Lesson 15

IMPROMPTU PRESENTATION AND EXTEMPORE

15.1 Introduction

Though oral communication happens to be a part of basic communication skills (which has been

already discussed in lesson-6; section 6.1), yet oral communication per se needs elaborate

discussion. Hence in this lesson, various dimensions of oral communication viz. impromptu,

extempore, public speaking, group discussion, etc. have been discussed at length. Further, skills

involved in organization of events like seminars, conference, etc have also been dealt with, in this

lesson.

15.2 Impromptu presentation

A speech and/or event that involves an eight-minute speech (with up to three of these eight

minutes available for use as preparation time) is known as impromptu speaking. The preparation

time is known as prep time, or simply preps.

This event varies depending upon the situation; and, the time allowed also varies

at different levels:

· The speaker at the college level is granted 7 minutes to divide, as he or she sees fit.

· Another variation exists in which the speaker must speak for five minutes and half of a minute

is given for preparation time. The speaker is given a slip of paper, which provides three

choices for his speech. The topics can be abstract or concrete nouns, people, political events,

quotations or proverbs.

· There is another variation where the speaker is given an envelope with slips in it, each with a

quotation. They have to draw 3 slips of paper, choose one, and then put two back. They are

then given 5 minutes to prepare a 5 minutes’ speech on the subject.

Even though the format seems to be simple, it takes time to construct a speech in that time and talk

on your feet. It is difficult to have mastery in this event, but many enjoy it, because one does not

have to prepare for the event beforehand. Impromptu speeches need not be factual and are indeed

encouraged to be humorous. There is a "triad" prompt in some impromptu rounds, where the

participant is given three key words to talk about and connect during the speech.

15.2.1 Types of Impromptu

15.2.1.1 OHSSL impromptu (Ohio Impromptu)

Communication Skills

71 www.AgriMoon.Com

In this type, the speaker is provided with seven minutes of time to divide at his own discretion

between prepping and speaking. All topics are quotations and generally random, but occasionally

may be random. It is also more factual and less humor-based, resembling extempore. Other

structures can also be used. Double analysis is normally used by experienced impromptu

speakers. The ratio usually being used by experienced speakers to divide the preparatory and

speaking time is 1:6.

15.2.1.2 Editorial Impromptu

It is an attempt to return “impromptu” to impromptu speaking. The students are given a short

editorial (ideally 3 to 5 paragraphs) to which they will develop a response. The students are

allowed nine minutes to divide between preparation and speech time. At least five minutes must

be used for speaking. Limited notes, prepared in the round, are permitted. The speech should

involve the development of an argument in response to the idea generated or opinion shared in a

given editorial.

15.2.1.3 High School Competition

In high school speech and debate competitions, thirty seconds are given to the competitor to select

a topic from a set of topics (usually three). During those 30 seconds, the competitor must also

compose a speech of five minutes with a 30 second grace period.

15.3 Structure of the Speech

An impromptu speech is simply a mini-speech and therefore it has: an Opening, a Body and a

Conclusion.

15.3.1 Opening

· Open by addressing the Chairman or Master of Ceremonies, e.g. Mister/Madam Chairman

· Brief introduction/opening sentence – attention getting

15.3.2 Body

· Cover the main points (Try to find one or two central themes )

· Use clearly worded simple sentences and try to link the themes

15.3.3 Conclusion

· Be brief and look for an elegant closing that links back to the opening

· End by acknowledging the Chairman or Master of Ceremonies

Communication Skills

72 www.AgriMoon.Com

A general outline for impromptu speeches is as follows:

1. Introduction/Roadmap(1 minute)

2. First section(1 minute)

3. Second section(1 minute)

4. Third section(1 minute)

5. Conclusion(1 minute)

The introduction should begin with a catchy beginning, the statement of the topic and an outline of

the speech. The conclusion is usually like the introduction except backwards, ending with a

profound statement. There are many kinds of formats that can be used for the three body points.

For example, if the topic is a quote, a competitor may go over how the quote is true, how the quote

is false, and why they believe what they believe. Some other examples are: past, present, future;

local, national, international. More advanced speakers use formats that look deeper into a subject

such as: physical, moral, and intellectual; books, video, digital (media.) However, many speakers

choose not to follow a format at all. Most beginners who fail to follow a solid format often find

themselves lost in a jumble of ideas.

15.3.4 Benefits of effective impromptu speaking skills:-

· Improves oral expression of thought

· Develop confidence in public speaking

· Think quickly on your feet

· Develop leadership and communication skills

15.3.5 Techniques to Deliver a Better Impromptu Speech

15.3.5.1 Give yourself time to prepare

· Take deep breaths

· Rise slowly from your chair and walk slowly to the lectern (or stand behind and away

from your chair)

· Use this time to collect your thoughts and decide on the purpose and plan of your speech

· Think about the opening sentence.

· Always remember that never start the speech immediately.

Communication Skills

73 www.AgriMoon.Com

15.3.5.2 Feel confident

· Look around at audience and smile. Stand tall.

· Don't slump, don't fidget, don't grasp the lectern, don't put hands in your pockets

· Speak and act in a confident manner

15.3.5.3 Slow delivery

· Gives you time to think ahead

· The audience has time to absorb and react to what you are saying

· Helps you reduce umms and ahhs

15.3.5.4 Focus

· Keep the focus on the subject while talking

· Don't think of any negatives (eg being unprepared)

· Talk directly to the audience and adapt to their feedback

· Maintain good eye contact with the audience

· Be brief and to the point

· Don't ramble or say too much on the subject

· Speak at the audience's level

15.3.5.5 Sources of Content

· Personalize: This is the subject you know most about. Audience can relate more easily to

personal topics - they probably have similar experiences.

· Your opinion

· Humour: Breaks the ice with the audience and relaxes you

· Other: Current events, something you have read or seen (newspaper, book, TV),

knowledge of pertinent facts

15.4 Methods to Determine Content

Communication Skills

74 www.AgriMoon.Com

The following methods are for guidance only. You don’t have to use them however they may help

you to think quickly on your feet. You may develop other techniques that suit your style of

speaking better.

· PREP Method (When asked to express an opinion - to inform, persuade or inspire)

· Point: Make your point (Opening)

· Reason: State your reason for making the point (Body)

· Example: Give an example to justify your previous remarks (Body)

· Point: Drive home the point again. Links the conclusion back to the opening.

· Past, Present, Future Method (Body)

When asked for your comment on a particular topic:

· Point: Make your point (Opening). Be brief.

· Past : What happened in the past? Reflect on a past issue. (Body)

· Present: What is happening today? (Body)

· Future: What will/could happen in the future? (Body)

· Point: Drive home your opening point. Reminds audience what the point of your speech

was all about. (Conclusion) Be brief.

Be Prepared

There is a good chance that you will be unexpectedly called upon to give an impromptu speech at

a Toastmasters (Table Topics) or others (business, club or P&F etc) meeting. Try and pre-empt

possible topics that may arise, such as those from current events or contentious issues. Have an

emergency speech available.

Speech Time

· In Toastmasters: Club level (Table Topics) : 90 secs

· Competition level: 2 minutes

· Speechcraft : 60 secs

· Elsewhere: 3 to 5 mins (whatever seems appropriate to occasion)

Communication Skills

75 www.AgriMoon.Com

15.5 Summary

· Deliberately rise from your chair very slowly and pause for a moment. Use this time to

decide on the purpose and plan of your speech

· Keep the focus on the subject while talking, and don't think about any negatives such as

being unprepared or that you will look or sound foolish. Rather, think about the subject.

Look for opportunities to bring in humor.

· Talk directly to the audience and adapt to audience feedback.

· Be brief and to the point. Guard against rambling and the temptation to say too much

about the subject.

· Remember, this is a mini speech so try to have an opening, a body and a conclusion. The

conclusion should reflect back to the comments in the opening.

· Always try to speak and act in a confident manner.

· Don’t rush.

· Address the Chairman before and after the speech.

15.6 EXTEMPORE

The extempore speech, as used by certain MBA institutes during their selection procedure is when

a candidate is given a topic and asked to speak about it for a minute or two. He is not allowed to

‘prepare’ for this topic, but has to speak on the spot. Thus, he cannot prepare the content and

decide what to say beforehand.

Extempore" or "ex tempore" refers to a stage or theatre performance, that is carried out without

preparation or forethought. Most often, the term is used in the context of speech, singing and stage

acting. Synonyms are "impromptu", "extemporaneous", or "improvised".

15.6.1 Procedure followed:-

1. The candidate waits for his turn outside the room as happens for interviews.

2. He is then called in to the room and may be asked to sit down.

3. He is then given a topic for his extempore speech. In FMS, this happens just before the

interview-i.e. the interview commences after the extempore round.

