company's mission and vision are concepts of corporate social responsibility. They define its ideology and, consequently, its way of acting and working. Recently, companies have adopted models that are environmentally sustainable and respectful of society, that promote equal opportunities, the defence of human rights and non-discrimination, among others. Regarding the corporate identity of a company, this is linked to the brand image.

Rituals

Rituals refer to the set of activities, routines or scheduled events that the company carries out at key moments. They are the perfect opportunity to comment on the corporate culture and communication between members of an organisation. For example, some companies have induction rituals for new employees, or farewell rituals for those leaving their jobs.

Types of business culture

Authoritarian culture

In this type of company, decision-making power is highly concentrated and centralised in the management. All processes have to be supervised by one or several people; and the ability of workers to develop themselves is very limited.

Bureaucratic culture

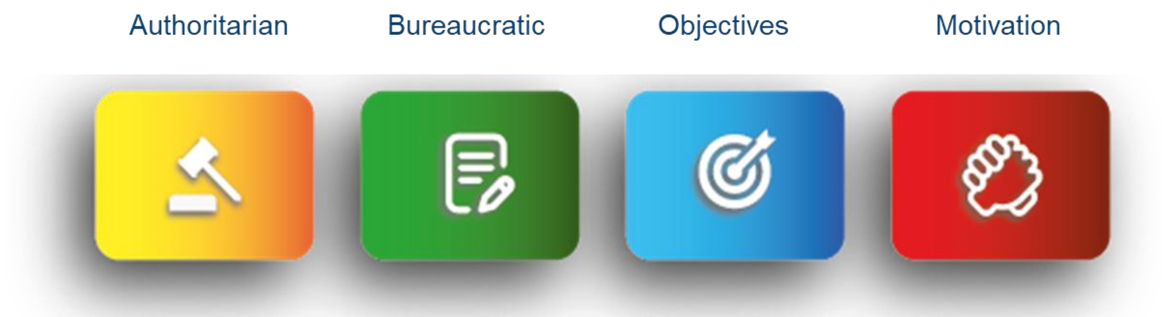
Bureaucratic culture is based on procedure and work methodology. In this type of culture there has to be a set of rules that determine the levels of freedom for employees to act. It is not usually a very effective model, as it resists change and leads to demotivation. However, it is viable in terms of order, control, process safety and quality.

Culture by objectives

A culture by objectives emphasises competitiveness and participation in order to achieve success. Its main characteristic feature is the demand for results. It can sometimes lead to stress, as employees may work under pressure to achieve the targets set in a short period of time; on the other hand, the mere thought of whether or not they can be achieved generates anxiety.

Motivational culture

Motivational culture is closely related to goal-oriented culture. This type of culture is focused on encouraging motivation in the team, in order to increase productivity and job satisfaction. One of the factors that ensures the success of this culture is the management style and communication from the more senior employees to the more junior employees.



Mission, Vision and Values

Business culture is based on three fundamental pillars that you have heard of: mission, vision and values. These three terms are not just the three items that every organisation includes on its website or in its organisational presentation. They must be a thoughtful proposal that gives the company its unique character, its value proposition and its differentiation from the competition.

BUSINESS MISSION

It answers the question: What does the company exist for?

It is clear that all companies exist to make money in the first place, but beyond the obvious: What does the company do? Who does it target? What is its raison d'être? What differentiates it from the competition? What is its value proposition?

COMPANY VISION

It answers the question: What is expected of the company in the future?

The vision is based on defining the goals of the organisation, in order to inspire and motivate but without losing sight of realistic and achievable objectives.

CORPORATE VALUES

They answer the question: What are we like and what do we believe in?

The values of the company are decisive in shaping the way we work as a team, from employees to managers. They determine the personality of the organisation.

THE BENEFITS OF CORPORATE CULTURE

- Cohesion between the members of the organisation, and the members and collaborators.
- Identification: the members of the organisation identify with the company, they feel part of it.
- Differentiation from the competition.
- Motivation: members and collaborators will feel welcome, accepted and able to achieve results more easily.

But let's not forget that a company culture is not something that is created only once, it is something that must be reviewed and improved from time to time. It is a living concept that will bring greater benefits, motivation and efficiency to all members of the organisation.

1.3. Business Etiquette

This concept refers to the set of manners and behaviours that should be followed in any work environment and although some are more common than others, it is related to the rules of coexistence that companies establish based on values such as respect and honesty.

Small actions such as greeting someone you are just getting to know with a firm handshake, being on time for a meeting or an event, saying thank you, and even politely asking for something can make the people you interact with feel comfortable and appreciated.

In conversation, give your full attention to whoever is speaking to you. When you maintain eye contact, and listen attentively, you are showing that you value the other person's time and way of thinking. It is also important to write and speak in a professional tone.

Rules of business etiquette

How to behave in business meetings and work engagements is undoubtedly key to success in the workplace. A good business is born from a good business relationship and business is based on relationships. Business etiquette is a very important element that can directly influence the success or failure of a business relationship and when it comes to implementing the best people management techniques and succeeding.

Below we have collected the etiquette codes and etiquette keys that can make the difference between a professional or a great professional.

1. Let's talk about names and their importance.

When you meet someone for the first time pay attention to their name, if it is unusual don't hesitate to ask nicely, remember it and use it in conversation without overusing it. In the same way that others will appreciate it if you remember their name and address them by it. On the other hand, it is also important to add your surname when introducing yourself personally.

2. Who is who
At the beginning of a business meeting do not forget to introduce all the staff members present. It is advisable to give more information than just first and last name, such as their role in the department and the tasks they perform in the company.

3. Always say hello
In this sense, you should greet everyone you come across on a daily basis in the business environment with the same degree of friendliness. You can even ask questions to start a conversation and show interest in that colleague.

4. Handshake and eye contact should never go wrong
When making direct eye contact, smile to convey trustworthiness and don't forget that the handshake should be firm. Generally, if you are the senior person or the host you should initiate the handshake.

5. Follow the basic rules of politeness
Keep the dialogue going and follow basic rules for being polite and respecting good manners. On the other hand, avoid using crutches and informal words.

6. Take care of your non-verbal communication and feedback
Give clues that you are following the conversion and that you are listening to your interlocutor as well as rely on non-verbal communication by smiling or nodding. Your facial expressions can express much more than you can think, as can your body language or the movements you make with your hands when you speak. When intervening in the conversation try not to interrupt and allow the other person to finish their argument.

7. Watch for spelling mistakes and the way you write.
Before sending emails, check for grammatical errors and that the tone used towards the person who is going to receive the email is appropriate.

