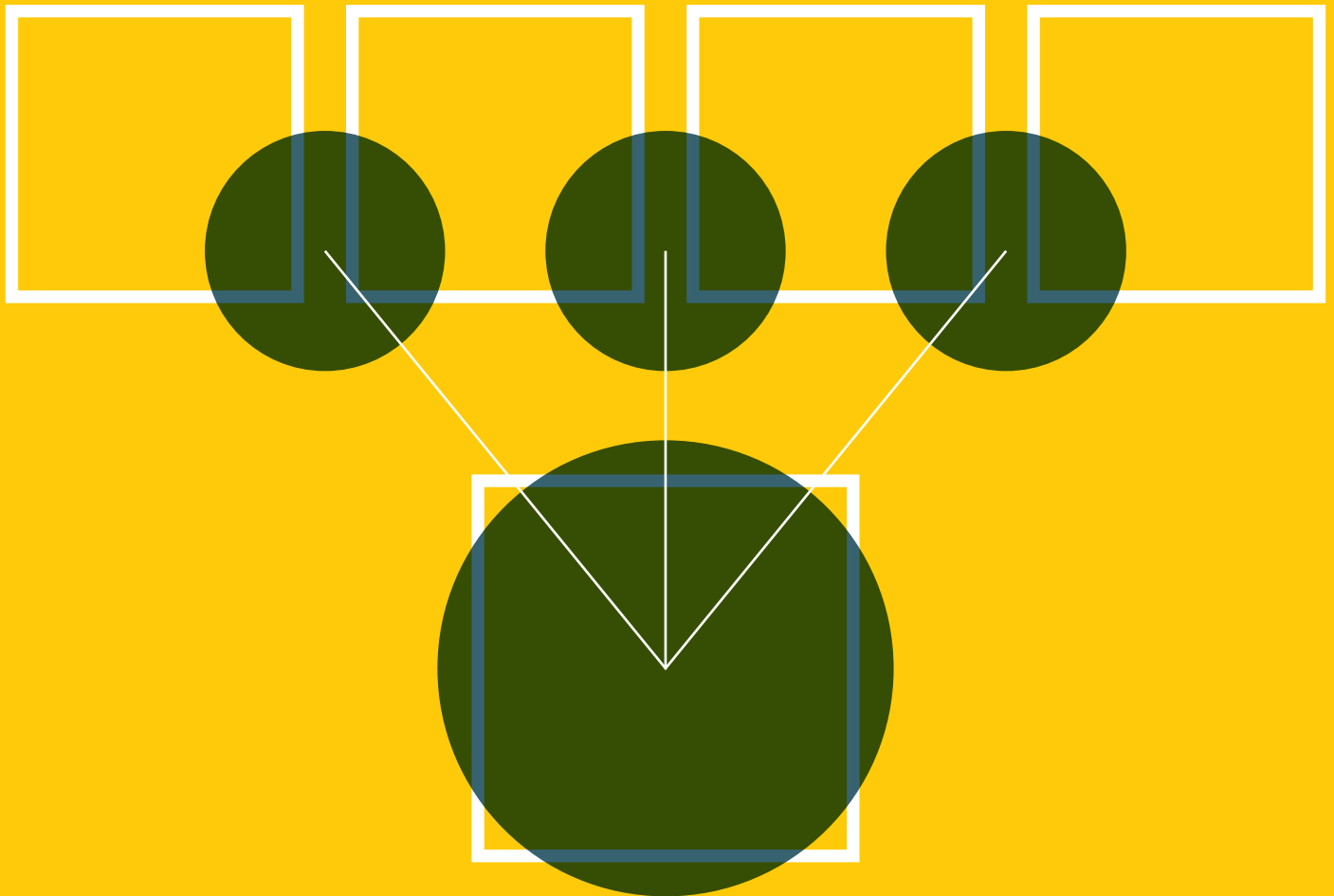




Mary Ellen Guffey
Dana Loewy
Richard Almonte



Essentials of Business Communication





Essentials of Business Communication

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NELSON

Learning With Guffey...

From the emphasis on writing in an increasingly digital workplace to updated model documents, Guffey, Loewy, and Almonte have updated tools and created new ways to keep you interested and engaged.

The following six pages describe features that will help you succeed in today's technologically enhanced workplace.

Essentials of Business Communication offers a three-in-one learning package that gets results:

- Authoritative textbook
- Practical workbook
- Self-teaching Grammar/Mechanics Handbook

EMPHASIS ON GRAMMAR

Throughout the text, you are encouraged to build on your basic grammar skills. The Grammar/Mechanics Handbook coupled with the Web-based Grammar/Mechanics Checkups and Grammar/Mechanics Challenges help you practise and sharpen your skills.

EMPHASIS ON PROFESSIONALISM

The Ninth Canadian Edition increases its emphasis on professional workplace behaviours and illustrates the importance of professionalism. Businesses have a keen interest in a professional workforce that effectively works together to deliver positive results that ultimately boost profits and bolster a company's image. In this edition, you'll discover the professional characteristics most valued in today's competitive workplace.

