

# **SOFT SKILLS**

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this unit is to enable you to develop the

- Ability to fill out a job application
- Ability to follow regulation
- Ability to listen and document what you have heard
- Ability to follow instruction
- Ability to relate to co-workers
- Ability to develop the capacity to learn
- Critical thinking
- And negotiation skills

## **INTRODUCTION**

Soft skills play a vital role towards employability, personal achievement and professional growth. It helps one stand out in a crowd of job seekers with even mediocre skill and talent. There is no denying the need for hard skill, i.e. knowledge. But with all the laurels people fail to corner a job. With all the knowledge people have only a short shelf life. And the onus lies with the soft skills. The most common traits asked by every prospective employer are positive work ethics, good attitude, and desire to learn and be trained.

Good attitude cannot be taught as it is a behavioural skill. But consistent practice and training can instil that in a person. Right perspective and readiness to learn and turn the situation to a positive outcome, take responsibility of one's action with the capacity to take any challenge, So the job seekers must possess soft skill to attract the employer.

To do so one has to redefine his body language, gesture, gait, and eye-contact.

## **THE 5 Cs OF BODY LANGUAGE**

- 1= Consciousness- Appearance: cloth (that creates the first arresting external visual impact and sends a message), tone of voice
- 2= Culture (sensitive to culture)- gesture, use of space, touch, silence, smile, eye-contact  
Use of proper register, that is appropriate to the situation and the relationship to the conversation partner.
- 3= Clues to read body language in clusters, observe one or more signals and don't go just by a single action

- 4= Changes – be observant of the changes in the body language/tone/words, by which the message is being communicated
- 5= Congruence – make a final assessment of the body language, check for congruence between words, tone and body language

## **UNIT 1**

\*Identifying job that matches with one's knowledge and technical skills:

At the root of success or failure of a candidate to get a job lies his capacity to design a persuasive CV (or CV as it is commonly called), and job application.

### **Objectives**

- **To learn the importance of communicative competence for a job**
- **To frame an effective CV and to present various CV styles**
- **Writing an effective CV**
- **To identify and elaborate upon writing the application for job**
- **And to write an effective job application**

### **COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE**

The idea behind our course is to gain communicative competence to get a satisfying employment. And the first step towards that is to get your message effectively across to others with minimal possible misunderstanding. To do so one needs to communicate effectively to grab the eye of the prospective employer.

Now-a-days the employers are flooded with a large number of applications. It is up to you to further your cause. It is like buying things on the net. The best displayed dress or the dress worn by a model catches your attention. Just like, in the present competitive world you have to show-case your-self; for which your CV will act as your show-case.

### **PRELIMINARY PREPARATION:**

In the field of professional competency you are like a package and your CV packages your assets to sell you to your chosen buyer. As the CV holds your future in its hand it has to project an impressive, professional impression about you. It should answer to the employer's needs and requirements for the post. So we have to analyse and try to fit into the mould of the requirement by minimising the gap, if any in your profile and the job description, to improve your chance of employability, by reflecting your personality and employment goals. Also you have to rewrite your CV for every new job you apply for, looking at the job specification, so that it is more focused.

So you should acquire the art of profiling your product- i.e. you, for your profit and growth. The employer buys you or hires you for what you can do for him that you have that quality they want. So your CV should be well written, and persuasive for a specific job. Here is how to listen to the salient feature of the job and generate a winning CV.

## **EXAMINE YOUR ASSETS**

There is no one way of writing a CV. So start with self-analysis and decide clearly on the aspects that must be reflected in the CV. Go through the following steps to be practical and factual and exact.

1. Read the advertisement carefully, if you are applying against a solicited post
2. Analyse the advertisement for job requirements and prepare a CV to cater to their requirements.
3. If applying for an unadvertised post, select a format that best projects your achievements, capabilities and any other special aptitude.
4. For applying to this latter post, make a proper research of the company's background, specialization for the post you require.

