# LESIKAR'S
# BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

## Connecting in a Digital World 13e

Kathryn Rentz | Paula Lentz

# Lesikar's Business Communication

## CONNECTING IN A DIGITAL WORLD

THIRTEENTH EDITION

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McGraw-Hill
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LESIKAR'S BUSINESS COMMUNICATION: CONNECTING IN A DIGITAL WORLD,
THIRTEENTH EDITION

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 QVR/QVR 1 0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

ISBN 978-0-07-340321-2
MHID 0-07-340321-0

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Typeface: *10.5/12 Minion Pro*
Compositor: *MPS Limited*
Printer: *Quad/Graphics*

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**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Rentz, Kathryn.
Lesikar's business communication : connecting in a digital world / Kathryn Rentz, UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI, Paula Lentz, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, EAU CLAIRE. — THIRTEENTH EDITION.
pages cm
Includes index.
ISBN 978-0-07-340321-2 (alk. paper) — ISBN 0-07-340321-0 (alk. paper)
1. Commercial correspondence. 2. English language—Business English. 3. Business communication.
I. Lentz, Paula. II. Title.
HF5721.L37 2014
651.7—dc23
2012049183

The Internet addresses listed in the text were accurate at the time of publication. The inclusion of a website does not indicate an endorsement by the authors or McGraw-Hill, and McGraw-Hill does not guarantee the accuracy of the information presented at these sites.

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# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

## Dr. Kathryn Rentz

Dr. Kathryn Rentz is a Professor of English at the University of Cincinnati. She taught her first business writing class as a doctoral student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the early 1980s and has been teaching workplace writing ever since. She helped establish the University of Cincinnati's professional writing program and has served as its coordinator. She has also won the English Department's teaching award, directed the department's graduate program, and helped direct the composition program.

Dr. Rentz's affiliation with the Association for Business Communication goes back to her beginnings as a business writing teacher. She has performed many roles for the ABC, including serving on the board of directors and chairing the publications board. She served two terms as an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Business Communication* and was Interim Editor from 2000–2001, for which she won the Francis W. Weeks Award of Merit. In 2008 she won the ABC's Meada Gibbs Outstanding Teacher Award. In 2011 she was elected Second Vice President for the association, and she will serve as its president in 2013–2014.

Dr. Rentz has published articles on business communication pedagogy and research in such journals as *Business Communication Quarterly,* the *Journal of Business Communication, Technical Communication Quarterly,* and the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*. She has participated in many professional meetings and seminars over the years and is always learning from her colleagues and her students.

## Dr. Paula Lentz

Dr. Paula Lentz is an Assistant Professor and Academic Program Director in the Department of Business Communication at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire. She teaches Business Writing, Business Writing II, and Advanced Business Writing. She is also a developer and coordinator of the department's Business Writing Fundamentals Program, which ensures that students have basic writing skills essential for success in their first business writing course. In addition, she chaired the College of Business's Writing Task Force, which developed a college-wide policy for assessing students' writing skills as part of their grade on any writing assignment in any business class.

Dr. Lentz is particularly interested in qualitative research that explores narratives and organizational cultures, genre theory, and writing pedagogy in online environments. She has published in such journals as *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal, Wisconsin Business Education Association Journal, Equal Opportunities International,* and *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management.* She has also presented her research at several national and regional conferences, including those of the Association for Business Communication and the Academy of Management.

Prior to becoming a full-time academic, she worked as a technical writer and publications editor. She continues to do freelance editing and provides consulting and writing services for several organizations. She received a BA from Coe College, an MA from UW–Eau Claire, and a PhD in Rhetoric and Scientific and Technical Communication from the University of Minnesota.

## A Debt of Gratitude

Our deepest respect and appreciation go to **Ray Lesikar,** who wrote the first edition of this book over 35 years ago and led it through 10 revisions. From the beginning, Ray emphasized currency and realism, adaptation to the reader, and straightforward, courteous, correct use of language. A particular strength of his was persuasive writing, to which he brought considerable professional experience. He was a beloved teacher as well as a busy consultant and prolific author, and it is fair to say that, in these roles and as a leader in the Association for Business Communication, he exerted as strong an influence on business communication as anyone else in the field before or since.

In 1991 Ray invited an accomplished business communication and information systems professor at San Diego State University to join him as a coauthor. Thus, with the 6th edition, **Marie Flatley** came on board. Besides doing much of the revision work, Marie added a chapter on communication-related technologies and integrated technology throughout the book. Ever since then, technological currency has been a defining trait of *Business Communication*. An expert on information systems, Marie also put her special stamp on the graphics and research chapters, and she made Lesikar's book one of the first to provide PowerPoint slides, Web-based material, and online activities. Though she has retired from teaching and has officially stepped down as an author for this book, she continues to offer her expertise in other venues.

Ray and Marie made a great team, and they set positive examples for us in ways that are too numerous to list. We're enormously grateful to them and honored to carry on their work.

# PREFACE

A lot has changed in the three years since the 12th edition of *Lesikar's Business Communication: Connecting in a Digital World* was published. Twitter and tablets have now become key players on the technology scene, along with Facebook, email marketing, smartphones, and cloud applications. The economies of the United States and many other countries have settled into a recession, creating a tougher job market and changing business and consumer needs. The presence of Gen Yers in the workplace has increased, while Baby Boomers are prolonging their retirement. The boundaries between cultures and countries have become more permeable, making the business world "flatter" and workplaces more diverse. And there's more information overload, making incisive analysis, lucid presentation of data, and development of targeted persuasive strategies more critical.

These changes have necessitated major revisions to the book. Yet its focus on fundamentals remains. Being able to assess a communication situation and audience, determine an appropriate strategy for meeting a business goal, and use words and visuals skillfully is the foundation for all the other skills. The balance between currency and timelessness—a distinguishing trait of this book throughout its 12 previous editions—is one we've worked hard to maintain.

## THIS BOOK'S APPROACH AND FEATURES

Each business communication textbook brings a somewhat unique perspective to the subject. This section describes our approach.

### The Nature of Business Communication

Our primary assumption about business communication is that it is a *problem-solving activity*. *Lesikar's* was the first book to take this approach, and it is still the only book with this approach at its core. From the first page to the last, this book makes clear that successful business communication requires analysis, judgment, imagination, and effort. Rules of thumb and common patterns are helpful, but preparing an effective document or presentation takes a lot of planning and revision. Students need to be told up front that business communication is not that easy . . . but undertaken with creativity, intelligence, and diligence, it can be extremely rewarding and even fun.

Toward this end, this book includes the most problem-solving cases, by far, of any book on the market—over 150 of them. These realistic scenarios make students consider specific contextual factors as they shape their messages, proposals, and reports. In addition, the cases acquaint students with goals they're likely to encounter on the job, from resolving ethical issues, solving management problems, and crafting company policies to reporting information, selling a product or idea, and managing customer relations. The realistic practice that these cases provide is the key payoff of this book's approach.

### Technology

To plan and communicate well, students must know what kinds of communication technologies are available, how their usage differs, and how to use them responsibly. The medium carries its own message, and what medium one uses affects one's communication choices. Plus, familiarity with a wide range of tools enables one to write better, work more efficiently, and produce more professional-looking products. Without overwhelming the students with technical details, we've incorporated dozens of useful communication-related technologies into this book, in every chapter and on almost every topic.

Students must also understand that technology changes. At the foundation of good communication is the ability to do research, to think, to understand other people, to organize one's thoughts logically and tactically, and to use well-chosen verbal and visual elements. We keep our primary emphasis on these skills.

### Today's Students

These days, students have a lower tolerance than ever for longwindedness, outdatedness, and irrelevance. We believe that they have a right to expect their business communication book to practice what it preaches. Many of our edits were thus intended to make this edition more reader focused, efficient, engaging, and real.

On the other hand, today's students tend to want clear-cut, quick answers to every question, and this is an unrealistic expectation to bring to business communication. They need to understand what an uncertain enterprise communication is and to be encouraged to solve problems with their own resourceful thinking.

Odd as it may sound, they also need to be encouraged to expand their technological literacy. Research shows that students are expert at using a few applications (e.g., phone apps, email clients, Facebook, and Twitter) but unaware of many other applications useful in business. Further, students tend to be familiar only with such basic software features as "open," "save," "copy," "paste," "print," and "save." Thus, most students can even use some instruction on Word, PowerPoint, and Excel.

Research shows as well that increased use of digital written communication has reduced students' skill with other media (e.g., body language and facial expressions, oral communication). Businesses need employees who can interview others, conduct an effective phone conference, and find information. Many of the exercises and cases in this book require students to practice these skills.

Another fact we've kept in mind is that business communication students' needs and interests can vary greatly, even within the same class. Some students will want to work for major corporations, while others plan to work for small businesses, start their own, or seek work in the nonprofit sector. Some have modest career goals, while others want the fast track to the executive suite. Some will bring strong skills and experience to their coursework, while others will need extra attention to the basics. A comprehensive business communication textbook should accommodate a wide range of student abilities and goals.

This understanding of our students informs the text of the book as well as these special features:

- *Learning Objectives* at the start, at the end, and throughout each chapter that make the main goals of the chapter clear.
- *Introductory Challenges* (formerly "Introductory Situations") that launch each chapter and each form of business communication with a business scenario to draw students quickly into the topic being discussed.
- *Examples of good and bad solutions* for the Introductory Challenges.
- Full-page *Case Illustrations* (real business messages, proposals, and reports), with margin notes, to show how to apply the book's advice.
- *Outlines and checklists* to help students grasp basic organizational patterns and editing guidelines.
- *Communication Matters* boxes that provide expert commentary, interesting facts, and helpful tips.
- *Technology in Brief* boxes illustrating numerous tools and techniques for making the most of technological aids to business communication.
- *Chapter summaries* that distill each chapter's contents into key points.
- *Critical Thinking Questions*, *Skills Building Exercises*, and *Problem-Solving Cases* at the end of the chapters to promote comprehension, retention, and skillful use of concepts.
- An *Online Learning Center* (OLC) that provides online quizzing, PowerPoint slides, video cases, and *Bizcom Tools & Tips*, a collection of business communication Web resources.
- A *QR code* at the end of every chapter that takes students directly to the book's online resources.

## TODAY'S TEACHERS

Business communication teachers face a daunting task: teaching a complex set of concepts and skills in an environment of shrinking resources, increasing class size, and sometimes insufficient support from department administrators. Perhaps the main challenge of the job is that the workload tends to encourage an emphasis on surface features (e.g., correctness and formatting), while effective business communication depends as well on higher-order skills (e.g. critical thinking, adaptation to the audience, and editing one's work). How to do it all—and do it well?

In working to make this edition appealing to students, we hope we've helped with a major part of the battle. The student features listed above also give teachers many excellent talking points and many resources for creating engaging activities and assignments.

In addition, we include the following help for instructors:

- *Annotated PowerPoint slides* for each chapter that include summaries, examples, and interactive slides.
- A downloadable *Instructor's Resource Manual*, which includes sample syllabi and rubrics, sample lectures and classroom activities keyed to the PowerPoint slides, answers to end-of-chapter Critical Thinking Questions and Skills Building Exercises, and sample solutions to selected Problem-Solving Cases.
- *Appendices* on formatting, grading symbols, and documentation of sources.
- A *detailed chapter on correctness*, ending with a diagnostic test for students (with the answers provided in Appendix A).
- A downloadable *Test Bank* for each chapter, along with a computerized test generator for building custom tests.
- An *Online Learning Center* (OLC) that includes resources for every chapter along with video cases and an extensive collection of business communication Web resources, *Bizcom Tools & Tips*.
- A link to *Bcomm Teacher Xchange* (bcommteacherxchange.wordpress.com), our blog for business

communication instructors. As of the end of 2012, we'd posted almost 100 articles, and we post a new one every other week. You can easily keep track of the latest news, tips, and resources in business communication by using the RSS feed or an email subscription.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

Like the 12 editions before it, this book moves from the more foundational topics to the more specialized ones. The chapters certainly do not have to be taught in the sequence in which they're presented (in fact, a few instructors we know swear by starting with the job-search chapter), but the building-blocks approach represented by this plan tends to work well.

Part I introduces students to the world of business communication. Chapter 1 describes the important role that communication plays in the workplace, current challenges for business communicators, main categories of business communication, and the business communication process. Chapter 2, picking up on a major trend discussed in the previous chapter, discusses the special challenges posed by cross-cultural communication.

Part II reviews the basic techniques of clear, correct, reader-adapted writing. Chapter 3 helps students choose the best wording for their readers, while Chapter 4 focuses on writing effective sentences and paragraphs. Chapter 5 ends this section with advice on managing tone and emphasis.