CAREER RELEVANCE

Because employers often rank communication skills among the most requested competencies, the Ninth Canadian Edition emphasizes the link between excellent communication skills and career success—helping you see for yourself the critical role business communication will play in your life.

It's Just That Easy!

FIGURE 2.6 | Applying Expert Writing Techniques to Improve an Email

DRAFT

From: Christina Watkins <cwatkins@biotech.ca>
To: All BioTech Team Members
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Company Needs to Reduce Employee Driving Trips to Office

Our company faces harsh governmental penalties if we fail to comply with the Air Quality Management District's program to reduce the number of automobile trips made by employees.

The aforementioned program stipulates that we offer incentives to entice employees to discontinue driving their vehicles as a means of transportation to and from this place of employment.

First, we are prepared to offer a full day off without penalty. However, the employee must not drive to work and must maintain a 75 percent vanpool participation rate for six months. Second, we offer a vanpool subsidy of \$100 a month, and the vanpool driver will not be limited in the personal use he makes of the vehicle on his own time. Third, employees in the vanpool will not be forced to park in outlying lots.

Pertaining to our need to have you leave your cars at home, all employees are herewith instructed to communicate with Saul Salazar, who will be facilitating the above-referenced program.

REVISION

From: Christina Watkins <cwatkins@biotech.ca>
To: All BioTech Team Members
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Great Perks for Driving Less

Hi, Team,

Want to earn a full day off with pay, reduce the stress of your commute, and pay a lot less for gas? You can enjoy these and other perks if you make fewer driving trips to the office.

As part of the Air Quality Management District's Trip Reduction Plan, you can enjoy the following benefits by reducing the number of trips you make to work:

- Full Day Off.** If you maintain a 75 percent participation rate in our ride-share program for a six-month period, you will receive one day off with pay.
- Vanpool Subsidy.** By joining a vanpool, you will receive assistance in obtaining a van along with a monthly \$100 subsidy. Even better, if you become a vanpool driver, you will also have unlimited personal use of the vehicle off company time.
- Preferential Parking.** By coming to work in vanpools, you can park close to the building in reserved spaces.

Why not help the environment, reduce your gas bill, and enjoy other perks by joining this program? For more information and to sign up, please contact Saul Salazar at ssctazar@biotech.com before February 1.

Chris
 Christina Watkins
 Senior Coordinator, Human Resources
 cwatkins@biotech.ca
 (902) 349-5871

Callouts for Draft:

- Focuses on sender rather than presenting ideas with audience benefits
- Presents ideas negatively (*penalty, must not drive, will not be limited, will not be forced*) and assumes driver will be male
- Negative-sounding subject line
- Uses unfamiliar words (*aforementioned, stipulates, entice*)
- Doesn't use plain English or conversational tone (*pertaining to, herewith, facilitating, above-referenced*)

Callouts for Revision:

- Positive-sounding subject line
- Opens with "you" view and audience benefits
- Phrases option in bulleted list with "you" view highlighting benefits (*day off, less driving stress, lower gas bill*)
- Repeats audience benefits with conversational tone and familiar words

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More Before-and-After Model Documents

Before-and-after sample documents and descriptive callouts create a road map to the writing process, demonstrating the effective use of the skills being taught, as well as the significance of the revision process.

Learning With Guffey...

Office Insider

To accentuate how excellent communication skills translate into career success, the *Office Insider* demonstrates the importance of communication skills in real-world practice.

OFFICE INSIDER

“Civility on the job creates an atmosphere of respect and appreciation that ultimately translates to a better reputation and, hence, to better business.”

— Ronald M. Bosrock, founder and director of The Global Institute, a research centre

Workplace in Focus Photo Essays

Vivid photos with intriguing stories demonstrate real-world applications of business communication concepts. Each photo essay concludes with a critical thinking question.

WORKPLACE IN FOCUS

At credit card company Amex's Canadian headquarters in Toronto, brainstorming and informal research is built right into the office architecture. In a recent head-office move, Amex decided to devote 20 percent of its office floor space—on every floor—to “open, collaborative spaces so employees can set up meetings in the conference room, grab a couch by a window, or enjoy a whiteboard brainstorming session over lunch with a colleague—all without compromising their connectivity.”¹ Encouraging employees to seek out information in this way, instead of sitting in a cubicle or office all day, has a double impact: it encourages the type of research gathering necessary in an ideas-based economy, and it suits the preferences of Millennial workers who appreciate collaboration and informality in the workplace. *What type of collaborations have you participated in at work?*



It's Just That Easy!

WRITING PLAN FOR PROFESSIONAL EMAILS

- **Subject line:** Summarize the main information/request in condensed form.
- **Greetings:** Say hello and goodbye politely.
- **Opening:** Reveal the reason for writing immediately in a more expanded form than in the subject line.
- **Body:** Explain or justify the reason using headings, bulleted lists, and other high-skim techniques when appropriate.
- **Closing:** Include (a) action information, dates, or deadlines; (b) a summary of the message; or (c) a closing thought.