8. Put aside unpunctuality
One of the rules of business etiquette is to be punctual, always arrive on time or even a few minutes early, do not make anyone wait, unpunctuality gives a bad image and time has a value. And if you are late for an appointment, give as much notice as possible and say that you can be delayed by 10 minutes.

9. Dress appropriately
It is true that dress codes have become much less strict than they were a few years ago and today you can be smart without wearing a tie. However, there are a number of items of clothing that are not appropriate to wear in the workplace, such as flip-flops, a tracksuit or a hoodie. Why? Quite simply, there is a good reason to take care of your appearance in the workplace and that is that first impressions count.

10. Mind your table manners
Behaving appropriately at a work engagement, whether it is during the working day or outside that involves a meal or lunch, also involves showing yourself to be professional in this type of situation. Talking with your mouth full and ordering the most expensive dish on the menu are two of the things to avoid. On the other

hand, review all the rules of dining etiquette.

11. Tidiness is important
A tidy desk or workspace says a lot about a person. Avoid the accumulation of sticky notes, coffee or tea cups and work all day in a clean, pleasant and organised space.

12. How others work
Respect the working style of your colleagues, if some need silence respect it, if you put on headphones to listen to your favourite bands while you carry out your work tasks avoid having the music on full blast.

13. Disconnect from your mobile phone
Yes, smartphones are part of our lives these days, but avoid using them excessively during meetings or working hours. Especially if you are not checking your work email or any other relevant matter that has to do with your work duties.

14. Study the context
Finally, remember that business etiquette can vary according to culture and location. This means that if you are going to a meeting in a different location and a different culture, it is advisable to review their rules of conduct and behaviour in the workplace to show that you are familiar with their customs and etiquette and that the working relationship is starting to build on a good foundation.

Work culture and behavioral culture

For Ouchi (1982), the culture of a company is constituted by the tradition, conditions and values that provide guidelines for a pattern of activities, opinions and actions, and he affirms that, what he calls, organisation Z would have very specific cultural characteristics: trust, friendship, teamwork and management by direct participation. This author also concludes that "humanised working conditions (characteristic of these organisations) not only increase the productivity and profits of the company, but also the self-esteem of the employees [... who] express greater emotional well-being and also feel less alienated" (1982, p. 215).

Hofstede (1999), who defined culture as the collective mental programming that distinguishes the members of one organisation from those of another.

Stephen P. Robbins and Timothy A. Judge organisational culture refers to a system of meaning shared by members, which distinguishes one organisation from another. This shared meaning system is, on closer examination, a set of key characteristics that the organisation values. Research suggests that there are seven main characteristics that, when put together, capture the essence of an organisation's culture.

Behavioural culture

Stephen P. Robbins and Timothy A. Judge Organisational Behaviour (often abbreviated as CO) is a field of study that has been developed in the last decade. CO) is a field of study that investigates the effect that individuals, groups and structure have on behaviour within organisations, with the purpose of applying that knowledge to improve organisational effectiveness.

It studies three determinants of behaviour in organisations: individuals, groups and structure. In addition, CO applies the knowledge gained about individuals, groups and the effect of structure on behaviour to make organisations work more effectively. Our definition can be summarised as follows: CO is concerned with the study of what people do in an organisation and how their behaviour affects the organisation's performance.

Attitude towards superiors, other employees and clients

From the perspective of law, they are those relationships that are established between labour and capital in the productive process. In this relationship, the person who provides the labour is called the worker, while the person who provides the capital is called the employer, employer or entrepreneur. The worker is always a natural person, while the employer can be either a natural person or a legal person. In modern societies the employment relationship is regulated by an employment contract in which both parties are formally free.

The employment relationship is the relationship between labour and capital in the production process. In this relationship, the person who provides the labour is called the "worker" and the person who provides the capital is called the "employer" (also employer or entrepreneur). The worker is always a natural person, while the employer can be either a natural person or a legal person.

In today's society, the employment relationship is regulated by employment contracts, in which both parties are completely free and which stipulate the rights and obligations of each party (e.g. the contract states that if a worker is dismissed he/she is entitled to compensation).

An employee may prove the existence of an employment relationship with his or her employer by requesting an employment relationship certificate or company certificate from the employer.

Customer relations refers to all those strategies that allow you to define how you will acquire, retain and expand your customer base. It is based, among others, on the segmentation and personalisation of your messages and value proposition through the different channels where you have a presence.

Labour discipline is the set of actions aimed at achieving compliance with the company's policies, rules and regulations by all its members.

We have seen how the company, when selecting its workers, makes efforts to identify those candidates who are most likely to adapt to its culture. However, in some cases, unsatisfactory behaviour occurs, against which it is necessary to act to ensure the harmony and smooth running of the organisation.

The purpose of disciplinary action is to ensure that the behaviour and performance of employees conforms to company guidelines.

Compliance with policies, rules and regulations is not only achieved through the application of disciplinary sanctions for those who deviate from them, but through rewards for those who respect them. Unfortunately, sanctions are often used more often than rewards and in some extreme cases the only disciplinary action taken is the dismissal of the worker. However, more and more organisations are taking care to establish rewards for exceptional behaviour to encourage respect for the organisational culture.

The advantages of using rewards rather than sanctions are: The rewards given act to reinforce performance improvement for everyone in the organisation.

Topic 2. Verbal and nonverbal communication

2.1 The concept of verbal communication

Verbal communication is about language, both written and spoken. In general, verbal communication refers to our use of words.

Different works on verbal communication refer to it as a simple process involving a speaker and a listener, who communicate through a message. This message must be constructed from a context, encoded in a code, refer to something and be transmitted through a channel. However, such research has not considered two questions raised by pragmatics and cognitive linguistics: why does a speaker communicate with a listener, and what does the speaker achieve in that listener once the communication process has taken place (Fajardo, 2009).

2.1.1. Types of verbal communication

There are two types:

- **Written communication**: Words are used through the use of writings, through the representation of signs on paper.
- **Oral communication**: In this case, this type of communication is manifested through spoken words.

2.1.2. Characteristics of verbal communication

These are the main ones:

- Oral messages are ephemeral, unlike written communication. They are forgotten sooner, and do not remain in the same form over time.
- It is spontaneous, as it can arise through a conversation between two interlocutors, without anything preconceived.
- There is an interaction between the individuals having a conversation.
- It is immediate in time.
- The auditory channel is used in the process.
- There may be variations depending on the cultural context.

- Movements and gestures may be used which are associated with the words being spoken.

