

Business and Administrative Communication

Succeeding in Business Communication

Chapter Outline

Communication Ability = Promotability

"I'll Never Have to Write Because . . ."

Communicating on the Job

The Cost of Communication

Costs of Poor Communication

- Wasted Time
- Wasted Efforts
- Lost Goodwill
- Legal Problems

Benefits of Improving Communication

Criteria for Effective Messages

Using Technology for Communication

Following Conventions

Understanding and Analyzing Business Communication Situations

How to Solve Business Communication Problems

- Gather Knowledge and Brainstorm Solutions.
- Answer the Five Questions for Analysis.
- Organize Your Information to Fit Your Audiences, Your Purposes, and the Situation.
- Make Your Document Visually Inviting.
- Revise Your Draft to Create a Friendly, Businesslike, Positive Style.
- Edit Your Draft for Standard English; Double-Check Names and Numbers.
- Use the Response You Get to Plan Future Messages.

How to Use This Book

Summary of Key Points

A Communication Recovery from Disaster



In 2009 and 2010 the Toyota Motor Corporation recalled more than 8 million cars and trucks after highly publicized incidents of accelerator pedal failure. In chilling accidents replayed on news reports and the Internet, Toyota accelerator pedals became stuck, causing serious—and sometimes fatal—crashes.

Toyota, the world's largest automaker, had built its business on customer trust and loyalty by providing consistent quality in its cars. But now, in addition to the financial costs of the pedal recalls and the government investigations, the company faced a public relations disaster: customers no longer trusted Toyota to provide safe vehicles.

The company responded with a carefully designed communication campaign to restore customer trust in the Toyota brand. On February 2, 2010, Jim Lentz, Toyota's president and chief operating officer in the United States, sent a letter to all Toyota customers with a personal apology and a commitment to correct the problems. This letter kicked off a publicity campaign of personal and open letters, newspaper and magazine advertisements, and television commercials that all

focused on how Toyota was taking responsibility and improving its operations.

Every company relies on communication with its customers to build trust. When crises hit, as in the case of Toyota's recalls, communication becomes even more important. The quality of written and spoken messages could make the difference between a company's failure and recovery after a crisis. In the late 1990s, Ford Motor Company and the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company were investigated for a series of rollover accidents involving blown-out tires. After first denying the problems and then blaming each other, both companies took years to recover from the crisis—they were still dealing with recalls and complaints in

“For Toyota, good communication helped the company recover from the costly and embarrassing recalls.”

2006, more than six years after the initial problems.

By contrast, Toyota's straightforward apology and aggressive communication in many forms of media helped restore its image quickly. In fact, by December 2010, Toyota announced that it had “regained the number one spot as the most-considered automobile brand among new-car shoppers.” For Toyota, good communication helped the company recover from the costly and embarrassing recalls.

Source: Toyota, “2010 Year-End Progress Report: Major Changes Help Toyota Put Even More Focus on Its Customers,” news release, December 20, 2010, <http://www.toyota.com/about/news/corporate/2010/12/21-1-Progress.html>; and Jim Lentz, “Open Letter to Toyota Customers,” Toyota, February 2, 2010, <http://www.toyota.com/recall/v2/pdf/ToyotaCustomerLetter.pdf>.

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will know

- LO 1-1** Why you need to be able to communicate well.
- LO 1-2** What the costs of communication are.
- LO 1-3** What the costs of poor communication are.
- LO 1-4** What role conventions play in business communication.
- LO 1-5** How to solve business communication problems.



Communication Is Key to Pay

How can you make more money at your job?

The number one way, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, is to “listen to your boss.” Specifically, do the work your boss wants done, follow directions, work hard, and let your boss know what you have accomplished. Employees who follow this method collect raises at a rate of 9.9%, while average performers receive 3.6% and poor performers get 1.3%, according to one survey.

Just as important is to make sure you ask your manager to define expectations. Don’t assume you know what your manager wants. Make sure you understand what your manager considers an outstanding performance in your position.

Adapted from Perri Capell, “10 Ways to Get the Most Pay out of Your Job,” *Wall Street Journal*, September 18, 2006, R1.

The amount of business communication is staggering. The U.S. Postal Service processed 177 billion pieces of mail in 2009, most of which were business communications. Merchants send American consumers 20 billion catalogs annually, through the mail and e-mail. When you consider that most of your business communications are electronic or oral, you can start to imagine the staggering number of business communications that people compose, hear, and read. As one small piece of that, the head of Best Buy says his company handles more than 1.5 billion customer interactions annually. The Radicati Group, a technology market research firm, projects that 294 billion e-mail messages were sent daily in 2010, of which 89.1% were spam.¹

Business depends on communication. People must communicate to plan products and services; hire, train, and motivate workers; coordinate manufacturing and delivery; persuade customers to buy; and bill them for the sale. Indeed, for many businesses and nonprofit and government organizations, the “product” is information or services rather than something tangible. Information and services are created and delivered by communication. In every organization, communication is the way people get work done.

Communication takes many forms: face-to-face or phone conversations, informal meetings, presentations, e-mail messages, letters, memos, reports, blogs, tweets, text messaging, and websites. All of these methods are forms of **verbal communication**, or communication that uses words. **Nonverbal communication** does not use words. Pictures, computer graphics, and company logos are nonverbal. Interpersonal nonverbal signals include how people sit at meetings, how large offices are, and how long someone keeps a visitor waiting.

COMMUNICATION ABILITY = PROMOTABILITY LO 1-1

Even in your first job, you’ll communicate. You’ll listen to instructions; you’ll ask questions; you may solve problems with other workers in teams. Even “entry-level” jobs require high-level skills in reasoning, mathematics, and communicating. As a result, communication ability consistently ranks first among the qualities that employers look for in college graduates.² Warren Buffet told Columbia Business School students that they could increase their value 50% by learning communication skills, and that many of them did not yet have those skills.³

As more people compete for fewer jobs, the ones who will build successful careers are those who can communicate well with customers and colleagues. Robert O. Best, Chief Information Officer of UNUMProvident, an insurance corporation, cautions, “You used to be able to get away with being a technical nerd. . . . Those days are over.”⁴

The National Commission on Writing surveyed 120 major corporations, employing nearly 8 million workers. Almost 70% of respondents said that at

least two-thirds of their employees have specific writing responsibilities included in their position descriptions. These writing responsibilities include:

- E-mail (100% of employees)
- Presentations with visuals, such as PowerPoint slides (100%)
- Memos and correspondence (70%)
- Formal reports (62%)
- Technical reports (59%)

Respondents also noted that communication functions were least likely to be outsourced.⁵

Because communication skills are so important, good communicators earn more. Research has shown that among people with two- or four-year degrees, workers in the top 20% of writing ability earn, on average, more than three times as much as workers whose writing falls into the worst 20%.⁶ Jeffrey Gitomer, business consultant and author of best-selling business books, says there are three secrets to getting known in the business world; all of them are communication skills: writing, e-zining (he reaches over 130,000 subscribers each week), and speaking. He states, “Writing leads to wealth.”⁷

In spite of the frequency of on-the-job writing and the importance of overall communication skills, employers do not find college students well skilled in writing. A survey of employers conducted on behalf of the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that writing was one of the weakest skills of college graduates.⁸ In another large survey, respondents noted that a lack of “effective business communication skills appears to be a major stumbling block among new [job] entrants—even at the college level. Spelling errors, improper use of grammar, and the misuse of words were common in written reports, PowerPoint presentations, and e-mail messages.”⁹

“I’LL NEVER HAVE TO WRITE BECAUSE . . .”

Some students think that an administrative assistant will do their writing, that they can use form letters if they do have to write, that only technical skills matter, or that they’ll call or text rather than write. Each of these claims is fundamentally flawed.

Claim 1: An administrative assistant will do all my writing.

Reality: Because of automation and restructuring, job responsibilities in offices have changed. Today, many offices do not have typing pools. Most secretaries have become administrative assistants with their own complex tasks such as training, research, and database management for several managers. Managers are likely to take care of their own writing, data entry, and phone calls.

Claim 2: I’ll use form letters or templates when I need to write.

Reality: A form letter is designed to cover only routine situations, many of which are computerized or outsourced. Also, the higher you rise, the more frequently you’ll face situations that aren’t routine, that demand creative solutions.

Claim 3: I’m being hired as an accountant, not a writer.

Reality: Almost every entry-level professional or managerial job requires you to write e-mail messages, speak to small groups, write documents, and present your work for annual reviews. People who do these things well are likely to be promoted beyond the entry level. Employees in jobs as diverse as firefighters, security professionals, and construction project managers are all being told to polish their writing and speaking skills.¹⁰

Claim 4: I’ll just pick up the phone.



Put It in Writing

Raymond Dreyfack credits his writing skills for his successful career at Faberge Perfumes. As he worked in supervisory and management jobs, he kept his eye open for opportunities to solve problems and improve performance. Then, when he had an idea, he wrote a memo to his boss.

Why a memo? The written format forced Dreyfack to organize his initial idea clearly and concisely. Editing memos trained Dreyfack to consider whether his messages reflected the reader’s interests and viewpoints. The written format also gave Dreyfack’s boss time to consider the idea and reflect on its merits. (If you spring an idea on your boss in the hallway, he or she might find it easier to blurt out a *no* than to give the idea fair consideration.)

Adapted from Raymond Dreyfack, “The Write Way to Jump-Start Your Career,” *Supervision* 65, no. 4 (April 2004): 13–15.

Reality: Important phone calls require follow-up letters, memos, or e-mail messages. People in organizations put things in writing to make themselves visible, to create a record, to convey complex data, to make things convenient for the reader, to save money, and to convey their own messages more effectively. “If it isn’t in writing, it didn’t happen” is a maxim at many companies. Writing is an essential way to record agreements, to make yourself visible, and to let your accomplishments be known.

COMMUNICATING ON THE JOB

Communication—oral, nonverbal, and written—goes to both internal and external audiences. **Internal audiences** are other people in the same organization: subordinates, superiors, peers. **External audiences** are people outside the organization: customers, suppliers, distributors, unions, stockholders, potential employees, trade associations, special interest groups, government agencies, the press, and the general public.

People in organizations produce a large variety of documents. Figures 1.1 and 1.2 list a few of the specific documents produced at Ryerson, a company that fabricates and sells steel, aluminum, other metals, and plastics to a wide variety of industrial clients and has sales offices across the United States, Canada, and China.

All of the documents in Figures 1.1 and 1.2 have one or more of the three basic purposes of organizational writing: to inform, to request or persuade, and to build goodwill. In fact, most messages have multiple purposes. When you answer a question, for instance, you’re informing, but you also want to build goodwill by suggesting that you’re competent and perceptive and that your answer is correct and complete.

THE COST OF COMMUNICATION LO 1-2

Writing costs money. The annual Social Security statements cost \$70 million a year to mail, even with huge economies of scale.¹¹ The cost does not include employee time in the writing and processing, a major expense.



Business communication involves paper documents, electronic communications, and most of all, interpersonal abilities.

Figure 1.1 Internal Documents Produced in One Organization

Document	Description of document	Purpose(s) of document
Transmittal	Memo accompanying document, telling why it's being forwarded to the receiver	Inform; persuade reader to read document; build image and goodwill
Monthly or quarterly report	Report summarizing profitability, productivity, and problems during period. Used to plan activity for next month or quarter	Inform; build image and goodwill (report is accurate, complete; writer understands company)
Policy and procedure bulletin	Statement of company policies and instructions (e.g., how to enter orders, how to run fire drills)	Inform; build image and goodwill (procedures are reasonable)
Request to deviate from policy and procedure bulletin	Persuasive memo arguing that another approach is better for a specific situation than the standard approach	Persuade; build image and goodwill (request is reasonable; writer seeks good of company)
Performance appraisal	Evaluation of an employee's performance	Inform; persuade employee to improve
Memo of congratulations	Congratulations to employees who have won awards, been promoted	Build goodwill

Document cycling processes also increase costs. In many organizations, all external documents must be approved before they go out. A major document may **cycle** from writer to superior to writer to another superior to writer again 10 or more times before final approval. Longer documents can involve large teams of people and take months to write.

Large organizations handle so much paper that even small changes to their communication practices amount to millions of dollars. Through better use of technology, InterContinental Hotels Group cut communications costs by \$2.6 million in two years. Xerox Global Services Europe touts contractual annual savings of up to 1 million Euros for organizations with 4,000 or more employees who switch to its printing services.¹²

Figure 1.2 External Documents Produced in One Organization

Document	Description of document	Purpose(s) of document
Quotation	Letter giving price for a specific product or service	Inform; build goodwill (price is reasonable)
Claims adjustment	Letter granting or denying customer request to be given credit for defective goods	Inform; build goodwill
Job description	Description of qualifications and duties of job. Used for performance appraisals, salaries, and hiring	Inform; persuade good candidates to apply; build goodwill (job duties match level, pay)
10-K report	Report filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission detailing financial information	Inform
Annual report	Report to stockholders summarizing financial information for year	Inform; persuade stockholders to retain stock and others to buy; build goodwill (company is a good corporate citizen)
Thank-you letter	Letter to suppliers, customers, or other people who have helped individuals or the company	Build goodwill



Hurricane Katrina Storms Communication Lines

Hurricane Katrina caused massive destruction to the Gulf Coast. During the storm, communication failures among local, state, and federal officials left their own harm.

The main communication problems included these issues:

- Lack of communication among responding organizations: FEMA claimed it was days before they knew about the thousands of people in the New Orleans Convention Center.
- Incompatible communication systems: The lack of coordination and communication caused by these systems put even more lives at risk by delaying assistance where it was most needed. Some rescuers in helicopters were unable to communicate with rescuers in boats. Some units of the National Guard actually used runners to communicate.
- Inconsistent messages: State and local agency teams received conflicting messages which led to confusion.

The massive communication problems led to an entire chapter on communication in the U.S. House of Representatives report on the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

Adapted from U.S. House of Representatives, *A Failure of Initiative: Final Report of the Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina*, 109th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, DC, February 15, 2006), <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/katrina/report/mainreport.pdf>.



Communication failures increased the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Good communication is worth every minute it takes and every penny it costs. A study of 335 U.S. and Canadian companies with an average of 13,000 employees each and median annual revenues of \$1.8 billion found that those companies who best communicated with their employees enjoyed “greater employee engagement and commitment, higher retention and productivity, and—ultimately—better financial performance. . . .

- They boasted a 19.4% higher market premium (the degree to which the company’s market value exceeds the cost of its assets).
- They were 4.5 times more likely to report high levels of employee engagement.
- They were 20% more likely to report lower turnover rates.”¹³

Another significant cost of communication is e-mail storage. In addition to the exponential increase in frequency, e-mails are also growing in size. Furthermore, many of them come with attachments. And businesses are storing much of this huge load on their servers. But the cost of the hardware is only some of the storage cost; a larger cost is administering and maintaining the archives. These costs include downtime when storage systems crash and time spent retrieving lost or corrupted messages.¹⁴

COSTS OF POOR COMMUNICATION **LO 1-3**

Poor communication can cost billions of dollars. We all can think of examples.

- Hurricane Katrina caused billions of dollars of damage—damage that was worsened by horrendous miscommunications between federal, state, and private relief organizations (see the sidebar “Hurricane Katrina Storms Communication Lines ” on this page).
- The space industry has had billion-dollar mistakes—mistakes where miscommunications were major contributing factors as confirmed by official government investigations (see sidebars on pages 9 and 12).
- Ford and Bridgestone Firestone’s failure to coordinate the design of the Ford Explorer and its tires cost them billions of dollars. In hindsight, people agree the mistakes could have been prevented if the different teams involved had communicated more effectively with each other.¹⁵

- Internal and external communication problems have contributed greatly to delays in Boeing's 787 Dreamliner, delays which have cost Boeing billions in penalties and have caused some customers to switch their orders to Airbus.¹⁶
- From figures provided by the members of the Business Roundtable, the National Commission on Writing calculated the annual private sector costs of writing training at \$3.1 billion.¹⁷ These figures do not include the retail and wholesale trade businesses.
- Even part of the subprime mortgage collapse, which helped spark a global recession, has been connected to poor communication. Documents supposedly explaining some of the riskier investments were so convoluted that even most experts could not understand them. Goldman Sachs paid a \$550 million fine to settle allegations that it misled investors in mortgage bonds.¹⁸

Costs of poor communication are not just financial. People died in the rollovers of Ford Explorers, noted above. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, inaccurate media reports of looting convinced some residents to stay to protect their property instead of evacuating; false reports of shootings at helicopters resulted in some states refusing to send trained emergency workers. According to the presidential commission, inadequate communication among British Petroleum, Halliburton, and Transocean, as well as within their own companies, was a contributing factor in BP's massive oil spill, which caused so much damage, as well as fatalities, in the Gulf of Mexico.¹⁹

Not all communication costs are so dramatic, however. When communication isn't as good as it could be, you and your organization pay a price in wasted time, wasted effort, lost goodwill, and legal problems.

Wasted Time

Bad writing takes longer to read as we struggle to understand what we're reading. How quickly we can do this is determined by the difficulty of the subject matter and by the document's organization and writing style.

Second, bad writing may need to be rewritten. Poorly written documents frequently cycle to other people for help.

Third, ineffective communication may obscure ideas so that discussions and decisions are needlessly drawn out.

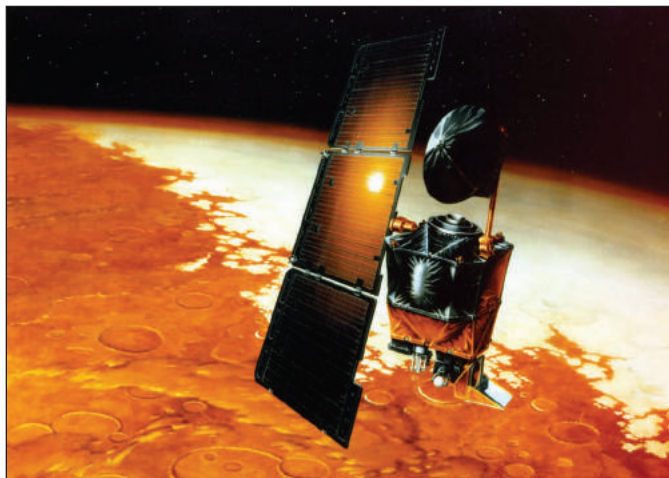


Business Communication Lessons from Mars

The *Mars Climate Orbiter* spacecraft lost contact with NASA mission control just after it arrived at Mars. A subsequent investigation revealed that the main problem was a minor software programming error caused by communication errors.

Like many business projects, the *Mars Climate Orbiter* involved a wide range of people in a range of locations. The programmers who wrote the software that controlled the spacecraft's engines worked in Great Britain, and used metric measurements in their calculations, while the engineers who made the satellite's engines worked in the United States, and used English measurements. Both teams assumed that they were using the same measurement standards, neither team made any attempt to check, and no one else caught the error. With that failure, NASA lost a \$125 million satellite and years of effort, while gaining a major public embarrassment.

Adapted from NASA MCO Mission Failure Mishap Investigation Board, *Mars Climate Orbiter Mishap Investigation Board Phase I Report*, November 10, 1999, ftp://ftp.hq.nasa.gov/pub/pao/reports/1999/MCO_report.pdf.



When the *Mars Climate Orbiter* spacecraft crashed as a result of poor communication, the United States lost a \$125 million satellite and years of effort.



Poor Customer Service Becomes Costly

A customer called AOL to cancel his service. The phone call lasted 21 minutes, including automated answering, waiting in a queue, and a five-minute conversation with a customer service representative. During the conversation, the customer service representative refused to comply with the customer's request to close his account despite 21 requests to "cancel" his service and approximately 9 "I-don't-need-it, I-don't-want-it, and I-don't-use-it" statements. To express his dissatisfaction, the customer posted the recorded conversation on the Web as a digital "documentary," which was heard by 300,000 visitors and highlighted on the *Today* show on NBC. Following the post, an AOL executive vice president e-mailed employees notifying them of the post and warning them that any of their customer interactions could be similarly posted. In addition, because of similar earlier violations, AOL agreed to pay a fine of \$1.25 million and to use a third-party verification system.

Another customer service incident occurred when a customer welcomed a Comcast technician into his home to replace a faulty modem. When the technician called the central office, he was placed on hold and proceeded to fall asleep on the couch after an hour of waiting. In response, the customer recorded a short documentary, "A Comcast Technician Sleeping on My Couch" and posted it to YouTube where 500,000 viewers watched the customer service blunder.

Adapted from Randall Stross, "AOL Said, 'If You Leave Me I'll Do Something Crazy,'" *New York Times*, July 2, 2006, E3.

Fourth, unclear or incomplete messages may require the receiver to gather more information and some receivers may not bother to do so; they may make a wrong decision or refuse to act.

Wasted Efforts

Ineffective messages don't get results. A receiver who has to guess what the sender means may guess wrong. A reader who finds a letter or memo unconvincing or insulting simply won't do what the message asks.

One company sent out past-due bills with the following language:

Per our conversation, enclosed are two copies of the above-mentioned invoice. Please review and advise. Sincerely, . . .

The company wanted money, not advice, but it didn't say so. The company had to write third and fourth reminders. It waited for its money, lost interest on it—and kept writing letters.

Lost Goodwill

Whatever the literal content of the words, every letter, e-mail, or report serves either to build or to undermine the image the reader has of the writer.

Part of building a good image is taking the time to write correctly. Even organizations that have adopted casual dress still expect writing to appear professional and to be free from typos and grammatical errors.

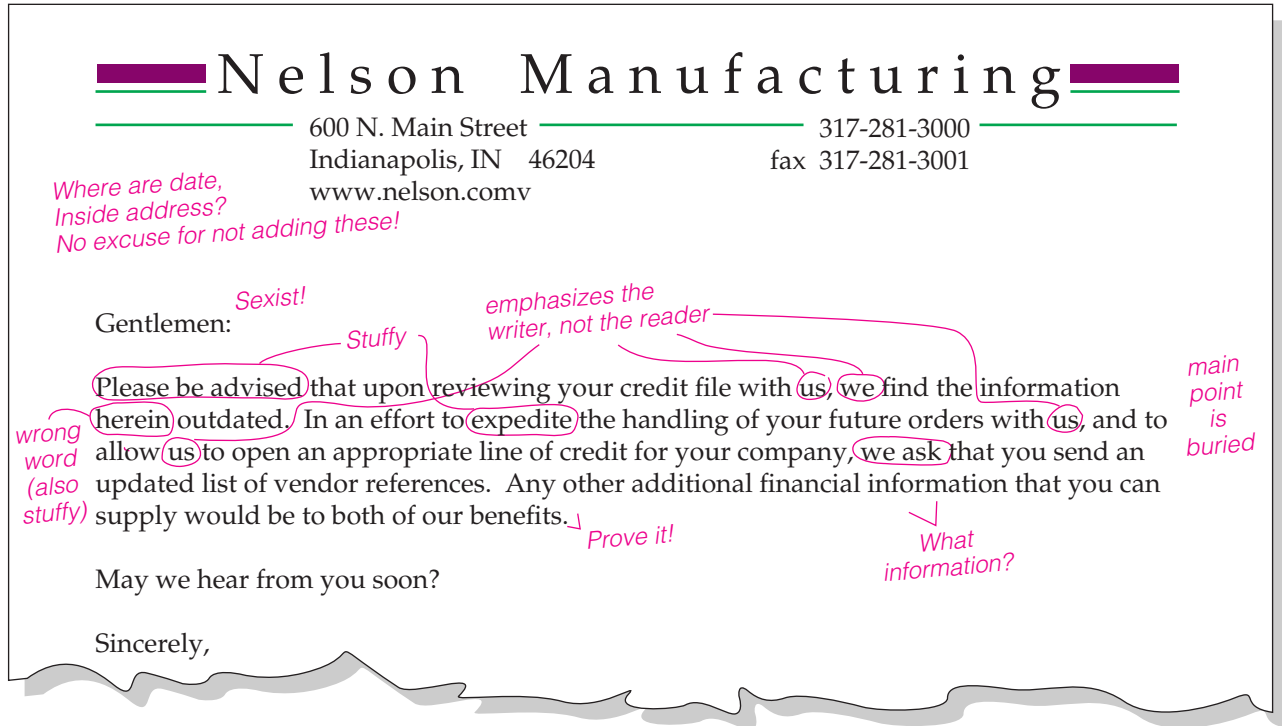
Messages can also create a poor image because of poor audience analysis and inappropriate style. The form letter printed in Figure 1.3 failed because it was stuffy and selfish. The comments in red show specific problems with the letter.

- **The language is stiff and legalistic.** Note the sexist "Gentlemen:" and obsolete "Please be advised," "herein," and "expedite."
- **The tone is selfish.** The letter is written from the writer's point of view; there are no benefits for the reader. (The writer says there are, but without a shred of evidence, the claim isn't convincing.)
- **The main point is buried** in the middle of the long first paragraph. The middle is the least emphatic part of a paragraph.
- **The request is vague.** How many references does the supplier want? Are only vendor references OK, or would other credit references, like banks, work too? Is the name of the reference enough, or is it necessary also to specify the line of credit, the average balance, the current balance, the years credit has been established, or other information? What "additional financial information" does the supplier want? Annual reports? Bank balance? Tax returns? The request sounds like an invasion of privacy, not a reasonable business practice.
- **Words are misused** (*herein for therein*), suggesting either an ignorant writer or one who doesn't care enough about the subject and the reader to use the right word.

You will learn more about tone in Chapter 3 and language in Chapter 5.

Legal Problems

Poor communication choices can lead to legal problems for individuals and organizations. The news is full of examples. Domino's pizza, which promised to deliver pizza to your door in 30 minutes, dropped that promise after a lawsuit, involving an accident with a Domino's delivery person, claimed that the

Figure 1.3 A Form Letter That Annoyed Customers

pledge led to accidents. Domino's settled for a sum in the seven-figure range, but dropped the promise because the company feared other lawsuits.²⁰

Individual communications can also have legal consequences. Steamy text messages revealed an affair between Detroit mayor Kwame Kilpatrick and one of his aides; both the messages and the affair contradicted testimony the mayor had given under oath. Consequences included loss of office, jail time, and a \$1 million fine.

US Representative Mark Foley resigned after his instant messages to House pages were published. E-mails have helped bring about the fall of many executives, including

- Senior Enron executives
- Boeing CEO Harry Stonecipher
- Credit Suisse First Boston banker Frank Quattrone
- Hewlett-Packard Chairperson Patricia Dunn
- Walmart Vice Presidents Julie Roehm and Sean Womack
- South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford

One San Francisco law firm says that 70% of their routine evidence now comes from e-mails.²¹

In particular, letters, memos, e-mails, and instant messages create legal obligations for organizations. When a lawsuit is filed against an organization, the lawyers for the plaintiffs have the right to subpoena documents written by employees of the organization. These documents may then be used as evidence, for instance, that an employer fired an employee without adequate notice or that a company knew about a safety defect but did nothing to correct it.

These documents may also be used as evidence in contexts the writer did not intend. This means that a careless writer can create obligations that the organization does not mean to assume. For instance, a letter from a manager



Columbia Disaster Communication Failures

In 2003, the *Columbia* space shuttle disintegrated on re-entry, resulting in the deaths of all seven crew members. The independent research team investigating the disaster found communication problems to be the root cause of the accident. The researchers concluded that organizational barriers prevented effective communication of critical safety information and restrained communication of professionals.

The report identified the following communication problems:

- Communication flow between managers and subordinates: Managers did not heed the concerns of the engineers regarding debris impacts on the shuttle. Throughout the project, communication did not flow effectively up to or down from program managers.
- Circulation of information among teams: Although engineers were concerned about landing problems and therefore conducted experiments on landing procedures, the concerns were not relayed to managers or to system and technology experts who could have addressed the concerns.
- Communication sources: Managers received a large amount of their information from informal channels, which blocked relevant opinions and conclusions from engineers.

Adapted from Columbia Accident Investigation Board, *Report of Columbia Accident Investigation Board, Volume 1*, August 2003, http://www.nasa.gov/columbia/home/CAIB_Vol1.html.

telling a scout troop they may not visit a factory floor because it is too dangerous could be used in a worker's compensation suit.²²

Careful writers and speakers think about the larger social context in which their words may appear. What might those words mean to other people in the field? What might they mean to a judge and jury?

BENEFITS OF IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

Better communication helps you to

- **Save time.** Eliminate the time now taken to rewrite badly written materials. Reduce reading time, since comprehension is easier. Reduce the time taken asking, "What did you mean?"
- **Make your efforts more effective.** Increase the number of requests that are answered positively and promptly—on the first request. Present your points—to other people in your organization; to clients, customers, and suppliers; to government agencies; to the public—more forcefully.
- **Communicate your points more clearly.** Reduce the misunderstandings that occur when the audience has to supply missing or unclear information. Make the issues clear, so they can be handled.
- **Build goodwill.** Build a positive image of your organization. Build an image of yourself as a knowledgeable, intelligent, capable person.

CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

Good business and administrative communication meets five basic criteria: it's clear, complete, and correct; it saves the audience's time; and it builds goodwill.

- **It's clear.** The meaning the audience gets is the meaning the communicator intended. The audience doesn't have to guess.
- **It's complete.** All of the audience questions are answered. The audience has enough information to evaluate the message and act on it.
- **It's correct.** All of the information in the message is accurate. The message is free from errors in spelling, grammar, word choice, and sentence structure.
- **It saves the audience's time.** The style, organization, and visual or aural impact of the message help the audience read or hear, understand, and act on the information as quickly as possible.
- **It builds goodwill.** The message presents a positive image of the communicator and his or her organization. It treats the receiver as a person, not a number. It cements a good relationship between the communicator and the receiver.

Whether a message meets these five criteria depends on the interactions among the communicator, the audience, the purposes of the message, and the situation. No single set of words will work in all possible situations.

USING TECHNOLOGY FOR COMMUNICATION

In this technological age, different forms of media are encompassing all parts of life. For instance, in 2010, the average American spent 158 hours a month watching television, accounting for approximately half their leisure time.

They also spent 25 hours a month using the Internet, which has become the third most popular news platform, behind only local and national television news. The Internet is now ahead of radio and national and local print newspapers as a news source. However, the greatest use of Internet time is for social networking. Personal e-mail has fallen out of second place to be replaced by gaming.²³

Technology has even gripped the highest office in the country. President Obama battled with U.S. intelligence agencies to keep his BlackBerry when he took office; he is the first president in the history of our country to use e-mail while in office.

If the highest office in the land demands technology, the business world is no exception. When it comes to technology, business continually embraces all forms that help increase productivity and save money. Almost all office employees are expected to know how to navigate through the web and to use word processing, e-mail, spreadsheet, database, and presentation software. Newer forms of technology, especially social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and texting, are also becoming prominent in business offices. Chapter 9 will discuss communication technologies in more detail.

FOLLOWING CONVENTIONS LO 1-4

Conventions are widely accepted practices you routinely encounter. For example, you wouldn't write an analytical report to your boss who only wanted a "yes" or "no" on whether you could make the scheduled meeting with potential clients. You would send the more appropriate and conventional response—an e-mail.

Similarly, common business communications have conventions. These conventions help people recognize, produce, and interpret different kinds of communications. Each chapter in this textbook presents conventions of traditional business documents. For example, Chapter 13 discusses conventions of job application letters, Chapter 11 highlights conventions of persuasive messages, and Chapter 19 talks about conventions of delivering oral presentations.

Conventions change over time. Consider how the conventions governing movies and television have changed just during your lifetime, allowing more explicit sex and violence. Similarly, conventions change in business. Paper memos have mostly given way to e-mails, and some e-mails are being replaced by text messaging.

The key to using conventions effectively, in spite of their changing nature, is to remember that they always need to fit the rhetorical situation—they always need to be adjusted for the particular audience, context, and purpose. For instance, Chapter 10 provides guidelines on constructing negative messages. However, you will need to adapt these guidelines based on the way your organization presents their negative messages. Some organizations will use a more formal tone than others; some present negative news bluntly, while others ease into it more gently.

Since every organization will be unique in the conventions they follow, the information presented in this text will provide a basic understanding of common elements for particular genres. You will always need to adjust the basics for your particular needs.

The best way to learn conventions in a particular workplace is to see what other workers are doing. How do they communicate with each other? Do their practices change when they communicate with superiors? What kinds of letters and memos do they send? How much do they e-mail? What tone is preferred? Close observation will help your communications fit in with the conventions of your employer.



Wiiio's laws

Professor Osmo A. Wiiio is a Finnish expert on communication. He has formulated a series of communication laws, expressed humorously but with serious content. These are some of his laws:

1. Communication usually fails, except by accident. (This is the fundamental one among Wiiio's laws.)
2. If a message can be interpreted in several ways, it will be interpreted in a manner that maximizes the damage.
3. There is always someone who knows better than you what you meant with your message.
4. The more we communicate, the worse communication succeeds.
5. In mass communication, the important thing is not how things are but how they seem to be.

Can you think of examples supporting Wiiio's laws?

Laws are quoted from Osmo A. Wiiio, "How All Human Communication Fails, Except by Accident, or a Commentary of Wiiio's Laws," last updated July 4, 2010, <http://www.cs.tut.fi/~jkorpela/wiiio.html>.

UNDERSTANDING AND ANALYZING BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SITUATIONS

The best communicators are conscious of the context in which they communicate; they're aware of options.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- **What's at stake—to whom?** Think not only about your own needs but also about the concerns your boss and your audience will have. Your message will be most effective if you think of the entire organizational context—and the larger context of shareholders, customers, and regulators. When the stakes are high, you'll need to take into account people's feelings as well as objective facts.
- **Should you send a message?** Sometimes, especially when you're new on the job, silence is the most tactful response. But be alert for opportunities to learn, to influence, to make your case.
- **What channel should you use?** Paper documents and presentations are formal and give you considerable control over the message. E-mail, texting, tweeting, phone calls, and stopping by someone's office are less formal. Oral channels are better for group decision making, allow misunderstandings to be cleared up more quickly, and seem more personal. Sometimes you may need more than one message, in more than one channel.
- **What should you say?** Content for a message may not be obvious. How detailed should you be? Should you repeat information that the audience already knows? The answers will depend on the kind of message, your purposes, audiences, and the corporate culture. And you'll have to figure these things out for yourself, without detailed instructions.
- **How should you say it?** How you arrange your ideas—what comes first, second, and last—and the words you use shape the audience's response to what you say.

HOW TO SOLVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS LO 1-5

When you're faced with a business communication problem, you need to develop a solution that will both solve the organization's problem and meet the psychological needs of the people involved. The strategies in this section will help you solve the problems in this book. Almost all of these strategies can also be applied to problems you encounter on the job. Use this process to create good messages:

- Gather knowledge and brainstorm solutions.
- Answer the five questions for analysis in Figure 1.4.
- Organize your information to fit your audiences, your purposes, and the context.
- Make your document visually inviting.
- Revise your draft to create a friendly, businesslike, positive style.
- Edit your draft for standard spelling, punctuation, and grammar; double-check names and numbers.
- Use the response you get to plan future messages.

Figure 1.4 Questions for Analysis

1. Who is (are) your audience(s)?
2. What are your purposes in communicating?
3. What information must your message include?
4. How can you build support for your position? What reasons or benefits will your audience find convincing?
5. What aspects of the total situation may be relevant?

Gather Knowledge and Brainstorm Solutions.

Problem solving usually starts by gathering knowledge. What are the facts? What can you infer from the information you're given? What additional information might be helpful? Where could you get it? What emotional complexities are involved? This information will usually start to suggest some solutions, and you should brainstorm other solutions. In all but the very simplest problems, there are multiple possible solutions. The first one you think of may not be best. Consciously develop several solutions. Then measure them against your audience and purposes: Which solution is likely to work best?

You will learn more about gathering knowledge in Chapter 15 and more about brainstorming in Chapter 8.

Answer the Five Questions for Analysis.

The five questions in Figure 1.4 help you analyze your audience(s), purpose(s), and the organizational context.

1. Who is (are) your audience(s)?

What audience characteristics are relevant for this particular message? If you are writing or speaking to more than one person, how do the people in your audience differ? How much does your audience know about your topic? How will they respond to your message? What objections might they have?

Some characteristics of your audience will be irrelevant; focus on ones that matter *for this message*. Whenever you address several people or a group, try to identify the economic, cultural, or situational differences that may affect how various subgroups may respond to what you have to say. For a more complete audience analysis, see the questions in Chapter 2.

