

**Courtland L. Bovée  
and John V. Thill**



# Business Communication Essentials

Fundamental Skills for the  
Mobile-Digital-Social Workplace

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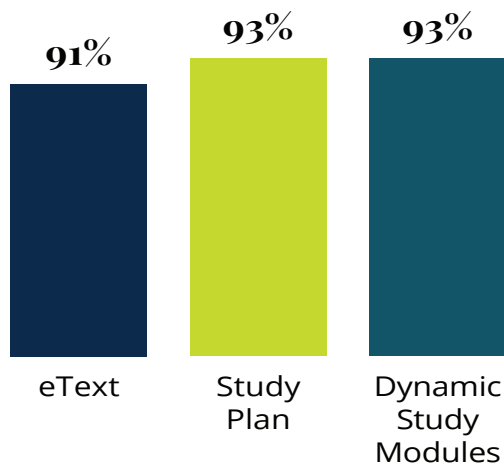
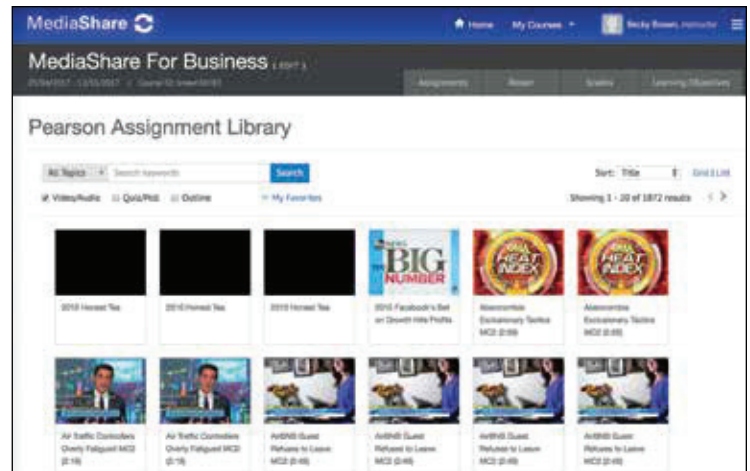
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EIGHTH  
EDITION

# Business Communication Essentials

## **Fundamental Skills for the Mobile-Digital-Social Workplace**

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# Dedication

**T**his book is dedicated to the many thousands of instructors and students who use Bovée and Thill texts to develop career-enhancing skills in business communication. We appreciate the opportunity to play a role in your education, and we wish you the very best with your careers.

**Courtland L. Bovée**

**John V. Thill**

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# Preface

## 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 digital 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 start-ups. 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.



## New to This Edition

**All new:** *The Future of Communication* gives a glimpse into fascinating technologies that are beginning to reshape business communication, including real-time translation, haptic communication, virtual and augmented reality, gestural computing, and automated emotion recognition.

**Nearly 70 new or substantially revised figures;** the Eighth Edition has 66 annotated model documents, 27 examples of mobile communication in business communication, and 25 examples of social media.

**Half the chapters have new Communication Matters insights** from respected business professionals that highlight the principles covered in the chapter.

**Revised annotations in model document before/after pairs** make it easier for students to see the specific changes made to transform ineffective messages into effective ones.

**More than 80 new questions and student activities;** one-third of the communication cases are new.

**Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress** has been converted to quick-to-read bulleted lists for easier study and review.

### The Future of Communication: The Internet of Things

The *Internet of Things (IoT)* refers to the billions of devices now connected to the Internet and the networking potential of having all these gadgets communicate with each other, feed

### The Future of Communication: Communication Bots

The bots are back. Automated bots (short for *robots*) made a small wave a decade or so ago when “chatbots” began appearing on websites to help companies handle

### The Future of Communication: Gamification

The fact that millions of people spend billions of hours playing games on computers and mobile devices is not lost on companies looking for ways to enhance communication with

### The Future of Communication: Blind Auditions

Most people like to think they are unbiased and capable of making fair, objective decisions when it comes to judging or assessing others. Unfortunately, that is far from reality. Decades of research suggests that *unconscious or implicit bias* is universal and that attitudes and

**Ineffective**

(a) The subject line is too generic and doesn't give the reader any clues about the content of the message.

(b) The message oozes with enthusiasm but beyond that it doesn't really say anything to further the candidate's cause.

(c) The writer fails to use this opportunity to confirm his ability to perform the job.

(d) The tone here is too personal, and the closing line is too demanding.

**Effective**

(a) The subject line lets the reader know what the message is about, which increases the chances she'll read it.

(b) The opening expresses appreciation and enthusiasm without overdoing it.

(c) Espinosa takes the opportunity to provide additional information—in this instance, reversing something he said in the interview.

(d) He uses the close to confirm his ability to do the job and to emphasize some positive personal characteristics.

**Numerous sections are new or substantially revised,** reflecting the latest research and practices in business communication:

- Communicating in an Organizational Context
- Developing Skills for Your Career
- Characteristics of Effective Teams
- Conflict Resolution in Team Settings
- Improving Your Nonverbal Communication Skills
- Workplace Etiquette
- Messaging
- Asking for Recommendations
- Writing Instructions
- Refusing Requests for Recommendations
- Giving Negative Performance Reviews
- Terminating Employment
- Using the Three-Step Writing Process for Persuasive Messages
- Balancing the Three Types of Persuasive Appeals
- Using Presentation Software to Create Visual Reports
- Keys to Being a Valued Networker
- Job-Specific Keywords
- Building an Effective LinkedIn Profile
- Understanding the Interviewing Process
- Common Types of Interview Questions
- Interviewing by Phone
- Interviewing by Video

# Solving Teaching and Learning Challenges

Communication is the most valuable skill that graduates can bring into the workforce, but it is one of the most challenging to teach. *Business Communication Essentials* blends the timeless fundamentals of communication with contemporary techniques and an emphasis on business English improvement. To help students succeed from their first day on the job, *Business Communication Essentials* presents the full range of on-the-job skills that today's communicators need, from writing conventional printed reports to using the latest digital, social, mobile, and visual media.

## COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"There's nothing better than a new and enthusiastic team that, on a shoestring budget, tries to do something that's never been done before."<sup>1</sup>

—Tricia Naddaff, president, Management Research Group

Tricia Naddaff's observation about high-performance teams hints at the near-magic that collaboration can bring to business. With the right people in the right circumstances, teams can innovate and produce results far beyond what the individual team members could achieve on their own. At the other extreme, when things go sideways, team projects can be a demoralizing waste of time and money. The difference often comes down to communication. This chapter explores the communication skills you need in order to succeed in team settings, along with several other interpersonal communication topics that will help you on the job: productive meetings, active listening, nonverbal communication, and business etiquette.



Management consultant Tricia Naddaff recognizes the productivity and innovation that successful teamwork can generate.

Each chapter opens with insights from a successful professional, emphasizing concepts and valuable skills that students will explore in the chapter.

**DURRBECK FINANCIAL GROUP** HOME OUR FIRM MEETING YOUR NEEDS SERVICES  
RESOURCE CENTER CONTACT

**JOLI FRIDMAN, CFP®, CPA**

Fridman highlights her experience with specific areas of expertise, beginning with points likely to be of greatest interest to prospective clients.

Academic credentials enhance her credibility by letting readers know she not only attended a respected university but now teaches at one, too.

Professional credentials convey the message that she meets rigorous standards of knowledge, experience, and ethical performance.

Mentioning her charitable work further builds her credibility (as president of the organization) and promotes a positive reaction from readers.

A high-quality photograph (well lit, with no background distractions) also conveys the message of professionalism.

Joli has been practicing comprehensive financial planning for over 20 years. Her areas of expertise include retirement planning, estate planning, tax planning, education funding, insurance planning, cash flow analysis and asset allocation. She is on the faculty at Northwestern University and is an academic affiliate of the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA). Joli received both her Bachelor's degree and Masters in Accountancy from University of Illinois. She is a Certified Financial Planner™ professional and Certified Public Accountant. Joli is also president of the Fred Outa Foundation.

**Figure 4.2 Building Credibility**  
In her profile page on her company's website, financial advisor Joli Fridman builds her credibility with a variety of specific, concrete statements. Notice how every statement packs a punch; there is no filler or "fluff."

## COMPOSITIONAL MODES FOR DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

As you practice using digital media in this course, focus on the principles of effective communication and the fundamentals of good writing, rather than on the specific details of any one medium or system.<sup>3</sup> Fortunately, with a few minor adjustments, your skills will transfer from one system to another without much trouble.

You can succeed with written communication in virtually all digital media by using one of nine *compositional modes*, each of which is well-suited to particular communication goals:

- **Conversations.** Although they take place via writing, some forms of digital communication function more like real-time conversations than the sharing of written documents. The section on messaging (see page 151) explores this important and ever-expanding communication format.
- **Comments and critiques.** One of the most powerful aspects of social media is the opportunity for interested parties to express opinions and provide feedback, whether it's leaving comments on a blog post or reviewing products on an e-commerce site. Sharing helpful tips and insightful commentary is also a great way to build your

Annotated model documents are perhaps the most important feature of a business communication text, and *Business Communication Essentials* is packed with a balance of carefully chosen examples from real companies and original material created to illustrate specific concepts.

Going beyond covering the tried-and-true, Bovée and Thill make unique contributions to the pedagogy and practice of business communication, such as the nine compositional modes required to succeed with digital and social media.



**TABLE 3.1 Medium/Channel Combinations: Advantages and Disadvantages**

Medium/Channel	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Oral, in-person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunity for immediate feedback</li> <li>Easily resolve misunderstandings and negotiate meanings</li> <li>Involve rich nonverbal cues (both physical gestures and vocal inflections)</li> <li>Allow expression of the emotion behind your message</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrict participation to those physically present</li> <li>Unless recorded, provide no permanent, verifiable record of the communication</li> <li>Can reduce communicator's control over the message</li> </ul>
<b>Oral, digital</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can provide opportunity for immediate feedback (live phone or online conversations)</li> <li>Not restricted to participants in the same location</li> <li>Allow time-shifted consumption (podcasts, for example)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack nonverbal cues other than voice inflections</li> <li>Can be tedious to listen to if not audience focused (recorded messages)</li> </ul>
<b>Written, printed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow writers to plan and control their messages</li> <li>Can reach geographically dispersed audiences</li> <li>Offer a permanent, verifiable record</li> <li>Minimize the distortion that can accompany oral messages</li> <li>Can be used to avoid immediate interactions</li> <li>Deemphasize any inappropriate emotional components</li> <li>Give recipients time to process messages before responding (compared with oral communication)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer limited opportunities for timely feedback</li> <li>Lack the rich nonverbal cues provided by oral media</li> <li>Often take more time and more resources to create and distribute</li> <li>Can require special skills to prepare or produce if document is elaborate</li> </ul>
<b>Written, digital</b>	<p>In general, all the advantages of written printed documents plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be delivered quickly</li> <li>Offer the flexibility of multiple formats and channels, from microblogs to wikis</li> <li>Offer the ability to structure messages in creative ways, such as writing a headline on Twitter and linking to the full message on a blog</li> <li>Can offer links to related and more in-depth information</li> <li>Can increase accessibility and openness in an organization through broader sharing</li> <li>Enable audience interaction through social media features</li> <li>Can be easily integrating with other media types, such as with embedded videos or photos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be limited in terms of reach and capability</li> <li>Require Internet or mobile phone connectivity</li> <li>Are vulnerable to security and privacy problems</li> <li>Are easy to misuse (sending too many messages to too many recipients)</li> <li>Create privacy risks and concerns (exposing confidential data, employer monitoring, accidental forwarding)</li> <li>Entail security risks (viruses, spyware; network breaches)</li> <li>Create productivity concerns (frequent interruptions, nonbusiness usage)</li> </ul>
<b>Visual, printed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can quickly convey complex ideas and relationships</li> <li>Are often less intimidating than long blocks of text</li> <li>Can reduce the burden on the audience to figure out how the pieces of a message or concept fit</li> <li>Can be easy to create in spreadsheets and other software (simple charts and graphs), then integrate with reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can require artistic skills to design</li> <li>Require some technical skills to create</li> <li>Can require more time to create than equivalent amount of text</li> <li>Can be expensive to print</li> </ul>
<b>Visual, digital</b>	<p>In general, all the advantages of visual printed documents and all the advantages of written digital formats plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can personalize and enhance the experience for audience members</li> <li>Offer the persuasive power of multimedia formats, particularly video</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need time, cost, and skills to create</li> <li>Can require large amounts of bandwidth</li> </ul>

*Business Communication Essentials* helps students develop their skills in the larger context of being a true professional, with all the insights and qualities that embodies.