4. The topic could be anything. It could be based on the candidate’s academic background,

his hobbies/ interests, any current or general affairs topic etc

Communication Skills

76 www.AgriMoon.Com

5. The candidate is given a few seconds to think about what he wants to say and then is

expected to start his speech.

6. He is expected to speak for around a couple of minutes on the topic

7. The candidate may complete the speech himself, or the panel, may let him know when to

stop.

15.6.2 Extempore helps in testing:-

Firstly, your ability to think on the spot and your spontaneity. It has often been seen that

candidates come with prepared answers for the interview, which they have mugged up. Thus these

answers do not really reflect their thoughts or the kind of people they are. Hence, an extempore

may be used, as you cannot prepare a speech beforehand in this case.

1. Your ability to express your thoughts: In an extempore, you have to think for a very

short while and then express yourself. You will be judged on how well you are able to do

so.

2. Fluency in the language: Your comfort level with English as a language can also be

assessed.

3. Body language/ Confidence: Your body language and Confidence levels maybe judged.

Many candidates feel very nervous about this round, as mentioned before. Does your

nervousness manifest itself in your gestures and expressions? Or do you appear calm and

collected despite everything? Can you express yourself confidently and clearly?

15.6.3 Do’s in Extempore

1. Firstly, do not get nervous! It has been observed that many candidates get freaked out and

are very sacred about the extempore round, as you cannot prepare beforehand and have no

idea as to which topic you may get. However, remember that you have to only speak on

the topic for a minute or two-you are not expected to get into a high level of detail,or show

some astounding knowledge about the topic given to you.

2. Do not start off speaking as soon as the topic is given to you. You have a few seconds to

think use them! It has also been observed that those who start off immediately, run out of

ideas and don’t know what to say. Thus they end up finishing their speech in hardly 20-

25seconds, or even less, in some cases.

3. Most importantly, structure your speech. Try and give it an introduction, a body and a

conclusion. It would be highly impressive if you can structure your talk well, even though

you were given only a few seconds to think about it.

Communication Skills

77 www.AgriMoon.Com

4. You must buttress your points/ arguments with logic and examples. This is crucial and will

help you stand out from the other candidates.

5. Try and either begin or end with a quote. If you can remember an appropriate quote and

use it in the relevant context, it will be absolutely great. Once again, the ability to do such

a thing at such short notice, will enable you to stand out from the other candidates.

15.6.4 Preparation for an Extempore

1. Make sure that you can speak for at least a minute on the following:-

· Important current affairs topics

· Important topics or issues pertaining to your academic background. For example, an

engineer may be asked to speak on ‘electromagnetic induction’ as his extempore topic.

Similarly, an Economics or Commerce graduate may be asked to speak on ‘The Fiscal

Deficit’, ‘Gross Domestic Product (GDP)’ or some related topic.

· Your hobbies and interests

· A person you admire

· Your favorite sports person or actor/ actress

2. Practice for an extempore adequately, by speaking aloud, either in front of a mirror or

even without one. The idea is that you should be able to speak, with a fair degree of

fluency, for about a minute on any topic you get. Practicing speaking aloud with ensure

that you are able to control your nervousness etc.

3. Watch your body language while you practice. It should not give away your nervousness.

Practice speaking both while sitting and standing, so that you are ready for both

eventualities.

Communication Skills

78 www.AgriMoon.Com

Module 4. Oral communication and organizational skills

Lesson 16

INDIVIDUAL & GROUP PRESENTATIONS

16.1 Introduction

The practice of showing and explaining the content of a topic to an audience or learner is known

as presentation. There are as many forms as the life situations. A presentation is a process of

offering for consideration or display. It can be a social introduction, as of a person at court, or a

demonstration, lecture, or welcoming speech, or a manner or style of speaking, instructing, or

putting oneself forward. The manner of presenting, especially the organization of visual details to

create an overall impression is a presentation. It may be the formal introduction of a person, as

into society or at court. In the business world, there are sales presentations, informational and

motivational presentations, first encounters, interviews, briefings, status reports, image-building,

and the inevitable training sessions. Presentations can also be categorized as vocational and nonvocational. In addition, they are expository or persuasive. They can also be impromptu,

extemporaneous, written, or memorizes. But it's more important to focus on their purpose. There

are three basic purposes for giving oral presentations:

1. To Inform

2. To Persuade

3. To Build Goodwill

Now-a-days, it has become increasingly common for individuals especially for the employers to

request job applicants who are successfully shortlisted to deliver one or more presentations at their

interview, debut, or other important event that needs to be highlighted in a more official way. The

purpose of the presentation in this setting may be to either demonstrate candidates' skills and

abilities in presenting, or to highlight their knowledge of a given subject. It is common for the

presenter to be notified of the request for them to deliver a presentation along with their invitation

to attend the event. Usually presenters are only given a title for their presentation and a time limit

which the presentation should not exceed. Be sure to hone up on current presentation etiquette

before preparing slide presentations. How you use this visual aid can make or break the

presentation.

16.2 Types

16.2.1 Informative Presentations

Include talks, seminars, proposals, workshops, conferences, and meetings where the presenter or

presenters share their expertise and information is exchanged.

Communication Skills

79 www.AgriMoon.Com

16.2.2 Persuasive Presentations

Sometimes called transactional, are often motivational. Persuasive Presentations are designed and

delivered to come out with a specific goal in mind.

16.2.3 Goodwill Presentations

Goodwill presentations, which often take the form of after dinner speeches, are often designed to

be entertaining-for example by sharing video highlights of a football season or anecdotes based on

some past experiences.

16.2.4 Multipurpose Presentations

Presentations usually have more than one purpose. A presentation to employees may be

announced as an informative session on new regulations but in reality may also be an all-out effort

to persuade workers to buy into the new rules.

16.2.5 Sales

Sales techniques are complex and require two essential items for success in sales presentations

which are knowing and understanding your audience, and building rapport.

16.2.6 Political

Presentations in the political arena are primarily grouped in the persuasive category. To be

effective they must include lots of information and also build goodwill.

16.2.7 Motivational Presentations

Motivation is another form of persuasion, but one that somehow takes on a more fervent, highly

charged tone.

16.2.8 Interviews

A “Job Interview” is yet another presentation form, one where the presenter should make an effort

to identify his or her immediate audience, but also take great pains to know as much as possible

about the larger audience.

Audiences can be classified into four basic categories:

1. Captives

2. Pragmatists

3. Socially Motivated

Communication Skills

80 www.AgriMoon.Com

4. Committed

When an individual stands up to deliver a presentation before an audience, it’s essential that the

audience know who the presenter is, why they are there, what specifically they expect to get from

your presentation, and how they will react to your message. You should try to gather as much

background information as possible before your presentation. There will be times, especially with

presentations that are open to the public, when you will only be able to guess.

It has been found that audiences believe presenters who use visuals are more professional and

credible than presenters who merely speak. Some research indicates that meetings and

presentations reinforced with visuals help participants reach decisions and consensus in less time.

A presentation program, such as Microsoft PowerPoint, is often used to generate the presentation

content. The development of information technology has made the use of these solutions possible,

but ‘Liquid Crystal Display (LCD)’ Projectors as well as overhead transparencies are still used

widely for the purpose of presentations.

Helpful Presentation Tips

· Easy Format

· Organize Your Thoughts

· Know Your Material

· Prep Time

· Outline Your Presentation

16.3 Three Ingredients of Group Presentations

16.3.1 Clarity

Clarity means clearness of purpose, thought or style. Developing clarity within your group will

help you develop a clear message for your audience.

16.3.1.1 Clarity of purpose

Just as your presentation will have a clear purpose, your group should create a Charter

Statement that explicitly captures the group’s desired outcome. This Charter Statement becomes

the test of everything that will go into the presentation and help guide the efforts of the team. For

example, if your group agrees that your general purpose is to sell your product, and, more

specifically, you know that the key decision maker in the audience is doubtful about cutting

checks to companies like yours, build that into your Charter Statement. The purpose of our

presentation is to sell our Product to ABC Company by overcoming the objections of the

Communication Skills

81 www.AgriMoon.Com

company’s Purchasing Officer through clear examples of how our Product provides a fast return

on investment. The Charter Statement will come in handy when you have a team member who

may want to go “off track” to tell personal anecdotes that don’t pass the test of the group’s charter.

16.3.1.2 Clarity of roles

Personalities come into play when groups meet to develop presentations. The struggles for

position and ego can quickly deplete the group’s momentum, resulting in hurt feelings and,

potentially, a weaker presentation. Providing clarity to group roles helps to establish expectations

and keep the entire group moving towards a common objective, leading thus to a great group

presentation. Identify the roles your group needs during message development. For example, to

ensure that team members are meeting assignments, select a Project Manager. This person isn’t

the “boss of the presentation”, but rather will focus on schedule and assignments. Other roles

could include a Gap Analyst who is responsible for identifying “gaps” in content and support

materials (handouts, graphics, etc.), which in turn could work closely with other roles within the

group like the Chief Researcher. Capitalize on the unique personalities within your group to

develop roles that work well for all, but be sure to discuss the roles openly so they are clear to

everyone.