2. What are your purposes in communicating?

What must this message do to meet the organization's needs? What must it do to meet your own needs? What do you want your audience to do? To think or feel? List all your purposes, major and minor.

Even in a simple message, you may have several related purposes: to announce a new policy, to make the audience aware of the policy's provisions and requirements, and to have them feel that the policy is a good one, that the organization cares about its employees, and that you are a competent communicator and manager.

3. What information must your message include?

Make a list of the points that must be included; check your draft to make sure you include them all. To include information without emphasizing it, put it in the middle of a paragraph or document and present it as briefly as possible.

4. How can you build support for your position? What reasons or benefits will your audience find convincing?

Brainstorm to develop reasons for your decision, the logic behind your argument, and possible benefits to the audience if they do as you ask. Reasons and audience benefits do not have to be monetary. Making the



Just a Deadline; No Directions

School assignments are spelled out, sometimes even in writing. In the workplace, workers are less likely to get details about what a document should include. The transition can be disorienting. One intern reported, "I was less prepared than I thought. . . . I was so used to professors basically telling you what they want from you that I expected to be, if not taught, then told, what exactly it was that they wanted these brochures to accomplish. . . . They have not taken the time to discuss it—they just put things on my desk with only a short note telling me when they needed it done. No directions or comments were included."

Intern's quotation from Chris M. Anson and L. Lee Forsberg, "Moving Beyond the Academic Community," *Written Communication* 7, no. 3 (April 1990): 211.



Classroom versus Workplace Contexts

Professors Aviva Freedman and Christine Adam found in a research study that students have to relearn ways to acquire basic knowledge when trying to mesh with their employer's organization once they enter the workforce.

School is structured to help students learn. On the other hand, the workplace is structured to get results, not help the learner/new employee. New college graduate hires frequently don't understand the context of communications. For example, new employees have to figure out which co-workers are trustworthy and can be a guide while not pushing away others.

Moreover, the roles of participants in each situation are different. While school settings have an instructor as the voice of authority, workplace settings are comprised of people with varying degrees of relevant and useful knowledge.

What has been your experience with internships? Have you noticed other ways in which workplace settings differ from classroom expectations?

Adapted from Aviva Freedman and Christine Adam, "Learning to Write Professionally: 'Situating Learning' and the Transition from University to Professional Discourse," *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 10, no. 4 (October 1996): 395–427.

audience's job easier or more pleasant is a good benefit. In an informative or persuasive message, identify multiple audience benefits. In your message, use those that you can develop most easily and effectively.

Be sure the benefits are adapted to your audience. Many people do not identify closely with their organizations; the fact that the organization benefits from a policy will help the individual only if the saving or profit is passed directly on to the employees. Instead, savings and profits are often eaten up by returns to stockholders, bonuses to executives, and investments in plants and equipment or in research and development.

5. What aspects of the total situation may be relevant?

Should you consider the economy? The time of year? Morale in the organization? Any special circumstances? The organization may be prosperous or going through hard times; it may have just been reorganized or may be stable. All these different situations will affect what you say and how you say it.

Think about the news, the economy, the weather. Think about the general business and regulatory climate, especially as it affects the organization specified in the problem. Use the real world as much as possible. Think about interest rates, business conditions, and the economy. Is the industry in which the problem is set doing well? Is the government agency in which the problem is set enjoying general support? Think about the time of year. If it's fall when you write, is your business in a seasonal slowdown after a busy summer? Gearing up for the Christmas shopping rush? Or going along at a steady pace unaffected by seasons?

To answer these questions, draw on your experience, your courses, and your common sense. Read the *Wall Street Journal* or look at a company's website. Sometimes you may even want to phone a local business person to get information.

Organize Your Information to Fit Your Audiences, Your Purposes, and the Situation.

You'll learn different psychological patterns of organization in Chapters 9 through 11. For now, remember these three basic principles:

- Put good news first.
- In general, put the main point or question first. In the subject line or first paragraph, make it clear that you're writing about something that is important to the reader.
- Disregard the above point and approach the subject indirectly when you must persuade a reluctant audience.

Make Your Document Visually Inviting.

A well-designed document is easier to read and builds goodwill. To make a document visually attractive

- Use subject lines to orient the reader quickly.
- Use headings to group related ideas.
- Use lists and indented sections to emphasize subpoints and examples.
- Number points that must be followed in sequence.
- Use short paragraphs—usually eight typed lines or fewer.

If you plan these design elements before you begin composing, you'll save time and the final document will probably be better.

The best medium for a document depends on how it will be used. For example, a document that will be updated frequently may need to be on a website so the reader can easily obtain the most current information. Chapters 6 and 16 will provide more information on the design of documents and visuals.



Succeeding against the Odds

I developed my communication skills as a technique of survival. I was born in poverty and spent two years on the welfare rolls, and I learned early that I had to communicate or die. And so I talked my way out of poverty—I communicated my way to the top. . . .

I read and re-read books on self-improvement, success and communication. The most important lesson I learned from these books is what I call “other focusing.” This means, among other things, that if we want to communicate with employees, managers, and even competitors we must ask ourselves not what we want but what they want.

This rule made me a millionaire. For the only way I got to where I am today was by persuading thousands of blacks and whites, some of whom were very prejudiced, that the only way they could get what they wanted was by helping me get what I wanted. All the law and prophecy of communication theory can be found in that formula.

John H. Johnson, owner and publisher of *Ebony* magazine, quoted in Gloria Gordon, “EXCEL Award Winner John H. Johnson Communicates Success,” *IABC Communication World* 6, no. 6 (May 1989): 18–19.

Revise Your Draft to Create a Friendly, Businesslike, Positive Style.

In addition to being an organizational member or a consumer, your reader has feelings just as you do. Writing that keeps the reader in mind uses **you-attitude** (see Chapter 3). Read your message as if you were in your reader’s shoes. How would you feel if *you* received it?

Good business and administrative writing is both friendly and businesslike. If you’re too stiff, you put extra distance between your reader and yourself. If you try to be too chummy, you’ll sound unprofessional. When you write to strangers, use simple, everyday words and make your message as personal and friendly as possible. When you write to friends, remember that your message may be read by people you’ve never even heard of: avoid slang, clichés, and “in” jokes.

Sometimes you must mention limitations, drawbacks, or other negative elements, but don’t dwell on them. People will respond better to you and your organization if you seem confident. Expect success, not failure. If you don’t believe that what you’re writing about is a good idea, why should they?

You emphasize the positive when you

- Put positive information first, give it more space, or set it off visually in an indented list.
- Eliminate negative words whenever possible.
- Focus on what is possible, not what is impossible.

Edit Your Draft for Standard English; Double-Check Names and Numbers.

Business people care about correctness in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. If your grasp of mechanics is fuzzy, if standard English is not your native dialect, or if English is not your native language, you’ll need to memorize rules and perhaps find a good book or a tutor to help you. Even software spelling and grammar checkers require the writer to make decisions. If you know how to write correctly but rarely take the time to do so, now is the time to begin to edit and proofread to eliminate careless errors. Correctness in usage, punctuation, and grammar is covered in Appendix B.

Always proofread your document before you send it out. Double-check the reader’s name, any numbers, and the first and last paragraphs. Chapter 5 will provide more tips on revising and editing communication.

Use the Response You Get to Plan Future Messages.

Evaluate the **feedback**, or response, you get. The real test of any message is “Did you get what you wanted, when you wanted it?” If the answer is *no*, then the message has failed—even if the grammar is perfect, the words elegant, the approach creative, the document stunningly attractive. If the message fails, you need to find out why.

Analyze your successes, too. You want to know *why* your message worked. There has to be a reason, and if you can find what it is, you'll be more successful more often.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book has many aids to help you learn the material.

- Chapter outlines, learning objectives, and headings all provide previews of the contents. They can give you hooks on which to hang the information you are reading.
- Examples of written documents provide illustrations of effective and ineffective communications. Comments in red ink highlight problems; those in blue ink note effective practices.
- Terminology is defined in the glossary at the end of the book.
- Sidebars provide workplace examples of ideas discussed in the text. They are categorized for you by the icons that appear beside them. A gold star with any icon signifies a classic example.
 - On-the-job examples have briefcase icons.
 - Ethics and legal examples have gavel icons.
 - Websites have an @ sign.
 - Technology examples have smartphone icons.
 - International examples have globe icons.
 - Fun examples have balloon icons.
- Chapter summaries at the end of each chapter, and review questions at the beginning of each set of chapter exercises, help you review the chapters for retention.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- Communication helps organizations and the people in them achieve their goals. The ability to write and speak well becomes increasingly important as you rise in an organization.
- People put things in writing to create a record, to convey complex data, to make things convenient for the reader, to save money, and to convey their own messages more effectively.
- Internal documents go to people inside the organization. External documents go to audiences outside: clients, customers, suppliers, stockholders, the government, the media, and the general public.
- The three basic purposes of business and administrative communication are to inform, to request or persuade, and to build goodwill. Most messages have more than one purpose.
- Poor writing wastes time, wastes effort, and jeopardizes goodwill.
- Good business and administrative writing meets five basic criteria: it's clear, complete, and correct; it saves the reader's time; and it builds goodwill.
- To evaluate a specific document, we must know the interactions among the writer, the reader(s), the purposes of the message, and the context. No single set of words will work for all readers in all situations.
- Common business communications have conventions, as do organizations. Business communicators need to know how to adjust conventions to fit a particular audience, context, and purpose.

- To understand business communication situations, ask the following questions:
 - What's at stake—to whom?
 - Should you send a message?
 - What channel should you use?
 - What should you say?
 - How should you say it?
- The following process helps create effective messages:
 - Gather knowledge and brainstorm solutions.
 - Answer the analysis questions in Figure 1.4.
 - Organize your information to fit your audiences, your purposes, and the context.
 - Make your document visually inviting.
 - Revise your draft to create a friendly, businesslike, positive style.
 - Edit your draft for standard English; double-check names and numbers.
 - Use the response you get to plan future messages.

CHAPTER 1

Exercises and Problems

*Go to www.mhhe.com/locker10e for additional Exercises and Problems.

1.1 Reviewing the Chapter

1. Why do you need to be able to communicate well? (LO 1-1)
2. What are some myths about workplace communication? What is the reality for each myth? (LO 1-1)
3. What are the costs of communication? (LO 1-2)
4. What are the costs of poor communication? (LO 1-3)
5. What role do conventions play in business communication? (LO 1-4)
6. What are the components of a good problem-solving method for business communication opportunities? (LO 1-5)

1.2 Assessing Your Punctuation and Grammar Skills

To help you see where you need to improve in grammar and punctuation, take the Diagnostic Test, B.1, Appendix B.

1.3 Letters for Discussion—Landscape Plants

Your nursery sells plants not only in your store but also by mail order. Today you've received a letter from Pat Sykes, complaining that the plants (in a \$572 order) did not arrive in a satisfactory condition. "All of them were dry and wilted. One came out by the roots when I took it out of the box. Please send me a replacement shipment immediately."

The following letters are possible approaches to answering this complaint. How well does each message meet the needs of the reader, the writer, and the organization? Is the message clear, complete, and correct? Does it save the reader's time? Does it build goodwill?

1.

Dear Sir:

I checked to see what could have caused the defective shipment you received. After ruling out problems in transit, I discovered that your order was packed by a new worker who didn't understand the need to water plants thoroughly before they are

shipped. We have fired the worker, so you can be assured that this will not happen again.

Although it will cost our company several hundred dollars, we will send you a replacement shipment.

Let me know if the new shipment arrives safely. We trust that you will not complain again.

2.

Dear Pat:

Sorry we screwed up that order. Sending plants across country is a risky business. Some of them just can't take the strain. (Some days I can't take the strain myself!) We'll send you some more plants sometime next week and we'll credit your account for \$372.

3.

Dear Mr. Smith:

I'm sorry you aren't happy with your plants, but it isn't our fault. The box clearly says, "Open and water immediately." If you had done that, the plants would have been fine. And anybody who is going to buy plants should know that a little care is needed. If you pull by the leaves, you will pull the roots out. Since you don't know how to handle plants, I'm sending you a copy of our brochure, "How to Care for Your Plants." Please read it carefully so that you will know how to avoid disappointment in the future.

We look forward to your future orders.

4.

Dear Ms. Sykes:

Your letter of the 5th has come to the attention of the undersigned.

According to your letter, your invoice #47420 arrived in an unsatisfactory condition. Please be advised that it is our policy to make adjustments as per the Terms and Conditions listed on the reverse side of our Acknowledgment of Order. If you will read that document, you will find the following:

" . . . if you intend to assert any claim against us on this account, you shall make an exception on your receipt to the carrier and shall, within 30 days after the receipt of any such goods, furnish us detailed written information as to any damage."

Your letter of the 5th does not describe the alleged damage in sufficient detail. Furthermore, the delivery receipt contains no indication of any exception. If you expect to receive an adjustment, you must comply with our terms and see that the necessary documents reach the undersigned by the close of the business day on the 20th of the month.

5.

Dear Pat Sykes:

You'll get a replacement shipment of the perennials you ordered next week.

Your plants are watered carefully before shipment and packed in specially designed cardboard containers. But if the weather is unusually warm, or if the truck is delayed,

small root balls may dry out. Perhaps this happened with your plants. Plants with small root balls are easier to transplant, so they do better in your yard.

The violas, digitalis, aquilegias, and hostas you ordered are long-blooming perennials that will get even prettier each year. Enjoy your garden!

1.4 Online Messages for Discussion—Responding to Rumors

The Acme Corporation has been planning to acquire Best Products, and Acme employees are worried about how the acquisition will affect them. Ed Zeplin, Acme's human resource manager, has been visiting the Acme chat sites and sees a dramatic rise in the number of messages spreading rumors about layoffs. Most of the rumors are false.

The following messages are possible responses that Ed can post to the chat sides. How well does each message meet the needs of the reader, the writer, and the organization? Is the message clear, complete, and correct? Does it save the reader's time? Does it build goodwill?

1.

It Will Be Great!

Author: L. Ed Zeplin, HR

Date: Tuesday, May 23

I am happy to tell you that the HR news is good. Two months ago, the CEO told me about the merger, and I have been preparing a human resource plan ever since.

I want you to know about this because morale has been bad, and it shouldn't be. You really should wait for the official announcements, and you'll see that the staffing needs will remain strong. My department has been under a lot of pressure, but if you'll be patient, we'll explain everything—the staffing, the compensation.

Our plan should be ready by Monday, and then if you have any questions, just contact your HR rep.

2.

HR Staffing

Author: HR Boss

Date: Tuesday, May 23

The rumors are false. Just ask anyone in HR. There will be no layoffs.

3.

Don't Believe the Rumors

Author: lezeplin@acme.com

Date: Tuesday, May 23

Acme has 475 employees, and Best Products has 132 employees. Our human resource plan for next year calls for 625 employees. If you do the math, you can see that there will be no layoffs. Rather, we will be hiring 18 employees. Of course, as we consolidate operations with Best, there will be some redeployments. However, our plan indicates that we will be able to retain our current staff. All employees are valued at Acme, as our current benefits package testifies.

Our HR plan is based on the best analytic techniques and a business forecast by a top consulting firm. If you're an employee, you should review our business plan, at the Our Goals page on Acme's intranet. Everyone should read Acme's mission statement on our home page, www.acme.com/homepage.html.

4.

Layoff Rumors Do Acme a Disservice

Author: Zeplin in HR

Date: Tuesday, 23 May

If you come here to get your company information, you aren't getting the straight story. The people posting to this discussion board are spreading false rumors, not the truth. If you want to know the truth about Acme, ask the people who have access to the information.

As HR manager, I can assure you we won't be laying off employees after the merger with Best Products. I'm the one who approves the staffing plan, so I should know. If people would ask me, instead of reading the negative, whining lies at this site, they would know the facts, too.

If people really cared about job security, they would be working and exceeding their goals, rather than wasting their time in rumor-mongering on message boards. Hard work: that's the key to success!

5.

The True Story about Lay-Offs

Author: lezeplin@acme.com

Date: Tuesday, 23 May

Whenever there is a merger or acquisition, rumors fly. It's human nature to turn to rumors when a situation seems uncertain. The case of Acme acquiring Best Products is no exception, so I'm not surprised to see rumors about layoffs posted on this message board.

Have no fear! I am working closely with our CEO and with the CEO and human resource manager at Best Products, and we all agree that our current staff is a valuable asset to Acme, to Best, and to our combined companies in the future. We have no plans to lay off any of our valued people. I will continue monitoring this message board and will post messages as I am able to disclose more details about our staffing plans. In the meantime, employees should watch for official information in the company newsletter and on our intranet.

We care about our people! If employees ever have questions about our plans and policies, they should contact me directly.

L. Ed Zeplin, HR Manager

1.5 Discussing Communication Barriers

With a small group, discuss some of the communication barriers you have witnessed in the workplace or classroom. What confuses audiences? What upsets them? What creates ill will? What causes loss of interest? Try

to pinpoint exactly how the communication broke down. How closely do the problems you've identified coincide with the content from Chapter 1?

1.6 Identifying Poor Communicators

Almost everyone has come in contact with someone who is a poor communicator. With a small group, discuss some of your experiences with poor communicators either in the workplace or in the classroom. Why was the

communicator ineffective? What would have made communication clearer? After your discussion, develop a list of poor communication traits and what can be done to overcome them.

1.7 Discussing Wiggio's Laws

Reread the list of Wiggio's laws in the sidebar on page 14. With a small group, discuss examples of those laws you have witnessed in

- The workplace
- The classroom

- The news media
- Social networking sites

1.8 Identifying Changing Conventions

This chapter talks about the need to be aware of conventions and how they shift with time. What are some changing classroom communication conventions you have observed in your classes? What are

some changing communication conventions you have observed at your workplace, or those of your family and friends? With a small group, discuss your examples.

1.9 Understanding the Role of Communication in Your Organization

Interview your work supervisor to learn about the kinds and purposes of communication in your organization. Your questions could include the following:

- What kinds of communication (e.g., memos, e-mail, presentations) are most important in this organization?
- What communications do you create? Are they designed to inform, to persuade, to build goodwill—or to do a combination?
- What communications do you receive? Are they designed to inform, to persuade, to build goodwill—or to do a combination?
- Who are your most important audiences within the organization?

- Who are your most important external audiences?
- What are the challenges of communicating in this organization?
- What kinds of documents and presentations does the organization prefer?

As your instructor directs,

- Share your results with a small group of students.
- Present your results in a memo to your instructor.
- Join with a group of students to make a group presentation to the class.
- Post your results online to the class.

1.10 Introducing Yourself to Your Instructor

Write a memo (at least 1½ pages long) introducing yourself to your instructor. Include the following topics:

Background: Where did you grow up? What have you done in terms of school, extracurricular activities, jobs, and family life?

Interests: What are you interested in? What do you like to do? What do you like to think about and talk about?

Academics: What courses have you liked the best in school? Why? What life skills have you gained? How do you hope to use them? What do you hope to gain from this course?

Achievements: What achievements have given you the greatest personal satisfaction? List at least five.

Include things that gave *you* a real sense of accomplishment and pride, whether or not they're the sort of thing you'd list on a résumé.

Goals: What do you hope to accomplish this term? Where would you like to be professionally and personally five years from now?

Use complete memo format with appropriate headings. (See Appendix A for examples of memo format.) Use a conversational writing style; check your draft to polish the style and edit for mechanical and grammatical correctness. A good memo will enable your instructor to see you as an individual. Use specific details to make your memo vivid and interesting. Remember that one of your purposes is to interest your reader!

1.11 Introducing Yourself to Your Collaborative Writing Group

Write a memo (at least 1½ pages long) introducing yourself to the other students in your collaborative writing group. Include the following topics:

Background: What is your major? What special areas of knowledge do you have? What have you done in terms of school, extracurricular activities, jobs, and family life?

Previous experience in groups: What groups have you worked in before? Are you usually a leader, a follower, or a bit of both? Are you interested in a quality product? In maintaining harmony in the group? In working efficiently? What do you like most about working in groups? What do you like least?

Work and composing style: Do you like to talk out ideas while they're in a rough stage or work them out on paper before you discuss them? Would you rather have a complete outline before you start writing or just a general idea? Do you want to have a detailed schedule of everything that has to be done and who will do it, or would you rather "go with the flow"? Do you work best under pressure, or do you want to have assignments ready well before the due date?

Areas of expertise: What can you contribute to the group in terms of knowledge and skills? Are you good at brainstorming ideas? Researching? Designing charts? Writing? Editing? Word processing? Managing the flow of work? Maintaining group cohesion?

Goals for collaborative assignments: What do you hope to accomplish this term? Where does this course fit into your priorities?

Use complete memo format with appropriate headings. (See Appendix A for examples of memo format.) Use a conversational writing style; edit your final draft for mechanical and grammatical correctness. A good memo will enable others in your group to see you as an individual. Use details to make your memo vivid and interesting. Remember that one of your purposes is to make your readers look forward to working with you!

1.12 Describing Your Experiences in and Goals for Writing

Write a memo (at least 1½ pages long) to your instructor describing the experiences you've had writing and what you'd like to learn about writing during this course.

Answer several of the following questions:

- What memories do you have of writing? What made writing fun or frightening in the past?
- What have you been taught about writing? List the topics, rules, and advice you remember.
- What kinds of writing have you done in school? How long have the papers been?
- How has your school writing been evaluated? Did the instructor mark or comment on mechanics and grammar? Style? Organization? Logic? Content? Audience analysis and adaptation? Have you gotten extended comments on your papers? Have instructors in different classes had the same standards, or have you changed aspects of your writing for different classes?

- What voluntary writing have you done—journals, poems, stories, essays? Has this writing been just for you, or has some of it been shared or published?
- Have you ever written on a job or in a student or volunteer organization? Have you ever edited other people's writing? What have these experiences led you to think about real-world writing?
- What do you see as your current strengths and weaknesses in writing skills? What skills do you think you'll need in the future? What kinds of writing do you expect to do after you graduate?

Use complete memo format with appropriate headings. (See Appendix A for examples of memo format.) Use a conversational writing style; edit your final draft for mechanical and grammatical correctness.

Adapting Your Message to Your Audience

Chapter Outline

Identifying Your Audiences

Ways to Analyze Your Audience

- Analyzing Individuals
- Analyzing Members of Groups
- Analyzing the Organizational Culture and the Discourse Community

Choosing Channels to Reach Your Audience

Using Audience Analysis to Adapt Your Message

1. How Will the Audience Initially React to the Message?
2. How Much Information Does the Audience Need?
3. What Obstacles Must You Overcome?
4. What Positive Aspects Can You Emphasize?

5. What Are the Audience's Expectations about the Appropriate Language, Content, and Organization of Messages?
6. How Will the Audience Use the Document?

Audience Analysis Works

Audience Benefits

- Characteristics of Good Audience Benefits
- Ways to Identify and Develop Audience Benefits

Audience Benefits Work

Writing or Speaking to Multiple Audiences with Different Needs

Summary of Key Points

Audiences Change with Time



Every year in late January, the president of the United States gives the State of the Union address to one of the largest and most diverse audiences of any communication. Congress, the news media, foreign leaders and diplomats, students, and members of the American public from all walks of life watch, listen, or read the president's comments each year.

Traditionally, the president uses the State of the Union to recount his successes and to spell out his political goals for the coming year. In 2010, President Barack Obama outlined ambitious plans for health care reform, economic recovery, and an increased focus on education and green energy initiatives.

He focused much of his speech on the challenges faced by the people of America and the steps he and his Democratic party were taking to help.

In 2011, however, the president faced a different audience. Even though many of the *people* listening were the same, the *situation* and the *attitudes* had changed. In spite of President Obama's success with his goals during 2010, many Americans were dissatisfied. Riding a wave of discontent with the government, conservative Republicans had gained control of

the House of Representatives in the November elections and gained several seats in the Senate. Throughout the election, the tenor of political discourse had become increasingly pointed and divisive.

President Obama responded to his audience with a different kind of State of the Union—one that still outlined ambitious plans, but focused more on bipartisan efforts to achieve them. His tone was more conciliatory and more focused on uniting the parties in Congress under his leadership, but

“His tone and presentation reflected the changed audience he faced—one more divided than the one he addressed in 2010.”

his core messages remained the same: improving health care, rebuilding the economy, strengthening education, and expanding green energy initiatives. His tone and presentation reflected the changed

audience he faced—one more divided than the one he addressed in 2010.

The ability to adjust your message to your audience is one key to effective communication. While President Obama addressed a complex audience of millions, most communications have very small, specific audiences—real people with real situations and real concerns. Learning to adjust to your audience will provide you with an excellent foundation for any kind of communication.

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will know

LO 2-1 Ways to analyze different kinds of audiences.

- a. Individuals
- b. Groups
- c. Organizations

LO 2-2 How to choose channels to reach your audience.

LO 2-3 How to analyze your audience and adapt your message to it.

LO 2-4 How to identify and develop audience benefits.

Knowing who you're talking to is fundamental to the success of any message. You need to identify your audiences, understand their motivations, and know how to reach them.

IDENTIFYING YOUR AUDIENCES

The first step in analyzing your audience is to decide who your audience is. Organizational messages have multiple audiences:

1. A **gatekeeper** has the power to stop your message instead of sending it on to other audiences. The gatekeeper therefore controls whether your message even gets to the primary audience. Sometimes the supervisor who assigns the message is the gatekeeper; sometimes the gatekeeper is higher in the organization. In some cases, gatekeepers may exist outside the organization.
2. The **primary audience** decides whether to accept your recommendations or acts on the basis of your message. You must reach the primary audience to fulfill your purposes in any message.
3. The **secondary audience** may be asked to comment on your message or to implement your ideas after they've been approved. Secondary audiences also include lawyers who may use your message—perhaps years later—as evidence of your organization's culture and practices.
4. An **auxiliary audience** may encounter your message but will not have to interact with it. This audience includes the “read-only” people.
5. A **watchdog audience**, though it does not have the power to stop the message and will not act directly on it, has political, social, or economic power. The watchdog pays close attention to the transaction between you and the primary audience and may base future actions on its evaluation of your message.

As the following examples show, one person can be part of two audiences. Frequently, a supervisor is both the primary audience and the gatekeeper.

Dawn is an assistant account executive in an ad agency. Her boss asks her to write a proposal for a marketing plan for a new product the agency's client is introducing. Her **primary audience** is the executive committee of the client company, who will decide whether to adopt the plan. The **secondary audience** includes the marketing staff of the client company, who will be asked for comments on the plan, as well as the artists, writers, and media buyers who will carry out details of the plan if it is

adopted. Her boss, who must approve the plan before it is submitted to the client, is the **gatekeeper**. Her office colleagues who read her plan are her **auxiliary audience**.

Joe works in the information technology department of a large financial institution. He must write a memo explaining a major software change. His boss is the **gatekeeper**; the software users in various departments are the **primary audience**. The **secondary audience** includes the tech people who will be helping the primary audience install and adjust to the new software. The **auxiliary audience** includes department program assistants who forward the memo to appropriate people in each department. A **watchdog audience** is the board of directors.



Reading Levels

One of the most relevant demographic measures for writers is the literacy level of your audience. Unfortunately, even in advanced economies you have to ask how well your audience can read and put information to use. In the United States, the answer may be “not very well.”

The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL), conducted by the US Department of Education, found that 14% of adults had difficulty reading well enough to follow simple instructions (such as when to take medication), 12% struggled to use simple forms (deciding where to sign their name on a form), and 22% had trouble working with numbers (simple addition tasks). NAAL also found that 5% of adults were nonliterate—their language skills weren’t strong enough to participate in the assessment.

Overall, that translates into 30 million adults in the United States with “below basic” reading and comprehension levels, and another 63 million with only “basic” literacy levels. For business writers, this poses a challenge. When composing a message for a broad audience of employees or customers, you may have to use short sentences, simple words, and clarifying graphics. What other techniques might you use to ensure that audiences with lower literacy levels can understand and use your message?

Adapted from Mark Kutner, Elizabeth Greenberg, and Justin Baer, “National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL): A First Look at the Literacy of America’s Adults in the 21st Century,” American Institutes for Research, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 2006, <http://nces.ed.gov/NAAL/PDF/2006470.PDF>.

WAYS TO ANALYZE YOUR AUDIENCE LO 2-1

The most important tools in audience analysis are common sense and empathy. **Empathy** is the ability to put yourself in someone else’s shoes, to feel with that person. Use what you know about people and about organizations to predict likely responses.

Analyzing Individuals

When you write or speak to people in your own organization and in other organizations you work closely with, you may be able to analyze your audience as individuals. You may already know them, or can probably get additional information easily. You may learn that one manager may dislike phone calls, so you will know to write your request in an e-mail. Another manager may have a reputation for denying requests made on a Friday, so you will know to get yours in earlier.

A useful schema for analyzing people is the **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator**.[®] This instrument uses four pairs of dichotomies to identify ways that people differ.¹ One of these dichotomies is well known: Extroversion-Introversion, measuring how individuals prefer to focus their attention and get energy. Extroverted types are energized by interacting with other people. Introverted types get their energy from within.

The other three dichotomies in Myers-Briggs[®] typology are Sensing-Intuition, Thinking-Feeling, and Judging-Perceiving. The Sensing-Intuition dichotomy measures the way an individual prefers to take in information. Sensing types gather information through their senses, preferring what is real and tangible. Intuitive types prefer to gather information by looking at the big picture, focusing on the relationships and connections between facts.

The Thinking-Feeling dichotomy measures the way an individual makes decisions. Thinking types prefer to use thinking in decision making to consider the logical consequences of a choice or action. Feeling types make decisions based on the impact to people, considering what is important to them and to others involved.

The Judging-Perceiving dichotomy measures how individuals orient themselves to the external world. Judging types like to live in a planned, orderly way, seeking closure. Perceiving types prefer to live in a flexible, spontaneous way, enjoying possibilities.

The descriptors on each of the scales’ dichotomies represent a preference, just as we have a preference for using either our right or our left hand to write. If necessary, we can use the opposite style, but we have less practice in it and use it less easily.

You can find your own personality type by taking the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator[®] instrument at your college’s counseling center or student services office. Some businesses administer the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator[®] instrument to all employees to assist with team building and/or personal growth and development.

Figure 2.1 Using Personalities in Communication

If your audience is	Use this strategy	Because
Extraverting	Try out ideas orally.	Extraverts like to develop ideas by talking; they are energized by people.
Introverting	Communicate in writing so the audience can think about your message before responding.	Introverts like to think before they communicate. Written messages give them their thinking time.
Sensing	Present all of the needed facts, and get them right. Present your reasoning step by step. Stress practicalities.	Sensing people are good at facts, and expect others to be, also. They trust their own experience more than someone else's account.
Intuiting	Focus on the big picture and underlying patterns first. Save details for later. Use metaphors and analogies in explanations. Stress innovation.	Intuitive people like new possibilities and innovation; they enjoy problem solving and creative endeavors. They can be impatient with details, routine, and repetition.
Thinking	Use logic and principles of consistency and fairness rather than emotion or personal circumstances.	Thinking people make decisions based on logic and abstract principles. They are often uncomfortable with emotion or personal revelations.
Feeling	Stress positives. Show how your ideas value the people needs of the organization. Use tactful language.	Feeling people care about other people and their feelings. They are empathetic and desire harmony.
Judging	Make your communications very organized. Provide all needed information. Follow company procedures. Schedule work in advance; provide time frames for various tasks.	Judging people are eager to make decisions, so they may not seek out additional information. They prefer a structured, orderly work life.
Perceiving	Provide alternatives. Ask for action or a decision by a specific date.	Perceiving people like to gather lots of information before making decisions, and they like to keep all options open as long as possible.

Source: *People Types and Tiger Stripes*, 4e 2009 Gordon Lawrence. Used with permission. CAPT, Inc.

As Figure 2.1 suggests, you'll be most persuasive if you play to your audience's strengths. Indeed, many of the general principles of business communication appeal to the types most common among managers. Putting the main point up front satisfies the needs of judging types, and some 75% of US managers are judging. Giving logical reasons satisfies the needs of the nearly 80% of U.S. managers who are thinking types.²

Analyzing Members of Groups

In many organizational situations, you'll analyze your audience not as individuals but as members of a group: "taxpayers who must be notified that they owe more income tax," "customers who use our accounting services," or "employees with small children." Focus on what group members have in common. Although generalizations won't be true for all members of the group, generalization is necessary when you must appeal to a large group of people with one message. In some cases, no research is necessary: It's easy to guess the attitudes of people who must be told they owe more taxes. In other cases, databases may yield useful information. In still other cases, you may want to do original research.

Databases enable you to map demographic and psychographic profiles of customers or employees. **Demographic characteristics** are measurable features that can be counted objectively: age, sex, race, religion, education level, income, and so on.

Sometimes demographic information is irrelevant; sometimes it's important. Does education matter? Well, the fact that the reader has a degree from



Group membership sometimes gives clues about your audience.

Eastern State rather than from Harvard may not matter, but how much the reader knows about accounting may. Does family structure matter? Sometimes. Some hotels and resorts offer family packages that include baby-sitting, multiple bedrooms, and children's activities.

Age certainly matters. Mutual funds are aiming for young investors by lowering the minimum investment to less than the cost of an iPod, and simplifying choices.³

One aspect of age that gets much press is the differences between generations in the office. Many older people believe younger workers have a sense of entitlement, that they expect great opportunities and perks without working for them. On the other hand, many younger workers see their older colleagues as rigid and hostile. Figure 2.2 shows some of the frequently mentioned age differences. While awareness of generational differences may help in some communication situations, such lists are also a good place to attach mental warnings against stereotypes. Plenty of baby boomers also like frequent positive feedback, and almost everyone likes a chance to make a difference.

For most companies, income is a major demographic characteristic. In 2011, Walmart quietly returned to its "everyday low prices" after experimenting with low-priced sale products balanced by slightly higher prices elsewhere. The new pricing had not appealed to Walmart's financially strapped customers. The chain also returned shotguns and rifles to the shelves of many of its stores in an attempt to attract more male customers.⁴

Location is yet another major demographic characteristic. You can probably think of many differences between regional audiences, or urban/rural audiences, in the United States. See Chapter 7 for more information on cross-cultural audiences.

Psychographic characteristics are qualitative rather than quantitative: values, beliefs, goals, and lifestyles. Knowing what your audience finds important allows you to choose information and benefits that the audience will find persuasive. The Choice and Gaylord hotel groups use semantic analysis software on their customer satisfaction surveys. Results can be connected to specific hotels, departments, shifts, employees, and rooms, allowing managers to track trends and respond to problems. Digital marketing companies are combining consumers' web surfing records with personal off-line data from sources such as the Census Bureau, consumer research firms such as Nielsen,



One Huge Audience

Baby boomers number 76 million and account for about half of total U.S. consumer spending. They are expected to spend an additional \$50 billion over the next decade. So businesses are subtly beginning to accommodate the needs of this major audience.

Subtle is a key word: boomers do not like to be reminded that they are aging. For instance, many boomers dislike having people talk slowly to them, so ADT Security Services trains new operators to talk quickly and get to the point. CVS stores have installed carpeting to reduce slipping. Arm & Hammer sharpened the color contrast on its cat litter packaging and increased font size 20%.

Euphemisms abound. ADT's medical-alert systems are now "companion services"; bathroom-fixture manufacturer Kohler has "belay" bars instead of grab bars for showers; and Kimberly-Clark's Depends are sometimes labeled as underwear. Small packages of Depends look like underwear and hang on hooks rather than being stacked on shelves like diapers.

Adapted from Ellen Byron, "How to Market to an Aging Boomer: Flattery, Subterfuge, and Euphemism," *Wall Street Journal*, February 5, 2011, A1.



Chinese Internet Companies

Chinese Internet companies are besting their American counterparts for Chinese users, and part of the reason is that they analyze their audience and give them what they want.

- Baidu's Internet search dominates Google's. One reason is that early on, Baidu's search bar was longer and wider than Google's, an important difference because Chinese characters are more complex than English letters, and the larger bar makes them clearer.
- Tencent Holdings popularized instant messaging in China by pairing it with blogging and online gaming, both highly popular in China. Now it has a bigger market value than Yahoo.
- Alibaba e-commerce site Taobao added instant messaging to allow buyers and sellers to haggle over prices, just as business is done off-line in China. eBay couldn't compete and closed its website in China.