With multiple quick-reference tables, the text serves as a valuable resource that students can use in other courses and take with them on the job.

**POWERFUL TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY**

The tools of business communication evolve with every advance in digital technology. The 20 technologies highlighted on the next four pages help businesses redefine the office, collaborate and share information, connect with stakeholders, and build communities of people with shared interests and needs. For more examples of business uses of social media tools in particular, see pages 146–147 in Chapter 6.

**REDEFINING THE OFFICE**

Thanks to advances in mobile and distributed communication, the “office” is no longer what it used to be. Technology lets today’s professionals work on the move while staying in close contact with colleagues, customers, and suppliers. These technologies are also redefining the very nature of some companies, as they replace traditional hierarchies with highly adaptable, virtual networks.

**Web-Based Meetings**



**Vide Conferencing and Telepresence**



**Shared Online Workspaces**



**BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS INNOVATING WITH MOBILE**

As the third major revolution in business communication in the past two decades (after the World Wide Web and social media), mobile communication has the potential to change nearly every aspect of business communication. Here is a small sample of the ways companies are putting mobile to work.

**Training**

In the face of changing markets, government regulations, and other forces in the business environment, developing and maintaining employee skill sets is an ongoing challenge for most companies. The challenge is made even more difficult when employees are constantly on the move or geographically dispersed. With training materials developed specifically for mobile devices, companies can deliver train-

**Mobile Glossary**

In addition to terms defined elsewhere in the book, here are some helpful mobile terms.

**3G, 4G, and 5G**

Successive generations of mobile phone technology.

**BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS INNOVATING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA**

Companies in virtually every industry use social media and continue to experiment with new ways to connect with customers and other stakeholders. From offering helpful tips on using products to helping customers meet each other, these companies show the enormous range of possibilities that new media continue to bring to business communication.

**Enterprise Social Networking**

The social networking concepts that keep you connected with friends and family are widely used in business today. *Enterprise social networks* are closed digital communities that connect employees within a company (and in some cases, selected external business partners). They often include a variety of communication and collaboration tools as well, including workgroup messaging, online meeting functions, and access to work files and other shared resources.



**Tweetups**

A powerful capability of online social media is bringing people with similar interests together offline. *Tweetups*, for example, are in-person meetings planned and organized over Twitter.

**MOBILE DEVICE ETIQUETTE**

Your mobile device habits say a lot about how much respect you have for the people around you. Avoid these disrespectful choices:<sup>61</sup>

- Using obnoxious ringtones
- Failing to mute your phone during meetings or other situations where it will interrupt people
- Talking loudly in open offices or public places
- Talking on your phone right next to someone else
- Making or taking unnecessary personal calls at work
- Invading privacy by using your phone's camera without permission
- Taking or making calls in restrooms and other inappropriate places
- Texting during meals or while someone is talking to you
- Allowing incoming calls to interrupt meetings or discussions
- Using voice recognition to the extent that it disrupts others

As the most compact text in the Bovée-Thill series, *Business Communication Essentials* is designed for high-efficiency learning. Students can scan concise bulleted lists to get important insights and writing tips on a wide variety of topics.

Today’s companies expect employees to put technology to effective use on human terms. Multiple features and thoroughly integrated coverage of contemporary tools help students hit the ground running.

<b>1</b>	Plan	→	<b>2</b>	Write	→	<b>3</b>	Complete
<p><b>Analyze the Situation</b> Define your purpose and develop an audience profile.</p> <p><b>Gather Information</b> Determine audience needs and obtain the information necessary to satisfy those needs.</p> <p><b>Choose Medium and Channel</b> Identify the best combination for the situation, message, and audience.</p> <p><b>Organize the Information</b> Define your main idea, limit your scope, select a direct or an indirect approach, and outline your content.</p>		<p><b>Adapt to Your Audience</b> Be sensitive to audience needs by using a “you” attitude, politeness, positive emphasis, and unbiased language. Build a strong relationship with your audience by establishing your credibility and projecting your company’s preferred image. Control your style with a conversational tone, plain English, and appropriate voice.</p> <p><b>Compose the Message</b> Choose strong words that will help you create effective sentences and coherent paragraphs.</p>		<p><b>Revise the Message</b> Evaluate content and review readability, edit and rewrite for conciseness and clarity.</p> <p><b>Produce the Message</b> Use effective design elements and suitable layout for a clean, professional appearance.</p> <p><b>Proofread the Message</b> Review for errors in layout, spelling, and mechanics.</p> <p><b>Distribute the Message</b> Deliver your message using the chosen medium; make sure all documents and all relevant files are distributed successfully.</p>			

Students sometimes flounder when faced with unfamiliar or difficult writing challenges because they don’t know how to move a project forward. By following the proven three-step process described in *Business Communication Essentials*, they never have to feel lost or waste time figuring out what to do next.

Review and test prep is faster than ever—the Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress feature has been redeveloped as quick-to-read bulleted lists that students can scan and memorize easily.

### Chapter Review and Activities

**MyLab Business Communication**  
Go to [www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication](http://www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication) to complete the problems marked with this icon

**Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress**

Objective 1: Identify the major digital channels used for brief business messages, and describe the nine compositional modes needed for digital media.

Primary digital media for short business messages include:

- Social networks
- Information- and content-sharing websites
- Email
- Messaging
- Blogging and microblogging
- Podcasting

The nine compositional modes are:

- Conversations

Objective 3: Explain how companies and business professionals can use content-sharing websites.

- User-generated content sites such as YouTube let companies host media items that customers and other stakeholders contribute.
- Content curation sites let professionals and consumers with expertise or interest in a particular field to collect and republish material on a particular topic.
- Community Q&A sites give individuals the opportunity to build their personal brands by providing expertise, and they give companies the chance to address customer complaints and correct misinformation.

Objective 4: Describe the evolving role of email in business communication, and explain how to adapt the three-step writing process to email messages.

- As the earliest widely available digital channel, email was applied to a broad range of communication tasks—some it was well suited for and some it wasn’t.
- Over time, newer media such as messaging and social networks have been taking over some of these tasks.
- Email remains a vital medium that is optimum for many private, short to medium-length messages.