Part III opens with a chapter on the writing process, the importance of readable formatting, and special considerations for each major medium of business writing, including social media. This section then provides patterns and advice for preparing the most common message types: good-news and neutral messages, bad-news messages, persuasive messages and proposals, and messages related to the job search. These chapters also discuss the choice of direct or indirect structure for the different types of messages.

Part IV concentrates on report writing, beginning with such basics as determining the problem and purpose, gathering and analyzing data, creating a logical structure, writing and formatting the contents, and preparing reports collaboratively. It then discusses four types of short reports and the long, formal report; business research methods, including Internet research; and the use of visuals to enhance reader comprehension.

Part V turns to oral communication, with a chapter on interpersonal communication and meetings and a chapter on oral reports and presentations. The topics range from the basics of speaking and listening to the effective use of different media, including presentation software and Web-conferencing tools.

Part VI provides two chapters—one on writing-related technologies and one on correctness—that can assist students with almost all the other chapters in the book.

Appendices also provide grading checklists, additional guidelines for formatting written documents, and advice and models for documenting sources.

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE 13TH EDITION

This edition of *Lesikar's Business Communication* maintains the book's focus on the fundamentals of successful business communication while adapting to the current business and academic environments and incorporating the advice of our helpful reviewers.

Perhaps the most noticeable changes are that

- The cross-cultural communication and research chapters have been moved to earlier locations in the book to better reflect their importance.
- The chapters on good-news and neutral, bad-news, and persuasive messages and proposals no longer have the words "Directness" and "Indirectness" in their titles. These chapters still recommend the more common pattern of organization for each message type, but the change is meant to allow students more latitude in choosing the pattern that best suits the situation.
- The writing style is better adapted to today's students. It is less stuffy, more efficient, and easier to comprehend.
- Just as technology now plays a role in every facet of business, it is everywhere in this book—in the text, in the boxed material, in the examples, in the exercises and cases, and in the visual material. Effective use of communication technologies, which has been a special focus of *Lesikar's* since the 6th edition, has acquired even greater prominence in this edition.
- A QR code at the end of each chapter now makes it easy for students to visit the book's website, where they'll find many more resources.
- Three new executives are featured in the book's six Part Openers: Stuart Crabb, head of learning and development at Facebook; Lynn Marmer, chief communications officer for Kroger Company; and Caroline Molina-Ray, Executive Director of Research and Publications at Apollo Research Institute.

As with each previous new edition, the references, examples, visuals, and exercises have been updated in every chapter. In addition, each chapter has undergone significant revision, as follows:

*Chapter 1: Understanding Workplace Communication*

- Now opens with an Introductory Challenge (a hypothetical workplace scenario) to generate student interest in the chapter contents.
- Provides the latest statistics on the importance of communication skills in the workplace.
- Updates the "Current Challenges for Business Communicators" section with research on workplace trends from the experts at the Institute for the Future, Apollo Research Institute, and the Aspen Institute.
- Incorporates new media and genres into the discussion of types of workplace communication.

*Chapter 2: Communicating Across Cultures*

- Now follows Chapter 1 to reflect the increasing importance of communicating well with those in or from other countries and cultures.
- Includes Hofstede's "power distance" factor in the discussion of different cultures' attitudes toward social hierarchy.
- Includes research on the cultural influences on online communication.
- Updates the page of additional resources on cross-cultural communication.

*Chapter 3: Adapting Your Words to Your Readers*

- Updates the Introductory Challenge as well as the boxed material on annoying business clichés, intergenerational communication, and grammar and style checkers.
- Includes a reference to and definition of *plain language*.
- Uses a more logical, less redundant structure and sharper headings, making the chapter's points clearer and more distinct. (For example, connotation and denotation, often-confused words, and idioms were all discussed in one section. Now they've been separated for better emphasis.)
- Expands and updates the discussion of language referring to those with disabilities.

*Chapter 4: Constructing Clear Sentences and Paragraphs*

- Opens with an updated Introductory Challenge.
- Trims the prefatory sections to get more quickly to the chapter's advice.
- Adds Communication Matters boxes on limiting the use of "there is/there are" and on avoiding the use of vague "this."
- Includes clearer advice about using short sentences for emphasis and varying sentence structure (e.g., use of coordination and subordination) to manage emphasis.
- Expands the discussion of faulty parallelism.

*Chapter 5: Writing for a Positive Effect*

- Makes a better case up front for paying attention to the human relations dimension of business writing.
- Shortens the discussion of "the old language of business" since today's students rarely use this language. They do overuse clichés, so the section on this stylistic problem has been expanded.
- Renames the section previously labeled "Resisting the Tendency to Be Formal" to "Choosing the Right Level of Formality" and does a better job of helping students manage the writer–reader relationship through appropriate word choice.
- Renames the section "Tailoring Your Message to Your Reader," which covered points already made in the chapter, to "Avoid Blaming the Reader" and discusses techniques for being tactful. This new section also includes a brief discussion of avoiding anger, replacing the unnecessarily long section on this topic.
- Adds a Technology in Brief box on "Courtesy in the Age of Mobile Devices" based on the latest advice from Emily Post's *Etiquette*.
- Better incorporates the concluding section on managing emphasis by focusing on techniques that contribute to a positive effect.

*Chapter 6: Choosing the Best Process and Form*

- Updates the audience analysis checklist to address what the audience knows; what the audience needs to know; and what the audience needs to think, feel, do, or believe as a result of the communication.
- Provides current advice on letter writing, particularly on avoiding the use of greetings such as "to whom it may concern" and other outdated expressions.
- Revises the discussion of email to treat it as the established form of business communication it has become rather than as an emerging technology. The sections on email content and structure have also been deleted to make the discussion of email more parallel with that of letters and memos.
- Replaces outdated content on pros and cons of email with advice on current email practices in the workplace and on the role of email in the context of newer communication technologies such as texting and instant messaging.
- Adds a Communication Matters box on the top 10 email mistakes.
- Updates the information on text and instant messaging and social media communication as forms of business messages.
- Adds the content from Chapter 17 regarding print versus online documents, updates this content to reflect the primary differences between the two

types, and offers current advice for writing Web content.

*Chapter 7: Getting to the Point in Good-News and Neutral Messages*

- Shifts the title's focus from directness (an organizational strategy) to the categories of messages being discussed (good-news and neutral).
- Incorporates a running narrative about routine communication at a hypothetical company, White Label Industries, throughout the chapter's Introductory Challenges. This enables instructors to discuss various communication tasks within a single company and provides a consistent scenario for addressing audience, context, and communication goals.
- Updates the good and bad examples to match the new Introductory Challenge scenarios.
- Clarifies the discussion on how to begin a message directly.
- Updates the Case Illustrations.
- Includes a section on direct claims, previously in the chapter on negative messages, with the rationale that routine claims require an approach more like that of neutral messages than that of bad-news messages.
- Adds a Communication Matters box about a company that is doing away with email as a communication channel. This presents an excellent discussion point for instructors.
- Includes 52 revised or new Problem-Solving Cases.

*Chapter 8: Maintaining Goodwill in Bad-News Messages*

- Shifts the title's focus on indirectness (an organizational strategy) to a focus on the category of messages being discussed (bad-news).
- Cites current research on when to use the direct versus the indirect approach for communicating bad news.
- Addresses the use of apologies in bad-news messages.
- Continues the White Label Industries narrative from Chapter 7 in some of the Introductory Challenges for bad-news messages, which lets instructors continue the simulation in a different rhetorical context.
- Incorporates additional new Introductory Challenges throughout the chapter, with new good and bad sample solutions.
- Adds three new Case Illustrations of bad-news messages written in the indirect approach: a refused request to an external audience, a refused request to an internal audience, and a negative announcement.
- Omits the discussion of direct claims (moved to Chapter 7), keeping the focus in this chapter on preparing claims for an unreceptive audience.
- Adds a Technology in Brief box on using Quick Parts for messages that are sent frequently or routinely.
- Includes 36 revised or new Problem-Solving Cases.

*Chapter 9: Making Your Case with Persuasive Messages and Proposals*

- Includes "Proposals" in the chapter title to better signal where this topic is covered.
- Updates the "Sales Messages" section with a new Introductory Challenge and new bad and good ways to handle it, new Case Illustrations, and references to the newer sales media (e.g., Facebook pages and Twitter messages).
- Adds a new section, "Enhancing Your Message with Visuals," to highlight the importance of planning compelling visual components for sales messages.
- Adds a Communication Matters box on Web resources for proposal writing.
- Ends with 35 revised or new Problem-Solving Cases for sales and proposal writing.

*Chapter 10: Conducting a Winning Job Campaign*

- Cites current research on the value employers place on internships.
- Adds a Technology in Brief box on tips for creating an effective LinkedIn profile.
- Includes comments in various parts of the chapter on how employers and job seekers use social networking sites in the hiring or job-search process.
- Distinguishes between features of print résumés and electronic résumés.
- Clarifies the discussion of the various types of electronic résumés (e.g., email, scannable, Web-based).
- Provides an extended discussion of best practices for creating electronic résumés.
- Clarifies when to include references with a résumé.
- Adds a Communication Matters box reporting a study on how much time employers spend reviewing résumés before deciding whether a candidate is a good fit.
- Updates the Case Illustrations for the résumé and cover letter examples.
- Adds a Communication Matters box on the 10 toughest interview questions.
- Adds a Communication Matters box emphasizing the importance of thank-you notes.

*Chapter 11: Preparing Informative and Influential Business Reports*

- Clarifies the discussion of problem statements by using "problem statement" to mean a description of the situation requiring a solution and "purpose statement" to mean the stated goal of the research conducted to find that solution.

- Adds basic guidelines for conducting research as preparation for Chapter 13 (“Conducting Research for Decision Makers”).
- Includes a new Technology in Brief box on report-writing software.
- Reduces the overly long section on writing headings but extends the discussion of making them parallel.

*Chapter 12: Choosing the Right Type of Report*

- Updates the discussion of problem statements for reports to incorporate the distinction between “problem statement” and “purpose statement.”
- Updates and enhances the sample reports.
- Adds a new sample progress report to show students how to prepare one about a course project.
- Removes audit reports since these are too specialized and often too routinized to be useful to most students.
- Ends with 35 revised or new Problem-Solving Cases and 152 additional report topics.

*Chapter 13: Conducting Research for Decision Makers*

- Is now grouped with the report-writing chapters to signal the importance of research to report writing.
- Opens with a new motivational section, “Why Research Matters,” followed by an overview of the main categories of research.
- Gets quickly to resources that students and professionals are likely to use—e.g., the Internet and other Web resources—rather than getting bogged down right away in a list of reference materials.
- Includes a new section on conducting research with social networking tools—Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, wikis, blogs, and listservs—and social bookmarking tools.
- Explains what a database (e.g., ABI/Inform) is and how to search it.
- Streamlines the discussion of reference materials by putting these resources into a descriptive table and updates the page-long List of Resources by Research Question.
- Includes more thorough, concrete advice on designing surveys.
- Expands the discussion of ethical guidelines for conducting research.

*Chapter 14: Using Visuals to Make Your Point*

- Changes “graphics” to “visuals” throughout to better reflect that business communicators have more options than just those that graph raw data.
- Adds a new Introductory Challenge.
- Adds a Communication Matters box on infographics.
- Incorporates many new visuals to illustrate common types of visuals used in business communication.
- Adds a Communication Matters box on avoiding chartjunk.

*Chapter 15: Communicating Effectively in Meetings and Conversations*

- Incorporates a new Introductory Challenge.
- Adds a Communication Matters box providing specific exercises and tips for improving voice quality.
- Adds a Communication Matters box on negotiation as an interpersonal skill.
- Includes a Technology in Brief box encouraging students to become familiar with online meeting tools such as Skype and to try using these tools for their group meetings.
- Updates the discussion of phone etiquette and organizes the information clearly into categories of initiating calls, answering calls directly, and screening calls for others.
- Deletes the discussion on using speech-recognition software for creating messages and reports. Some of the information is relocated to Chapter 17, “Leveraging Technology for Better Writing.”
- Updates the Communication Matters box on using a professional handshake.
- Adds information regarding current research on the relationship between the technology use of “digital natives”’ (Gen Xers and Gen Yers) and the potential underdevelopment of their nonverbal communication skills.