Adapted from Loretta Chao, "Something Borrowed . . ." *Wall Street Journal*, November 16, 2009, R4.

Figure 2.2 Some Generational Differences in the Office

	Baby Boomers	Generation X and Millennials
Birth Dates	Between 1946 and 1964	1964 and on
Work ethic	Long hours in office	Productivity counts, not hours at office
Values	Hard work; consistency; hierarchy; clearly defined roles; serious about work	Work-life balance; flexibility; autonomy, informality; variety of challenges; the workplace can be fun
Preferred channels	Face-to-face, e-mail	Texting, social networks
Motivators	Duty to company	Why a task is important; what's in it for them
Communication style	Through channels and hierarchy; accept annual evaluation	Freely offer opinions, both laterally and upward; want great amounts of attention and praise; want faster feedback
Decorum	Follow basic business decorum	May need to be reminded about basic business decorum

Sources: Ron Alsop, "The 'Trophy Kids' Go to Work," *Wall Street Journal*, October 21, 2008, D1, D4; and Piper Fogg, "When Generations Collide," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 18, 2008, B18.

credit card and shopping histories, and real estate and motor vehicle records. The combined data allow marketers to reach narrowly defined audiences, especially convenient for cable TV ads.⁵

Analyzing the Organizational Culture and the Discourse Community

Be sensitive to the culture in which your audiences work and the discourse community of which they are a part. **Organizational culture** is a set of values, attitudes, and philosophies. An organization's culture is revealed verbally in the organization's myths, stories, and heroes, as well as in documents such as employee manuals. It is revealed nonverbally through means such as dress codes, behavior standards, or the allocation of space, money, and power. A **discourse community** is a group of people who share assumptions about what channels, formats, and styles to use for communication, what topics to discuss and how to discuss them, and what constitutes evidence.

In an organization that values equality and individualism, you can write directly to the CEO and address him or her as a colleague. In other companies, you'd be expected to follow a chain of command. Some organizations prize short messages; some expect long, thorough documents. Messages that are consistent with the organization's culture have a greater chance of succeeding.

You can begin to analyze an organization's culture by asking the following questions:

- Is the organization tall or flat? Are there lots of levels between the CEO and the lowest worker, or only a few?
- How do people get ahead? Are the organization's rewards based on seniority, education, being well-liked, saving money, or serving customers? Are rewards available only to a few top people, or is everyone expected to succeed?



Some companies are beginning to accept visible body art and long hair in traditional workplace cultures.

- Does the organization value diversity or homogeneity? Does it value independence and creativity or being a team player and following orders?
- What stories do people tell? Who are the organization's heroes and villains?
- How important are friendship and sociability? To what extent do workers agree on goals, and how intently do they pursue them?
- How formal are behavior, language, and dress?
- What does the work space look like? Do employees work in offices, cubicles, or large rooms?
- What are the organization's goals? Making money? Serving customers and clients? Advancing knowledge? Contributing to the community?

To analyze an organization's discourse community, ask the following questions:

- What media, formats, and styles are preferred for communication?
- What do people talk about? What topics are not discussed?
- What kind of and how much evidence is needed to be convincing?

CHOOSING CHANNELS TO REACH YOUR AUDIENCE LO 2-2

A communication **channel** is the means by which you convey your message. Communication channels vary in speed, accuracy of transmission, cost, number of messages carried, number of people reached, efficiency, and ability to



Write Your Way into Your New Job

You can learn a bit about your organization's discourse community by listening to people and reading the documents that other people write. But the best way to learn is to write. The feedback you get from your supervisor will show you how to adapt your writing for the particular organization. To make the feedback most useful, categorize the comments and generalize. Are you being asked to provide specific supporting details? To write so that people can understand what you say without having to reread? To use a more or less formal style? To include lots of charts or none at all?

Learning to adapt your content, structure, and style to the organization will make you a more effective writer and a more effective worker. And that means that more often you'll be able to get what you want in the organization.



A Channel Pro

Virgin Atlantic Airlines (VAA) uses multiple channels to support its branding as a fun, innovative, honest, caring, and value-offering airline.

- The most-read portion of its Facebook page contains travel tips from crew members, communication that comes across as honest and caring.
- Its website contains a “rapid response” link to Twitter and Facebook for up-to-date communications during crises.
- Its Vtravelled site allows customers to exchange travel information and advice.
- Its Facebook Flight Status app was a first for any airline, as was its iPhone app, Flight Tracker, which includes real-time aircraft positions.
- In response to suggestions from its online community, it launched an airport taxi-sharing service.

VAA’s head of e-business says, “Twitter is no more than a sound bite. Facebook can be an article. The website is for in-depth detail. They all need to signpost each other.”

Adapted from Patrick Barwise and Sean Meehan, “The One Thing You Must Get Right When Building a Brand,” *Harvard Business Review* 88, no. 12 (December 2010): 83–84.

promote goodwill. Depending on the audience, your purposes, and the situation, one channel may be better than another.

A written message makes it easier to

- Present extensive or complex data.
- Present many specific details.
- Minimize undesirable emotions.
- Track details and agreements.

Oral messages make it easier to

- Use emotion to help persuade the audience.
- Focus the audience’s attention on specific points.
- Resolve conflicts and build consensus.
- Modify plans.
- Get immediate action or response.

Choosing the right channel can be tricky sometimes. Even in the office, you will have to decide if your message will be more effective as an e-mail, text message, phone call, visit, or sticky note posted on a colleague’s computer. In nonstandard situations, choosing a channel can be challenging. If you are the head of a small, nonprofit literacy agency which helps adults learn to read, how do you reach your clients? You cannot afford TV ads, and they cannot read print channels such as flyers. If you are a safety officer for a manufacturer, how do you send out product recall notifications? How many people file the

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contact-information cards when they purchase an item? If you are the benefits manager in a large manufacturing plant, how will you get information about your new benefits plan out to the thousand people on the floor? They don't use computers at work and may not have computer access at home.

Businesses are becoming ever more savvy about using the array of channels. Ad money has been moving out of print and TV channels and into online advertising, which totaled \$25 billion in 2010. Of those billions, \$2 billion were spent on social media sites, Facebook in particular.⁶

Businesses use Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr to highlight new products and services. Many companies have interactive websites and forums where customers can get product information and chat about products; Amazon is the prime example. Diaper companies are giving perks to “mommy” bloggers to talk about their products; car companies are using strong social media influencers to post their opinions online.⁷ Nonprofits advertise events, connect with volunteers, and schedule volunteer service on their Facebook pages. And all that social network chatter can now be mined by software which performs semantic analyses providing feedback to advertisers about both products and audiences.

Even traditional paper channels are moving online. Publishers are making their travel books into e-books and cell phone apps. Newspapers are expanding from print to blogs, podcasts, and chatrooms. In fact, Warren Buffet himself warned the *Washington Post*, on whose board he served, that the paper-only model would no longer work.⁸ In 2010, 41% of Americans got their national and international news from the Internet, surpassing newspapers (40%) for the first time, and online advertising surpassed print newspaper advertising for the first time.⁹

The big three TV network newscasts are facing similar problems. According to the Pew Research Center, network evening news audiences have been on a downward trend for three decades. Staffers have been cut, as have bureaus and offices. Audience median age is now over 50.¹⁰ In response to declining viewership, networks are posting news in online stories and videos, as well as blogs.



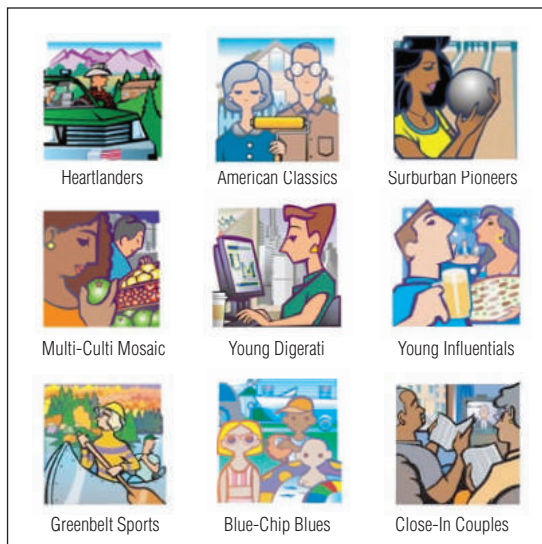
Trolling for Plaintiffs

Law firms are spending millions to develop their online presence—and to get new clients. And this online spending is replacing more traditional spending for yellow pages, TV, and radio ads.

Many of these online sites look like community forums or news boards. They are publicized on forums such as Facebook and Twitter. Many firms, knowing that people generally trust material they find in electronic searches far more than they trust ads, are also adding content so that their sites appear early in a Google search.

The marketing officer for one such law firm told the *Wall Street Journal* that people reaching the firm through social media were twice as likely to become clients as those who made contact through television or print.

Adapted from Nathan Koppel, “Using Social Networking as Legal Tool: Law Firms Say They Are Turning to the Web to Develop Evidence for Suits and Market Themselves to Potential Clients,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 15, 2010, B4.



Market research firm Claritas, Inc., combines demographic and psychographic data to identify 66 lifestyle segments, including “Young Digerati” (tech-savvy young adults), “Close-In Couples” (older, African-American couples), and “Blue-Chip Blues” (young families with well-paying blue-collar jobs). PRIZM is a trademark or registered trademark of The Nielsen Company (US), LLC.



Is It the Black Abyss for the White Pages?

White pages may become a relic as more and more telecommunication companies cease to print paper copies.

As land lines steadily decrease, more and more people rely solely on their cell phones, whose numbers usually are not in the white pages. Furthermore, those cell phones store frequently used numbers. For numbers not in their cell phones, most consumers now check the Internet.

Telecommunication companies tout the change as an environmentally friendly one. Verizon notes a savings of 17,000 tons of paper annually by switching to Internet listings in its 12-state area of operation.

Adapted from Michael Felberbaum, "It's Looking Dark for White Pages of Phone Books," *Des Moines Register*, November 12, 2010, 1A.

Creative uses of channels are appearing everywhere (for more on electronic channels, see Chapters 4 and 9):

- Intel is using electronic billboards in New York's Penn Station to promote its Smart TV technology. People with the appropriate mobile app will be personally greeted by the signs.¹¹
- Popular bands such as Phish have developed their own apps, with features such as remixing tools and games, for their fans.¹²
- Toy maker Mattel is using Facebook, Twitter, and a series of eight webisodes to celebrate the 50th birthday of Barbie's boyfriend Ken. The webisodes allow Mattel to extend the audience to teenagers and adults who have an emotional tie with the toy and may be collectors.¹³
- Dunkin' Donuts quickie contest for people to submit pictures of themselves drinking iced coffee in the winter generated 140 submissions and 3.9 million product plugs through posts and status updates.¹⁴
- Digital book store Wowio is selling ads on e-books readers download from its site.¹⁵
- Bill Cosby recorded a hip-hop album to help carry his message of education and self-respect to new audiences. To sell its cleaning products, Clorox put out an album, "The Blue Sky Project: A Clorox Charity Collection." Companies such as Procter & Gamble and Allstate also offer full-length versions of tunes used in their ads. In regions such as the United Kingdom and Asia, original songs featured in ads often become quite popular.¹⁶
- Vienna, Austria, raised money for the main public library with a phone sex hotline. Pay by the minute and you got to hear a famous Austrian actress reading passages from the library's collection of erotic fiction from the 18th through 20th centuries.¹⁷

Creative channels abound. Ads are appearing on hotel shower curtains, the bellies of pregnant women, airport luggage conveyor belts, grocery check-out conveyors, sidewalks, and toilet stall doors. Ads inside subway tunnels appear to be in motion as trains ride by. One company prints ads on cardboard shirt hangers which are distributed free to cleaners. The hangers are touted as a good way to reach male consumers.¹⁸

As consumers become ever more savvy about ways to ignore advertising, one channel that has received publicity is the vivistitial: ads that take advantage of more receptive times in consumers' lives. One much talked about example is the elevator ad. Captivate offers video programming, such as news headlines and weather, in elevators. The programming is not intrusive: screens are not huge and the video does not have sound. Recall of Captivate ads is two to four times higher than that of TV ads.¹⁹

USING AUDIENCE ANALYSIS TO ADAPT YOUR MESSAGE LO 2-3

Zeroing in on the right audience with the right message is frequently a formula for success. If you know your audience well and if you use words well, much of your audience analysis and adaptation will be unconscious. If you don't know your audience or if the message is very important, take the time to analyze your audience formally and to revise your message with your analysis in mind. The questions in Figure 2.3 will help guide a careful analysis.

Figure 2.3 Analyzing Your Audience

These questions will help you analyze your audience:

1. How will the audience initially react to the message?
2. How much information does the audience need?
3. What obstacles must you overcome?
4. What positive aspects can you emphasize?
5. What are the audience's expectations about the appropriate language, content, and organization of messages?
6. How will the audience use the document?

As you answer these questions for a specific audience, think about the organizational culture in which the person works. At every point, your audience's reaction is affected not only by his or her personal feelings and preferences but also by the political environment of the organization, the economy, and current events.

1. How Will the Audience Initially React to the Message?

a. Will the audience see this message as important? Audiences will read and act on messages they see as important to their own careers; they may ignore messages that seem unimportant to them.

When the audience may see your message as unimportant, you need to

- Use a subject line or first paragraph that shows your reader this message is important and relevant.
- Make the action as easy as possible.
- Suggest a realistic deadline for action.
- Keep the message as short as possible.



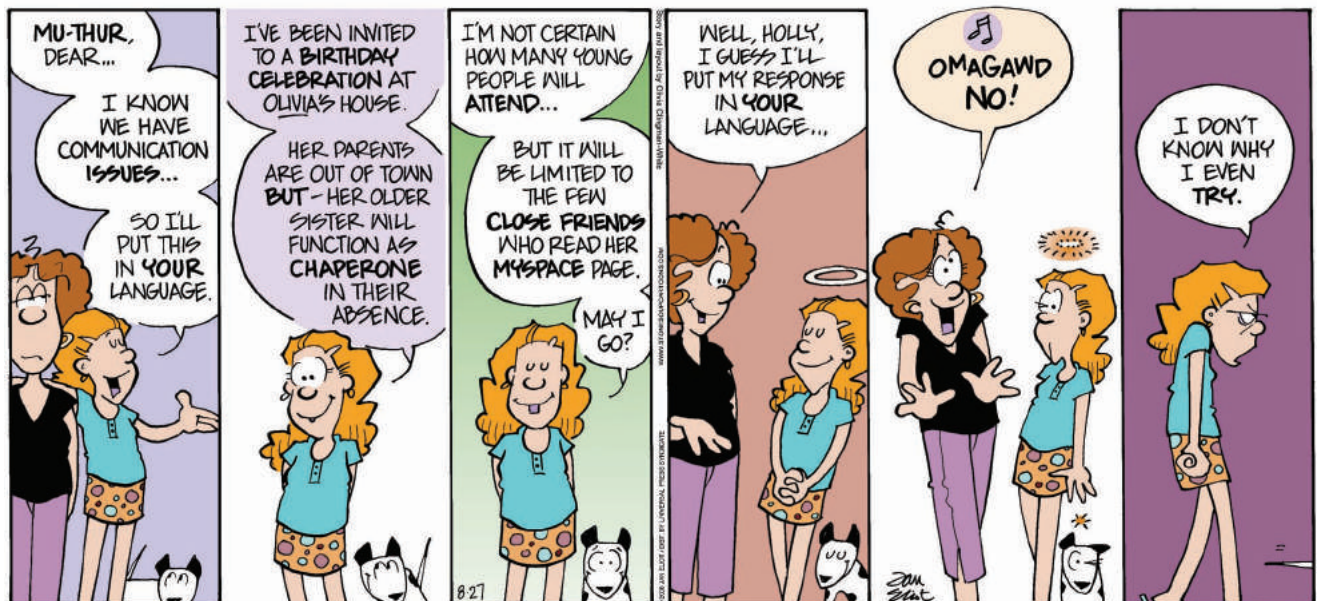
A Zappos Channel

[According to Tony Hsieh, founder and CEO of Zappos, the popular Internet footwear business], "There's a lot of buzz these days about 'social media' and 'integration marketing.' As unsexy and low-tech as it may sound, our belief is that the telephone is one of the best branding devices out there. You have the customer's undivided attention for five to ten minutes, and if you get the interaction right, what we've found is that the customer remembers the experience for a very long time and tells his or her friends about it.

...
 "At Zappos, we don't measure call times (our longest phone call was almost six hours long!). . . . We don't have scripts because we trust our employees to use their best judgment when dealing with each and every customer. . . . We're trying to build a lifelong relationship with each customer one phone call at a time."

Quoted from Tony Hsieh, *Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose* (New York: Business Plus, 2010), 143–45. With permission from Central Grand Publishing.

STONE SOUP



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Customer Analysis

According to Harvey Mackay, author of the business bestseller *Swim with the Sharks without Being Eaten Alive*, the Golden Rule of sales is Know Your Customer. Your customers are not companies, but rather the individuals at companies who decide whether or not to buy your goods or services. To analyze these buyers, he has developed a 66-question customer profile, the Mackay 66.

The profile includes questions about such topics as the individual's education, spouse, children, politics, religion, activities, hobbies, vacations, cars, personality, personal goals, and business goals. In addition to typical questions you might expect, such as employment record, the profile also asks about

- Status symbols in office.
- Sensitive items to be avoided.
- Subjects arousing strong feelings.
- Favorite conversation topics.

Mackay uses the information in these profiles to meet the needs of his customers. (He says he also guards it with his life, because he knows how sensitive it is.)

Adapted from Harvey Mackay, "Knowing Your Customer Is Key," *Des Moines Register*, November 29, 2010, 6E.

b. How will the fact that the message is from you affect the audience's reaction? The audience's experience with you and your organization shapes the way they respond to this new message. Someone who thinks well of you and your organization will be prepared to receive your message favorably; someone who thinks poorly of you and the organization will be quick to find fault with what you say and the way you say it.

When your audience has negative feelings about your organization, your position, or you personally, you need to

- Make a special effort to avoid phrases that could seem condescending, arrogant, rude, hostile, or uncaring.
- Use positive emphasis (Chapter 3) to counteract the natural tendency to sound defensive.
- Develop logic and benefits fully.

2. How Much Information Does the Audience Need?

a. How much does the audience already know about this subject? It's easy to overestimate the knowledge an audience has. People outside your own immediate unit may not really know what it is you do. Even people who once worked in your unit may have forgotten specific details now that their daily work is in management. People outside your organization won't know how *your* organization does things.

When some of your information is new to the audience, you need to

- Make a special effort to be clear. Define terms, explain concepts, use examples, avoid acronyms.
- Link new information to old information that the audience already knows.
- Use paragraphs and headings to break up new information into related chunks so that the information is easier to digest.
- Test a draft of your document with your reader or a subset of your intended audience to see whether the audience can understand and use what you've written.

b. Does the audience's knowledge need to be updated or corrected? Our personal experience guides our expectations and actions, but sometimes needs to be corrected. If you're trying to change someone's understanding of something, you need to

- Acknowledge the audience's initial understanding early in the message.
- Use examples, statistics, or other evidence to show the need for the change, or to show that the audience's experience is not universal.
- Allow the audience to save face by suggesting that changed circumstances call for new attitudes or action.

c. What aspects of the subject does the audience need to be aware of to appreciate your points? When the audience must think of background or old information to appreciate your points, you can

- Preface information with “As you know” or “As you may remember” to avoid suggesting that you think the audience does not know what you’re saying.
- Put old or obvious information in a subordinate clause.

3. What Obstacles Must You Overcome?

a. Is your audience opposed to what you have to say? People who have already made up their minds are highly resistant to change. When the audience will oppose what you have to say, you need to

- Start your message with any areas of agreement or common ground that you share with your audience.
- Make a special effort to be clear and unambiguous. Points that might be clear to a neutral audience can be misinterpreted by someone opposed to the message.
- Make a special effort to avoid statements that will anger the audience.
- Limit your statement or request to the smallest possible area. If parts of your message could be delivered later, postpone them.
- Show that your solution is the best solution currently available, even though it isn’t perfect.

b. Will it be easy for the audience to do as you ask? Everyone has a set of ideas and habits and a mental self-image. If we’re asked to do something that violates any of those, we first have to be persuaded to change our attitudes or habits or self-image—a change we’re reluctant to make.

When your request is time-consuming, complicated, or physically or psychologically difficult, you need to

- Make the action as easy as possible.
- Break down complex actions into a list, so the audience can check off each step as it is completed. This list will also help ensure complete responses.
- Show that what you ask is consistent with some aspect of what the audience believes.
- Show how the audience (not just you or your organization) will benefit when the action is completed.

4. What Positive Aspects Can You Emphasize?

a. From the audience’s point of view, what are the benefits of your message? Benefits help persuade the audience that your ideas are good ones. Make the most of the good points inherent in the message you want to convey.

- Put good news first.
- Use audience benefits that go beyond the basic good news.



Tiny Marketing

In its goal of attracting 1 billion additional consumers, Procter & Gamble is adding new marketing techniques to its arsenal. Since most of these potential customers are poor women in developing countries who buy single-use packets of products such as shampoo, soap, and detergent, P&G is packaging its products in small portions. The small packages also please the tiny mom-and-pop stores, many just kiosks or closet-sized stores, which serve these customers. These stores aggregated are P&G’s largest customer, larger even than Wal-Mart. To attract owners, P&G employs local agents who tidy and price P&G in-store products, distribute promotional items, and stock shelves—sparing owners trips to distributors.

P&G is also developing special products just for these markets. One example is feminine hygiene products. Because many customers lack the money and privacy to change pads frequently, P&G developed a low-priced, extra-absorbent pad, which is now the leading product in Mexico.

What unique marketing practices have you noticed in other countries?

Adapted from Ellen Byron, “P&G’s Global Target: Shelves of Tiny Stores: It Woos Poor Women Buying Single Portions; Mexico’s ‘Hot Zones,’” *Wall Street Journal*, July 16, 2007, A1.



Customer Service Channels

"If you think the privacy of your medical information has been compromised, you can file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights. A brochure distributed by this office tells people they can call and 'ask for a civil-rights or privacy-complaint form.'

"But you can't really ask for anything, because when you call the number, you can't get a person on the line.

"An automated voice thanks you for calling and then breaks the news:

"We're sorry, a staff person is not able to receive your call. This number is not able to receive messages.'

"Callers are directed to a website to file a complaint. Twice. And if you don't have a computer, . . . [t]he voice tells you . . . 'most local libraries have computers available that residents can use to access the Internet at no extra cost.'"

Is this an ethical way to distribute information? What groups of people does this channel discriminate against? Do you know of other organizations that communicate only through the web?

*Quoted from "Not Exactly a Model for Customer Service," *Des Moines Register*, August 23, 2008, 14A.

b. What experiences, interests, goals, and values do you share with the audience? A sense of solidarity with someone can be an even more powerful reason to agree than the content of the message itself. When everyone in your audience shares the same experiences, interests, goals, and values, you can

- Consider using a vivid anecdote to remind the audience of what you share. The details of the anecdote should be interesting or new; otherwise, you may seem to be lecturing the audience.
- Use a salutation and close that remind the audience of their membership in this formal or informal group.

5. What Are the Audience's Expectations about the Appropriate Language, Content, and Organization of Messages?

a. What style of writing does the audience prefer? Good writers adapt their style to suit the reader's preferences. A reader who sees contractions as too informal needs a different style from one who sees traditional business writing as too stuffy. As you write,

- Use what you know about your reader to choose a more or less formal, more or less friendly style.
- Use the reader's first name in the salutation only if both of you are comfortable with a first-name basis.

b. Are there hot buttons or "red flag" words that may create an immediate negative response? You don't have time to convince the audience that a term is broader or more neutral than his or her understanding. When you need agreement or approval, you should

- Avoid terms that carry emotional charges for many people: for example, *criminal, un-American, feminist, fundamentalist, liberal*.
- Use your previous experience with individuals to replace any terms that have particular negative meanings for them.

c. How much detail does the audience want? A message that does not give the audience the amount of or kind of detail they want may fail. Sometimes you can ask your audience how much detail they want. When you write to people you do not know well, you can

- Provide all the detail they need to understand and act on your message.
- Group chunks of information under headings so that readers can go directly to the parts of the message they find most interesting and relevant.
- Be sure that a shorter-than-usual document covers the essential points; be sure that a longer-than-usual document is free from wordiness and repetition.

d. Does the audience prefer a direct or indirect organization? Individual personality or cultural background may lead someone to prefer a particular kind of structure. You'll be more effective if you use the structure and organization your audience prefers.

6. How Will the Audience Use the Document?

a. Under what physical conditions will the audience use the document? Reading a document in a quiet office calls for no special care. But suppose the audience will be reading your message on the train commuting home, or on a ladder as he or she attempts to follow instructions. Then the physical preparation of the document can make it easier or harder to use.

When the reader will use your document outside an office,

- Use lots of white space.
- Make the document small enough to hold in one hand.
- Number items so the reader can find his or her place after an interruption.

b. Will the audience use the document as a general reference? As a specific guide? Understanding how your audience will use the document will enable you to choose the best pattern of organization and the best level of detail.

If the document will serve as a general reference,

- Use a specific subject line to aid in filing and retrieval. If the document is online, consider using several keywords to make it easy to find the document in a database search program.
- Use headings within the document so that readers can skim it.
- Give the office as well as the person to contact so that the reader can get in touch with the appropriate person some time from now.
- Spell out details that may be obvious now but might be forgotten in a year.

If the document will be a detailed guide or contain instructions,

- Check to be sure that all the steps are in chronological order.
- Number steps so that readers can easily see which steps they've completed.
- Group steps into five to seven categories if there are many individual steps.
- Put any warnings at the beginning of the document; then repeat them just before the specific step to which they apply.

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS WORKS

Audience analysis is a powerful tool. Amazon.com tracks users' online histories to make suggestions on items they might like. Nintendo believes that much of its success is extending its concept of audience. An important part of its audience is hard-core gamers, a very vocal group—they love to blog. But if Nintendo listened just to them, they would be the only audience Nintendo had. Instead, Nintendo extended its audience by creating the Wii, a new system that the hard-core gamers had not imagined and one that is collecting new users who never imagined owning a system at all.²⁰ With the introduction of Wii Fit, Nintendo is expanding its audience to more women and even senior citizens.

Best Buy uses its extensive customer feedback to tweak its private-label electronics. The company noticed, for instance, that many portable DVD players



Audience Is Not a Mystery for Her

Every year, mystery writer Mary Higgins Clark sells 3.7 million copies of her books; in fact, she has sold over 100 million copies in the United States alone.

Perhaps the biggest factor in her success is her careful audience analysis; she gives her audience what they want. In her case, this means intelligent women in danger who unravel sinister plots and often help engineer their own escapes. Her heroines tend to be self-made professionals.

Because her novels are always “G-rated” (no cursing, no living together before marriage, no explicit depictions of violence), they are a favorite of mother-daughter book clubs and sell heavily for Mother’s Day, the third biggest book-selling holiday of the year (Father’s Day and Christmas are bigger).

Adapted from Alexandra Alter, “The Case of the Best-Selling Author: How a Former Pan-Am Stewardess Has Stayed at the Top of the Publishing Game Since 1975,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 25, 2011, D1.



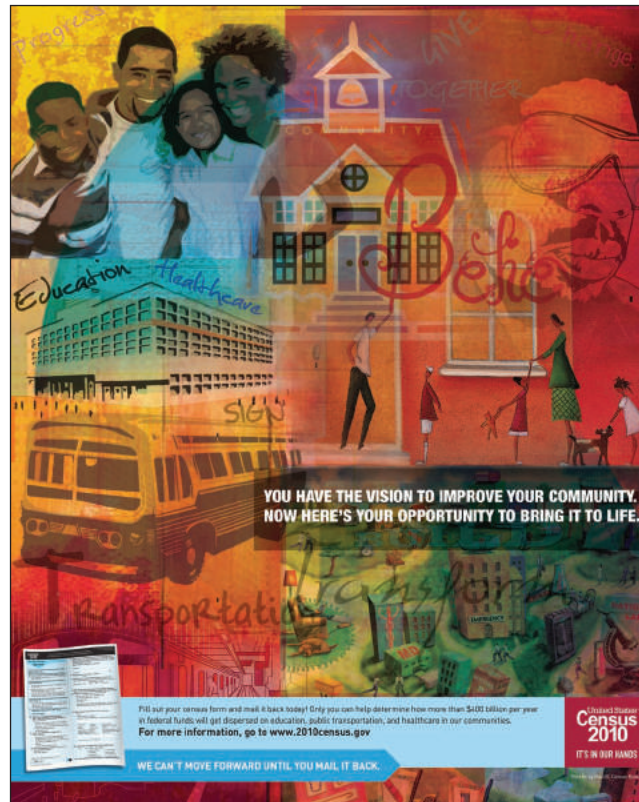
Audience Analysis at the Front Line

Some major businesses are sending their executives out to the front lines for a day or more to increase awareness of both clients' and employees' needs. Such stunts are bringing changes to the front lines. A Loews executive who served as a bellhop, pool attendant, and housekeeper at a Florida hotel sweated so much in his polyester uniform that he had both the style and material of the uniforms altered. Executives at DaVita, a firm that runs kidney dialysis centers, learn that patient needs must come first, even before company paperwork.

Other companies which send executives out to be low-level workers include Walt Disney, Continental Airlines, Sysco, and Amazon.com.

What do you think executives learn on the front lines at these companies? Can you think of other companies that would benefit from similar programs for their executives?

Adapted from Joann S. Lublin, "Top Brass Try Life in the Trenches: To Promote Understanding, Firms Require Executives to Perform Entry-Level Jobs," *Wall Street Journal*, June 25, 2007, B1, B3.



The U.S. Census Bureau prepared over 100 posters, similar to this one, to reach various segments of its audience.

Source: "Posters," U.S. Census Bureau: United States Census 2010, <http://2010.census.gov/partners/materials/posters-materials.php>.

were purchased for young children. So they developed a spill-resistant model with rubberized edges that became a top seller.²¹

Tesco PLC, Britain's largest retailer, signs up customers for its Clubcard. The card gives customers discounts, and it gives Tesco audience data. When Tesco added Asian herbs and ethnic foods in Indian and Pakistani neighborhoods, the data showed the products were also popular with affluent white customers, so Tesco expanded its roll-out. When customers buy diapers the first time, they get coupons for usual baby products such as wipes and toys. They also get coupons for beer, because the data show that new fathers buy more beer.²²

AUDIENCE BENEFITS LO 2-4

Use your analysis of your audience to create effective **audience benefits**, advantages that the audience gets by using your services, buying your products, following your policies, or adopting your ideas. In informative messages, benefits give reasons to comply with the information you announce and suggest that the information is good. In persuasive messages, benefits give reasons to act and help overcome audience resistance. Negative messages do not use benefits.

Characteristics of Good Audience Benefits

Good benefits meet four criteria. Each of these criteria suggests a technique for writing good benefits.

1. Adapt benefits to the audience. When you write to different audiences, you may need to stress different benefits. Suppose that you manufacture a product and want to persuade dealers to carry it. The features you may cite in ads directed toward customers—stylish colors, sleek lines, convenience, durability, good price—won’t convince dealers. Shelf space is at a premium, and no dealer carries all the models of all the brands available for any given product. Why should the dealer stock your product? To be persuasive, talk about the features that are benefits from the dealer’s point of view: turnover, profit margin, the national advertising campaign that will build customer awareness and interest, the special store displays you offer that will draw attention to the product.

2. Stress intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivators. **Intrinsic motivators** come automatically from using a product or doing something. **Extrinsic motivators** are “added on.” Someone in power decides to give them; they do not necessarily come from using the product or doing the action. Figure 2.4 gives examples of extrinsic and intrinsic motivators for three activities.

Intrinsic motivators or benefits are better than extrinsic motivators for two reasons:

- There just aren’t enough extrinsic motivators for everything you want people to do. You can’t give a prize to every customer every time he or she places an order or to every subordinate who does what he or she is supposed to do.
- Research shows that extrinsic motivators may actually make people *less* satisfied with the products they buy or the procedures they follow.

In a groundbreaking study of professional employees, Frederick Herzberg found that the things people said they liked about their jobs were all intrinsic motivators—pride in achievement, an enjoyment of the work itself, responsibility. Extrinsic motivators—pay, company policy—were sometimes mentioned as things people disliked, but they were never cited as things that motivated or satisfied them. People who made a lot of money still did not mention salary as a good point about the job or the organization.²³

Steak ‘n Shake restaurant chain wanted to find out what motivated its employees to do their best at work. The company learned that what employees want more than money is respect and the feeling that management listens to them and values their input.²⁴

3. Prove benefits with clear logic and explain them in adequate detail. An audience benefit is a claim or assertion that the audience will benefit if they do something. Convincing the audience, therefore, involves two steps: making sure that the benefit really will occur, and explaining it to the audience.



Witness.org: Sharing Evidence of Human Rights Abuses

“For the past 16 years Witness has provided video cameras to carefully selected activists and community leaders in more than 100 countries. The group has amassed one of the largest existing collections of human-rights-abuse footage and has shown its videos to policy makers and human-rights groups around the world.”

The graphic and disturbing nature of these videos make them difficult to distribute to public forums (such as YouTube), where user guidelines prevent anyone from sharing violent or sexually explicit material. Instead, Witness created their own version of YouTube—<http://hub.witness.org/>—where anyone can submit video clips of human rights abuses, and anyone can log in and view the evidence.

Witness’ video evidence has led to war crimes prosecutions and put pressure on governments to change their policies.

How does Witness’ approach demonstrate a keen understanding of audience analysis? What “audience benefits” does their website address? What ethical concerns might there be about publishing graphic video evidence on a public website?

Quoted and adapted from David Kushner, “In Your Eyes: Peter Gabriel’s Human-Rights Group Embraces Social Media. A YouTube for Unseen Atrocities,” *Fast Company*, November 2008, 80–2.

Figure 2.4 Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivators

Activity	Extrinsic motivator	Intrinsic motivator
Making a sale	Getting a commission	Pleasure in convincing someone; pride in using your talents to think of a strategy and execute it
Turning in a suggestion to a company suggestion system	Getting a monetary reward when the suggestion is implemented	Solving a problem at work; making the work environment a little more pleasant
Writing a report that solves an organizational problem	Getting praise, a good performance appraisal, and maybe a raise	Pleasure in having an effect on an organization; pride in using your skills to solve problems; solving the problem itself

If the logic behind a claimed benefit is faulty or inaccurate, there's no way to make that particular benefit convincing. Revise the benefit to make it logical.

- Faulty logic: Moving your account information into Excel will save you time.
- Analysis: If you have not used Excel before, in the short run it will probably take you longer to work with your account information using Excel. You may have been pretty good with your old system!
- Revised benefit: Moving your account information into Excel will allow you to prepare your monthly budget pages with a few clicks of a button.

If the logic is sound, making that logic evident to the audience is a matter of providing enough evidence and showing how the evidence proves the claim that there will be a benefit. Always provide enough detail to be vivid and concrete. You'll need more detail in the following situations:

- The audience may not have thought of the benefit before.
- The benefit depends on the difference between the long run and the short run.
- The audience will be hard to persuade, and you need detail to make the benefit vivid and emotionally convincing.

The apparel industry, which is actively seeking a middle-aged and baby boomer audience, is using details to attract them. Slacks may offer slimming panels, and jeans may offer stretch waists and room for padded hips and thighs. Tops may cover upper arms. The potential market is huge. Women over 35 bought over half the annual \$100 billion spent on women's apparel purchases.²⁵



Until recently, Islamic women who wanted to go swimming had a problem. To meet their customers' needs, the Australian company Ahiida now makes hooded full-bodied bathing suits, called Burqinis, for Muslim women who wish to go swimming while still maintaining the Islamic customs of full body coverage.

Source: Lisa Miller, "Belief Watch: Surf's Up!" *Newsweek*, January 29, 2007, 15.

4. Phrase benefits in you-attitude. If benefits aren't worded with you-attitude (Chapter 3), they'll sound selfish and won't be as effective as they could be. It doesn't matter how you phrase benefits while you're brainstorming and developing them, but in your final draft, check to be sure that you've used you-attitude.

Lacks you-attitude: **We** have the lowest prices in town.

You-attitude: At Havlichek Cars, **you get** the best deal in town.