The unique and free *Real-Time Updates—Learn More* feature connects students with dozens of carefully selected online media items that complement the text’s coverage with additional examples and valuable insights. Media items range from interactive websites and online videos to infographics, presentations, and podcasts. In addition, students can explore thousands of curated media items in the Real-Time Updates system and subscribe to weekly updates.

MIT career advisor Lily Zhang handpicked these talks for the insights they can give all job hunters. Go to [real-timeupdates.com/bce8](http://real-timeupdates.com/bce8) and select Learn More in the Students section.

No other textbook comes close to offering the resources that Bovée and Thill provide free to students and instructors:

- Sponsored instructor communities on LinkedIn and Facebook with nearly two thousand members
- Tips and techniques in *Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Blog* and Twitter feed
- The Bovée & Thill channel on YouTube
- *Business Communication Headline News*
- Videos and PowerPoint presentations on SlideShare
- Hundreds of infographics, videos, articles, podcasts, and PowerPoints on the Business Communication Pictorial Gallery on Pinterest
- The Ultimate Guide to Resources for Teaching Business Communication
- Curated magazines for business communication on Scoop.it

Links to all these services and resources can be found at [blog.businesscommunicationnetwork.com/resources](http://blog.businesscommunicationnetwork.com/resources).

Expand your classroom resources with both curated content and original videos and presentations.

*Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Blog* offers original insights and teaching tips to enhance your lectures.

## MYLAB BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

### Reach every student with MyLab

MyLab is the teaching and learning platform that empowers you to reach *every* student. By combining trusted author content with digital tools and a flexible platform, MyLab personalizes the learning experience and improves results for each student. Learn more at MyLab Business Communication.

### Deliver trusted content

You deserve teaching materials that meet your own high standards for your course. That's why we partner with highly respected authors to develop interactive content and course-specific resources that you can trust — and that keep your students engaged.

MyLab Business Communication offers a variety of grammar exercises, flashcards, and audio lessons to test your learning and skills and get instant feedback.

### Empower each learner

Each student learns at a different pace. Personalized learning pinpoints the precise areas where each student needs practice, giving all students the support they need — when and where they need it — to be successful.

### Teach your course your way

Your course is unique. So whether you'd like to build your own assignments, teach multiple sections, or set prerequisites, MyLab gives you the flexibility to easily create *your* course to fit *your* needs.

### Improve student results

When you teach with MyLab, student performance improves. That's why instructors have chosen MyLab for over 15 years, touching the lives of over 50 million students. Learn more.

# Developing Employability Skills

In addition to helping students develop a full range of communication skills, *Business Communication Essentials* will enhance a wide range of other skills that experts say are vital for success in the 21st-century workplace:

- **Critical thinking.** In many assignments and activities, students need to define and solve problems and make decisions or form judgments.
- **Collaboration.** Team-skills assignments provide multiple opportunities to work with classmates on reports, presentations, and other projects.
- **Knowledge application and analysis.** From the basic communication process to strategies for specific message types, students will learn a variety of concepts and apply that knowledge to a wide range of challenges.
- **Business ethics and social responsibility.** Ethical choices are stressed from the beginning of the book, and multiple projects encourage students to be mindful of the ethical implications that they could encounter in similar projects on the job.
- **Information technology skills.** Projects and activities in every chapter help students build skills with technology, including document preparation tools, online communication services, presentation software, and messaging systems.
- **Data literacy.** Report projects in particular present opportunities to fine-tune data literacy skills, including the ability to access, assess, interpret, manipulate, summarize, and communicate data.

Hundreds of realistic exercises, activities, and cases offer an array of opportunities for students to practice vital skills and put newfound knowledge to immediate use.

These resources are logically sorted by learning category, from conceptual recall to situational analysis to skill development.

To help instructors zero in on specific learning needs, activities are tagged in multiple ways, from media usage to team skills.

## Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

6-1. What are the situations in which a printed memo or letter

## Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

6-6. What are three innovative ways you could optimize your

## Practice Your Skills

### Exercises for Perfecting Your Writing

To review chapter content related to each set of exercises, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

## Expand Your Skills

### Critique the Professionals

Locate the YouTube channel page of any company you find interesting and assess its social networking presence using the criteria for effective communication discussed in this chapter and your own experience using social media. What does this company do might it improve? Using sts, write a brief analysis more than one page), cit-support from the chapter.

## EMAIL SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

7-34. **Message Strategies: Routine Responses [LO-4]** As administrative assistant to Walmart's director of marketing, you have just received a request from the company's webmaster to analyze

## BLOGGING SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

7-42. **Message Strategies: Good-News Messages [LO-4]**

Most people have heard of the Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony awards for television, music, movies, and theater performances.

## PROPOSAL-WRITING SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

11-27. **Message Strategies: Proposals [LO-1], [LO-4]**

Presentations can make—or break—careers and companies. A good presentation can bring in millions of dollars in new sales or fresh number

## CAREER SKILLS/SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS

13-24. **Message Strategies: Building a LinkedIn Profile [LO-4]** Your LinkedIn summary is a great opportunity to present a clear picture of who you are and what you can bring to a job.

**Your task:** Draft a summary for your LinkedIn profile, making sure to stay within the system's current length limits for this

and search online for eed more tips.

## Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from [real-timeupdates.com/bce8](http://real-timeupdates.com/bce8); select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 3, Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

### Level 1: Self-Assessment—Verbs

Review Section 1.3 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

### Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division,

### Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C), or download the document and make the corrections in your word-processing software.