16.3.1.3 Clarity of message

Instead of writing “speeches” for each individual speaker, try creating one master presentation, a

unified narrative, and then decide who speaks to which points, and when. This is a shift from the

traditional segmented method of group presentations where often group members are directed to

“give five minutes of talking” and then are left to develop content independently. In a master

presentation, each speaker may weave in and out at various points during the presentation. When

done well, this fluid dynamic can hold an audience’s attention better by offering a regular change

in speakers’ voices and presence.

Moreover,by using a master presentation, your group will ensure that each of the presenters will

stay “on script” and use cohesive language, smooth transitions, and (when using visuals)

consistent graphics.

16.3.2 Control

Group presentations face unique logistical challenges beyond just developing presentation content.

16.3.2.1 Control in introduction

The way of introducing a group is noticed by the audience, so plan those introductions with your

presentation. Your presentation may be part of a larger event that includes an master of

ceremonies who will introduce the team. If so, be sure that you provide pertinent information to

the emcee that will allow her/him to generate interest in your presentation even before you begin

Communication Skills

82 www.AgriMoon.Com

speaking. If your group is responsible for making its own introductions, however, you will need to

decide if you will introduce your group members in the beginning, or when they first speak. Your

group also will need to decide if each member introduces her/himself, or if one member will

introduce everyone. There is no one right way to do introductions, but your group must decide

how to do them before the day of the presentation.

16.3.2.2 Control in transitions

Decide how you are going to “hand off” from one speaker to the next. In the “master presentation”

approach, you may want to consider simply have speakers pick up a narrative right where the

previous speaker left off. If you use the more traditional segmented approach, each speaker may

cue the subsequent speakers by identifying them and their subject matter. For example: “…and

speaking of quality control, no one is more qualified as Mr. X, who is going to tell us about how

this team will deliver a quality project for you.”

Another option is to assign a group emcee who will handle transitions between presentation

sections. Your group will need to determine which option makes the most sense based on your

presentation style and audience expectations.

16.3.2.3 Control vis-à-vis time and space

Multiple speakers translate to occupying more physical space, and the potential to gobble up more

time with introductions and transitions. If you will be presenting in a small room, consider where

each speaker needs to be positioned to quickly reach the speaking area, and whether they will sit

or stand when not speaking. Your presentation must fit within your allotted time, so you will need

to time your group’s presentation, including equipment set up, introductions, and transitions.

16.3.3 Commitment

Commitment from each group member is going to give your presentation the best content and flair

that will impress your audience.

16.3.3.1 Commit to a schedule

Once you know the date of your presentation, create a schedule that includes specific milestones,

such as “presentation draft due” and “final rehearsal”. Having a specific schedule allows members

either to agree to the group’s expectations or to offer dates that better fit their personal schedules.

One can also assign specific responsibilities to the scheduled milestones; for example, who is

responsible for bringing the handouts, projector, and laptop to the presentation?

16.3.3.2 Commit to rehearsing

“If you find group members who lack the commitment to rehearse, consider finding group

members who will commit.” Rehearsing is one of the most important steps for presentation

Communication Skills

83 www.AgriMoon.Com

success. Have your team members agree from day one that they will make themselves available to

practice with the group. If you find group members who lack the commitment to rehearse,

consider finding group members who will commit. Practice makes perfect, and no rehearsal means

your group doesn’t know what will happen to the content, timing, or quality of the presentation.

Do those sound like things your group would like to leave to chance?

16.3.3.3 Commit to answering your audience’s questions

Always be ready to pepper your group with questions after your formal presentation is over. Your

presentation is not over yet. Handling those questions is as important as the presentation itself. A

well-done presentation means nothing if presenters fumble questions so badly that they appear

incompetent. Have each member develop a list of potential questions and then, as a group, review

the list. Discuss who will be responsible for handling which types of questions. By incorporating

these three ingredients into your next group presentation process, you will find that you not only

develop a presentation that your audience loves, but your group will transform from a rag-tag

group of speakers into a dynamic presenting team.

16.4 Suggestions for an Effective Group Presentation

First, appoint one of the speakers to be in charge. If this is not done and something unexpected

occurs, no one has the responsibility for the group which may lose credibility because of

uncertainty in how to respond. In addition, when a question is asked, the speaker-in-charge

immediately refers it to the person with the appropriate expertise; thus there is no uncertain pause

because no one knows who will answer the question.

Second, each speaker should know what the other speakers are going to say. This knowledge will

help them avoid duplication of material and they can make appropriate references to another

speaker’s content if it applies. This knowledge helps insure continuity among the different

speakers.

Third, the last words of each speaker should synchronize with what the next speaker will cover.

This adds unity to the entire presentation and gives the new speaker a smooth opening to his or her

material. An example might be, "Now Susan will cover the financial aspects of our proposal and

help you understand the benefits this will give you."

Fourth, if possible the strongest speaker should end the group presentation. The ending is the most

important part of the presentation; people remember best what you say last. You want to have an

ending speaker who can show passion and enthusiasm for the topic.

Finally, a dress rehearsal is essential. The group members need to get a feel of the complete

message to see how they can best contribute. In addition, with several people speaking it is hard to

gauge the time the speakers will take. This dress rehearsal allows the group to time the

presentation and to make adjustments in each portion in order to be under the time limit; the more

Communication Skills

84 www.AgriMoon.Com

people involved the more unpredictable the total time. With everyone hearing the other speeches,

each speaker can give feedback to the others that will improve the quality of the whole

presentation. Extraneous and redundant material can be eliminated as well.

16.5 Group discussion

Group Discussion is a modern method of assessing the students’ personality. It is both a technique

and an art and a comprehensive tool to judge the worthiness of the student and his appropriateness

for the job. The term suggests a discussion among a group of 8& 12 members who will express

their views freely, frankly in a friendly manner, on a topic of current issue. The abilities of the

members of the group are measured within a time limit of 20 to 30 minutes.

Group Discussion is a very important round in any selection process, be it for an MBA course,

campus recruitment or for any graduate/post graduate degree. The selection committee conducts

GD to gauge whether the candidate has certain personality traits and/or skills that it desires in its

members, say for example: ability to work in a team, communication skills, leadership skills,

reasoning ability, imitativeness, assertiveness, creative, flexibility, ability to think and act

independently.

Normally groups of 8-10 candidates are formed into a leaderless group, and are given a specific

situation to analyze and discuss within a given time limit. The group may be given a Case Study

and asked to come out with a solution for a problem. The group may be given a topic and asked to

discuss on the same. A panel will observe the proceedings and evaluate the members of the group.

16.5.1 Prerequisites of a Group Discussion

• Topics given by panelists

• Planning and preparation

• Knowledge with self-confidence

• Communication skills/ power of speech

• Presentation

• Body Language and personal appearance

• Being calm and cool

• Extensive knowledge base related to state, country and globe

• Areas are politics, sports, science &trade commerce, Industry and Technology, MNC, etc

• Analyze the social, economical issues logistically

Communication Skills

85 www.AgriMoon.Com

• Listening skills

• Co-operation

16.5.2 Salient features of Group Discussion

• Topic may be given to judge your public speaking talent.

• Discussion revolves around a specific subject.

• The examiner does not interfere once he announced the topic.

• Maintain cordiality and free expression of thought and opinion.

16.5.3 Main objectives of the participants in a Group Discussion

1) The first thing is that the panel should notice you. Merely making a meaningful contribution

and helping the group arrive at a consensus is not enough? Ensure that the group hears you. If

the group hears you, so will the evaluator. You need to be assertive. It depends on you how

you steer the group in the right direction, once it gets stuck to something. This gives you the

chance to showcase your leadership skills. Most importantly, you have to make your chances.

Many group discussion participants often complain that they did not get a chance to speak.

The fact is that in no group discussion will you get a chance to speak. There is nothing more

unacceptable in a GD than keeping one's mouth shut or just murmuring things which are

inaudible.

2) The second most essential thing is that your contribution to the group should be meaningful.

For that you need to have a good knowledge base. You should be able to think logically and

hence put forth you ideas cohesively. The quality of what you said is more valuable than the

quantity. It doesn’t help if you shout at the top of your voice and speak at great length, what

matters most is what you speak and how it creates an impact on the group as well as the

evaluators.

3) The last most important thing is that you must be clearly seen to be attempting to build a

consensus. This shows your ability to work in a team, your ability to adjust yourself in new

surroundings and help others in your team to reach a definite conclusion amidst difference of

opinions. After all this is what all Group Discussions aim at: To be able to discuss and arrive

at a consensus.

16.5.4 Do’s in Group Discussion

• Make original points & support them by substantial reasoning.