Writing Plans

Ample step-by-step writing plans help you get started quickly on organizing and formatting messages.

Closes with forward look

A number of other payroll services offer outstanding programs. I'm sure we can find the perfect partner to enable you to outsource your payroll responsibilities, thus allowing your company to focus its financial and human resources on its core business. I look forward to our next appointment when you may choose from a number of excellent payroll outsourcing firms.

Sincerely,

Jane Moffatt
Jane Moffatt
Partner

Tips for Resolving Problems and Following Up

- Whenever possible, call or see the individual involved.
- Describe the problem and apologize.
- Explain why the problem occurred.
- Take responsibility, if appropriate.
- Explain what you are doing to resolve it.
- Explain what you are doing to prevent recurrence.
- Follow up with a message that documents the personal contact.
- Look forward to positive future relations.

Tips for Preparing Business Messages

Tips boxes summarize practical suggestions for creating effective business messages. Study them before completing your writing assignments.

Learning With Guffey...

Chapter Review and Critical Thinking Exercises

End-of-chapter questions reinforce concepts covered in each chapter.

CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Define *communication*. When is it successful? (Obj. 1)
2. List the five steps in the communication process. (Obj. 1)
3. In what ways is business writing different from high school writing and private messages? (Obj. 2)
4. Describe the components in each stage of the 3-x-3 writing process. (Obj. 2)
5. What does *WIFM* mean? Why is it important to business writers? (Obj. 3)
6. What seven factors should writers consider in selecting an appropriate channel to deliver a message? (Obj. 3)
7. What is the "you" view? When can the use of the pronoun *you* backfire? (Obj. 4)
8. How can a business writer sound conversational but also be professional? (Obj. 4)
9. Why is positive wording more effective in business messages than negative wording? (Obj. 5)
10. What are three ways to avoid biased language? Give an original example of each. (Obj. 5)

CRITICAL THINKING

1. Has digital transmission changed the nature of communication? (Obj. 1)
2. Why do you think employers prefer messages that are not written like high school writing? (Obj. 2)
3. Why should business writers strive to use short, familiar, simple words? Does this "dumb down" business messages? (Obj. 5)
4. A wise observer once said that bad writing makes smart people look dumb. Do you agree or disagree, and why? (Objs. 1–5)
5. In a letter to the editor, a teacher criticized a newspaper article on autism because it used the term *autistic child* rather than *child with autism*. She championed *people-first* terminology, which avoids defining individuals by their ability or disability.⁶ For example, instead of identifying someone as a *disabled person*, one would say, *she has a disability*. What does *people-first language* mean? How can language change perceptions? (Obj. 5)

It's Just That Easy!

ACTIVITIES AND CASES

5.1 EMAIL THAT INFORMS AND REQUESTS: DRESS CODE CONTROVERSY (OBJ. 1)

As the Montreal-based director of Human Resources at Sensational, you have not had a good week. The national media recently reported the fact that Sensational—a leading women's fashion chain—has been taken before the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission to defend against a claim by a young woman. The young woman recently applied for a job at a Halifax Sensational location and was told in a pre-interview with a manager that "she'd never be hired if she wore her headaddress to work." Citing the Commission's website claim that "It's against the law to fire an employee because he wears clothing that is required by his religion," the young woman lodged a complaint.⁴⁴ Head office in Vancouver has been in damage-control mode ever since.

Your Task. Quickly realizing the effects the negative media reporting will have, you draft an email to all employees. The purpose of the email is to reaffirm that Sensational abides by and supports all Canadian human rights legislation and, at the same time, that employees should not talk to any media that may ask them for comments. You realize that these two messages are somewhat contradictory (one positive, one negative), but you feel time is of the essence.

Related website: Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (www.gov.ns.ca/humanrights).

Activities and Cases

Chapter concepts are translated into action as you try out your skills in activities designed to mirror real-world experiences.

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Today's graduates enter working environments with ever-increasing demands. As a result of growing emphasis on team management and employee empowerment, they will be expected to gather data, solve problems, and make decisions independently. They will be working with global trading partners and collaborating with work teams in an increasingly diverse workplace. And they will be using sophisticated technologies to communicate.

Surprisingly, writing skills are becoming more and more important. In the past businesspeople may have written a couple of business letters a month, but now they receive and send hundreds of emails and texts weekly. Their writing skills are showcased in every message they send. To help students develop the skills they need to succeed in today's technologically enhanced workplace, we have responded with a thoroughly revised Ninth Canadian Edition of *Essentials of Business Communication*.