Ways to Identify and Develop Audience Benefits

Brainstorm lots of benefits—perhaps twice as many as you'll need. Then you can choose the ones that are most effective for your audience, or that you can develop most easily. The first benefit you think of may not be the best.

Sometimes benefits will be easy to think of and to explain. When they are harder to identify or to develop, use the following steps to identify and then develop good benefits.

1. Identify the needs, wants, and feelings that may motivate your audience. All of us have basic needs, and most of us supplement those needs with possessions or intangibles we want. We need enough food to satisfy nutritional needs, but we may want our diet to make us look sexy. We need basic shelter, but we may want our homes to be cozy, luxurious, or green. And our needs and wants are strongly influenced by our feelings. We may feel safer in a more expensive car, even though research does not show that car as being safer than cheaper models.

2. Identify the objective features of your product or policy that could meet the needs you've identified. Sometimes just listing the audience's needs makes it obvious which feature meets a given need. Sometimes several features together meet the need. Try to think of all of them.

Suppose that you want to persuade people to come to the restaurant you manage. It's true that everybody needs to eat, but telling people they can satisfy their hunger needs won't persuade them to come to your restaurant rather than going somewhere else or eating at home. Depending on what features your restaurant offered, you could appeal to one or more of the following subgroups:

Subgroup	Features to meet the subgroup's needs
People who work outside the home	A quick lunch; a relaxing place to take clients or colleagues
Parents with small children	High chairs, children's menus, and toys to keep the kids entertained while they wait for their order
People who eat out a lot	Variety both in food and in decor
People on tight budgets	Economical food; a place where they don't need to tip (cafeteria or fast food)
People on special diets	Low-sodium and low-carb dishes; vegetarian food; kosher food
People to whom eating out is part of an evening's entertainment	Music or a floor show; elegant surroundings; reservations so they can get to a show or event after dinner; late hours so they can come to dinner after a show or game



No Substitute for Face Time

In the face of globalization and remote video feeds that simultaneously connect workers and clients all around the world, face-to-face meetings are still critical in global business. Culturally, the world is still incredibly diverse, and to make global coalitions, such as launching a Coca-Cola bottling plant in Albania a few years ago, meeting the right people in person was crucial for Coke's CEO.

Another example is MTV in the center of Islamic nations. Would it be possible to enter MTV into the Arabian market without offending the religious institutions of this region? Not without many carefully planned, face-to-face meetings. The chief of MTV Networks International managed to accomplish the establishment of MTV Arabia by convincing the mayor of Mecca that the new station would provide educational opportunities and would not show skin.

Collaborative technologies such as videoconferencing may be convenient and less expensive than frequent flying, but technology simply cannot take the place of physically sitting down with a colleague or client to solve problems and form alliances.

Adapted from Tom Lowry et al., "It's All About the Face-to-Face," *BusinessWeek*, January 28, 2008, 48–51.



A Song Becomes a Star Channel

Wavin' Flag, a song by Somali-Canadian hip-hop artist K'naan, became a World Cup anthem and top iTunes hit in 17 countries. It also was the centerpiece of Coca-Cola's largest marketing campaign, which reached 160 countries.

Coke liked K'naan's multinational upbringing and the song's melody and chorus. K'naan recorded versions of the song with various multinational pop stars to increase its appeal.

Coke put the profits from the sale of *Wavin' Flag* downloads into its Replenish Africa Initiative, a \$30 million effort to provide clean water and better sanitation on that continent.

Adapted from Duane D. Stanford, "Coke's World Cup Song Hits the High Notes," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, July 19, 2010, 24–25.

Whenever you're communicating with customers or clients about features that are not unique to your organization, it's wise to present both benefits of the features themselves and benefits of dealing with your company. If you talk about the benefits of the new healthy choices in children's menus but don't mention your own revised menu, people may go somewhere else!

3. Show how the audience can meet their needs with the features of the policy or product. Features alone rarely motivate people. Instead, link the feature to the audience's needs—and provide details to make the benefit vivid.

Weak: You get quick service.

Better: If you only have an hour for lunch, try our Business Buffet. Within minutes, you can choose from a variety of main dishes, vegetables, and a make-your-own-sandwich-and-salad bar. You'll have a lunch that's as light or filling as you want, with time to enjoy it—and still be back to the office on time.

AUDIENCE BENEFITS WORK

Appropriate audience benefits work so well that organizations spend much time and money identifying them and then developing them.

- Procter & Gamble increased the market share of Gain detergent, and saw annual sales of over a billion dollars, by focusing on a benefit their audience considered important: the scent.²⁶
- Hotels study which benefits are worth the money, and which are not. Holiday Inn keeps restaurants and bars in all their hotels, even though they are not money makers, but does not have bellhops. Staybridge Suites cleans less often but has "Sundowner receptions" which give guests a free meal and a chance to socialize.²⁷
- *The Daily Sun*, a South African tabloid, is gaining market share, when other newspapers are losing it, by focusing on stories—soccer, sex, soap operas, local witches, supernatural events like evil flying tortoises—its audience wants to read. This audience, primarily newly enfranchised black Africans, has given the paper an audited paid circulation of over a half million.²⁸
- Many companies offer their employees health benefits, an arrangement that benefits both the company and employee. Meredith Corporation, publisher of magazines such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Family Circle*, and *Parents*, pays for employee health screenings. Employees who accept the offer get \$300 off their health insurance cost; Meredith gets a decrease in corporate health care costs.²⁹
- Companies branching out into servicing their products find that they are more successful if they offer benefits in addition to cost saving. One truck company offers its customers fleet-management services, including monitoring fuel consumption and showing drivers how to increase their gas mileage. This service in turn helps its customers appeal to environmentally concerned clients such as government agencies.³⁰

Remember that audience benefits must be appropriate for the audience before they work. Tylenol tried a new ad campaign that said, "We put our love into Tylenol." Upset customers who remembered the Tylenol cyanide poisonings wrote in saying they didn't want anyone putting anything into their Tylenol.³¹

THE McPLAYBOOK



Now That's Fast Food

To pump up business 24/7, McDonald's has sped up its new-product introductions. Here's its secret recipe:

<p>Make it easy to eat</p> <p>McDonald's does more than half its business at drive-through windows. That means it needs snacks and meals that can be held in one hand while the other is on the steering wheel.</p>	<p>Make it easy to prepare</p> <p>McDonald's restaurant crews turn over entirely within a year, on average. To maintain consistency amid this churn, tasks must be simple to learn and repeat.</p>
<p>Make it quick</p> <p>It's called fast food for a reason. McDonald's tests all new products for cooking times so customers don't have to wait even a second longer than absolutely necessary.</p>	<p>Make what the customers want</p> <p>McDonald's prowls the market for new products and then spends months in carefully monitored field tests to ensure that people will buy its new concoctions.</p>

McDonald's plans menu items to meet the needs and expectations of customers, employees, and franchise owners.

Source: From Michael Arndt, "Special Report: McDonald's," Reprinted from the February 5, 2007 issue of *BusinessWeek*. Used with permission of Bloomberg L. P. Copyright © 2011. All rights reserved.

Sometimes it is hard to know what your audience wants. A classic example is "feature creep" in electronic goods. Unfortunately, consumers seem to want lots of features in their electronics when they buy them, but then become frustrated trying to use them and return the devices. In the United States, product returns cost \$100 billion.³² Research has shown that over half the wares are in complete working order; consumers just cannot operate them.³³

WRITING OR SPEAKING TO MULTIPLE AUDIENCES WITH DIFFERENT NEEDS

Many business and administrative messages go not to a single person but to a larger audience. When the members of your audience share the same interests and the same level of knowledge, you can use the principles outlined above for individual readers or for members of homogeneous groups. But often different members of the audience have different needs.

Researcher Rachel Spilka has shown that talking to readers both inside and outside the organization helped corporate engineers adapt their documents successfully. Talking to readers and reviewers helped writers involve readers in the planning process, understand the social and political relationships among readers, and negotiate conflicts orally rather than depending solely on the document. These writers were then able to think about content as well as about organization and style, appeal to common grounds (such as reducing waste or increasing productivity) that multiple readers shared, and reduce the number of revisions needed before documents were approved.³⁴

When it is not possible to meet everyone's needs, meet the needs of gatekeepers and decision makers first.



Localizing Incentive Programs

Incentive programs are employee benefits aimed to reward good work performances. Globalization has complicated such programs, because what works in one country may not work in another.

In the United States, top performers might be rewarded with an expensive luxury item such as a watch. In China or India, a moped might be more appropriate.

Travel awards may also differ. US employees generally prefer unstructured, leisurely vacations, such as those offered by beach resorts. Europeans tend to prefer more adventurous trips, perhaps including a strenuous mountain hike or rafting trip. Many Chinese prefer highly structured tours with carefully planned itineraries.

Religion can also be a factor. Many U.S. employees would appreciate a trip to Las Vegas, with a complimentary bottle of champagne in their room. But many religious people in the Middle East or Asia would not want the gambling or the alcohol.

What are some employee incentives you can name that would be appropriate in one country but not another? What are some ways large firms can work with these differences?

Adapted from Irwin Speizer, "Good Intentions, Lost in Translation," *Workforce Management*, November 21, 2005, <http://www.workforce.com/archive/feature/benefits-compensations/good-intentions-lost-translation/index.php>.

As you write for multiple audiences, consider these strategies:

Content and number of details

- Provide an overview or executive summary for readers who want just the main points.
- In the body of the document, provide enough detail for decision makers and for anyone else who could veto your proposal.
- If the decision makers don't need details that other audiences will want, provide those details in appendices—statistical tabulations, earlier reports, and so forth.

Organization

- Use headings and a table of contents so readers can turn to the portions that interest them.
- Organize your message based on the decision makers' attitudes toward it.

Level of formality

- Avoid personal pronouns. *You* ceases to have a specific meaning when several different audiences use a document.
- If both internal and external audiences will use a document, use a slightly more formal style than you would in an internal document.
- Use a more formal style when you write to international audiences.

Technical level

- In the body of the document, assume the degree of knowledge that decision makers will have.
- Put background and explanatory information under separate headings. Then readers can use the headings and the table of contents to read or skip these sections, as their knowledge dictates.
- If decision makers will have more knowledge than other audiences, provide a glossary of terms. Early in the document, let readers know that the glossary exists.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- The **primary audience** will make a decision or act on the basis of your message. The **secondary audience** may be asked by the primary audience to comment on your message or to implement your ideas after they've been approved. The **auxiliary audience** encounters the message but does not have to interact with it. A **gatekeeper** controls whether the message gets to the primary audience. A **watchdog audience** has political, social, or economic power and may base future actions on its evaluation of your message.
- A communication channel is the means by which you convey your message to your audience.
- The following questions provide a framework for audience analysis:
 1. What will the audience's initial reaction be to the message?
 2. How much information does the audience need?

3. What obstacles must you overcome?
 4. What positive aspects can you emphasize?
 5. What expectations does the audience have about the appropriate language, contents, and organization of messages?
 6. How will the audience use the document?
- **Audience benefits** are advantages that the audience gets by using your services, buying your products, following your policies, or adopting your ideas. Benefits can exist for policies and ideas as well as for goods and services.
 - Good benefits are adapted to the audience, based on **intrinsic** rather than **extrinsic motivators**, supported by clear logic, explained in adequate detail, and phrased in you-attitude. Extrinsic benefits simply aren't available to reward every desired behavior; further, they reduce the satisfaction in doing something for its own sake.
 - To create audience benefits,
 1. Identify the feelings, fears, and needs that may motivate your audience.
 2. Identify the features of your product or policy that could meet the needs you've identified.
 3. Show how the audience can meet their needs with the features of the policy or product.
 - When you write to multiple audiences, use the primary audience to determine level of detail, organization, level of formality, and use of technical terms and theory.

CHAPTER 2
Exercises and Problems

*Go to www.mhhe.com/locker10e for additional Exercises and Problems.

2.1 Reviewing the Chapter

1. Who are the five different audiences your message may need to address? (LO 2-1)
2. What are some characteristics to consider when analyzing individuals? (LO 2-1)
3. What are some characteristics to consider when analyzing groups? (LO 2-1)
4. What are some questions to consider when analyzing organizational culture? (LO 2-1)
5. What is a discourse community? Why will discourse communities be important in your career? (LO 2-1)
6. What are standard business communication channels? (LO 2-2)
7. What kinds of electronic channels seem most useful to you? Why? (LO 2-2)
8. What are considerations to keep in mind when selecting channels? (LO 2-2)
9. What are 12 questions to ask when analyzing your audience? (LO 2-3)
10. What are four characteristics of good audience benefits? (LO 2-4)
11. What are three ways to identify and develop audience benefits? (LO 2-4)
12. What are considerations to keep in mind when addressing multiple audiences? (LO 2-3)

2.2 Reviewing Grammar

Good audience analysis requires careful use of pronouns. Review your skills with pronoun usage by doing grammar exercise B.5, Appendix B.

2.3 Identifying Audiences

In each of the following situations, label the audiences as gatekeeper, primary, secondary, auxiliary, or watchdog audiences (all audiences may not be in each scenario):

1. Kent, Carol, and Jose are planning to start a website design business. However, before they can get started, they need money. They have developed a business plan and are getting ready to seek funds from financial institutions for starting their small business.
2. Barbara's boss asked her to write a direct mail letter to potential customers about the advantages of becoming a preferred member of their agency's travel club. The letter will go to all customers of the agency who are over 65 years old.
3. Paul works for the mayor's office in a big city. As part of a citywide cost-cutting measure, a blue-ribbon panel has recommended requiring employees who work more than 40 hours in a week to take compensatory time off rather than being paid overtime. The only exceptions will be the police and fire departments. The mayor asks Paul to prepare a proposal for the city council, which will vote on whether to implement the change. Before they vote, council members will hear from (1) citizens, who will have an opportunity to read the proposal and communicate their opinions to the city council; (2) mayors' offices in other cities, who may be asked about their experiences; (3) union representatives, who may be concerned about the reduction in income that will occur if the proposal is implemented; (4) department heads, whose ability to schedule work might be limited if the proposal passes; and (5) the blue-ribbon panel and good-government lobbying groups. Council members come up for reelection in six months.
4. Sharon, Steven's boss at Bigster Corporation, has asked him to write an e-mail for everyone in her division, informing them of HR's new mandatory training sessions on new government regulations affecting Bigster's services.

2.4 Analyzing Multiple Audiences

Like most major corporations, the U.S. Census Bureau has multiple, conflicting audiences, among them the president, Congress, press, state governments, citizens (both as providers and users of data), statisticians, and researchers.

- For the bureau, who might serve as gatekeeper, primary, secondary, auxiliary, and watchdog audiences?
- What kinds of conflicting goals might these audiences have?
- What would be appropriate benefits for each type of audience?
- What kinds of categories might the bureau create for its largest audience (citizens)?
- How do some of the posters at the website below differ for different audiences?: "Posters," U.S. Census Bureau: United States Census 2010, <http://2010.census.gov/partners/materials/posters-materials.php>.

2.5 Choosing a Channel to Reach a Specific Audience

Suppose your organization wants to target a product, service, or program for each of the following audiences. What would be the best channel(s) to reach that group in your city? To what extent would that channel reach all group members?

- a. Stay-at-home mothers
- b. Vegetarians
- c. Full-time students at a university
- d. Part-time students at a community college
- e. Non-English speakers
- f. People who use hearing aids
- g. Parents whose children play softball or baseball
- h. Attorneys
- i. Female owners of small businesses
- j. Pet owners

2.6 Identifying and Developing Audience Benefits

Listed here are several things an organization might like its employees to do:

1. Use less paper.
2. Attend a brown-bag lunch to discuss ways to improve products or services.
3. Become more physically fit.
4. Volunteer for community organizations.
5. Write fewer e-mails.
6. Attend mandatory training about new government regulations affecting the business.

As your instructor directs,

- a. Identify the motives or needs that might be met by each of the activities.
- b. Take each need or motive and develop it as an audience benefit in a full paragraph. Use additional paragraphs for the other needs met by the activity. Remember to use you-attitude!

2.7 Identifying Objections and Audience Benefits

Think of an organization you know something about, and answer the following questions for it:

- a. Your organization is thinking about developing a knowledge management system that requires workers to input their knowledge and experience in their job functions into the organizational database. What benefits could the knowledge management system offer your organization? What drawbacks are there? Who would be the easiest to convince? Who would be the hardest?
- b. New telephone software would efficiently replace your organization's long-standing human phone operator who has been a perennial welcoming voice to incoming callers. What objections might people in your organization have to replacing the operator? What benefits might your organization receive? Who would be easiest to convince? Who would be the hardest?
- c. Your organization is thinking of outsourcing one of its primary products to a manufacturer in another country where the product can be made more cost-efficiently. What fears or objections might people have? What benefits might your organization receive? Who would be easiest to convince? Who would be the hardest?

As your instructor directs,

- a. Share your answers orally with a small group of students.
- b. Present your answers in an oral presentation to the class.
- c. Write a paragraph developing the best audience benefit you identified. Remember to use you-attitude.

2.8 Analyzing Benefits for Multiple Audiences

The U.S. Census Bureau lists these benefits from cooperating with the census:

“Census information affects the numbers of seats your state occupies in the U.S. House of Representatives. And people from many walks of life use census data to advocate for causes, rescue disaster victims, prevent diseases, research markets, locate pools of skilled workers and more.

“When you do the math, it's easy to see what an accurate count of residents can do for your community. Better infrastructure. More services. A brighter tomorrow for everyone. In fact, the information the census collects helps to determine how more than \$400 billion dollars of federal funding each year is spent on infrastructure and services like:

- Hospitals
- Job training centers
- Schools
- Senior centers
- Bridges, tunnels and other public works projects
- Emergency services”

How well do these benefits meet the four characteristics of good audience benefits discussed in this chapter?

Quoted from “Why It's Important,” U.S. Census Bureau: United States Census 2010, accessed May 8, 2010, <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/about/why-important.php>.

2.9 Addressing Your Audience's Need for Information

"Tell me about yourself."

This may be the most popular opening question of job interviews, but it's also a question that you'll encounter in nearly any social situation when you meet someone new. Although the question may be the same, the answer you give will change based upon the rhetorical situation: the audience, purpose, and context of the question.

For each of the following situations in a–g, ask yourself these questions to help create a good response:

- How will the audience react to your answer? Will the audience see the message as important? What information will you need to include in your answer to keep their attention?
- How will the audience use your answer? Why is the audience asking the question? What information is relevant to the audience and what information can you leave out?
- How much information does the audience need? What information do they already know about you? What level of detail do they need?
- What are the audience's expectations about your answer? What are the appropriate word choices and

tone for your answer? What topics should you avoid (at least for now)?

- What are the physical conditions that will affect your answer? Where are you (e.g., Are you outside, in a noisy room, on the phone)? How much time do you have to give your response?

Write your response to the statement "Tell me about yourself." Assume that the question is being asked by

- a. A recruiter at a career fair in your university's auditorium.
- b. A recruiter in a job interview in a small interview or conference room.
- c. An attractive male or female at a popular weekend nightspot.
- d. Your instructor on the first day of class.
- e. Your new roommate on your first day in the dormitory.
- f. A new co-worker on your first day at a new job.
- g. A new co-worker on your first day volunteering at your local food pantry.

2.10 Analyzing Individuals

Read about the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator on page 29. On the web, take one of the free tests similar to the Myers-Briggs. Read about your personality type and consider how accurate the description may be. Print your results.

As your instructor directs,

- Share your results orally with a small group of students and discuss how accurately the Type Indicator describes you. Identify some of the differences among your personality types and consider how the differences would affect efforts to collaborate on projects.

- Identify other students in the classroom with the same combination of personality traits. Create a brief oral presentation to the class that describes your Type Indicator and explains how the pros and cons of your personality will affect group dynamics in collaborative work.

- Write a brief memo to your instructor describing your results, assessing how well the results reflect your personality, and suggesting how your personality traits might affect your work in class and in the workplace.

2.11 Getting Customer Feedback

Smart businesses want to know what their customers and clients are saying about their products and services. Many websites can help them do so.

Check some of the common sites for customer comments. Here is a list to get you started:

<http://www.amazon.com>
<http://www.angieslist.com>
<http://getsatisfaction.com>
<http://www.my3cents.com>
<http://www.ratepoint.com>
<http://www.suggestionbox.com>

<http://www.thesqueakywheel.com>

<http://www.yelp.com>

What does each site do?

What are good features of each site?

What are drawbacks?

As your instructor directs,

- a. Discuss your findings in a memo to your instructor.
- b. Share your findings in small groups.
- c. As a group, make a presentation to your classmates.

2.12 Identifying International Audience Benefits

Reread the sidebar on page 39 explaining how Procter & Gamble is marketing its products in developing countries. In small groups, discuss different marketing practices you have become aware of in other countries. How do these practices benefit consumers? How do they benefit store owners?

As your instructor directs,

- Post your findings electronically to share with the class.
- Present your findings in a memo to your instructor.
- Present your findings in an oral presentation to the class.

2.13 Evaluating a New Channel

To combat software piracy, Microsoft tried an unusual communication channel. A new software update turned screens black on computers using pirated software; the update also posted a message to switch to legitimate software copies. The update did not prevent people from using their machines, and they could manually change their wallpaper back to its previous design. But the black screen returned every 60 minutes. Microsoft said there was little protest except in China, where ironically the software piracy problem is greatest.

In small groups, discuss this practice.

- What do you think of this channel?
- Is it ethical?
- Will it help or hurt Microsoft profits in China?

- How do you think receivers of the black screen react?

As your instructor directs,

- Post your findings electronically to share with the class.
- Present your findings in a memo to your instructor.
- Present your findings in an oral presentation to the class.

Source: Loretta Chao and Juliet Ye, "Microsoft Tactic Raises Hackles in China: In Antipiracy Move, Software Update Turns Screens Black and Urges Users to Buy Legal Windows Copies," *Wall Street Journal*, October 23, 2008, B4.

2.14 Discussing Ethics

- What do you think about the practice among some companies of giving perks such as free samples to bloggers to discuss their products? Does your opinion change according to the expense of the perk (free tissues vs. tablet computers, for instance)? How can you tell if bloggers have been influenced by the companies whose products they discuss?
- What do you think about the practice of law firms using social media to find plaintiffs (see sidebar on page 35)? Is it any worse to use social media than print or TV ads? Why? Look at some of the sites provided by law firms. Try <http://www.oil-rig-explosions.com/>, <http://www.consumerwarningnetwork.com/>; <http://www.sokolovlaw.com/legal-help/dangerous-drugs/birth-control>; <http://westwoodscammed.me/>. How persuasive is the content?
- What do you think about the practice of tracking consumers' Internet surfing and selling the information to marketers? Does the tracking seem more intrusive when it is combined with off-line records such as shopping and credit card records?
- What do you think about the practice of companies asking their employees to take health screenings and then giving them hundreds of dollars off their health insurance if they do so? What benefits do you see for employees? Drawbacks? Is this just a way to penalize employees who refuse by making them pay more for health insurance?

2.15 Banking on Multiple Audiences

Bruce Murphy, an executive at KeyBank, is working on a new problem: how to extend banking services to a new audience—people who use banks intermittently or not at all. It is a large group, estimated at 73 million people. Together, they spend an estimated \$11 billion in fees at places such as check-cashing outlets, money-wire companies, and paycheck lenders (companies offering cash advances on future paychecks).

However, they are a tough audience. Many of them have a deep distrust of banks or believe banks will not serve them. Murphy also faced another tough audience: bank managers who feared attracting forgeries and other bad checks and thus losing money. One manager actually said, "Are you crazy? These are the very people we're trying to keep out of the bank!"

To attract the new customers, KeyBank cashes payroll and government checks for a 1.5% fee, well below the 2.44% which is average for check-cashing outlets. The bank also started offering free financial education classes. In fact, the bank even has a program to help people with a history of bounced checks to clear their records by paying restitution and taking the financial education class.

The program is growing, both among check-cashing clients and branches offering the services, to the satisfaction of both audiences.

- What are some other businesses that could expand services to underserved populations?
- What services would they offer?
- What problems would they encounter?
- What audience appeals could they use to attract clients or customers?

Source: Adapted from Ann Carrns, “Banks Court a New Client: The Low-Income Earner: KeyCorp Experiments with Check Cashing,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 16, 2007, A1, A14.

2.16 Announcing a New Employee Benefit

Your company has decided to pay employees for doing charity work. Employees can spend one hour working with a charitable or nonprofit group for every 40 hours they work. As Vice President of Human Resources, you need to announce this new program.

Pick a specific organization you know something about, and answer the following questions about it:

1. What proportion of the employees are already involved in volunteer work?
2. Is community service or “giving back” consistent with the organization’s corporate mission?
3. Some employees won’t be able or won’t want to participate. What is the benefit for them in working for a company that has such a program?
4. Will promoting community participation help the organization attract and retain workers?

As your instructor directs,

- a. Present your answers in an oral presentation to the class.
- b. Present your answers in a memo to your instructor.
- c. Share your answers with a small group of students and write a joint memo reporting the similarities and differences you found.

2.17 Announcing a Tuition Reimbursement Program

Assume that your organization is considering reimbursing workers for tuition and fees for job-related courses. As Director of Education and Training, you will present to company executives a review of pros and cons for the program. To prepare, you have composed a list of questions you know they may have. Pick a specific organization that you know something about, and answer the following questions about it.

1. What do people do on the job? What courses or degrees could help them do their current jobs even better?
2. How much education do people already have? How do they feel about formal schooling?
3. How busy are employees? Will most have time to take classes and study in addition to working 40 hours a week (or more)?
4. Is it realistic to think that people who get more education would get higher salaries? Or is money for increases limited? Is it reasonable to think that most people could be promoted? Or does the organization have many more low-level than high-level jobs?
5. How much loyalty do employees have to this particular organization? Is it “just a job,” or do they care about the welfare of the organization?
6. How competitive is the job market? How easy is it for the organization to find and retain qualified employees?
7. Is knowledge needed to do the job changing, or is knowledge learned 5 or 10 years ago still up-to-date?
8. How competitive is the economic market? Is this company doing well financially? Can its customers or clients easily go somewhere else? Is it a government agency dependent on tax dollars for funding? What about the current situation makes this an especially good time to hone the skills of the employees you have?
9. Do you support the program? Why or why not?

2.18 Crafting a Memo for a Particular Audience

Your supervisor at a fitness center wants to increase the organization’s membership and has asked you to write a letter to the three primary population segments in your town: retirees, college students, and working professionals with families. Using the following fitness benefits

your supervisor gave you to help you get started, write a version of a letter targeted at each of the three audiences.

- Become a member with no sign-up fees.
- Attend free nutrition classes to help with weight control and optimal fitness.

- Attend any of our many fitness classes, scheduled for your convenience.
- Enjoy the new indoor/outdoor pool with lap lanes and zero-gravity entrance.
- Use the large selection of free-weights and exercise machines.

- Lose weight and feel your healthiest with a personal trainer, who will guide you toward your fitness goals.

Remember these benefits were just to get you started; you are expected to come up with more on your own.

2.19 Analyzing Your Co-Workers

What do your co-workers do? What hassles and challenges do they face? To what extent do their lives outside work affect their responses to work situations? What do your co-workers value? What are their pet peeves? How committed are they to organizational goals? How satisfying do they find their jobs? Are the people you work with quite similar to each other, or do they differ from each other? How?

As your instructor directs,

- a. Share your answers orally with a small group of students.

- b. Present your answers in an oral presentation to the class.
- c. Present your answers in a memo to your instructor.
- d. Share your answers with a small group of students and write a joint memo reporting the similarities and differences you found.

2.20 Analyzing the Audiences of Noncommercial Web Pages

Analyze the implied audiences of two web pages of two noncommercial organizations with the same purpose (combating hunger, improving health, influencing the political process, etc.). You could pick the home pages of the national organization and a local affiliate, or the home pages of two separate organizations working toward the same general goal.

Answer the following questions:

- Do the pages work equally well for surfers and for people who have reached the page deliberately?
- Possible audiences include current and potential volunteers, donors, clients, and employees. Do the pages provide material for each audience? Is the material useful? Complete? Up-to-date? Does new material encourage people to return?

- What assumptions about audiences do content and visuals suggest?
- Can you think of ways that the pages could better serve their audiences?

As your instructor directs,

- a. Share your results orally with a small group of students.
- b. Present your results orally to the class.
- c. Present your results in a memo to your instructor. Attach copies of the home pages.
- d. Share your results with a small group of students, and write a joint memo reporting the similarities and differences you found.
- e. Post your results in an e-mail message to the class. Provide links to the two web pages.

2.21 Analyzing a Discourse Community

Analyze the way a group you are part of uses language. Possible groups include

- Work teams.
- Sports teams.
- Sororities, fraternities, and other social groups.
- Churches, mosques, synagogues, and temples.
- Geographic or ethnic groups.
- Groups of friends.

Questions to ask include the following:

- What specialized terms might not be known to outsiders?
- What topics do members talk or write about? What topics are considered unimportant or improper?
- What channels do members use to convey messages?
- What forms of language do members use to build goodwill? to demonstrate competence or superiority?

- What strategies or kinds of proof are convincing to members?
- What formats, conventions, or rules do members expect messages to follow?
- What are some nonverbal ways members communicate?

As your instructor directs,

- a. Share your results orally with a small group of students.
- b. Present your results in an oral presentation to the class.
- c. Present your results in a memo to your instructor.
- d. Share your results with a small group of students, and write a joint memo reporting the similarities and differences you found.

Building Goodwill

Chapter Outline

You-Attitude

- How to Create You-Attitude
- You-Attitude beyond the Sentence Level

Positive Emphasis

- How to Create Positive Emphasis
- How to Check Positive Emphasis

Tone, Power, and Politeness

- Use Courtesy Titles for People You Don't Know Well
- Be Aware of the Power Implications of the Words You Use

Reducing Bias in Business Communication

- Making Language Nonsexist
- Making Language Nonracist and Nonageist
- Talking about People with Disabilities and Diseases
- Choosing Bias-Free Photos and Illustrations

Summary of Key Points

Restoring Goodwill at Delta



Traveling by air can be a frustrating experience. High prices, extra fees, delays, and cancellations can leave a customer feeling frazzled and angry. After a year in which it had the highest number of customer complaints, Delta Air Lines is trying to change its image by sending all 11,000 flight agents back to training.

In day-long seminars, agents learn how to respond to customer complaints and worries with a positive attitude and a focus on improving the customer's experience. The seminars include these key points:

- *Be positive.* The agents are taught to smile and express appreciation for the customers' business, especially when the customers are unhappy or when there are problems.

- *Be honest.* If a passenger is late and going to miss her flight, the agents learn to tell her immediately and offer to help rebook, rather than encouraging her to rush through the airport.

- *Recognize the customer's feelings.* Empathizing with a frustrated customer can make the difference between a bad experience and a good

experience. Agents may not be able to solve all customers' complaints, but by acknowledging frustration they show that they care and are attempting to help.

- *Don't apologize for the rules.* Baggage fees and other expenses have become part of the flying experience. Agents should stick to the facts, rather than saying they agree with angry customers. Michael Hazelton, a facilitator for the training classes, said, "You may

think you are bonding with the customer by agreeing the fees are horrible, but the customer thinks, 'This person just threw his company under the bus.'"

- *Don't place blame.* Customers know when they've made poor decisions, such as

arriving late or not allowing enough time to get through airport security. Agents should work to help the customers and solve problems as much as possible.

Of course, better customer service can't solve every problem with flying. But at Delta Air Lines, they believe that an increased focus on the customer will improve peoples' impressions of the flying experience.

"Agents learn how to respond to customer complaints and worries with a positive attitude and a focus on improving the customer's experience."

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will know how to

- LO 3-1** Create you-attitude.
- LO 3-2** Create positive emphasis.
- LO 3-3** Improve tone in business communications.
- LO 3-4** Reduce bias in business communications.

Goodwill smooths the challenges of business and administration. Companies have long been aware that treating customers well pays off in more sales and higher profits.

- Amazon's corporate mission says "We seek to be Earth's most customer centric company for three primary customer sets: consumer customers, seller customers and developer customers." Jeff Bezos, Amazon's founder and CEO, has a video on YouTube entitled "Everything I Know." It has three points: obsess over customers, invent on behalf of customers, and think long term, because doing so allows you to serve customers better.¹
- Tony Hsieh built Zappos around customer service, including a service attitude for their vendors.
- Linda Thaler and Robin Koval built the Kaplan Thaler Group into an advertising agency with nearly \$1 billion in billings using goodwill, you-attitude, and positive tone.²
- A study by Vanderbilt University found that a portfolio of companies whose ACSI (American Consumer Satisfaction Index) scores were above the national average far outperformed the market. Over a 10-year period, the portfolio gained 212%; the Standard & Poor 500-stock index rose 105% over the same period.³

Goodwill is important internally as well as externally. More and more organizations are realizing that treating employees well is financially wise as well as ethically sound. Happy employees create less staff turnover, thus reducing hiring and training costs. A University of Pennsylvania study of 3,000 companies found that investing 10% of revenue on capital improvement boosted company productivity 3.9%, but spending the money on employees increased productivity 8.5%, or more than twice as much.⁴

You-attitude, positive emphasis, and bias-free language are three ways to help build goodwill. Messages that show **you-attitude** use the audience's point of view, not the writer's or speaker's. **Positive emphasis** means focusing on the positive rather than the negative aspects of a situation. **Bias-free language** does not discriminate against people on the basis of sex, physical condition, race, ethnicity, age, or any other category. All three help you achieve your purposes and make your messages friendlier, more persuasive, more professional, and more humane. They suggest that you care not just about money but also about the needs and interests of your customers, employees, and fellow citizens.

YOU-ATTITUDE **LO 3-1**

Putting what you want to say in you-attitude is a crucial step both in thinking about your audience's needs and in communicating your concern to your audience.

How to Create You-Attitude

You-attitude is a style of communication that looks at things from the audience's point of view, emphasizing what the audience wants to know, respecting the audience's intelligence, and protecting the audience's ego.

To apply you-attitude on a sentence level, use the following techniques:

1. **Talk about the audience, not about yourself.**
2. **Refer to the customer's request or order specifically.**
3. **Don't talk about feelings, except to congratulate or offer sympathy.**
4. **In positive situations, use *you* more often than *I*. Use *we* when it includes the audience.**
5. **In negative situations, avoid the word *you*. Protect the audience's ego. Use passive verbs and impersonal expressions to avoid assigning blame.**

Revisions for you-attitude do not change the basic meaning of the sentence. However, revising for you-attitude often makes sentences longer because the revision is more specific and has more information. Long sentences need not be wordy. **Wordiness** means having more words than the meaning requires. We can add information and still keep the writing concise.

1. Talk about the audience, not about yourself. Your audience wants to know how they benefit or are affected. When you provide this information, you make your message more complete and more interesting.

Lacks you-attitude: **We** have negotiated an agreement with Apex Rent-a-Car that gives you a discount on rental cars.

You-attitude: As a Sunstrand employee, **you can now get** a 20% discount when you rent a car from Apex.

2. Refer to the customer's request or order specifically. Refer to the customer's request, order, or policy specifically, not as a generic *your order* or *your policy*. If your customer is an individual or a small business, it's friendly to specify the content of the order. If you're dealing with a company with which you do a great deal of business, give the invoice or purchase order number.

Lacks you-attitude: **Your order . . .**

You-attitude
(to individual): **The desk chair you ordered . . .**

You-attitude
(to a large store): **Your invoice #783329 . . .**

3. Don't talk about feelings, except to congratulate or offer sympathy. In most business situations, your feelings are irrelevant and should be omitted.

Lacks you-attitude: **We are happy** to extend you a credit line of \$10,000.

You-attitude: **You can now charge** up to \$10,000 on your American Express card.

It is appropriate to talk about your own emotions in a message of congratulations or condolence.

You-attitude: **Congratulations on your promotion to district manager!** I was really pleased to read about it.



Customer Service Becoming Popular with Businesses

More companies are improving customer service to increase both sales and market share.

Walgreens is training pharmacists to work more closely with patients with chronic illnesses such as diabetes. Pharmacists are replacing their normal 3- to 5-minute meetings with regular 20- to 45-minute patient meetings to help them manage their disease.

American Express is training call-center agents to focus on building customer loyalty rather than processing the call quickly.

Even Comcast, which has had well-publicized problems with customer service, is giving its 24,000 call-center agents additional training.

