

The background of the cover is a vibrant blue, representing clear water. Three colorful striped angelfish are swimming in the water. One is in the upper right, another in the lower left, and a third in the lower right. They have vertical stripes in shades of orange, yellow, and blue, with a dark purple or black dorsal fin and a bright yellow tail.

EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

ELEVENTH EDITION

John V. Thill
Courtland L. Bovée



Excellence
in Business
Communication

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ELEVENTH
EDITION

Excellence in Business Communication

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Printer/Binder: Courier/Kendallville
Cover Printer: Lehigh-Phoenix Color—Hagerstown
Text Font: 10.5/12 Minion Pro

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Thill, John V.

Excellence in business communication / John V. Thill, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Global Communication Strategies, Courtland L. Bovee, Professor of Business Communication, C. Allen Paul Distinguished Chair, Grossmont College. — Eleventh Edition.

pages cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 978-0-13-354417-6 (alk. paper)

1. Business communication—United States—Case studies. I. Bovée, Courtland L. II. Title.

HF5718.2.U6T45 2013b

658.4'5—dc23

2013028137

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

PEARSON

ISBN 10: 0-13-354417-6

ISBN 13: 978-0-13-354417-6

Dedication

This book is dedicated to you and the many thousands of other students who have used this book in years past. We appreciate the opportunity to play a role in your education, and we wish you success and satisfaction in your studies and in your career.

John V. Thill
Courtland L. Bovée

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Contents in Brief

Preface xvii
Prologue xxxiii

PART 1	Understanding the Foundations of Business Communication	1
	1 Achieving Success Through Effective Business Communication	2
	2 Mastering Team Skills and Interpersonal Communication	34
	3 Communicating in a World of Diversity	65
PART 2	Applying the Three-Step Writing Process	93
	4 Planning Business Messages	94
	5 Writing Business Messages	122
	6 Completing Business Messages	152
PART 3	Crafting Brief Messages	181
	7 Crafting Messages for Electronic and Social Media	182
	8 Writing Routine and Positive Messages	221
	9 Writing Negative Messages	251
	10 Writing Persuasive Messages	290
PART 4	Preparing Reports and Oral Presentations	321
	11 Planning Reports and Proposals	322
	12 Writing Reports and Proposals	361
	13 Completing Reports and Proposals	401
	14 Designing and Delivering Oral and Online Presentations	444
PART 5	Writing Employment Messages and Interviewing for Jobs	479
	15 Building Careers and Writing Résumés	480
	16 Applying and Interviewing for Employment	516
	APPENDIX A Format and Layout of Business Documents	553
	APPENDIX B Documentation of Report Sources	569
	APPENDIX C Correction Symbols	575
	Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage	578
	Answer Keys	606
	Brand, Organization, Name, and Website Index	610
	Subject Index	613

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Contents

Preface xvii
Prologue xxxiii

PART 1

Understanding the Foundations of Business Communication 1

1 Achieving Success Through Effective Business Communication 2

COMMUNICATING AT **Toyota** 2

Understanding Why Communication Matters 3

- Communication Is Important to Your Career 3
- Communication Is Important to Your Company 5
- What Makes Business Communication Effective? 5

Communicating as a Professional 5

- Understanding What Employers Expect from You 7
- Communicating in an Organizational Context 8
- Adopting an Audience-Centered Approach 8

Understanding the Unique Challenges of Business Communication 9

- The Globalization of Business and the Increase in Workforce Diversity 9
- The Increasing Value of Business Information 9
- The Pervasiveness of Technology 10
- The Evolution of Organizational Structures and Leadership Styles 10
- A Heavy Reliance on Teamwork 10

Exploring the Communication Process 10

- The Basic Communication Model 11
- The Social Communication Model 14

Using Technology to Improve Business Communication 16

- Keeping Technology in Perspective 16
- Guarding Against Information Overload 16
- Using Technological Tools Productively 17
- Reconnecting with People 17

Committing to Ethical and Legal Communication 22

- Distinguishing Ethical Dilemmas from Ethical Lapses 22
- Ensuring Ethical Communication 23
- Ensuring Legal Communication 25

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT **Toyota** 26

Applying What You've Learned 26

Learning Objectives Checkup 27

Apply Your Knowledge 30

Practice Your Skills 30

Expand Your Skills 31

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 32

THE ART OF PROFESSIONALISM Maintaining a Confident, Positive Outlook 7

2 Mastering Team Skills and Interpersonal Communication 34

COMMUNICATING AT **Cemex** 34

Communicating Effectively in Teams 35

- Advantages and Disadvantages of Teams 35
- Characteristics of Effective Teams 36
- Group Dynamics 36

Collaborating on Communication Efforts 39

- Guidelines for Collaborative Writing 39
- Technologies for Collaborative Writing 39
- Social Networks and Virtual Communities 40
- Giving—and Responding to—Constructive Feedback 41

Making Your Meetings More Productive 42

- Preparing for Meetings 42
- Conducting and Contributing to Efficient Meetings 43
- Putting Meeting Results to Productive Use 44

Using Meeting Technologies 45

Improving Your Listening Skills 47

- Recognizing Various Types of Listening 47
- Understanding the Listening Process 47
- Overcoming Barriers to Effective Listening 48

Improving Your Nonverbal Communication Skills 49

- Recognizing Nonverbal Communication 50
- Using Nonverbal Communication Effectively 50

Developing Your Business Etiquette 51

- Business Etiquette in the Workplace 52
- Business Etiquette in Social Settings 54
- Business Etiquette Online 54

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT **Cemex** 55

Learning Objectives Checkup 56

Apply Your Knowledge 60

Practice Your Skills 60

Expand Your Skills 62

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 62

COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES Whose Skin Is This, Anyway? 53

3 Communicating in a World of Diversity 65

COMMUNICATING AT **EY** 65

Understanding the Opportunities and Challenges of Communication in a Diverse World 66

- The Opportunities in a Global Marketplace 67
- The Advantages of a Diverse Workforce 67
- The Challenges of Intercultural Communication 67

Developing Cultural Competency 69

- Understanding the Concept of Culture 69
- Overcoming Ethnocentrism and Stereotyping 69

Recognizing Variations in a Diverse World 70

- Contextual Differences 70
- Legal and Ethical Differences 71
- Social Differences 71
- Nonverbal Differences 72
- Age Differences 73
- Gender Differences 74
- Religious Differences 74
- Ability Differences 74

Adapting to Other Business Cultures 75

- Guidelines for Adapting to Any Business Culture 75
- Guidelines for Adapting to U.S. Business Culture 75

Improving Intercultural Communication Skills 76

- Studying Other Cultures 76
- Studying Other Languages 78
- Respecting Preferences for Communication Style 78
- Writing Clearly 78
- Speaking and Listening Carefully 80
- Using Interpreters, Translators, and Translation Software 83
- Helping Others Adapt to Your Culture 84

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT **EY** 85

- Learning Objectives Checkup** 86
- Apply Your Knowledge** 89
- Practice Your Skills** 89
- Expand Your Skills** 90
- Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage** 91
- COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES** Us Versus Them: Generational Conflict in the Workplace 73

PART 2

Applying the Three-Step Writing Process 93

4 **Planning Business Messages** 94

COMMUNICATING AT **H&R Block** 94

Understanding the Three-Step Writing Process 95

- Optimizing Your Writing Time 96
- Planning Effectively 96

Analyzing the Situation 96

- Defining Your Purpose 97
- Developing an Audience Profile 97

Gathering Information 99

- Uncovering Audience Needs 100
- Finding Your Focus 100
- Providing Required Information 100

Selecting the Best Medium 102

- Oral Media 102
- Written Media 103
- Visual Media 103
- Electronic Media 104
- Factors to Consider When Choosing Media 104

Organizing Your Information 106

- Defining Your Main Idea 106
- Limiting Your Scope 107
- Choosing Between Direct and Indirect Approaches 108
- Outlining Your Content 109
- Building Reader Interest with Storytelling Techniques 112

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT **H&R Block** 114

Learning Objectives Checkup 115

- Apply Your Knowledge** 118
- Practice Your Skills** 118
- Expand Your Skills** 120
- Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage** 120

PRACTICING ETHICAL COMMUNICATION How Much Information Is Enough? 101

5 **Writing Business Messages** 122

COMMUNICATING AT **She Takes on the World** 122

Adapting to Your Audience: Being Sensitive to Audience Needs 123

- Using the “You” Attitude 123
- Maintaining Standards of Etiquette 124
- Emphasizing the Positive 125
- Using Bias-Free Language 125

Adapting to Your Audience: Building Strong Relationships 127

- Establishing Your Credibility 127
- Projecting Your Company’s Image 128

Adapting to Your Audience: Controlling Your Style and Tone 129

- Using a Conversational Tone 129
- Using Plain Language 130
- Selecting the Active or Passive Voice 131

Composing Your Message: Choosing Powerful Words 132

- Understanding Denotation and Connotation 133
- Balancing Abstract and Concrete Words 134
- Finding Words That Communicate Well 134

Composing Your Message: Creating Effective Sentences 136

- Choosing from the Four Types of Sentences 136
- Using Sentence Style to Emphasize Key Thoughts 137

Composing Your Message: Crafting Unified, Coherent Paragraphs 138

- Creating the Elements of a Paragraph 138
- Choosing the Best Way to Develop Each Paragraph 140

Using Technology to Compose and Shape Your Messages 142

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT **She Takes on the World** 143

- Learning Objectives Checkup** 144
- Apply Your Knowledge** 147
- Practice Your Skills** 147
- Expand Your Skills** 150
- Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage** 150

THE ART OF PROFESSIONALISM Being Dependable and Accountable 140

6 **Completing Business Messages** 152

COMMUNICATING AT **Jefferson Rabb Web Design** 152

Revising Your Message: Evaluating the First Draft 153

- Evaluating Your Content, Organization, Style, and Tone 153
- Evaluating, Editing, and Revising the Work of Others 156

Revising to Improve Readability 156

- Varying Your Sentence Length 157
- Keeping Your Paragraphs Short 157
- Using Lists to Clarify and Emphasize 157
- Adding Headings and Subheadings 158

Editing for Clarity and Conciseness 158

- Editing for Clarity 158
- Editing for Conciseness 160
- Using Technology to Revise Your Message 162

Producing Your Message 164

- Designing for Readability 164
- Designing Multimedia Documents 167
- Using Technology to Produce Your Message 168
- Formatting Formal Letters and Memos 169

Proofreading Your Message 170**Distributing Your Message 172****SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT *Jefferson Rabb* Web Design 173**

- Learning Objectives Checkup 174
- Apply Your Knowledge 177
- Practice Your Skills 177
- Expand Your Skills 180
- Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 180

COMMUNICATION MISCUES Missing the Message with Prescription Medications 160**SHARPENING YOUR CAREER SKILLS Proofread Like a Pro to Create Perfect Documents 171****PART 3****Crafting Brief Messages 181****7 Crafting Messages for Electronic and Social Media 182****COMMUNICATING AT *Starbucks* 182****Electronic and Social Media for Business Communication 183**

- Electronic and Social Media Options 184
- Compositional Modes for Electronic and Social Media 184
- Creating Content for Social Media 187

Social Networks 188

- Business Communication Uses of Social Networks 189
- Strategies for Business Communication on Social Networks 192

Information and Media Sharing Sites 193

- User-Generated Content Sites 193
- Content Curation Sites 193
- Community Q&A Sites 194

Email 194

- Planning Email Messages 195
- Writing Email Messages 195
- Completing Email Messages 197

Instant Messaging and Text Messaging 198

- Understanding the Benefits and Risks of IM 198
- Adapting the Three-Step Process for Successful IM 199

Blogging and Microblogging 200

- Understanding the Business Applications of Blogging 201
- Adapting the Three-Step Process for Successful Blogging 203
- Microblogging 204

Podcasting 206

- Understanding the Business Applications of Podcasting 206
- Adapting the Three-Step Process for Successful Podcasting 206

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT *Starbucks* 208**Learning Objectives Checkup 209**

- Apply Your Knowledge 212
- Practice Your Skills 212
- Expand Your Skills 214
- Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 214
- Cases 215

COMMUNICATION MISCUES Help! I'm Drowning in Social Media! 201**8 Writing Routine and Positive Messages 221****COMMUNICATING AT *Get Satisfaction* 221****Strategy for Routine Requests 222**

- Stating Your Request Up Front 222
- Explaining and Justifying Your Request 222
- Requesting Specific Action in a Courteous Close 223

Common Examples of Routine Requests 223

- Asking for Information and Action 223
- Asking for Recommendations 225
- Making Claims and Requesting Adjustments 225

Strategy for Routine and Positive Messages 228

- Starting with the Main Idea 228
- Providing Necessary Details and Explanation 228
- Ending with a Courteous Close 229

Common Examples of Routine and Positive Messages 229

- Answering Requests for Information and Action 229
- Granting Claims and Requests for Adjustment 230
- Providing Recommendations and References 232
- Sharing Routine Information 234
- Announcing Good News 235
- Fostering Goodwill 236

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT *Get Satisfaction* 239**Learning Objectives Checkup 240**

- Apply Your Knowledge 243
- Practice Your Skills 243
- Expand Your Skills 245
- Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 245
- Cases 245

COMMUNICATION MISCUES Can You Get Sued for Writing—or Not Writing—a Recommendation Letter? 234**9 Writing Negative Messages 251****COMMUNICATING AT *Chargify* 251****Using the Three-Step Writing Process for Negative Messages 252**

- Step 1: Planning a Negative Message 252
- Step 2: Writing a Negative Message 254
- Step 3: Completing a Negative Message 255

- Using the Direct Approach for Negative Messages 256
 - Opening with a Clear Statement of the Bad News 256
 - Providing Reasons and Additional Information 256
 - Closing on a Respectful Note 257

- Using the Indirect Approach for Negative Messages 257
 - Opening with a Buffer 258
 - Providing Reasons and Additional Information 258
 - Continuing with a Clear Statement of the Bad News 260
 - Closing on a Respectful Note 260

- Maintaining High Standards of Ethics and Etiquette 261
- Sending Negative Messages on Routine Business Matters 263

- Making Negative Announcements on Routine Business Matters 263
- Rejecting Suggestions and Proposals 263
- Refusing Routine Requests 264
- Handling Bad News About Transactions 264
- Refusing Claims and Requests for Adjustment 266

- Sending Negative Organizational News 268
 - Communicating Under Normal Circumstances 268
 - Responding to Negative Information in a Social Media Environment 269
 - Communicating in a Crisis 271

- Sending Negative Employment Messages 272
 - Refusing Requests for Employee References and Recommendation Letters 272
 - Refusing Social Networking Recommendation Requests 273
 - Rejecting Job Applications 273
 - Giving Negative Performance Reviews 274
 - Terminating Employment 275