Effective Features That Remain Unchanged

The Ninth Canadian Edition maintains the streamlined, efficient approach to communication that has equipped past learners with the skills needed to be successful in their work. It is most helpful to postsecondary and adult learners preparing themselves for new careers, planning a change in their current careers, or wanting to upgrade their writing and speaking skills. The aim of this edition is to incorporate more of the comments, suggestions, and insights provided by adopters and reviewers over the past few years. For those new to the book, some of the most popular features include the following:

- **Text/Workbook Format.** The convenient text/workbook format presents an all-in-one teaching–learning package that includes concepts; workbook application exercises; writing, speaking, and interpersonal challenges; and a combination handbook/reference manual.
- **Comprehensive but Concise Coverage.** An important reason for the enormous success of *Essentials of Business Communication* is that it practises what it preaches. The Ninth Canadian Edition follows the same strategy, concentrating on essential concepts presented without wasted words.
- **Writing Plans and Writing Improvement Exercises.** Step-by-step writing plans structure the writing experience so that novice writers get started quickly—without struggling to provide unknown details to unfamiliar, hypothetical cases. Many revision exercises build confidence and skills.
- **Wide Coverage of Communication Technology.** All relevant chapters build technology skills by including discussions and applications involving email, instant messaging, texting, cellphones, Web research, contemporary software, online employment searches, and electronic presentations. The Ninth Canadian Edition stays on top of the use of mediated communication within organizations, including the use of social media sites, like Twitter, and blogs for both business and marketing communication.
- **Challenging Cases.** The reality of the work world is that communication situations will not always easily fit the models provided in a business communication textbook. As a result, we have threaded ambiguity and complexity into the tasks

so that students have a chance to use their critical thinking skills as well as their business communication skills regularly.

- **Workplace in Focus Feature.** Chapters contain a Workplace in Focus feature that connects the content being discussed in the chapter to a real-world example. These features make ideal starting points for in-class discussion.
- **Communication Technology in the News Feature.** Units open with articles from Canadian media outlets that bring home the relevance of business communication to today's technology-driven workplace. Topics covered range from texting lingo in the workplace to mastering anger when sending email.
- **Plagiarism.** An unfortunate reality of the Internet age is the difficulty today's students have in understanding the need for proper citation and documentation, as well as the difficulty in understanding the seriousness of plagiarism and its difficult repercussions. We address the issue of plagiarism by offering concrete examples of the real-world ramifications of this behaviour.

Revision Highlights

The following features were updated for the Ninth Canadian Edition:

- **Situational Focus.** The reality of business communication is that people need to be able to respond effectively and professionally in a variety of workplace situations. This is different from memorizing a number of genres or formats. For this reason, while the Ninth Canadian Edition includes a rich introductory chapter covering a multitude of daily forms of communication (e.g., text, email, Web conference, social media), it expands on this generic way of thinking by considering important, realistic, and recurring business situations divided into three categories: daily, persuasive, and negative.
- **New and Revised End-of-Chapter Exercises and Activities.** This edition features a significant revision of the end-of-chapter exercises, activities, and cases. The *Chapter Review*, *Critical Thinking* questions, and *Activities and Cases* feature more than 15 percent new content. As with the last edition, these new cases recognize the pedagogical usefulness of scripting, role play, and performance as effective means of practising business communication skills.
- **New Technology in the News Boxes.** Every unit opens with a new and current Canadian newspaper article focusing on technology and communication in the workplace. Covering a wide range of topics, from creating online profiles for job seekers to the rise of incivility in the increasingly technological workplace, these articles are timely and relevant, and they will enhance students' understanding of how communication can be influenced by shifts in technology.
- **New Workplace in Focus Boxes.** These boxes have been refreshed to reflect current trends in communication in the workplace.
- **Increased Analysis of New Communication Technologies.** Technology manufacturers' ability to innovate can seem to outstrip teachers' ability to contextualize the changes happening to communication. This edition stays ahead of the curve by contextualizing podcasts, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, wikis, blogs, and other of-the-moment technologies in more detail than any other business communication textbook.

Other Features That Enhance Teaching and Learning

Although the Ninth Canadian Edition of *Essentials of Business Communication* packs considerable information into a small space, it covers all of the critical topics

necessary in a comprehensive business communication course; it also features many teaching–learning devices to facilitate instruction, application, and retention.