## **DESIGNING/DRAFTING A CV**

**The next step is to draft your CV. Though it doesn't have a fixed format, and differ with the purpose and context of your application, the following is a very common approach:**

### **PRE WRITING ACTIVITIES**

#### **SELF EXAMINATION**

- 1 What are my motivating factors?
- 2 Am I dependable?
- 3 Am I a team leader/ team member/ would like to work alone?
- 4 Am I confident?
- 5 Am I good at communication?
- 6 Am I good at time management?

#### **APTITUDE**

My ability lies in problem solving?

logical aptitude?

Verbal/ written aptitude?

## **EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION**

My specialization At undergraduate level?

Post graduation level?

	Internship/seminars/workshops attended?
	Percentage of marks?
My Skills	intrapersonal skill-like problem solving, logical thinking, analytical And interpersonal skills like effective communication skills Technical skills like commuting/computer skills
My Achievements	Significant achievement in sports/literary activities/ drama, son Participation in NSS/ NCC (any award like participation in RD Parade, Best Cadet?) Social work?
My Experience	part-time/full-time job? Projects done?
My Career Goal	What d I do with my skills? Where do I see myself 5 years from now?

## METHODOLOGY

- 1 Read the advertisement carefully**
- 2 Analyse the job requirements, and prepare a CV that projects your suitability as an applicant.**
- 3 If applying for an unsolicited position, do a careful survey of the prerequisites and shape your CV accordingly.**

## DRAFT CV

**NAME**

**FATHER'S NAME**

**DATE OF BIRTH**

**ADDRESS FOR COMMUNICATION (with mobile number)**

**POSITION SOUGHT and CAREER OBJECTIVES**

**EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION, with information about institutions attended**

**EXPERIENCE**

## **LANGUAGES KNOWN**

**ANY OTHER INFORMATION (like: Career achievements, extracurricular achievements, special skills or achievements, awards or honours received)**

## **REFERENCES**

An effective CV should be well organised, to be able to create a good first impression. It should be free of error, typographically attractive, and all the necessary information should be well organised.

After the preparation of the first draft is ready, go through it carefully to eliminate any mistake. Now pay attention to the

**Format selection**

**Verifiability of the information**

**Language mistakes**

**And use of critical/technical vocabulary**

**Therefore you need to**

## **INTERNALISE THE FOLLOWING ACTION VERBS TO ENRICH YOUR CV**

A=	approved accomplished	arranged allocated	addressed assessed	arbitrated analysed	advised adapted
B=	built	begin	brief	bring	budget
C=	collect Computed	compiled	confirmed	collaborated	conceived
D=	detected Delivered	directed	drafted	devised	dispensed
E=	executed Examined	enlisted	established	expedited	evaluated
F=	fabricated Focused	fashioned	facilitated	founded	finance
G=	gain	generate	graduate	greet	guide
	<b>Gathered</b>				

H= handle	help	hire	host	harmonised
I= identify	illustrate	implement	improve	improvise
Increase	index	influence	initiate	institute
J= join	justify			
L- launch	lecture	led	lessen	lift
Link	listen	lectured		
M= maintain	manipulate	map	market	measure
Mediate	merge	mobilize	modify	monitor
N= negotiate	networked	nullified		
O= observe	obtain	operate	order	organise
Originate	outpace	outperform	overhauled	oversaw
P= participate	perform	persuade	prevent	prioritised
Process	produce	programme	promote	pursue
Q= qualify	quality-control			
R= run	received	recommend	reconcile	recruit
Reduce	resolve	restore	reorganise	restructure
S= schedule	screen	search	secure	share
Sort	specialize	specify	sponsor	sustain
T= target	test	track	transact	transcribe
Train	transact	transcribe	transmit	transport
U= unite	update	upgrade	utilise	ungraded
V= validate	value	verify	view	volunteer
W= watch	weigh	witness	write	
Y= yield				

THE CV needs to be accompanied by a COVER LETTER. It is the second and equally important part for the solicited position. The format is the same as that of any formal application.

#### AN EXAMPLE

(Application for the post of Salesman)

Rabi Mahapatra

Plot . No. 123

Shahid Nagar

Bhubaneswar-7510 07

1 January 2016-07-23

Mr Surya Prakash

Personnel Manager (HR)

Rahul Steel

Mancheswar Industrial Estate

Bhubaneswar- 751010

Dear Mr Prakash

As per your advertisement in the Odia Daily The Samaja I am applying for the post of Salesman, because I have the requisite qualification and experience as the advertisement mentioned.