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT **Chargify** 276

- Learning Objectives Checkup 277
- Apply Your Knowledge 281
- Practice Your Skills 281
- Expand Your Skills 282
- Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 282
- Cases 283

PRACTICING ETHICAL COMMUNICATION The Deceptive Soft Sell 262

10 Writing Persuasive Messages 290

COMMUNICATING AT **CafeMom** 290

- Using the Three-Step Writing Process for Persuasive Messages 291
 - Step 1: Planning Persuasive Messages 291
 - Organizing Your Information 293
 - Step 2: Writing Persuasive Messages 294
 - Step 3: Completing Persuasive Messages 294

- Developing Persuasive Business Messages 295
 - Strategies for Persuasive Business Messages 295
 - Avoiding Common Mistakes in Persuasive Communication 299
 - Common Examples of Persuasive Business Messages 301

- Developing Marketing and Sales Messages 303
 - Planning Marketing and Sales Messages 304
 - Writing Conventional Marketing and Sales Messages 304
 - Writing Promotional Messages for Social Media 305

- Maintaining High Standards of Ethics, Legal Compliance, and Etiquette 306

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT **CafeMom** 308

- Learning Objectives Checkup 309
- Apply Your Knowledge 312
- Practice Your Skills 312
- Expand Your Skills 314
- Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 314
- Cases 315

PRACTICING ETHICAL COMMUNICATION Pushing the Limits of Credibility 295

PART 4 Preparing Reports and Oral Presentations 321

11 Planning Reports and Proposals 322

COMMUNICATING AT **MyCityWay** 322

- Applying the Three-Step Writing Process to Reports and Proposals 323

- Analyzing the Situation 323
- Gathering Information 325
- Selecting the Right Medium 327
- Organizing Your Information 327

- Supporting Your Messages with Reliable Information 329

- Planning Your Research 330
- Locating Data and Information 330
- Evaluating Sources 330
- Using Your Research Results 331

- Conducting Secondary Research 334

- Finding Information at a Library 335
- Finding Information Online 336
- Documenting Your Sources 338

- Conducting Primary Research 339

- Conducting Surveys 339
- Conducting Interviews 340

- Planning Informational Reports 342

- Organizing Informational Reports 342
- Organizing Website Content 343

- Planning Analytical Reports 346

- Focusing on Conclusions 346
- Focusing on Recommendations 347
- Focusing on Logical Arguments 348

- Planning Proposals 351

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT

MyCityWay 353

- Learning Objectives Checkup 354
- Apply Your Knowledge 357
- Practice Your Skills 357
- Expand Your Skills 359
- Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 359

SHARPENING YOUR CAREER SKILLS Creating an Effective Business Plan 343

12 Writing Reports and Proposals **361**COMMUNICATING AT **Tellabs** 361**Composing Reports and Proposals** 362

- Adapting to Your Audience 362
- Drafting Report Content 362
- Drafting Proposal Content 367
- Helping Report Readers Find Their Way 369
- Using Technology to Craft Reports and Proposals 370

Writing for Websites and Wikis 371

- Drafting Website Content 371
- Collaborating on Wikis 372

Illustrating Your Reports with Effective Visuals 373

- Understanding Visual Design Principles 373
- Understanding the Ethics of Visual Communication 375
- Identifying Points to Illustrate 375
- Selecting the Right Type of Visual 376

Producing and Integrating Visuals 386

- Creating Visuals 386
- Integrating Visuals with Text 386
- Balancing Illustrations and Words 386
- Referencing Visuals 387
- Verifying the Quality of Your Visuals 388

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT **Tellabs** 390**Learning Objectives Checkup** 391**Apply Your Knowledge** 394**Practice Your Skills** 394**Expand Your Skills** 396**Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage** 396**Cases** 397**PRACTICING ETHICAL COMMUNICATION** Distorting the Data 388**13** Completing Reports and Proposals **401**COMMUNICATING AT **Garage Technology Ventures** 401**Revising Reports and Proposals** 402**Producing Formal Reports** 403

- Prefatory Parts 405
- Text of the Report 410
- Supplementary Parts 411

Producing Formal Proposals 412

- Prefatory Parts 412
- Text of the Proposal 413

Proofreading Reports and Proposals 429**Distributing Reports and Proposals** 429SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT **Garage Technology Ventures** 430**Learning Objectives Checkup** 431**Apply Your Knowledge** 434**Practice Your Skills** 434**Expand Your Skills** 435**Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage** 435**Cases** 436**REPORT WRITER'S NOTEBOOK** Analyzing a Formal Report 414**14** Designing and Delivering Oral and Online Presentations **444**COMMUNICATING AT **Principato-Young Entertainment** 444**Planning a Presentation** 445

- Analyzing the Situation 445
- Selecting the Right Medium 447
- Organizing Your Presentation 447

Developing a Presentation 451

- Adapting to Your Audience 451
- Composing Your Presentation 452

Enhancing Your Presentation with Effective Slides 455

- Choosing Structured or Free-Form Slides 455
- Designing Effective Slides 457

Completing a Presentation 461

- Finalizing Your Slides 461
- Creating Effective Handouts 464
- Choosing Your Presentation Method 464
- Practicing Your Delivery 465

Delivering a Presentation 465

- Overcoming Anxiety 465
- Handling Questions Responsively 466
- Embracing the Backchannel 467
- Giving Presentations Online 468

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT **Principato-Young Entertainment** 468**Learning Objectives Checkup** 469**Apply Your Knowledge** 474**Practice Your Skills** 474**Expand Your Skills** 475**Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage** 475**Cases** 476**THE ART OF PROFESSIONALISM** Being a Team Player 454**PART 5**
Writing Employment Messages and Interviewing for Jobs **479****15** Building Careers and Writing Résumés **480**COMMUNICATING AT **ATK** 480**Finding the Ideal Opportunity in Today's Job Market** 481

- Writing the Story of You 481
- Learning to Think Like an Employer 482
- Researching Industries and Companies of Interest 483
- Translating Your General Potential into a Specific Solution for Each Employer 484
- Taking the Initiative to Find Opportunities 484
- Building Your Network 484
- Seeking Career Counseling 486
- Avoiding Mistakes 486

Planning a Résumé 486
 Analyzing Your Purpose and Audience 487
 Gathering Pertinent Information 488
 Selecting the Best Media 488
 Organizing Your Résumé Around Your Strengths 488
 Addressing Areas of Concern 489

Writing a Résumé 490
 Keeping Your Résumé Honest 490
 Adapting Your Résumé to Your Audience 490
 Composing Your Résumé 491

Completing a Résumé 495
 Revising Your Résumé 499
 Producing Your Résumé 500
 Proofreading Your Résumé 503
 Distributing Your Résumé 503

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT **ATK** 506

Learning Objectives Checkup 507
Apply Your Knowledge 511
Practice Your Skills 511
Expand Your Skills 512
Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 512
Cases 513

THE ART OF PROFESSIONALISM Striving to Excel 485

COMMUNICATION MISCUES Don't. Just Don't. 499

16 Applying and Interviewing for Employment 516

COMMUNICATING AT **Zappos** 516

Submitting Your Résumé 517
 Writing Application Letters 517
 Following Up After Submitting a Résumé 522

Understanding the Interviewing Process 523

The Typical Sequence of Interviews 523
 Common Types of Interviews 524
 Interview Media 525
 What Employers Look for in an Interview 525
 Preemployment Testing and Background Checks 526

Preparing for a Job Interview 527

Learning About the Organization and Your Interviewers 527
 Thinking Ahead About Questions 528
 Bolstering Your Confidence 529
 Polishing Your Interview Style 529
 Presenting a Professional Image 532
 Being Ready When You Arrive 533

Interviewing for Success 534

The Warm-Up 534
 The Question-and-Answer Stage 534
 The Close 536
 Interview Notes 537

Following Up After the Interview 537

Follow-Up Message 538
 Message of Inquiry 539
 Request for a Time Extension 539
 Letter of Acceptance 539

Letter Declining a Job Offer 539
 Letter of Resignation 541

SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT **Zappos** 542

Learning Objectives Checkup 543
Apply Your Knowledge 546
Practice Your Skills 546
Expand Your Skills 547
Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 547
Cases 548

COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES Successfully Interviewing Across Borders 531

COMMUNICATION MISCUES Make Sure You Don't Talk Yourself out of a Job 535

APPENDIX A

Format and Layout of Business Documents 553

First Impressions 553

Paper 553
 Customization 553
 Appearance 553

Letters 554

Standard Letter Parts 554
 Additional Letter Parts 559
 Letter Formats 561

Envelopes 562

Addressing the Envelope 563
 Folding to Fit 564
 International Mail 565

Memos 567

Reports 567
 Margins 567
 Headings 567
 Page Numbers 568

APPENDIX B

Documentation of Report Sources 569

Chicago Humanities Style 569

In-Text Citation—*Chicago* Humanities Style 569
 Bibliography—*Chicago* Humanities Style 570

APA Style 572

In-Text Citation—APA Style 572
 List of References—APA Style 572

MLA Style 572

In-Text Citation—MLA Style 572
 List of Works Cited—MLA Style 573

APPENDIX C

Correction Symbols 575

Content and Style 575
Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 576
Proofreading Marks 577

Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 578

Diagnostic Test of English Skills 578
Assessment of English Skills 580

Essentials of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 580**1.0 Grammar 580**

- 1.1 Nouns 580
- 1.2 Pronouns 582
- 1.3 Verbs 583
- 1.4 Adjectives 587
- 1.5 Adverbs 588
- 1.6 Other Parts of Speech 589
- 1.7 Sentences 590

2.0 Punctuation 593

- 2.1 Periods 593
- 2.2 Question Marks 593
- 2.3 Exclamation Points 594
- 2.4 Semicolons 594
- 2.5 Colons 594
- 2.6 Commas 594
- 2.7 Dashes 596
- 2.8 Hyphens 596
- 2.9 Apostrophes 596
- 2.10 Quotation Marks 597
- 2.11 Parentheses and Brackets 597
- 2.12 Ellipses 597

3.0 Mechanics 598

- 3.1 Capitalization 598
- 3.2 Underscores and Italics 599
- 3.3 Abbreviations 600
- 3.4 Numbers 600
- 3.5 Word Division 601

4.0 Vocabulary 601

- 4.1 Frequently Confused Words 601
- 4.2 Frequently Misused Words 602
- 4.3 Frequently Misspelled Words 603
- 4.4 Transitional Words and Phrases 604

Answer Keys 606**Brand, Organization, Name,
and Website Index 610****Subject Index 613**

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Preface

Major Changes and Improvements in this Edition

Bovée and Thill texts have long set the benchmark in this field for rigorous, high-value revisions that make sure instructors and students have the most comprehensive, realistic, and contemporary materials available. In keeping with that standard, the eleventh edition of *Excellence in Business Communication* offers numerous, changes, additions, and improvements.

SIGNIFICANT CONTENT ADDITIONS AND UPGRADES

The following sections are all new, updated with important new material, or streamlined for more efficient coverage:

- *Communication Is Important to Your Career* (in Chapter 1)
- *Communicating as a Professional* (in Chapter 1)
- *The Art of Professionalism: Maintaining a Confident, Positive Outlook* (highlight box in Chapter 1)
- *On the Job: Communicating at Cemex* (in Chapter 2)
- *Putting Meeting Results to Productive Use* (in Chapter 2)
- *Business Etiquette in the Workplace* (in Chapter 2)
- *Business Etiquette in Social Settings* (in Chapter 2)
- *Business Etiquette Online* (in Chapter 2)
- *On the Job: Communicating at EY* (in Chapter 3)
- *Gender Differences* (in Chapter 3)
- *Electronic Media* (in Chapter 4)
- *On the Job: Communicating at She Takes on the World* (in Chapter 5)
- *Using a Conversational Tone* (in Chapter 5)
- *The Art of Professionalism: Being Dependable and Accountable* (highlight box in Chapter 5)
- *Electronic and Social Media for Business Communication* (in Chapter 7)
- *On the Job: Communicating at Starbucks* (in Chapter 7)
- *Social Networks* (in Chapter 7)
- *Information and Media Sharing Sites* (in Chapter 7)
- *Content Curation Sites* (in Chapter 7)
- *Writing Email Messages (use of emoticons)* (in Chapter 7)
- *Microblogging* (in Chapter 7)
- *Providing Recommendations and References* (in Chapter 8)
- *Fostering Goodwill* (in Chapter 8)
- *Offering Condolences* (in Chapter 8)
- *Practicing Ethical Communication: The Deceptive Soft Sell* (highlight box in Chapter 9)
- *Giving Negative Performance Reviews* (in Chapter 9)
- *Developing Marketing and Sales Messages* (in Chapter 10; entire section compressed to allow more room for coverage of persuasive business messages)
- *Practicing Ethical Communication: Pushing the Limits of Credibility* (highlight box in Chapter 10)
- *Avoiding Common Mistakes in Persuasive Communication* (in Chapter 10)
- *Evaluating Sources* (in Chapter 11)
- *Analyzing Data* (in Chapter 11)

- *Search Tips* (in Chapter 11)
- *Identifying Points to Illustrate* (in Chapter 12)
- *Infographics* (in Chapter 12)
- *Video* (in Chapter 12)
- *Advantages and Disadvantages of Structured Slides* (in Chapter 14)
- *Advantages and Disadvantages of Free-Form Slides* (in Chapter 14)
- *The Art of Professionalism: Being a Team Player* (highlight box in Chapter 14)
- *Designing Effective Slides* (in Chapter 14)
- *Planning Your Résumé* (in Chapter 15)
- *Finding the Ideal Opportunity in Today's Job Market* (in Chapter 15)
- *The Art of Professionalism: Striving to Excel* (highlight box in Chapter 15)
- *Considering Photos, Videos, Presentations, and Infographics* (in Chapter 15)
- *Motivating Action* (in Chapter 16, regarding application letters)
- *Follow-Up Message* (in Chapter 16, formerly titled *Thank You Messages*)

NEW FIGURES IN THE ELEVENTH EDITION

Providing students with an array of carefully chosen and crafted examples is one of the most important functions of a business communication textbook. The eleventh edition offers more than 70 new figures, including many annotated model documents and a number of new before/after pairs that demonstrate how to fix specific problem areas in a message. Here are the new figures in this edition:

Chapter	Figure	Title	Before/After Pair	Annotated Model Document	Real Company
1	1	Sharing Information			
1	2	Ineffective and Effective Business Communication	X	X	
1	4	A Model of the Communication Process			
2	2	Collaboration Technologies			
2	4	Typical Meeting Agenda			
2	5	Capturing Key Decisions and Discoveries from a Meeting			X
3	3a	Intercultural Business Letter: Ineffective Original Draft	X	X	
3	3b	Intercultural Business Letter: First Revision	X	X	
3	3c	Intercultural Business Letter: Final Revision		X	
3	3d	Intercultural Business Letter: Translated			
3	4	Writing for Intercultural Audiences	X	X	
4	3	Predicting the Effects of Audience Composition			
4	4	Media Choices			X
4	5	Visual Media			X
4	7	Limiting the Scope of a Message		X	X
4	9	Organizing Your Thoughts with a Clear Outline		X	
4	10	Improving the Organization of a Message	X	X	
4	11	Storytelling as a Way to Organize Messages		X	X
5	1	Fostering a Positive Relationship with an Audience		X	X
5	2	Building Credibility		X	X
5	5	Topic Sentences		X	X
6	4	Comments Attached to a PDF File		X	