- **Focus on Writing Skills.** Most students need a great deal of instruction and practice in developing basic and advanced writing techniques, particularly in view of today’s increased emphasis on communication by email. Writing skills have returned to the forefront since so much of today’s business is transacted through written messages.
- **Realistic Emphasis.** *Essentials* devotes a chapter to the writing of email, texts, and instant messages, plus other daily forms of communication, recognizing that the business world no longer operates via letter or memo except in certain specialized situations (e.g., direct-mail sales letter, collection letters, cover letters for job applications, etc.).
- **Listening, Speaking, and Nonverbal Skills.** Employers are increasingly seeking well-rounded individuals who can interact with fellow employees as well as represent the organization effectively. *Essentials* provides professional tips for managing nonverbal cues; overcoming listening barriers; developing speaking skills; planning and participating in meetings; and making productive telephone calls.
- **Coverage of Formal and Informal Reports.** Two chapters develop functional report-writing skills. Chapter 8 provides detailed instruction in the preparation of six types of informal reports, while Chapter 9 covers proposals and formal reports. For quick comprehension, all reports contain marginal notes that pinpoint writing strategies.
- **Employment Communication Skills.** Successful résumés, cover letters, and other employment documents are among the most important topics in a good business communication course. *Essentials* provides the most realistic and up-to-date résumés in the field. The models show chronological, functional, combination, and computer-friendly résumés.
- **Focus on Oral Communication Skills.** Chapter 10 looks at oral interpersonal skills: person-to-person conversations, telephone communication (including cell-phone etiquette), and business meeting skills, while Chapter 11 specifically discusses business presentation skills.
- **Employment Interviewing.** *Essentials* devotes a chapter to effective interviewing techniques, including a discussion of screening interviews and hiring interviews. Chapter 13 also teaches techniques for fighting fear, answering questions, and following up.
- **Models Comparing Effective and Ineffective Documents.** To facilitate speedy recognition of good and bad writing techniques and strategies, *Essentials* presents many before-and-after documents. Marginal notes spotlight targeted strategies and effective writing. We hope that instructors turn this before-and-after technique into effective pedagogy whereby all their students’ written assignments undergo the scrutiny of an editing and revising process before being handed in as final products.
- **Variety in End-of-Chapter Activities.** An amazing array of review questions, critical-thinking questions, activities, and realistic case problems holds student attention and helps them apply chapter concepts meaningfully.
- **Grammar/Mechanics Handbook.** A comprehensive Grammar/Mechanics Handbook supplies a thorough review of English grammar, punctuation, capitalization style, and number usage. Its self-teaching exercises may be used for classroom instruction or for supplementary assignments. The handbook also serves as a convenient reference throughout the course and afterwards.

MindTap

Stay organized and efficient with **MindTap**—a single destination with all the course material and study aids students need to succeed. The MindTap that accompanies this textbook includes the following:

- Animated model documents
- Videocases and interviews with Canadian industry professionals
- Aplia™ offers high-quality, auto-graded assignments that ensure students put forth effort on a regular basis throughout the term.
- YouSeeU is an interactive platform where students can record and upload videos using easy-to-use recording tools that are accessible on multiple devices. Instructors can easily view and grade submitted video assignments and offer valuable commentary at a precise frame for targeted feedback.
- Study tools like practice quizzes, chapter PowerPoint summaries, and flashcards
- ReadSpeaker will read the text aloud.
- Highlight the text and make notes in the MindTap Reader. Notes will flow into Evernote, the electronic notebook app that is accessible anywhere when it's time to study for the exam.
- All written assignments can be uploaded into Pathbrite, our e-portfolio app. Access to Pathbrite continues after the MindTap access expires.

Visit nelson.com/student to start using MindTap. Enter the Online Access Code from the card included with the textbook. If a code card is not provided, instant access can be purchased at NELSONbrain.com.

Instructor Resources



The **Nelson Education Teaching Advantage (NETA)** program delivers research-based instructor resources that promote student engagement and higher-order thinking to enable the success of Canadian students and educators. Visit Nelson Education's **Inspired Instruction** website at nelson.com/inspired/ to find out more about NETA.

The following instructor resources have been created for *Essentials of Business Communication*, Ninth Canadian Edition. Access these ultimate tools for customizing lectures and presentations at nelson.com/instructor.

NETA Test Bank

This resource was written by Karen McLaren, Cambrian College. It includes over 325 multiple-choice questions written according to NETA guidelines for effective construction and development of higher-order questions. Also included are over 195 true/false questions and over 130 fill-in-the-blank questions.

The NETA Test Bank is available in a new, cloud-based platform. **Nelson Testing Powered by Cognero®** is a secure online testing system that allows instructors to author, edit, and manage test bank content from anywhere Internet access is available. No special installations or downloads are needed, and the desktop-inspired interface, with its drop-down menus and familiar, intuitive tools, allows instructors to create and manage tests with ease. Multiple test versions can be created in an instant, and content can be imported or exported into other systems. Tests can be delivered from a learning management system, the classroom, or wherever an instructor chooses. Nelson Testing Powered by Cognero for *Essentials of Business Communication*, Ninth Canadian Edition, can be accessed through nelson.com/instructor.



NETA PowerPoint

Microsoft® PowerPoint® lecture slides for every chapter have been created by Lisa Jamieson, Red River College. There is an average of 30 slides per chapter, many featuring key figures, tables, and photographs from *Essentials of Business Communication*, Ninth Canadian Edition. The Notes feature also includes additional activities and ideas for discussion. NETA principles of clear design and engaging content have been incorporated throughout, making it simple for instructors to customize the deck for their courses.

Image Library

This resource consists of digital copies of figures, short tables, and photographs used in the book. Instructors may use these jpegs to customize the NETA PowerPoint or create their own PowerPoint presentations. An Image Library Key describes the images and lists the codes under which the jpegs are saved.

NETA Instructor Guide

The Instructor's Manual to accompany *Essentials of Business Communication*, Ninth Canadian Edition, has been prepared by Karen McLaren, Cambrian College. This manual contains sample lesson plans, learning objectives, and suggested classroom activities to give instructors the support they need to engage their students within the classroom.

Instructor's Solutions Manual

This manual, prepared by Karen McLaren of Cambrian College, contains complete solutions to Critical Thinking Questions, Chapter Review Questions, and Activities and Cases.