2.1.3. Examples of verbal communication

Here are some examples of verbal communication, referring to its two types, oral and written communication:

1. A conversation.
2. An email.
3. A phone calls.
4. A whistle.
5. A digital book, or in paper format.
6. The writing of a letter.
7. A scream.

2.2 The importance of verbal communication in human relationships

Verbal communication arises from the need to communicate. Our ancestors needed to create communication codes when they were immersed in the battle for survival.

Man, as a social being, needs language to interact. This relationship explains the emergence both of language itself - given the need to communicate - and of the different linguistic registers, in that man is constantly confronted with diverse communication situations in the social and cultural contexts in which he interacts with individuals whose social distribution is equally dissimilar (Fajardo, 2009).

Communication between individuals is essential for a number of reasons including access to and exchange of information, open discussion of ideas and negotiation of disagreements and conflicts. In human groups, communication has become an essential survival factor not only for the human species, but for everything else: customs, rituals, social and cultural traditions, and history, among others (Fajardo, 2009).

One of the functions attributed to language, perhaps the most important, is to serve as a vehicle for communicating something to someone, to share with that someone our thoughts about something, that is, to communicate something about the world around us to a specific interlocutor, through speech acts produced in a particular language and referring to a portion of reality, on which we build communication (Fajardo, 2009).

2.3 The concept of paraverbal communication

Paraverbal communication refers to variations in the use of the voice. It is the way in which things are said by introducing nuances and intonations while speaking.

These are the changes in voice, intonations, the emphasis we place on words, the speed with which we speak, pauses, synchrony with verbal and non-verbal communication, etc.

This communication resource allows us to ask questions, providing the appropriate tone for them, allows us to make exclamations or affirmations, allows us to be ironic, allows us to be close to the audience, to express silences or interruptions, to give the floor to another interlocutor, etc.

Paraverbal language performs the dual task of optimising the insight of verbal language and benefiting the expression of emotions and qualities of the speaker.

Paraverbal Functions

- Motivate the receiver.
- Allow the other to process the information.
- Point out an incorrect communicative process (a very prolonged silence).
- Indicate the change of time in the speakers.
- Manifest impressions or emotions.

2.4 Characteristics of paraverbal communication in a telephone conversation and features of electronic communication

The following aspects of paraverbal communication should be taken into account when making presentations:

- Projection: To project the voice is to direct the voice towards the listeners, so the purpose of projecting the voice is to make the words heard and understood. Some people have problems in projecting their voice, which causes the message not to reach the interlocutors and they lose interest in the presentation. To solve this problem, specialists can help you to train your voice and improve your projection.

- Articulation: This paraverbal aspect will allow us to be heard and understood. It is vitally important to articulate the words so that the message reaches the receiver completely and information is not lost or the presentation is interrupted because the audience does not understand the words.

- Pronunciation: As well as articulation, the correct pronunciation of words will allow us to be understood. In presentations it is appropriate that the pronunciation is firm, without omitting letters or syllables and not lowering the voice at the end of the words.

- **Repetition:** Crutches are words or phrases that we repeat without realising it, we could say that it is a reflex action. These repetitions impoverish the presentation and it is necessary that we realise what they are and eliminate them from the presentations or speeches. To do this, we can record ourselves on video to see which words we repeat and practice over and over again until we eliminate crutches from our vocabulary.

- **Intonation:** this is the variation in the tone of voice. Intonation is relatively easy to control but has a great impact on the audience as intonation accompanies the meaning or intention of what we say.

- **Volume:** this is the intensity with which we speak. We must adapt the volume to the place and specific circumstances. Once the volume at which the presentation should be made has been established, it should not vary notably, unlike the tone, which should change constantly.

- **Speed:** We must adjust the message of the presentation to the time allotted to us. Speaking too slowly or too fast impoverishes the presentation and we run the risk of the audience not receiving the message correctly.

- **Pauses and silences:** We should not be afraid to introduce silences and pauses in our presentations. Used in an appropriate manner, this resource reflects a lack of nervousness, imposes respect, and allows the speaker to take a breath. Silence, on the other hand, is another element of intonation, which allows us to direct the presentation and highlight important topics.

- **Variety:** it is important to introduce a variety of vocabulary and intonation. Variety enriches the presentation and is synonymous with professionalism and control of the subject matter.

Topic 3. Nonverbal communication

3.1. The concept of nonverbal communication

Non-verbal communication is a communication process through which a message is transmitted by means of gestures, signs or indications; in other words, without words, unlike verbal communication. Gestures, body language, posture, facial expression, eye contact... are some of the resources used.

Non-verbal communication has several functions in the socialisation process:

1. It defines our identity.
2. It demonstrates the degree or capacity we have to relate to each other.
3. It helps to delimit and understand messages without the need to use language.
4. Conveys emotions and feelings.
5. It influences others and ourselves.

3.1.1. Channels of non-verbal communication

Once we are clear about what non-verbal communication is and what the characteristics of non-verbal communication are, it is useful to know the different channels used by the types of non-verbal and gestural communication. These are just some of them:

- **Facial expressions:** they are the clearest thermometer that shows what kind of emotions we feel and where we focus our attention when communicating. The face is capable of communicating, without words, joy, surprise, sadness, fear, anger, disgust and contempt.

- **Gestures:** they are one of the channels of non-verbal communication with the greatest cultural component. We must know how to differentiate between illustrative gestures, which are those that accompany verbal discourse, emblematic gestures, which make sense on their own, and regulatory or affective gestures, which help us to direct the interaction or convey feelings.
- **Postures:** the exposure and orientation of our torso show the degree of interest and openness towards others. In addition, postures indicate emotional state and, at the same time, influence modo.
- **Appearance:** this tells us about a person's age, gender, origin, culture, socio-economic status, etc. It is one of the most influential channels of communication. It is one of the most influential channels of non-verbal communication.

3.2. Body language and its influence on non-verbal communication

The communication we make through our body has a great influence on social relationships, and is the perfect mirror of emotions.

It has happened to everyone who has met a person, but they did not convey confidence. This is usually because there is a contradiction between what the person communicates verbally and what their body language says.

Body language: This is a form of non-verbal communication based on gestures, postures and movements of the body and face to transmit information. It is usually done unconsciously, so it is a good indicator of a person's emotional state.

In the business world there are many occasions when you have to speak in public, and usually under pressure, so you must have a good control over non-verbal language. This way you will be closer to achieving your goal.

However, you must bear in mind that non-verbal language can be influenced by environmental factors and, therefore, it is not an absolute truth. To be able to make an analysis and be sure of it, you must find several signs.