*Chapter 16: Delivering Oral Reports and Business Speeches*

- Enhances and clarifies the section on oral reports.
- Replaces “Making Formal Speeches” with “Giving Speeches and Presentations” to reduce the emphasis on speeches and increase the emphasis on the more common types of talks.
- Adds advice on choosing the best medium/media for the presentation.
- Adds sections on planning for interaction with the audience and choosing the means of audience feedback (e.g., Q&A, Twitter).
- Adds a Communication Matters box on TED talks.
- Gives better advice about planning and using visuals to support a talk.
- Relabels the section “Use of PowerPoint” as “Use of Presentation Software” and presents guidelines for using any presentation tool (e.g., Prezi, Google Docs, SlideRocket).
- Adds a section on using handouts to support a talk.

- Recasts the final section on virtual presentations as "Delivering Web-Based Presentations" and moves it up in the chapter to reflect the increased popularity of webinars.

*Chapter 17: Leveraging Technology for Better Writing*

- Focuses the chapter specifically on technologies that enhance writing ability rather than on general communication technologies since the latter are discussed throughout the text.
- Eliminates redundancies between this chapter and Chapter 13 ("Conducting Research for Decision Makers") in terms of gathering information electronically.
- Distinguishes between, and discusses separately, the use of technology to organize a project and the use of technology to organize a document.
- Reorganizes content to flow more logically. For example, the discussion of speech-recognition software is moved to the section on technologies for drafting rather than on technologies for revising and editing.
- Updates terminology to reflect current usage (e.g., "electronic calendar" rather than "personal information management tool").
- Discusses RSS feeds and tablet or smartphone apps as information-gathering tools.
- Mentions multimedia tools, document design software, and Web development software as options for creating and presenting information.
- Omits the discussion of print versus electronic documents (moved to Chapter 6).
- Adds visuals of iPad apps to reflect current technology used in business communication.
- Provides a Communication Matters box on knowing one's audience before using texting abbreviations or other "text speak."

*Chapter 18: Conveying Professionalism Through Correctness*

- Includes 50 new practice sentences to build students' skills in the use of pronoun case, pronoun–antecedent agreement, subject–verb agreement, punctuation, and the apostrophe.
- Provides additional guidelines on pronoun–antecedent agreement.
- Adds a Communication Matters box citing current news articles that discuss the relationship between an employee's use of good grammar and success in the workplace.

In addition, Appendix B ("Physical Presentation of Letters, Memos, and Reports") and Appendix E ("Documentation and the Bibliography") have been updated to reflect current practices and technologies for formatting documents and citing sources.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many dedicated business communication instructors and business professionals have contributed to this book throughout its long history. We extend our sincere thanks to them for their ideas and inspiration.

We are especially indebted to those who have served as reviewers for this and past editions. They truly deserve much of the credit for improvements in this book.

Reviewers of the 12th edition:

Melissa Bakeman, *California State University—San Bernardino*

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Kelly Warren, *Wayland Baptist University*

Karen Schelter Williams, *San Diego Mesa College*

Laura Williams, *Lipscomb University*

Bennie J. Wilson, III, *University of Texas at San Antonio*

Robert Zackowski, *Horry Georgetown Technical College*

In addition, we would particularly like to thank Lora Arduser for her major contributions to the research chapter and Appendix E, Riley Dugan and Emily Elsner Twesme for the problem-solving cases they contributed, and Heather Smith for her excellent work on the PowerPoint slides and Instructor's Manual.

Finally, on our respective home fronts, we acknowledge the support of our loved ones. Kathy acknowledges the support of Dave, Caroline, and Michael Rentz; her sister, Rebecca Horn; and friends in the English Department at the University of Cincinnati. Paula acknowledges her husband John, family members, friends, and colleagues in the College of Business at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire. Your support has made this book possible.

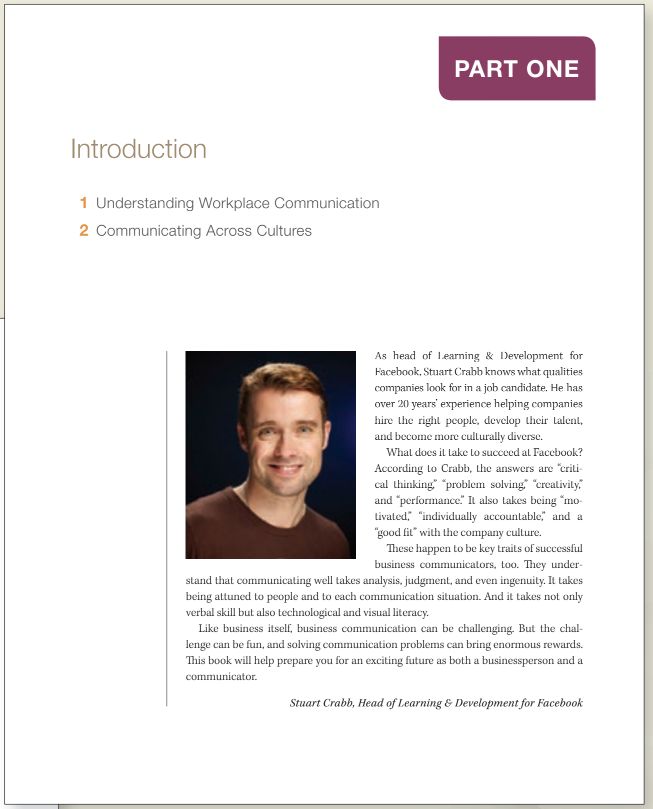
Kathryn Rentz
Paula Lentz

# A Quick Look

**LESIKAR'S BUSINESS COMMUNICATION (13th ed.),** by Kathryn Rentz and Paula Lentz, brings the contemporary perspective of two experienced teachers to Ray Lesikar's classic textbook. Following the standard set by the 6th edition, this book integrates current technologies and trends throughout while maintaining an emphasis on the fundamentals: careful analysis of the communication problem, development of an audience-focused solution, and clear, correct use of language and visuals. Combined with abundant realistic examples, exercises, and cases, this approach makes *Lesikar's* one of the most pedagogically effective books in the field.

## PART OPENERS

The six sections of the book begin with part openers featuring quotes from distinguished business leaders in such well-known companies as Facebook and Berkshire Hathaway. These opening comments attest to the importance of business communication skills in the real world.



PART ONE

Introduction

1 Understanding Workplace Communication
2 Communicating Across Cultures

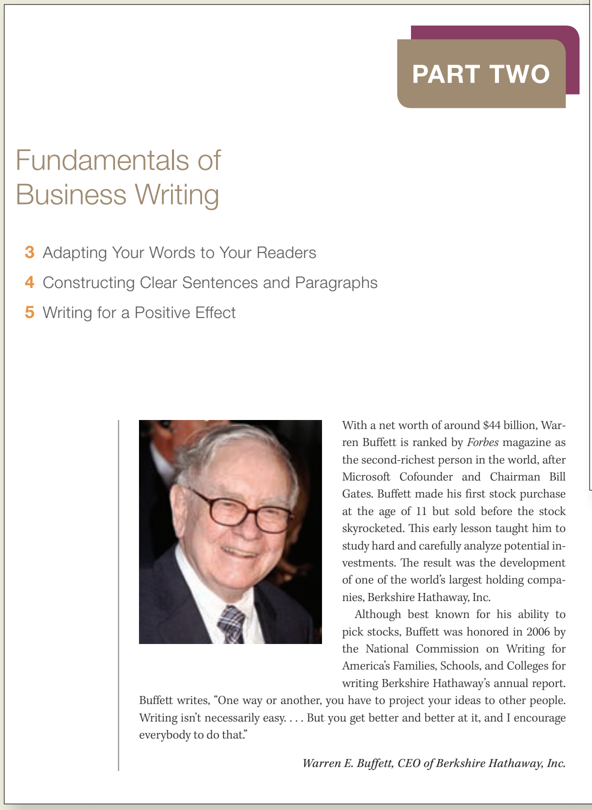
As head of Learning & Development for Facebook, Stuart Crabb knows what qualities companies look for in a job candidate. He has over 20 years' experience helping companies hire the right people, develop their talent, and become more culturally diverse.

What does it take to succeed at Facebook? According to Crabb, the answers are "critical thinking," "problem solving," "creativity," and "performance." It also takes being "motivated," "individually accountable," and a "good fit" with the company culture.

These happen to be key traits of successful business communicators, too. They understand that communicating well takes analysis, judgment, and even ingenuity. It takes being attuned to people and to each communication situation. And it takes not only verbal skill but also technological and visual literacy.

Like business itself, business communication can be challenging. But the challenge can be fun, and solving communication problems can bring enormous rewards. This book will help prepare you for an exciting future as both a businessperson and a communicator.

*Stuart Crabb, Head of Learning & Development for Facebook*



PART TWO

Fundamentals of Business Writing

3 Adapting Your Words to Your Readers
4 Constructing Clear Sentences and Paragraphs
5 Writing for a Positive Effect

With a net worth of around $44 billion, Warren Buffett is ranked by *Forbes* magazine as the second-richest person in the world, after Microsoft Cofounder and Chairman Bill Gates. Buffett made his first stock purchase at the age of 11 but sold before the stock skyrocketed. This early lesson taught him to study hard and carefully analyze potential investments. The result was the development of one of the world's largest holding companies, Berkshire Hathaway, Inc.

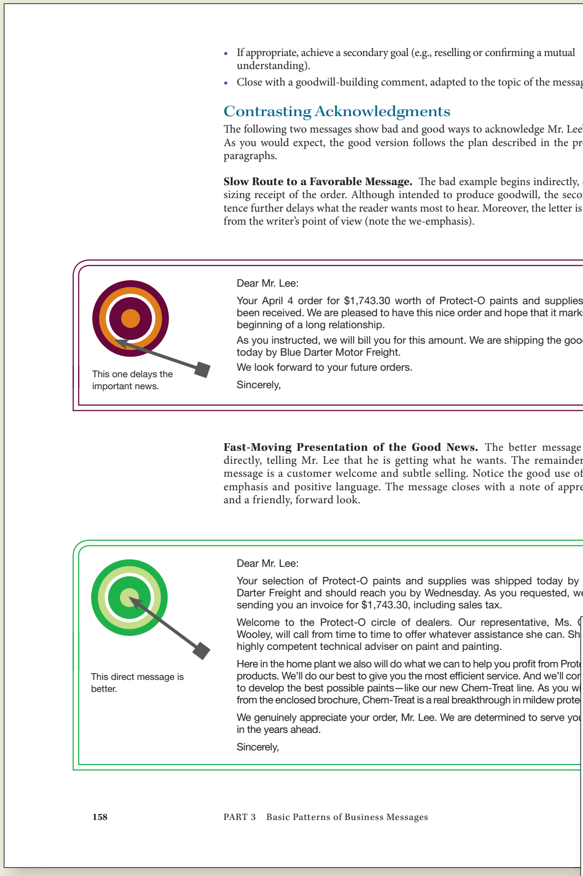
Although best known for his ability to pick stocks, Buffett was honored in 2006 by the National Commission on Writing for America's Families, Schools, and Colleges for writing Berkshire Hathaway's annual report. Buffett writes, "One way or another, you have to project your ideas to other people. Writing isn't necessarily easy. . . . But you get better and better at it, and I encourage everybody to do that."

*Warren E. Buffett, CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, Inc.*

# at the 13th Edition

## GOOD AND BAD EXAMPLES

Numerous good and bad examples of various business documents—from messages to memos to reports—are featured throughout the text. These writing samples allow students to learn by example. For easy reference, good examples are highlighted with a green bulls-eye and bad examples are denoted by a red missed target.



- If appropriate, achieve a secondary goal (e.g., reselling or confirming a mutual understanding).
- Close with a goodwill-building comment, adapted to the topic of the message.

### Contrasting Acknowledgments

The following two messages show bad and good ways to acknowledge Mr. Lee's order. As you would expect, the good version follows the plan described in the preceding paragraphs.

**Slow Route to a Favorable Message.** The bad example begins indirectly, emphasizing receipt of the order. Although intended to produce goodwill, the second sentence further delays what the reader wants most to hear. Moreover, the letter is written from the writer's point of view (note the we-emphasis).

This one delays the important news.

Dear Mr. Lee:

Your April 4 order for $1,743.30 worth of Protect-O paints and supplies has been received. We are pleased to have this nice order and hope that it marks the beginning of a long relationship.

As you instructed, we will bill you for this amount. We are shipping the goods today by Blue Darter Motor Freight.

We look forward to your future orders.

Sincerely,

**Fast-Moving Presentation of the Good News.** The better message begins directly, telling Mr. Lee that he is getting what he wants. The remainder of the message is a customer welcome and subtle selling. Notice the good use of reader emphasis and positive language. The message closes with a note of appreciation and a friendly, forward look.

This direct message is better.