Chapter	Figure	Title	Before/After Pair	Annotated Model Document	Real Company
6	5	Designing for Readability		X	X
6	6	Multimedia Tools			
7	2	Compositional Modes for Electronic Media		X	X
7	3	Business Communication on Social Networks		X	X
7	4	Community Q&A Sites			X
7	7	Effective Business Blogging		X	X
8	4	Responding to a Claim When the Customer Is at Fault	X	X	
8	6	Sharing Routine Information		X	X
8	7	Social Media News Release		X	X
9	1	Comparing the Indirect and Direct Approaches for Negative Messages			
9	2	Choosing the Direct or Indirect Approach			
9	3	Meeting Audience Needs in a Direct-Approach Message		X	X
9	6	Message to Refuse a Claim	X	X	
9	7	Internal Message Providing Bad News About Company Operations	X	X	
10	2	The AIDA Model for Persuasive Messages			
10	3	Balancing Logical and Emotional Appeals			
10	4	Persuasive Argumentation	X	X	
10	6	Persuasive Messages in Social Media		X	X
11	6	Summarizing Effectively			
11	9	Effective Informational Report (Excerpt)		X	X
11	10	Information Architecture			X
12	4	Wikis at IBM			X
12	11b	Data Visualization: Gephi Network Map			X
12	14	Geographic Information Systems			X
12	16a	Infographics: Stylized Data Charts			
12	16b	Infographics: Data Narration			X
13	2	Executive Summary		X	X
14	10	Designing Effective Visuals: Selected Slides		X	
15	1	Writing the Story of You		X	
15	3	Crafting Your Résumé, Scenario 1: Positioning Yourself for an Ideal Opportunity		X	
15	4	Crafting Your Résumé, Scenario 2: Reposi- tioning Yourself for Available Opportunities		X	
15	5	Crafting Your Résumé, Scenario 3: Posi- tioning Yourself for More Responsibility		X	
15	7	Social Media Resume			X
16	2	Unsolicited Application Letter: Ineffective and Effective	X	X	
16	3	Job Task Simulations			X
16	6	Follow-up Message: Ineffective and Effective	X	X	
16	7	Request for a Time Extension Ineffective and Effective	X	X	

Why This Book Is the Right Choice for Your Course

- Market-leading innovation.** For more than three decades, Bovée and Thill texts have pioneered coverage of emerging trends and their implications for business communication. When some other textbooks were just starting to mention innovations such as blogging, for example, Bovée and Thill had already progressed to the profound changes these tools have brought about, with unique content such as the social communication model and the nine compositional modes for electronic communication.
- Up-to-date coverage that reflects today’s business communication practices and employer expectations.** Technology, globalization, and other forces have dramatically changed the practice of business communication in recent years, even to the point of altering how people read and how messages should be constructed. To prepare students for today’s workplace, the business communication course needs to address contemporary skills, issues, and concepts.
- Practical advice informed by deep experience.** Beyond the research and presentation of new ideas and tools, Bovée and Thill are among the most active and widely followed users of social media in the entire field of business communication. They don’t just write about new concepts; they have years of hands-on experience with blogging, content curation, search technologies, and other important tools. They are active participants in more than 45 social media sites.
- Engaging coverage of real companies and contemporary issues in business communication.** From chapter-opening vignettes to model documents to student activities, Bovée and Thill texts emphasize companies and issues students already know about or are likely to find intriguing. For example, cases in recent editions have addressed location-based social networking (the business communication implications of the FourSquare game app), employer restrictions on social media, and the use of Twitter in the job search process.
- Integrated learning.** In sharp contrast to texts that tack on coverage of social media and other new topics, Bovée and Thill continually revise their coverage to fully

integrate the skills and issues that are important in today’s workplace. This integration is carried through chapter-opening vignettes, chapter content, model documents, end-of-chapter questions, communication cases, and test banks to make sure students practice the skills you’ll need, not just read about them in some anecdotal fashion.

- Added value with unique, free resources for instructors and students.** From the groundbreaking Real-Time Updates to *Business Communication Headline News* to videos specially prepared for instructors, Bovée and Thill offer an unmatched array of free resources to enhance the classroom experience and keep course content fresh.



Links to an article in a respected business magazine

Links to a seminar invitation on Deloitte’s website

Links to an article and information about the firm’s consulting services in this market

Links to a video on YouTube

Links to a video on Deloitte’s website

Links to an article and information about the firm’s consulting services in this market

Links to a report on Deloitte’s website

Links to a conference invitation on Deloitte’s website

In-Depth Coverage of Electronic and Social Media Topics in the Eleventh Edition

Excellence in Business Communication offers in-depth coverage of new and emerging media skills and concepts. These tables show where you can find major areas of coverage, as well as chapter-opening vignettes, figures, and communication cases that expose students to professional use of social media and other new technologies.

Major Coverage of Electronic and Social Media

Topic	Page
Blogging and microblogging	200–206
Collaboration technologies	39–40
Community Q&A websites	194
Compositional modes for electronic media	184–187
Content curation	196
Creating content for social media	187
Data visualization	380–381
Electronic and social media options	184
Email	194–197
Infographics	384–385
Instant messaging and text messaging	198–200
Interview media	525–526
Meeting technologies	45–47
Online and social media résumés	503–504
Online etiquette	54–55
Podcasting	206–207
Social communication model	14–16
Social networking	40–41, 188–193
Twitter-enabled backchannel in presentations	467
User-generated content sites	193
Web writing	343–345, 371–372
Wikis	372–373
Writing persuasive messages for social media	305–306

Chapter-Opening Vignettes That Highlight Social Media and Other Innovative Technologies

Company	Media	Page
Toyota	Social networking, user-generated content	2
Cemex	Online collaboration and social networking system	34
H&R Block	Online video, social media	94
She Takes on the World	Blogging	122
Jefferson Rabb	Interactive websites	152
Starbucks	Social media	182
GetSatisfaction	Community Q&A websites	221
Chargify	Blogging	251
CafeMom	Social networking	290
MyCityWay	Mobile apps	322
ATK	Workforce analytics and applicant tracking systems	480

**New Media Figures and Model Documents
(not including email or IM)**

Title	Figure	Page
Business Communication: 1.0 Versus 2.0	1.6	15
Collaboration Technologies	2.2	40
Shared Workspaces	2.3	41
Capturing Key Decisions and Discoveries from a Meeting	2.5	45
Virtual Meetings	2.6	46
Telepresence	2.7	46
Media Choices	4.4	102
Visual Media	4.5	103
Storytelling as a Way to Organize Messages	4.11	112
Fostering a Positive Relationship with an Audience	5.1	124
Building Credibility	5.2	127
Topic Sentences	5.5	139
Designing for Readability	6.5	165
Multimedia Tools	6.6	168
The Rise and Reach of Social Media	7.1	185
Compositional Modes in Electronic and Social Media	7.2	186
Business Communication on Social Networks	7.3	188
Community Q&A Sites	7.4	194
Effective Business Blogging	7.7	202
The Podcasting Process	7.8	207
Sharing Routine Information	8.6	235
Social Media News Release	8.7	237
Information Architecture	11.10	345
Wikis at IBM	12.4	372
Data Visualization	12.12	381
Geographic Information Systems	12.14	383
Interactive, Animated Diagrams	12.15	384
Infographics	12.16	385
Executive Summary	13.2	410
Infographic Résumé	15.6	502
Social Media Résumé	15.7	504
Job Task Simulations	16.3	526
Interview Simulators	16.4	530

**Communication Cases Involving Social/New Media
(not including email or IM)**

Case	Media	Page
7.23	Social networking	215
7.24	Social networking	215
7.25	Social networking	215
7.26	Community Q&A websites	215
7.33	Blogging	217

**Communication Cases Involving Social/New Media
(not including email or IM) (Continued)**


Case	Media	Page
7.34	Blogging	217
7.35	Blogging	217
7.36	Blogging	217
7.37	Blogging	217
7.38	Microblogging	217
7.39	Microblogging	218
7.40	Podcasting	218
7.41	Podcasting	218
7.42	Podcasting	218
8.20	Blogging	245
8.22	Microblogging	246
8.29	Podcasting	247
8.30	Blogging	247
8.32	Microblogging	248
8.33	Blogging	248
8.35	Social networking	248
8.36	Web writing	248
8.37	Blogging	249
8.38	Social networking	249
9.24	Microblogging	285
9.28	Podcasting	286
9.30	Blogging	286
9.31	Microblogging	286
9.32	Blogging	287
9.33	Blogging	287
9.34	Blogging	287
9.35	Social networking	287
9.36	Social networking	287
10.21	Microblogging	315
10.22	Blogging	315
10.29	Blogging	316
10.34	Web writing	317
10.35	Web writing	318
10.36	Web writing	318
10.37	Blogging	318
10.38	Social networking	318
10.39	Social networking	318
10.40	Microblogging	319
12.29	Wikis	397
12.30	Web writing	397
12.31	Web writing	398
15.25	Video	514
16.21	Microblogging	548
16.23	Blogging	549

Extending the Value of Your Textbook with Free Multimedia Content

Excellence in Business Communication's unique Real-Time Updates system automatically provides weekly content updates, including interactive websites, podcasts, PowerPoint presentations, online videos, PDF files, infographics, and articles. You can subscribe to updates chapter by chapter, so you get only the material that applies to the chapter you are studying. You can access Real-Time Updates by visiting <http://real-timeupdates.com/ebc11>.

 **REAL-TIME UPDATES**
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

Twelve reasons why talking can be better than texting	17
Why saying “thank you” is good for you, too	55
Understand the difference between translation and localization	84
Need a creative spark?	113
Building credibility online	128
Take your communication skills from good to great	131
Eighteen online resources that can improve your writing	136
Improve your document designs by learning the fundamentals of typography	166
Thirty-five tips from new-media expert Brian Solis	189
Stay on top of new terminology in social media	192
Putting Pinterest to work in business communication	193
Legal advice for every blogger	204
Simple rules for writing effective thank-you notes	238
Using stories to persuade	297
Persuasive messages: 20 tips for success	303
Inspire your presentations with advice from these bloggers	460

 **REAL-TIME UPDATES**
LEARN MORE BY LISTENING TO THIS PODCAST

How to keep small battles from escalating into big ones	38
How to share your ideas in a meeting	44
Résumé advice from a PR insider	495
Expert tips for successful phone interviews	525

 **REAL-TIME UPDATES**
LEARN MORE BY WATCHING THIS VIDEO

Train yourself to listen more effectively	47
Learn why listening is a survival skill for leaders	47
Find out why email starts fights—and how to avoid them	195
Get expert tips on writing (or requesting) a letter of recommendation	233
Crisis communication and social media	268
Positive ways to engage when you pick up negative social commentary	269
Persuasion skills for every business professional	294
Quick tips for evaluating the research quality of a website	330
Dealing with the Difficult Four	447
How to establish an emotional connection with any audience	451
Get a quick video tour of Garr Reynolds’s <i>Presentation Zen</i>	455
Turn your presentation into a video	461
The quiet person’s guide to becoming a better public speaker	466
Maximize the rewards of the backchannel and minimize the risks	467
Learn to use LinkedIn’s résumé builder	490
Video interviewing on Skype	525
Stay calm by pressing your “panic reset button”	536

 **REAL-TIME UPDATES**
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS PDF

Dig deep into audience needs with this planning tool	98
Get detailed advice on using bias-free language	127
The right way to ask for recommendations on LinkedIn	225

 **REAL-TIME UPDATES**
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS INFOGRAPHIC

See how small businesses are using social media	15
Seven common hand gestures that will stir up trouble in other cultures	72
Create compelling content when you’re out of ideas	187
See why the social approach is revolutionizing routine customer communication	230
See how expensive poor customer service really is	257
Decide how to respond to online reputation attacks	271
The color of persuasion	305
See how an applicant tracking system handles your résumé	491
Get a quick reminder of the key steps in preparing for an interview	532

 **REAL-TIME UPDATES**
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Check Out the Cutting Edge of Business Communication	4
Social media disclosure guidelines that ensure transparency	22
See the newest designs from some of the brightest minds in typography	167
Learn from the best social media bloggers in the business	183
Innovative social media marketing	184
Expert advice on choosing the best online search tools	336
Try these 100 serious search tools	336
Get to the CORE of online research	338
Learn to use Google more effectively	338
Step-by-step advice for developing a successful business plan	342
Crafting your “wow” statement	342
Get practical advice on developing research reports	405
Follow these people to a new career	486
See the cutting edge of creative résumé design	487
Converting your résumé to a CV	488
Find the keywords that will light up your résumé	492
Find inspiration in these creative résumés	500

 **REAL-TIME UPDATES**
LEARN MORE BY WATCHING THIS PRESENTATION

Tips for avoiding ethical problems with social media	25
Smart advice for brainstorming sessions	106
Get helpful tips on creating an outline for any project	109
Practical advice for thorough proofreading	171
Need clarification about plagiarism?	363
The ten worst mistakes to make in a business plan	408



REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS INTERACTIVE WEBSITE

- Check your cultural awareness 77
- Mine the web to piece together stories on any topic 112
- Grammar questions? Click here for help 132
- How much are you worth? 522
- Prepare for your next interview with these Pinterest pins 533



REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY EXPLORING THIS WEBSITE

- Data visualization gateway: A comprehensive collection for business communicators 380
- Ten tools for creating infographics 384
- Great advice for getting started in digital video 386

1 Read messages from the authors and access special assignment materials and "Learn More" media items.

2 Click on any chapter to see the updates and media items for that chapter.

3 Scan headlines and click on any item of interest to read the article or download the media item. Every item is personally selected by the authors to complement the text and support in-class activities.