Adapted from Dana Mattioli, "Customer Service as a Growth Engine," *Wall Street Journal*, June 7, 2010, B6.



Exercising Empathy for Employees and Customers

Although the concept of happy employees leading to happy customers is not new, it is experiencing a resurgence in many different industries. For example, call centers are allowing seasoned employees to work at home while a grocery chain is giving employees a profit-sharing plan that rewards them for excellent customer service.

Companies are finding creative ways to help employees identify with customers. USAA, an insurance agency for the military, provides new employees with MREs (meals ready to eat) during orientation so they will better understand the lifestyle of the members they serve.

Cabela's, an outdoor outfitter, encourages employees to use products they sell by loaning items free of charge in exchange for writing reviews on a company system. The loans are good perks for employees, and they help staff understand the issues customers may have with the products.

At Four Seasons Hotels, employees receive free overnight stays and meals at the hotel for themselves and a guest. They gain a customer's perspective on the hotel, but they also grade the hotel on various services.

The companies exercising empathy for employees and customers believe their customer service helps set them apart from other organizations.

Adapted from Jena McGregor, "Customer Service Champs," *BusinessWeek*, March 5, 2007, 52.

Don't talk about your audience's feelings, either. It's distancing to have others tell us how we feel—especially if they are wrong.

Lacks you-attitude: You'll be happy to hear that Open Grip Walkway Channels meet OSHA requirements.

You-attitude: Open Grip Walkway Channels meet OSHA requirements.

Maybe the audience expects that anything you sell would meet government regulations (OSHA—the Occupational Safety and Health Administration—is a federal agency). The audience may even be disappointed if they expected higher standards. Simply explain the situation or describe a product's features; don't predict the audience's response.

When you have good news, simply give the good news.

Lacks you-attitude: You'll be happy to hear that your scholarship has been renewed.

You-attitude: Congratulations! Your scholarship has been renewed.

4. In positive situations, use *you* more often than *I*. Use *we* when it includes the audience.

Talk about the audience, not you or your company.

Lacks you-attitude: We provide health insurance to all employees.

You-attitude: You receive health insurance as a full-time Procter & Gamble employee.

Most readers are tolerant of the word *I* in e-mail messages, which seem like conversation. But edit paper documents to use *I* rarely if at all. *I* suggests that you're concerned about personal issues, not about the organization's problems, needs, and opportunities. *We* works well when it includes the reader. Avoid *we* if it excludes the reader (as it would in a letter to a customer or supplier or as it might in a memo about what *we* in management want *you* to do).

5. In negative situations, avoid the word *you*. Protect your audience's ego. Use passive verbs and impersonal expressions to avoid assigning blame.

When you report bad news or limitations, use a noun for a group of which your audience is a part instead of *you* so people don't feel that they're singled out for bad news.

Lacks you-attitude: You must get approval from the director before you publish any articles or memoirs based on your work in the agency.

You-attitude: Agency personnel must get approval from the director to publish any articles or memoirs based on their work at the agency.

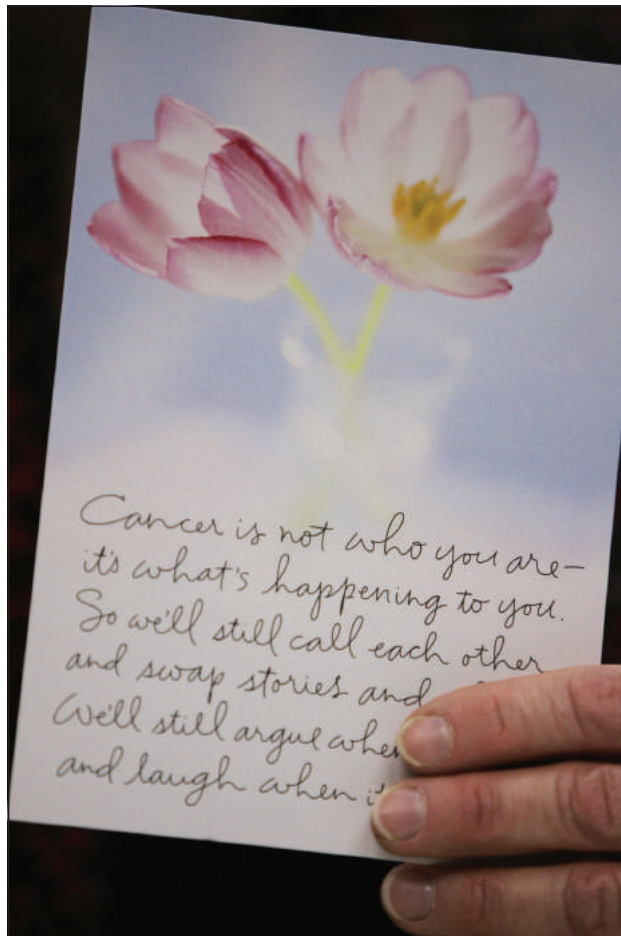
Use passive verbs and impersonal expressions to avoid blaming people. **Passive verbs** describe the action performed on something, without necessarily saying who did it. (See Chapter 5 for a full discussion of passive verbs.) In most cases, active verbs are better. But when your audience is at fault, passive verbs may be useful to avoid assigning blame.

Impersonal expressions omit people and talk only about things. Normally, communication is most lively when it's about people—and most interesting to audiences when it's about them. When you have to report a mistake or bad news, however, you can protect your audience's ego by using an impersonal expression, one in which things, not people, do the acting.

Lacks you-attitude: You made no allowance for inflation in your estimate.

You-attitude (passive): No allowance for inflation has been made in this estimate.

You-attitude (impersonal): This estimate makes no allowance for inflation.



Hallmark is producing a new line of cards for common situations such as depression or chemotherapy. For example, “Get Well Soon,” is not appropriate for someone who is battling cancer. Hallmark has changed the tone of their Journey’s Collection to reflect the needs of their dual audiences—buyers and receivers of cards.

Source: David Twiddy, “Hallmark Tackles Real-Life Situations,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 19, 2007, sec. Business.

A purist might say that impersonal expressions are illogical: An estimate, for example, is inanimate and can’t “make” anything. In the pragmatic world of business writing, however, impersonal expressions help you convey criticism tactfully.

You-Attitude beyond the Sentence Level

Good messages apply you-attitude beyond the sentence level by using content and organization as well as style to build goodwill.

To create goodwill with content,

- Be complete. When you have lots of information to give, consider putting some details in an appendix, which may be read later.
- Anticipate and answer questions your audience is likely to have.
- Show why information your audience didn’t ask for is important.
- Show your audience how the subject of your message affects them.



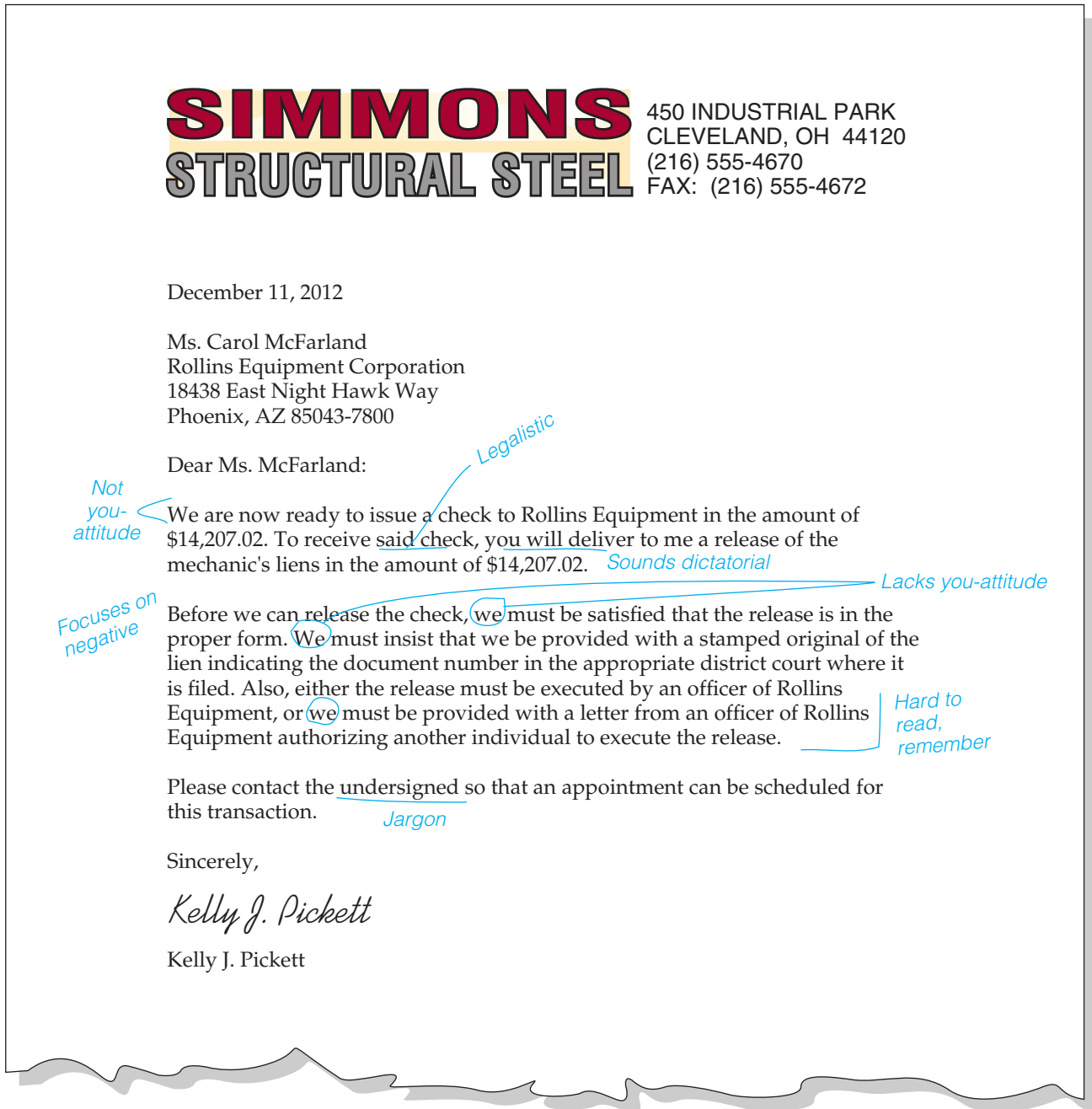
You-Attitude with International Audiences

When you communicate with international audiences, look at the world from their point of view.

The United States is in the middle of most of the maps sold in the United States. It isn’t in the middle of maps sold elsewhere in the world.

The United States clings to a measurement system that has been abandoned by most of the world. When you write for international audiences, use the metric system.

Even pronouns and direction words need attention. We may not feel inclusive to readers with different assumptions and backgrounds. *Here* won’t mean the same thing to a reader in Bonn as it does to one in Boulder.

Figure 3.1 A Letter Lacking You-Attitude

To organize information to build goodwill,

- Put information your audience is most interested in first.
- Arrange information to meet your audience's needs, not yours.
- Use headings and lists so readers can find key points quickly.

Consider the letter in Figure 3.1. As the red marginal notes indicate, many individual sentences in this letter lack you-attitude. Fixing individual sentences could improve the letter. However, it really needs to be totally rewritten.

Figure 3.2 shows a possible revision of this letter. The revision is clearer, easier to read, and friendlier.

POSITIVE EMPHASIS LO 3-2

Some negatives are necessary. When you have bad news to give—announcements of layoffs, product defects and recalls, price increases—straightforward negatives build credibility. (See Chapter 10 on how to present bad news.) Sometimes negatives are needed to make people take a problem

Figure 3.2 A Letter Revised to Improve You-Attitude

SIMMONS

STRUCTURAL STEEL

450 INDUSTRIAL PARK
CLEVELAND, OH 44120
(216) 555-4670
FAX: (216) 555-4672

December 11, 2012

Ms. Carol McFarland
Rollins Equipment Corporation
18438 East Night Hawk Way
Phoenix, AZ 85043-7800

Dear Ms. McFarland:

Let's clear up the lien in the Allen contract.

Rollins will receive a check for \$14,207.02 when you give us a release for the mechanic's lien of \$14,207.02. To assure us that the release is in the proper form,

1. Give us a stamped original of the lien indicating the document's district court number, and
2. Either
 - a. Have an officer of Rollins Equipment sign the release
 - or
 - b. Give us a letter from a Rollins officer authorizing someone else to sign the release.

Please call me to tell me which way is best for you.

Sincerely,

Kelly J. Pickett

Kelly J. Pickett
Extension 5318

Starts with main point from the reader's point of view

Focuses on what reader gets

List makes it easy to see that reader needs to do two things—and that the second can be done in two ways.

Emphasizes reader's choice

Extension number makes it easy for reader to phone.



Defining Allowable Negatives

The Des Moines *Register* issued the following standards for contributors to its electronic forum:

"[The Des Moines *Register*'s] new updated standards make the distinction between offensive opinion and offensive approach.

We will remove comments including these types of specific information or language:

- Libel. In general terms, that means a comment that includes a false statement of fact that actually harms a person's reputation (as opposed to insulting or offending them).
- Sexually explicit or crude sexual comments about someone.
- Threatening statements or statements that suggest violent acts against someone.
- Crude comments about a child.
- Swearing or obscenity.
- Derogatory phrases to define a group of people.
- Nasty name-calling (language such as "moron" and "white trash").

But we will allow opinions some will find offensive.

We will allow conversation that is simply strident in tone.

We will allow criticism of public officials.

We will allow criticism of people who are subjects of stories.

We will allow opinions that some may find offensive about tough social issues around race and sexual orientation, as long as they don't include the kind of specific language I just described."

Quoted from Carolyn Washburn, "Inviting Robust Conversation, but Spelling Out a Few Rules," *Des Moines Sunday Register*, April 15, 2007.

seriously. In some messages, such as disciplinary notices and negative performance appraisals, one of your purposes is to make the problem clear. Even here, avoid insults or attacks on your audience's integrity or sanity.

Sometimes negatives create a "reverse psychology" that makes people look favorably at your product. German power tool manufacturer Stihl advertises that its chain saws and other tools are *not* sold by chains like Lowe's or Home Depot. Instead, the company emphasizes that its products are sold through independent retailers. While the campaign risks offending potential customers by implying that shopping at big box stores means that they don't appreciate quality, Stihl insists that its high-end products are worth the prices that are charged by specialty stores.⁵

But in most situations, it's better to be positive. Researchers have found that businesspeople responded more positively to positive than to negative language and were more likely to say they would act on a positively worded request.⁶ In ground-breaking research for Met Life, Martin Seligman found that optimistic salespeople sold 37% more insurance than pessimistic colleagues. As a result, Met Life began hiring optimists even when they failed to meet the company's other criteria. These "unqualified" optimists outsold pessimists 21% in their first year and 57% in the next.⁷

Positive emphasis is a way of looking at things. Is the bottle half empty or half full? You can create positive emphasis with the words, information, organization, and layout you choose. "Part-time" may be a negative phrase for someone seeking full-time employment, but it may also be a positive phrase for college students seeking limited work hours while they pursue their education. It may become even more positive if connected with flexible hours.

How to Create Positive Emphasis

Create positive emphasis by using the following techniques:

1. Avoid negative words and words with negative connotations.
2. Beware of hidden negatives.
3. Focus on what the audience can do rather than on limitations.
4. Justify negative information by giving a reason or linking it to an audience benefit.
5. Put the negative information in the middle and present it compactly.

Choose the technique that produces the clearest, most accurate communication.

1. Avoid negative words and words with negative connotations.

Figure 3.3 lists some common negative words. If you find one of these words in a draft, try to substitute a more positive word. When you must use a negative, use the *least negative* term that will convey your meaning.

The following examples show how to replace negative words with positive words.

Negative: We have **failed** to finish taking inventory.

Better: We haven't finished taking inventory.

Still better: We **will be finished** taking inventory **Friday**.

Negative: If you **can't understand** this explanation, feel free to call me.

Better: If you have further **questions**, just call me.

Still better: **Omit the sentence**.

Figure 3.3 Negative Words to Avoid

afraid	impossible	Some dis- words:	Many un- words:		
anxious	lacking			disapprove	unclear
avoid	loss			dishonest	unfair
bad	neglect	dissatisfied	unfortunate		
careless	never		unfortunately		
damage	no		unpleasant		
delay	not	Many in- words:	unreasonable		
delinquent	objection		inadequate	unreliable	
deny	problem		incomplete	unsure	
difficulty	reject	inconvenient			
eliminate	sorry	insincere			
error	terrible	injury			
except	trivial				
fail	trouble	Some mis- words:			
fault	wait		misfortune		
fear	weakness		missing		
hesitate	worry	mistake			
ignorant	wrong				
ignore					

Omit double negatives.

Negative: **Never fail** to back up your documents.

Better: **Always** back up your documents.

When you must use a negative term, use the least negative word that is accurate.

Negative: Your balance of \$835 is **delinquent**.

Better: Your balance of \$835 is **past due**.

Getting rid of negatives has the added benefit of making what you write easier to understand. Sentences with three or more negatives are very hard to understand.⁸

2. Beware of hidden negatives. Some words are not negative in themselves but become negative in context. *But* and *however* indicate a shift, so, after a positive statement, they are negative. *I hope* and *I trust that* suggest that you aren't sure. *Patience* may sound like a virtue, but it is a necessary virtue only when things are slow. Even positives about a service or product may backfire if they suggest that in the past the service or product was bad.

Negative: **I hope** this is the information you wanted. [Implication: I'm not sure.]

Better: Enclosed is a brochure **about road repairs scheduled for 2012**.

Still better: The brochure contains a list of **all roads and bridges scheduled for repair during 2012, specific dates when work will start, and alternate routes**.

Negative: Please be **patient** as we switch to the automated system. [Implication: You can expect problems.]

Better: If you have **questions** during our **transition** to the automated system, call Melissa Morgan.

Still better: **You'll be able to get information instantly about any house on the market when the automated system is in place. If you have questions during the transition, call Melissa Morgan.**

Negative: Now Crispy Crunch tastes **better**. [Implication: it used to taste terrible.]

Better: Now Crispy Crunch tastes **even** better.

**Truly Friendly Skies**

United pilot Denny Flanagan goes out of his way to create goodwill with his passengers and customers. He takes pictures of pets in cargo compartments and shows their owners that the pets are safely onboard. He phones the parents of unaccompanied minors to keep them up-to-date on delays. He hands out his business cards to all passengers, and the lucky ones with his signature on the back get free books, wine, or discount coupons. When his flights are delayed or diverted, he tries to find snacks like McDonald's hamburgers for his passengers. Before some of his delayed flights he is in the passenger lounge using his cell-phone to help passengers with their connections. . . .

Captain Flanagan says, "I just treat everyone like it's the first flight they've ever flown. . . . The customer deserves a good travel experience."

One of those customers noted, "If other folks in the airline industry had the same attitude, it would go a long way to mitigating some of the negative stuff that has come about in the last four or five years."

Quoted from Scott McCartney, "To a United Pilot, The Friendly Skies Are a Point of Pride," *Wall Street Journal*, August 28, 2007, A1, A11. Copyright © 2007 by Dow Jones & Company, Inc. Reproduced with permission of Dow Jones & Company, Inc. via Copyright Clearance Center.



Truth Can Be Spoken in Different Ways

“One Iranian told a fable of an ancient king who had an ominous dream. In the dream the king saw himself aged and afflicted, with decaying and falling teeth. Calling together his court astrologers for an interpretation, the shaken king heard the first say, “Your Majesty, I regret to tell you that the interpretation must be bad. The dream means that you will die within a year.” In a rage the king threw the brash astrologer out of his court and turned to the second man.

The second astrologer said, “Your Majesty, it is good news, the very best. It means that all your programs and projects will live on after you, and all your sons and daughters will survive you.” The king, who was old and knew he might die soon, nevertheless was pleased with this interpretation and richly rewarded the astrologer.”

Quoted from John P. Fieg and John G. Blair, *There Is a Difference: 12 Intercultural Perspectives* (Washington, DC: Meridian House International, 1975), 83.

Removing negatives does not mean being arrogant or pushy.

Negative: I **hope** that you are **satisfied enough** to place future orders.

Arrogant: I **look forward** to receiving **all of your future business**.

Better: **Whenever you need computer chips, a call to Mercury is all it takes for fast service.**

When you eliminate negative words, be sure to maintain accuracy. Words that are exact opposites will usually not be accurate. Instead, use specifics to be both positive and accurate.

Negative: The exercycle is **not** guaranteed for life.

Not true: The exercycle is **guaranteed for life**.

True: The exercycle is **guaranteed for 10 years**.

Legal phrases also have negative connotations for most readers and should be avoided whenever possible.

3. Focus on what the audience can do rather than on limitations. When there are limits, or some options are closed, focus on the alternatives that remain.

Negative: We will **not** allow you to charge **more than \$5,000** on your VISA account.

Better: **You can charge \$5,000** on your new VISA card.

or: **Your new VISA card gives you \$5,000 in credit that you can use at thousands of stores nationwide.**

As you focus on what will happen, check for **you-attitude**. In the last example, “We will allow you to charge \$5,000” would be positive, but it lacks you-attitude.

When you have a benefit and a requirement the audience must meet to get the benefit, the sentence is usually more positive if you put the benefit first.

Negative: You will **not** qualify for the student membership rate of \$55 a year **unless** you are a full-time student.

Better: **You get all the benefits of membership for only \$55 a year if you’re a full-time student.**

4. Justify negative information by giving a reason or linking it to an audience benefit. A reason can help your audience see that the information is necessary; a benefit can suggest that the negative aspect is outweighed by positive factors. Be careful, however, to make the logic behind your reason clear and to leave no loopholes.

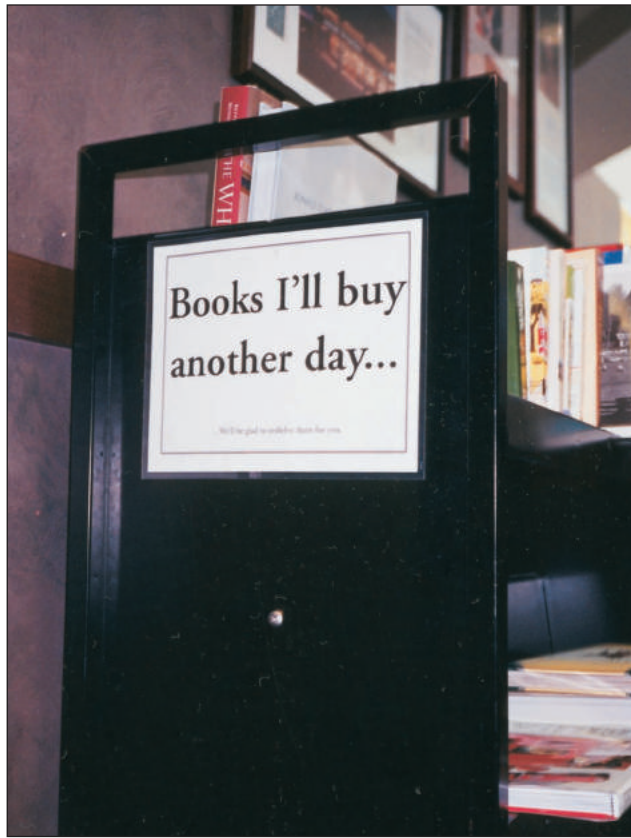
Negative: We **cannot** sell individual pastel sets.

Loophole: **To keep down packaging costs and to help you save on shipping and handling costs, we sell pastel sets in packages of 12.**

Suppose the customer says, “I’ll pay the extra shipping and handling. Send me six.” If you truly sell only in packages of 12, you need to say so:

Better: To keep down packaging costs and to help customers save on shipping and handling costs, we sell pastel sets **only** in packages of 12.

If you link the negative element to a benefit, be sure it is a benefit your audience will acknowledge. Avoid telling people that you’re doing things “for their own good.” They may have a different notion of what their own good is. You may think you’re doing customers a favor by limiting their credit so they don’t get in over their heads and go bankrupt. They may think they’d



Some stores might say, "Put books you don't want here." But bookseller Joseph Best in Lexington, KY, uses positive emphasis.

be better off with more credit so they could expand in hopes of making more sales and more profits.

5. Put the negative information in the middle and present it compactly. Put negatives at the beginning or end only if you want to emphasize the negative. To deemphasize a written negative, put it in the middle of a paragraph rather than in the first or last sentence and in the middle of the message rather than in the first or last paragraphs.

When a letter or memo runs several pages, remember that the bottom of the first page is also a position of emphasis, even if it is in the middle of a paragraph, because of the extra white space of the bottom margin. (The first page gets more attention because it is on top and the reader's eye may catch lines of the message even when he or she isn't consciously reading it; the tops and bottoms of subsequent pages don't get this extra attention.) If possible, avoid placing negative information at the bottom of the first page.

Giving a topic lots of space emphasizes it. Therefore, you can de-emphasize negative information by giving it as little space as possible. Give negative information only once in your message. Don't list negatives with bulleted or numbered lists. These lists take space and emphasize material.

How to Check Positive Emphasis

All five of the strategies listed above help create positive emphasis. However, you should always check to see that the positive emphasis is appropriate, sincere, and realistic.



Four Ways to Say "Yes" Instead of "No"

"Yes, I want to help."

Even if you have to say no personally, there is usually an alternative yes. By helping to solve someone's problem—say, by referring them to someone who might be able to help them—you keep the positive energy in motion.

'Yes, you can do better.'

Rather than say, "This is terrible," it's a lot more motivating to say, "You do such terrific work. I'm not sure this is up to your caliber."

'Yes, I see you.'

It only takes a minute to send a thank-you note or respond to an unsolicited résumé.

'Yes, your talents lie elsewhere.'

Warren Buffet says that he's never fired anyone. He has just helped them to find the right job."

Quoted from Linda Kaplan Thaler and Robin Koval, *The Power of Nice: How to Conquer the Business World with Kindness* (New York: Currency, 2006), 84–87.

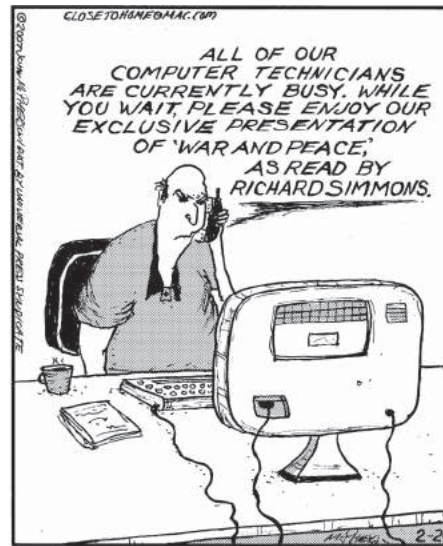


So's Yer Old Man

It may not come as a surprise to you, but a Harvard professor's computerized study of congressional communications reveals that 27% of the time members of Congress are taunting each other.

The three categories the study expected to find were well-known to political scientists: claiming credit, taking a position, and "advertising" someone or something to get one's name out there. That members of Congress also spend a quarter of their time taunting each other came as a surprise. Taunting was most common among members with a relatively safe position.

Adapted from David A. Fahrenthold, "27% of Communication by Members of Congress Is Taunting, Professor Concludes," *Washington Post*, April 6, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/27percent-of-communication-by-members-of-congress-is-taunting-professor-concludes/2011/04/06/AF1no2qC_story.html.



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As you read at the beginning of this section, positive emphasis is not always **appropriate**. Some bad news is so serious that presenting it with positive tone is insensitive, if not unethical. Layoffs, salary cuts, and product defects are all topics in this category.

Some positive emphasis is so overdone that it no longer seems **sincere**. The used-car sales rep selling a rusting auto is one stereotype of insincerity. A more common example for most business people is the employee who gushes praise through gritted teeth over your promotion. Most of us have experienced something similar, and we know how easy it is to see through the insincerity.

Positive emphasis can also be so overdone that it clouds the reality of the situation. If your company has two finalists for a sales award, and only one award, the loser does not have second place, which implies a second award. On the other hand, if all sales reps win the same award, top performers will feel unappreciated. Too much praise can also make mediocre employees think they are doing great. Keep your communications **realistic**.

Restraint can help make positive emphasis more effective. Conductor Otto Klemperer was known for not praising his orchestra. One day, pleased with a particularly good rehearsal, he spoke a brusque "good." His stunned musicians broke into spontaneous applause. Klemperer rapped his baton on his music stand to silence them and said, "Not *that* good."⁹

STONE, POWER, AND POLITENESS LO 3-3

Tone is the implied attitude of the communicator toward the audience. If the words of a document seem condescending or rude, tone is a problem. Norms for politeness are cultural and generational; they also vary from office to office.

Tone is tricky because it interacts with context and power. Language that is acceptable within one group may be unacceptable if used by someone outside the group. Words that might seem friendly from a superior to a subordinate may seem uppity if used by the subordinate to the superior. Similarly, words that may be neutral among peers may be seen as negative if sent by a superior to subordinate.

Paul Goward, the former police chief of Winter Haven, Florida, discovered this lesson about the connection between power and tone. Goward sent an e-mail to about 80 employees asking “Are You a Jelly Belly?” In the e-mail, he provided 10 reasons why his employees should be in better shape; the reasons ranged from health risks to department image. The e-mail added, “If you are unfit, do yourself and everyone else a favor. . . . See a professional about a proper diet. . . . Stop making excuses. . . . We didn’t hire you unfit and we don’t want you working unfit.” The e-mail so offended employees that Goward was forced to resign.¹⁰

Using the proper tone with employees can have huge economic impact for a business. A Litigation Trends Survey, based on reports from 310 in-house counsel, found employee lawsuits to be the top litigation concern of corporate lawyers. Disgruntled employees are suing more than ever before, and disputes over wages or hours frequently can be brought as class actions, making them even more expensive.¹¹

The desirable tone for business writing is businesslike but not stiff, friendly but not phony, confident but not arrogant, polite but not groveling. Several guidelines will help you achieve the tone you want.

Use Courtesy Titles for People You Don’t Know Well

Most U.S. organizations use first names for everyone, whatever their age or rank. But many people don’t like being called by their first names by people they don’t know or by someone much younger. When you talk or write to people outside your organization, use first names only if you’ve established a personal relationship. If you don’t know someone well, use a courtesy title (see *pages 71–72* for more on courtesy titles):

Dear Mr. Reynolds:

Dear Ms. Lee:

Be Aware of the Power Implications of the Words You Use

“Thank you for your cooperation” is generous coming from a superior to a subordinate; it’s not appropriate in a message to your superior. Different ways of asking for action carry different levels of politeness.¹²

Order: (lowest politeness)	Turn in your time card by Monday.
Polite order: (midlevel politeness)	Please turn in your time card by Monday.
Indirect request: (higher politeness)	Time cards should be turned in by Monday.
Question: (highest politeness)	Would you be able to turn in your time card by Monday?

Higher levels of politeness may be unclear. In some cases, a question may seem like a request for information to which it’s acceptable to answer, “No, I can’t.” In other cases, it will be an order, simply phrased in polite terms.

You need more politeness if you’re asking for something that will inconvenience the audience and help you more than the person who does the action. Generally, you need less politeness when you’re asking for something small, routine, or to the audience’s benefit. Some discourse communities, however, prefer that even small requests be made politely.

Lower politeness:	To start the scheduling process, please describe your availability for meetings during the second week of the month.
Higher politeness:	Could you let me know what times you’d be free for a meeting the second week of the month?



Solving an Ethical Dilemma Using Goodwill

Most ethical dilemmas boil down to people, balancing the needs or desires of one constituency against those of another: Management versus staff, stockholders versus customers.

Toro, maker of lawnmowers, faced such a dilemma. One of its popular riding mowers is very hard to overturn, but when it does, it can seriously injure the driver. Toro decided to install roll bars behind the driver’s seat on new machines but not raise the price because the bars were added for safety.

Then an even harder issue arose. Shouldn’t the same ethical treatment be offered on machines already owned? Those owners would be protected but the cost would adversely affect shareholders.

What would you do? Toro installed the bars for all mowers, new and used, a decision they believed would best serve users and shareholders in the long term.

Adapted from Kevin Cashman, “What Exactly Is Ethics?” *Forbes*, March 3, 2007, http://www.forbes.com/2007/03/03/leadership-cashman-ethics-leadership-citizen-cx_kc_0305ethics.html.



Attempts To Create a Unisex Pronoun

For more than 150 years, people have attempted to coin a unisex pronoun. None of the attempts has been successful.

Date	he or she	his or her	him or her
1850	ne	nis	nim
1884	le	lis	lim
1938	se	sim	sis
1970	ve	vis	ver
1977	e	e's	em
1988	ala	alis	alum

Adapted from Dennis E. Baron, "The Epicene Pronoun: Word That Failed," *American Speech* 56 (1981): 83–97; and Ellen Graham, "Business Bulletin," *Wall Street Journal*, December 29, 1988, A1.

REDUCING BIAS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION LO 3-4

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the United States now has more women than men, and more women than men are attending college and attaining postsecondary degrees. The Hispanic population is the fastest growing in the country; it numbered 50.5 million in the 2010 census. Four states (California, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Texas) plus the District of Columbia have a "majority–minority" population, where more than 50% are part of a minority group. The number of people 65 and older is also growing; that population now numbers over 40 million, and 6.5 million of them are still in the workforce.¹³ These figures highlight the growing diversity of the workplace and the need to communicate with appropriate language.

Bias-free language is language that does not discriminate against people on the basis of sex, physical condition, race, ethnicity, age, religion or any other category. It includes all audience members, helps to sustain goodwill, is fair and friendly, and complies with the law.

Check to be sure that your language is bias-free. Doing so is ethical; it can also avoid major problems and lawsuits.

- Josef Ackermann, chief executive of Deutsche Bank, was mocked in the international news when he said at a news conference that including women on the bank's all-male executive board would make it "more colorful and prettier too." The publicity added to mistrust of the bank at an awkward time when it was lobbying to dissuade German policy makers from imposing restrictions.¹⁴
- Conservative advice expert Dr. Laura Schlessinger resigned abruptly from her syndicated radio show after a controversy arising from her multiple use of a racial epithet while talking to an African American caller.
- Famous radio personality Don Imus was fired by CBS after making racist comments about the Rutgers University women's basketball team.

Making Language Nonsexist

Nonsexist language treats both sexes neutrally. Check to be sure that your messages are free from sexism in four areas: job titles, courtesy titles and names, pronouns, and other words and phrases.

Job titles Use neutral titles which do not imply that a job is held only by men or only by women. Many job titles are already neutral: *accountant, banker, doctor, engineer, inspector, manager, nurse, pilot, secretary, technician*, to name a few. Other titles reflect gender stereotypes and need to be changed.

Instead of	Use
Businessman	A specific title: executive, accountant, department head, owner of a small business, men and women in business, businessperson
Chairman	Chair, chairperson, moderator
Fireman	Firefighter
Foreman	Supervisor
Mailman	Mail Carrier
Salesman	Salesperson, sales representative
Waitress	Server
Woman lawyer	Lawyer
Workman	Worker, employee. Or use a specific title: crane operator, bricklayer, etc.

Courtesy titles and names E-mails to people you know normally do not use courtesy titles. However, letters, memos, and e-mails to people with whom you have a more formal relationship require courtesy titles in the salutation *unless* you're on a first-name basis with your reader. (See Appendix A for examples of memo and letter formats.)

When you know your reader's name and gender, use courtesy titles that do not indicate marital status: *Mr.* for men and *Ms.* for women. *Ms.* is particularly useful when you do not know what a woman's marital status is. However, even when you happen to know that a woman is married or single, **you still use *Ms.*** unless you know that she prefers another title. There are, however, two exceptions:

1. If the woman has a professional title, use that title if you would use it for a man.

Dr. Kristen Sorenson is our new company physician.

The Rev. Elizabeth Townsley gave the invocation.

2. If the woman prefers to be addressed as *Mrs.* or *Miss*, use the title she prefers rather than *Ms.* (You-attitude takes precedence over nonsexist language: address the reader as she—or he—prefers to be addressed.) To find out if a woman prefers a traditional title,

- Check the signature block in previous correspondence. If a woman types her name as (*Miss*) *Elaine Anderson* or (*Mrs.*) *Kay Royster*, use the title she designates.
- Notice the title a woman uses in introducing herself on the phone. If she says, "This is Robin Stine," use *Ms.* when you write to her. If she says, "I'm Mrs. Stine," use the title she specifies.
- When you're writing job letters or crucial correspondence, call the company and ask the receptionist which title your reader prefers.