Media Guide

The Media Guide includes teaching materials for all video cases selected to accompany *Essentials of Business Communication*, Ninth Canadian Edition.

The Ninth Canadian Edition of *Essentials of Business Communication* includes many of the constructive suggestions and timely advice provided by professional communicators, educators, and students who use the book across Canada. These dedicated reviewers include the following:

Bob Ackroyd, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
Marie Brodie, Nova Scotia Community College Truro
Katherine Dyck, Saskatchewan Polytechnic
Lara Loze, Durham College
Heather Lundy, RCC Institute of Technology
Catrina McBride, Algonquin College
John McLean, Humber College
Tetiana Seredynska, HEC Montréal
Panteli Tritchew, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

A new edition like this would not be possible without the development team at Nelson. Special thanks go to Alexis Hood, Lisa Peterson, Amanda Henry, and Natalia Denesiuk Harris. We would also like to thank Megha Bhardwaj and the team at MPS. Thanks also go to the copy editor, Kate Unrau.

Mary Ellen Guffey
Dana Loewy
Richard Almonte

Business Communication in the Digital Age

UNIT 01

CHAPTER 1 Communicating in the Digital-Age Workplace



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NEL

COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE NEWS

The next big thing in video communications

Gillian Shaw, Vancouver Sun, May 6, 2015

Vancouver start-up Perch launched with a video-messaging service but it has morphed into an always-on video portal that allows companies with employees around the globe to create virtual offices.

It's the third incarnation for Perch's product, first conceived as a security system that turned old iPods into home monitoring cameras. That was before the company's cofounder and CEO Danny Robinson's kids started using the system to leave him video messages, turning beta testing into video messaging.

As with many tech start-ups, that turned out to be only a stepping stone to the commercial product that's now being used by employees at hundreds of companies around the globe and most recently had Perch named one of five Cool Vendors in Unified Communications for 2015 by industry analyst Gartner.

"The aha moment was when my daughter came home and held up her report card to the iPad to show Danny," said Maura Rodgers, Robinson's wife. She is founder of the social promotions platform Strutta and Perch's vice-president of marketing. "We thought, this is very cool, the kids are using it to communicate directly. What if it could be live."

The way Perch works is by using a dedicated iPad mounted at work or at home with the Perch app (though you can use Perch anywhere you have an Internet connection with an iPad or iPhone). You can set up a Perch portal using your email (although for security reasons not free online services like Gmail and others) and once that's verified you can invite colleagues.

Users can control their availability. They can opt to turn Perch on and let others in their network use the iPad's camera to see that they're available to chat. If you want to talk to someone, walk up to the Perch screen and the face detection automatically unmutes the microphone.

"You can use it in live mode, where you essentially create a virtual window to connect spaces or you can use it where it's online but more of an ambient mode, where there are images that broadcast your

availability and let people know that you are available to talk," said Rodgers.

Unlike video calling services such as Skype or FaceTime, Perch doesn't require a call—you can just walk up to it and start talking.

That's what Carman Neustaedter's one-and-a-half-year-old son does when he wants to get grandma's attention—or at least his version of talking. Grandma's in Kelowna, but connected via a portal in the family's kitchen.

"When my one-and-a-half-year-old was born, we had already started using Perch," said Neustaedter, an assistant professor in Simon Fraser University's School of Interactive Arts & Technology, whose research focuses on human-computer interaction and interaction design. "He can push a stool to the kitchen counter and when he climbs up to look at the screen, he knows he's looking at grandma's house.

"He'll start squawking to get her attention."

Neustaedter said video calling and connection services such as Skype, FaceTime and Google Hangout are designed with a calling mode.

"To me what Perch is doing that's really smart is changing the connection model that people use," he said.

Neustaedter said the traditional calling mode "is growing stale," and while people will try leaving connections open on other video calling services, they're not designed for it and the result he said is "clunky."

"Perch is designed for that purpose to leave a connection open for a long period of time and so I see this as a transition to this new way of connecting that makes more sense for people as they begin to rethink the way they connect with their family and friends and coworkers."

Perch is based on a freemium model. It's free for download but with added features at a fee for large corporate users that want to use the system to keep their employees connected.

Rodgers, who uses Perch to stay connected with her mother in Boston, said she is also increasingly hearing from companies and individuals who



are using Perch to connect to elderly parents and relatives.

“It’s so simple for my Mom to use,” said Rodgers. “She knows when I’m there and she’ll just pop in

and say ‘I haven’t see you in a couple of days, what have you been up to?’

“It lets me know how she’s doing and I get to see how she’s doing.”

Summarize the article you’ve just read in a two- to three-sentence paragraph. Answer the following questions, either on your own or in a small group. Be prepared to give your answers in a short presentation or in an email to your instructor.

QUESTIONS:

- 1.** How does what you’ve learned in this article change your perception of what business communication is or is not?
- 2.** How might what you’ve learned in this article be useful in changing your own school or workplace communication?
- 3.** Come up with pro and con arguments for the following debate/discussion topic: In the digital age, should employees who work from home expect the same kind of privacy as people who are not working from home? In other words, is it reasonable for an employer to expect an employee working from home to have an application like Perch installed so they can be available at all times?