• Listen to the other participants actively &carefully.

Communication Skills

86 www.AgriMoon.Com

• Whatever you say must be with a logical flow, and validate it with an example as far as

possible.

• Make only accurate statements.

• Modulate the volume, pitch and tone.

• Be considerate to the feelings of the others.

• Try to get your turn.

• Be an active and dynamic participant by listening.

• Talk with confidence and self-assurance.

16.5.5 Don’ts during Group Discussion

• Being shy/nervous/keeping isolated from Group Discussion

• Interrupting another participant before his arguments are over

• Speak in favour; e.g., establish your position and stand by it stubbornly

• Changed opinions

• Don’t make fun of any participant even if his arguments are funny.

• Don’t engage yourself in sub-group conversation.

• Don’t repeat and use irrelevant materials.

• Addressing you to the examiner.

• Worrying about making some grammatical mistakes, for your interest the matter you put

across are important.

16.5.6 Important points in Group Discussion

· Be Yourself. Be as natural as possible and don’t try to be someone you are not.

· Take time to organize your thoughts. Don’t suddenly jump to any conclusion. Think

before you speak so that you don’t speak anything irrelevant to the topic being discussed.

· Don’t make the mistake of looking at the panel while you are speaking. You are in

a Group Discussion and you are expected to discuss among group members, so always

look at your group members while you are speaking.

Communication Skills

87 www.AgriMoon.Com

· Seek clarifications if you have any doubts regarding the subject, before the discussion

commences.

· Your body language says a lot about you - your gestures and mannerisms are more likely

to reflect your attitude than what you say.

· Never try to show your dominance. Be assertive, speak yourself and let others speak as

well.

· Don’t lose your cool if anyone says anything you object to. The key is to stay objective:

Don't take the discussion personally.

· Show your leadership skills. Motivate the other members of the team to speak. Be

receptive to others' opinions and do not be abrasive or aggressive.

· Remember, opening the discussion is not the only way of gaining attention and

recognition. If you do not give valuable insights during the discussion, all your efforts of

initiating the discussion will be in vain.

· Be assertive: An assertive person is directing, honest careful about not hurting others

‘self-respect’.

· A patient listener: listening to another person is one way of showing appreciation.

· Right language: Words can make friends & right words at the right time make the best

results.

· Be analytical and fact-oriented: It is necessary to make relevant points which can be

supported with facts and analyzed logically.

· Accept criticism: If any member of the group criticizes or disapproves a point, it is

unwise to get upset or react sharply. In case the criticism is flimsy, the same can be pointed

out politely.

· Maximize participation; one must try to contribute fully, vigorously & steadily throughout

the discussion.

· Show leadership ability: A group discussion also evaluates your leadership qualities.

· Accept someone's point of view

· Praise the argument

· Accept the contradictory view

Communication Skills

88 www.AgriMoon.Com

· Express your argument with few facts, cases,data, newspapers, publications etc.

· Express without hurting others feelings.

· Never try to bluff.

· Practice group discussion with friends on different subjects.

· Don’t be disheartened if you did not do well in your First Group Discussion. Instead try to

learn from your past mistakes.

16.5.7 Benefits in Group Discussion

· Stimulation of thinking in a new way.

· Expansion of knowledge

· Understanding of your strength and weakness.

· Your true personality is revealed and qualities of leadership crystallize

· Provides chance of exposure

· Language skills

· Academic knowledge

· Leadership skills

· People-handling skills

· Team work

· General knowledge

Communication Skills

89 www.AgriMoon.Com

Module 4. Oral communication and organizational skills

Lesson 17

ORGANIZING SEMINARS& CONFERENCES

17.1 Introduction

The popularity of conferences and seminars results from the distinct benefits they offer. Attendees

pre-qualify themselves as prospects; if they weren't interested in the issue being discussed, they

wouldn't come. You get to talk with them face-to-face, both formally during presentations and

informally during breaks, meals, and receptions. As a speaker, you are automatically classified as

an expert. Outside speakers can add credibility and drawing power. Because seminars can run

from a few hours to several days, they can be adapted to a wide array of subject matter and

contexts. In combination with outbound telemarketing, the offer of a quality seminar is an

effective tool for multiplying the number of qualified prospects for your products and services.

17.2 Benefits of Seminar/Conference

It is better to address the benefits of a seminar/conference before going through the first steps of

conference organization. A conference is the broadest of the three kinds of meetings (Seminar,

Workshop, and Conference) can provide, among others, the opportunity to:

• Meet students, researchers, professors etc. from other linguistics departments of your own

or other countries

• Become aware of other cultures and ideas related to linguistics

• Familiarize yourself with other research work, projects etc.

• Promote your association, university / department within the field

• Attract new and active students in your association, university / department

• Build connections and create a network of co-workers and institutions

• Travel and get to know the hosting country (geographically, culture, religion etc.)

• Promote your own research and get feedback

• Gain and train management skills

• Trained interpersonal skills

• Learn how things are behind the scenes

• Become an active member of the academic community

Communication Skills

90 www.AgriMoon.Com

17.2.1 Seminars can be of the following types

• A half-day seminar on your products and services.

• A one-day or two-day conference, featuring multiple tracks and noted speakers, run by a

professional conference organizer on highly technical issues, attracting participants from

across the country.

• A series of half-day or one-day seminars offered at several locations across the country to

teach the fundamentals of a specific application to those just beginning to work in that area.

Each of these programs will result in new business for the sponsor or for the speakers. Unlike

most forms of marketing, you can sometimes charge for seminars, covering your marketing costs

and even making a profit. However, with these benefits come associated risks and costs,

especially if you plan a large conference for which you will charge a fee. If it is a one-time event,

a conference is a high-fixed-cost, low variable cost enterprise. The time speakers must invest to

prepare remains constant regardless of audience size. Marketing costs are also usually fixed,

consisting of a large mailing. This leaves the duplication of handouts as the major variable cost.

A two-day conference can cost you a bundle if too few participants attend to defray the hotel

charges. By forecasting your costs, you can easily run a breakeven analysis to calculate how

many participants you need at a given price to recoup your costs. The fee from every additional

attendee is almost all profit.

A small seminar, over a breakfast or at the end of the day, can be set up and run by one person if

time is available over an extended period, but it is a method that lends itself more to an

organization. A large conference requires many hours of preparation from many people. This

differs from many of the other marketing techniques that can be done by a single individual.

17.2.2 Optimizing the seminar’s success

The subject for a business conference must:

17.2.2.1 Be educational

People come to conferences to learn. Entertainment is a plus, but promotion of your business is

acceptable only if it is heavily disguised. There has to be something worth learning.

17.2.2.2 Be urgent

There must be a need to know now. A conference on "New Genomic Tools" is not likely to draw

as many people as one entitled “Speeding Your Drugs to Market”. The term "urgent" here means

that there is value to learning something now rather than later.

17.2.2.3 Provide solutions

Communication Skills

91 www.AgriMoon.Com

The conference must offer attendees solutions or progress toward solutions, because people

attend conferences in order to solve problems better.

You should test seminar content against these criteria. A brainstorming session with your staff

can usually provide you with a good assortment of subjects to pick from that will ensure good

attendance.

17.2.3 Length

Next you must decide on the conference's length. You can determine length by asking yourself

the following questions:

a) How much time and support do I have to set it up? A two-day conference requires

much more work than a half day seminar. You must adjust the length to the level of effort

you can put into setting it up.

b) How much content do I have to offer? There is simply not enough material for a

lengthy conference on some subjects.

c) Is my audience willing to pay? A two-day conference gets expensive, and most firms

expect to be paid for them. The audience, in turn, is faced with not just a fee but a

substantial opportunity cost in time invested away from other duties. A longer conference

must therefore deal with a particularly weighty, urgent, or complicated subject. Generally

you must also have a longer mailing list to find people with budgets and schedules that will

allow them to attend.

d)How many speakers can I attract? Many conferences use only one speaker, but the

speaker had better be good. Using three or four speakers a day diversifies your risk. Some

of the time the audience will be listening to some exceptional speakers, even if not all are

of equal quality.

e) How geographically scattered is my market? Few people will drive more than an hour to

attend a half day seminar. Assuming that very few of the intended clientele respond to your

invitations (an optimistic target, unless outbound telemarketing is utilized), you will need to

invite two hundred prospective buyers of your services to attract a twenty-person audience.

Identifying so many prospects within a one hour travel time is easy in some businesses but

impossible in others, even when more than one person is invited from the same

organization. The wider the geographic area you need to draw people from, the longer your

conference will have to be to justify longer travel times. Alternatively, you need to repeat

your half day seminar in several locations to meet the travel time criterion.