3.3. Simple techniques of communication empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand the inner world of others and to avoid making judgements. Empathic communication is the path that leads to this goal through two techniques: understanding and active listening.

Empathic communication is not only an important component of the helping relationship, but also a valuable tool in any work and social environment.

The word "empathy" is derived from the Greek empátheia (to feel inside) and refers to the ability to see the world through the eyes of another person. The empathic person can understand the other person's inner world (their affections, thoughts, emotions, etc.) but without making them his or her own.

Empathic communication is an attitude that we possess or that can be acquired through training. What you learn is how to break down relational barriers with others by avoiding the mistakes that shut down communication. The key elements of empathic communication are understanding and active listening.

Active compression in empathic communication

When we communicate with another person there are two main ways in which we try to understand what we are saying:

- The first way is intellectual understanding, proper to those who want to understand the facts. The listener focuses on the events that took place and the way they alternate. Attention is focused on what the other is saying.

- The second is empathic understanding. Here we focus attention on how our interlocutor is speaking. The focus is therefore on the emotional nuances of the narrative that provide information about the narrator's state of mind.

Often we only get the feeling that we have been truly understood when our listener understands what we are experiencing and not how the matter took place.

The Three Key Elements of Empathic Communication:

Empathic communication that leads to this kind of understanding is based on three main elements:

1. **Transparency:** not hiding emotional reactions. We can disagree with someone and that can be shared, but lying blocks communication.
2. **Self-control:** not confusing our reactions with those of the other person, nor imposing our needs. We are not always on the lookout for advice.
3. **Unconditional acceptance:** avoid judging the behaviour of others and focus on how they feel.

Active listening for empathetic communication

To make sure that the other is open and trusts us it is necessary to demonstrate the ability to listen (usually, the interesting part of the story is always queued in the conversation). Listening does not mean staying still and not interrupting, it is a proactive behavior by which you become able to understand the other. Active listening avoids communication blocks and promotes empathy.

Caracteristics of these blockages:

1. Inquiring attitude more attentive to the details of what happened.
2. Imposition of solutions based on their experience. Whoever offers easy solutions to the problems of others is often offended if we ignore him.
3. Generalist comforting phrases that do not consider the specific nature of the situation.
4. Expression of personal opinions about what happened.

Encourage empathic communication

What should we do to encourage empathic communication? If the purpose is to understand the other, we must first accept that sometimes we cannot understand everything immediately. It is useful to ask questions, for example, by paraphrasing what has been said. This gives the other person the ability to check our understanding.

Two more active strategies are confrontation and the use of humor.

In both cases you have to pay close attention: humor can have the opposite effect if it is not used sparingly. As for the confrontation, it is advisable not to talk about one's own experiences (to avoid diverting the conversation to oneself), but about anonymous third parties.

Topic 4. Written business communication

4.1. The concept of business written business communication

Written communication involves any type of message that makes use of the written word and is the most important and effective of any mode of business communication. Discover types and examples of written communications, as well as advantages, disadvantages, and effective skills used in written business communication.

Types of Written Communication

Written communication involves any type of message that makes use of the written word. Written communication is the most important and the most effective of any mode of business communication.

Some of the various forms of written communications that are used internally for business operations include:

- Memos
- Reports

- Bulletins
- Job descriptions
- Employee manuals
- Emails
- Instant messages

Examples of written communications generally used with clients or other businesses include:

- Email
- Internet websites
- Letters
- Proposals
- Telegrams
- Faxes
- Postcards
- Contracts
- Advertisements
- Brochures
- News releases

Advantages and Disadvantages of Written Communication

Some advantages of written communication are:

- No need for personal contact - you can tell an employee he or she has to work overtime through an email instead of face-to-face.
- Saves money - you can send an email instead of calling long distance.
- Written proof - provides written proof in case of a dispute.

Some disadvantages of written communication are:

- Delay in communication - it may take a while to get to the intended recipient.
- Lack of secrecy - once it's on paper, anyone can read it.
- Costly - if the sender and receiver are sitting next to each other, you still have to spend money on paper or Internet service.

4.2. Basic principles of written business communication

Online and offline, effective business writing is an important aspect of any workplace, for business owners and employees. As a frequently used form of business communication, writing can provide information, offer detailed instructions and can even relay ideas and suggestions. Create a checklist that includes essential steps necessary to effectively write business communications so that your next business writing piece is engaging and error-free.

Identify Audience
Before you sit down to write, identify your reader. Get a clear idea of the person or persons who will read the communication you're writing. Determine what questions they expect you to answer, what tone is appropriate, whether they are a busy executive or a loyal customer. Knowing the audience can help you select the format of your business communication.

Determine Purpose for Writing
Whether you're writing to share an idea with a fellow business owner or trying to persuade a customer to try a product or service you offer, it's important to determine the purpose of your communication before you start writing. Knowing the purpose can help keep you on topic and reduce tangents in your writing.

Choose Ideal Format
Business writing isn't limited to letters and emails. Newsletters, memos, postcards and even advertisements are written business communications businesses create. Postcards and sales letters are ideal for communicating with potential clients, while newsletters and memos can be used for internal use.

Research Background Information
Thoroughly research the topic you're writing on to ensure that you include all necessary details, facts and figures. For a business report, graphs, charts and images can help to illustrate points. Customer testimonials might be ideal in a business communication targeted to customers.

Capture Audience
Business writing should be clear, concise and creative. For example: Entrepreneur magazine suggests provoking a reader reaction by starting with a question. Start with a joke, a story, an unusual fact or a fact that shocks the reader.

Stick to One Topic
Mixing an array of ideas in business writing reduces the effectiveness of the main message. Stay focused on one topic, per written communication to avoid confusing the reader.

Proofread for Grammar And Clarity
Proofread your document before sending it your reader. Grammar issues and wordiness can distract readers, so it's important to review all business documents carefully.

4.3. Styles in written business communication & rules for writing a business letter

A company uses documents to communicate, transact business and analyze its productivity. Business documents range from brief email messages to complex legal agreements. Some documents are prepared by employees and business owners, while others are drafted by professionals from outside of the company, such as accountants and lawyers. Since documents provide proof of an organization's dealings and may be referred to for years to come, it is important that they be well written.

Emails and Memorandums

Co-workers typically use email to convey information to each other. Before email became prevalent, memorandums were used for intraoffice messages. Memos are still used in situations where a message is meant to accompany a specific file and in cases that require more privacy than an email. Both a memo and an email identify the sender and recipient and contain a subject line. The text is formatted in one or more paragraphs.