Dear Mr. Lee:

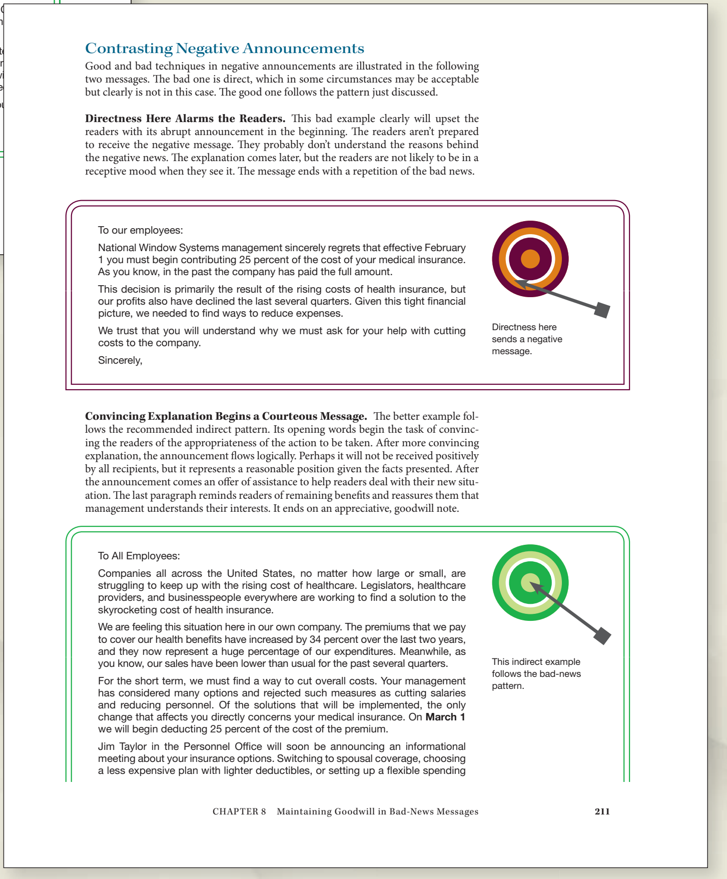
Your selection of Protect-O paints and supplies was shipped today by Blue Darter Freight and should reach you by Wednesday. As you requested, we are sending you an invoice for $1,743.30, including sales tax.

Welcome to the Protect-O circle of dealers. Our representative, Ms. Wooley, will call from time to time to offer whatever assistance she can. Sh highly competent technical adviser on paint and painting.

Here in the home plant we also will do what we can to help you profit from Prot products. We'll do our best to give you the most efficient service. And we'll cor to develop the best possible paints—like our new Chem-Treat line. As you wi from the enclosed brochure, Chem-Treat is a real breakthrough in mildew prote

We genuinely appreciate your order, Mr. Lee. We are determined to serve you in the years ahead.

Sincerely,



### Contrasting Negative Announcements

Good and bad techniques in negative announcements are illustrated in the following two messages. The bad one is direct, which in some circumstances may be acceptable but clearly is not in this case. The good one follows the pattern just discussed.

**Directness Here Alarms the Readers.** This bad example clearly will upset the readers with its abrupt announcement in the beginning. The readers aren't prepared to receive the negative message. They probably don't understand the reasons behind the negative news. The explanation comes later, but the readers are not likely to be in a receptive mood when they see it. The message ends with a repetition of the bad news.

To our employees:

National Window Systems management sincerely regrets that effective February 1 you must begin contributing 25 percent of the cost of your medical insurance. As you know, in the past the company has paid the full amount.

This decision is primarily the result of the rising costs of health insurance, but our profits also have declined the last several quarters. Given this tight financial picture, we needed to find ways to reduce expenses.

We trust that you will understand why we must ask for your help with cutting costs to the company.

Sincerely,

Directness here sends a negative message.

**Convincing Explanation Begins a Courteous Message.** The better example follows the recommended indirect pattern. Its opening words begin the task of convincing the readers of the appropriateness of the action to be taken. After more convincing explanation, the announcement flows logically. Perhaps it will not be received positively by all recipients, but it represents a reasonable position given the facts presented. After the announcement comes an offer of assistance to help readers deal with their new situation. The last paragraph reminds readers of remaining benefits and reassures them that management understands their interests. It ends on an appreciative, goodwill note.

To All Employees:

Companies all across the United States, no matter how large or small, are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of healthcare. Legislators, healthcare providers, and businesspeople everywhere are working to find a solution to the skyrocketing cost of health insurance.

We are feeling this situation here in our own company. The premiums that we pay to cover our health benefits have increased by 34 percent over the last two years, and they now represent a huge percentage of our expenditures. Meanwhile, as you know, our sales have been lower than usual for the past several quarters.

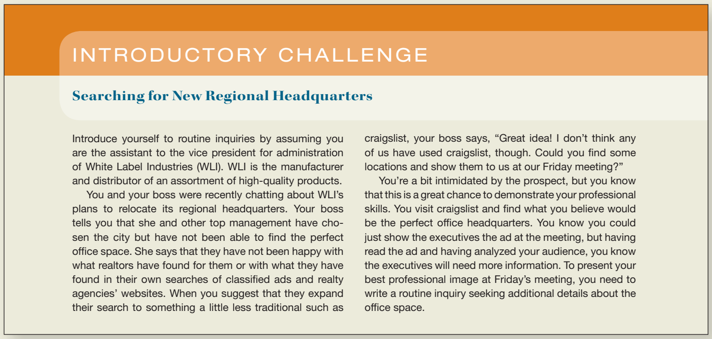
For the short term, we must find a way to cut overall costs. Your management has considered many options and rejected such measures as cutting salaries and reducing personnel. Of the solutions that will be implemented, the only change that affects you directly concerns your medical insurance. On **March 1** we will begin deducting 25 percent of the cost of the premium.

Jim Taylor in the Personnel Office will soon be announcing an informational meeting about your insurance options. Switching to spousal coverage, choosing a less expensive plan with lighter deductibles, or setting up a flexible spending

This indirect example follows the bad-news pattern.

# THEMATIC BOXES

Each chapter features thematic boxes to highlight and reinforce important topics.



INTRODUCTORY CHALLENGE

**Searching for New Regional Headquarters**

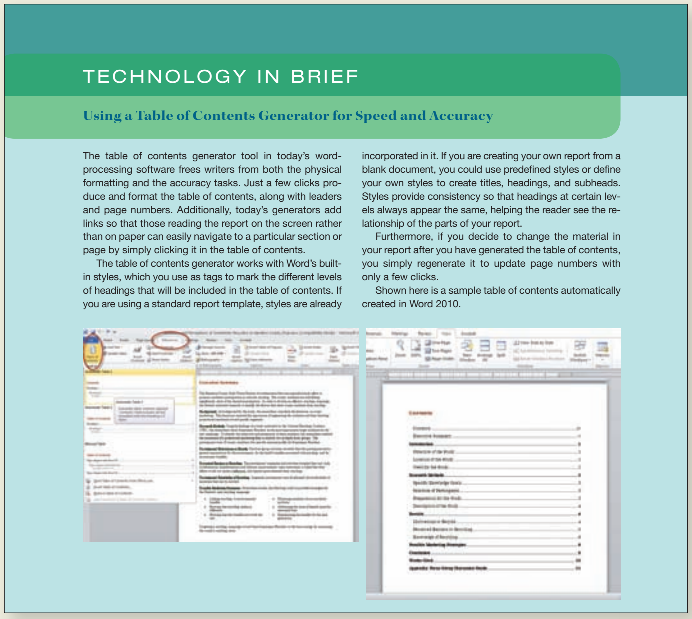
Introduce yourself to routine inquiries by assuming you are the assistant to the vice president for administration of White Label Industries (WLI). WLI is the manufacturer and distributor of an assortment of high-quality products.

You and your boss were recently chatting about WLI's plans to relocate its regional headquarters. Your boss tells you that she and other top management have chosen the city but have not been able to find the perfect office space. She says that they have not been happy with what realtors have found for them or with what they have found in their own searches of classified ads and realty agencies' websites. When you suggest that they expand their search to something a little less traditional such as craigslist, your boss says, "Great idea! I don't think any of us have used craigslist, though. Could you find some locations and show them to us at our Friday meeting?"

You're a bit intimidated by the prospect, but you know that this is a great chance to demonstrate your professional skills. You visit craigslist and find what you believe would be the perfect office headquarters. You know you could just show the executives the ad at the meeting, but having read the ad and having analyzed your audience, you know the executives will need more information. To present your best professional image at Friday's meeting, you need to write a routine inquiry seeking additional details about the office space.

## INTRODUCTORY CHALLENGE

Each box presents a realistic business scenario and provides students with a context for the topics discussed in the chapter.



TECHNOLOGY IN BRIEF

**Using a Table of Contents Generator for Speed and Accuracy**

The table of contents generator tool in today's word-processing software frees writers from both the physical formatting and the accuracy tasks. Just a few clicks produce and format the table of contents, along with leaders and page numbers. Additionally, today's generators add links so that those reading the report on the screen rather than on paper can easily navigate to a particular section or page by simply clicking it in the table of contents.

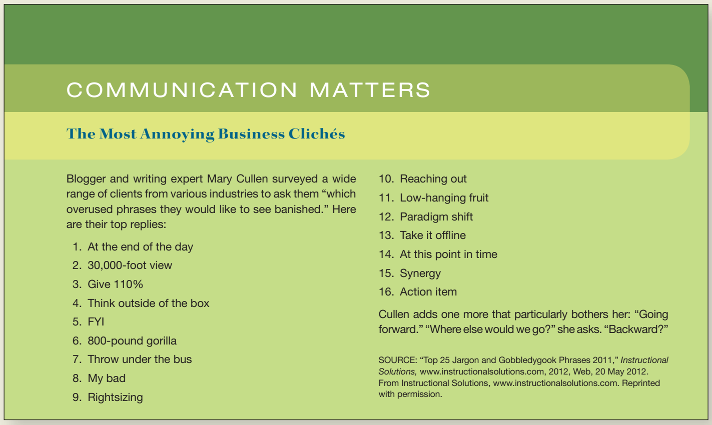
The table of contents generator works with Word's built-in styles, which you use as tags to mark the different levels of headings that will be included in the table of contents. If you are using a standard report template, styles are already incorporated in it. If you are creating your own report from a blank document, you could use predefined styles or define your own styles to create titles, headings, and subheads. Styles provide consistency so that headings at certain levels always appear the same, helping the reader see the relationship of the parts of your report.

Furthermore, if you decide to change the material in your report after you have generated the table of contents, you simply regenerate it to update page numbers with only a few clicks.

Shown here is a sample table of contents automatically created in Word 2010.

## TECHNOLOGY IN BRIEF

These boxes reflect how current technologies affect business communication, covering such topics as the top 10 email mistakes, courteous use of mobile devices, and tools and technologies that students will encounter in the workplace.



COMMUNICATION MATTERS

**The Most Annoying Business Clichés**

Blogger and writing expert Mary Cullen surveyed a wide range of clients from various industries to ask them "which overused phrases they would like to see banished." Here are their top replies:

1. At the end of the day
2. 30,000-foot view
3. Give 110%
4. Think outside of the box
5. FYI
6. 800-pound gorilla
7. Throw under the bus
8. My bad
9. Rightsizing
10. Reaching out
11. Low-hanging fruit
12. Paradigm shift
13. Take it offline
14. At this point in time
15. Synergy
16. Action item

Cullen adds one more that particularly bothers her: "Going forward." "Where else would we go?" she asks. "Backward?"

SOURCE: "Top 25 Jargon and Gobbledygook Phrases 2011," *Instructional Solutions,* www.instructionalsolutions.com, 2012, Web, 20 May 2012. From Instructional Solutions, www.instructionalsolutions.com. Reprinted with permission.

## COMMUNICATION MATTERS

Communication Matters boxes contain authoritative and anecdotal commentary to emphasize communication concepts from each chapter.

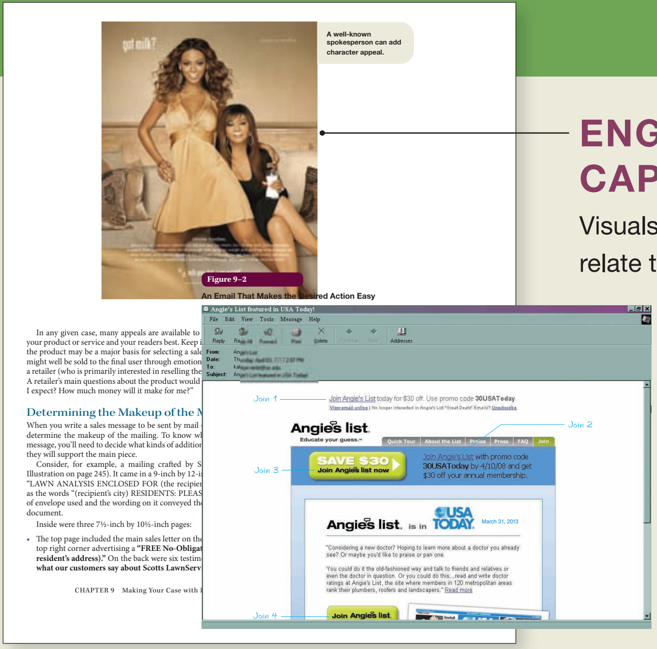

A well-known spokesperson can add character appeal.