In addition to using parallel courtesy titles, use parallel forms for names.

Not Parallel	Parallel
Members of the committee will be Mr. Jones, Mr. Yacone, and Lisa.	Members of the committee will be Mr. Jones, Mr. Yacone, and Ms. Melton.
	or
	Members of the committee will be Irving, Ted, and Lisa.

When you know your reader's name but not the gender, either

- Call the company and ask the receptionist, or
- Use the reader's full name in the salutation:
Dear Chris Crowell:
Dear J. C. Meath:



Booming Business

As the 78 million U.S. baby boomers age, more and more companies are making products with adaptations for physical infirmities:

- Appliance control panels with adjustable typefaces and color combinations.
- Ovens, dishwashers, and washer/dryer sets mounted higher so people have to bend over less.
- Sink fixtures with levers instead of knobs, for hands with limited mobility.
- Cellphones with large keys and large numbers on the screen.

Nissan and Ford Motor Companies fit their design engineers with special body suits that mimic aging bodies. The suits have an expanded waist, limited mobility in key joints, and goggles that mimic the effect of cataracts.

Marketing these new features requires a delicate touch, because no one likes to be reminded that their body is failing.

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When you know neither the reader's name nor gender, you have three options:

- Omit the salutation and use a subject line in its place. (See Figure A.4, Simplified Format.)
SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION FOR BEN WANDELL
- Use the reader's position or job title:
Dear Loan Officer:
Dear Registrar:
- Use a general group to which your reader belongs:
Dear Investor:
Dear Admissions Committee:

Pronouns When you refer to a specific person, use the appropriate gender pronouns:

In **his** speech, **John** Jones said that . . .

In **her** speech, **Judy** Jones said that . . .

When you are referring not to a specific person but to anyone who may be in a given job or position, traditional gender pronouns are sexist.

Sexist: a. Each **supervisor** must certify that the time sheet for **his** department is correct.

Sexist: b. When the **nurse** fills out the accident report form, **she** should send one copy to the Central Division Office.

Business communication uses four ways to eliminate sexist generic pronouns: use plurals, use second-person *you*, revise the sentence to omit the pronoun, or use pronoun pairs. Whenever you have a choice of two or more ways to make a phrase or sentence nonsexist, choose the alternative that is the smoothest and least conspicuous.

The following examples use these methods to revise sentences *a* and *b* above.

1. Use plural nouns and pronouns.

Nonsexist: a. **Supervisors** must certify that the **time sheets** for **their departments** are correct.

Note: When you use plural nouns and pronouns, other words in the sentence may need to be made plural too. In the example above, plural supervisors have plural time sheets and departments.

Avoid mixing singular nouns and plural pronouns.

Nonsexist but lacks agreement: b. When the **nurse** fills out the accident report, **they** should send one copy to the Central Division Office.

Since *nurse* is singular, it is incorrect to use the plural *they* to refer to it. The resulting lack of agreement is acceptable orally but is not yet acceptable in writing. Instead, use one of the other ways to make the sentence nonsexist.

2. Use *you*.

Nonsexist: a. **You** must certify that the time sheet for **your** department is correct.

Nonsexist: b. When **you** fill out an accident report form, **send** one copy to the Central Division Office.

You is particularly good for instructions and statements of the responsibilities of someone in a given position.

3. Substitute an article (*a*, *an*, or *the*) for the pronoun, or revise the sentence so that the pronoun is unnecessary.

Nonsexist: a. The supervisor must certify that the time sheet for **the department** is correct.

Nonsexist: b. The **nurse will**

1. **Fill out the accident report form.**
2. **Send one copy of the form to the Central Division Office.**

4. When you must focus on the action of an individual, use pronoun pairs.

Nonsexist: a. The supervisor must certify that the time sheet for **his or her** department is correct.

Nonsexist: b. When the nurse fills out the accident report form, **he or she** should send one copy to the Central Division Office.

Other words and phrases If you find any terms similar to those in the first column in Figure 3.4 in your messages or your company's documents, replace them with terms similar to those in the second column.

Not every word containing *man* is sexist. For example, *manager* is not sexist. The word comes from the Latin *manus* meaning *hand*; it has nothing to do with maleness.

Avoid terms that assume that everyone is married or is heterosexual.

Biased: You and **your husband or wife** are cordially invited to the reception.

Better: You and **your guest** are cordially invited to the reception.

Making Language Nonracist and Nonageist

Language is **nonracist** and **nonageist** when it treats all races and ages fairly, avoiding negative stereotypes of any group. Use the following guidelines to check for bias in documents you write or edit.

Give someone's race or age only if it is relevant to your story. When you do mention these characteristics, give them for everyone in your story—not just the non-Caucasian, non-young-to-middle-aged adults you mention.

Figure 3.4 Getting Rid of Sexist Terms and Phrases

Instead of	Use	Because
The girl at the front desk	The woman's name or job title: "Ms. Browning," "Rosa," "the receptionist"	Call female employees <i>women</i> just as you call male employees <i>men</i> . When you talk about a specific woman, use her name, just as you use a man's name to talk about a specific man.
The ladies on our staff	The women on our staff	Use parallel terms for males and females. Therefore, use <i>ladies</i> only if you refer to the males on your staff as <i>gentlemen</i> . Few businesses do, since social distinctions are rarely at issue.
Manpower Manhours Manning	Personnel Hours or worker hours Staffing	The power in business today comes from both women and men.
Managers and their wives	Managers and their guests	Managers may be female; not everyone is married.



New Technology Access for People with Visual and Hearing Impairments

In October 2010, President Obama signed into law a bill aimed at making technologies that are staples of life more accessible. The law mandates

- Easier Internet connections on smart phones.
- Audible descriptions of action on TV.
- Captions for dialogue on TV.
- TV remotes with buttons or switches for easier access to closed captioning.
- Equipment compatible with hearing aids for Internet phone calls.

Adapted from “Bill Will Improve Technology Access for Blind, Deaf,” *Des Moines Register*, October 9, 2010, 3A.



Organizations are making their business sites more accommodating to people with disabilities.

Refer to a group by the term it prefers. As preferences change, change your usage. Fifty years ago, *Negro* was preferred as a more dignified term than *colored* for African Americans. As times changed, *Black* and *African American* replaced it. Gallup polls show that the majority of black Americans (about 60%) have no preference between the two terms. However, among those who do care, polls show a slight trend toward African American.¹⁵

Oriental has now been replaced by *Asian*.

The term *Latino* is the most acceptable group term to refer to Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Brazilianos, and other people with Central and Latin American backgrounds. (*Latina* is the term for an individual woman.) Better still is to refer to the precise group. The differences among various Latino groups are at least as great as the differences among Italian Americans, Irish Americans, Armenian Americans, and others descended from various European groups.

Baby boomers, *older people*, and *mature customers* are more generally accepted terms than *Senior Citizens* or *Golden Agers*.

Avoid terms that suggest that competent people are unusual. The statement “She is an intelligent purple woman” suggests that the writer expects most purple women to be stupid. “He is an asset to his race” suggests that excellence in the race is rare. “He is a spry 70-year-old” suggests that the writer is amazed that anyone that old can still move.

Talking about People with Disabilities and Diseases

A disability is a physical, mental, sensory, or emotional impairment that interferes with the major tasks of daily living. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 19% of Americans currently have a disability; of those, about 48% who were 21–64 and had a “nonsevere disability” were employed full-time.¹⁶ The number of people with disabilities will rise as the population ages.

To keep trained workers, more and more companies are making accommodations for disabilities. Companies such as Sylvania, American Express, and

General Motors are offering accommodations such as telecommuting, flexible hours, workshift changes, and assignment changes.¹⁷

When talking about people with disabilities, use **people-first language** to focus on the person, not the condition. People-first language names the person first, then adds the condition. Use it instead of the traditional noun phrases that imply the condition defines the person. In 2010, President Obama signed Rosa’s Law, which replaces “mentally retarded” with “an individual with an intellectual disability,” in most federal statutes.¹⁸



R-E-S-P-E-C-T

“Most major airlines and hotel chains provide disability training to employees. . . . I recognize when someone has been trained—to offer me a Braille menu, use my name when addressing me, or take a moment to orient me to a new environment. What I appreciate even more, though, is . . . simple, common courtesy.

“I don’t care how many pages in an employee manual somewhere are devoted to . . . the dos and don’ts of interacting with someone who is deaf, blind, or mentally retarded. Among hundreds of experiences in airports and hotels, the one distinction that separates the (mostly) pleasing from the (occasionally) painful in my encounters has been the honest friendliness and respect with which I have or have not been treated.

“Ask me where I’d like to sit, whether I need help getting there, and what other kinds of help I need.

“Please, assume that I know more about my disability than anyone else ever could.

“Respect me as you do any other customer who is paying for the same service, and have the grace to apologize if something does go wrong.

“Too many companies, it seems to me, are busy shaking in their boots over the imagined high cost of accommodating people with disabilities when, in many instances, a good old-fashioned refresher course in manners would cover most bases.”

Quoted from Deborah Kendrick, “Disabled Resent Being Patronized,” *Columbus Dispatch*, July 21, 1996, 3B. Reprinted with permission.

Instead of	Use	Because
The mentally retarded	People with an intellectual disability	The condition does not define the person or his or her potential.
Cancer patients	People being treated for cancer	

Avoid negative terms, unless the audience prefers them. You-attitude takes precedence over positive emphasis: use the term a group prefers. People who lost their hearing as infants, children, or young adults often prefer to be called *deaf*, or *Deaf* in recognition of Deafness as a culture. But people who lose their hearing as older adults often prefer to be called *hard of hearing*, even when their hearing loss is just as great as that of someone who identifies him- or herself as part of the Deaf culture.

Using the right term requires keeping up with changing preferences. If your target audience is smaller than the whole group, use the term preferred by that audience, even if the group as a whole prefers another term.

Some negative terms, however, are never appropriate. Negative terms such as *afflicted*, *suffering from*, and *struck down* also suggest an outdated view of any illness as a sign of divine punishment.

Instead of	Use	Because
Confined to a wheelchair	Uses a wheelchair	Wheelchairs enable people to escape confinement.
AIDS victim	Person with AIDS	Someone can have a disease without being victimized by it.
Abnormal	Atypical	People with disabilities are atypical but not necessarily abnormal.

Choosing Bias-Free Photos and Illustrations

When you produce a document with photographs or illustrations, check the visuals for possible bias. Do they show people of both sexes and all races? Is there a sprinkling of various kinds of people (younger and older, people using wheelchairs, etc.)? It’s OK to have individual pictures that have just one sex or one race; the photos as a whole do not need to show exactly 50% men and 50% women. But the general impression should suggest that diversity is welcome and normal.

Check relationships and authority figures as well as numbers. If all the men appear in business suits and the women in maids’ uniforms, the pictures are sexist even if an equal number of men and women are pictured. If the only nonwhites pictured are factory workers, the photos support racism even when an equal number of people from each race are shown.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- **You-attitude** is a style of communication that looks at things from the audience's point of view, emphasizing what the audience wants to know, respecting the audience's intelligence, and protecting the audience's ego.
 1. Talk about the audience, not about yourself.
 2. Refer to the audience's request or order specifically.
 3. Don't talk about feelings except to congratulate or offer sympathy.
 4. In positive situations, use *you* more often than *I*. Use *we* when it includes the audience.
 5. In negative situations, avoid the word *you*. Protect the audience's ego. Use passive verbs and impersonal expressions to avoid assigning blame.
- Apply you-attitude beyond the sentence level by using organization and content as well as style to build goodwill.
- **Positive emphasis** means focusing on the positive rather than the negative aspects of a situation. To create positive emphasis
 1. Avoid negative words and words with negative connotations.
 2. Beware of hidden negatives.
 3. Focus on what the audience can do rather than on limitations.
 4. Justify negative information by giving a reason or linking it to an audience benefit.
 5. Put the negative information in the middle and present it compactly.
- Check to see that your positive emphasis is appropriate, sincere, and clear.
- The desirable tone for business communication is businesslike but not stiff, friendly but not phony, confident but not arrogant, polite but not groveling.
- Bias-free language is fair and friendly; it complies with the law. It includes all members of your audience; it helps sustain goodwill.
- Check to be sure that your language is nonsexist, nonracist, and nonageist.
- Communication should be free from sexism in four areas: job titles, courtesy titles and names, pronouns, and other words and phrases.
- *Ms.* is the nonsexist courtesy title for women. Whether or not you know a woman's marital status, use *Ms.* unless the woman has a professional title or unless you know that she prefers a traditional title.
- Four ways to make pronouns nonsexist are to use plurals, to use *you*, to revise the sentence to omit the pronoun, and to use pronoun pairs.
- When you talk about people with disabilities or diseases, use the term they prefer.
- When you produce newsletters or other documents with photos and illustrations, picture a sampling of the whole population, not just part of it.

CHAPTER 3

Exercises and Problems

*Go to www.mhhe.com/locker10e for additional Exercises and Problems.

3.1 Reviewing the Chapter

1. What are five ways to create you-attitude? (LO 3-1)
2. What are five ways to create positive emphasis? (LO 3-2)
3. How can you improve the tone of business messages? (LO 3-3)
4. What are different categories to keep in mind when you are trying to reduce bias in business messages? (LO 3-4)
5. What techniques can you use when you are trying to reduce bias in business messages? (LO 3-4)

3.2 Evaluating the Ethics of Positive Emphasis

The first term in each pair is negative; the second is a positive term that is sometimes substituted for it. Which of the positive terms seem ethical? Which seem unethical? Briefly explain your choices.

cost	investment	nervousness	adrenaline
second mortgage	home equity loan	problem	challenge
tax	user fee	price increase	price change
		for-profit hospital	tax-paying hospital
		used car	pre-owned car
		credit card fees	usage charges

3.3 Eliminating Negative Words and Words with Negative Connotations

Revise each of the following sentences to replace negative words with positive ones. Be sure to keep the meaning of the original sentence.

1. You will lose customer goodwill if you are slow in handling returns and issuing refunds.
2. Do not put any paper in this box that is not recyclable.
3. When you write a report, do not make claims that you cannot support with evidence.
4. Don't drop in without an appointment. Your counselor or case worker may be unavailable.
5. I am anxious to discuss my qualifications in an interview.

3.4 Focusing on the Positive

Revise each of the following sentences to focus on the options that remain, not those that are closed off.

1. Scholarship applications that arrive December 1 or later cannot be processed.
2. You cannot use flextime unless you have the consent of your supervisor.
3. As a first-year employee, you are not eligible for dental insurance.
4. I will be out of the country October 25 to November 10 and will not be able to meet with you then.
5. You will not get your first magazine for at least four weeks.

3.5 Identifying Hidden Negatives

Identify the hidden negatives in the following sentences and revise to eliminate them. In some cases, you may need to add information to revise the sentence effectively.

1. The seminar will help you become a better manager.
2. Thank you for the confidence you have shown in us by ordering one of our products. It will be shipped to you soon.
3. This publication is designed to explain how your company can start a recycling program.
4. I hope you find the information in this brochure beneficial to you and a valuable reference as you plan your move.
5. In thinking about your role in our group, I remember two occasions where you contributed something.
6. [In job letter] This job in customer service is so good for me; I am so ready to take on responsibility.

3.6 Improving You-Attitude and Positive Emphasis

Revise these sentences to improve you-attitude and positive emphasis. Eliminate any awkward phrasing. In some cases, you may need to add information to revise the sentence effectively.

1. You'll be happy to learn that the cost of tuition will not rise next year.
2. Although I was only an intern and didn't actually make presentations to major clients, I was required to prepare PowerPoint slides for the meetings and to answer some of the clients' questions.
3. At DiYanni Homes we have more than 30 plans that we will personalize just for you.

4. Please notify HR of your bank change as soon as possible to prevent a disruption of your direct deposit.
5. I'm sorry you were worried. You did not miss the deadline for signing up for a flexible medical spending account.
6. We are in the process of upgrading our website. Please bear with us.
7. You will be happy to hear that our cellphone plan does not charge you for incoming calls.
8. The employee discount may only be used for purchases for your own use or for gifts; you may not buy items for resale. To prevent any abuse of the discount privilege, you may be asked to justify your purchase.
9. I apologize for my delay in answering your inquiry. The problem was that I had to check with our suppliers to see whether we could provide the item in the quantity you say you want. We can.
10. If you mailed a check with your order, as you claim, we failed to receive it.
11. This job sounds perfect for me.

3.7 Eliminating Biased Language

Explain the source of bias in each of the following, and revise to remove the bias.

1. We recommend hiring Jim Ryan and Elizabeth Shuman. Both were very successful summer interns. Jim drafted the report on using rap music in ads, and Elizabeth really improved the looks of the office.
2. All sales associates and their wives are invited to the picnic.
3. Although he is blind, Mr. Morin is an excellent group leader.
4. Unlike many blacks, Yvonne has extensive experience designing web pages.
5. Chris Renker
Pacific Perspectives
6300 West Coronad Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA
Gentlemen:
6. Enrique Torres has very good people skills for a man.

7. *Parenting 2012* shows you how to persuade your husband to do his share of child care chores.
8. Mr. Paez, Mr. O'Connor, and Tonya will represent our office at the convention.
9. Sue Corcoran celebrates her 50th birthday today. Stop by her cubicle at noon to get a piece of cake and to help us sing "The Old Grey Mare Just Ain't What She Used to Be."
10. Because older customers tend to be really picky, we will need to give a lot of details in our ads.

3.8 Analyzing You-Attitude

Your book gives some examples of occasions when you-attitude is inappropriate. What are some other examples? Why are they inappropriate? How would you fix them?

3.9 Analyzing Positive Tone

LaQuinta ran a series of ads using cartoons, like the one on this page, featuring people making the best of disasters. You can see the whole series at this website: <http://www.lq.com/lq/brightside/index.jsp>.

What do you think of these ads? Does the use of negatives help or hinder them? What overall impression of LaQuinta do the ads leave with you?

wake up on the bright side™



For reservations, visit LQ.com


LAQUINTA
INNS & SUITES

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3.10 Analyzing Goodwill

A recent study by a law professor shows that credit card companies make offers to people fresh out of bankruptcy. In the study of 341 families, almost 100% received credit card offers within a year after completing bankruptcy proceedings, and 87% of those offers mentioned the bankruptcy proceedings. In fact, 20% of the offers came from companies the family had owed before the bankruptcy.

In small groups, discuss whether you think this practice is ethical. Why or why not? What reasons exist for not offering new credit to people who have just gone through bankruptcy? Why might such people need new credit cards?

Adapted from Marie Beaudette, "Study: Credit Card Offers Flood Once-Bankrupt Consumers," *Des Moines Register*, August 10, 2007, 6D.

3.11 Analyzing Ethics

[Female lawyers and their female corporate clients recently had a "shoe event" at a Manhattan boutique to network.]

"Such women-only networking events are proliferating at law firms and an array of other companies, including [accounting, investing, and industrial companies]. There are spa retreats, conferences at resorts, evenings at art galleries and cooking demonstrations, all organized by women who want to network and socialize with clients in their own way—at least some of the time.

"The top brass at such companies support the events for several reasons, most notably, they help to boost the bottom line. . . .

"Still, holding women-only networking events raises some complicated issues. Are these single-sex events just as exclusionary as the traditional spectator sports events and steak-and-cigar dinners have been for men? What about women who have male clients and vice versa?"

How do you feel about women-only events? Are they ethical?

Quoted from Carol Hymowitz, "High Power and High Heels: Companies Move beyond Sports, Steak and Scotch to Cultivate New Clients," *Wall Street Journal*, March 26, 2007, B1.

3.12 Analyzing a Form Letter

Analyze the following form letter.

Is it a goodwill message?

Where does it show you-attitude? Where does it need more you-attitude?

Evaluate the use of positive tone.

What is your overall impression of the letter?

Debbie Harrington
1436 Gooden Road
Lincoln, NE 54367

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS TIME SENSITIVE; PLEASE REVIEW CAREFULLY

James Honda of Lincoln has partnered with Automobile Resellers, Inc., to replenish drastically reduced vehicle inventories. James Honda of Lincoln is in need of a number of high-demand pre-owned vehicles and records indicate that you may own one of these vehicles. Your 2007 Honda Civic has been classified as a high-demand vehicle. The purpose of this letter is to request the opportunity to BUY BACK your vehicle for perhaps more than you thought possible.

Bring this letter for admittance to this event. Simply present it to a dealership representative who will assist you in this BUY BACK process. Also, you may have won up to \$20,000. To see if your claim number is a guaranteed cash prize winner, simply visit James Honda of Lincoln on the event date and claim your prize.

During this exciting event, James Honda of Lincoln has agreed to aggressively price its entire inventory of new and pre-owned cars, trucks, vans, and sport utilities. With

rates as low as 0% and rebates up to \$5,000, we are confident that you can upgrade your 2007 Honda Civic and in many cases reduce your current monthly payment with little out-of-pocket expense.

Due to the nature of this event it will not be advertised to the general public. Your status as a customer as well as your possession of a high-demand vehicle entitles you to attend this exciting event.

Appointments are recommended due to the anticipated response of this event. To schedule an appointment or if you are unable to attend on the below event date, please contact James Honda of Lincoln toll-free at 800.123.4567.

EVENT DATE:

Saturday, Nov 21st—9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

EVENT SITE:

JAMES HONDA OF LINCOLN

220 Kitty Hawk

Lincoln, NE 54367

As your instructor directs,

- Share your findings orally with a small group of students.
- Share your findings orally with the class.
- Post your findings in an e-mail to the class.
- Summarize your findings in a memo to your instructor.

3.13 Revising a Form Letter

Revise this form letter to improve positive tone and you-attitude (and to catch spelling and punctuation errors):

Dear customer,

We wish you a Happy New Year from Happy Catalog. Its been awhile since we heard from you. We have a special offer to welcome you back.

Our customers are the focus of what we do. All of our efforts center on exceeding our customer expectations.

Happy Catalog stands behind everything we sell, as we have since 1986. We will provide you with even better service, tailored to meet you needs and guaranteed to offer more of the helpful, unique and hard to find merchandise we're known for. Whether you choose to shop by phone, mail, or e-mail us, we promise to continually improve our process to better serve you. If you have been disappointed in any way, please accept our sincerest apology.

We have a special offer, exclusively for you, to welcome you back. When you use the enclosed coupon, you'll save 20% on any order, regardless of order size. Hurry, this offer will expire the beginning of February.

Welcome back! Thank you for your business.

Sincerely,

I. M. President

Happy Catalog.

3.14 Advising a Hasty Subordinate

Three days ago, one of your subordinates forwarded to everyone in the office a bit of e-mail humor he'd received from a friend. Titled "You know you're

Southern when . . . ," the message poked fun at Southern speech, attitudes, and lifestyles. Today you get this message from your subordinate:

Subject: Should I Apologize?

I'm getting flamed left and right because of the Southern message. I thought it was funny, but some people just can't take a joke. So far I've tried not to respond to the flames, figuring that would just make things worse. But now I'm wondering if I should apologize. What do you think?

Answer the message.

3.15 Responding to a Complaint

You're Director of Corporate Communications; the employee newsletter is produced by your office. Today you get this e-mail message from Caroline Huber:

Subject: Complaint about Sexist Language

The article about the "Help Desk" says that Martina Luna and I "are the key customer service representatives 'manning' the desk." I don't MAN anything! I WORK.

Respond to Caroline. And send a message to your staff, reminding them to edit newsletter stories as well as external documents to replace biased language.

3.16 Exploring the Positive Effects of Negative Messages

In 2004, Gap Inc. (Gap, Old Navy, and Banana Republic) released a social responsibility report that acknowledged wage, health, and safety violations in many of its overseas factories. Rather than hiding this information, Gap chose to go public and address the problem. In 2006, Ford Motor Company released a series of online documentaries about the company's turnaround efforts which included a film about the company stock receiving a "sell" rating from industry analysts.

Find an example of a company that has shared its problems and its plans to solve those problems with the public. What went wrong? How did the company respond? How did the company report the problem?

Can you find the current status of the company and its recovery?

As your instructor directs,

- Share your findings orally with a small group of students.
- Post your findings in an e-mail to the class.
- Summarize your findings in a memo to your instructor.
- Join with a group of students to create a written report summarizing negative corporate news.

Adapted from Cheryl Dahl, "Gap's New Look: The See-Through," *Fast Company*, September 2004, 69–70.

3.17 Evaluating Bias in Visuals

Evaluate the portrayals of people in one of the following:

- Ads in one issue of a business magazine
- A company's annual report
- A company's web page

Do the visuals show people of both sexes and all races? Is there a sprinkling of people of various ages and physical conditions? What do the visuals suggest about who has power?

As your instructor directs,

- Share your findings orally with a small group of students.
- Post your findings in an e-mail to the class.
- Summarize your findings in a memo to your instructor.
- Present your findings in an oral presentation to the class.
- Join with a small group of students to create a written report.

3.18 Revising a Memo for Positive Tone

Revise the following memo to improve positive tone.

TO: All Staff

SUBJECT: Decorating Your Work Area

With the arrival of the holiday season, employees who wish to decorate their work areas should do so only with great caution. Don't do something stupid that might burn down the entire office. If you wish to decorate, don't forget the following guidelines:

1. If using decorative lights, don't place them in obstructive places.
2. Do not overload your workstation with decorations that will interfere with your daily duties.
3. Don't forget to turn off and/or unplug all lights at the end of your workday.
4. Do not use hot lights; they can burn your countertop so it is imperative that everyone take care in selecting your lights.
5. Do not use decorations which will offend people of other religions.
6. Absolutely no candles are allowed.

Don't forget these guidelines, and we'll have a great holiday season. Thank you for your cooperation.

3.19 Dealing with Negative Clients

An executive at one of your largest client companies is known for his negative attitude. He is feared for his sharp tongue and scathing attacks, and he bullies everyone. Everyone you know, including yourself, is afraid of him. Unfortunately, he is also the one who decides whether or not you get your annual contract. Your contract is up for renewal, and you have some new services you think his company would like.

In small groups, discuss at least four ways to handle Mr. Bully. Write up your two best to share with the whole class. Also write up the reasons you think these two approaches will work. Share your two approaches with the whole class, as a short oral presentation or online.

As a class, select the two best approaches from those offered by the small groups. Discuss your criteria for selection and rejection.

3.20 Writing Business Thank-You Notes

Some businesses make a practice of sending goodwill messages to some of their customers.

Pick a business you patronize that might logically send some thank-you notes. Write a suitable note and design a tasteful visual for it. In a separate document, write a memo to your instructor explaining your design and content decisions.

Questions you might want to consider:

- Who is your audience? Will you write to everyone? Will you target big spenders? Trend setters? People who might become long-term customers? How will you identify your categories?
- What tone did you select? What words and phrases help produce that tone? What words and phrases did you avoid? What diction choices did you make to convey sincerity?
- What content did you choose? Why? What content choices did you discard?
- What design features did you choose? Why? What design features did you discard?

3.21 Evaluating You-Attitude and Positive Emphasis in University Websites

As they plan their college visits, many students begin by visiting university websites. Imagine you are a high school senior and a prospective student. Go to the "Prospective Students" part of your school's website and read about housing, course offerings, and student life. Evaluate the information you find for you-attitude and positive emphasis. Compare the text for prospective

students with the text on several sites targeted for current students. Does the tone change? In what ways? What information increases or decreases you-attitude?

Now visit the website of another university. Review the same type of information for prospective students and compare it to that of your own school. Which school does a better job? Why?

As your instructor directs,

- Share your findings orally with a small group of students.
- Share your findings orally with the class.
- Post your findings in an e-mail to the class.
- Summarize your findings in a memo to your instructor.

3.22 Evaluating You-Attitude and Positive Emphasis at IRS

The IRS has a page called “Where’s My Refund?” In 2007, the page read like this:

“Where’s My Refund?”

“You filed your tax return and you’re expecting a refund. You have just one question and you want the answer now—*Where’s My Refund?*”

“Whether you split your refund among several accounts, opted for direct deposit to one account or asked IRS to mail you a check, you can track your refund through this secure Web site. You can get refund information even if you filed just to request the telephone excise tax refund.”

“To get to your personal refund information, be ready to enter your:”

- Social Security Number (or IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number)
- Filing status (Single, Married Filing Joint Return, Married Filing Separate Return, Head of Household, or Qualifying Widow(er))
- Exact refund amount shown on your return

“If you don’t receive your refund within 28 days from the original IRS mailing date shown on *Where’s My Refund?*, you can start a refund trace online.”

If *Where’s My Refund?* shows that IRS was unable to deliver your refund, you can change your address online.

“*Where’s My Refund?* will prompt you when these features are available for your situation. ”

“Okay now, *Where’s My Re-fund?*”

Now read their current “Where’s My Refund” page on their website. What changes have they made? Which version has more you-attitude and positive emphasis? Which version do you like better? Why? Write your answers in a memo to your instructor or classmates.

Quoted from “Where’s My Refund?” U.S. Department of the Treasury, updated April 6, 2011, <http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96596,00.html>.

3.23 Designing for People with Disabilities

Reread the sidebar on page 75. In small groups discuss these questions:

- What are some other products you can think of that could be redesigned for easier use by people with disabilities?
- What themes would you use to advertise these products? Remember that no one likes to be reminded that they are losing physical capacities.
- What are some changes companies should make to their advertising and product information for easier access by people with disabilities?

As your instructor directs, in small groups

- Summarize your discussion in a memo for your instructor.
- Summarize your discussion in a memo for your class list serve.
- Prepare a short presentation for your classmates.

3.24 Revising a “Goodwill Disaster”

Li, an intern at All-Weather, a window manufacturer, has been asked to write a letter to a recent young customer asking him if some new engineers can tour his gallery to see the products in use. Here is his draft:

Dear Mr. Mason,
Executive Director,
Iconic Art Gallery, St. Paul, MN

You must be glad that you chose All-Weather’s energy efficient bow windows, horizontal sliders, and fiberglass doors for your art gallery. As everyone who is anyone knows, we offer the finest quality wood, vinyl, aluminum, steel, and fiberglass composite windows and doors you can find in the US of A. As you also know, our customer service representatives are ready to assist you 24/7 (and more!) with any installation or maintenance needs you may have (even if it’s your responsibility or fault, I might add). After doing so much for an important customer such as you, we have a small favor to ask of you, which we’re sure you will not deny us. We just hired some new engineers who will join our manufacturing division to continue to make the fine products that we make. Unfortunately, they have never seen how our finished products look outside or inside actual homes or offices. (On a personal note, I confess I don’t know what they can learn from one visit to a home or an office.) Our VP (Manufacturing), an asset to All-Weather, says that we should send these engineers out on a field visit. And he should know, shouldn’t he, being the VP and all? That is why I’m writing to you (the pleasure is mine, though).

These fresh minds need exposure to actual conditions in actual markets. We think that if they visit your art gallery, they will see how our products are helping you get results your art gallery could never dream of before. If you don’t believe me, take a peek inside your exhibits room, whose space seems to have expanded thanks to our bow window that you have installed. I myself remember what a cramped-looking room it was before. No, I’m not asking you to share your admission fees with us, though free exhibition tickets wouldn’t hurt (I’m kidding, sir). Also, you should perhaps buy more windows and doors from us (and attract more visitors as a result!). Also, don’t forget to mention us favorably to your patrons.

Oh, and by the way, will you please let us know the day and time suitable to you when we might send those engineers to your art gallery? Our orientation program begins in three weeks time. Looking forward to your prompt acceptance of our request (with or without free exhibition tickets).

Sincerely,
Li

Li was trying for a breezy tone which he thought appropriate for a young art gallery owner but obviously went overboard.

Based on your reading of Chapter 3, complete the following tasks:

- List problems in Li’s draft.
- Prepare another list of changes that would improve the draft. Be specific in your suggestions. For instance, it’s insufficient to say “more you-attitude” or “more politeness.” Point to places in the draft where these strategies might be useful. Also, rephrase relevant sentences or paragraphs for more you-attitude or more politeness, whichever is the case.
- What is the primary purpose of the letter? The secondary purpose?
- Revise the draft.

Navigating the Business Communication Environment

Chapter Outline

Ethics

Corporate Culture

Interpersonal Communication

- Listening
- Conversational Style
- Nonverbal Communication
- Networking

Time Management

- Techniques
- Multitasking

Trends in Business Communication

- Data Security
- Electronic Privacy

- Customer Service
- Work/Family Balance
- Environmental Concern
- Globalization and Outsourcing
- Diversity
- Teamwork
- Job Flexibility
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Rapid Rate of Change

Summary of Key Points

A Refreshingly Ethical Project



One of the best-known corporate social responsibility efforts is Pepsi's Refresh Project, launched in February 2010.

In its first year, the Refresh Project promised \$20 million in donations to organizations and individuals who submitted "refreshing ideas that change the world." Competition for grants, especially in the \$250,000 category, was high, with community, health, and religious

organizations forming alliances and dominating voting by encouraging supporters to vote up to the maximum allowed under contest rules. Such competition shut out many smaller, grassroots organizations that couldn't muster the same kind of support among voters.

Despite initial complaints of unfair competition, Pepsi Refresh Project reported 12,642 idea submissions and over 76 million votes. The project awarded \$6.4 million in grants to arts and health organizations, and provided funds that helped improve 26 playgrounds and start 47 organizations.

To even the field for the second year of Project Refresh, Pepsi revised voting procedures. Additionally, Pepsi eliminated the \$250,000 grant category, but offered twice as many grants of \$50,000 or less, which are sought by smaller groups. Jill Beraud, chief marketing officer for PepsiCo Beverages America, explained that the changes were meant to make the competition for Project Refresh grants more democratic.

While some analysts worry that Pepsi is spending too much on promoting an image of social responsibility and not enough on marketing its major brands, PepsiCo remains committed to Project Refresh and plans to expand the initiative to China and Latin America. According to PepsiCo Chairman and Chief Executive Indra K. Nooyi, companies must find ways

to make their brands stand apart from other brands in their same market, and social responsibility is one way to do that. As she explained at an industry conference in December 2010,

"What does this brand stand for in terms of doing something positive in the world?"

"It's a matter of, 'What does this brand stand for in terms of doing something positive in the world?'"

Source: Valerie Bauerlein, "Pepsi Hits 'Refresh' on Donor Project," *Wall Street Journal*, January 31, 2011, B4.

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will know

- LO 4-1** Why ethics is so important in business communication.
- LO 4-2** How corporate culture impacts the business environment.
- LO 4-3** How to improve interpersonal communication.
- LO 4-4** How to use your time more efficiently.
- LO 4-5** What the trends in business communication are.



Dilbert May Get You Fired

Catfish Bend Casinos in Burlington, Iowa, fired a seven-year employee for placing a Dilbert cartoon on a company bulletin board. The employee posted the cartoon after the company announced the casino was closing and 170 workers would probably be laid off.

The Dilbert cartoon called decision makers “drunken lemurs” and said they had time but no talent.

The employee, who was identified from security tapes, thought the comic was humorous and might cheer up some of his colleagues. Managers found it insulting misconduct. They then tried to block his unemployment benefits, but the judge sided with the employee, calling the posting “a good-faith error in judgment.”

Adapted from Clark Kauffman, “Bosses Check Video, Fire Man Who Put up Comic,” *Des Moines Register*, December 19, 2007, 1A, 10A.

In addition to adapting to audiences and building goodwill, business communications are heavily influenced by the environments in which they are created and interpreted. Part of this environment is shaped by national culture, such as the growing concern about business ethics, and part is shaped by corporate culture. Part is shaped by individual behaviors, such as those involved in interpersonal communication. A final part is shaped by widespread trends—trends such as globalization or the green movement. Technology and information overload, which are perhaps the largest of these trends, are discussed extensively in Chapter 9, along with effective ways to deal with them.

ETHICS LO 4-1

With the official recognition of a serious worldwide recession in the fall of 2008, along with the subprime mortgage debacle, ethics concerns have become a major part of the business environment. Financial giants such as AIG, Bear Sterns, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Wachovia, and Washington Mutual had to be bailed out or went bankrupt. Banks, corporate officials, and rating agencies all were accused of unethical behavior. The SEC charged Goldman Sachs with fraud on securities linked to subprime mortgages; the firm settled out of court for over half a billion dollars.