17.2.4 Timing

Communication Skills

92 www.AgriMoon.Com

Timing will also affect attendance. Most are scheduled to avoid summer vacations and end-of-theyear holidays. Longer conferences tend to be scheduled for either the beginning or end of the

week, allowing participants to travel on the weekend and perhaps enjoy a short vacation at the city

where the conference is being held. In the suburbs, short seminars should run in the late afternoon,

allowing attendees to leave work a little early and avoid rush-hour traffic. Center-city seminars

often fare better over breakfast or lunch, allowing attendees to leave before rush-hour. If charging

a fee, don’t schedule late in the year, as most travel budgets are already used up.

17.2.5 Location

Possible locations for your seminar or conference include your own offices, a hotel, a corporate or

privately operated conference center, or space borrowed or leased from another organization. If

your office has adequate meeting space and is close to the market you are trying to reach, holding

the conference there provides you the opportunity to show the place off and introduce other

members of the firm. The location serves as a subtle advertisement for your firm.

Hotels and conference centers offer logistical support unavailable at many offices for conferences

of a day or more, including full audio visual support, eating space separate from meeting space,

and almost enough telephones for everyone to use during breaks. Most hotels will provide meeting

spaces free if you guarantee a minimum number of room rentals. Room rates are negotiable if you

expect a large number of participants. More importantly, you will want to negotiate the cost of

meals and break-time refreshments. This is because participants pay for rooms themselves, while

you pay for meals and refreshments either out of conference fees or out of your own budget. Talk

to several hotels, see the space they plan to give you, look at rooms, taste the food, check out

logistical support such as photocopying and audio visual equipment, request rates, and ask for

references from others who have held meetings there. You will then be in a position to negotiate

with several hotels to get the mix of service and cost that suits your needs.

17.2.6 Seminar marketing

Most seminars are marketed by direct mail. The longer the seminar and the more you plan to

charge for it, the longer the list will have to be to identify an adequate number of candidates. A

breakfast or evening seminar can get by with a much shorter list.

Seminar attendance can be increased dramatically through effective telemarketing. Scripts and

training are the key, and only qualified professionals that can represent you effectively should be

used. Telemarketing should be coordinated with mail drops, timed so the prospect has the

invitation on their desk no more than a week. Outbound scripts should include topic and product

interest and referral questions. Interviewees can also be asked if they would post invitations on

bulletin boards, or e-mail the announcement to their colleagues. An e-mail version should be

available to facilitate this.

Communication Skills

93 www.AgriMoon.Com

You should also consider having the seminar announcement and registration form on your

website. We don’t recommend advertising in journals, due to the high cost and relatively low

coverage.

17.2.7 The invitation

Because the quality of your invitation or flyer greatly influences attendance, it deserves

special attention. For a one- or two-day conference, the flyer should include seven things:

• The conference theme - The reader should be able to determine almost instantaneously

what the conference is about. The wording should be as compelling as possible.

• A concise description stressing benefits - Don't leave it to the readers to figure out what

they will get out of attending. If you tone down your flyer, be sure you don't obscure the

benefits in the process.

• A description of who should attend - This inclusive list indicates who the conference is

designed for and allows the reader to say, "This is meant for me!"

• A review of the schedule and content - In this portion, list what will occur: From the

morning through the afternoon of each day, noting speakers and subjects followed by two

or three bullets stressing the benefits of each.

• A concise speaker description. Include credentials, background and experience.

• Logistics of time, place, fee, payment, registration, and accommodations. This should

include directions to the site, if not included with confirmation letters.

• A sign-up sheet. This can be a tear sheet or a response card to fax or mail in. Make sure

to ask qualifying questions, including seminar topic interest, and product interest and

timing.

17.2.8 The speakers

People who organize seminars for the first time often see themselves or others in their firm as

primary speakers. You can often do better by including outsiders and sometimes by using them

exclusively. Doing this will make the seminar seem less self-serving, which frequently results

in higher attendance. Prospective customers will shun a seminar if they sense they may be

submitted to an hour-long advertisement. When selecting a speaker or speakers for a seminar,

one should consider the following points:

1. Drawing power- Some names attract more attendees than others. A client with stature

in his industry will often attract his competitors, who are probably good prospective

clients for you.

Communication Skills

94 www.AgriMoon.Com

2. Availability- One of the most onerous tasks in organizing a conference or seminar is

lining up speakers. This needs to be done early in the process, because everything else

hinges on it.

3. Knowledge- The speaker must know the subject matter. Firms that use only their own

employees as speakers often can do so because they are presenting highly technical

material that is little understood by outsiders.

4. Speaking ability- The quality of the speaking will determine the success of the seminar.

Don't subject your audience to the expert bore. Rehearse the speakers.

5. Balance - If you have several speakers, make sure they present different points of view.

Otherwise you will get a me-too presentation.

6. Price- Most firms want to avoid paying speakers, other than for travel expenses.

If you do decide to speak yourself or to use others in your firm as speakers exclusively, you must

stress the content and benefits in your flyer. The more people understand about what they will

learn, the less they are likely to fear an advertisement. Remember that people attend a seminar

to learn, not to be sold!

17.2.9 Chance to talk

People attend seminars and conferences not only to hear the speakers but also to talk to their peers

at other companies. They want to compare notes, empathize, look for jobs, and relax with others

who understand their problems. These periods of informal interaction also offer you the best

opportunities for building relationships and generating leads. Arrangements for this activity

deserve careful attention. You need to block appropriate time for it-before a breakfast or dinner

seminar, after an afternoon seminar, and at several convenient times during a conference. You will

need space that encourages interaction. That means open space out of traffic flow where people

can stand and talk to each other without interruption. Comfortable sitting space in small clusters

helps too. During this time you and others from your firm should play host, circulating to make

sure you meet everyone, making introductions, and absorbing those at the fringes of the

conversations into the center. Above all, you should get others to talk. They have had a chance to

hear you during the presentation. Now it is your turn to listen and learn. Learn names, learn

personal interests, and learn business responsibilities and concerns. This information will allow

you to follow up later with a personal note to each individual.

Have a few stock questions to get others talking, like, "What is your specific interest in coming to

this conference?" or "What do you think of the seminar so far?" Also, have questions that will

draw out the silent individuals in a group. If one individual dominates the discussion with his

reason for attending, wait for a pause and say, "That's interesting." Turn to someone else and say,

"Did you come for the same reasons or different ones?" Using your networking skills, you should

Communication Skills

95 www.AgriMoon.Com

be listening for ways you can help those you talk with. An obligation to call a participant with

information he is looking for creates a means of keeping the relationship alive later. Create a list

of these obligations for use after the conference. The opportunity to establish a relationship with

your audience is one of the primary benefits of running a seminar or conference. The chance to do

so is largely restricted to informal interaction periods. Work hard during these periods and you

greatly increase your chances of obtaining business later.

17.2.10 Money

Few firms charge for seminars running less than a full day. A multi-track or two-day conference,

however, can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to put on. Because of the substantial

educational benefits they provide, attendees are willing to pay for them, and most, though not all,

firms charge a fee. You should consider doing so.

The more your conference looks like one run by a trade association or other third-party

conference operator, the more you can charge attendees. This usually means several presenters

from a variety of organizations, high quality audiovisual materials, a binder full of training

materials, and good quality conferencing space. Individuals with unusually strong credentials

as experts and trainers do present alone for two days and charge, but they are in the minority.

For prevailing fee structures, review fliers for conferences that you receive by mail. Charging a fee

can enhance the credibility of your seminar. It shows that people will pay to hear what you say and is an

indicator that you intend to educate, not advertise.

17.2.11 Something to take home

For-profit conferences universally provide participants with printed material summarizing what

they have learned. If your event is free, you must decide whether to do so. Materials you can use

for this purpose include copies of exhibits used by speakers, white papers or reprints of articles on

the subject, and speaker bios.

A high quality package of materials adds to the professional appearance of a seminar and gives

those who attend something they can save with your name on it.

17.2.12 Post-Seminar Follow -up

Within a week of a conference's completion you should follow up with letters to everyone you

have met, thanking them for attending. If you have promised someone information, you can put it

in the letter, or, if appropriate, call. As in all forms of marketing, follow-up has a major impact on

lead generation and separates the serious marketer from the casual one.

Attendees should be contacted after the seminar by a centralized telemarketing effort or one

closely managed with Field Sales. Immediate prospects for your services are quickly forwarded

Communication Skills

96 www.AgriMoon.Com

to Field Sales, and Field Sales should receive a list of those with longer term buying plans. There

should be managed follow-up of prospects who express product interest every six months.

17.3 Guidelines for Writing/Formulating a Proposal for Organizing International

Conferences/Workshops/Seminars for Approval by the Higher Authority

1. Title of the Seminar/Conference/Workshop/Forum

2. Purpose: The purpose of the proposal is to seek the consideration and approval of the

Higher Authority to organize the International Conference

3. Background: Background of the Seminar/Conference/Workshop.

4. Organizing Committee

5. Objective of the Seminar/Conference/Workshop

6. Basis For Consideration: Justification of the need to hold the conference.

7. Details of the Seminar/Conference/Workshop:

-Date, Time and Venue

-Participants:- Specify total number of local and participants and list out their names. State

and list the countries that will be expected to participate in the conference.