**Figure 9–2**

An Email That Makes the Desired Action Easy

Angie's List featured in USA Today!

Join 1 — Join Angie's List today for $30 off. Use promo code **30USAToday**

View email online | No longer interested in Angie's List "Great Deals" Emails? Unsubscribe

Angie's list. Educate your guess.™

Join 2

Join 3 — SAVE $30 Join Angie's list now

Join Angie's List with promo code 30USAToday by 4/10/08 and get $30 off your annual membership.

Angie's list. is in USA TODAY. March 31, 2013

"Considering a new doctor? Hoping to learn more about a doctor you already see? Or maybe you'd like to praise or pan one.

You could do it the old-fashioned way and talk to friends and relatives or even the doctor in question. Or you could do this...read and write doctor ratings at Angie's List, the site where members in 120 metropolitan areas rank their plumbers, roofers and landscapers." Read more

Join 4 — Join Angie's list

In any given case, many appeals are available to
your product or service and your readers best. Keep i
the product may be a major basis for selecting a sale
might well be sold to the final user through emotion
a retailer (who is primarily interested in reselling the
A retailer's main questions about the product would
I expect? How much money will it make for me?"

### Determining the Makeup of the M

When you write a sales message to be sent by mail
determine the makeup of the mailing. To know wh
message, you'll need to decide what kinds of addition
they will support the main piece.

Consider, for example, a mailing crafted by S
Illustration on page 245). It came in a 9-inch by 12-i
"LAWN ANALYSIS ENCLOSED FOR (the recipien
as the words "(recipient's city) RESIDENTS: PLEAS
of envelope used and the wording on it conveyed th
document.

Inside were three 7½-inch by 10½-inch pages:

- The top page included the main sales letter on the
top right corner advertising a **"FREE No-Obligat
resident's address)."** On the back were six testim
**what our customers say about Scotts LawnServ**

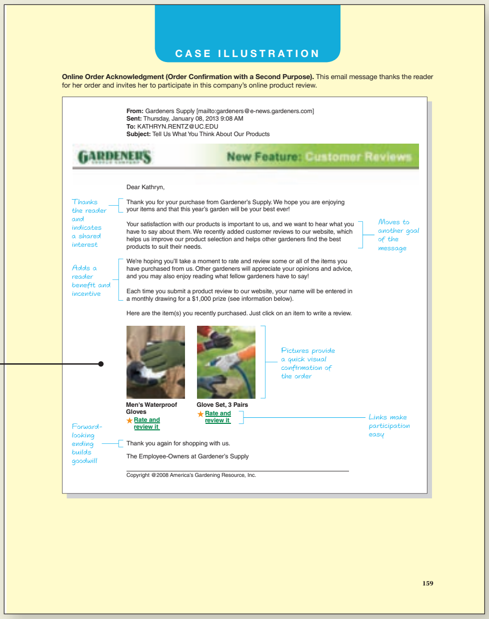
CHAPTER 9 Making Your Case with

# ENGAGING PHOTOS AND SCREEN CAPTURES

Visuals of contemporary people and companies help students relate to the material and understand key points.

# NUMEROUS CASE ILLUSTRATIONS

Annotated examples of real business messages, reports, and other documents show how to apply the concepts discussed in the chapters.


CASE ILLUSTRATION

**Online Order Acknowledgment (Order Confirmation with a Second Purpose).** This email message thanks the reader for her order and invites her to participate in this company's online product review.

**From:** Gardeners Supply [mailto:gardeners@e-news.gardeners.com]
**Sent:** Thursday, January 08, 2013 9:08 AM
**To:** KATHRYN.RENTZ@UC.EDU
**Subject:** Tell Us What You Think About Our Products

Dear Kathryn,

Thank you for your purchase from Gardener's Supply. We hope you are enjoying your items and that this year's garden will be your best ever!

Your satisfaction with our products is important to us, and we want to hear what you have to say about them. We recently added customer reviews to our website, which helps us improve our product selection and helps other gardeners find the best products to suit their needs.

We're hoping you'll take a moment to rate and review some or all of the items you have purchased from us. Other gardeners will appreciate your opinions and advice, and you may also enjoy reading what fellow gardeners have to say!

Each time you submit a product review to our website, your name will be entered in a monthly drawing for a $1,000 prize (see information below).

Here are the item(s) you recently purchased. Just click on an item to write a review.

**Men's Waterproof Gloves**
★ Rate and review it

**Glove Set, 3 Pairs**
★ Rate and review it

Thank you again for shopping with us.

The Employee-Owners at Gardener's Supply

Copyright @2008 America's Gardening Resource, Inc.

Thanks the reader and indicates a shared interest

Moves to another goal of the message

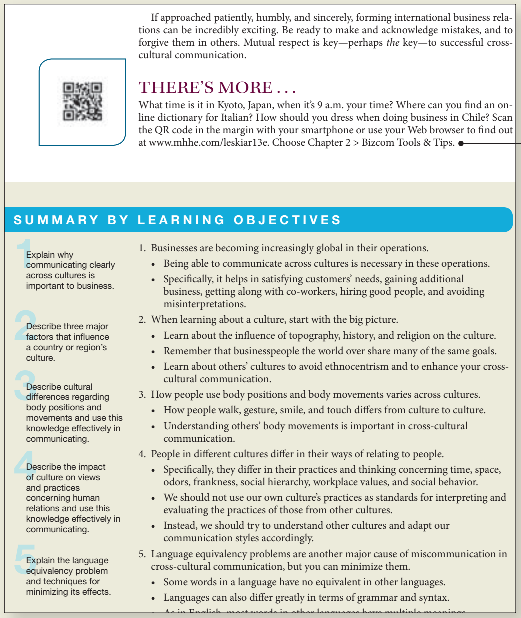
Adds a reader benefit and incentive

Pictures provide a quick visual confirmation of the order

Links make participation easy

Forward-looking ending builds goodwill

159


If approached patiently, humbly, and sincerely, forming international business relations can be incredibly exciting. Be ready to make and acknowledge mistakes, and to forgive them in others. Mutual respect is key—perhaps *the* key—to successful cross-cultural communication.

### THERE'S MORE . . .

What time is it in Kyoto, Japan, when it's 9 a.m. your time? Where can you find an online dictionary for Italian? How should you dress when doing business in Chile? Scan the QR code in the margin with your smartphone or use your Web browser to find out at www.mhhe.com/leskiar13e. Choose Chapter 2 > Bizcom Tools & Tips.

### SUMMARY BY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

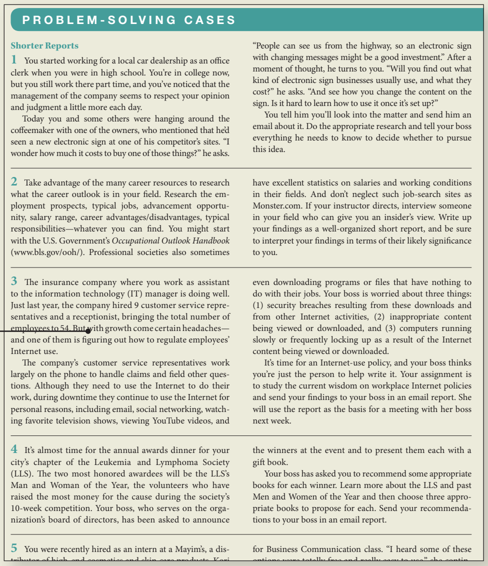
| | |
|---|---|
| 1 Explain why communicating clearly across cultures is important to business. | 1. Businesses are becoming increasingly global in their operations.<br>• Being able to communicate across cultures is necessary in these operations.<br>• Specifically, it helps in satisfying customers' needs, gaining additional business, getting along with co-workers, hiring good people, and avoiding misinterpretations. |
| 2 Describe three major factors that influence a country or region's culture. | 2. When learning about a culture, start with the big picture.<br>• Learn about the influence of topography, history, and religion on the culture.<br>• Remember that businesspeople the world over share many of the same goals.<br>• Learn about others' cultures to avoid ethnocentrism and to enhance your cross-cultural communication. |
| 3 Describe cultural differences regarding body positions and movements and use this knowledge effectively in communicating. | 3. How people use body positions and body movements varies across cultures.<br>• How people walk, gesture, smile, and touch differs from culture to culture.<br>• Understanding others' body movements is important in cross-cultural communication. |
| 4 Describe the impact of culture on views and practices concerning human relations and use this knowledge effectively in communicating. | 4. People in different cultures differ in their ways of relating to people.<br>• Specifically, they differ in their practices and thinking concerning time, space, odors, frankness, social hierarchy, workplace values, and social behavior.<br>• We should not use our own culture's practices as standards for interpreting and evaluating the practices of those from other cultures.<br>• Instead, we should try to understand other cultures and adapt our communication styles accordingly. |
| 5 Explain the language equivalency problem and techniques for minimizing its effects. | 5. Language equivalency problems are another major cause of miscommunication in cross-cultural communication, but you can minimize them.<br>• Some words in a language have no equivalent in other languages.<br>• Languages can also differ greatly in terms of grammar and syntax. |

# QUICK ACCESS TO ONLINE RESOURCES

A QR code and URL at the end of every chapter will take students directly to the contents of the website's *Bizcom Tools & Tips.* Here they'll find over a hundred Web-based resources—from technology videos to grammar and style tips to advice on proposal writing and other topics.

# RELEVANT AND CHALLENGING CASES

An extensive collection of scenario-based cases gives students practice solving communication problems on a wide range of business topics, from Internet use to customer service to marketing research.


### PROBLEM-SOLVING CASES

**Shorter Reports**

1 You started working for a local car dealership as an office clerk when you were in high school. You're in college now, but you still work there part time, and you've noticed that the management of the company seems to respect your opinion and judgment a little more each day.

Today you and some others were hanging around the coffeemaker with one of the owners, who mentioned that he'd seen a new electronic sign at one of his competitor's sites. "I wonder how much it costs to buy one of those things?" he asks. "People can see us from the highway, so an electronic sign with changing messages might be a good investment." After a moment of thought, he turns to you. "Will you find out what kind of electronic sign businesses usually use, and what they cost?" he asks. "And see how you change the content on the sign. Is it hard to learn how to use it once it's set up?"

You tell him you'll look into the matter and send him an email about it. Do the appropriate research and tell your boss everything he needs to know to decide whether to pursue this idea.

2 Take advantage of the many career resources to research what the career outlook is in your field. Research the employment prospects, typical jobs, advancement opportunity, salary range, career advantages/disadvantages, typical responsibilities—whatever you can find. You might start with the U.S. Government's *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (www.bls.gov/ooh/). Professional societies also sometimes have excellent statistics on salaries and working conditions in their fields. And don't neglect such job-search sites as Monster.com. If your instructor directs, interview someone in your field who can give you an insider's view. Write up your findings as a well-organized short report, and be sure to interpret your findings in terms of their likely significance to you.

3 The insurance company where you work as assistant to the information technology (IT) manager is doing well. Just last year, the company hired 9 customer service representatives and a receptionist, bringing the total number of employees to 54. But with growth come certain headaches—and one of them is figuring out how to regulate employees' Internet use.

The company's customer service representatives work largely on the phone to handle claims and field other questions. Although they need to use the Internet to do their work, during downtime they continue to use the Internet for personal reasons, including email, social networking, watching favorite television shows, viewing YouTube videos, and even downloading programs or files that have nothing to do with their jobs. Your boss is worried about three things: (1) security breaches resulting from these downloads and from other Internet activities, (2) inappropriate content being viewed or downloaded, and (3) computers running slowly or frequently locking up as a result of the Internet content being viewed or downloaded.

It's time for an Internet-use policy, and your boss thinks you're just the person to help write it. Your assignment is to study the current wisdom on workplace Internet policies and send your findings to your boss in an email report. She will use the report as the basis for a meeting with her boss next week.