I have completed my +2 Science, recently. My CV (enclosed) explains the jobs I have undertaken during my summer vacations. I have also been working as a sales person in a shop that deals with steel products. I love to travel and own a motor-cycle.

I am looking forward to be engaged in a full-time job. So I would like to discuss how I can be an asset to your company. I look forward to a positive communication from you.

Yours sincerely

Rabi Mahapatra

Enclosure: CV

Final Tips to make your CV attractive

GIVE YOUR CV A PROFESSIONAL LOOK

In order to do so, double check your CV for any mistake. Don't use any fancy font. Use capital letter or underline the headings. Do not use italicks.

#### **BE FACTUAL, COMPLETE AND OBJECTIVE.**

Your CV should reflect your skill or your achievements. No subjective account should be given. Date, address, phone number must be correct.

Take care of your grammar, spelling, usage, vocabulary, and punctuation.

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## **UNIT2**

### **GROUP DISCUSSION**

The ability to take part, effectively, in a group discussion lends success to any professional.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- 1 to realise the importance of group discussion**
- 2 master the art of successful group discussions**
- 3 be able to judge the areas requiring evaluation**
- 4 knowing the art of discussion**
- 5 knowing how to exchange opinion and suggestion**

### **WHAT IS GROUP DISCUSSION**

Group Discussion (GD) is a group of persons sitting around a table to discuss an issue/topic/problem. In a selection process GD plays an important role by revealing a person's listening skill, speaking skill, objectivity, analytical capability, assertiveness, leadership capability and problem-solving capacity.

#### **Listening Skill**

Listening involves decoding the sounds, comprehending them and analysis. It needs careful and continuous practice to develop this skill.

There are 4 approaches to listening: discriminating, comprehending, critical and active listening. Active listening is about being empathetic and encouraging the speaker. It also takes into account verbal and non-verbal behaviour of the speaker to analyse the speaker's personality and point-of-view.

### **Speaking Skill**

Effective listening makes one a good speaker. But for that you need to improve your vocabulary with reading with understanding. A good speaker must be good at construction of sentences, sequential arrangement of ideas, coherence, giving proper stress on punctuation. Also as GD is a formal process, one must avoid using slang, abbreviations (e.g. Ya for yes). One also needs to take care of one's pitch, intonation and spontaneity.

### **Problem-Solving Skill**

One must have problem-solving skill to win a discussion. It needs accurate analytical skill. One must avoid panic, over-confidence, but must have adequate data to give objective judgement.

### **Leadership Skill**

GD does not have a nominated leader. But someone with the following qualities will emerge as a leader:

Knowledge about the topic

Emotional composure

Judicious and objective

Democratic and totally non-fanatic

Logical thinking and problem-solving capacity

Possess skills to steer the discussion to a meaningful and acceptable conclusion.

### **Interpersonal Skills**

One's success in the work place depends on one's inter-personal skills. It requires effective communication capacity such as

Show of empathy and a pleasant facial expression.

Good body language

Proper eye contact

Controlled pitch of the voice

Diffuse conflict if any

No favouritism

No personal comment

Once you realise you know the topic, assimilate your thoughts within the given time. Write down the points in a piece of paper, arrange them logically. While presenting your ideas do not be in a hurry to present them all at once. Observe the flow of the agreement and present your point at the appropriate moment.

If you feel inadequate with the topic, don't lead the discussion; observe the others, so you may come up with some ideas.

While presenting an idea, it is essential to mention the relevance of your idea to the topic. Pay attention to the concept hidden in the topic through logical analysis of the key words. If the topic is about social issues, multiple perspective must be taken into consideration; social, cultural, political. If the topic is a case-study, analyse the topic from all possible angles. It is generally related to some past action that led to the present situation; also suggest useful suggestion for a better future.