4 Media items are categorized by type so you can quickly find podcasts, videos, PowerPoints, and more.

5 Subscribe via RSS to individual chapters to get updates automatically for the chapter you're currently studying.

UNMATCHED COVERAGE OF ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Bovée and Thill textbooks continue to lead the field with unmatched coverage of communication technologies, reflecting the expectations and opportunities in today's workplace:

- Applicant tracking systems
- Assistive technologies
- Automated reputation analysis
- Avatars
- Backchannel
- Blogs
- Cloud computing
- Clustering engines
- Community Q&A websites
- Computer animation
- Content curation
- Crowdsourcing
- Data visualization
- Electronic documents
- Electronic forms
- Electronic presentations
- Electronic résumé production
- Electronic whiteboards
- Email
- Email hygiene
- Emoticons
- Enterprise instant messaging
- E-portfolios
- Extranets
- Gamification
- Geographic information systems
- Graphics software
- Groupware and shared online workspaces
- Infographics
- Information architecture
- Instant messaging
- Intellectual property rights
- Interactivity
- Internet telephony (Skype)
- Interview simulators
- Intranets
- Knowledge management systems
- Lifestreaming
- Linked and embedded documents
- Location-based social networking
- Microblogs
- Mobile business apps
- Multimedia documents
- Multimedia presentations
- Multimedia résumés
- Newsfeeds
- Online brainstorming systems
- Online research techniques
- Online survey tools
- Online video
- Podcasts
- PowerPoint animation
- Really Simple Syndication (RSS)
- Screencasts
- Search and metasearch engines
- Search engine optimization (SEO)
- Security and privacy concerns in electronic media
- Sentiment analysis
- Social bookmarking
- Social commerce
- Social media
- Social media résumés
- Social networking
- Tagging
- Templates and style sheets
- Teleconferencing and telepresence
- Text messaging
- Translation software
- User-generated content
- Video interviews
- Video résumés
- Videoconferencing
- Virtual communities
- Virtual meetings
- Virtual whiteboards
- Web 2.0
- Web content management systems
- Web directories
- Webcasts
- Website accessibility
- Wikis
- Workforce analytics

What Is the Single Most Important Step You Can Take to Enhance Your Career Prospects?

No matter what profession you want to pursue, the ability to communicate will be an essential skill—and a skill that employers expect you to have when you enter the workforce. This course introduces you to the fundamental principles of business communication and gives you the opportunity to develop your communication skills. You'll discover how business communication differs from personal and social communication, and you'll see how today's companies are using blogs, social networks, podcasts, virtual worlds, wikis, and other technologies. You'll learn a simple three-step writing process that works for all types of writing and speaking projects, both in college and on the job.

Along the way, you'll gain valuable insights into ethics, etiquette, listening, teamwork, and nonverbal communication. Plus, you'll learn effective strategies for the many types of communication challenges you'll face on the job, from routine messages about transactions to complex reports and websites.

Colleges and universities vary in the prerequisites established for the business communication course, but we advise taking at least one course in English composition before enrolling in this class. Some coursework in business studies will also give you a better perspective on communication challenges in the workplace. However, we have taken special care not to assume any in-depth business experience, so you can use *Excellence in Business Communication* successfully even if you have limited on-the-job experience or business coursework.

HOW THIS COURSE WILL HELP YOU

Few courses can offer the three-for-the-price-of-one value you get from a business communication class. Check out these benefits:

- **In your other classes.** The communication skills you learn in this class can help you in every other course you take in college. From simple homework assignments to complicated team projects to class presentations, you'll be able to communicate more effectively with less time and effort.
- **During your job search.** You can reduce the stress of searching for a job and stand out from the competition. As you'll see in Chapters 15 and 16, every activity in the job search process relies on communication. The better you can communicate, the more successful you'll be at landing interesting and rewarding work.
- **On the job.** After you get that great job, the time and energy you have invested in this course will continue to yield benefits year after year. As you tackle each project and every new challenge, influential company leaders—the people who decide how quickly you'll get promoted and how much you'll earn—will be paying close attention to how well you communicate. They will observe your interactions with colleagues, customers, and business partners. They'll take note of how well you can collect data, find the essential ideas buried under mountains of information, and convey those points to other people. They'll observe your ability to adapt to different audiences and circumstances. They'll be watching when you encounter tough situations that require careful attention to ethics and etiquette. The good news: Every insight you gain and every skill you develop in this course will help you shine in your career.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

Although this course explores a wide range of message types and appears to cover quite a lot of territory, the underlying structure is actually rather simple. You'll learn a few basic concepts, identify some key skills to use and procedures to follow, and then practice, practice, practice. Whether you're writing a blog posting in response to one of the real-company cases or drafting your own résumé, you'll be practicing the same skills again and again.

With feedback and reinforcement from your instructor and your classmates, your confidence will grow and the work will become easier and more enjoyable.

The following sections offer advice on approaching each assignment, using your textbook, and taking advantage of some other helpful resources.

Approaching Each Assignment

In the spirit of practice and improvement, you will have a number of writing (and possibly speaking) assignments throughout this course. These suggestions will help you produce better results with less effort:

- **First, don't panic!** If the thought of writing a report or giving a speech sends a chill up your spine, you're not alone. Everybody feels that way when first learning business communication skills, and even experienced professionals can feel nervous about major projects. Keeping three points in mind will help. First, every project can be broken down into a series of smaller, manageable tasks. Don't let a big project overwhelm you; it's nothing more than a bunch of smaller tasks. Second, remind yourself that you have the skills you need to accomplish each task. As you move through the course, the assignments are carefully designed to match the skills you've developed up to that point. Third, if you feel panic creeping up on you, take a break and regain your perspective.
- **Focus on one task at a time.** A common mistake writers make is trying to organize and express their ideas while simultaneously worrying about audience reactions, grammar, spelling, formatting, page design, and a dozen other factors. Fight the temptation to do everything at once; otherwise, your frustration will soar and your productivity will plummet. In particular, don't worry about grammar, spelling, and word choices during your first draft. Concentrate on the organization of your ideas first, then the way you express those ideas, and then the presentation and production of your messages. Following the three-step writing process is an ideal way to focus on one task at a time in a logical sequence.
- **Give yourself plenty of time.** As with every other school project, putting things off to the last minute creates unnecessary stress. Writing and speaking projects in particular are much easier if you tackle them in small stages with breaks in between, rather than trying to get everything done in one frantic blast. Moreover, there will be instances when you simply get stuck on a project, and the best thing to do is walk away and give your mind a break. If you allow room for breaks in your schedule, you'll minimize the frustration and spend less time overall on your homework, too.
- **Step back and assess each project before you start.** The writing and speaking projects you'll have in this course cover a wide range of communication scenarios, and it's essential that you adapt your approach to each new challenge. Resist the urge to dive in and start writing without a plan. Ponder the assignment for a while, consider the various approaches you might take, and think carefully about your objectives before you start writing. Nothing is more frustrating than getting stuck halfway through a project because you're not sure what you're trying to say or you've wandered off track. Spend some extra time planning, and you'll spend a lot less time writing.
- **Use the three-step writing process.** Planning is the first step in the three-step writing process, which you'll learn about in Chapter 4 and use throughout the course. This process has been developed and refined by professional writers with decades of experience and thousands of projects ranging from short blog posts to 500-page textbooks. It works, so take advantage of it.
- **Learn from the examples and model documents.** This textbook offers dozens of realistic examples of business messages, many with notes along the sides that explain strong and weak points. Study these and any other examples your instructor provides. Learn what works and what doesn't, then apply these lessons to your own writing.
- **Learn from experience.** Finally, learn from the feedback you get from your instructor and from other students. Don't take the criticism personally; your instructor and your classmates are commenting about the work, not about you. View every bit of feedback as an opportunity to improve.

Using This Textbook Package

This book and its accompanying online resources introduce you to the key concepts in business communication while helping you develop essential skills. As you read each chapter, start by studying the learning objectives. They will help you identify the most important concepts in the chapter and give you a feel for what you'll be learning. Following the learning objectives, the "On the Job" vignette features a successful professional role model who uses the same skills you will be learning in the chapter.

As you work your way through the chapter, compare the advice given with the various examples, both the brief in-text examples and the stand-alone model documents. Also, keep an eye out for the Real-Time Updates elements in each chapter. The authors have selected these videos, podcasts, presentations, and other online media to provide informative and entertaining enhancements to the text material.

At the end of each chapter, you'll revisit the "On the Job" story from the beginning of the chapter and imagine yourself in the role of a business professional solving four realistic communication dilemmas. Next, the "Learning Objectives Checkup" gives you the chance to quickly verify your grasp of important concepts. Each chapter includes a variety of questions and activities that help you gauge how well you've learned the material and are able to apply it to realistic business scenarios. Several chapters have activities with downloadable media such as podcasts; if your instructor assigns these, follow the instructions in the text to locate the correct files.

Several chapters have activities with downloadable media such as presentations and podcasts or the use of the Bovée-Thill wiki simulator. If your instructor assigns these activities, follow the instructions in the text to locate the correct online files. And if you'd like some help getting started with Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn, we have created screencasts with helpful advice on these topics.

In addition to the 16 chapters of the text itself, here are some special features that will help you succeed in the course and on the job:

- **Prologue: Building a Career with Your Communication Skills.** This section (immediately following this Preface) helps you understand today's dynamic workplace, the steps you can take to adapt to the job market, and the importance of creating an employment portfolio and building your personal brand.
- **Handbook.** The Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage (see page 578) serves as a convenient reference of essential business English.
- **Real-Time Updates.** You can use this unique newsfeed service to make sure you're always kept up to date on important topics. Plus, at strategic points in every chapter, you will be directed to the Real-Time Updates website to get the latest information about specific subjects. To sign up, visit <http://real-timeupdates.com/ebc11>.
- **Business Communication Web Search.** With our unique web search approach, you can quickly access more than 325 search engines. The tool uses a simple and intuitive interface engineered to help you find precisely what you want, whether it's PowerPoint files, PDF files, Microsoft Word documents, Excel files, videos, podcasts, videos, or social bookmarks. Check it out at <http://websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com>.
- **CourseSmart eTextbooks.** CourseSmart eTextbooks were developed for students looking to save on required or recommended textbooks. Students simply select their eText by title or author and purchase immediate access to the content for the duration of the course, using any major credit card. With a CourseSmart eText, students can search for specific keywords or page numbers, take notes online, print out reading assignments that incorporate lecture notes, and bookmark important passages for later review. For more information or to purchase a CourseSmart eTextbook, visit www.coursesmart.com.

About the Authors

Courtland L. Bovée and John V. Thill have been leading textbook authors for more than two decades, introducing millions of students to the fields of business and business communication. Their award-winning texts are distinguished by proven pedagogical features, extensive selections of contemporary case studies, hundreds of real-life examples, engaging writing, thorough research, and the unique integration of print and electronic resources. Each new edition reflects the authors' commitment to continuous refinement and improvement, particularly in terms of modeling the latest practices in business and the use of technology.

Professor Bovée has 22 years of teaching experience at Grossmont College in San Diego, where he has received teaching honors and was accorded that institution's C. Allen Paul Distinguished Chair. Mr. Thill is a prominent communications consultant who has worked with organizations ranging from Fortune 500 multinationals to entrepreneurial startups. He formerly held positions with Pacific Bell and Texaco.

Courtland Bovée and John Thill were recently awarded proclamations from the Governor of Massachusetts for their lifelong contributions to education and for their commitment to the summer youth baseball program that is sponsored by the Boston Red Sox.



Acknowledgments

The eleventh edition of *Excellence in Business Communication* reflects the professional experience of a large team of contributors and advisors. We express our thanks to the many individuals whose valuable suggestions and constructive comments influenced the success of this book.

REVIEWERS OF PREVIOUS EDITIONS

Thank you to the following professors: Lydia E. Anderson, *Fresno City College*; Victoria Austin, *Las Positas College*; Faridah Awang, *Eastern Kentucky University*; Jeanette Baldrige, *University of Maine at Augusta*; Diana Baran, *Henry Ford Community College*; JoAnne Barbieri, *Atlantic Cape Community College*; Kristina Beckman, *John Jay College*; Judy Bello, *Lander University*; Carol Bibby, *Triton College*; Nancy Bizal, *University of Southern Indiana*; Yvonne Block, *College of Lake County*; Edna Boroski, *Trident Technical College*; Nelvia M. Brady, *Trinity Christian College*; Arlene Broeker, *Lincoln University*; David Brooks, *Indiana University Southeast*; Carol Brown, *South Puget Sound Community College*; Domenic Bruni, *University of Wisconsin*; Jeff Bruns, *Bacone College*; Gertrude L. Burge, *University of Nebraska*; Sharon Burton, *Brookhaven College*; Robert Cabral, *Oxnard College*; Dorothy Campbell, *Brevard Community College*; Linda Carr, *University of West Alabama*; Alvaro Carreras, Jr., *Florida International University*; Sharon Carson, *St. Philip's College*; Rick Carter, *Seattle University*; Dacia Charlesworth, *Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne*; Jean Chenu, *Genesee Community College*; Connie Clark, *Lane Community College*; Alvin Clarke, *Iowa State University*; Jerrie Cleaver, *Central Texas College*; Clare Coleman, *Temple University*; Michael P. Collins, *Northern Arizona University*; M. Cotton, *North Central Missouri College*; Pat Cowherd, *Campbellsville University*; Pat Cuchens, *University of Houston–Clear Lake*; Walt Dabek, *Post University*; Cathy Daly, *California State University–Sacramento*; Linda Davis, *Copiah–Lincoln Community College*; Christine R. Day, *Eastern Michigan University*; Harjit Dosanjh, *North Seattle Community College*; Amy Drees, *Defiance College*; Cynthia Drexel, *Western State College of Colorado*; Lou Dunham, *Spokane Falls Community College*; Donna Everett, *Morehead State University*; Donna Falconer, *Anoka–Ramsey Community College*; Kate Ferguson Marsters, *Gannon University*; Darlynn Fink, *Clarion University of Pennsylvania*; Bobbi Fisher, *University of Nebraska–Omaha*; Laura Fitzwater, *Community College of Philadelphia*; Lynda K. Fuller, *Wilmington University*; Matthew Gainous, *Ogeechee Technical College*; Yolande Gardner, *Lawson State Community College*; Gina Genova, *University of California–Santa Barbara*;