4 It's almost time for the annual awards dinner for your city's chapter of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS). The two most honored awardees will be the LLS's Man and Woman of the Year, the volunteers who have raised the most money for the cause during the society's 10-week competition. Your boss, who serves on the organization's board of directors, has been asked to announce the winners at the event and to present them each with a gift book.

Your boss has asked you to recommend some appropriate books for each winner. Learn more about the LLS and past Men and Women of the Year and then choose three appropriate books to propose for each. Send your recommendations to your boss in an email report.

5 You were recently hired as an intern at a Mayim's, a dis-

for Business Communication class. "I heard some of these

# A Wealth of Supplements

**LESIKAR'S BUSINESS COMMUNICATION, THIRTEENTH EDITION,** includes a variety of supplemental materials to help instructors prepare and present the material in this textbook more effectively.

## INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

The downloadable Instructor's Manual (IM) shows how to present the book's contents step by step. After an orienting introduction, each IM chapter walks the instructor though the corresponding book chapter, syncing the discussion with the chapter's PowerPoint slides. The IM also provides tips for teaching the first day of class, sample syllabi for the quarter and semester systems, sample answers and talking points for the Critical Thinking Questions and Skills Building Exercises, and sample solutions for the Problem-Solving Cases.

The book's website supplements the IM with teaching notes for the video cases, a wide range of Web-based resources, and a biweekly blog post by the authors. Even a new instructor can get up to speed quickly while having many helpful options to choose from.

## TEST BANK AND EZ TEST

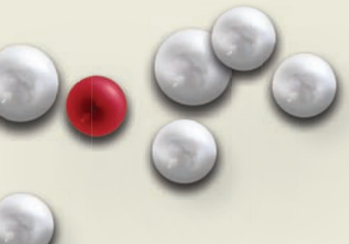
The Test Bank includes more than 1,000 multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer questions. Each question identifies the answer, difficulty level, and Bloom's Taxonomy level coding. Each test question is also tagged to the Learning Objective it covers in the chapter and the AACSB Learning Standard it falls under.

### EZ TEST ONLINE

McGraw-Hill's *EZ Test Online* is a flexible and easy-to-use electronic testing program. The program allows instructors to create tests from book-specific items, accommodates a wide range of question types, and enables instructors to add their own questions. Multiple versions of a test can be created, and any test can be exported for use with WebCT, Blackboard, or any other course management system. EZ Test Online is accessible to busy instructors virtually anywhere via the Web, and the program eliminates the need for them to install test software. For more information about EZ Test Online, please see the website at www.eztestonline.com.

## PRESENTATION SLIDES

Clear, visually appealing PowerPoint slides support every chapter. In addition to reinforcing the book's key points, the slides provide additional cases to discuss and other forms of interactivity (e.g., questions to answer or blanks to fill in).



The instructors' version of the slides also contains brief notes to help the teacher emphasize the key points and explain their importance. Instructors can easily add to or revise the slides to adapt them to a particular approach.

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The presentation capture tool gives instructors the ability to evaluate presentations and students the freedom to practice their presentations anytime and anywhere.

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- PowerPoint files
- Test Bank
- *Bcomm Teacher Xchange*, the authors' blog
- Management Asset Gallery, which contains 23 Self-Assessments and Manager's Hot Seat Videos
- eBook

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- Provides instant practice material and study questions, easily accessible on the go.
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- Offer access to lectures anytime and anywhere by computer, iPod, or mobile device.
- Increase intent listening and class participation by easing students' concerns about note taking. Lecture Capture will make it more likely that you will see students' faces, not the tops of their heads.

To learn more about Tegrity, watch a two minute Flash demo at http://tegritycampus.mhhe.com.

## ASSURANCE-OF-LEARNING READY

Many educational institutions today are focused on the notion of *assurance of learning*, an important element of some accreditation standards. *Lesikar's Business Communication* is designed specifically to support your assurance-of-learning initiatives with a simple, yet powerful, solution.

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The McGraw-Hill Companies is a proud corporate member of AACSB International. Understanding the importance and value of AACSB accreditation, the authors of *Lesikar's Business Communication, Thirteenth Edition*, recognize the curricula guidelines detailed in the AACSB standards for business accreditation by connecting selected questions in the text and/or the Test Bank to the six general knowledge and skill guidelines in the AACSB standards.

The statements contained in *Lesikar's Business Communication, Thirteenth Edition,* are provided only as a guide for the users of this textbook. The AACSB leaves content coverage and assessment within the purview of individual schools, the mission of the school, and the faculty. While *Lesikar's Business Communication* and the teaching package make no claim of any specific AACSB qualification or evaluation, we have tagged selected questions according to the six general knowledge and skill areas.

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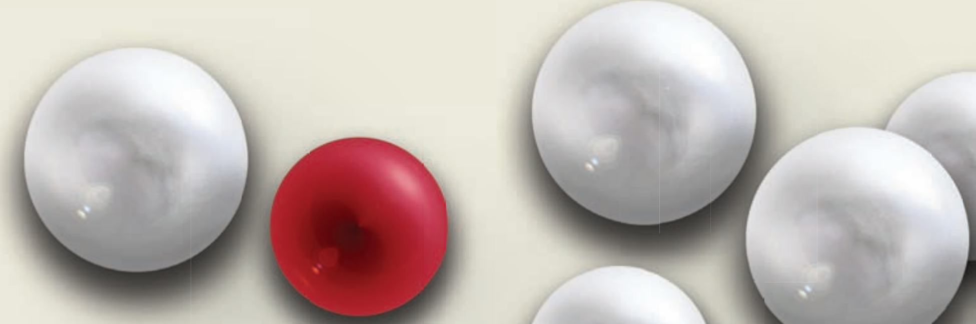

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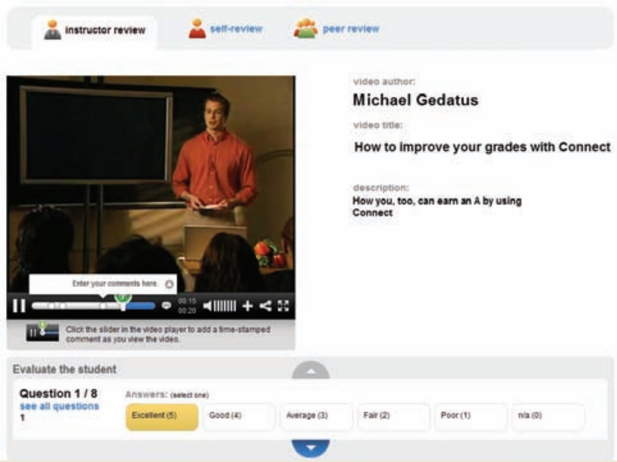
instructor review
self-review
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Enter your comments here.
00:15
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Evaluate the student
Excellent (5)
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Question 1 / 8
see all questions
1
Answers: (select one)

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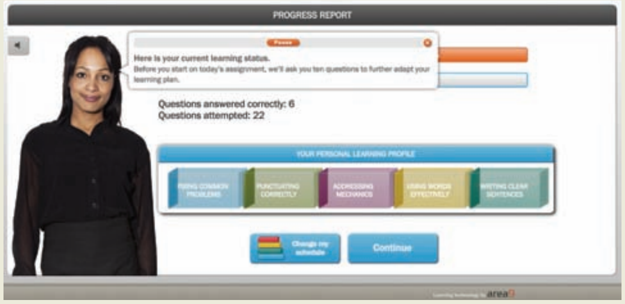
PROGRESS REPORT
Pause
YOUR PERSONAL LEARNING PROFILE
FIXING COMMON PROBLEMS
PUNCTUATING CORRECTLY
ADDRESSING MECHANICS
USING WORDS EFFECTIVELY
WRITING CLEAR SENTENCES
Change my schedule
Continue
area9

Here is your current learning status.
Before you start on today's assignment, we'll ask you ten questions to further adapt your learning plan.

Questions answered correctly: 6
Questions attempted: 22

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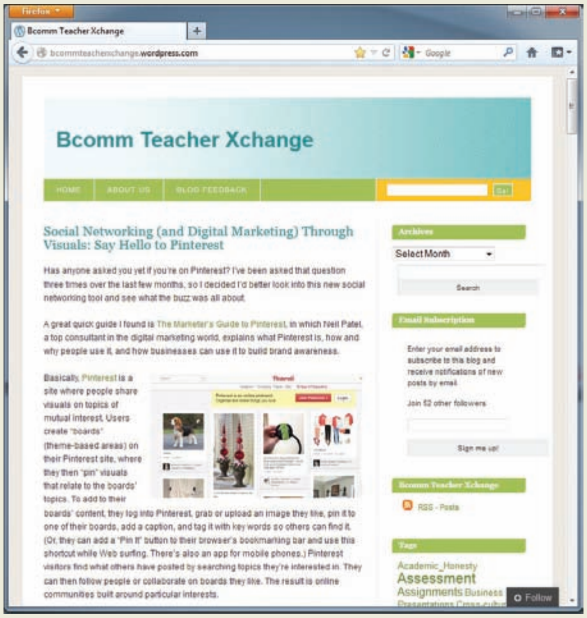
Instructors can keep track of the latest business communication news, trends, tips, and tools by following the authors' blog, *Bcomm Teacher Xchange*, at www.bcommteacherxchange.wordpress.com. The articles are searchable by subject, and a new one is posted every other week.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Tags
Academic_Honesty
Assessment
Assignments
Business
Follow

Social Networking (and Digital Marketing) Through Visuals: Say Hello to Pinterest

Has anyone asked you yet if you're on Pinterest? I've been asked that question three times over the last few months, so I decided I'd better look into this new social networking tool and see what the buzz was all about.

A great quick guide I found is The Marketer's Guide to Pinterest, in which Neil Patel, a top consultant in the digital marketing world, explains what Pinterest is, how and why people use it, and how businesses can use it to build brand awareness.

Basically, Pinterest is a site where people share visuals on topics of mutual interest. Users create "boards" (theme-based areas) on their Pinterest site, where they then "pin" visuals that relate to the boards' topics. To add to their boards' content, they log into Pinterest, grab or upload an image they like, pin it to one of their boards, add a caption, and tag it with key words so others can find it. (Or, they can add a "Pin It" button to their browser's bookmarking bar and use this shortcut while Web surfing. There's also an app for mobile phones.) Pinterest visitors find what others have posted by searching topics they're interested in. They can then follow people or collaborate on boards they like. The result is online communities built around particular interests.

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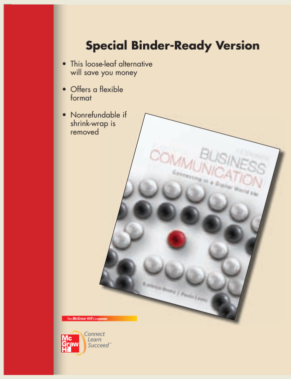
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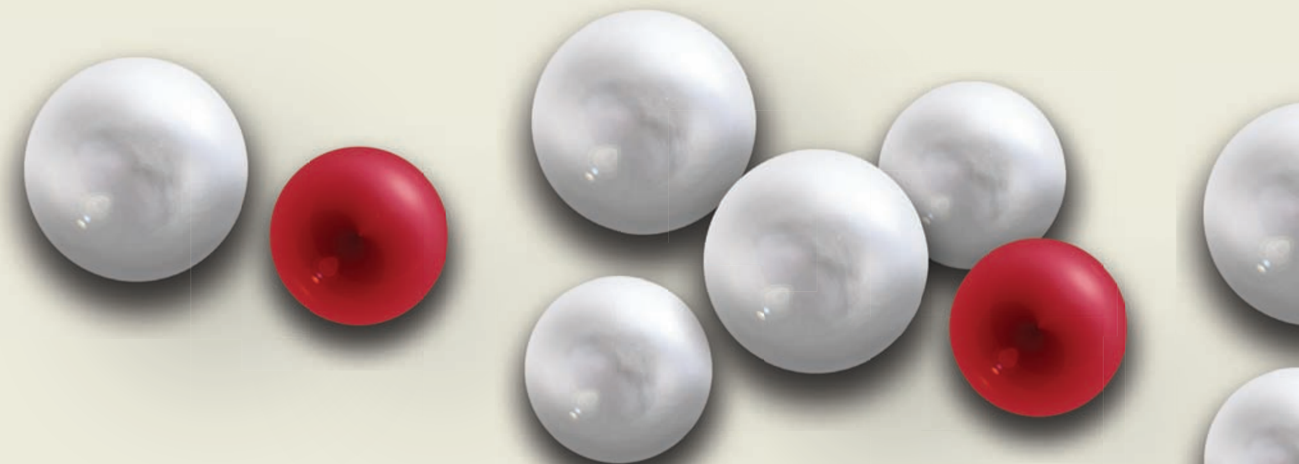

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# Introduction

1 Understanding Workplace Communication
2 Communicating Across Cultures

As head of Learning & Development for Facebook, Stuart Crabb knows what qualities companies look for in a job candidate. He has over 20 years' experience helping companies hire the right people, develop their talent, and become more culturally diverse.