## Table of Contents Overview

<b>Prologue</b>	<b>Building a Career with Your Communication Skills</b>	Learn how this course will help you launch an interesting and rewarding career
<b>Part 1</b>	<b>Business Communication Foundations</b>	
	1: Professional Communication in Today's Digital, Social, Mobile World	See what it means to communicate as a professional and learn essential concepts of ethics and diversity
	2: Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, and Business Etiquette	Learn how to work successfully in teams, collaborate on projects, and improve listening and etiquette
<b>Part 2</b>	<b>The Three-Step Writing Process</b>	
	3: Planning Business Messages	Discover a simple process that helps you write more effectively while spending less time and energy
	4: Writing Business Messages	Learn how to build credibility and achieve a conversational tone in your business writing
	5: Completing Business Messages	Make your writing more compelling with careful revision and produce attractive messages in any medium
<b>Part 3</b>	<b>Brief Business Messages</b>	
	6: Crafting Messages for Digital Channels	Adapt what you already know about digital and social media to the challenges of professional communication
	7: Writing Routine and Positive Messages	Maintain productive working relationships by writing routine messages quickly and easily
	8: Writing Negative Messages	Learn the secrets of sharing negative information in a thoughtful way
	9: Writing Persuasive Messages	Explore the techniques to make internal messages as well as marketing and sales messages more persuasive
<b>Part 4</b>	<b>Longer Business Messages</b>	
	10: Understanding and Planning Reports and Proposals	Simplify the process of writing informational and analytical reports and business proposals
	11: Writing and Completing Reports and Proposals	Create compelling visuals and put the finishing touches on formal reports and proposals
	12: Developing and Delivering Business Presentations	Develop engaging presentations and conquer the anxieties that every speaker feels
<b>Part 5</b>	<b>Employment Messages and Job Interviews</b>	
	13: Building Careers and Writing Résumés	Succeed with two of the most important documents you'll ever write—application letters and your résumé
	14: Applying and Interviewing for Employment	Make sure your talent and value shine through as you progress through the job-search process

## Instructor Teaching Resources

This program comes with the following teaching resources.

Supplements available to instructors at <a href="http://www.pearsonhighered.com">www.pearsonhighered.com</a>	Features of the Supplement
Instructor's Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter summary</li> <li>• Chapter outline</li> <li>• Teaching notes</li> <li>• Overcoming difficulties students often face</li> <li>• Suggested classroom exercises</li> <li>• Test Your Knowledge answers</li> <li>• Apply Your Knowledge answers</li> <li>• Practice Your Skills answers</li> <li>• Expand Your Skills answers</li> <li>• Case solutions (short message cases) and solution guidelines (report and proposal cases)</li> <li>• Improve your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage answers and solutions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1: Self-Assessment</li> <li>Level 2: Workplace Applications</li> <li>Level 3: Document Critique</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Test Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 1,700 multiple-choice, true/false, and essay questions</li> <li>• Answer explanations</li> <li>• Keyed by learning objective</li> <li>• Classified according to difficulty level</li> <li>• Classified according to learning modality: conceptual, application, critical thinking, or synthesis</li> <li>• Learning outcomes identified</li> <li>• AACSB learning standard identified (Ethical Understanding and Reasoning; Analytical Thinking Skills; Information Technology; Diverse and Multicultural Work; Reflective Thinking; Application of Knowledge)</li> </ul>
Computerized TestGen	<p>TestGen allows instructors to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• customize, save, and generate classroom tests.</li> <li>• edit, add, or delete questions from the Test Item Files.</li> <li>• analyze test results.</li> <li>• organize a database of tests and student results.</li> </ul>
PowerPoints	<p>Slides include all the graphs, tables, and equations in the textbook PowerPoints meet accessibility standards for students with disabilities. Features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keyboard and screen reader access</li> <li>• Alternative text for images</li> <li>• High contrast between background and foreground colors</li> </ul>

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John V. Thill

## BUILDING A CAREER WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

### Using This Course to Help Launch Your Career

This course will help you develop vital communication skills that 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.

#### GETTING READY TO TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR CAREER

Today's job market offers an exciting range of possibilities, from multinational corporations to small companies to entrepreneurial startups. Or, like many professionals, you might take the leap and invent your own job as an independent contractor.

No matter which path you choose, keep two important 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 in order to succeed, it's up to you to manage your career and look out for your own best interests.



Peter Bernik/Shutterstock

Are you comfortable working on your own? Independent workers have become an important part of the global workforce.

## 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 practically 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 talent is 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:<sup>1</sup>

- **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.



Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock

Communication skills will benefit your career, no matter what path or profession you pursue.

- **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.
- **Digital, social, and mobile media skills.** Today's workers need to know how to use common office software and to communicate using a wide range of digital media and systems.
- **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.

## 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, technology, people, ideas, numbers, 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?



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 begin to recognize a pattern of skills. Which of them might be valuable to potential employers?

Next, consider 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.

**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.	_____	_____	_____	_____

## 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, search for job openings in the professions and companies in which you are interested and identify the skills and attributes those employers want. If you lack any key elements, look for opportunities to gain additional experience or training. Consider part-time jobs, temporary positions that let you build important skills to apply in your dream job, and volunteering opportunities. Search the project listings at freelancing sites such as Upwork ([www.upwork.com](http://www.upwork.com)) to see whether you can compete for any of the available projects. Also consider applying your talents to *crowdsourcing* 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.

## 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. This can be a combination of print and digital materials. Your college might offer hosting for *e-portfolios*, which let you display 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. To see a selection of student e-portfolios from colleges around the United States, go to [real-timeupdates.com/bce8](http://real-timeupdates.com/bce8), select Student Assignments, and locate the link to student e-portfolios.

Throughout this course, pay close attention to the assignments marked "Portfolio Builder" (they start in Chapter 6). 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 that 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 that 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 cars or the performance emphasis of BMW. Similarly, when people who know you think about you, they have a particular 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. If you're not comfortable with the notion of presenting yourself as a brand, think instead of your *professional promise*. When people hear your name, what do you want them to think about you and your professional attributes and qualifications?

You will have multiple opportunities to plan and refine your personal brand during this course. For example, Chapter 6 offers tips on business applications of social media, which are key to personal branding, and Chapters 13 and 14 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:

- **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 13 offers more on this personal brand-building approach.
- **Clarify your professional theme.** Think in terms of a theme you would like to project. What do you want to be known as? Brilliant strategist? Hard-nosed, get-it-done tactician? Technical guru? Problem solver? Creative genius? Inspirational leader?
- **Create a headline.** Distill your professional promise down to a single headline, also known as a *tagline* or *elevator pitch*. The headline should be a statement of compelling value, not a generic job title. Instead of "I'm a social media specialist," you might say "I help small companies get the same reach on social media as giant corporations." If you don't yet have professional experience in your chosen field, express your headline in terms of educational qualifications: "With my degree in computer science and robotics, I am ready to help build the next generation of assistive technologies for people with motor, vision, and cognitive impairments."