Lonny Gilbert, *Central State University*; Camille Girardi-Levy, *Siena College*; Nancy Goehring, *Monterey Peninsula College*; Dawn Goellner, *Bethel College*; Robert Goldberg, *Prince George's Community College*; Jeffrey Goldberg, *MassBay Community College*; Helen Grattan, *Des Moines Area Community College*; Barbara Grayson, *University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff*; Deborah Griffin, *University of Houston–Clear Lake*; Alice Griswold, *Clarke College*; Bonnie Grossman, *College of Charleston*; Lisa Gueldenzoph, *North Carolina A&T State University*; Wally Guyot, *Fort Hays State University*; Valerie Harrison, *Cuyamaca College*; Tim Hartge, *The University of Michigan–Dearborn*; Richard Heiens, *University of South Carolina–Aiken*; Maureece Heinert, *Sinte Gleska University*; Leighanne Heisel, *University of Missouri–St. Louis*; Gary Helfand, *University of Hawaii–West Oahu*; Cynthia Herrera, *Orlando Culinary Academy*; Kathy Hill, *Sam Houston State University*; Pashia Hogan, *Northeast State Tech Community College*; Sarah Holmes, *New England Institute of Technology*; Ruth Hopkins Zajdel, *Ohio University–Chillicothe*; Sheila Hostetler, *Orange Coast College*; Michael Hricik, *Westmoreland County Community College*; Rebecca Hsiao, *East Los Angeles College*; Mary Ann Hurd, *Sauk Valley Community College*; Pat Hurley, *Leeward Community College*; Harold Hurry, *Sam Houston State University*; Marcia James, *University of Wisconsin–Whitewater*; Frank Jaster, *Tulane University*; Jonatan Jelen, *Parsons The New School For Design*; Irene Joannette Gallio, *Western Nevada Community College*; Edgar Dunson Johnson III, *Augusta State University*; Mark Johnson, *Rhodes State College*; Joanne Kapp, *Siena College*; Jeanette A. Karjala, *Winona State University*; Christy L. Kinnion, *Lenior Community College*; Deborah Kitchin, *City College of San Francisco*; Lisa Kirby, *North Carolina Wesleyan College*; Claudia Kirkpatrick, *Carnegie Mellon University*; Betty Kleen, *Nicholls State University*; Fran Kranz, *Oakland University*; Jana Langemach, *University of Nebraska–Lincoln*; Joan Lantry, *Jefferson Community College*; Kim Laux, *Saginaw Valley State University*; Kathryn J. Lee, *University of Cincinnati*; Anita Leffel, *The University of Texas, San Antonio*; Ruth Levy, *Westchester Community College*; Nancy Linger, *Moraine Park Technical College*; Jere Littlejohn, *University of Mississippi*; Dana Loewy, *California State University–Fullerton*; Jennifer Loney, *Portland State University*; Susan Long, *Portland Community College*; Sue Loomis, *Maine Maritime Academy*; Thomas Lowderbaugh, *University of Maryland–College Park*; Jayne Lowery, *Jackson State Community College*; Lloyd Matzner, *University of Houston–Downtown*; Ron McNeel, *New Mexico State University at Alamogordo*; Dr. Bill McPherson, *Indiana University of Pennsylvania*; Phyllis Mercer, *Texas Woman's University*; Donna Meyerholz, *Trinidad State Junior College*; Annie Laurie I. Meyers, *Northampton Community College*; Catherine “Kay” Michael, *St. Edward's University*; Kathleen Miller, *University of Delaware*; Gay Mills, *Amarillo College*; Julie Mullis, *Wilkes Community College*; Pamela Mulvey, *Olney Central College*; Jimidene Murphey, *Clarendon College*; Cindy Murphy, *Southeastern Community College*; Dipali Murti-Hali, *California State University–Stanislaus*; Shelley Myatt, *University of Central Oklahoma*; Cora Newcomb, *Technical College of the Lowcountry*; Ron Newman, *Crafton Hills College*; Linda Nitsch, *Chadron State College*; Leah Noonan, *Laramie County Community College*; Mabry O'Donnell, *Marietta College*; Diana Oltman, *Central Washington University*; Ranu Paik, *Santa Monica College*; Lauren Paisley, *Genesee Community College*; Patricia Palermo, *Drew University*; John Parrish, *Tarrant County College*; Diane Paul, *TVI Community College*; John T. Pauli, *University of Alaska–Anchorage*; Michael Pennell, *University of Rhode Island*; Sylvia Beaver Perez, *Nyack College*; Melinda Phillabaum, *Indiana University*; Ralph Phillips, *Geneva College*; Laura Pohopien, *Cal Poly Pomona*; Diane Powell, *Utah Valley State College*; Christine Pye, *California Lutheran University*; Norma Pygon, *Triton College*; Dave Rambow, *Wayland Baptist University*; Richard David Ramsey, *Southeastern Louisiana University*; Charles Riley, *Tarrant County College–Northwest Campus*; Jim Rucker, *Fort Hays State University*; Dr. Suzan Russell, *Lehman College*; Danielle Scane, *Orange Coast College*; Calvin Scheidt, *Tidewater Community College*; Nancy Schneider, *University of Maine at Augusta*; Brian Sheridan, *Mercyhurst College*; Melinda Shirey, *Fresno City College*; Bob Shirilla, *Colorado State University*; Joyce Simmons, *Florida State University*; Gordon J. Simpson, *SUNY Cobleskill*; Peggy Simpson, *Dominican University*; Eunice Smith, *Bismarck State College*; Jeff Smith, *University of Southern California*; Lorraine M. Smith, *Fresno City College*; Harvey Solganick, *LeTourneau University–Dallas campus*; Stephen Soucy, *Santa Monica*

College; Linda Spargo, *University of Mississippi*; W. Dees Stallings, *Park University*; Sally Stanton, *University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*; Mark Steinbach, *Austin Community College*; Angelique Stevens, *Monroe Community College*; Steven Stovall, *Wilmington College*; Alden Talbot, *Weber State University*; Michele Taylor, *Ogeechee Technical College*; Wilma Thomason, *Mid-South Community College*; Ed Thompson, *Jefferson Community College*; Ann E. Tippett, *Monroe Community College*; Lori Townsend, *Niagara County Community College*; Lani Uyeno, *Leeward Community College*; Wendy Van Hatten, *Western Iowa Tech Community College*; Jay Wagers, *Richmond Community College*; John Waltman, *Eastern Michigan University*; Jie Wang, *University of Illinois at Chicago*; Chris Ward, *The University of Findlay*; Dorothy Warren, *Middle Tennessee State University*; Glenda Waterman, *Concordia University*; Kellie Welch, *Jefferson Community College*; Bradley S. Wesner, *Nova Southeastern University*; Mathew Williams, *Clover Park Technical College*; Beth Williams, *Stark State College of Technology*; Brian Wilson, *College of Marin*; and Sandra D. Young, *Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College*.

REVIEWERS OF DOCUMENT MAKEOVERS

We sincerely thank the following reviewers for their assistance with the Document Makeover feature: Lisa Barley, *Eastern Michigan University*; Marcia Bordman, *Gallaudet University*; Jean Bush-Bacelis, *Eastern Michigan University*; Bobbye Davis, *Southern Louisiana University*; Cynthia Drexel, *Western State College of Colorado*; Kenneth Gibbs, *Worcester State College*; Ellen Leathers, *Bradley University*; Diana McKowen, *Indiana University*; Bobbie Nicholson, *Mars Hill College*; Andrew Smith, *Holyoke Community College*; Jay Stubblefield, *North Carolina Wesleyan College*; Dawn Wallace, *Southeastern Louisiana University*.

REVIEWERS OF MODEL DOCUMENTS

The many model documents that accompany the text received invaluable review from Dacia Charlesworth, *Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne*; Diane Todd Bucci, *Robert Morris University*; Estelle Kochis, *Suffolk County Community College*; Sherry Robertson, *Arizona State University*; Nancy Goehring, *Monterey Peninsula College*; James Hatfield, *Florida Community College at Jacksonville*; Avon Crismore, *Indiana University*.

PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to our many friends, acquaintances, and business associates who provided materials or agreed to be interviewed so that we could bring the real world into the classroom.

A very special acknowledgment goes to George Dovel, whose superb writing skills, distinguished background, and wealth of business experience assured this project of clarity and completeness. Also, recognition and thanks go to Jackie Estrada for her outstanding skills and excellent attention to details. Her creation of the “Peak Performance Grammar and Mechanics” material is especially noteworthy.

We also feel it is important to acknowledge and thank the Association for Business Communication, an organization whose meetings and publications provide a valuable forum for the exchange of ideas and for professional growth.

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Prologue

BUILDING A CAREER WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Using This Course to Help Launch Your Career

This course will help you develop vital communication skills you'll use throughout your career—and those skills can help you launch an interesting and rewarding career, too. This brief prologue sets the stage by helping you understand today's dynamic workplace, the steps you can take to adapt to the job market, and the importance of creating an employment portfolio and building your personal brand. Take a few minutes to read it while you think about the career you hope to create for yourself.

Understanding the Changing World of Work

There is no disguising the fact that you are entering a tough job market, but there are several reasons for at least some hope over the longer term. First, the U.S. economy will recover from the Great Recession, although it's going to take a while before the majority of employers feel confident enough to ramp up hiring significantly. Second, the large demographic bulge of baby boomers is moving into retirement, which should set off a chain reaction of openings from the tops of companies on downward. Third, political and business leaders here and abroad are keenly aware of the problem of unemployment among young adults, both as it affects people looking for work and in the loss of vitality to the economy. For example, programs aimed at helping graduates start companies right out of college, rather than enter the conventional job market, are springing up under government and philanthropic efforts.¹

The ups and downs of the economic cycle are not the only dynamic elements that will affect your career. The nature of employment itself is changing, with a growing number of independent workers and loosely structured *virtual organizations* that engage these workers for individual projects or short-term contracts, rather than hire employees. In fact, one recent study predicted that independent workers will outnumber conventional employees in the United States by 2020.²

This new model of work offers some compelling advantages for workers and companies alike. Companies can lower their fixed costs, adapt more easily to economic fluctuations and competitive moves, and get access to specialized talent for specific project needs.³ Workers can benefit from the freedom to choose the clients and projects that interest them the most, the flexibility to work as much or as little as they want, and (thanks to advances in communication technology) access to compelling work even if they live far from major employment centers such as New York City or California's Silicon Valley.⁴

On the other hand, this new approach also presents some significant challenges for all parties. These flexibilities and freedoms can create more complexity for workers and managers, diminished loyalties on both sides, uncertainty about the future, issues with skill development and training, and problems with accountability and liability.⁵ Many of these concerns involve communication, making solid communication skills more important than ever.

These changes could affect you even if you pursue traditional employment throughout your career. Within organizations, you're likely to work with a combination of "inside" employees and "outside" contractors, which can affect the dynamics of the workplace. And the availability of more independent workers in the talent marketplace gives employers more options and more leverage, so full-time employees may find themselves competing against freelancers, at least indirectly.

As you navigate this uncertain future, keep two vital points in mind. First, don't wait for your career to just happen: Take charge of your career and stay in charge of it. Explore all your options and have a plan—but be prepared to change course as opportunities and threats appear on the horizon. Second, don't count on employers to take care of you. The era of lifetime employment, in which an employee committed to one company for life with the understanding it would return the loyalty, is long gone. From finding opportunities to developing the skills you need to succeed, it's up to you to manage your career and look out for your own best interests.

HOW EMPLOYERS VIEW TODAY'S JOB MARKET

From an employer's perspective, the employment process is always a question of balance. Maintaining a stable workforce can improve nearly every aspect of business performance, yet many employers want the flexibility to shrink and expand payrolls as business conditions change. Employers obviously want to attract the best talent, but the best people are more expensive and more vulnerable to offers from competitors, so there are always financial trade-offs to consider.

Employers also struggle with the ups and downs of the economy. When unemployment is low, the balance of power shifts to employees, and employers have to compete in order to attract and keep top talent. When unemployment is high, the power shifts back to employers, who can afford to be more selective and less accommodating. In other words, pay attention to the economy; at times you can be more aggressive in your demands, but at other times you need to be more accommodating.

Companies view employment as a complex business decision with lots of variables to consider. To make the most of your potential, regardless of the career path you pursue, you need to view employment in the same way.

WHAT EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR IN JOB APPLICANTS

Given the complex forces in the contemporary workplace and the unrelenting pressure of global competition, what are employers looking for in the candidates they hire? The short answer: a lot. Like all "buyers," companies want to get as much as they can for the money they spend. The closer you can present yourself as the ideal candidate, the better your chances of getting a crack at the most exciting opportunities.

Specific expectations vary by profession and position, of course, but virtually all employers look for the following general skills and attributes:⁶

- **Communication skills.** The reason this item is listed first isn't that you're reading a business communication textbook. Communication is listed first because it is far and away the most commonly mentioned skill set when employers are asked about what they look for in employees. Improving your communication skills will help in every aspect of your professional life.
- **Interpersonal and team skills.** You will have many individual responsibilities on the job, but chances are you won't work alone very often. Learn to work with others—and help them succeed as you succeed.
- **Intercultural and international awareness and sensitivity.** Successful employers tend to be responsive to diverse workforces, markets, and communities, and they look for employees with the same outlook.
- **Data collection, analysis, and decision-making skills.** Employers want people who know how to identify information needs, find the necessary data, convert the data into useful knowledge, and make sound decisions.

- **Computer and electronic media skills.** Today's workers need to know how to use common office software and to communicate using a wide range of electronic media.
- **Time and resource management.** If you've had to juggle multiple priorities during college, consider that great training for the business world. Your ability to plan projects and manage the time and resources available to you will make a big difference on the job.
- **Flexibility and adaptability.** Stuff happens, as they say. Employees who can roll with the punches and adapt to changing business priorities and circumstances will go further (and be happier) than employees who resist change.
- **Professionalism.** Professionalism is the quality of performing at the highest possible level and conducting oneself with confidence, purpose, and pride. True professionals strive to excel, continue to hone their skills and build their knowledge, are dependable and accountable, demonstrate a sense of business etiquette, make ethical decisions, show loyalty and commitment, don't give up when things get tough, and maintain a positive outlook.

Unfairly or not, some employers believe many of today's graduates are not ready to enter the workforce, whether they're lacking one or more essential skills or just not being ready to make the transition from student to professional.⁷ You may or may not agree with this assessment, but view it as an opportunity. If you can communicate well, demonstrate an interest in learning how to improve your professional skills, and present yourself as someone who is motivated to make an important contribution to a company, you will stand out from your competition in the job market.

Adapting to Today's Job Market

Adapting to the workplace is a lifelong process of seeking the best fit between what you want to do and what employers (or clients, if you work independently) are willing to pay you to do. It's important to think about what you want to do during the many thousands of hours you will spend working, what you have to offer, and how to make yourself more attractive to employers.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

Economic necessities and the vagaries of the marketplace will influence much of what happens in your career, of course, and you may not always have the opportunity to do the kind of work you would really like to do. Even if you can't get the job you want right now, though, start your job search by examining your values and interests. Doing so will give you a better idea of where you want to be eventually, and you can use those insights to learn and grow your way toward that ideal situation. Consider these questions:

- **What would you like to do every day?** Research occupations that interest you. Find out what people really do every day. Ask friends, relatives, alumni from your school, and contacts in your social networks. Read interviews with people in various professions to get a sense of what their careers are like.
- **How would you like to work?** Consider how much independence you want on the job, how much variety you like, and whether you prefer to work with products, machines, people, ideas, figures, or some combination thereof.
- **How do your financial goals fit with your other priorities?** For instance, many high-paying jobs involve a lot of stress, sacrifices of time with family and friends, and frequent travel or relocation. If location, lifestyle, intriguing work, or other factors are more important to you, you may well have to sacrifice some level of pay to achieve them.
- **Have you established some general career goals?** For example, do you want to pursue a career specialty such as finance or manufacturing, or do you want to gain experience in multiple areas with an eye toward upper management?
- **What sort of corporate culture are you most comfortable with?** Would you be happy in a formal hierarchy with clear reporting relationships? Or do you prefer less structure? Teamwork or individualism? Do you like a competitive environment?