What does it take to succeed at Facebook? According to Crabb, the answers are "critical thinking," "problem solving," "creativity," and "performance." It also takes being "motivated," "individually accountable," and a "good fit" with the company culture.

These happen to be key traits of successful business communicators, too. They understand that communicating well takes analysis, judgment, and even ingenuity. It takes being attuned to people and to each communication situation. And it takes not only verbal skill but also technological and visual literacy.

Like business itself, business communication can be challenging. But the challenge can be fun, and solving communication problems can bring enormous rewards. This book will help prepare you for an exciting future as both a businessperson and a communicator.

*Stuart Crabb, Head of Learning & Development for Facebook*

# CHAPTER ONE

# Understanding Workplace Communication

## Learning Objectives

Upon completing this chapter, you will understand the role and nature of communication in business. To achieve this goal, you should be able to

1. Explain the importance of communication to you and to business.
2. Describe the main challenges facing business communicators today.
3. Describe the three main categories of business communication.
4. Describe the formal and informal communication networks of the business organization.
5. Describe factors that affect the types and amount of communicating that a business does.
6. Explain why business communication is a form of problem solving.
7. Describe the various contexts for each act of business communication.
8. Describe the business communication process.

# INTRODUCTORY CHALLENGE

## Demonstrating Your Value on a High-Profile Team

You were thrilled to be hired a few months ago as a customer service representative for OrgWare.com, a company that sells management software specially designed for professional associations. The software enables organizations like the American Marketing Association and the Association for Business Communication to manage their finances, keep track of their members, schedule events, and much more.

The company is doing well. In 12 years, it has grown from a five-person business into one that employs 120 people. There are now six regional sales teams located across the U.S., and there's even a development team in Malaysia. But this growth has created a problem: The extensive face-to-face communication that helped make OrgWare.com a thriving business has, in many cases, become difficult or impossible. As a result, the sense of teamwork in the organization is weakening. And it is clear that phone calls, emails, and instant messaging are not sufficient to keep employees engaged and well informed.

The CEO has formed a task force to find an internal communication solution. Will it be an intranet? An electronic newsletter? A secure social networking site? Virtual meetings? A combination? Which would the employees be most likely to read and use? How should the solution be implemented, and what will it cost?

To your surprise, you were asked to help find the answers. The CEO felt that your familiarity with new media could be an asset to the team. You'll also be expected to represent the customer service area and the viewpoints of young employees like yourself.

Everyone on the team will need to research the pros and cons of different media, acquire employees' opinions, write progress reports, share ideas, and ultimately help present the team's recommendation to the top executives.

Are you ready?

# THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS

**LO1** Explain the importance of communication to you and to business.

Your work in business will involve communication—a lot of it—because communication is a major part of the work of business. The overview that follows will help you prepare for the communication challenges that lie ahead.

## The Importance of Communication Skills

Because communication is so important in business, businesses want and need people with good communication skills. Evidence of the importance of communication in business is found in numerous surveys of executives, managers, and recruiters. Without exception, these surveys have found that communication ranks at or near the top of the business skills needed for success.

For example, the 431 managers and executives who participated in a survey about graduates' preparedness for the workforce named "oral communications," "teamwork/collaboration," "professionalism/work ethic," "written communications," and "critical thinking/problem solving" as the top "very important skills" job applicants should have.[1] The employers surveyed for the National Association of Colleges and Employers' *Job Outlook Survey* for 2011 rated "communication" as the most valuable soft skill, with "teamwork skills" and "analytical skills" following closely behind.[2] Why is communication ability so highly valued? As one professional trainer explains, "you will need to

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[1] The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the Society for Human Resource Management, *Are They Ready to Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants into the 21st Century Workforce*, 21, *Partnership for 21st Century Skills*, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2 Oct. 2006, Web, 22 Apr. 2012.

[2] *NACE*, National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2011, Web, 22 Apr. 2012.

## COMMUNICATION MATTERS

### Peter Drucker on the Importance of Communication in Business

Peter Drucker, recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom and one of the most respected management consultants, educators, speakers, and writers of our time, made these observations about communication:

> Colleges teach the one thing that is perhaps most valuable for the future employee to know. But very few students bother to learn it. This one basic skill is the ability to organize and express ideas in writing and speaking.
>
> As soon as you move one step from the bottom, your effectiveness depends on your ability to reach others through the spoken or the written word. And the further away your job is from manual work, the larger the organization of which you are an employee, the more important it will be that you know how to convey your thoughts in writing or speaking. In the very large organization . . . this ability to express oneself is perhaps the most important of all the skills a person can possess.

request information, discuss problems, give instructions, work in teams, and interact with colleagues and clients" to achieve cooperation and team efficiency. To advance, you'll also need to be able to "think for yourself," "take initiative," and "solve problems."[3] On the managerial level, you'll find that communication skills are even more essential. In the words of an international business consultant, "nothing puts you in the 'poor leader' category more swiftly than inadequate communication skills."[4]

Unfortunately, businesses' need for employees with strong communication skills is all too often unfulfilled. When NFI Research asked senior executives and managers what areas of their companies they'd most like to see improved, they put "efficiency" and "communication" at the top of the list.[5] According to Solari Communications, "poor communication costs business millions of dollars every single day" in the form of wasted time, misunderstandings, eroded customer loyalty, and lost business.[6] SIS International Research found that poor communication is a problem for small and mid-sized businesses, not just for big corporations. Its data indicated that in 2009 a business with 100 employees spent an average downtime of 17 hours a week on clarifying its communications, which translated into an annual cost of $524,569.[7]

The communication shortcomings of employees and the importance of communication in business explain why you should work to improve your communication skills. Whatever position you have in business, your performance will be judged largely on the basis of your ability to communicate. If you perform and communicate well, you are likely to be rewarded with advancement. And the higher you advance, the more you will need your communication ability. The evidence is clear: Improving your communication skills improves your chances for success in business.

## Why Business Depends upon Communication

Every business, even a one-person business, is actually an economic and social system. To produce and sell goods and services, any business must coordinate the activities of many groups of people: employees, suppliers, customers, legal advisors, community representatives, and government agencies that might be involved. These connections are achieved through communication.

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[3] Shirley Taylor, "Why Are Communication Skills Important?," *ST Training Solutions*, ST Training Solutions Pte Ltd, n.d., Web, 22 Apr. 2012.

[4] Jonathan Farrington, "The MOST Important Leadership Trait?—It's a 'No-Brainer,'" *Blogit*, Jonathan Farrington, 26 Sept. 2008, Web, 22 Apr. 2012.

[5] Chuck Martin, "NFI Research Result: Wish List," *Forbes.com*, Forbes.com, 4 Feb. 2010, Web, 22 Apr. 2012.

[6] Rich Maggiani, "The Costs of Poor Communication," *Solari*, Solari Communication, 2012, Web, 22 Apr. 2012.

[7] SIS International Research, "SMB Communications Pain Study White Paper: Uncovering the Hidden Cost of Communications Barriers and Latency," *SIS International Research*, SIS International Research, *Market Intelligence Journal*, 10 Mar. 2009, Web, 22 Apr. 2012.

Consider, for example, the communications of a pharmaceutical manufacturer. Throughout the company, employees send and receive information about all aspects of the company's business:

- Salespeople receive instructions and information from the home office and submit orders and regular reports of their contact with customers.
- Executives use written and oral messages to conduct business with customers and other companies, manage company operations, and perform strategic planning.
- Production supervisors receive work orders, issue instructions, receive status reports, and submit production summaries.
- Shop floor supervisors deliver orders to the employees on the production line, communicate and enforce guidelines for safety and efficiency, troubleshoot problems that arise, and bring any concerns or suggestions to management.
- Marketing professionals gather market information, propose new directions for company production and sales efforts, coordinate with the research and development staff, and receive direction from the company's executives.
- Research specialists receive or propose problems to investigate, make detailed records of their research, monitor lab operations for compliance with government regulations, and communicate their findings to management.
- Public relations professionals use various media to build the company's brand and maintain the public's trust.

Numerous communication-related activities occur in every other niche of the company as well: finance and accounting, human resources, legal, information systems, and other departments. Everywhere, employees receive and send information as they conduct their work, and they may be doing so across or between continents as well as between buildings or offices.

Oral communication is a major part of this information flow. So, too, are various types of written communication—instant messaging, text messaging, online postings and comments, email, memos, letters, and reports, as well as forms and records.

All of this communicating goes on in business because communication is essential to the organized effort involved in business. Simply put, communication enables human beings to work together.

## Current Challenges for Business Communicators

**LO2** Describe the main challenges facing business communicators today.

While communication has always been central to business, the nature of work today presents special communication challenges. Here we discuss four interrelated trends that are likely to influence how you will work and communicate.

**The Need for Expanded Media Literacy.** When email arrived on the scene in the late 1980s, it created something of a revolution. Instead of being restricted to letters, memos, and printed reports and proposals, business writers could now correspond electronically. As a result, many tasks formerly conducted via the "old" forms—memos in particular—were performed through email instead, and email replaced many phone and face-to-face conversations as well. Email has also had the effect of speeding up communication and of enabling a communicator to reach many more readers simultaneously. It has increased what we can achieve—and are expected to achieve—each day.

Email is still the most heavily used medium in business, but many other media have appeared on the scene. In addition to instant messaging and text messaging, businesses are now using blogs, tweets, podcasts, social networking, virtual meetings, videos, animation, simulations, and even online games. Collectively referred to as **new media**, these forms of communication and the mobile devices with which people access them are causing another revolution.

The impacts of this change are many and far reaching. It is easy now to network with others, even on the other side of the world, and to tap the intelligence of those outside the boundaries of the organization. Obviously, these "new ways for groups to come together and collaborate" will require that employees be "highly conversant with digital networking and virtual collaboration."[8] But new media are also increasing the need for employees who have **social intelligence**—the ability "to quickly assess the emotions of those around them and adapt their words, tone, and gestures accordingly."[9]

With information coming in so fast and from so many sources, organizations are becoming less hierarchical and more brain-like, with each employee acting as a kind of sensor. As a result, front-line employees now have a higher level of decision-making power than ever before.[10] Performing well in such an environment takes "novel and adaptive thinking,"[11] a willingness to "embrace change," and "fierce problem-solving skills."[12] The approach to business communication that this book takes will help you develop these strengths.

**Increasing Globalism and Workplace Diversity.** Countries and cultures continue to grow more interconnected as businesses expand their reach around the world. According to a panelist for a recent webinar on workplace trends, we are seeing "the emergence of the truly globally integrated enterprise," which means that the likelihood of working on a global team is increasing, as is the importance of "global social networks."[13]

**Cross-cultural competency** should thus be a part of your skillset.[14] You will need to be aware that your assumptions about business and communication are not shared by everyone everywhere. As the next chapter explains, businesspeople from other countries may have distinctly different attitudes about punctuality and efficiency. They can also differ from you in their preference, or lack thereof, for directness and the show of emotion. And the core features of their culture—such as their preference for individualism or collectivism, their religious beliefs, their political environment, their ideas about social hierarchy, and their attitudes toward work itself—can make their view of how to do business quite different from yours.

You will encounter other kinds of diversity as well. To have adequate retirement income, the so-called Baby Boomers—those born soon after World War II—are extending their careers. This means that organizations are likely to have employees in their twenties, in their sixties and seventies, and every age in between.[15] The influx of women into the workplace has meant increased gender diversity. And according to a diversity officer for a major health-care firm, each generation of U.S. workers has grown more ethnically diverse, with the so-called Generation Y cohort (those born after 1979) having the most ethnic diversity.[16] This trend is making organizations more innovative and productive,[17] and it means that "cultural agility" will need to figure into your workplace communications.[18]

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[8] David Bollier, *The Future of Work: What It Means for Individuals, Businesses, Markets and Governments*, 15, *The Aspen Institute*, Aspen Institute, 2011, Web, 22 Apr. 2012.

[9] Institute for the Future for Apollo Research Institute, *Future Work Skills 2020*, 8, *Apollo Research Institute*, Apollo Research Institute, 2011, Web, 22 Apr. 2012.

[10] Bollier 19.

[11] Institute for the Future for Apollo Research Institute, *Future of Work Report: Executive Summary*, 4, *Apollo Research Institute*, Apollo Research Institute, Mar. 2012, Web, 22 Apr. 2012.

[12] Bollier 22.