Business Letters for Outside Communication

Business letters are used to communicate with individuals outside of the office. Recipients may include customers, colleagues in other businesses, service providers, professionals who advise the business, government officials and job applicants. A business letter is usually formatted in block style, in which all of the elements of the letter, except the letterhead, are aligned with the left margin. It can be emailed or delivered by mail. If a letter is sent in the text of an email, the sender includes his name, job title and contact information at the bottom of the email.

Business Reports for Conveying Information

Business reports convey information in a format that is more formal and usually longer than a letter. Reports cover a variety of topics, such as safety compliance, sales figures, financial data, feasibility studies and marketing plans. They may include statistics, charts, graphs, images, case studies and survey results. Some reports are published for the benefit of investors. If a report is periodic, such as a monthly sales report, a template is used for convenience and to enable comparison with previous reports.

Transactional Documents to Conduct Business with Clients

A company uses documents to transact business with its clients. To save time, these documents may be formatted as a form, such as an order form, transmittal page, invoice or receipt. The types of transactional documents used vary somewhat by the nature of a business. An insurance agent, for example, generates insurance applications and policies, while a lender uses loan applications and mortgage documents.
In some fields, businesses enter into agreements and contracts with others; these documents might be drafted by the company's lawyer.

Financial Documents to Manage the Business

A business uses financial documents to stay within its budget, prepare budget proposals and file tax returns. These documents include receipt records, payroll reports, paid bills, bank statements, income statements, balance sheets and tax reporting forms. These documents may be prepared by the company's accountant.
A business owner uses these documents to determine the financial success of the company and to identify areas that are unproductive. A department head might use financial documents to prepare a budget proposal.

Topic 5. Business trips and meetings

5.1. Preparation and organization of business trip

To make any trip, it is necessary to carry out a previous planning of different aspects of it, so that everything goes as we want. In this way, we avoid possible setbacks, and optimize the time and money allocated to the trip. This planning must be even more exhaustive if we are going to embark on a business trip. In this case **we must be much more careful with the organization of the trip,** since not only our time and our money are at stake, but also that of the company itself and that of our partners.

The basics of trip planning are set out below:

1. Documentation

It is common for business trips to be prepared at a short time in advance, before a business opportunity that arises at a given time, an unforeseen event, etc. Therefore, if we usually travel at work relatively frequently, it **is very important to have our personal identification documents in order:** passport and ID, since their processingusually takes a few days. We must also inform ourselves if the country of destination requires us any type of visa to be able to enter. In this case **we must process it at the corresponding embassy or administration.** There are also specialized visa processing companies that can be useful if we are going to visit a country that requires especially complex procedures.

Depending on the destination, we may have to present a certificate of vaccinations. And if we foresee that we will need to drive, we should check the compatibility of our driving license with the country we will visit. In case of incompatibility, we must **process the issuance of an international driving permit.**

2. Travel insurance

It is always interesting to have an insurance specialized in business trips when planning our business trip. These types of products offer more specific coverage in cases such as the loss of documents, delays and cancellations in means of transport and accommodation, etc. In addition, we must **check the validity of our European Health Insurance Card** in the country of destination or the international coverage of our private insurance. We can also take out travel health insurance for the occasion, if we consider it necessary.

3. Know the destination of our trip

To avoid setbacks, we must know some basic information about the country or city to visit: climate, time slot, customs, gastronomy, schedules, etc. All this will be very useful when planning our agenda, reserving the means of transport that we are going to use, or adapting our clothing to the place in question. In addition, knowing some facts about the local culture is always useful to interact with our hosts: **to know the protocol of business in the country, the way to greet, to give thanks** and other formulas to show cordiality, respect and education.

4. Choice of accommodation

When choosing the hotel or hotels in which we will stay during our trip, we must look mainly at its location. We must ensure that it is in a place close to the locations where we will develop our work and our meetings. We must also **check that it has good connections with airports, metro network, etc.** On the other hand, it is important that we inform ourselves in advance of the services and peculiarities offered by each of the hotels that we shun for our trip: WIFI Internet connection; restaurant hours; room service, in case we need to eat something after hours; laundry and ironing service, meeting rooms, etc. Some hotels also offer special areas with their own office services: printers, computers, telephones, etc.

5. Plan our agenda

When planning our agenda, we must consider the **local schedules of the destination,** as well as the time it will take us to move from one place to another once we are there. If we are going to make long-duration flights, we must keep in mind the effect of jet *lag,* and give ourselves a recovery time before planning the first work meeting. On the other hand, it is also interesting to leave moments of rest during which we can relax and momentarily escape from work, since a too tight schedule will not favor our good work performance. In this sense, taking advantage of the downtime we have in activities such as reading, watching a movie or listening to music, will help us disconnect and eliminate stress.

6. Transport at destination

Once we land in the place where we are going to carry out the work, we will have to face constant displacements: from the airport to the hotel, from the hotel to the meeting places; to restaurants, etc. We must know in advance the **transport options offered by the place of destination:** metro, taxis, car rental, etc. and choose the one that best suits our needs and our budget.

7. Luggage

When packing our luggage, we will choose a suitcase that allows us to carry everything we need to do our work, that protects our work material and that allows us to move comfortably. **We must wear the necessary clothes for each type of meeting, but only the essential, avoiding having to carry weight unnecessarily.** When arranging our clothes inside the suitcase, we will organize them according to the weight and delicacy of each garment. Leaving higher those garments more susceptible to wrinkle and more delicate. Quality clothing usually withstands the transfer of travel better, so it will be very useful to take this into account while we prepare.

If we carry computer equipment, electronic instruments, documents, or any other delicate work material, we must carry it in special suitcases for this type of equipment. It is always interesting to have watertight suitcases to store this type of belongings, as well as to have security locks through codes or keys.

Whenever we can we will try to avoid the check-in of our luggage, as it is possible that we may suffer losses that prevent us from fulfilling the objectives of our trip. A brief consultation with the conditions established by our transport company in terms of luggage, hand luggage, extra packages and check-in, will avoid many headaches.

8. Charge the batteries

Literally. **It is essential that we make sure that all the electronic devices that we are going to use during our trip have the batteries charged to the maximum:** laptop, mobile, *tablet,*etc. We can also carry extra batteries if necessary, or autonomous recharging devices (power*banks).* We must also remember to carry the current chargers that we need for each of the devices, as well as adapters or specific current transformers to be able to use them in the places of destination. If we want to have calls and data on our phone during the trip, we will have to consult the *roaming* policy of our company for the destination country, or hire a specific plan for the trip.

5.2. Travel order and business trip report

What are T&E reports?