Communicating in the Digital-Age Workplace

OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to

- 1.1** Describe how solid communication skills will improve your career prospects.
- 1.2** Confront barriers to effective listening.
- 1.3** Explain the importance of nonverbal communication.
- 1.4** Understand five common dimensions of culture and how they affect communication.
- 1.5** Use intercultural communication strategies to prevent miscommunication.



Yuri_Arcurs/stock by Getty Images

1.1 The Relationship Between Solid Communication Skills and Workplace Success

You may wonder what kind of workplace you will enter when you graduate and which skills you will need to be successful in it. Expect a fast-moving, competitive, and information-driven digital environment. Communication technology provides unmatched mobility and connects individuals anytime and anywhere in the world. Today's communicators interact using mobile electronic devices and access information stored on remote servers, in the cloud. This mobility and instant access explain why increasing numbers of workers must be available practically around the clock and must respond quickly.

1.1a Solid Communication Skills: Your Path to Success

Your ability to communicate is a powerful career sifter.¹ Strong communication skills will make you marketable even in a tough economic climate. When jobs are few and competition is fierce, superior communication skills will give you an edge over other job applicants. Recruiters rank communication high on their wish lists.² In a poll, 1,000 executives cited writing, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills

along with self-motivation and team skills as their top choices in new hires. Effective writing skills can be a stepping stone to great job opportunities; poorly developed writing skills, on the other hand, will derail a career. Given the increasing emphasis on communication, Canadian corporations are paying millions of dollars to communication coaches and trainers to teach employees the very skills that you are learning in this course. For example, Toronto-based Livewire, a leading provider of business communication services, and the winner of a 2017 International Association of Business Communicators Award of Excellence, lists among its clients well-known Canadian companies like BMO, Four Seasons, McCain Foods, and Telus.³

Because communication skills are learned, you control how well you communicate.

1.1b The Digital Revolution: Why Writing Skills Matter More Than Ever

People in today's workforce communicate more, not less, since information technology and the Internet have transformed the world of work. Thanks to technology, messages travel instantly to distant locations, reaching potentially huge audiences with a minimum of expense and effort. Work team members collaborate even when they are physically apart. Moreover, social media are playing an increasingly prominent role in business. In such a hyperconnected world, writing matters more than ever. Digital media require written communication, and workers' skills are always on display.⁴

As a result, employers seek employees with a broader range of skills and with higher levels of knowledge in their field than in the past.⁵ Unfortunately, a great number of workers can't deliver.⁶ A survey of corporations revealed that two thirds of salaried employees have some writing responsibility. About one third of them, however, do not meet the writing requirements for their positions.⁷ "Businesses are crying out—they need to have people who write better," said Gaston Caperton, business executive and former College Board president.⁸

Not surprisingly, many job listings mention the need for excellent oral and written communication skills. In a poll of recruiters, oral and written communication skills were, by a large margin, the top skill set sought.⁹ Among the top choices in two other surveys were teamwork, critical-thinking, analytical-reasoning, and oral and written communication skills.¹⁰ In addition, as you will learn in later chapters, recruiters will closely examine your social media presence to learn about your communication skills and professionalism. Naturally, they will not hire candidates who write poorly or post inappropriate content online.¹¹

TECHIES WRITE TOO. Even in technical fields such as accounting and information technology, you will need strong communication skills. An Accountemps poll of 1,400 chief financial officers revealed that 75 percent said that verbal, written, and interpersonal skills are more important today than they were in the past.¹² Technical experts must be able to communicate with others and explain their work clearly, says an IBM systems specialist.¹³ A survey of Web professionals showed that those with writing and copyediting skills were far less likely to have their jobs sent offshore.¹⁴ Another survey conducted by the Society for Information Management revealed that network professionals ranked written and oral communication skills among the top five most desired skills for new hires.¹⁵

BUSINESSES GENERATE A WIDE RANGE OF MESSAGES. Be prepared to use a variety of media. In addition to occasional traditional letters and memos, expect to communicate with the public and within the company by email,* instant messaging and texting, company blogs, collaboration software such as wikis, and social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. You will learn more about workplace communication technology in Chapter 5.

*The usage standard in this book is *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, Second Edition. Words such as *email* and *Web* are in a state of flux, and a single standard has yet to establish itself. The *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* continues to show conventional usage patterns.