Even drug companies were not immune. Glaxo pleaded guilty to charges that it knowingly sold adulterated drugs, including the antidepressant Paxil, and paid fines of \$750 million. Pfizer paid \$2.3 billion for promoting drugs for unauthorized uses.¹

Billionaires fell as well. Bernie Madoff was sentenced to prison in what may have been the biggest Ponzi scheme in history, one that defrauded thousands of investors of billions of dollars. Hedge-fund manager Raj Rajaratnam was convicted of securities fraud and conspiracy in the biggest insider-trading case to that time.²

The Ethics Resource Center, America’s oldest nonprofit organization devoted to ethical practice, reported in its 2009 *National Business Ethics Survey*[®], that 49% of employees surveyed personally witnessed unethical or illegal behavior; 37% of those witnesses did not report it. The most frequent misconducts were company resource abuse, abusive behavior, lying to employees, e-mail or Internet abuse, conflicts of interest, discrimination, lying to stakeholders, employee benefit violations, health or safety violations, employee privacy breach, improper hiring practices, and falsifying time or expenses.³

Some common reasons for not reporting ethical misconduct are

- It's standard practice here.
- It's not a big deal.
- It's not my responsibility (a particularly common reason for junior employees).
- I want to be loyal to my colleagues/manager/company (stated negatively, this reason is "fear of consequences").⁴

On the other side of the coin, positive ethical efforts are also getting attention. The United Nations Global Compact, the world's largest corporate effort for global citizenship, focuses on human rights, labor, environment, and anticorruption measures. More than 5,300 businesses in 130 countries participate.⁵ The Clinton Global Initiative has brought together 150 heads of state, 18 Nobel laureates, and hundreds of CEOs, who collectively have committed \$63 billion. This money has already impacted the lives of 300 million people in 180 countries.⁶

The United States has its own efforts:

- Bill and Melinda Gates' foundation received double attention when Warren Buffett announced his transfer of billions of dollars to it. The three philanthropists have attracted still more attention with their efforts to convince other billionaires to pledge the majority of their wealth to philanthropy. The list of those who have made the pledge is posted at givingpledge.org; it included 69 pledgers in Spring 2011.
- Google, the "Don't Be Evil" company, has invested over \$100 million in Google.org to use "Google's strengths in information and technology to build products and advocate for policies that address global challenges."⁷
- Robin Hood, a venture philanthropy, "robs" the rich (its board members cover all costs, so 100% of money donated goes to fund programs) to help the poor in New York City.⁸

Social entrepreneurs, backed by social investors like Bill Gates, are extending the reach of philanthropy. Grameen Bank founder Muhammad Yunus won the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his work with microfinance. The bank says it has brought 68% of its 8.3 million clients out of extreme poverty. Social Finance is launching Social Impact Bonds (SiB). SiBs help social enterprises acquire the sustainable revenues they need to succeed. Financial returns for investors are based on improved social outcomes.⁹

Business ethics includes far more than corporate greed, international pacts, and philanthropy, of course. Much of business ethics involves routine practices, and many of these practices involve communication. How can we make our contracts with our clients and suppliers easier to understand? How can we best communicate with our employees? How much should our hospital disclose about infection rates?

Many basic, daily communication decisions involve an ethics component. Am I including all the information my audience needs? Am I expressing it in ways they will understand? Am I putting it in a format that helps my audience grasp it quickly? Am I including information for all segments of my audience? Am I taking information from other sources accurately? Am I acknowledging my sources? Figure 4.1 lists some of the web resources that deal with business ethics.

Figure 4.2 elaborates on ethical components of communication. As it suggests, language, graphics, and document design—basic parts of any



Definitely Not Full Disclosure

"A prominent spine surgeon and researcher at the University of Wisconsin received \$19 million in payment over five years from Medtronic Inc., one of the country's largest makers of spinal devices. . . ."

"The surgeon . . . received the payments while helping Medtronic develop and promote a number of spinal products. Medtronic's \$19 million in payments . . . went 'greatly' beyond what was evident in disclosures he made to the university. . . ."

"[During those five years, the surgeon] told the university that he received \$20,000 or more from Medtronic. . . . The disclosures conform to school policies, which currently don't require researchers to specify amounts received above \$20,000. . . ."

"Charles Rosen, a University of California, Irvine, spinal surgeon who is also president of the Association for Medical Ethics, said the Wisconsin disclosure policy is similar to that of many universities and medical societies. He said those policies are insufficient. . . ."

"When you are advocating devices or procedures, it can't be said this is a private matter and that no one should know how much this company is paying me,' he said. 'It should be very public. People should know.'"

Quoted from David Armstrong and Thomas M. Burton, "Medtronic Paid This Researcher More Than \$20,000—Much More," *Wall Street Journal*, January 16, 2009. Copyright © 2009 by Dow Jones & Company, Inc. Reproduced with permission of Dow Jones & Company, Inc. via Copyright Clearance Center.



No Illegal Downloads in France

France became one of the first countries to enforce an antipiracy law against Internet scofflaws. It is going after all illegal downloaders of copyrighted film and music, regardless of where the material was made.

The law was passed after heavy lobbying from involved industries, who claim that illegal downloads cost the French music industry €700 million (\$978 million) annually.

Offenders receive two warnings, first by e-mail and then by registered letter. A third offense can lead to legal proceedings plus a one-year Internet blackout for the offender.

Adapted from Max Colchester, "All Eyes on France as Officials Enforce New Antipiracy Law," *Wall Street Journal*, November 27, 2010, B1.

Figure 4.1 Business Ethics Resources on the Web

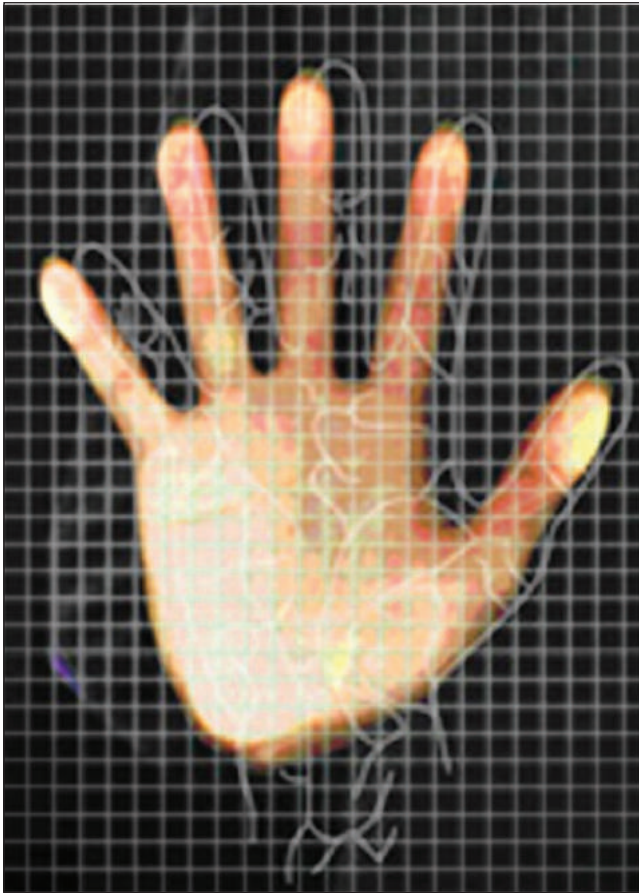
- **Business Ethics Resources on the Internet**
<http://www.ethicsweb.ca/resources/business>
- **Defense Industry Initiative on Business Ethics and Conduct**
<http://dii.org>
- **DePaul University's Institute for Business and Professional Ethics**
<http://commerce.depaul.edu/ethics>
- **Ethics Resource Center**
<http://www.ethics.org>
- **E-Business Ethics**
<http://www.e-businessethics.com>
- **Various Codes of Conduct**
<http://www.ethicsweb.ca/resources/business/codes.html>

business document—can be ethical or manipulative. Persuading and gaining compliance—activities at the heart of business and organizational life—can be done with respect or contempt for customers, co-workers, and subordinates.

In these days of instant communication, you, like the organization in which you work, must always act in an ethical manner. Consequences for not doing so are becoming more common as disgruntled colleagues/employees now have ample means for whistleblowing. Of course, there are also positive reasons for ethical behavior. In addition to moral reasons, there are business ones. As the Ethics Resource Center notes, customers and employees are attracted

Figure 4.2 Ethical Issues in Business Communications

Manner of conveying the message	Qualities of the message	Larger organizational context of the message
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the language audience-friendly? Does it respect the audience? • Do the words balance the organization's right to present its best case with its responsibility to present its message honestly? • Do graphics help the audience understand? Or are graphics used to distract or confuse? • Does the design of the document make reading easy? Does document design attempt to make readers skip key points? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the message an ethical one that is honest and sensitive to all stakeholders? • Have interested parties been able to provide input? • Does the audience get all the information it needs to make a good decision or is information withheld? • Is information communicated so the audience can grasp it or are data "dumped" without any context? • Are the arguments logical? Are they supported with adequate evidence? • Are the emotional appeals used fairly? Do they supplement logic rather than substitute for it? • Does the organizational pattern lead the audience without undue manipulation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the organization treat its employees? How do employees treat each other? • How sensitive is the organization to stakeholders such as the people who live near its factories, stores, or offices and to the general public? • Does the organization support employees' efforts to be honest, fair, and ethical? • Do the organization's actions in making products, buying supplies, and marketing goods and services stand up to ethical scrutiny? • Is the organization a good corporate citizen, helpful rather than harmful to the community in which it exists? • Are the organization's products or services a good use of scarce resources?



GMAT is now using palm vein scans to eliminate hired test takers. See sidebar on this page.

to ethical businesses. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, a professor at Harvard Business School, argues in her book, *Supercorp: How Vanguard Companies Create Innovation, Profits, Growth, and Social Good*, that companies desiring to do good have a competitive advantage. In fact, a benevolent viewpoint provides a wider view of society and thus awareness of new opportunities for growth and innovation by solving the problems of unmet needs.

Tony Hsieh, the founder and CEO of Zappos, offers this useful ethics guideline:

As a guiding principle in life for anything I do, I try to ask myself, What would happen if everyone in the world acted in the same way? What would the world look like? What would the net effect be on the overall happiness in the world? [Hsieh's italics]

This thought experiment has been useful to me when thinking about whether to share how we do things at Zappos, or whether to get upset at the waitress who accidentally got my order wrong, or whether to hold the door open for a stranger who's a slightly inconvenient distance away.

The same questions are just as important for deciding what not to do, even if not doing anything is the default choice.¹⁰

CORPORATE CULTURE LO 4-2

Another strong influence on the business environment is corporate culture (see Chapter 2 for ways to analyze corporate culture). Corporate cultures vary widely. They range from formal—with individual offices, jackets, and hierarchical lines of command—to informal, with open office space, casual attire, and flat organizational structures. Characteristics of popular corporate



Business School Ethics

GMAT test scores were canceled for applicants who allegedly supplied or accessed exam questions posted on a website. Business schools were notified that these students had prepared improperly for the exam, and the Graduate Management Admission Council, which oversees the exam, obtained a court order to shut down the site, believed to be maintained in China.

The council also announced that it will be requiring GMAT test takers to take a palm vein scan, an infrared picture of the blood vessels in their hands. This new security measure is a new attempt to wipe out proxies—hired brains that take the test for an applicant.

The efforts to cheat continue in business school. Donald McCabe, a Rutgers University professor of management who has studied academic dishonesty for two decades, says that students in business schools cheat more than other students. His findings are backed up by a Duke University study which found that 56% of master's students in business administration cheat, again the highest rate among graduate students.

Adapted from John Hechinger, "Schools Cancel GMAT Scores," *Wall Street Journal*, September 11, 2008, D6; and "The Ethical Mind: A Conversation with Psychologist Howard Gardner," *Harvard Business Review*, March 2007, 51–56.



Rule 34: Don't Plagiarize

"Do not plagiarize" should have been included in *Unwritten Rules of Management*, the book by William Swanson, CEO of Raytheon. In 2004, Raytheon gave employees free copies of the book, which contained 33 rules. The book quickly became widely read by professionals and executives because of its humorous approach. However, an engineer at Hewlett-Packard discovered that 13 of the rules had been previously published by W. J. King in his 1944 bestseller, *The Unwritten Laws of Engineering*. Further findings uncovered that the additional rules were obtained from Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and humor editorial writer Dave Barry.

Swanson apologized for the mistake, which, he states, began when he asked employees to create a presentation from a file. The presentation was a great hit, which led to the creation of the 33 rules—one for each year he worked for Raytheon. Unfortunately, the rules were not original and the sources were not properly cited.

How can you avoid plagiarism?

Adapted from Lisa Takeuchi Cullen, "Rule No. 1: Don't Copy," *Time*, May 15, 2006, 41.



Some employees use exercise balls as desk chairs. The balls require employees to use core muscles to maintain posture. Employees say they are also fun because they can bounce.

cultures include flexible work arrangements, profit sharing, information sharing, good training, health insurance, and wellness programs.

Both large and small companies get cited for their corporate cultures. Google is known for company gyms, well-stocked snack rooms, restaurants, and casual work attire. Dealer.com offers subsidized meals at its café, with organic and locally grown food, wellness seminars on exercise and stress management, chair massages, bike rentals, tennis and basketball courts, fitness center, and half-price ski passes. The company supports its sports teams, including softball, volleyball, soccer, bowling, and dragon-boat racing.¹¹

Two companies in the same field may have very different cultures. When Procter & Gamble bought Gillette, they expected a smooth marriage between the world's number one toothbrush, Oral-B, and the world's number two toothpaste, Crest. But cultural differences caused problems. Gillette employees found P&G's culture rigid, its decision making slow. Gillette employees also had to learn P&G's famous acronyms, such as CIB (consumer is boss) and FMOT (first moment of truth, when consumers notice the product). P&G people sent memos, Gillette people called meetings.¹²

Wise companies also use effective corporate cultures to retain hourly workers. Hotels lose two-thirds of their hourly workers annually, according to hotel survey firm Market Metrix. Each departure costs midrange hotels about \$5,000 in lost productivity, recruiting, and training. But Joie de Vivre Hospitality has a turnover rate that is half the industry average. The CEO attributes the low rate to a corporate culture that listens to employees, enacts some of their suggestions, and tries to make work fun. In addition to awards, the company sponsors parties, annual retreats, and regularly scheduled dinners. It also offers free classes on subjects such as Microsoft Excel and English as a second language.¹³

Corporate culture is at the heart of the customer service focus at Zappos, the Internet footwear retailer. The company nurtures a touch of weirdness to make work more fun. That same touch of weirdness also encourages innovation. To increase serendipitous interactions, all employees enter and exit through the reception area. Logging in to the company computer requires completing the short multiple-choice test to name the randomly selected employee whose picture is displayed.¹⁴ Tours of corporate offices are always unique, because teams are always changing their décor:

You might find a popcorn machine or a coffee machine dressed up as a robot in our lobby. As you passed through different departments, you might find an aisle of cowbells . . . , a makeshift bowling alley . . . , employees dressed up as pirates,



Thoughtful Perks

Some companies have unique perks:

- On-site laundry pickup and delivery
- Café lunch delivery at desks
- Professional home cleaning
- Two weeks fully paid leave to work for green nonprofits
- Up to \$5,000 and an extra week off for vacations abroad
- Charge card to use in a nearby restaurant

Adapted from "10 Perks We Love," *Inc.*, June 2010, 94.

employees karaokeing, a nap room, a petting zoo, or a hot dog social. You might see a parade pass by because one of our departments decided that it was the perfect day to celebrate Oktoberfest.¹⁵

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION LO 4-3

Within the corporate environment, some people are more likely to be successful than others, and one major reason for the variation is interpersonal communication skill. Much important communication takes place in hallways, at the coffee machine, and in break rooms. Successful professionals communicate well with different categories of people—co-workers, bosses, clients—in a variety of settings. To do so, they cultivate skills in diverse areas such as listening, conversation, nonverbal communication, and networking. They also practice skills in conflict resolution and teamwork (see Chapter 8 for a discussion of these latter two skills).

These skills are part of what Daniel Goleman has widely popularized as Emotional Intelligence in his books on the subject. He presents much evidence to show that while intelligence and expertise are necessary to climb to the top in organizations, once at the top emotional intelligence, not IQ, predicts the star leaders.¹⁶

Listening

Listening is crucial to building trust. However, listening on the job may be more difficult than listening in classes. Many classroom lectures are well organized, with signposts and repetition of key points to help hearers follow. But conversations usually wander. A key point about when a report is due may be sandwiched in among statements about other due dates for other projects. Finally, in a classroom you're listening primarily for information. In interchanges with friends and co-workers, you need to listen for feelings, too. Feelings such as being rejected or overworked need to be dealt with as they arise. But you can't deal with a feeling unless you are aware of it.

Listening errors also can result from being distracted by your own emotional response, especially when the topic is controversial. Listeners have to be aware of their emotional responses so that they can clarify the speaker's intent and also allow time for cooling off, if necessary. A "you" attitude is as helpful for listening as it is for writing. Listening is more effective if the listener focuses more on understanding than on formulating a reply. Thinking about your own response too often causes you to miss important information.

Some listening errors also happen because the hearer wasn't paying enough attention to a key point. Be aware of points you need to know and listen for them.

Inattention and emotions can cause listeners to misinterpret a speaker. To reduce listening errors caused by misinterpretation,

- Paraphrase what the speaker has said, giving him or her a chance to correct your understanding.
- At the end of the conversation, check your understanding with the other person. Especially check who does what next.
- After the conversation, write down key points that affect deadlines or how work will be evaluated. Sometimes these key points need to be confirmed in an e-mail.
- Don't ignore instructions you think are unnecessary. Before you do something else, check with the order giver to see if there is a reason for the instruction.



Warren Buffett on Ethics

In a 2008 letter to Berkshire directors, Warren Buffett says this about ethics:

"We *must* continue to measure every act against not only what is legal but also what we would be happy to have written about on the front page of a national newspaper in an article written by an unfriendly but intelligent reporter."

"Sometimes your associates will say 'Everybody else is doing it.' This rationale is almost always a bad one if it is the main justification for a business action. It is totally unacceptable when evaluating a moral decision. Whenever somebody offers that phrase as a rationale, in effect they are saying that they can't come up with a *good* reason. If anyone offers this explanation, tell them to try using it with a reporter or a judge and see how far it gets them."

"... It's very likely that if a given course of action evokes hesitation *per se*, it's too close to the line and should be abandoned. There's plenty of money to be made in the center of the court. If it's questionable whether some action is close to the line, just assume it is outside and forget it."

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Small Companies, Large Hearts

Some small companies are building philanthropy into their business models. Hook & Ladder Brewing Company donates a portion of all sales to local burned firefighters and other burn survivors. ColorMe Company, which produces arts and crafts materials for children, gives 10% of earnings to children's charities. Toms shoes gives a pair of new shoes to a child in need for every pair of shoes purchased from them.

Charitable contributions like these help attract and keep customers and employees and set such companies apart from their competitors.

What do you think of such philanthropic business models? What potential problems do such models have? Do you think the benefits will outweigh the pitfalls?

Adapted from "H&L History," Hook & Ladder Brewing Company, accessed May 26, 2011, <http://www.hookandladderbeer.com/Public/Content.aspx>; "Homepage," ColorMe Company, accessed May 26, 2011, <http://www.colormecompany.com/>; "Official Store," TOMS Company, accessed May 26, 2011, <http://www.toms.com/>.

- Consider the other person's background and experiences. Why is this point important to the speaker? What might he or she mean by it?

Listening to people is an indication that you're taking them seriously. **Acknowledgment responses**—nods, *uh huhs*, smiles, frowns—help carry the message that you're listening. However, remember that listening responses vary in different cultures.

In **active listening**, receivers actively demonstrate that they've understood a speaker by feeding back the literal meaning, the emotional content, or both. These strategies create active responses:

- Paraphrase the content. Feed back the meaning in your own words.
- Identify the feelings you think you hear.
- Ask for information or clarification.
- Offer to help. ("What can I do to help?")

When dealing with problems, instead of acknowledging what the other person says, many of us immediately respond in a way that analyzes or attempts to solve or dismiss the problem. People with problems need first of all to know that we hear that they're having a rough time. Figure 4.3 lists some of the responses that block communication. Ordering and threatening both tell the other person that the speaker doesn't want to hear what he or she has to say. Preaching attacks the other person. Minimizing the problem suggests the other person's concern is misplaced. It can even attack the other person's competency by suggesting that other people are coping just fine with bigger problems. Even advising shuts off discussion. Giving a quick answer minimizes the pain the person feels and puts him or her down for not seeing (what is to us) the obvious answer. Even if it is a good answer from an objective point of view, the other person may not be ready to hear it. And too often, the off-the-top-of-the-head solution doesn't address the real problem.

Active listening takes time and energy. Even people who are skilled active listeners can't do it all the time. Active listening can reduce the conflict that

Figure 4.3 Blocking Responses versus Active Listening

Blocking response	Possible active response
Ordering, threatening "I don't care how you do it. Just get that report on my desk by Friday."	Paraphrasing content "You're saying that you don't have time to finish the report by Friday."
Preaching, criticizing "You should know better than to air the department's problems in a general meeting."	Mirroring feelings "It sounds like the department's problems really bother you."
Minimizing the problem "You think <i>that's</i> bad. You should see what I have to do this week."	Asking for information or clarification "What parts of the problem seem most difficult to solve?"
Advising "Well, why don't you try listing everything you have to do and seeing which items are most important?"	Offering to help solve the problem together "Is there anything I could do that would help?"

Source: These responses that block communication are based on a list in Thomas Gordon and Judith Gordon Sands, *P.E.T. in Action* (New York: Wyden, 1976), 117–18.

results from miscommunication, but it alone cannot reduce the conflict that comes when two people want apparently inconsistent things or when one person wants to change someone else.

Conversational Style

Deborah Tannen, a linguist who specializes in gender discourse, uses the term **conversational style** to denote our conversational patterns and the meaning we give to them: the way we show interest, politeness, appropriateness.¹⁷ Your answers to the following questions reveal your own conversational style:

- How long a pause tells you that it's your turn to speak?
- Do you see interruption as rude? or do you say things while other people are still talking to show that you're interested and to encourage them to say more?
- Do you show interest by asking lots of questions? or do you see questions as intrusive and wait for people to volunteer whatever they have to say?

Tannen concludes that the following features characterize her own conversational style:

- Fast rate of speech.
- Fast rate of turn-taking.
- Persistence—if a turn is not acknowledged, try again.
- Preference for personal stories.
- Tolerance of, preference for simultaneous speech.
- Abrupt topic shifting.

Different conversational styles are not necessarily good or bad, but people with different conversational styles may feel uncomfortable without knowing why. A subordinate who talks quickly may be frustrated by a boss who speaks slowly. People who talk more slowly may feel shut out of a conversation with people who talk more quickly. Someone who has learned to make requests directly (“Please pass the salt”) may be annoyed by someone who uses indirect requests (“This casserole needs some salt”).

In the workplace, conflicts may arise because of differences in conversational style. If people see direct questions as criticizing or accusing, they may see an ordinary question (“Will that report be ready Friday?”) as a criticism of their progress. One supervisor might mean the question simply as a request for information. Another supervisor might use the question to mean “I want that report Friday.”

Researchers Daniel N. Maltz and Ruth A. Borker believe that differences in conversational style (Figure 4.4) may be responsible for the miscommunication that often occurs in **male–female conversations**. Certainly conversational style is not the same for all men and for all women, but research has found several common patterns in the U.S. cultures studied so far.¹⁸ For example, researchers have found that women are much more likely to nod and to say *yes* or *mm hmm* than men are.¹⁹ Maltz and Borker hypothesize that to women, these symbols mean simply “I’m listening; go on.” Men, on the other hand, may decode these symbols as “I agree” or at least “I follow what you’re saying so far.” A man who receives nods and *mmms* from a woman may feel that she is inconsistent and unpredictable if she then disagrees with him. A woman may feel that a man who doesn’t provide any feedback isn’t listening to her.



Encyclopedia of Ethical Failure

“[Stephen] Epstein, the director of the Pentagon’s Standards of Conduct Office, is mounting an ethical cleansing offensive from inside the corridors of power. His weapon of choice is the ‘Encyclopedia of Ethical Failure,’ a hit parade he publishes on the Internet to regale bureaucrats with tales of shenanigans and shockingly bad judgment that have shot down the careers of fellow public servants across government.

“Take the case of the Customs . . . officer who landed a government helicopter on his daughter’s grade-school playground: Despite having a supervisor’s ill-considered clearance to fly there, . . . the officer was fired for misusing government property. . . .

“Mr. Epstein combs through the press, legal records and internal government investigation reports for material. . . . He often finds humor in the missteps. Two Veterans Affairs bureaucrats were charged with overbilling the government and receiving kickbacks from a supplier. ‘The product? . . . Red tape.’”

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Figure 4.4 Different Conversational Styles

	Debating	Relating
Interpretation of questions	See questions as requests for information.	See questions as way to keep a conversation flowing.
Relation of new comment to what last speaker said	Do not require new comment to relate explicitly to last speaker's comment. Ignoring previous comment is one strategy for taking control.	Expect new comments to acknowledge the last speaker's comment and relate directly to it.
View of aggressiveness	See aggressiveness as one way to organize the flow of conversation.	See aggressiveness as directed at audience personally, as negative, and as disruptive to a conversation.
How topics are defined and changed	Tend to define topics narrowly and shift topics abruptly. Interpret statements about side issues as effort to change the topic.	Tend to define topics gradually, progressively. Interpret statements about side issues as effort to shape, expand, or limit the topic.
Response to someone who shares a problem	Offer advice, solutions.	Offer solidarity, reassurance. Share troubles to establish sense of community.

Sources: Based on Daniel N. Maltz and Ruth A. Borker, "A Cultural Approach to Male-Female Miscommunication," *Language and Social Identity*, ed. John J. Gumperz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 213; and Deborah Tannen, *Talking from 9 to 5: Women and Men in the Workplace: Language, Sex and Power* (New York: William Morrow, 1995).



Interpersonal Skills for Doctors

The risk of being sued for medical malpractice lies not so much with training, credentials, or even the number of mistakes made. Rather, it depends on doctors' interpersonal skills. Again and again, patients in malpractice suits say they were rushed, ignored, or treated like objects. A study of surgeons showed that those who had never been sued

- Made orienting comments at visits, so patients knew what was going to happen and when it was best to ask questions.
- Practiced active listening ("Tell me more about that").
- Laughed and were funny during visits.

The difference was all in how they talked to their patients; there was no difference in amount or quality of information.

Adapted from Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2007), 40–43.

Research has also shown that in our culture men tend to interrupt more than women; women tend to wait for a pause in the discussion before speaking. When former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was asked to give advice to professional women hoping to rise in the ranks, she replied, "Learn to interrupt."²⁰

Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication—communication that doesn't use words—takes place all the time. Smiles, frowns, who sits where at a meeting, the size of an office, how long someone keeps a visitor waiting—all these communicate pleasure or anger, friendliness or distance, power and status.

Researchers have begun to study a category of nonverbal communication called **social signals**—tone of voice, gestures, proximity to others, facial expressions—as keys to business success. Researchers can study these signals in individuals and then predict accurately who will win raises or business plan contests. The more successful people are more energetic and positive. They do talk more, but they also listen more, drawing other people out.²¹

Most of the time we are no more conscious of interpreting nonverbal signals than we are conscious of breathing. Yet nonverbal signals can be misinterpreted just as easily as can verbal symbols (words). And the misunderstandings can be harder to clear up because people may not be aware of the nonverbal cues that led them to assume that they aren't liked, respected, or approved.

Learning about nonverbal language can help us project the image we want to present and make us more aware of the signals we are interpreting. However, even within a single culture, a nonverbal symbol may have more than one meaning.

In the business world, two sets of nonverbal signals are particularly important: spatial cues and body language.

Spatial Cues In the United States, the size, placement, and privacy of one's office connotes status. Large corner offices have the highest status. An individual office with a door that closes connotes more status than a desk in a common area. Windows also may matter. An office with a window may connote more status than one without.

People who don't know each other well may feel more comfortable with each other if a piece of furniture separates them. For example, a group may work better sitting around a table than just sitting in a circle. Desks can be used as barricades to protect oneself from other people.

Body Language Our body language communicates to other people much about our feelings. Our facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, posture, and body positions all telegraph information about us. In the United States, **open body positions** include leaning forward with uncrossed arms and legs, with the arms away from the body. **Closed** or **defensive body positions** include leaning back, sometimes with both hands behind the head, arms and legs crossed or close together, or hands in pockets. As the labels imply, open positions suggest that people are accepting and open to new ideas. Closed positions suggest that people are physically or psychologically uncomfortable, that they are defending themselves and shutting other people out.

People who cross their arms or legs often claim that they do so only because the position is more comfortable. But notice your own body the next time you're in a perfectly comfortable discussion with a good friend. You'll probably find that you naturally assume open body positions. The fact that so many people in organizational settings adopt closed positions may indicate that many people feel at least slightly uncomfortable in school and on the job.

Some nonverbal communications appear to be made and interpreted unconsciously by many people. Researchers at MIT are showing that when we get excited about something, we have more nervous energy. Another such signal is fluency, or consistency. Consistency in motions (such as in surgery) or



Liar Detection

Although not infallible, these are signs of lying:

Body language: Physical cues such as sweating and fidgeting may be telling.

Details: False stories often lack details. Pushing for details increases chances the liar may slip up.

Unpleasantness: Liars are less cooperative, pleasant, and friendly than truth tellers. They also make more negative statements and complaints.

Eye contact: Failure to make eye contact is often a sign of lying.

Stress signs: Dilated pupils and a rise in voice pitch may be present.

Pauses: Most liars will have pauses in their stories as they make them up.

Inconsistencies: Ask suspected liars to repeat their stories; listen for inconsistencies.

Adapted from Elisabeth Eaves, "Ten Ways to Tell if Someone Is Lying to You," *Forbes*, July 22, 2010, http://www.forbes.com/2006/11/02/tech-cx_ee_technology_liar_slide.html.



(a)



(b)

(a) (left) "THE REAL THING: A real smile involves the whole face, not just the mouth. While muscles pull the corners of the mouth up (1), an involuntary nerve causes the upper eye fold (2) to relax."

(b) (right) "THE SOCIAL SMILE: When faking, the lips are pulled straight across (3). Though this creates cheek folds (4) similar to those of a real smile, the lack of eye crinkles (5) is a dead giveaway."

Quoted from Andy Raskin, "A Face Any Business Can Trust," *Business 2.0* 4, no. 11 (December 2003): 60.



Are Interruptions Impolite?

In the dominant U.S. culture, interrupting can seem impolite, especially if a lower-status person interrupts a superior.

Simulated negotiations have measured the interruptions by businesspeople in 10 countries. The following list is ordered by decreasing numbers of interruptions:

- Korea
- Germany
- France
- China
- Brazil
- Russia
- Taiwan
- Japan
- United Kingdom
- United States

This list does not mean that U.S. businesspeople are more polite, but rather that how people show politeness differs from culture to culture. Chinese and Italians (who also interrupt frequently) use interruptions to offer help, jointly construct a conversation, and show eagerness to do business—all of which are polite.

Based on Jan M. Ulijn and Xiangling Li, "Is Interrupting Impolite? Some Temporal Aspects of Turn-Taking in Chinese-Western and Other Intercultural Encounters," *Text* 15, no. 4 (1995): 600, 621.



Body language can give big clues about our attitude to office visitors.

tone (speech) tells us who is expert, or at least well practiced. Such signals are hard to fake, which may explain their influence.²²

Body language is complicated by the fact that nonverbal signs may have more than one meaning. A frown may signal displeasure or concentration. A stiff posture that usually means your co-worker is upset may today just be a sign of sore back muscles.

Misunderstandings are even more common when people communicate with people from other cultures or other countries. Knowing something about other cultures may help you realize that a subordinate who doesn't meet your eye may be showing respect rather than dishonesty. But it's impossible to memorize every meaning that every nonverbal sign has in every culture. And in a multicultural workforce, you may not know whether someone retains the meanings of his or her ancestors or has adopted the dominant U.S. meanings. The best solution is to ask for clarification.

Networking

A much underappreciated skill in the business environment is **networking**, the ability to connect with many different kinds of people. Most of us can relate to the people in our immediate work group, although even there differences in ability to connect impact performance. But true networking is creating connections with still more people. It involves creating connections before they are needed, creating diverse connections in widely spread areas, knowing which people to turn to when you need additional expertise, knowing people outside the company.

Good networkers know who will help them cut through red tape, who can find an emergency supplier, who will take on extra work in a crisis. Informal conversations, about yesterday's game and Li's photography exhibit as well as what's happening at work, connect them with the **grapevine**, an informal source of company information. Participation in civic, school, religious, and professional organizations connects them to a larger environment. They attend conferences, trade shows, fundraisers, and community events. They use social networking sites such as LinkedIn (see Chapter 9 for more on electronic networks).

Networking becomes even more important as you climb the corporate ladder. Good managers interact with their employees continually, not just when they need something. They listen to lunchroom conversations; they chat with employees over coffee.

Much research shows that networking is crucial to job success. In *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman tells of research in a division at Bell Labs to determine what made the star performers in the division. Everyone in the division had a high academic IQ, which meant that IQ was not a good predictor of job productivity (although academic knowledge and IQ are good predictors of success on earlier career ladder rungs). But networking skill was a good predictor. The stars put effort into developing their network, and they cultivated relationships in that network *before* they were needed.²³

Goleman identifies three different kinds of workplace networks: conversational (who talks to whom), expertise (who can be turned to for advice), and trust (who can be trusted with sensitive information like gripes). Unsurprisingly, the stars of an organization are often heavily networked in all three varieties.²⁴

Good networkers share certain interpersonal communication behaviors. They adapt their behavior and attitude to the people around them. They subtly mirror the postures, behaviors, and emotional states of people near them. They share some personal and emotional information about themselves, a sharing that helps build trust. They capitalize on the benefits of physical proximity—trading some phone calls for actual office visits, attending both informal and formal gatherings. One study showed that people with these skills penetrated the center of their workplace network in just 18 months; people lacking in these skills took 13 years.²⁵

TIME MANAGEMENT LO 4-4

As your work environment becomes more complex, with multiple networks, responsibilities, and projects, good time management becomes crucial. Although much time management advice sounds like common sense, it is amazing the number of people who do not follow it.

Techniques

Probably the most important time management technique is to prioritize the demands on your time, and make sure you spend the majority of your time on the most important demands. If your career success depends on producing reports, news articles, and press releases about company business, then that is what you need to spend the majority of your time doing.

Randy Pausch, in his highly popular video and book *The Last Lecture*, makes this point about prioritizing most eloquently. His lecture is a moving reminder to make time for friends and family. His colleagues noted that he would regularly tell his students they could always make more money later, but they could never make more time.²⁶

In *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey presents a useful time management matrix which sorts activities by urgency and importance; see Figure 4.5. Obviously we should focus our time on important, urgent activities, but Covey also advises putting significant time into quadrant II, important but nonurgent activities, which he calls the heart of effective management. Quadrant II activities include networking, planning, and preparing.²⁷



Authoritative Body Language

Carol Kinsey Goman, author of *The Silent Language of Leaders: How Body Language Can Help—or Hurt—How You Lead*, offers these tips to increase your image of authority:

- Keep your head straight up. Head tilts show concern or interest for individuals, but may be processed as submission signals in power situations.
- Expand your space. Stand tall, spread your elbows a little, widen your stance, and spread your materials on the table at the next meeting. Authority is demonstrated through height and space.
- Use the tonal arc, in which your voice rises in pitch through a sentence but drops back down at the end. Ending on a higher pitch often indicates uncertainty or a need for approval.
- Look serious when the subject is serious. Smiles are frequently inappropriate in power situations.
- Do not nod to express listening or engagement; nodding undercuts authority.
- Minimize movements, especially gestures.
- Have a firm handshake.

Adapted from Carol Kinsey Goman, “10 Common Body Language Traps for Women in the Workplace,” *On Leadership* (blog), *Washington Post*, May 2, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/on-leadership/post/10-common-body-language-traps-for-women-in-the-workplace/2011/03/03/AFI0GFbF_blog.html.