TABLE 1 Career Self-Assessment

Activity or Situation	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	No Preference
1. I want to work independently.				
2. I want variety in my work.				
3. I want to work with people.				
4. I want to work with technology.				
5. I want physical work.				
6. I want mental work.				
7. I want to work for a large organization.				
8. I want to work for a nonprofit organization.				
9. I want to work for a small business.				
10. I want to work for a service business.				
11. I want to start or buy a business someday.				
12. I want regular, predictable work hours.				
13. I want to work in a city location.				
14. I want to work in a small town or suburb.				
15. I want to work in another country.				
16. I want to work outdoors.				
17. I want to work in a structured environment.				
18. I want to avoid risk as much as possible.				
19. I want to enjoy my work, even if that means making less money.				
20. I want to become a high-level corporate manager.				

You might need some time in the workforce to figure out what you really want to do or to work your way into the job you really want, but it's never too early to start thinking about where you want to be. Filling out the assessment in Table 1 might help you get a clearer picture of the nature of work you would like to pursue in your career.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER?

Knowing what you want to do is one thing. Knowing what a company is willing to pay you to do is another thing entirely. You may already have a good idea of what you can offer employers. If not, some brainstorming can help you identify your skills, interests, and characteristics. Start by jotting down achievements you're proud of and experiences that were satisfying, and think carefully about what specific skills these achievements demanded of you. For example, leadership skills, speaking ability, and artistic talent may have helped you coordinate a successful class project. As you analyze your achievements, you may well begin to recognize a pattern of skills. Which of them might be valuable to potential employers?

Next, look at your educational preparation, work experience, and extracurricular activities. What do your knowledge and experience qualify you to do? What have you learned from volunteer work or class projects that could benefit you on the job? Have you held any offices, won any awards or scholarships, mastered a second language? What skills have you developed in nonbusiness situations that could transfer to a business position?

Take stock of your personal characteristics. Are you aggressive, a born leader? Or would you rather follow? Are you outgoing, articulate, great with people? Or do you prefer working alone? Make a list of what you believe are your four or five most important qualities. Ask a relative or friend to rate your traits as well.

If you're having difficulty figuring out your interests, characteristics, or capabilities, consult your college career center. Many campuses administer a variety of tests that can help you identify interests, aptitudes, and personality traits. These tests won't reveal your "perfect" job, but they'll help you focus on the types of work best suited to your personality.

HOW CAN YOU MAKE YOURSELF MORE VALUABLE?

While you're figuring out what you want from a job and what you can offer an employer, you can take positive steps toward building your career. First, look for volunteer projects, temporary jobs, freelance work, or internships that will help expand your experience base and skill set.⁸ You can look for freelance projects on Craigslist (www.craigslist.org) and numerous other websites; some of these jobs have only nominal pay, but they do provide an opportunity for you to display your skills. Also consider applying your talents to *crowd-sourcing* projects, in which companies and nonprofit organizations invite the public to contribute solutions to various challenges.

These opportunities help you gain valuable experience and relevant contacts, provide you with important references and work samples for your *employment portfolio*, and help you establish your *personal brand* (see the following sections).

Second, learn more about the industry or industries in which you want to work and stay on top of new developments. Join networks of professional colleagues and friends who can help you keep up with trends and events. Many professional societies have student chapters or offer students discounted memberships. Take courses and pursue other educational or life experiences that would be difficult while working full time.

For more ideas and advice on planning your career, check out the resources listed in Table 2.

BUILDING AN EMPLOYMENT PORTFOLIO

Employers want proof that you have the skills to succeed on the job, but even if you don't have much relevant work experience, you can use your college classes to assemble that proof. Simply create and maintain an *employment portfolio*, which is a collection of projects that demonstrate your skills and knowledge. You can create a *print portfolio* and an *e-portfolio*; both can help with your career effort. A print portfolio gives you something tangible to bring to interviews, and it lets you collect project results that might not be easy to show online, such as a handsomely bound report. An e-portfolio is a multimedia presentation of your skills and experiences.⁹ Think of it as a website that contains your résumé, work samples, letters of recommendation, relevant videos or podcasts you have recorded, any blog posts or articles you have written, and other information about you and your skills. If you have set up a *lifestream* (a real-time aggregation of your content creation, online interests, and social media interactions) that is professionally focused, consider adding that to your e-portfolio.

TABLE 2 Career Planning Resources

Resource	URL
Career Rocketeer	www.careerrocketeer.com
The Creative Career	http://thecreativecareer.com
Brazen Careerist	www.brazencareerist.com
Daily Career Connection	http://dailycareerconnection.com
The Career Key	http://careerkey.blogspot.com
Rise Smart	www.ris SMART.com/blog
Women's Leadership Blog	http://blog.futurewomenleaders.net/blog
The Career Doctor	www.careerdoctor.org/career-doctor-blog

The portfolio can be burned on a CD or DVD for physical distribution, or, more commonly, it can be posted online—whether it’s a personal website, your college’s site (if student pages are available), a specialized portfolio hosting site such as Behance (www.behance.com), or a résumé hosting site such as VisualCV (www.visualcv.com) or Gozaik (www.gozaik.com) that offers multimedia résumés. To see a selection of student e-portfolios from colleges around the United States, go to <http://real-timeupdates.com/ebc11>, click on Student Assignments, and then click on Prologue to locate the link to student e-portfolios.

Throughout this course, pay close attention to the business communication cases marked Portfolio Builder (they start in Chapter 7). These items will make particularly good samples of not only your communication skills but also your ability to understand and solve business-related challenges. By combining these projects with samples from your other courses, you can create a compelling portfolio when you’re ready to start interviewing. Your portfolio is also a great resource for writing your résumé because it reminds you of all the great work you’ve done over the years. Moreover, you can continue to refine and expand your portfolio throughout your career; many professionals use e-portfolios to advertise their services.

As you assemble your portfolio, collect anything that shows your ability to perform, whether it’s in school, on the job, or in other venues. However, you *must* check with employers before including any items you created while you were an employee and check with clients before including any *work products* (anything you wrote, designed, programmed, and so on) they purchased from you. Many business documents contain confidential information companies don’t want distributed to outside audiences.

For each item you add to your portfolio, write a brief description that helps other people understand the meaning and significance of the project. Include such items as these:

- **Background.** Why did you undertake this project? Was it a school project, a work assignment, or something you did on your own initiative?
- **Project objectives.** Explain the project’s goals, if relevant.
- **Collaborators.** If you worked with others, be sure to mention that and discuss team dynamics if appropriate. For instance, if you led the team or worked with others long distance as a virtual team, point that out.
- **Constraints.** Sometimes the most impressive thing about a project is the time or budget constraints under which it was created. If such constraints apply to a project, consider mentioning them in a way that doesn’t sound like an excuse for poor quality. If you had only one week to create a website, for example, you might say that “One of the intriguing challenges of this project was the deadline; I had only one week to design, compose, test, and publish this material.”
- **Outcomes.** If the project’s goals were measurable, what was the result? For example, if you wrote a letter soliciting donations for a charitable cause, how much money did you raise?
- **Learning experience.** If appropriate, describe what you learned during the course of the project.

Keep in mind that the portfolio itself is a communication project, so be sure to apply everything you’ll learn in this course about effective communication and good design. Assume that potential employers will find your e-portfolio site (even if you don’t tell them about it), so don’t include anything that could come back to haunt you. Also, if you have anything embarrassing on Facebook, Twitter, or any other social networking site, remove it immediately.

To get started, first check with the career center at your college; many schools offer e-portfolio systems for their students. (Some schools now require e-portfolios, so you may already be building one.) You can also find plenty of advice online; search for “e-portfolio,” “student portfolio,” or “professional portfolio.”

BUILDING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

Products and companies have brands that represent collections of certain attributes, such as the safety emphasis of Volvo, the performance emphasis of BMW, or the luxury emphasis of Cadillac. Similarly, when people who know you think about you, they have a particular

TABLE 3 Personal Branding Resources

Resource	URL
Personal Branding Blog	www.personalbrandingblog.com
Mohammed Al-Taee	http://altaeeblog.com
Brand Yourself	http://blog.brand-yourself.com
Krishna De	http://krishnade.com/blog2/
Cube Rules	http://cuberules.com
Jibber Jobber	www.jibberjobber.com/blog
The Engaging Brand	http://theengagingbrand.typepad.com

set of qualities in mind based on your professionalism, your priorities, and the various skills and attributes you have developed over the years. Perhaps without even being conscious of it, you have created a **personal brand** for yourself.

As you plan the next stage of your career, start managing your personal brand deliberately. Branding specialist Mohammed Al-Taee defines personal branding succinctly as “a way of clarifying and communicating what makes you different and special.”¹⁰

You can learn more about personal branding from the sources listed in Table 3, and you will have multiple opportunities to plan and refine your personal brand during this course. For example, Chapter 7 offers tips on business applications of social media, which are key to personal branding, and Chapters 15 and 16 guide you through the process of creating a résumé, building your network, and presenting yourself in interviews. To get you started, here are the basics of a successful personal branding strategy:¹¹

- **Figure out the “story of you.”** Simply put, where have you been in life, and where are you going? Every good story has dramatic tension that pulls readers in and makes them wonder what will happen next. Where is your story going next? Chapter 15 offers more on this personal brand-building approach.
- **Clarify your professional theme.** Volvos, BMWs, and Cadillacs can all get you from Point A to Point B in safety, comfort, and style—but each brand emphasizes some attributes more than others to create a specific image in the minds of potential buyers. Similarly, you want to be seen as something more than just an accountant, a supervisor, a salesperson. What will your theme be? Brilliant strategist? Hard-nosed, get-it-done tactician? Technical guru? Problem solver? Creative genius? Inspirational leader?
- **Reach out and connect.** Major corporations spread the word about their brands with multimillion-dollar advertising campaigns. You can promote your brand for free or close to it. The secret is networking, which you’ll learn more about in Chapter 15. You build your brand by connecting with like-minded people, sharing information, demonstrating skills and knowledge, and helping others succeed.
- **Deliver on your brand’s promise—every time, all the time.** When you promote a brand, you make a promise—a promise that whoever buys that brand will get the benefits you are promoting. All of this planning and communication is of no value if you fail to deliver on the promises your branding efforts make. Conversely, when you deliver quality results time after time, your talents and professionalism will speak for you.

We wish you great success in this course and in your career!

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Excellence
in Business
Communication

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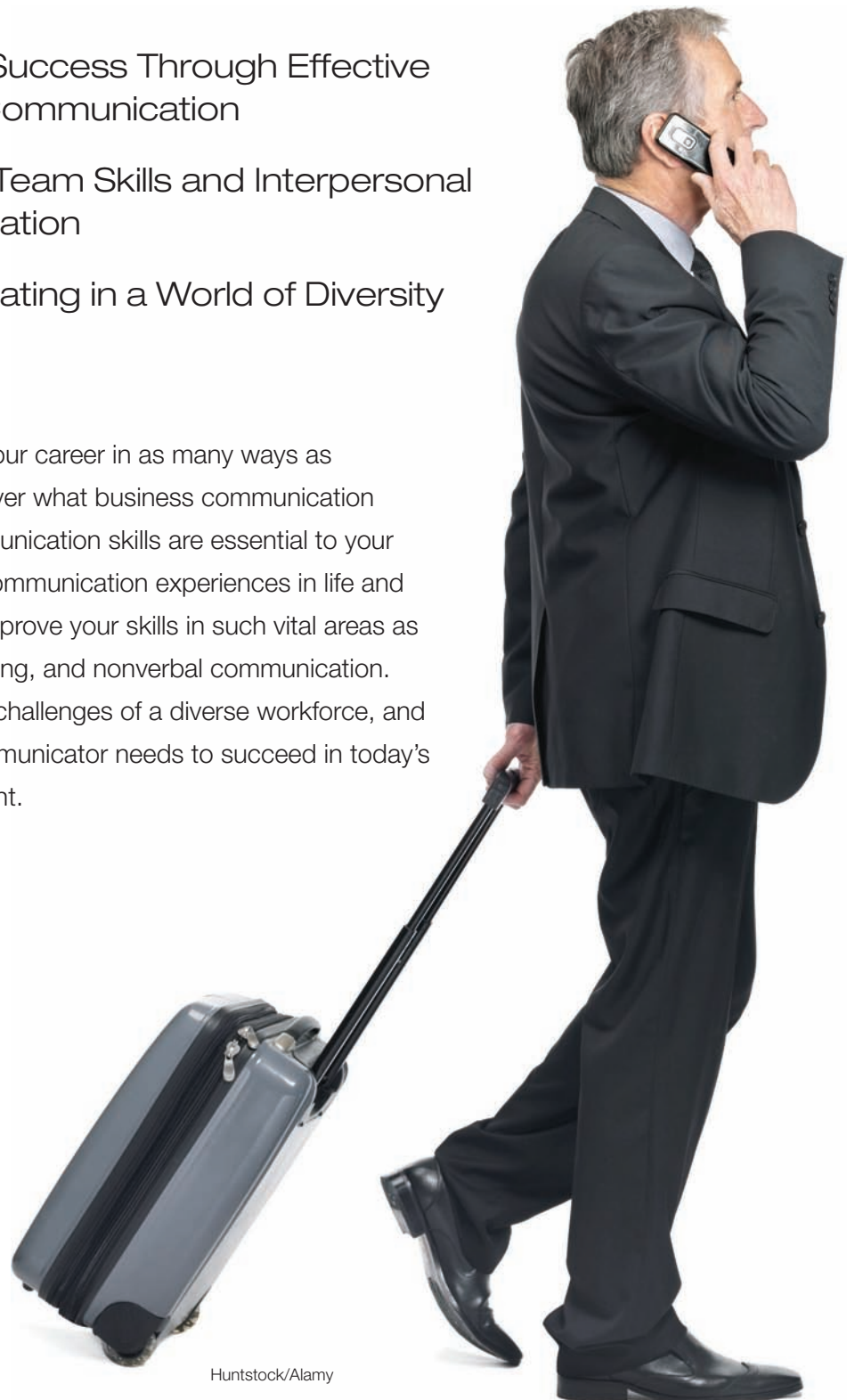
Understanding the Foundations of Business Communication

CHAPTER **1** Achieving Success Through Effective Business Communication

CHAPTER **2** Mastering Team Skills and Interpersonal Communication

CHAPTER **3** Communicating in a World of Diversity

No other skill can help your career in as many ways as communication. Discover what business communication is all about, why communication skills are essential to your career, and how to adapt your communication experiences in life and college to the business world. Improve your skills in such vital areas as team interaction, etiquette, listening, and nonverbal communication. Explore the advantages and the challenges of a diverse workforce, and develop the skills that every communicator needs to succeed in today's multicultural business environment.