Travel and expense reports are physical or digital documents that include all of the relevant details for a travel-related expense, including the amount of the purchase, the date, and expense category. Original receipts are typically also included with T&E reports so that if a tax return is ever audited, the business can provide evidence of reimbursable expenses.

Elements of a travel and expense report:

- Date of purchase
- Vendor purchased from
- Expense categories such as the client, project, account, or department
- Name of employee who purchased the item
- Any additional notes about the purchase
- The subtotal of the purchase
- Any tax or VAT associated with the purchase
- The grand total (including tax)
- A PDF, JPG, or PNG file for the receipt or invoice

Why are travel and expense reports important?

Travel expense reports are important for several key reasons that matter to a company, whether a global corporation or a small business.

Tax preparation

In most countries around the world, travel is fully deductible, as long as it has a justifiable business purpose. That purpose can be professional development, recruiting, sales, procurement, on-site customer support, and more. But in order to deduct your expenses legally with the IRS or other government entity, you need proof in the form of a receipt or invoice.

Business intelligence

Reporting is not just for the tax entity of the governments whose countries you operate in. Understanding travel costs is important for your business as well. For example, with real-time insights into travel spend, you can make in-the-moment decisions to stick to your budget. And with monthly and quarterly reports, you can identify projects or teams that are overspending.

Fraud reduction
Unfortunately, travel reimbursement is subject to employee fraud. With the right procedures in place (including the requirement to attach receipts), you can reduce your company’s risk of fraud.

Best practices for tracking and reporting on travel expenses. In 2021 and beyond, a travel and expense report is no longer a physical form. Expense reporting should be digital, and integrated with your business travel software.

Book travel in one place

- DO book business travel with a travel management platform: When you encourage employees to book in an approved business travel management software, you can better control their spending and consolidate expenses into one monthly invoice. This reduces the need for expense reporting.
- DON’T book business travel on consumer websites: If your employees book travel on consumer sites (used by vacationers), then your business-related expenses are spread all over the place, requiring expense reports.

Integrate your tech

- DO integrate your travel management platform with your expense management platform: You can integrate your business travel platform with your expense management platform, so that all of your deductible travel expenses are in one place.

- DON’T rely solely on an expense management platform: While an expense management platform is important for every type of expense, it doesn’t actually help you spend money. It just shows you what you spent after the fact. You need a business travel platform for embeddable policies and invoice consolidation.

Use corporate cards to your advantage

- DO offer corporate credit cards to frequent travelers: Many companies still require employees to create an expense report even if they use their corporate card, so it might not seem like a corporate card saves time. But it does. Modern expense management platforms reconcile expense reports with credit card transactions, so your finance team doesn’t have to.
- DON’T require travelers to constantly request reimbursements: Employees don’t want to pay with their own money and then fill out expense reimbursements. With a corporate card, there’s no need to. Having fewer reimbursement forms saves time for travelers and administrators.

Digitize your travel policies

- DO include your T&E policy in your travel management system: One reason why a business travel platform is so important is the ability to digitize policies. These policies take effect during trip searching and booking, so they actually control spend.
- DON’T rely on a policy document to help you manage spending: Employees forget to read policy documents. If your T&E policy only exists in a document, it might be able to teach employees how to scan receipts, but it won’t control spending in the moment it really matters.

Smart strategies to save money on travel expenses

Of course, streamlining your travel and expense reporting is only one part of the puzzle. You might also want to reduce your business travel expenses.

- Analyze travel spend by person, team, project etc.
- Use your business travel software to set up tags, categories, and cost centers. This will allow you to accurately calculate the ROI of business travel and set better budgets in the future.
- Track trip cancellations and recoverable VAT for cost optimization
- TravelPerk allows you to track trip cancellations and recoverable VAT. If you find a high amount of trip cancellations (due to uncontrollable circumstances), you might choose flexible, refundable travel instead. You can also track all of the required details to reclaim VAT.
- Create unique travel policies for certain teams or projects
- The better that your travel policies match your company, the better they will work. Set different policies for different travel reasons (such as recruiting), or for different teams (such as sales).

- Use dynamic travel budgets for policy accuracy in every city
- It's impossible to set an accurate per night hotel budget if your company travels to multiple cities. With TravelPerk, you can set dynamic budgets that allow your employees to spend a certain percentage higher than the cheapest option available.
- When you digitize T&E reports as part of your travel management strategy, you save time for everyone at your company while collecting real-time, valuable data. And when you book travel using travel management software, you consolidate your vendor, so travelers don't even need to create reports for those bookings.

Example Company Inc. – 134 Victoria Street – Texas, 76262

John Doe
2171 Baker Avenue
Roanoke, TX 76262
United States

Travel expense report

Employee information	
Employee name:	
Employee ID:	
Department:	
Travel information	
Start of trip (date and time):	02.01.2018 at 08:00
End of trip (date and time):	01.03.2018 at 08:00
Trip destination:	
Purpose of trip:	
Method of transport:	
Travel expenses	
Travel costs:	
Meal costs:	
Accommodation costs:	
Incidental costs (attach receipts): *(e.g. parking ticket, public transport costs)*	
Total cost of the trip:	

Date, Employee signature

Date, Manager signature

5.3. The concept, types and ways of organizing meetings

THE MEETING TYPE SELECTION

Effective meetings are pre-planned meetings that have a clear structure and follow well-defined parameters. There are several types of meetings that have their own characteristics. Among them:

1. **Staff meeting** (status meeting) – the structure of this type of meeting consists of a warm-up or introductory speech, the main part, including the rules, format and goals, general questions, results of work, reports of participants and analysis of results.
2. **Report** - consists of presentations by several participants. One presentation lasts no more than 7 minutes, considering this is the length of time that can hold the audience's attention.
3. **Exchange of views** – the alternate saying of all the meeting participants.
4. **Briefing** – consists of an introduction, which includes plans, indicating the importance of the topic and defining the problem, the main part is the plans, rules and instructions, then there is a discussion with subsequent analysis, and at the end — setting tasks and summing up.
5. **Discussion** – the meeting is organized once again after the main meeting has already been held, but the decision has not been made.

Besides the main types, there are also such meeting formats as planning and brainstorming. In the first case, a narrow circle of employees is invited to a meeting to solve a problem that they are directly related to. The second type of meeting is designed to find unusual ideas and fresh solutions. As many people as possible are invited to such meeting.

To properly manage the time allocated for a meeting, invest in this time period and not delay the solution of the main task, you can use special applications, such as a simple time tracker Checkiant. You can also use it to track the employees' working hours and earned money, thereby increasing the productivity and quality of work of each of them.