- **Reach out and connect.** Major corporations spread the word about their brands with multimillion-dollar advertising campaigns. You can promote your brand at little or no cost. The secret is networking, which you'll learn more about in Chapter 13. 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.

### USING ALL THE JOB-SEARCH TOOLS AT YOUR DISPOSAL

As a final note, be sure to use all the job-search tools and resources available to you. For example, many companies now offer mobile apps that give you a feel for what it's like to work there and let you search for job openings. A variety of apps and websites can help you find jobs, practice interviewing, and build your professional network.

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

## Endnote

1. Courtland L. Bovè and John V. Thill, *Business in Action*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education, 2017), 19–22; “The Human Factor: The Hard Time Employers Have Finding Soft Skills,” Burning Glass Technologies, accessed 8 February 2017, [burning-glass.com](http://burning-glass.com).

# Business Communication Foundations

CHAPTER **1** Professional Communication in Today's Digital, Social, Mobile World

CHAPTER **2** Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, and Business Etiquette

**N**o 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, how social and mobile technologies are revolutionizing business communication, and how to adapt your communication experiences in life and college to the business world. Explore the advantages and the challenges of a diverse workforce and develop the skills that every communicator needs to succeed in today's global, multicultural business environment. Improve your skills in such vital areas as team interaction, etiquette, listening, and nonverbal communication.



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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

- 1 Define *communication*, and explain the importance of effective business communication.
- 2 Explain what it means to communicate as a professional in a business context.
- 3 Describe the communication process model, and explain how social media are changing the nature of business communication.
- 4 Outline the challenges and opportunities of mobile communication in business.
- 5 Define *ethics*, explain the difference between an ethical dilemma and an ethical lapse, and list six guidelines for making ethical communication choices.
- 6 Explain how cultural diversity affects business communication, and describe the steps you can take to communicate more effectively across cultural boundaries.
- 7 List four general guidelines for using communication technology effectively.
- 8 Identify six related skills that you will have the opportunity to develop as you work on your communication skills in this course.

### MyLab Business Communication

★ If your instructor is using MyLab Business Communication, visit [www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication](http://www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication) for videos, simulations, and writing exercises.

## COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

“Writing, communication skills, and organizational skills are scarce everywhere. These skills are in demand across nearly every occupation—and in nearly every occupation they’re being requested far more than you’d expect based on standard job profiles. Even fields like IT and engineering want people who can write.”  
—*The Human Factor: The Hard Time Employers Have Finding Soft Skills*, Burning Glass Technologies

Burning Glass Technologies continually studies the job market, using artificial intelligence to figure out what skills employers are looking for and comparing those with the skills that job seekers have to offer. After analyzing millions of job openings across a wide range of industries, one conclusion jumped out: Today’s employers are looking for people who know how to communicate. In every profession except two, communication skills are the most-requested qualification (and in those two professions, they ranked second).<sup>1</sup>

What does this mean to you? It means that no matter what career path you might follow, improving your communication skills will give you a significant competitive edge in the job market. And you’ve come to the right place: This course is designed to help you develop the skills that will help you get ahead.



Burning Glass applies artificial intelligence to the challenges of matching employer need with employee skill sets.

## Why Communication Is the Most Important Business Skill

**1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE**  
Define *communication*, and explain the importance of effective business communication.

**Communication** is the process of transferring information and meaning between *senders* and *receivers* using one or more media and communication channels. 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.<sup>2</sup> As Figure 1.1 illustrates, this sharing can happen in a variety of ways, including a simple and successful transfer of information, a negotiation 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 it 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 or launch.

### COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR CAREER

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

You can have the greatest plans and ideas in the world, but they usually aren't much 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.

If you work as a freelancer or independent contractor, you will need communication skills to “sell yourself” into each new opportunity.

The changing nature of employment is putting new pressure on communication skills, too. Companies such as Uber and Lyft are the most visible in the *gig economy*, where independent contractors work without many of the advantages or the disadvantages of regular employment. Many other companies now supplement their permanent workforces with independent contractors in a variety of business and technical fields 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 freelancers, working without the support network that an established company environment provides. You may need to “sell yourself” into each new contract, and you will need to communicate successfully in a wide range of work situations and take full responsibility for your career growth and success.

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.

#### 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 [real-timeupdates.com/bce8](https://real-timeupdates.com/bce8) and select Learn More in the Students section.

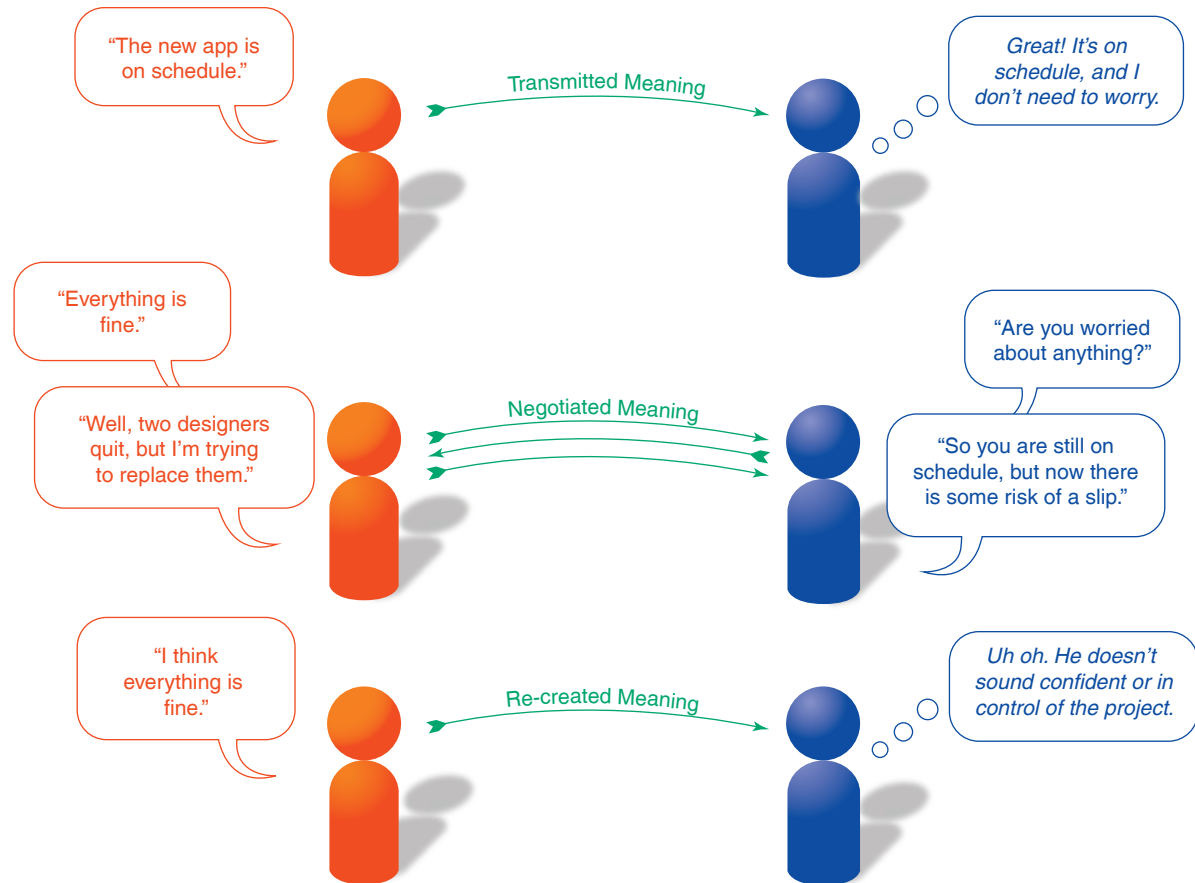
### COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR COMPANY