#### Preparation

Preparation for a GD can be divided into two phases: first, before you enter the room; and second when you are about to participate in the GD. In the first phase, you should read good magazines, newspapers, journals to develop your knowledge. Evaluate yourself constantly through available questionnaire. In the second category, pay attention to your appearance, be positive and have confidence.

#### Participation

Be ready to initiate the discussion

Steer the discussion in a logical and convincing direction

Identify your role, your supporters, and your opponents.

### PERFORMANCE

Your performance is a combination of all the above along with suitable non-verbal communication. Your posture and gesture speak louder than your verbal communication. So you need to observe carefully the following instructions.

#### EYE CONTACT

While speaking, keep eye contact with all the members, as each member of the group is equally important. We have the tendency of looking at only one or two persons throughout a discussion or avoid eye contact altogether. This is a giveaway of your nervousness. A good eye contact, contrarily, reveals your attention and confidence.

#### FACIAL EXPRESSION

GD is a formal forum, hence requires formal etiquette. Your facial expression will reveal your state of mind to the interviewee. Any negative signal of anger, irritation, and diffidence will be an alarm note. So wear a pleasant, warm and confident facial expression.

## HAND MOVEMENTS

During a GD do not lean too close to your opponent. Keep your hands off the table. Do not use a lot of hand gesture. So you should keep the hand gesture to the minimum and use it only in a relevant situation.

## POSTURE

Seat comfortably and show assertion in your posture. Do not be too relaxed or rigid. Sit straight with your head held erect. Do not lean on the table or to a side.

## VOICE MODULATION

## PACE

Speak slow and clearly. Speaking too fast will blur the clarity of speech, speaking too slow will make it boring

## PITCH

You should fit the loudness of your voice looking at the size of the room and participants. Use a pleasant pitch.

## TONE

Your tone reveals your attitude towards others and also to the process of the GD. You should be pleasant, polite and serious.

## PRONUNCIATION

You should use intelligible pronunciation as taught to you. Try and follow Standard English pronunciation.

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## INTERVIEW SKILLS

Interview is an interpersonal communication or direct interaction between two individuals i.e. the applicant and the interviewee. Here an applicant is face-to-face with a panel of judges and is closely observed by them.

## OBJECTIVE

It accesses the capacity, suitability of a candidate for a particular job. So the risk of elimination is higher. So it observes and evaluates the candidate.

A job interview is pre-arranged and planned conversation used for evaluating the suitability of a candidate for a particular post. It is crucial for the candidate, as there are many applicants for

limited posts. So the competition is too high. And the personal and interpersonal skills of a candidate are under scanner. There are two types of interviews: informal and formal.

Informal interviews are conducted based on vacancy and situation. It is an informal conversation aimed at finding out a candidate's suitability for a position by observing a candidate closely. Formal interviews are comparatively more serious. The purpose of this type of interview is to find the most suitable candidate. They are of three different types.

#### STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Here a set of standard questions are asked. All the candidates are asked the same set of questions. The advantage is for the interviewer. They can easily choose the best looking at his approach to the set questions.

#### STRESS INTERVIEW

Sometimes the candidate is deliberately put under pressure. It a technique used by Socrates. The candidate will be asks counter questions based on his earlier replies until the candidate gives up or passes. This tests the candidate's capacity work under pressure.

#### DEPTH INTERVIEW

All superficial answers will be explored deeply to reveal the inconstancy of the candidate.

#### TELEPHONIC INTERVIEW

The increasing number of call centres and smart phones has aided the interviewee in his work. Many companies now use telephone or Skype to interview a candidate. It narrows down the number of candidates selected for the final interview. It saves both time and money for the interviewer and the interviewee. It is also beneficial for the candidate as the board cannot see his body language.

So you need to ask for the company profile to get yourself ready for the purpose.

But you have to abide by some dos and don'ts.

- 1      be confident of your capabilities but don't be dissuaded by any lacunae
- 2      sit comfortably but don't throw your body (this would hamper your concentration)
- 3      listen carefully, don't be in a hurry to answer before the question is complete
- 4      if possible, note down the question, don't depend upon only memory
- 5      analyse the question before answering
- 6      be very clear and audible, don't mumble or be loud

Proper knowledge, spontaneity and aptness of your reply are the key to success.