[13] Jim Keane, President, Steelcase Group, *Future of Work Webinar*, *Apollo Research Institute,* Apollo Research Institute, n.d., Web, 7 May 2012.

[14] Institute for the Future for Apollo Research Institute, *Future Work Skills 2020*, 9.

[15] According to Ross C. DeVol, chief research officer for the Milken Institute, one in five Americans will have hit 60 in 2030, and many of these will be staying in the workforce (*Future of Work Webinar*, *Apollo Research Institute*, Apollo Research Institute, n.d., Web, 7 May 2012).

[16] Katherine Haynes Sanstad, Regional Executive Director, Diversity, Kaiser Permanente, *Future of Work Webinar*, *Apollo Research Institute*, Apollo Research Institute, n.d., Web, 7 May 2012.

[17] Institute for the Future for Apollo Research Institute, *Future Work Skills 2020*, 9.

[18] Sanstad.

## COMMUNICATION MATTERS

### What One CEO Looks for in Job Candidates

In a *New York Times* interview, Delta CEO Richard Anderson highlighted the importance of communication skills and contextual awareness.

When asked if there had been any change in the qualities he looks for in a job applicant over the last several years, he responded with these comments:

> I think this communication point is getting more and more important. People really have to be able to handle the written and spoken word. . . .
>
> The second thing is, I think you've got to have what our pilots call operational awareness. You've got to have your head up . . . and you've got to have situational awareness of everything that's going on around you. There is so much going on in the world today, you've got to know what's going on globally, what's going on around you, particularly today with what's going on in this economy.
>
> And third, you've got to have not just the business skills, you've got to have the emotional intelligence. It's just not enough to be the best person operating an HP calculator. You have to have the emotional intelligence to understand what's right culturally, both in your company and outside your company.

SOURCE: Adam Bryant, "He Wants Subjects, Verbs and Objects," *The New York Times* 25 Apr. 2009: BU2, *The New York Times,* Web, 30 Apr. 2012.

**An Increased Need for Strong Analytical Skills.** Adapting to a quickly changing business landscape requires being able to assess information quickly, focus on what's relevant, and interpret information reliably and usefully. As data-gathering devices are built into more objects, there will be more numerical data for us to process. The need for **computational thinking**—the ability "to interact with data, see patterns in data, make data-based decisions, and use data to design for desired outcomes"[19]—will increase. So will the need for **visual literacy**, the ability to create and interpret graphics.[20]

The value of **interpretive skills** extends beyond interpreting numbers. As we've pointed out, being able to understand other people is critical. As "smart machines" automate many workplace tasks, employees will spend more time on tasks that require "sense-making," or "the ability to determine the deeper meaning or significance of what is being expressed."[21] As one expert put it, "We've got to recognize that the real high-value work . . . may actually have an *imaginative* component."[22] This quality is required to discern the key facts, to explore "what if," and to choose the best solution—all central components of successful business communication.

**An Increased Focus on Ethics and Social Responsibility** One more widespread trend under way in business will likely affect the goals of the organization you work for: an increased focus on ethical and socially responsible behavior.

While ethical scandals have plagued businesses throughout modern history, the Enron and WorldCom scandals of 2002, in which false reports of financial health cheated employees and shareholders alike, seemed to usher in a new era of concern. That concern was well founded: With 2008 came unprecedented discoveries of mismanagement and fraud on the part of some of the United States's largest financial institutions. Accounts of predatory lending, business espionage, and exploitative labor

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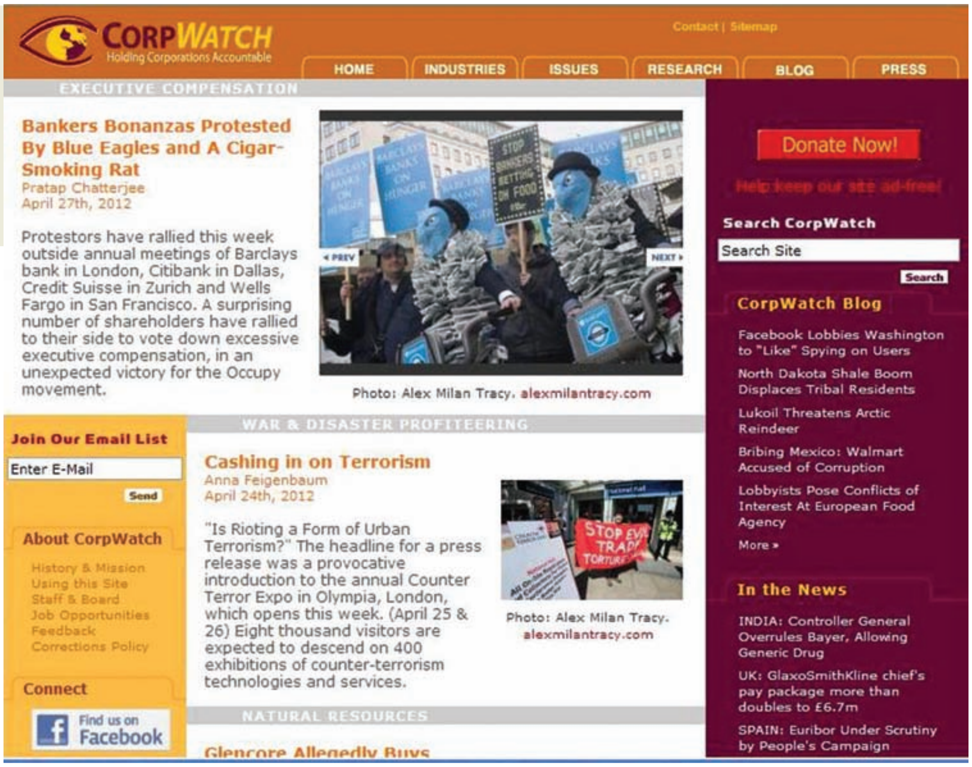
[19] Institute for the Future for Apollo Research Institute, *Future Work Skills 2020*, 4.

[20] Institute for the Future for Apollo Research Institute, *Future Work Skills 2020*, 10.

[21] Institute for the Future for Apollo Research Institute, *Future Work Skills 2020*, 8.

[22] Bollier 8.

**Nongovermental organizations (NGOs) such as CorpWatch attest to the growing importance of social responsibility in business.**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In the News

**Bankers Bonanzas Protested By Blue Eagles and A Cigar-Smoking Rat**
Pratap Chatterjee
April 27th, 2012

Protestors have rallied this week outside annual meetings of Barclays bank in London, Citibank in Dallas, Credit Suisse in Zurich and Wells Fargo in San Francisco. A surprising number of shareholders have rallied to their side to vote down excessive executive compensation, in an unexpected victory for the Occupy movement.

Photo: Alex Milan Tracy. alexmilantracy.com

**Cashing in on Terrorism**
Anna Feigenbaum
April 24th, 2012

"Is Rioting a Form of Urban Terrorism?" The headline for a press release was a provocative introduction to the annual Counter Terror Expo in Olympia, London, which opens this week. (April 25 & 26) Eight thousand visitors are expected to descend on 400 exhibitions of counter-terrorism technologies and services.

Photo: Alex Milan Tracy. alexmilantracy.com

**Glencore Allegedly Buys**

- Facebook Lobbies Washington to "Like" Spying on Users
- North Dakota Shale Boom Displaces Tribal Residents
- Lukoil Threatens Arctic Reindeer
- Bribing Mexico: Walmart Accused of Corruption
- Lobbyists Pose Conflicts of Interest At European Food Agency

- INDIA: Controller General Overrules Bayer, Allowing Generic Drug
- UK: GlaxoSmithKline chief's pay package more than doubles to £6.7m
- SPAIN: Euribor Under Scrutiny by People's Campaign

SOURCE: CorpWatch, Home page, CorpWatch, n.d., Web, 30 Apr. 2012. From http://www.corpwatch.org.

practices continue to shake the public's confidence in business. On a moral level, doing business in a way that harms others is wrong. On a practical level, doing so undermines trust, which is critical to the success of business. The more an organization builds trust among its employees, its shareholders, its business partners, and its community, the better for the business and for economic prosperity overall. A key way to build trust is through respectful, honest communication backed up by quality goods and services.

Lately, another important dimension of business ethics has developed: **corporate social responsibility**. The Internet has brought a new transparency to companies' business practices, with negative information traveling quickly and widely. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as CorpWatch, Consumer Federation of America, and Greenpeace can exert a powerful influence on public opinion and even on governments. Businesses now operate in an age of social accountability, and their response has been the development of corporate social responsibility (CSR) departments and initiatives. While the business benefits of CSR have been debated, the public demand for such programs is strong. You may well find that social issues will influence how you do business and communicate in business.

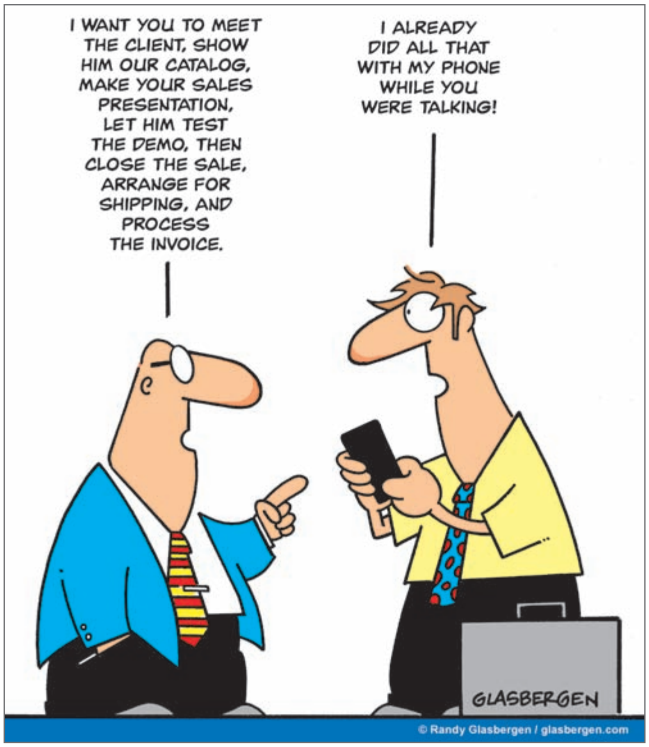
**LO3** Describe the three main categories of business communication.

## Main Categories of Business Communication

Such newer media as blogs and social networking have weakened the boundary between "inside" and "outside" the organization. One post on a company's blog, for example, could draw comments from employees, from employees in a similar organization or industry, or from potential customers.

Even so, most communication on the job can still be categorized as either internal operational, external operational, or personal. These categories, while not completely distinct, can help you understand your purposes for communicating.

**Internal-Operational Communication.** All the communication that occurs in conducting work within a business is internal operational. This is the communication among the business's employees that is done to perform the work of the business and track its success.


I WANT YOU TO MEET THE CLIENT, SHOW HIM OUR CATALOG, MAKE YOUR SALES PRESENTATION, LET HIM TEST THE DEMO, THEN CLOSE THE SALE, ARRANGE FOR SHIPPING, AND PROCESS THE INVOICE.
I ALREADY DID ALL THAT WITH MY PHONE WHILE YOU WERE TALKING!
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**Internal-operational communication** takes many forms. It includes the ongoing discussions that senior management undertakes to determine the goals and processes of the business. It includes the orders and instructions that supervisors give employees, as well as written and oral exchanges among employees about work matters. It includes reports that employees prepare concerning sales, production, inventories, finance, maintenance, and so on. It includes the messages that they write and speak in carrying out their assignments and contributing their ideas to the business.

Much of this internal-operational communication is performed on computer networks. Employees send email, chat online, and post information on company portals and blogs for others throughout the business, whether located down the hall, across the street, or in other countries. And today, much of this communication takes place via smartphones and other mobile devices.

**External-Operational Communication.** The work-related communicating that a business does with people and groups outside the business is **external-operational communication**. This is the business's communication with its publics—suppliers, service companies, customers, government agencies, the general public, and others.

External-operational communication includes all of the business's efforts at selling—from sales letters, emails, and phone calls to Web and television ads, trade-show displays, the company website, and customer visits. Also in this category is all that a business does to gain positive publicity, such as promoting its community-service activities, preparing appealing materials for current and prospective investors, writing press releases for the media, and contributing expert insights at professional meetings and on webinars. In fact, every act of communication with an external audience can be regarded as a public-relations message, conveying a certain image of the company. For this reason, all such acts should be undertaken with careful attention to both content and tone.

The importance of these kinds of external-operational communication hardly needs explaining. Because the success of a business depends on its ability to attract and satisfy customers, it must communicate effectively with those customers.