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, by promoting<sup>3</sup>

Effective communication is critical to virtually every aspect of business.

- A stronger sense of trust between individuals and organizations
- 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





**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.

- Stronger decision making based on timely, reliable information
- Clearer and more persuasive marketing messages
- Greater engagement of employees with their work, leading to higher employee satisfaction and lower employee turnover

## 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.<sup>4</sup> 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. Even when an opinion is called for, present compelling evidence to support your conclusion.

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

- **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 readers or listeners or what you can do for them.
- **Offer compelling, persuasive arguments and recommendations.** Show your readers precisely how they will benefit by responding to your message the way you want them to.

Keep these five characteristics in mind as you review the ineffective and effective versions of the message in Figure 1.2.

## Communicating as a Professional

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

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 Figure 1.3 on page 8).

A key message to glean from Figure 1.3 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.

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

Communication is an essential part of being a successful professional.

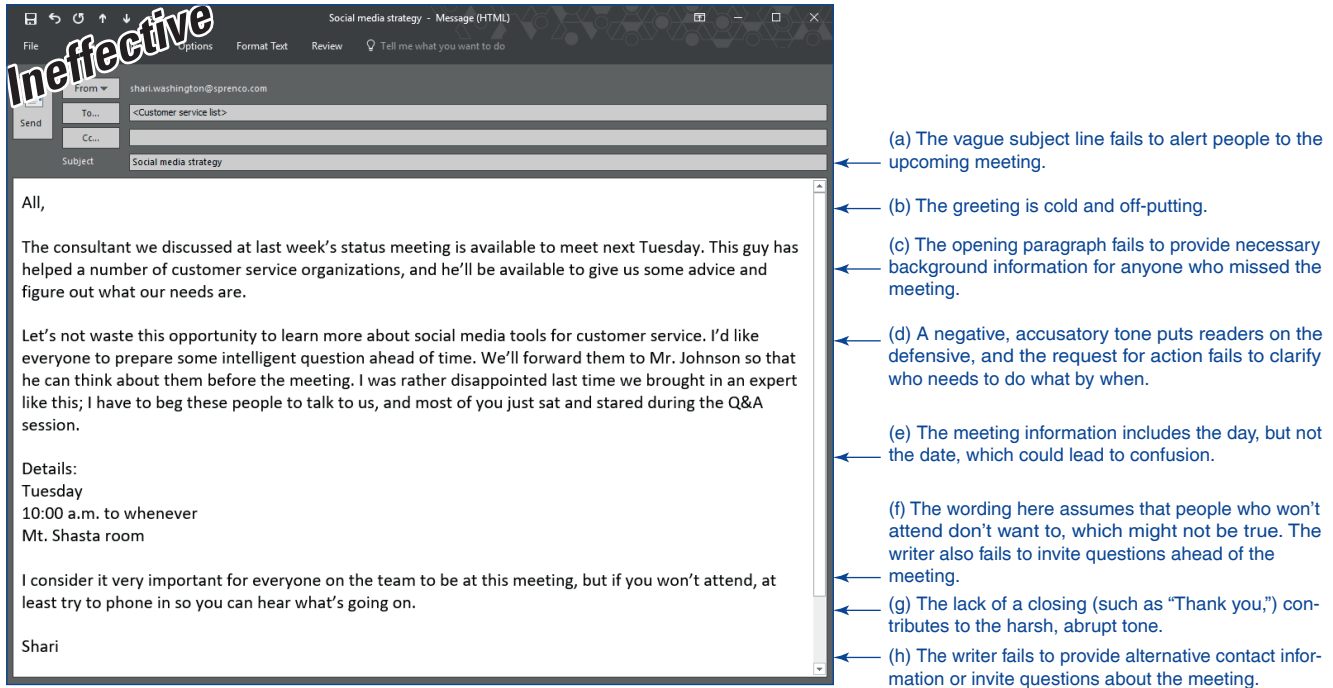
### UNDERSTANDING WHAT EMPLOYERS EXPECT FROM YOU

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:<sup>5</sup>

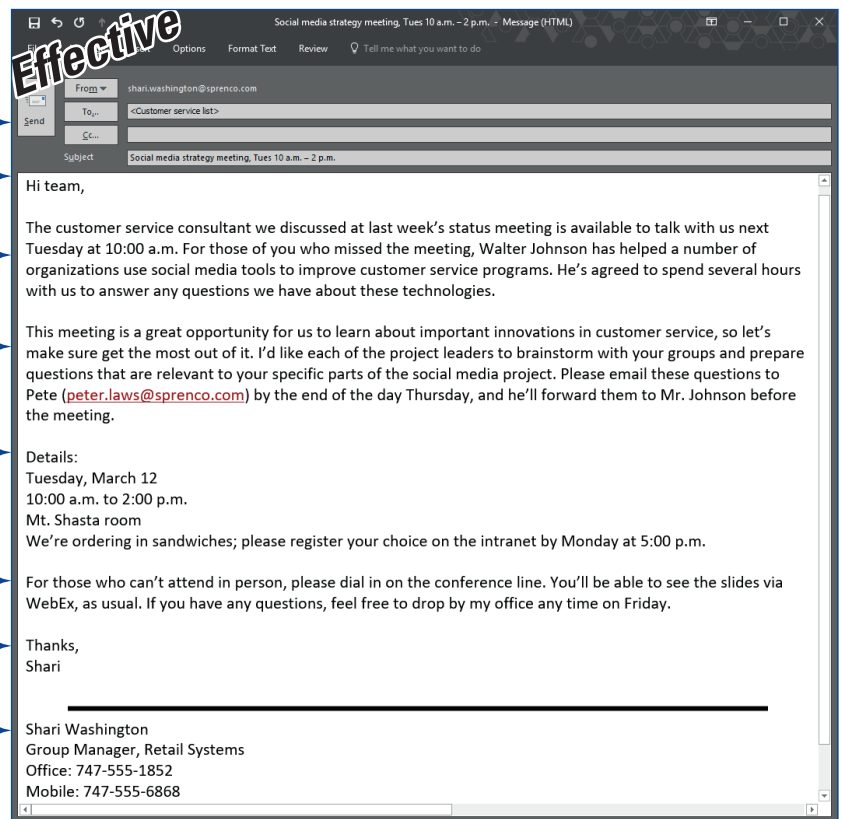
Employers expect you to have a broad set of communication skills, and you can practice all of these skills in this course.

- Recognizing information needs, using efficient search techniques to locate reliable sources of information, and using gathered information ethically; this collection of skills is often referred to as *digital information fluency*<sup>6</sup>
- 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
- Using **critical thinking**, which is the ability to evaluate evidence completely and objectively in order to form logical conclusions and make sound recommendations

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.



- (a) An informative subject line helps people grasp important details immediately.
- (b) The greeting is friendly without being too casual.
- (c) The opening paragraph fills in missing information so that everyone can grasp the importance of the message.
- (d) This upbeat paragraph emphasizes the positive value of the meeting, and the request provides enough information to enable readers to respond.
- (e) The date eliminates scheduling uncertainty.
- (f) The writer offers everyone a chance to participate, without making anyone feel guilty about not being able to attend in person. The closing paragraph invites questions ahead of time so they don't derail the meeting.
- (g) Like the greeting, the close has a warm and personal tone, without being too casual.
- (h) The email signature provides additional information and alternative contact options.



**Figure 1.2 Effective Professional Communication**

At first glance, the top email message here looks like a reasonable attempt at communicating with the members of a project team. However, compare it with the bottom version by referencing the notes lettered (a) through (h) to see just how many problems the original message really has.

Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation



**Figure 1.3 Elements of Professionalism**  
To be respected as a true professional, develop these six qualities.

## COMMUNICATING IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Every company has a formal communication network, where messages follow the lines of command in the organization structure.

Every company has also has an informal communication network—all the communication that takes place outside the formal network.

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 your social and scholastic environments. Every organization has a *formal* communication network in which ideas and information flow along the lines of command in the company's organization structure. When managers inform their subordinates about new company policies or sales representatives submit travel reports, they are using the formal communication network. This flow of “official” information—downward, upward, and horizontally throughout the organization—keeps all the parts of a company connected and functioning smoothly.