-Paper presentation: State the working papers for presentation. State and list the paper

presenters and their countries of origin

-Programme (Brochure): Please attach conference brochure

8. Financial Implications:

Specify source of income and expected expenditure

Specify whether this involves budget allocation from the government or any central agency

9. Security Implications:

Specify whether the seminars/conferences, workshops/forum held have implications on

security and national policies

10. Recommendations:

The approving authorities are kindly requested to consider and approve the proposal to

organize the International Conference on “Towards Better (Trust) Management &

Development”

Communication Skills

97 www.AgriMoon.Com

11. Report on the implementation of the Seminar/Conference/Workshop/Forum

Report of the conference should be forwarded to the concerned higher authority as soon as

possible, through proper channel.

17.3.1 The idea

The idea of organizing a conference without any specific details is usually generated by one

person and that person needs to spread his idea within his department and see who is willing to

help. Once he has a team with at least two-three members he can start preparing.

17.3.2 Pre-preparation

A group of two-three persons will not be enough for the organization of a conference, so there is a

need to recruit more students in the group. The department should be informed about the idea and

the goals and should give their approval before inviting more people to help.

17.3.3 Call for volunteers

Usually postgraduate student conference organizing committees are created by Post-graduate

students who volunteer to help and thus are small in number. If it is a small team (2-3 persons),

then call for volunteers so as to expand your team. A “call for volunteers” should outline the

purpose of the team (now be called a committee) and provide a general description of what the

new members will do. Also give a ‘response deadline’ for those who would like to volunteer.

Conduct an interview before admitting anyone in the committee.

17.3.4 The interview

Allocate a time and place for the interview. Before having the interview make sure you have a list

of all the questions you and your colleagues would like to ask as well as what it is that you are

looking for from the new members. What you are looking for should be determined by the list of

duties in the sections 3 and 4 below. The most important restriction for a person to become a

member of the committee should be to be available during the conference preparation period.

Have in mind that a conference organizing team will surely need among others a:

• Head of the conference/team, who will be responsible for keeping the agenda and organizing

all other members;

• Head of finance: the person, who will know exactly how much money you have and what

you spent the rest of the money on;

• Head of the programme: To know what the programme would be like, getting in touch with

lectures, students, etc.

Communication Skills

98 www.AgriMoon.Com

• Head of accommodation: the person who will organize all the accommodation facilities and

offers provided for the conference, as well as inform the participants or attendees about all the

tourist information needed

• Head of technical support & webmaster: the person(s) who will know how to handle audiovisual equipment as well as support the organization and maintenance of the webpage.

Therefore the students admitted in the committee should abide with the above requirements.

17.3.5 Specifying the Nature of the Conference:

Once having a team you need to specify the actual nature of the conference. Try to provide

answers to the following questions in order to determine the nature of the conference:

• To whom the conference is going to address?

• Who are the people most likely to attend it?

• Which area of importance will be covered?

• Will it have a specific theme within the area?

• Is it going to be a Local, Regional, National or International Conference?

• Where will it be held?

• How long should it last?

• What is the scope of the conference?

In order to be able to answer these afore-stated questions, you should draw some information from

previous conferences of the same nature. Learn as much as possible about other conferences,

seminars and workshops, so as to be acquainted with many hints and procedures.

17.3.6 Preparation / Time-table

When having a team and the approval of your department as well as being able to answer the

questions above then you can continue with administering to each member of the committee what

they are suppose to do. Firstly, you should plan the timetable for preparation, execution and

follow-up. The timetable should be divided into three sections with respect to the remaining

months until the conference is held. The first step should involve preparations made for 5-6

months before the event, the second for the preparations made for 3-4 months before the

conference; and lastly, 1-2 months before the conference.

17.3.6.1 First Step: 5-6 months before the event

Communication Skills

99 www.AgriMoon.Com

When planning the timetable you should consider that you should provide at least 5-6 months for

preparation. This is vital for both you as organizers and the presenters.

a) Secure a day

In order to be able to secure a day for the conference you should search at some linguistics pages

and find all conferences held during the academic year you are interested in organizing your

conference. Make sure that you choose a day that it is at least 5-6 months away and there is no

other conference on that day in the same area as the one where you are thinking of having the

conference.

b) Room-bookings

Once you decide on the day you need to allocate room bookings (committee-style or lecture style).

When making room bookings you should think about how many parallel or net sessions you are

going to have. The more parallel sessions the more rooms you will need. Also consider the fact

that depending on the length of the conference the attendance will vary. Therefore, you need more

rooms that you may use at the end which are good sized rooms where your participants will not

seem to be too few or too many. Also consider that the rooms you book have the appropriate

requirements; for example audiovisual (AV) equipment. In a conference you always serve coffee

and sometimes lunch or dinner depending on the nature of the conference. This is something that

should also be considered since you need the lecture rooms to be close to a coffee room where the

coffee will be served; either by a university catering or any other catering service which is

approved.

c) Catering

If you are organizing the conference in your university then you should ask for the approval by the

university catering services available in your area. That is, universities tend to have some

approved services which can be given to students so as to follow among others safety regulations.

Once having the list you can start contacting the catering services and choose the one which suites

your requirements. Consider that when being asked to give the catering service the program of the

conference you should tell them to bring everything 10-15 minutes earlier so as to avoid any

delays and be able to have a backup plan in case that something goes wrong; with respect to

catering services.

d) Funding

In order to be able to pay for all your expenses you will need a sponsor. First you should address

your department to see whether they could fund your conference. You could also apply to other

organizations, which may be scientific, financial/banking,donor/sponsoring in nature.

e) Plenary Speakers

Communication Skills

100 www.AgriMoon.Com

All conferences tend to have two or three plenary speakers who are reputed ones (in their area of

specialization) from all over the world. As a conference organizer, you should have decided

whether the conference you are organizing will be of a specific subject or not. If the conference

covers a specific area of linguistics then you should choose the leading linguists in that field and

invite them to become the plenary speakers. However, if the conference you are organizing is a

general one, without having a focus on any specific area/field, then you should be cautious when

choosing who to invite as plenary speakers..

f) Advertising the Event

When confirming your plenary speakers then you can advertise the event. Initially the event

should be advertised to your audience, depending on the nature of the conference; whether it is a

regional, International, etc.

g) Call for Abstracts

The ‘call for abstracts’ should include information such as:

• Time and place of the conference

• Names of the plenary speakers

• Which departments / associations support the event

• Deadline for abstract submission

• Description of the abstract format required; named, word count etc.

You should make sure that you have a reasonable deadline for abstract submission and that you

sent at least three invitations to your prospective audience with a short interval in between. Be

prepared when setting the deadline that you may have to extend the deadline, since for

uncountable reasons you may not have enough abstracts to complete the slots you want

h) Registration Form

The form should include among others:

• Name and affiliation details

• Information about registration packs/fees

• Information regarding dietary requirements or any other individual needs

• A check-list to indicate whether they are presenting or just attending the conference

• Information about accommodation packs

Communication Skills

101 www.AgriMoon.Com

Advise all presenters to register, since information about dietary and accommodation requirements

is not obtained through an abstract submission.

i) Webpage Design

You should try to either form a webpage through your department’s server or through one of your

own; this depends on the status of your conference and whether it is approved by your department.

The actual webpage should include:

• Information about the nature of the event

• Information about the place and the surrounding area of where the event is taking place

• Travel information / time tables redarding bus, trains, Metro etc.

• Hotel lists

• Contact details of all committee members

• Information about the committee members

• Abstract guidelines

• Fares for registration/ packs available for students

• Mode(s) of payment

• Registration form

17.3.6.2 Second Step: 3-4 months before the event

(a) Receiving the Abstracts

Once receiving the abstracts you should make sure that they follow the format you requested.

Those that abide to the guidelines can be categorized depending on their field.

(b) Reviewing the Abstracts

You should decide on whether you would like postgraduate students or teaching staff to review

the abstracts submitted. Once you decide on this then you can distribute a call for reviewers.

(c) Call for Reviewers

The ‘call for reviewers’ should include information about possible areas of linguistics which will

be addressed by the abstracts as well as a deadline for notification of interest. This should also

include a deadline for when the abstract reviewing is due. You should also include a note as to

which area the volunteered reviewers would feel more positive to review. This, you should have in

Communication Skills

102 www.AgriMoon.Com

mind when distributing the abstracts received. When sending the abstracts to reviewers you should

give the reviewers an anonymous copy of the abstract so as to avoid any biased answers. You

should also provide the reviewers with reviewing guidelines, in order to obtain clear comments

and avoid more subjective recommendations.