Huntstock/Alamy

1 Achieving Success Through Effective Business Communication

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

- 1 Explain the importance of effective communication to your career and to the companies where you will work
- 2 Explain what it means to communicate as a professional in a business context
- 3 Identify five unique challenges of business communication
- 4 Describe the communication process model and the ways social media are changing the nature of business communication
- 5 List four general guidelines for using communication technology effectively
- 6 Define ethics, explain the difference between an ethical dilemma and an ethical lapse and list six guidelines for making ethical communication choices

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ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT TOYOTA

Inviting Customers to Help Rejuvenate a Brand's Reputation

Imagine you're in the market for a new car and need to learn about the various models, options, dealers, and other factors involved in this important purchase. Fortunately, a friend has just gone through this process and can provide valuable information from a consumer's perspective.

Now imagine you have a hundred or a thousand or ten thousand friends who have recently purchased cars. Imagine how much information you could get from so many people—and all you need to do is jump on Facebook, Epinions, or another social media website.

Consumers have been sharing information online for as long as computers have been connected, but the rapid growth of social media has merged these isolated conversations into a global phenomenon that has permanently changed the nature of business

Toyota USA Like

Wall Info AutoBiograp... Tiny Football YouTube Photos >>

AUTO-BIOGRAPHY

Every owner has a story or two or fifty-two about their Toyota. From wild drives to road trips taken. To the name you give it to the day you give it to a friend or family member. All these wonderful fun, happy, not-so-happy, crazy, relaxing moments add up to create your Auto-Biography. Feel free to poke around. Share a story. Or add a few chapters about the life (and love) you have with yours. Enjoy.

Explore Auto-Biographies

Scan. Save. Shop. Share. Get the Toyota Shopping Tool app featuring mLot for Android and Apple devices. toyota.com/mobile

Suggest to friends

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Mobile Shopping Tools <http://www.toyota.com/mobil> <http://m.toyota.com>

Information on Toyota Safety <http://www.toyota.com/safety>

Toyota USA 1-800-331-4331

Watch the videos featuring real owners' stories — including a few animated by some very talented artists. (Whoa, because... maybe yours will be next.)

Courtesy of Toyota

Toyota's user-generated content campaign on Facebook, Auto-Biography, invited owners to submit stories, photos, and videos that describe their favorite moments and memories with their Toyota vehicles.

communication. The Japanese automaker Toyota is one of the millions of companies around the world using social media to supplement or even replace traditional forms of customer communication.

Toyota was looking for some positive communication after concerns about sticking gas pedals led to the recall of millions of vehicles and prompted the company to halt sales of eight models while it investigated the problem. The situation was potentially serious, to be sure, but Toyota executive Bob Zeinstra said loyal Toyota owners responded with an “outpouring of support and care.”

To capitalize on this goodwill, built up through years of delivering safe, dependable vehicles, Toyota invited owners to tell their stories through a Facebook campaign it called “Auto-Biography.” The program featured a customized Facebook application that encouraged owners to share stories of their favorite moments with their Toyota vehicles.

Thousands of Toyota owners contributed, sharing everything from the pet names they gave their cars to how they use their

cars for work or play to the way their families passed down a Toyota from one generation to the next. Many listed the number of miles they had on their cars, some up to 300,000 or more, making strong statements to support the Toyota message of reliability. Many owners also personalized their stories with photos or videos of themselves and their cars. Toyota highlighted a small number of the stories through professionally produced animated or live videos, which it then featured prominently on the Auto-Biography page and used in print and television advertising.

By inviting satisfied customers to tell their own stories through *user-generated content* (which you’ll read more about in Chapter 7), the campaign helped Toyota repair its reputation among potential car buyers and respond to negative stories in the news media. Moreover, Zeinstra says the Facebook initiative also reminded current Toyota owners “why they love their cars so much.”¹

www.facebook.com/toyota

Understanding Why Communication Matters

Whether it’s as simple as a smile or as ambitious as a Facebook campaign, **communication** is the process of transferring information and meaning between *senders* and *receivers*, using one or more written, oral, visual, or electronic media. The essence of communication is sharing—providing data, information, insights, and inspiration in an exchange that benefits both you and the people with whom you are communicating.² As Figure 1.1 on the next page indicates, this sharing can happen in a variety of ways, including simple and successful transfers of information, negotiations in which the sender and receiver arrive at an agreed-upon meaning, and unsuccessful attempts in which the receiver creates a different message than the one the sender intended.

You will invest a lot of time and energy in this course developing your communication skills, so it’s fair to ask whether the effort will be worthwhile. This section outlines the many ways in which good communication skills are critical for your career and for any company you join.

COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR CAREER

Improving your communication skills may be the single most important step you can take in your career. You can have the greatest ideas in the world, but they’re no good to your company or your career if you can’t express them clearly and persuasively. Some jobs, such as sales and customer support, are primarily about communicating. In fields such as engineering or finance, you often need to share complex ideas with executives, customers, and colleagues, and your ability to connect with people outside your field can be as important as your technical expertise. If you have the entrepreneurial urge, you will need to communicate with a wide range of audiences, from investors, bankers, and government regulators to employees, customers, and business partners.

The changing nature of employment is putting new pressure on communication skills, too. Many companies now supplement their permanent workforces with independent contractors who are brought on for a short period or even just a single project. Chances are you will spend some of your career as one of these independent freelancers, working without the support network that an established company environment provides. You will have to “sell yourself” into each new contract, communicate successfully in a wide range of work situations, and take full responsibility for your career growth and success.

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain the importance of effective communication to your career and to the companies where you will work.

Communication is the process of transferring information and meaning between senders and receivers.

Ambition and great ideas aren’t enough; you need to be able to communicate with people in order to succeed in business.

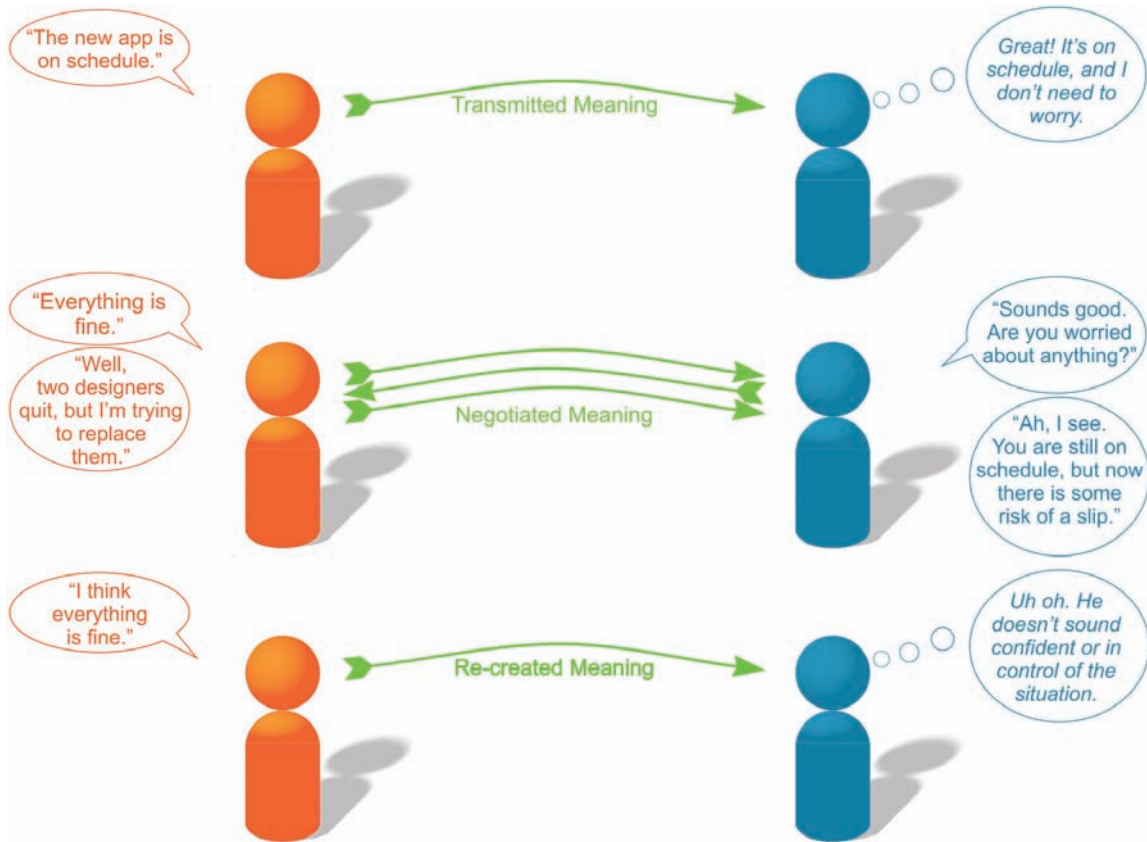


Figure 1.1 Sharing Information

These three exchanges between a software project manager (left) and his boss (right) illustrate the variety of ways in which information is shared between senders and receivers. In the top exchange, the sender's meaning is transmitted intact to the receiver, who accepts what the sender says at face value. In the middle exchange, the sender and receiver negotiate the meaning by discussing the situation. The negotiated meaning is that everything is fine so far, but the risk of a schedule slip is now higher than it was before. In the bottom exchange, the receiver has a negative emotional reaction to the word "think" and as a result creates her own meaning—that everything probably *is not* fine, in spite of what the sender says.

If you launch a company or move into an executive role in an existing organization, you can expect communication to consume the majority of your time. Top executives spend most of their workdays communicating, and businesspeople who can't communicate well don't stand much chance of reaching the top.

Employers sometimes express frustration at the poor communication skills of employees—particularly recent college graduates who haven't yet learned how to adapt their communication styles to a professional environment. If you learn to write well, speak well, listen well, and recognize the appropriate way to communicate in any situation, you'll gain a major advantage that will serve you throughout your career.³

This course teaches you how to send and receive information more effectively and helps you improve your communication skills through practice in an environment that provides honest, constructive criticism. You will discover how to collaborate in teams, listen effectively, master non-verbal communication skills, and participate in productive meetings. You'll learn about communicating across cultural boundaries. You'll learn a three-step process that will help you write effective business messages, and you'll get specific tips for crafting a variety of business messages using a wide range of media, from social networks to blogs to online presentations. Develop these skills, and you'll start your business career with a clear competitive advantage.

Strong communication skills give you an advantage in the job market.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Check Out the Cutting Edge of Business Communication

This Pinterest board created by the authors highlights some of the most important changes taking place in the field of business communication. Go to <http://real-timeupdates.com/ebc11> and click on Learn More.

COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR COMPANY

Aside from the personal benefits, communication should be important to you because it is important to your company. Effective communication helps businesses in numerous ways. It provides⁴

- Closer ties with important communities in the marketplace
- Opportunities to influence conversations, perceptions, and trends
- Increased productivity and faster problem solving
- Better financial results and higher return for investors
- Earlier warning of potential problems, from rising business costs to critical safety issues
- Stronger decision making based on timely, reliable information
- Clearer and more persuasive marketing messages
- Greater employee engagement with their work, leading to higher employee satisfaction and lower employee turnover

Effective communication yields numerous business benefits.

WHAT MAKES BUSINESS COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVE?

Effective communication strengthens the connections between a company and all of its **stakeholders**, those groups affected in some way by the company's actions: customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, neighbors, the community, the nation, and the world as a whole.⁵ To make your communication efforts as effective as possible, focus on making them practical, factual, concise, clear, and persuasive:

- **Provide practical information.** Give recipients useful information, whether it's to help them perform a desired action or understand a new company policy.
- **Give facts rather than vague impressions.** Use concrete language, specific detail, and information that is clear, convincing, accurate, and ethical. When an opinion is called for, present compelling evidence to support your conclusion.
- **Present information in a concise, efficient manner.** Concise messages show respect for people's time, and they increase the chances of a positive response.
- **Clarify expectations and responsibilities.** Craft messages to generate a specific response from a specific audience. When appropriate, clearly state what you expect from audience members or what you can do for them.
- **Offer compelling, persuasive arguments and recommendations.** Show your readers precisely how they will benefit by responding the way you want them to respond to your message.

Effective messages are *practical, factual, concise, clear, and persuasive.*

Keep these five important characteristics in mind as you compare the ineffective and effective versions of the message in Figure 1.2 on the next page.

Communicating as a Professional

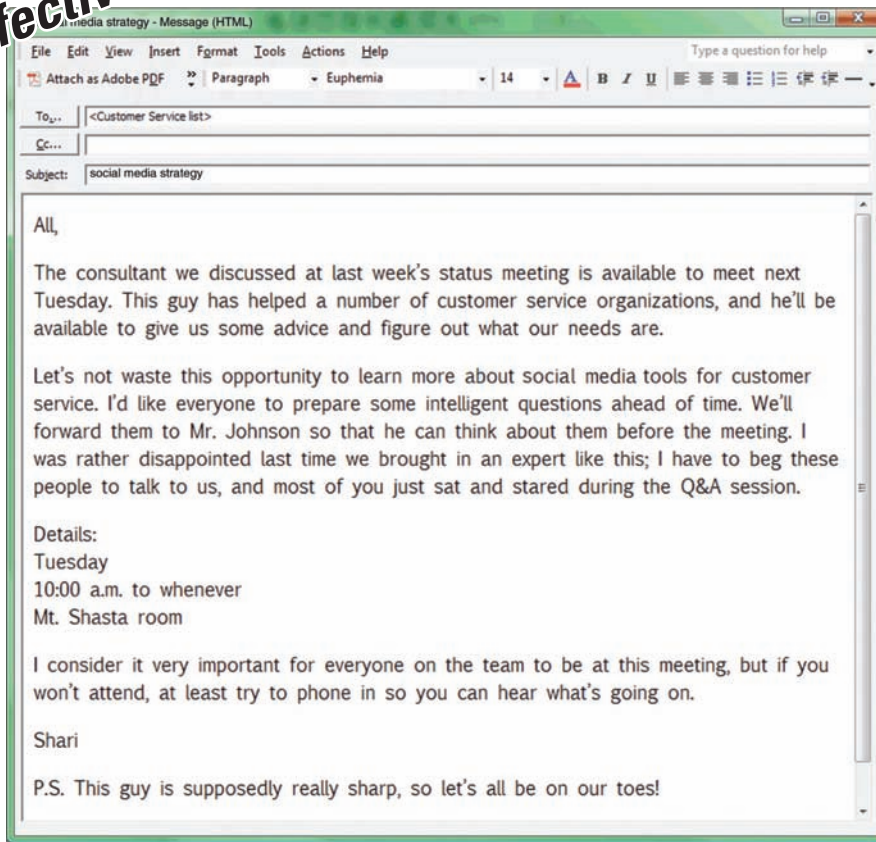
You've been communicating your entire life, of course, but if you don't have a lot of work experience yet, meeting the expectations of a professional environment might require some adjustment. A good place to start is to consider what it means to be a professional. **Professionalism** is the quality of performing at a high level and conducting oneself with purpose and pride. It means doing more than putting in the hours and collecting a paycheck: True professionals go beyond minimum expectations and commit to making meaningful contributions. Professionalism can be broken down into six distinct traits: striving to excel, being dependable and accountable, being a team player, demonstrating a sense of etiquette, making ethical decisions, and maintaining a positive outlook (see Table 1.1 on page 7).