10 STEPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE MEETING

To conduct meetings effectively you need to identify three main components of a successful team meeting: an open dialogue, a clear goal and a strong leader. Now let's go through the 10 key steps of organizing an effective meeting:

1. Clearly define the purpose of the meeting. If it doesn't make sense, then you shouldn't strain yourself and distract employees from their work. Today, you can easily provide information to each team member via email. The need for a meeting can only be justified when it's necessary to get an immediate response from subordinates. In this case, the meeting should be!
2. Properly prepare. You can think through not only the main points of the plan, but also practice some phrases, perhaps write an introductory or final speech.

3. Notify each team member about the meeting timely. If you inspire the team with at least one convincing and well-founded thesis, motivate them to the event – it will increase the effectiveness of the meeting. Everyone will understand why they met and what they need to achieve in the end. So you need to think carefully about your goals in advance, and then notify your employees about the meeting.
4. Manage the process. A good meeting can only take place under good leadership. It's necessary to make it clear to the audience that you are also acting as an observer here and will make sure that the meeting corresponds to the topic, fits into the time frame and that no one deviates from the set issues. It is equally important to show that you respect the time of every present person. To do this, let them watch the clock or set a timer. Every time the main topic is replaced by secondary conversations, get everyone back to the main theme.
5. Let everyone think freely. But don't let other participants make fun of the speaker. Watch the discipline.
6. It is important for present persons to take part in the discussion and to make their own suggestion, ideas or personal opinions about the topic. It is necessary to listen to everyone and only then, after analyzing everything heard, make a final decision.
7. Make a plan of action at the end of the meeting. You should check with employees whether they understand the final decision of the meeting, what needs to be done next, and what result to achieve. If something goes wrong, you need to analyze all the errors and take them into account next time.
8. Keep an eye on time. It's important both to start the meeting on time and to finish it timely. Punctuality plays an important role in achieving success.
9. Work with your subordinates after the meeting is over. You can ask each participant to write a report on the results of the event. This is a useful life hack how to hold an effective meeting, eliminating all the shortcomings that happened last time.
10. Monitor compliance of approved decisions. At the end of the meeting, make sure that employees follow the adopted plan and strategy, and do not forget about everything five minutes after the meeting ends.

TYPICAL MISTAKES IN MEETING ORGANIZATION

Each subsequent analysis of the past meeting will allow you to eliminate mistakes and conduct effective, productive meetings, the results of which will suit both employees and the authority. It's very difficult to do everything right from the first attempts, when a lot of people come to the meeting, and you don't have enough time. But everything comes with experience.

Frequent mistakes in meeting managing:

1. Didn't define the goal or didn't inform its participants about the goal.
2. Lack of preparing.
3. Didn't set the time frame or the meeting is being protracted.
4. Didn't create motivation for participants.
5. Time is spent on other issues that do not relate to the topic of the meeting
6. Lack of clear rules at the meeting.
7. Didn't record the results and agreements after the meeting.
8. Failure to direct disputes in a constructive direction.
9. Manager's monologue.

One of the necessary condition for conducting an effective meeting is to avoid mistakes. The main thing is that they don't have to become a habit, and you can quickly analyze them and think of solutions to eliminate them.

So, we have considered the main principles of an effective meeting, which make up a ladder of task compliance, concreteness, short-termism, timing, participation, voting rights, consolidation of results and planning. Errors can occur at any of these stages. Let's analyze the most common of them:

- you have not defined the goal — after the event, the participants will only have a sense of wasted time. Usually, if employees do not receive notifications specifying the topic and goals of the meeting, they either don't come at all, or they only come because they are afraid of being punished;
- you have not prepared for the meeting — if you don't know what to say to the participants, then how can you expect them to take any actions, activity, or reaction at all. In this case, the meeting will be held under the motto "clarification of misunderstandings and search for a topic", and everyone will leave it with a complete lack of understanding of what happened and without a single plan for the future;
- you haven't set a time limit — if you set a specific time of the meeting, then the participants will try to find a solution within these limits. Otherwise, a half-hour briefing can turn into a three-hour empty rhetoric;
- you didn't motivate the meeting participants properly, as well as yourself – if you don't know how to use such a tool as "meeting" and don't consider it as something important in the company's activities, then there is nothing to be surprised when the meetings will become lust a formal

and inefficient activity;

- meeting misused — you can not call the "people" on any occasion. Why distract people from their tasks to analyze issues that can be resolved, for example, via email or at the end of the working day just five minutes before leaving the office;
- the purpose of the meeting you set and the methods for its solving are not compatible with each other — if it was decided to deal with the problem as a whole team, you shouldn't take all the time for a personal monologue and express only your own opinion. It's important to give everyone the floor, and at the vote for one option.
  Analyzing all the above-mentioned rules for conducting effective meetings, it is worth noting that deficiencies analysis is one of the key points in successful achieving of goals.

CONSTRUCTIVE MEETING LAYOUT

The secret for organizing and conducting an effective meeting is to create the right plan and, also important, follow each stage of it.

1. At t**he preparatory stage**, the leader must provide participants with information about the upcoming event with issues to be solved or questions to be answered. At this stage, he must also create the right motivation and bring all present to the fact that the constructive interaction is expected, and everyone has the right to their own point of view and, accordingly, will be able to speak out.

2. At the stage called "**start of the meeting**", it's important for the organizer to clearly state the purpose and topic. To set the tone for the event, you need to hold a welcome part, seat and greet the participants.

3. The most important moment — **the main part of the meeting**. At this stage, the leader needs to voice the problem, approve ways for its solution, create optimal conditions for the group to offer a number of successful proposals, and ensure the process of adopting a single final version.

4. At **the final part**, the organizer must distribute the results of the meeting to each of the participants. This can also be done 1-2 hours after the planning session. It's very important to finish the meeting correctly, inspire employees with positive energy and increase interaction between team members.

5.4. Business correspondence related to meetings and gatherings - invitation to the meeting, minutes from the meeting

What are meeting minutes?

Meeting minutes are a written record of the conversation and decisions that are made over the course of a meeting. Meeting minutes are applicable to any kind of group within a company, including a board meeting, where the parties involved include boards of directors.

This type of meeting notes can actually be written for any kind of meeting that requires an official record. This written record can then be used to either inform team members who weren't able to attend what happened or to keep track of decisions and action items that can be revisited. Minutes from previous meetings can therefore be used in order to make future organizational decisions.

What is the purpose of meeting minutes?