(d) Acceptance/ Rejection of Abstracts

When receiving reviewers’ comments and their suggestion for accepting or declining the abstract

you should inform the presenters. Before that you should try to crosscheck reviewers’ comments

so as to make sure that you also agree with their comments. The abstracts that were rejected could

be accepted as a poster presentation or nothing at all.

e) Conference Programme

When creating the program there are several factors you should consider, such as:

• Enough time for registration in the morning

• Include a 15 minute slot in the first session for the opening of the conference which should

be made by a member of your sponsoring organization and the chair of your committee

• Adequate breaks between sessions

• Tea/Coffee breaks should last for at least 17 minutes

• Lunch breaks should last for at least 1 hour

• Have enough time for poster presentations

• Allow for a five-minute break between presentations, so that attendees can choose to leave or

change the lecture room

• Try to have presentations in each session and same lecture room that cover the same or

similar area of linguistics. That is, have syntax presentations on one session and morphology

on another

• Have both the name of the presentation and the presenter on the program. You may also want

to include affiliation details

• Also, try to have two-three last minute backup presentations (if you can) in case that there is

a last minute cancellation

f) Advertising about the Conference Programme

Communication Skills

103 www.AgriMoon.Com

Once you have created the program you should send it to all departments and your audience.

When sending the program also include in the email a second/third call for attendees along with

all information needed; do not forget the registration form..

17.3.6.3 Third Step: 2-1 month(s) before the event

• Arrange facilities for collection and banking, cancellation and upload them on the webpage.

• Ask the presenters whether they would require any special equipment

• Book AV equipment etc., finalizing room allocation.

• Create an abstract booklet for both oral and poster presentation (or even workshops) and sent

it to the printing services.

• Create conference posters and use them to advertise your conference around your

Department and University.

a) One week before the event

Make the conference packs for the event. This should include the following:

• Abstract booklet

• Conference time-table

• Information about local events and the area, which you can get from the tourism office from

your town/city

• Any advertising leaflets given by your department or any other funding body

• Taxis’ telephone numbers, Train, metro, bus time-tables, etc.

• Name-Tags (make sure that committee’s name-tags differ in color or layout to the ones given

to presenters and attendees)

• Food-vouchers (if any)

• Area- maps

• Delegate-lists

• Feedback- form

• Make preparations in case that the event has to be cancelled. That is, you may need to have a

cancellation notice ready which you could distribute to everyone who was registered as well as

to any mailing lists.

Communication Skills

104 www.AgriMoon.Com

• Ask your plenary speakers, attendees and presenters whether they would require any extra

help with their arrival at the place of the event.

• You should printout some extra taxi numbers and bus, train, metro timetables, area maps for

the registration desk.

• Briefing session with helpers.

• Check & re-check the room- bookings, speakers, refreshment/catering arrangements, room

layout and AV provision.

b) One day before the event

• Make sure there are enough signs for speakers and attendees to find the room where the

event will take place. If not create some yourself.

• Re-confirm: room bookings, catering.

• Arrange room layout for both poster and oral presentations.

• Make sure the whole committee is on call in case that something goes wrong.

• Confirm that the folders etc are ready.

• Confirm you have a printout of the lists of presenters and attendees.

• Confirm you have a list of any economic arrangements that need to be settled on the day.

• Have a list of all the telephone numbers for all possible services needed. That is, catering,

safety services as well as hospital telephone numbers.

• Check that you have done the name tag and food vouchers etc.

• Make sure you have a money box for the day of the event.

• Arrange which members of the committee are going to be at the registration desk, who is

going to welcome guests and who is going to assist presenters test their presentation on your

AV equipment.

• Make sure you have at least two extra laptops for the day of the event, in case that a

computer or the AV equipment in any of the rooms is not working properly.

• Have an announcement advising attendees to enter/leave the lecture room if they are late by

the emergency exits not the front doors so as not to interrupt the presenter.

c) On the day

Communication Skills

105 www.AgriMoon.Com

• Arrive early

• Prepare the registration desk and make sure that everybody is on their position

• Check on room layout, provision for speakers (AV, water in the lecture rooms)

• Advise the presenters as soon as they register to check their presentation with the person who

has been allocated for this job.

• Before the beginning of the first presentation thank everyone for coming and also make sure

you acquaint them with safety and room evacuation procedures. When organizing a

conference or any other event you are responsible for guiding people in case of an emergency

event. Therefore, make sure that you have been informed about all the safety procedures and

that at least one member of the committee knows first aid in case that you might need to act

accordingly.

d) Afterwards

• Record who actually attends

• ‘Thank You’ letters to speakers

• General report to all delegates

• Settle the account

17.3.7 Conference& seminar organizer's outline

17.3.7.1 Outline of the specific tasks you must complete to run a conference

I. Determine Goals & Target Audience

a. Select general subject(s)

b. Determine length (half day, one day, two days, multiple tracks)

c. Brainstorm regarding alternative venues & topics

d. Review for feasibility

1. Is it educational?

2. Is it important?

3. Will it provide solutions?

4. Do we have the resources/knowledge to handle it?

Communication Skills

106 www.AgriMoon.Com

II. Determine Seminar Marketing Plan

A. Mailing List/Logistics

B. Advertising

C. Website

D. Outbound telemarketing

1. Pre-mailing qualification & referral

2. Post-mailing qualification, referral & registration

E. Registration options

III. Establish schedule

1. Set date(s)

2. Set completion dates for key tasks

3. Monitor and revise periodically

IV. Select speakers

A. Brainstorm alternatives

1. Internal

2. External

3. Current users

4. Other experts

B. Review for suitability

1. Knowledge

2. Drawing power of name

3. Speaking ability

C. Invite speakers

1. Invite and confirm availability

Communication Skills

107 www.AgriMoon.Com

2. Invite fallback speakers, as needed

V. Select site

A. Review alternatives

1. Internal

2. Hotel

3. Conference center

B. Inspect site alternatives

1. Meeting space

2. Breakout space

3. Socializing space

4. Sleeping accommodations

5. Food service

6. Logistical support

7. Photocopying

8. Audiovisual equipment

9. Telephones

10. Message service

11. Rest rooms

12. Financial terms

13. Larger space for overcapacity

C. Negotiate terms and reserve space

VI. Mail invitations

A. Create invitation list

1. Brainstorm alternatives with planning team

Communication Skills

108 www.AgriMoon.Com

a) Internal

b) Purchased

c)Provided by speakers

2. Set targets, filter & combine databases

B. Determine registration sources

1. mail

2. fax

3. web

4. inbound phone center

5. outbound telemarketing center

C. Produce invitations

1. Draft copy

a) Describe theme

b) Describe benefits

c) Note who should attend

d) Describe schedule and content

e) Describe speakers

f) Describe logistics

(1) Time

(2) Place

(3) Fee and payment

(4) Registration/response form, including qualification questions

(5) Accommodations

(6) Directions

Communication Skills

109 www.AgriMoon.Com

Design, print and mail invitations and confirmation packages

g) Staged mail drops (as needed)

h) Fax and e-mail versions for follow-up

VII. Registration & confirmation

A. Monitor incoming registration

1. Ask qualification questions on all incoming telephone calls

2. Provide lists of registrants to sales reps weekly

3. Monitor registration for room capacity

B. Conduct outbound telemarketing

1. Ask qualification questions

2. Ask for referrals

3. Invitation ready to Fax or e-mail to referrals or if misplaced

C. Send Confirmation Packages

1. Include schedule, speakers bios, directions, mass transit, parking info

2. Sending options (mail, fax, e-mail)

D. Conduct outbound reminder calls

1. 24 to 48 hours prior to the event

2. Voicemail messages are OK

VIII. Order refreshments/meals

A. Select caterer/provider

B. Select menu

C. Place order

IX. Rehearse speakers

A. Schedule rehearsal

Communication Skills

110 www.AgriMoon.Com

B. Coach speakers

C. Determine need and arrange for audiovisual equipment

X. Prepare materials

A. Collect copies of speakers' exhibits

B. Collect speakers' bios

C. Collect white papers/article reprints

D. Prepare title page and table of contents

E. Duplicate and bind

F. Prepare seminar evaluation form, including qualification questions

XI. Arrange and check seminar logistics

A. Reception

B. Registration

C. Name tags

D. Coat room

E. Speaker introductions

F. Writing materials for attendees

G. Materials delivery

H. Seating arrangement

I. Water for speakers

J. Podium and lighting for speakers

K. Audiovisual equipment

L. Heating and air conditioning

M. Hosts and helpers from firm

XII. Conduct event

Communication Skills

111 www.AgriMoon.Com

A. Set up “Welcome Centre” to speed up registration & seating

B. Offer reward for turning in completed evaluation and qualification form

XIII. Post-event follow-up

A. ‘Thank You’ letters to attendees

B. ‘Thank You’ letters to speakers

C. Post-seminar telemarketing

D. Follow-up to harvest immediate prospects.

Communication Skills

112 www.AgriMoon.Com

Module 4. Oral communication and organizational skills

Lesson 18

PUBLIC SPEAKING

18.1 Introduction

The process of speaking to a group of people in a structured, deliberate manner intended to

inform, influence, or entertain the listeners is known as public speaking. It is closely allied to

"presenting", although the latter has more of a commercial connotation. In public speaking, there

are five basic elements, often expressed as "who is saying what to whom using what medium with

what effects?" The purpose of public speaking ranges from simply transmitting information, to

motivating people to act, to simply telling a story. Good orators should be able to change the

emotions of their listeners, not just inform them. Interpersonal communication and public

speaking have several components that embrace such things as motivational speaking,

leadership/personal development, business, customer service, large group communication, and

mass communication. Public speaking can be a powerful tool to use for purposes such as

motivation, influence, persuasion, informing, translation, or simply entertaining. A confident

speaker is more likely to use this as excitement and create effective speech, thus increasing their

overall ethos. Professional public speakers often engage in on-going training and education to

refine their craft. This may include seeking guidance to improve their speaking skills—such as

learning better story-telling techniques, for example, or learning how to effectively use humor as a

communication tool—as well as continuous research in their topic area of focus.