Gossip Networking

Although it has a tarnished reputation, gossip can benefit both individuals and organizations, research shows. Gossiping is a form of networking. According to Joe Labianca, a professor at the University of Kentucky's Center for Research on Social Networks in Business, the more workers gossip, the better their understanding of the work environment and the higher their peers rate their influence. Gossip disseminates valuable information about workers, such as who doesn't do their share or who is impossible to work with.

And guess what? Managers gossip, too. In fact, they may have more "gossip partners" than nonmanagers.

Adapted from Giuseppe Labianca, "It's Not 'Unprofessional' to Gossip at Work," *Harvard Business Review*, (September 2010): 29.

Figure 4.5 Stephen Covey's Time Management Matrix. Covey advises putting significant time into quadrant II.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	I ACTIVITIES: Crises Pressing problems Deadline-driven projects	II ACTIVITIES: Prevention, PC activities Relationship building Recognizing new opportunities Planning, recreation
Not Important	III ACTIVITIES: Interruptions, some calls Some mail, some reports Some meetings Proximate, pressing matters Popular activities	IV ACTIVITIES: Trivia, busy work Some mail Some phone calls Time wasters Pleasant activities

Source: Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 150–54. Reprinted with permission of the author.

These are some other common tips for time management:

- Keep lists—both daily and long term. Prioritize items on your list.
- Ask yourself where you want to be in three or five years and work accordingly.
- Do large, important tasks first, and then fill in around them with smaller tasks.
- Break large tasks into small ones. Remember that you do not always have to work sequentially. If you have been putting off a report because you cannot decide how to write its introduction, start with the conclusions or some other part that is easy for you to write.
- Find blocks of time: put your phone on answering machine, ignore e-mail, avoid the break room, move discretionary meetings. Put these blocks at your most productive time; save e-mail and meetings for less productive times.
- Avoid time sinks: some people, long phone conversations, constant e-mail checks.
- Decide at the end of today's work session what you will do in tomorrow's session, and set yourself up to do it. Find the necessary file; look up the specifications for that proposal.
- At end of week, evaluate what you didn't get done. Should you have done it for promotion, goodwill, ethics?

Multitasking

Many workers believe they can manage some of their time crunch problems by multitasking. Unfortunately, decades of research on the subject show that this is a false belief. It is particularly false when long-term learning or communication tasks are involved.²⁸ Just think of all the e-mails that get sent to unintended audiences while the writer is multitasking, or all the phone calls for which the caller, busy multitasking, forgets who is being called or why in the short time between dialing and pickup.

Research shows that when we think we are multitasking, we are really switching back and forth between tasks. And there is always a start-up delay involved in returning to a previous task, no matter how brief the delay. These delays may make it faster to do the tasks sequentially, in which case we will probably do them better, too. In fact, some research shows it can take up to 50% longer to multitask.²⁹ Other research shows that multitasking hurts overall attention and memory, even when not multitasking.³⁰

When we return to a task following an interruption—either from someone else, like a phone call, or from ourselves, like a visit to FaceBook—it may take us close to half an hour to get back into the original task.³¹ Sometimes, we do not get back to the task correctly. Pilots who are interrupted in their preflight checklist may miss an item when they return to it. One crash, in which 153 people died, has been blamed on an error resulting from such an interruption.³²

TRENDS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION LO 4-5

Both business and business communication are constantly changing. One of the biggest changes for most people is the shift to electronic communications. This all-encompassing trend is the subject of Chapter 9. Related to this shift are trends in data security and electronic privacy. Other trends are customer service, work/family balance, environmental concern, globalization and outsourcing, diversity, teamwork, job flexibility, innovation and entrepreneurship. As this list of trends suggests, rapid change itself is another major trend in the business environment.

Data Security

As business communication becomes increasingly electronic, concerns about data theft mushroom. Just as individuals take steps—like not providing important identification numbers by e-mail—to prevent identity theft, organizations take steps to protect their data. The need for them to do so becomes always more urgent as hackers continue to produce more sophisticated software. In 2011, Sony reported the theft of names, birthdates, and possibly credit card numbers for 77 million people.³³

Not all the lost data comes from hackers. Lost or stolen laptops and smart phones containing sensitive data also add to the problem. Flash drives, because of their small size, are an even bigger problem. Corporate security measures include bans on personal electronic devices. Some companies are even disabling extra USB connections to ensure employees cannot attach these devices. Others are performing random checks of laptops to look for unauthorized or unsecured files and using scans of fingerprints, eyes, or faces to limit and track access to specific computers.³⁴

Data security problems affect individuals, too. When hackers get names and e-mail addresses, they can send **phishing messages**, e-mails that try to lure receivers to send sensitive information. When hackers can connect the names and addresses to actual firms the readers use, such as banks and stores, the phishing e-mails look so official that even executives and professionals are convinced to respond.

Electronic Privacy

As organizations respond to growing security concerns, their efforts often encroach on workers' privacy. Organizations are monitoring many different kinds



As the Old Song Says, "I Got Rhythm"

One of the newest electronic security methods is keystroke authentication. It turns out that your typing pattern, the pressure of your fingers on the keys and your typing speed, is unique. It allows you to prove electronically that you are who you say you are.

Keystroke patterning has a long history. The military began using it over a hundred years ago to identify individual senders of Morse code by their tapping rhythms. As the location of those senders shifted, military trackers got data on enemy movements.

Currently, the biggest users of keystroke patterning are banks and credit unions, who are employing it in addition to standard password authentication. Since identity theft has become such a major problem, banks and credit unions are under a federal mandate to use stronger authentication measures to protect online customers.

Adapted from Kathleen Kingsbury, "Telltale Fingertips: With Biometrics, How You Type Can Allow Websites to Know Who You Are—Or Aren't," *Time Bonus Section*, January 2007, A10.

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Identity theft is such a growing concern that some companies make it the main focus of their business.

of electronic interactions. According to a survey by the American Management Association of 304 companies,

- 73% store and review e-mail.
- 66% monitor Internet usage.
- 65% block inappropriate websites.
- 48% use video surveillance.
- 45% record time spent on phone and numbers dialed.
- 43% store and review computer files.³⁵

The same study also showed that 45% track keystrokes (and time spent at the computer). Because of findings from such monitoring, some companies are blocking access to particular websites, especially Facebook, YouTube, sports and online shopping sites. Many organizations claim that heavy usage of these sites slows down company communications such as file transfers and e-mail. In 2009, Senator Chuck Grassley called for a halt of funds to the National Science Foundation after a report was released that found that some employees spent up to 20% of their workday looking at porn instead of reviewing grant proposals.³⁶

Other surveillance techniques use GPS (global positioning system) chips to monitor locations of company vehicles, as well as arrival and departure times at job sites. EZ-Pass, the electronic toll collection system, records are being used in courts as proof of infidelity. Workers may tell their spouses they are in a meeting, but EZ-Pass has a record of where and when their vehicle entered or exited that day.³⁷ Cellphones and computers give approximate location signals that are accurate enough to help law enforcement officials locate suspects.

The division between corporate data security and personal privacy has become increasingly complex and blurry. Corporate surveillance does not necessarily stop when employees leave their offices or cars. It can continue to the company parking areas and even employees' homes. Companies such as Google, Delta Air Lines, and even Burger King have fired workers for content on their personal blogs. Although many workers believe their blogs are protected by the first amendment, the truth is that in most states, companies can fire employees for almost any reason except discrimination.³⁸

A survey by the American Management Association found that over a quarter of companies fired employees for e-mail misuse.³⁹ New technologies make it increasingly easy for companies—and lawyers—to track employees. “E-discovery” software can aid searchers in sorting millions of documents and e-mails in just days to find relevant ones for court cases. They go far beyond finding specific words and terms. In some of the best, if you search for “dog,” you will also find documents with “man’s best friends” and even the notion of “walk.” Other programs can find concepts rather than just key words. Still others look at activities—who did what when, who talked to whom—to extract patterns. They find anomalies, such as switching media from e-mail to phone or a face-to-face communication, or when a document is edited an unusual number of times by unusual people.⁴⁰

Other media are also connected with privacy issues. Some Twitter users have found the hard way that their messages are not private. Paul Chambers lost his job and was convicted of threatening to blow up an airport after sending a joking tweet to his friends.⁴¹ Detroit mayor Kwame Kilpatrick was charged with perjury and forced to resign after text messages he sent were used against him by prosecutors. Embarrassing photos of hapless individuals pepper the web. Employees have also been fired for posting on their personal Facebook site disparaging comments about their employers. And even “old” technology can threaten privacy. Illinois Governor Blagojevich was impeached on the bases of taped phone conversations.

Although more individuals are starting to sue over their firings, and a few are winning, the legal scale is still weighted in favor of employers. In 2010 the Supreme Court ruled that searches on work equipment are reasonable and not a violation of Fourth Amendment rights.



Someone's Watching

The anonymous life exists no more, if it ever did. Now private incidents are constantly being publicized on the Internet. New sites are constantly springing up that allow ordinary citizens to post blogs, comments, pictures, or videos about faux pas ranging from bad driving to leaving doggie droppings. Anyone, from your next door neighbor to the guy sitting next to you on the bus while you are loudly talking on your cell-phone, can report a complaint about your social infraction on these websites.

For example, a North Carolina driver found himself accused of reckless driving. Unfortunately, the posting doesn't stop there; readers added the driver's full name and cellphone number. Other “violators” have had home address, occupation, and employer's name posted.

Check out some of these sites:
 Platewire.com
 Mybikelane.com
 Litterbutt.com
 Rudepeople.com

How would you feel if one of your actions were deemed obnoxious enough to show up on one of these websites? Do you think the self-policing of these types of websites can really make a difference?

Adapted from Jennifer Saranow, “The Snoop Next Door: Bad Parking, Loud Talking—No Transgression Is Too Trivial to Document Online,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 12, 2007, W1.

Some companies are seeking to help individuals protect their privacy by offering services that delete messages and documents from multiple phones at a set time. Users can set an expiration time for their messages, which will be used to delete the messages from their own phones, the recipients' phones, and the messaging service's computer servers.⁴² Other companies, for example, allow users to choose what kinds of ads they will see or to opt out altogether. Companies like Microsoft and Mozilla are beginning to include do-not-track features in their popular Internet browsers, to keep advertisers and others from monitoring online habits.⁴³

In 2009, the Federal Trade Commission endorsed industry self-regulation to protect consumer privacy. Websites and companies that collect consumer data such as searches performed and websites visited are to (1) clearly notify consumers that they do so, (2) provide an easy way to opt out, (3) protect the data, and (4) limit its retention, but breaches of these guidelines continue to occur.⁴⁴

A highly publicized study by the *Wall Street Journal* of the 50 most popular websites in the United States found that those sites installed 3,180 tracking files on the test computer. Twelve sites, including Dictionary.com, Comcast.net, and MSN.com, installed over 100 tracking tools each. Some tracking files could track sensitive health and financial data; other files could transmit keystrokes; still other files could reattach trackers that a person deleted. Apps on smart phones are performing similar trackings.⁴⁵

Customer Service

One effect of the recession was to push more businesses into focusing on their customer service. Amazon, for instance, is well-known for its mission to be "Earth's most customer centric company." But it is far from alone. Customer satisfaction is increasingly important for all businesses; in fact, it is a leading indicator of financial success.⁴⁶ Companies with higher scores on the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) tend to see better sales and stock performance than do companies with lower scores.⁴⁷ In an age where unhappy customers can share their experiences with thousands of web users, focusing on customer satisfaction is vital.

Improving customer service doesn't always mean spending extra money. Companies are learning to cross-train employees, so they can fill in where needed. Other companies are giving extra attention to their best customers to keep them loyal. Walgreens is training its pharmacists to work more closely with patients with chronic illnesses such as diabetes.⁴⁸ A tried and true way of improving customer service is increasing the oral communication skills of sales reps and customer service agents.

Work/Family Balance

In addition to improving customer satisfaction, businesses are also focusing on their own employees. To reduce turnover, and increase employee satisfaction, companies are trying to be more family friendly by proving flextime, telecommuting, time off for family needs, and extended career breaks for caregiving. The balance of work and family is becoming such a popular topic that the *Wall Street Journal* now runs a regular column called "Work and Family."

At Cisco, 95% of employees take advantage of flextime, and 90% do some of their work off-site (the average is two days a week). Mothers of young



Many organizations promote virtual offices, which allow employees to work from home.

children can take extended leave of up to two years, including one with full benefits. Cisco also offers job sharing and some positions that work full-time from home. Microsoft offers in-home sick care for sick children, as well as local centers for mildly ill children.⁴⁹

At times, employees find ways other than physical presence to demonstrate their commitment and enthusiasm for organizational goals. Thanks to technology advances, employees can use laptops, e-mail, or cellphones to do work at any time, including weekends and evenings. The downside of this trend is that sometimes work and family life are not so much balanced as blurred. For instance, many employers are giving portable media players to workers for training courses, language lessons, and general organizational announcements to hear on their own time. Some employees are also expected to conduct business 24-hours a day because of different time zones of workplaces. The flexibility of employees is necessary in an age of downsizing and globalization, but it means that families are being impacted.

Dilbert's company, the one of cartoon fame, no longer uses the phrase work/family balance; instead, it uses "'work-life integration' so it's easier to make you work when you would prefer being with loved ones."⁵⁰

Environmental Concern

As global warming becomes an issue of increasing concern, more and more companies are trying to soften their environmental impact. They do so for a variety of reasons in addition to environmental concerns. Sometimes such



Santa Letters

Even letters to Santa Claus reflect the wider business environment.

During good times, children tend to ask for everything they see. But tougher economic times are reflected in children's letters. The letters talk of grim topics such as lost jobs and homes. They plead for basic necessities—rent money for mom, diapers for the baby, socks and warm clothing for everyone.

The Chicago main post office alone receives over 12,000 letters to Santa. Employees and volunteers sort them by gender and family size, then put them in the lobby where customers can select a child to help. Hundreds do so.

Adapted from Stacy St. Clair, "Letters to Santa Reflect Reality of Grim Economy: Kids' Requests for Toys Are Replaced with Wishes for Pajamas—or Rent Money for Their Parents," *Des Moines Register*, December 11, 2008, 3A.

awareness saves money; sometimes executives hope it will create favorable publicity for the company. However, many marketing experts say that green advertising is now just standard operating procedure.⁵¹ Environmental activist groups such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth go even further. These groups have sharply and publicly criticized some large companies for exaggerating their commitment to the environment. One study claims that 95% of the “green” products it examined made claims that were lies, unsupported by proof, or couched in meaningless language (“all-natural”).⁵²

Fortune’s 2007 list of the 20 most admired companies was organized around environmental awareness. The top companies on it owed a significant part of their growth to strategies and products aimed at helping the environment.

Walmart is boosting its purchase of local, small-farmer grown produce, both domestically and internationally. GE has spent more than \$5 billion in research and development for its ecomagination initiative; it has committed itself to an additional \$10 billion by 2015. Revenues from its energy-efficient and environmentally sound products and services crossed \$18 billion in 2009, almost two times the company average.⁵³

Globalization and Outsourcing

In the global economy, importing and exporting are just a start. More and more companies have offices and factories around the world:

- McDonald’s serves food in over 119 countries on six continents.⁵⁴
- 3M operates in over 65 countries; 65% of its sales are international.⁵⁵
- UPS serves over 220 countries and territories.⁵⁶
- Coca-Cola sells its beverages in over 200 countries.⁵⁷
- Walmart has 4,600 stores outside the continental United States, including ones in Central America, South America, China, India, and Japan.⁵⁸



Alternate energy has become a leading environmental issue, bringing both business and good publicity to some companies.



McDonald's now serves food in China.

The site of the store, factory, or office may not be the site of all the jobs. A data center in Washington can support many workers in India as businesses are outsourcing domestically and globally. **Outsourcing** means going outside the company for products and services that once were produced by the company's employees. Companies can outsource technology services, customer service, tax services, legal services, accounting services, benefit communications, manufacturing, and marketing. Outsourcing is often a win-win solution: the company saves money or gets better service, and the outsourcers make a profit. In *The World Is Flat*, Thomas Friedman says "the accountant who wants to stay in business in America will be the one who focuses on designing creative, complex strategies. . . . It means having quality-time discussions with clients."⁵⁹ He sees the work of the future as customization, innovation, service, and problem solving.⁶⁰

All the challenges of communicating in one culture and country increase exponentially when people communicate across cultures and countries. Succeeding in a global market requires **intercultural competence**, the ability to communicate sensitively with people from other cultures and countries, based on an understanding of cultural differences. To learn more about international communication, see Chapter 7.

Diversity

Women, people of color, and immigrants have always been part of the U.S. workforce. But for most of this country's history, they were relegated to clerical, domestic, or menial jobs. Now, U.S. businesses realize that barriers to promotion hurt the bottom line as well as individuals. Success depends on using the brains and commitment as well as the hands and muscles of every worker.

In the last decade, we have also become aware of other sources of diversity beyond those of gender, race, and country of origin: age, religion, class,



Japanese Companies Woo Former Female Employees

Faced with a looming worker shortage as baby boomers retire, Japanese companies have begun courting their former women employees. Some are accepting former employees' requests to work part-time and offering coaches until the women get back up to speed. Other companies are offering perks to female employees to retain them. Some companies are offering day care centers and coupons for babysitting and house-cleaning services; other companies allow women to work shorter hours or reject overtime work until their youngest child finishes high school.

"It's not difficult to set up a [female-friendly] system," says [the] manager of a division promoting women at Mizuho's [one of Japan's major banks] corporate banking unit. "The hardest part is changing people's mentality. It takes a long time."

Adapted and quoted from Miho Inada, "Japanese Companies Woo Women Back to Work," *Wall Street Journal*, July 23, 2007, B1.



Team Communication Saves Lives

Communication breakdowns during patient transfers between units or personnel shifts are the largest source of medical error. The hospital accreditation board is now requiring hospitals to establish standards for transfer communications. To help hospitals, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement is working with hospitals on a communication rubric known as SBAR:

- Situation: describe briefly, get attention.
- Background: offer enough to provide context for the problem.
- Assessment: your assessment of overall condition.
- Recommendation: your specific recommendations.

Kaiser Permanente, the large health care organization, pioneered using the model, which helps doctors and nurses convey the most critical information in just 60 seconds. The model increases communication between doctors who don't want nurses' opinions and nurses who are reluctant to provide their opinions.

One Kaiser physician administrator says, "In almost all serious avoidable episodes of patient harm, communication failure plays a central role. . . . By teaching caregivers new models of 'structured communication,' . . . we can make sure that we are all in the same movie."

Adapted from Laura Landro, "Hospitals Combat Errors at the 'Hand-Off': New Procedures Aim to Reduce Miscues as Nurses and Doctors Transfer Patients to Next Shift," *Wall Street Journal*, June 28, 2006, D1, D2.

regional differences, sexual orientation, and physical disabilities are now areas of diversity. Helping each worker reach his or her potential requires more flexibility from managers as well as more knowledge about intercultural communication. And it's crucial to help workers from different backgrounds understand each other—especially in today's global economy. To learn more about diversity and the workforce, read Chapter 7.

Teamwork

More and more companies are getting work done through teams. Teamwork brings together people's varying strengths and talents to solve problems and make decisions. Often, teams are cross-functional (drawing from different jobs or functions) or cross-cultural (including people from different nations or cultural groups served by the company).

Teams, including cross-functional teams, helped Sarasota Memorial Hospital resolve major problems with customer and employee satisfaction. For example, team members from the emergency room recorded every step in the process from pulling into the parking lot through decisions about patient care, and then they eliminated unnecessary steps. The ER team worked with the laboratory staff to improve the process of getting test results. At Michelin, the French tire maker, teams bring together people from the United States and Europe. According to the company's chemical purchasing manager for Europe, the exchange between the two continents helps employees on both sides of the Atlantic understand each other's perspectives and needs.⁶¹

Increasing emphasis on teamwork is a major reason given by organizations such as AT&T, Intel, Hewlett-Packard, and the U.S. Interior Department for calling telecommuting workers back to the office.⁶² To learn more about working in teams, see Chapter 8.

Job Flexibility

In traditional jobs, people did what they were told to do. But today, jobs that are routine can readily be done in other countries at lower cost. Many U.S. jobs have already been subject to such "offshoring," and more are sure to follow. The work that remains in the United States is more likely to be complex work requiring innovation, flexibility, and adaptation to new learning.

Today's workers do whatever needs to be done, based on the needs of customers, colleagues, and anyone else who depends on their work. They help team members finish individual work; they assist office mates with pressing deadlines. They are resourceful: they know how to find information and solution ideas. They work extra hours when the task demands it. They are ready to change positions and even locations when asked to do so. They need new skill sets even when they don't change jobs.

At Sarasota Memorial Hospital, food service workers do more than bring food to patients; they open containers, resolve problems with meals, help patients read their menus, and adjust orders to meet patients' preferences. This attentiveness not only serves the patients; it is part of a team-spirited approach to patient care that in this case frees nurses to do other work.⁶³ The experience at Sarasota Memorial is backed up by research suggesting that the most effective workers don't see work as assigned tasks. Instead, they define their own goals based on the needs of customers and clients.⁶⁴

Your parents may have worked for the same company all their lives. You may do that, too, but you have to be prepared to job-hunt throughout your career. That means continuing to learn—keeping up with new technologies, new economic and political realities, new ways of interacting with people.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

As global competition increases, and industrial milieus change ever more quickly, innovation becomes more and more important. *Fortune's* 2008 list of most admired companies was organized around innovation. Apple, at the top of the list, also got the top marks for innovation.

Many companies rely on all employees for suggestions. A classic article in the *Harvard Business Review* made famous the examples of 3M (where researchers can spend 15% of their time on ideas that don't need management approval), Thermo Electron (where managers can “spin out” promising new businesses), and Xerox (where employees write business proposals competing for corporate funds to develop new technologies).⁶⁵ 3M also sends 9,000 employees, in 35 countries, into customers' workplaces to work beside people there and to note problems the company can solve. American Express established a \$50 million innovation fund to finance employees' ideas.⁶⁶ Google is famous for its 20% rule: technical employees can spend about 20% of their time on projects outside their main job, and even their managers cannot remove that free margin.⁶⁷

The spirit of innovation is inspiring some workers to start their own businesses. The U.S. Census Bureau counted 21.4 million nonemployer businesses (self-employed workers without employees) in 2008.⁶⁸ In fact, these businesses are the majority of all U.S. businesses. These entrepreneurs have to handle all the communication in the business: hiring, training, motivating, and evaluating employees; responding to customer complaints; drafting surveys; writing business plans; making presentations to venture capitalists; and marketing the product or service.

Rapid Rate of Change

As any employee who has watched his or her job shift can testify, change—even change for the better—is stressful. Even when change promises improvements, people have to work to learn new skills, new habits, and new attitudes.

Rapid change means that no college course or executive MBA program can teach you everything you need to know for the rest of your working life. You'll need to stay abreast of professional changes by reading trade journals as well as professional websites and blogs, participating in professional Listservs, and attending professional events. Take advantage of your company's training courses and materials; volunteer for jobs that will help you gain new skills and knowledge. Pay particular attention to your communication skills; they become even more important as you advance up your career ladder. A survey of 1,400 financial executives found that 75% considered oral, written, and interpersonal skills even more important for finance professionals now than they were just a few years ago.⁶⁹

The skills you polish along the way can stand you in good stead for the rest of your life: critical thinking, computer savvy, problem solving, and the ability to write, speak, and work well with other people are vital in most jobs. It's almost a cliché, but it is still true: the most important knowledge you gain in college is how to learn.



World-Class Innovation

Ideo, the world-famous design consulting firm, has over 1,000 patents and 346 design awards. Their message to the world is that creativity is not a burst of inspiration but rather a teachable process—understand, observe, brainstorm, prototype—that can be incorporated into businesses of all sizes.

One of their clients, the giant health care provider Kaiser Permanente, now has its own innovation center that follows the Ideo way. That center tackled the all-too-common problem of medication errors, errors that harm more than 1.5 million people in the United States alone. A team shadowed doctors, nurses, and pharmacists as they prescribed, administered, and filled medications. They made videos; they kept journals. And they discovered that interruptions were the cause of most errors. So the team brainstormed solutions, including “Leave Me Alone!” aprons and red “Do Not Cross!” lines in front of medication stations. The program has reduced interruptions by 50%.

Adapted from Linda Tischler, “A Designer Takes On His Biggest Challenge Ever,” *Fast Company*, February 2009, 78–83, 101.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- The economic news continues to create concern over lapses in business ethics. On the other hand, positive ethical efforts are also increasing.
- Corporate cultures range from informal to formal and impact such widely diverse areas as worker performance and sales.

- Interpersonal communication includes such areas as listening, conversational style, body language, and networking. Its importance in career success is receiving new recognition.
- Time management skills are also crucial to job success. Probably the most important time management technique is to prioritize the demands on your time, and make sure you spend the majority of your time on the most important demands.
- Decades of research on multitasking show that it does not increase job performance and may actually hinder it.
- Eleven trends in business, government, and nonprofit organizations affect business and administrative communication: data security, electronic privacy, customer service, work/family balance, environmental concern, globalization and outsourcing, diversity, teamwork, job flexibility, innovation and entrepreneurship, and rapid change.

CHAPTER 4

Exercises and Problems

*Go to www.mhhe.com/locker/10e for additional Exercises and Problems.

4.1 Reviewing the Chapter

1. What are some positive ethical efforts that are getting attention? (LO 4-1)
2. What are some ethical components of communication? (LO 4-1)
3. What are some elements of corporate culture? How do they affect business? (LO 4-2)
4. What are some ways to improve interpersonal communication? (LO 4-3)
5. What are some communication signals you might receive from specific body language cues? (LO 4-3)
6. What are some ways to manage your time more efficiently? (LO 4-4)
7. What are 11 trends in business communication? What do these trends mean for you? (LO 4-5)
8. What are some electronic privacy issues that could affect you at your workplace? (LO 4-5)

4.2 Protecting Privacy Online

As companies demand ever-more accurate audiences to whom they can pitch their products and services, the debate over online tracking vs. privacy continues.

Working in small groups, discuss some of the challenges you see to protecting your privacy on the Internet.

- Should companies be allowed to track your online activity? Is it OK if they notify you they are tracking you? Do you like targeted placement ads, similar to Google's recommendations for you? Where do you find a balance between allowing Internet sites to use your information to provide better service and protecting your privacy?
- Are employers justified in monitoring employees' e-mail, Twitter, and Internet usage on company machines?
- Are employers justified in monitoring employees' Facebook accounts? Do you think it is fair when employees get fired for comments they post on their Facebook site?
- What do you think of companies like Google tracking searches to produce sites like Google Flu Trends, which shows where people are getting sick during flu season?

4.3 Following Trends in Business Communication

Pick three of the trends discussed in this chapter and explain how they have impacted business communications in an organization where you—or a friend or family member—have worked.

As your instructor directs,

- a. Share your information in small groups.
- b. Present your group findings to your classmates.
- c. Post your information online for your classmates.

4.4 Applying Ethics Guidelines

Reread the ethics guidelines by Warren Buffett (sidebar on page 93) and Tony Hsieh (end of Ethics section). In small groups, apply them to some business ethics situations currently in the news.

- How would the situations be handled by Buffett? Hsieh?

- Do you approve of those solutions?
- Do you find one statement more helpful than the other? Why?

4.5 Making Ethical Choices

Indicate whether you consider each of the following actions ethical, unethical, or a gray area. Which of the actions would you do? Which would you feel uncomfortable doing? Which would you refuse to do?

Discuss your answers with a small group of classmates. In what ways did knowing you would share with a group change your answers?

1. Taking home office supplies (e.g., pens, markers, calculators, etc.) for personal use.
2. Inflating your evaluation of a subordinate because you know that only people ranked *excellent* will get pay raises.
3. Making personal long-distance calls on the company phone.
4. Updating your Facebook page and visiting the pages of friends during business hours.
5. Writing a feasibility report about a new product and de-emphasizing test results that show it could cause cancer.
6. Coming in to the office in the evening to use the company's computer for personal projects.
7. Designing an ad campaign for a cigarette brand.
8. Working as an accountant for a company that makes or advertises cigarettes.
9. Working as a manager in a company that exploits its nonunionized hourly workers.
10. Writing copy for a company's annual report hiding or minimizing the fact that the company pollutes the environment.
11. "Padding" your expense account by putting on it charges you did not pay for.
12. Telling a job candidate that the company "usually" grants cost-of-living raises every six months, even though you know that the company is losing money and plans to cancel cost-of-living raises for the next year.
13. Laughing at the racist or sexist jokes a client makes, even though you find them offensive.
14. Reading the *Wall Street Journal* on company time.

4.6 Analyzing Business Ethics

New Oriental Education & Technology Group offers Chinese students intensive courses to prepare for SAT, GRE, and TOEFL exams. The object of the courses is to enable their students to achieve scores that will get them into American colleges and universities. The courses provide traditional prep help, such as cramming vocabulary words, but they also offer more controversial techniques.

- They avail themselves of websites where students download the test questions they remember immediately after the exam. Since the tests do recycle some questions to ensure score consistency over time, they can prep students for actual exam questions.
- They provide tricks (e.g., females in the test passages are always smarter than males) that help students choose correct answers just by looking at the choices, without understanding the passages.
- Since many of their students are good at math, they recommend that five minutes into the math section, their students should flip back to the reading and finish it. Flipping is prohibited, but this timing helps students escape the attention of the proctors, who look for it at the beginning and end of each test section.
- They help students prepare essays and speeches on topics—such as biographies of famous Americans, that can be memorized and adapted to many situations, thus avoiding extemporaneous performances.

The upside of their efforts is that many of their students do fulfill dreams of getting into American schools. The downside is that many of these same students have such poor English skills that they cannot understand the lectures or participate in class discussions. Nor can they write class papers without help. Unfortunately, they

score so well that they even sometimes test out of the transitional programs many schools have to help students with shaky English skills.

- Is New Oriental an ethical business?
- What would Warren Buffett say (see pg. 93)?
- What would Tony Hsieh say (see end of Ethics section)?
- What are New Oriental's effects on its students?

Why do American schools accept these students?
What could be done to make the situation more ethical?

Source: Daniel Golden, "U.S. College Test Prep in China Is: [sic]" *Bloomberg Businessweek*, May 9, 2011, 58–63.

4.7 Analyzing Philanthropic Websites

Working in small groups, go to the websites of some of the large philanthropic organizations such as the Gates Foundation, Google.org, or the Clinton Global Initiative. What commonalities do you see? Which aspects do you like

best? If you were a rich multibillionaire who was going to leave a billion dollars to a philanthropy, which one would you choose? Why? Write your findings and answers to these questions in a memo to share with your class.

4.8 Analyzing Pro Bono Work

Pro bono legal work, free legal work for those in need, has long been a law tradition. But now some elite firms are so eager for pro bono work—to boost their image or ranking, to get high-profile cases, and to attract top law students—that they are paying for it.

- What do you think of organizations that charge law firms to do pro bono work?

- What do you think of law firms that do pro bono work just to boost their image or ranking? Does their motivation matter?
- When law firms pay to work on high-profile cases, what happens to welfare cases, landlord–tenant disputes, or divorce cases among poorer couples?

Discuss your answers in small groups.

4.9 Analyzing a Letter

Dr. Joseph Biederman, Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Chief of Clinical and Research Programs in Pediatric Psychopharmacology and Adult ADHD, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Wall Street Journal* that appeared December 19, 2008, on page A16. The letter repudates the claim that he had a significant relationship with pharmaceutical manufacturers. Find the letter in your library's electronic copy of the *Wall Street Journal*. (In ProQuest, the letter is listed under the title "I was Doing the Right Thing." Authors of letters to the editor are listed as Anonymous in ProQuest.)

For a memo to your instructor, analyze the letter.

- What was your first impression?
- Is the letter convincing to you?
- What part makes you most sympathetic to the doctor?
- Is there any part that works against the doctor?
- Who are the audiences?
- What is the purpose of the letter?

After you analyze the letter as it is, look up some articles about Dr. Biederman. Three that appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, including the one referenced in the letter, are

- David Armstrong, "Harvard Researchers Fail To Report Drug Payments," *Wall Street Journal*, June 9, 2008, A2.
- David Armstrong and Alicia Mundy, "J&J Emails Raise Issues of Risperdal Promotion," *Wall Street Journal*, November 25, 2008, B1.
- Jennifer Levitz, "Drug Researcher Agrees to Curb Role," *Wall Street Journal*, December 31, 2008, B3.

Do these articles change your opinion of the letter? Why? Include both parts of your analysis, of the letter itself and the impact of the articles, in a memo to your instructor.

4.10 Analyzing Corporate Culture

Some businesses are deciding not to hire people with visible body art. Do you think such policies are allowable

expressions of corporate culture, or are they a form of discrimination? Discuss your answers in small groups.

4.11 Analyzing Corporate Culture

Go to *Fortune's* 100 Best Companies to Work For website: http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/bestcompanies/2011/full_list/.

Look up six companies you find interesting. What are unique features of their corporate culture? What features

seem to be common with many companies? Which features did you find particularly appealing? Write up your findings in a memo for your instructor.

4.12 Analyzing Customer Service

Go to a business on campus or in your community where you can observe customer service for a half hour. Make sure you observe at least three different kinds of service.

- Where did you go? Why?
- What categories of service did you observe?
- What examples of good service did you see?

- What examples of service that could be improved did you see? How would you improve it?
- If you were the manager of the business, what changes would you make to impact customer service?

Write up your findings in a memo to your instructor.

4.13 Analyzing Nonverbal Communication

Choose one of your courses and make notes on nonverbal communications you see in the classroom.

- What are some dominant traits you see among the students?
- What are some interesting behaviors you see in individual students?
- Does the nonverbal communication differ from the beginning and end of the class?

- What are nonverbal communications from the instructor?
- Overall, what does the nonverbal communication in the classroom tell you about student learning in that class?

Write up your findings in a memo to your instructor.

4.14 Analyzing Body Language

Go to a location such as your campus or city library where you can watch people at work and rest. Spend a half hour observing examples of body language around you. Make sure your half hour includes examples of at least one group at work, individuals at work, and individuals relaxing.

- What were some interesting examples of body language you noted?
- What were some common features of body language?

- Did you see any unique body language?
- Could you make assumptions about group relations based on the body language you saw exhibited by members of the group?
- How did the body language of individuals who were relaxing differ from that of the group members?

Write up your findings in a memo for your instructor.

4.15 Analyzing Your Time Management

For two days, write down exactly how you spend your time. Be specific. Don't just say "two hours studying." Instead, note how long you spent on each item of study (e.g., 15 min. reviewing underlinings in sociology chapter, 20 min. reviewing class notes, an hour and 20 min. reading accounting chapter). Include time spent on items such as grooming, eating, talking with friends (both in person and on phone), texting, watching television, and sleeping.

Now analyze your time record. Does anything surprise you? How much time did you spend studying?

Is it enough? Did you spend more time studying your most important subjects? Your hardest subjects? Did you spend time on projects that are due later in the term? Did you spend time on health-related items? Do you see items on which you spent too much time? Too little time? Did you spend any time on items that would fit in Covey's quadrant II (see page 100)?

As your instructor directs,

- a. Share your findings in small groups.
- b. Write up your findings in a memo for your instructor.

4.16 Analyzing the Business Environment Where You Work

In a memo to your instructor, describe and analyze the business environment at an organization where you have worked. Use this chapter as a guide for content. What

aspects of the environment did you like? Dislike? What aspects helped your job performance? What aspects hindered your job performance?

4.17 Participating in a Networking Event

In this exercise, you are going to participate in a networking event, an abbreviated "talk and walk."

To prepare for the event,

- Prepare business cards for yourself, using a computer application of your choice.
- Prepare a list of people in your class that you would like to meet (give a visual description if you do not know their names).
- Prepare a list of questions you would like to have answered.
- Collect materials to use for taking notes during the event.

During the event, you will have six three-minute sessions to talk with a fellow student. Your instructor will time the sessions and tell you when to change people.

After the event, analyze what you have learned. Here are some questions to get you started:

- Who was the most interesting? Why?
- Who did you like the most? Why?
- Who would you most like to have on a team in this class? Why?
- Did you meet anyone who might become a professional contact? Explain.
- What lessons did you learn about networking?

As your instructor directs,

- Share your analyses in small groups; then prepare an informal oral report for the class.
- Write up your analysis in a memo to your teacher.
- Write up your analysis in a memo to post on your class website.