Every organization also has an *informal* communication network, often referred to as the *grapevine* or the *rumor mill*, which encompasses all the “unofficial” communication that occurs outside the formal network. Some of this informal communication takes place naturally when employees interact on the job and in social settings, and some of it takes place when the formal network doesn't provide information that employees want. In fact, the limitations of formal communication networks helped spur the growth of social media in the business environment. Communication in the informal network is healthy and important, because the formal network can't always capture and share all the information that helps people do their jobs. However, if a workplace is rife with rumors and company gossip, this could be a sign that the formal network is not functioning effectively.


## ADOPTING AN AUDIENCE-CENTERED APPROACH

Focus on the needs of your audiences to make your messages more effective.

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, 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 envision yourself in their position using common sense and imagination. This ability to relate to the needs of others is a key part of *emotional intelligence*, a combination of emotional and social skills widely considered to be a vital characteristic of successful managers and leaders. 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.



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Respect, courtesy, and common sense will help you avoid etiquette mistakes.

## Exploring the Communication Process

Even with the best intentions, communication efforts can fail. Fortunately, by understanding communication as a process with distinct steps, you can improve the odds that your messages will reach their intended audiences and produce their intended effects. This section explores the communication process in two stages: first by following a message from one sender to one receiver in the basic communication model, and then by expanding on that approach with multiple messages and participants in the social communication model.

**3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE**  
Describe the communication process model, and explain how social media are changing the nature of business communication.

### THE BASIC COMMUNICATION MODEL

Many variations of the communication process model exist, but these eight steps provide a practical overview (see Figure 1.4 on the next page):

1. **The sender has an idea.** Whether a communication effort will ultimately be effective starts right here and depends on the nature of the idea and the motivation for sending it. For example, if your motivation is to offer a solution to a problem, you have a better chance of crafting a successful message than if your motivation is merely to complain about the problem.
2. **The sender encodes the idea as a message.** When someone puts an idea into a **message**, he or she is **encoding** it, or expressing it in words or images. Much of the focus of this course is on developing the skills needed to successfully encode your ideas into effective messages.
3. **The sender produces the message in a transmittable medium.** With the appropriate message to express an idea, the sender now needs a **communication medium** to present that message to the intended receiver. To update your boss on the status of a project, for instance, you might have several media options at your disposal, from a phone call to an instant message to a slideshow presentation. Each medium has its own strengths and weaknesses, which you’ll learn more about in Chapter 3.
4. **The sender transmits the message through a channel.** As technology continues to increase the number of media options, it continues to provide new **communication channels** senders can use to transmit their messages. The distinction between medium and channel can get a bit murky, but think of the medium as the *form* a message takes (written versus spoken, for example) and the channel as the

The communication process starts with a sender having an idea and then encoding the idea into a message that can be transferred to a receiver.