18.2 Importance of Good Public Speaking

Good public speaking skills also works at the time of the interview. It is compulsory to face an

interview before getting a new job. Interviewer will not only judge your personality but also your

communication and fluency in general. In this technology- savvy world, your presentation skills

and public speaking skills are also counted along with your basic qualification.

It is not that we only require public speaking skills to speak in front of audience or to give

lectures. Public speaking skills are an asset that is worth millions. These skills are counted not

only in our professional life but are also useful when a person is college go-getter. For example, a

student possessing good presentation skills and public speaking skills can do wonders in his

grading criteria. It is important to have clarity of delivery element, which is the base of any public

speaking skills because unclear speech and words will do any good in general speaking in front of

audiences. It is common sense that on whatever topic you are speaking, clarity is a must because

no one would be able to convey your message or whatever you are trying to speak. Unclear words

will only show that you have not prepared the subject or you are scared of speaking. Those who

cannot convey their ideas into words cannot transform their skills in professional life. Some

scholars just pass away with their ideas still left with them just because of the inability to

Communication Skills

113 www.AgriMoon.Com

transform ideas. It is true that these scholars were intelligent and conveyed their message through

writing. But the written scripts cannot convey the messages effectively compared to speaking.

They simply were not able to put their messages in front of the people of what they actually think.

They were unable to speak in front of the public. So, do not let go the importance of public

speaking skills.

People also think that public speaking skills and communication skills are not inter-related. But

they should know that they are inter-related to a certain degree of extent. However public speaking

is a broader term compared to communication skills, because people with good public speaking

skills have good communication skills. However, the vice-versa may not be correct. There are

many reasons behind why people with good communication cannot speak in public. The reason

behind why people are unable to speak in front of pubic is fear. Most of the people are scared and

have fear while speaking in front of the public. They get nervous and their heartbeat gets fast

resulting into unclear words and stammering. The common fear of public speaking is called gloss

phobia (or, informally, "stage fright").

There are numerous ways to enhance public speaking skills. No doubt, apart from the practice you

should have a great storage bank of vocabulary in your mind. You can practice public speaking

skills by speaking in front of your family members, friends and colleagues. Gradually, your

fluency will increase along with your vocabulary. Once you are able to come out of your fear, you

can be a good public speaker. Do not forget that possessing good public speaking skills is a big

asset.

18.3 Tips for Public Speaking

· Know the needs of your audience and match your contents to their needs.

· Know your material thoroughly.

· Put what you have to say in a logical sequence.

· Ensure your speech will be captivating to your audience as well as worth their time and

attention.

· Practice and rehearse your speech at home or where you can be at ease and comfortable,

in front of a mirror, your family, friends or colleagues.

· Use a tape-recorder and listen to yourself. Videotape your presentation and analyze it.

· Know what your strong and weak points are. Emphasize your strong points during your

presentation.

Communication Skills

114 www.AgriMoon.Com

· When you are presenting in front of an audience, you are performing as an actor is on

stage. How you are being perceived is very important. Dress appropriately for the

occasion.

· Be solemn if your topic is serious. Present the desired image to your audience.

· Look pleasant, enthusiastic, confident, proud, but not arrogant.

· Remain calm. Appear relaxed, even if you feel nervous.

· Speak slowly, enunciate clearly, and show appropriate emotion and feeling relating to

your topic.

· Establish rapport with your audience.

· Speak to the person farthest away from you to ensure your voice is loud enough to project

to the back of the room. Vary the tone of your voice and dramatize if necessary. If a

microphone is available, adjust and adapt your voice accordingly.

· Body language is important. Standing, walking or moving about with appropriate hand

gesture or facial expression is preferred to sitting down or standing still with head down

and reading from a prepared speech. Use audio-visual aids or props for enhancement if

appropriate and necessary.

· Master the use of presentation software such as PowerPoint well before your presentation.

Do not over-dazzle your audience with excessive use of animation, sound clips, or gaudy

colors which are inappropriate for your topic. Do not torture your audience by putting a

lengthy document in tiny print on an overhead and reading it out to them.

· Speak with conviction as if you really believe in what you are saying. Persuade your

audience effectively.

· The material you present orally should have the same ingredients as that which are

required for a written research paper, i.e. a logical progression from INTRODUCTION

to BODY (strong supporting arguments, accurate and up-to-date information)

to CONCLUSION.

· Do not read from notes for any extended length of time although it is quite acceptable to

glance at your notes infrequently. Speak loudly and clearly. Sound confident.

· Do not mumble. If you made an error, correct it, and continue. No need to make excuses

or apologize profusely.

Communication Skills

115 www.AgriMoon.Com

· Maintain sincere eye-contact with your audience. Use the 3-second method, e.g. look

straight into the eyes of a person in the audience for 3 seconds at a time. Have direct eye

contact with a number of people in the audience, and every now and then glance at the

whole audience while speaking. Use your eye-contact to make everyone in your audience

feel involved.

· Speak to your audience, listen to their questions, respond to their

reactions, adjust and adapt.

· If what you have prepared is obviously not getting across to your audience, change your

strategy mid-stream if you are well prepared to do so. Remember that communication is

the key to a successful presentation.

· If you are short of time, know what can be safely left out. If you have extra time, know

what could be effectively added. Always be prepared for the unexpected.

· Pause. Allow yourself and your audience a little time to reflect and think. Don't race

through your presentation and leave your audience, as well as yourself, feeling out of

breath.

· Add humor whenever appropriate and possible. Keep audience interested throughout your

entire presentation. Remember that an interesting speech makes time fly, but a boring

speech is always too long to endure even if the presentation time is the same.

· When using audio-visual aids to enhance your presentation, be sure all necessary

equipment is set up and in good working order prior to the presentation. If possible, have

an emergency backup system readily available. Check out the location ahead of time to

ensure seating arrangements for audience, whiteboard, blackboard, lighting, location of

projection screen, sound system, etc. are suitable for your presentation.

· Have handouts ready and give them out at the appropriate time. Tell audience ahead of

time that you will be giving out an outline of your presentation so that they will not waste

time taking unnecessary notes during your presentation.

· Know when to STOP talking. Use a timer or the microwave oven clock to time your

presentation when preparing it at home. Just as you don't use unnecessary words in your

written paper, you don't bore your audience with repetitious or unnecessary words in your

oral presentation. To end your presentation, summarize your main points in the same way

as you normally do in the CONCLUSION of a written paper.

· Remember, however, that there is a difference between spoken words appropriate for the

ear and formally written words intended for reading. Terminate your presentation with an

interesting remark or an appropriate punch line. Leave your listeners with a positive

Communication Skills

116 www.AgriMoon.Com

impression and a sense of completion. Do not belabor your closing remarks. Thank your

audience and sit down.

· Have the written portion of your assignment or report ready for your instructor if required.

The objectives of a public speaker's presentation can range from simply transmitting information,

to motivating people to act, to simply telling a story. People who speak publicly in a professional

capacity are paid a ‘speaking fee’. Professional public speakers may include ex-politicians, sports

stars and other public figures. In the case of high profile personalities, the sum can be

extraordinary.

Public speaking and oration are sometimes considered some of the most importantly valued skills

that an individual can possess. This skill can be used for almost anything. Most great speakers

have a natural ability to display the skills and effectiveness that can help to engage and move an

audience for whatever purpose. Language and rhetoric use are among two of the most important

aspects of public speaking and interpersonal communication. Having knowledge and

understanding of the use and purpose of communication can help to make a more effective

speaker communicate their message in an effective way. The speeches of politicians are often

widely analyzed by both their supporters and detractors.