A key message to glean from Table 1.1 is how much these elements of professionalism depend on effective communication. For example, to be a team player, you have to be able to collaborate, resolve conflicts, and interact with a wide variety of personalities. Without strong communication skills, you won't be able to perform to your potential—and others won't recognize you as the professional you'd like to be.

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain what it means to communicate as a professional in a business context.

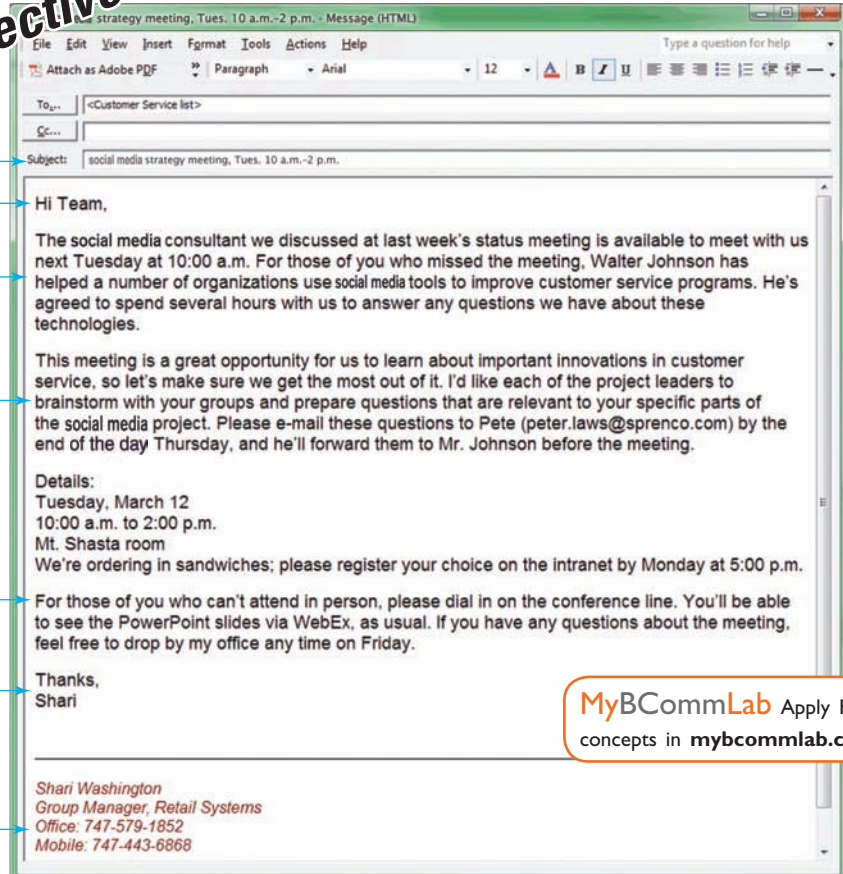
Communication is an essential part of being a successful professional.

Ineffective



- The vague subject line fails to alert people to the upcoming meeting.
- The greeting is cold and off-putting.
- The opening paragraph fails to provide necessary background information for anyone who missed the meeting.
- A negative, accusatory tone here puts readers on the defensive.
- This request for action fails to clarify who needs to do what by when.
- The meeting information includes the day, not the date, which could lead to confusion.
- The wording here assumes that people who won't attend don't want to, which might not be true.
- The lack of a closing (such as "thank you") contributes to the harsh, abrupt tone.
- The writer fails to provide alternative contact information or invite questions about the meeting.

Effective



- An informative subject line helps people grasp key content immediately.
- The greeting is friendly without being too casual.
- The opening paragraph fills in missing information so that everyone can grasp the importance of the message.
- This paragraph emphasizes the importance of the meeting, and the request provides enough information to enable readers to respond.
- The writer offers everyone a chance to participate, without making anyone feel guilty about not being able to attend in person. (WebEx is an online meeting system.) The closing paragraph also invites questions ahead of time so that they don't derail the meeting.
- Like the greeting, the close has a warm and personal tone, without being too casual.
- The email signature provides additional information and alternative contact options.

MyBCommLab Apply Figure 1.2's key concepts in mybcomm.com.

Figure 1.2 Ineffective and Effective Business Communication

At first glance, this email message looks like a reasonable attempt at communicating with the members of a project team. However, review the blue annotations to see just how many problems the message really has.

TABLE 1.1 Elements of Professionalism

Trait	What It Means
Be the best	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pros strive to excel, to be the best they can be at everything they do. • Excelling at every level is how pros build a great career.
Be dependable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pros keep their promises and meet their commitments. • Pros learn from their mistakes and take responsibility for their errors.
Be a team player	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pros know how to contribute to a larger cause. • Team players make others around them better.
Be respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pros know that good business etiquette is a sign of respect for those around them. • Respecting others is not only good etiquette, it's good for one's career.
Be ethical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible professionals strive to avoid ethical lapses. • Pros weigh their options carefully when facing ethical dilemmas.
Be positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful people believe in what they're doing and in themselves. • Pros don't complain about problems; they find them and fix them.

This section offers a brief look at the skills employers will expect you to have, the nature of communication in an organizational environment, and the importance of adopting an audience-centered approach.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT EMPLOYERS EXPECT FROM YOU

Today's employers expect you to be competent at a wide range of communication tasks. Fortunately, the skills employers expect from you are the same skills that will help you advance in your career:⁶

- Organizing ideas and information logically and completely
- Expressing ideas and information coherently and persuasively
- Actively listening to others
- Communicating effectively with people from diverse backgrounds and experiences
- Using communication technologies effectively and efficiently
- Following accepted standards of grammar, spelling, and other aspects of high-quality writing and speaking
- Communicating in a civilized manner that reflects contemporary expectations of business etiquette, even when dealing with indifferent or hostile audiences
- Communicating ethically, even when choices aren't crystal clear
- Managing your time wisely and using resources efficiently

Employers expect you to possess a wide range of communication skills.

THE ART OF PROFESSIONALISM

Maintaining a Confident, Positive Outlook

Spend a few minutes around successful people in any field, and chances are you'll notice how optimistic they are. They believe in what they're doing, and they believe in themselves and their ability to solve problems and overcome obstacles.

Being positive doesn't mean displaying mindless optimism or spewing happy talk all the time. It means acknowledging that things may be difficult but then buckling down and getting the job done anyway. It means no whining and no slacking off, even when the going gets tough. We live in an imperfect world, no question—jobs can be boring or difficult, customers can be unpleasant, and bosses can be unreasonable. But when you're a pro, you find a way to power through.

Your energy, positive or negative, is contagious. Both in person and online, you'll spend as much time with your colleagues as you spend with family and friends. Personal demeanor is therefore a vital element of workplace harmony. No one expects (or wants) you to be artificially upbeat and bubbly every second of the day, but one negative personality can make an entire office miserable and unproductive. Every person in a company has a responsibility to contribute to a positive, energetic work environment.

CAREER APPLICATIONS

1. Do you have an ethical obligation to maintain a positive outlook on the job? Why or why not?
2. How can you lift your spirits when work is dragging you down?

You'll have the opportunity to practice these skills throughout this course, but don't stop there. Successful professionals continue to hone communication skills throughout their careers.

COMMUNICATING IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

The formal communication network mirrors the company's organizational structure.

In addition to having the proper skills, you need to learn how to apply those skills in the business environment, which can be quite different from the social and scholastic environments you are accustomed to. Every organization has a **formal communication network**, in which ideas and information flow along the lines of command (the hierarchical levels) in the company's organization structure (see Figure 1.3). Throughout the formal network, information flows in three directions. *Downward communication* flows from executives to employees, conveying executive decisions and providing information that helps employees do their jobs. *Upward communication* flows from employees to executives, providing insight into problems, trends, opportunities, grievances, and performance, thus allowing executives to solve problems and make intelligent decisions. *Horizontal communication* flows between departments to help employees share information, coordinate tasks, and solve complex problems.⁷

Every organization also has an **informal communication network**, often referred to as the *grapevine* or the *rumor mill*, which encompasses all communication that occurs outside the formal network. Some of this informal communication takes place naturally as a result of employee interaction on the job and in social settings, and some of it takes place when the formal network doesn't provide information employees want. In fact, the inherent limitations of formal communication networks helped spur the growth of social media in the business environment.

ADOPTING AN AUDIENCE-CENTERED APPROACH

An audience-centered approach involves understanding, respecting, and meeting the needs of your audience members.

An **audience-centered approach** involves understanding and respecting the members of your audience and making every effort to get your message across in a way that is meaningful to them. This approach is also known as adopting the "you" attitude, in contrast to messages that are about "me." Learn as much as possible about the biases, education, age, status,

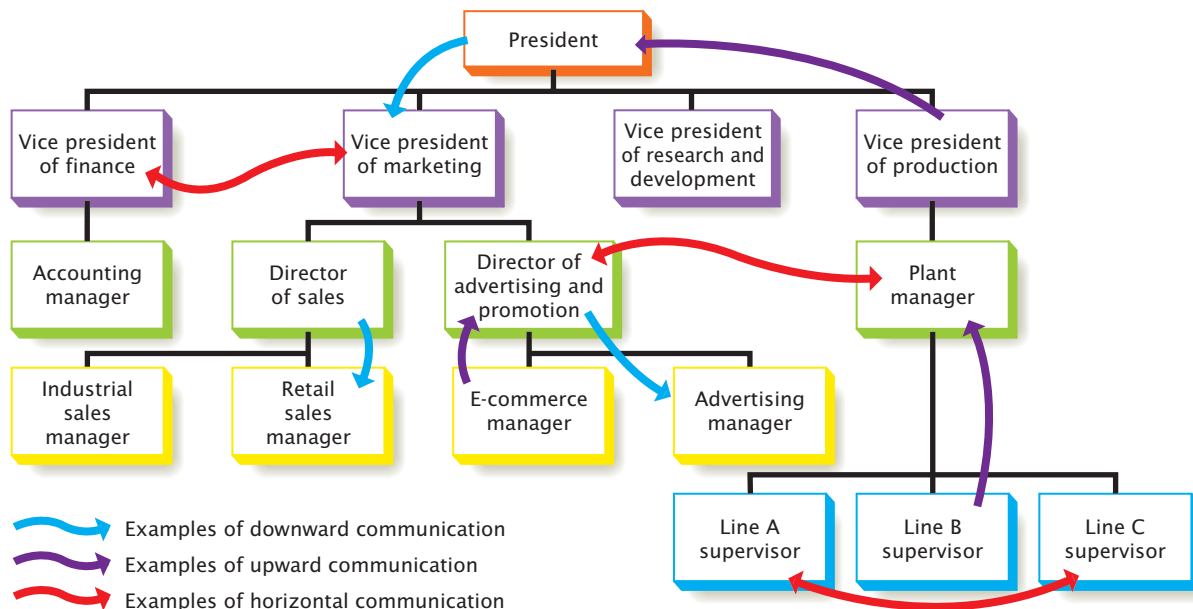


Figure 1.3 Formal Communication Network
 The formal communication network is defined by the relationships between the various job positions in the organization. Messages can flow *upward* (from a lower-level employee to a higher-level employee), *downward* (from a higher-level employee to a lower-level employee), and *horizontally* (across the organization, between employees at the same or similar levels).

style, and personal and professional concerns of your receivers. If you're addressing people you don't know and you're unable to find out more about them, try to project yourself into their position by using common sense and imagination. This ability to relate to the needs of others is a key part of *emotional intelligence*, which is widely considered to be a vital characteristic of successful managers and leaders.⁸ The more you know about the people you're communicating with, the easier it will be to concentrate on their needs—which, in turn, will make it easier for them to hear your message, understand it, and respond positively.

A vital element of audience-centered communication is **etiquette**, the expected norms of behavior in any particular situation. In today's hectic, competitive world, etiquette might seem a quaint and outdated notion. However, the way you conduct yourself and interact with others can have a profound influence on your company's success and your career. When executives hire and promote you, they expect your behavior to protect the company's reputation. The more you understand such expectations, the better chance you have of avoiding career-damaging mistakes. The principles of etiquette discussed in Chapter 2 will help you communicate with an audience-centered approach in a variety of business settings.

Etiquette, the expected norms of behavior in any particular situation, can have a profound influence on your company's success and your career.

Understanding the Unique Challenges of Business Communication

Although you have been communicating with some success your entire life, business communication is often more complicated and demanding than the social communication you typically engage in with family, friends, and school associates. This section highlights five issues that illustrate why business communication requires a high level of skill and attention.

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Identify five unique challenges of business communication.

THE GLOBALIZATION OF BUSINESS AND THE INCREASE IN WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Today's businesses increasingly reach across international borders to market their products, partner with other businesses, and employ workers and executives—an effort known as **globalization**. Many U.S. companies rely on exports for a significant portion of their sales, sometimes up to 50 percent or more, and managers and employees in these firms need to communicate with many other cultures. Moreover, thousands of companies from all around the world vie for a share of the massive U.S. market, so chances are you'll do business with or even work for a company based in another country at some point in your career.

Businesses are paying more attention to **workforce diversity**—all the differences among people who work together, including differences in age, gender, sexual orientation, education, cultural background, religion, ability, and life experience. As Chapter 3 discusses, successful companies realize that a diverse workforce can yield a significant competitive advantage, but it also requires a more conscientious approach to communication.

Smart employers recognize the benefits of a more diverse workforce—and the additional challenges of ensuring smooth communication between people from diverse backgrounds.

THE INCREASING VALUE OF BUSINESS INFORMATION

As global competition for talent, customers, and resources continues to grow, the importance of information continues to escalate as well. Companies in virtually every industry rely heavily on **knowledge workers**, employees at all levels of an organization who specialize in acquiring, processing, and communicating information. Three examples help to illustrate the value of information in today's economy:

Information has become one of the most important resources in business today.

- **Competitive insights.** The more a company knows about its competitors and their plans, the better able it will be to adjust its own business plans.
- **Customer needs.** Information about customer needs can be analyzed and summarized in order to develop goods and services that better satisfy customer demands.
- **Regulations and guidelines.** Today's businesses must understand and follow a wide range of government regulations and guidelines covering such areas as employment, environment, taxes, and accounting.