So what's all the hype around meeting minutes? To start, they provide a historical record of the company's short and long-term planning. Participants have the ability to use the meeting minutes as a record for future reference, to understand what kinds of progression has taken place.

Minutes also provide legal protection for the organization. Many times, due diligence is captured in companies' meeting minutes, which can then be officiated and documented to confirm the ethical, fair practices of the organization. Meeting notes also serve as proof of why and how a company came to certain decisions. This is going to be helpful in answering any questions that arise in reference to decisions that have been made.

In a recent article about how to take better minutes, Business Training Works highlights the importance of meeting minutes:

- *They are a record of a group's decisions and actions*
- *They are a reminder of who was given assignments*
- *They are evidence of deadlines*
- *They are a benefit for people who are absent when decisions are made*

Meeting Minutes Examples

1 Formal Meeting Minutes Example

Formal meeting minutes are used to document big or official decisions that often require approval. These meeting minutes use formal language and are structured with the purpose of being shared with all of the meeting participants afterwards.

Formal meeting minutes are commonly used by nonprofits, government, schools, and public companies. In fact, most trade unions, schools, city and county governments model their meeting minutes based on Robert's Rules of Order.

If you're writing minutes for a formal meeting, it's important to document as much information as possible, and keep the meeting format consistent from meeting to meeting.

It's smart to use a meeting template for more formal conversations to give them the structure that you're looking for. Organization of notes is key, since you'll be sharing the notes with everyone afterwards.

Formal Meeting Minutes [Example]
Company + Department Name
Date

---

1. Call to order
[Meeting facilitator] called to order the regular meeting of [Organization] at [time] on [date] in [location].
2. Roll call
[Secretary] conducted a roll call. The following persons were present:
[List of attendees]
3. Approval of minutes from last meeting
[Secretary] read the minutes from the last meeting. The minutes were approved.
4. Open issues
    - Open issue + Summary of discussion
    - Open issue + Summary of discussion
5. New business
    - New business + Summary of discussion
    - New business + Summary of discussion
6. Adjournment
[Meeting facilitator] adjourned the meeting at [time meeting ended].

Minutes submitted by: [Name]
Minutes approved by: [Name]

2 Informal Meeting Minutes Example

Informal meeting minutes serve as a quick reference to important topics that have been covered in your meeting such as goals, obstacles, deadlines or ideas that have surfaced.

If your organization doesn't require you to use a specific meeting minutes template, you can use and customized a simpler template. Contrary to a formal meeting minutes template, no one needs to have approved the minutes for this type of meeting and they serve to only document the key points and next steps.

Here's an informal meeting minutes template you can use to record decisions at your team meetings:
Informal Meeting Minutes [Example]

Meeting attendees
Date

---

1. Meeting objective
State the purpose of your meeting: what are you planning to accomplish?
2. Talking points
    - New talking point
    - New talking point

3. Action items
- New action item, due date, and assignee
- New action item, due date, and assignee

7 things to include when writing meeting minutes

1 Date and time of the meeting

Before you actually start writing your meeting minutes, note the date and time of the meeting. Seems like a no-brainer, but it's worth a mention seeing as it's so important to be able to go back to previous meetings and understand when they happened, what's been accomplished, and what's still outstanding.

2 Names of the participants

The next step is to document the names of all of the participants and any other people who weren't able to attend. Usually, at the beginning of the meeting, there's some time dedicated to the acceptance or amendment to previous meeting minutes so you can take a look at who attended last time to have a draft version of an attendee list. Better yet, use the calendar invite to check names as participants join or enter the room.

3 Purpose of the meeting

It's pretty important that the "why" behind this meeting is documented and made obvious. In this part of the meeting minutes, try to be detailed in explaining why this meeting was called and what it's trying to achieve. This is going to especially be useful for any individuals who were unable to attend the meeting and for anyone who is using the outcomes of this meeting to fuel decisions.

4 Agenda items and topics discussed

Try using your meeting agenda as a general outline for your meeting notes and use each agenda item as a section to record notes on, including any outcomes or major decisions that have been made.

It's a good idea to send out your meeting agenda in advance so that everyone can make suggestions and contribute to it. This also means that no one's walking into the room blind to what's going to be discussed.

Using a meeting minutes template that you can use on a recurring basis is also going to save you a lot of time and energy and foster some familiarity.

Having a meeting agenda isn't worth your time unless you're going to discuss the most relevant and pertinent topics in an engaging manner. Definitely some food for thought.

5 Action items

Productive meetings result in assigning action items to different participants. Record any decisions or action items as soon as they happen so that you can transcribe them with accuracy. Capturing everything would be impossible, so instead, listen for actions that need to be made in relation to major decisions, recommendations, challenges or solutions that have been identified.

Recording the action items of a meeting is going to enable you as a group to hold each other accountable for your responsibilities and support one another in getting tasks done that bring you closer to achieving your larger, organizational goals.

6 Next meeting date and place

If you're taking formal meeting minutes, it's important for the meeting attendees to know when the call to order for the next meeting is, with regard to this project or topic of discussion. This gives you a general timeline of how long you have to complete the responsibilities that have been assigned to you.

Understanding when you're meeting next is going to help you manage your time appropriately and prioritize all of your tasks appropriately. It's as important to know the place of your meeting, whether it be online or in person.

Make sure you have the appropriate software downloaded, or if it's an in-person meeting, that you've calculated how long you're going to sit on the highway – *in which case you should probably have a podcast downloaded and ready to go!*

7 Documents to be included in the report

The last thing to include are supplementary documents that you should send out with your minutes in the meeting report. Think about if any documents were used or referenced in the meeting which may be useful to include for your team members. This could include an action or issues log, KPIs, updates or changes to the project.

Even though you're sending this report out as quickly as possible, make sure that you write the minutes well, focusing on quality, seeing as this serves as a minute record which will be referred to in the future.

Summary

Writing meeting minutes doesn't need to be stressful. In fact, the whole purpose of them is to make your life less stressful by having the ability to go back and reference what was discussed and what the key outcomes were. In this article, Fellow outlined what meeting minutes are and why they're so important. We provided formal and informal meeting minutes templates so that you can test them out and see if they work for you. Lastly, we listed 7 must-have things to include when writing meeting minutes:

1. Date and time of meeting
2. Names of the participants
3. Purpose of the meeting

4. Agenda items and topics to be discussed
5. Action items
6. Next meeting date and place

7. Documents to be included in the meeting report

Refer back to this guide whenever you need some guidance on how to write effective meeting minutes – and don't forget to try out one of our meeting templates so that you can maintain consistency and never skip over any necessary detail.