OFFICE INSIDER

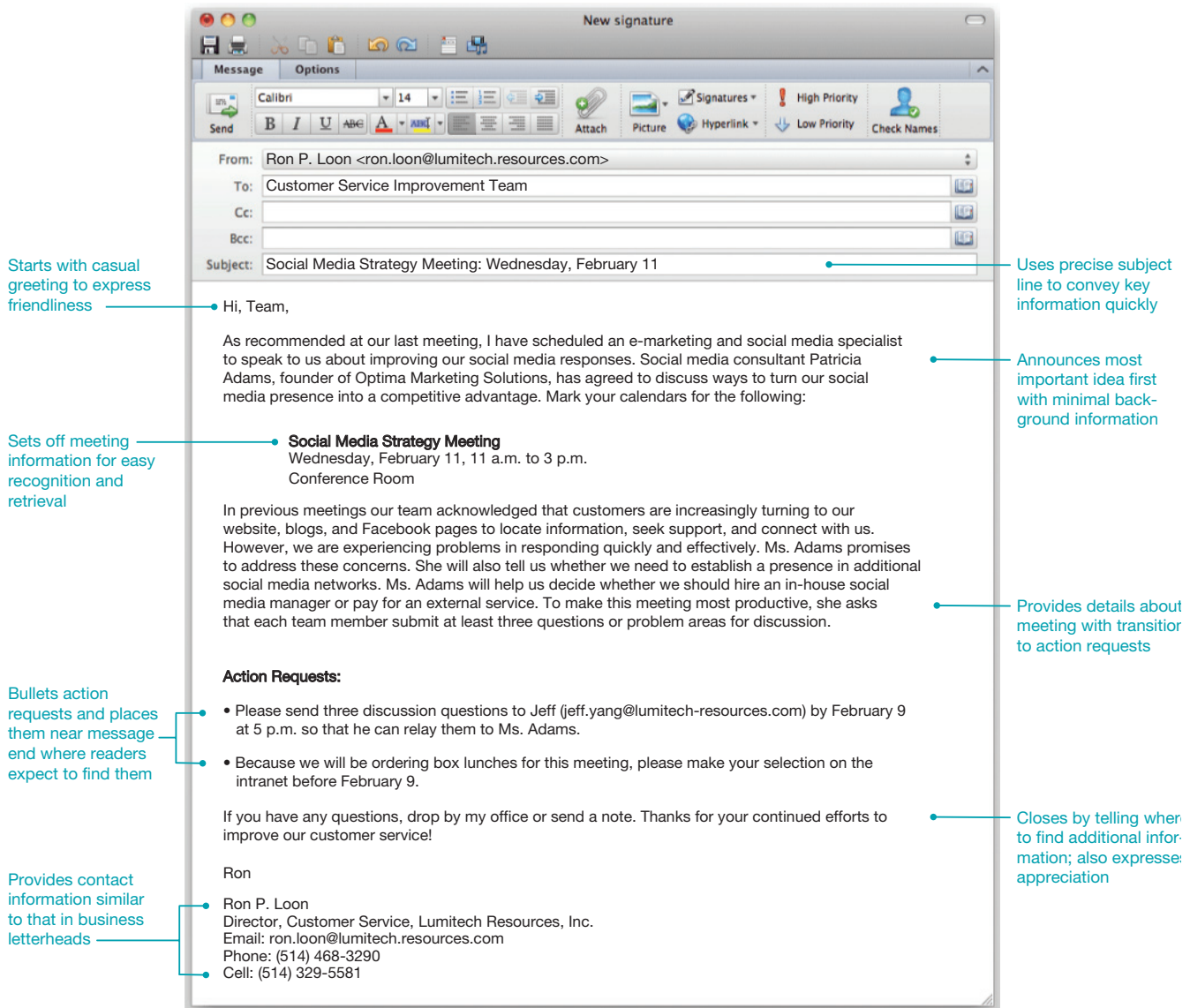
"Communicating clearly and effectively has NEVER been more important than it is today. Whether it's fair or not, life-changing critical judgments about you are being made based solely on your writing ability."

—Victor Urbach, management consultant

Office Insider based on Canavor, N. (2012). *Business writing in the digital age*. Los Angeles: Sage, p. 4.

Note: Small superscript numbers in the text announce information sources. Full citations begin on page 4 near the end of the book. This edition uses a modified APA reference format.

FIGURE 1.1 | Professional Email Message



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WRITING IS IN YOUR FUTURE. Regardless of career choice, you will probably be sending many digital messages, such as the email shown in Figure 1.1. In fact, email is “today’s version of the business letter or interoffice memo.”¹⁶ Because email and other digital media have become important channels of communication in today’s workplace, all digital business messages must be clear, concise, and professional. Notice that the message in Figure 1.1 is more professional than the quick email or text you might send socially. Learning to write professional digital messages will be an important part of this course.

1.1c What Employers Want: Professionalism

Your future employer will expect you to show professionalism and possess what are often referred to as “soft skills” in addition to your technical knowledge. Soft skills are essential career attributes that include the ability to communicate, work well with others, solve problems, make ethical decisions, and appreciate diversity.¹⁷ Sometimes called employability skills or key competencies, these soft skills are desirable in all business sectors and job positions.¹⁸

“The ability to write well is unquestionably a skill necessary for 21st-century success in college and the workplace.... Strong writing skills are essential.”

—Gaston Caperton, former president, College Board

Office Insider based on Lewin, T. (2008, April 25). Informal Style of Electronic Messages Is Showing Up in Schoolwork, Study Finds. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/25/education/25writing.html?mcubz=1>

Not every job seeker is aware of the employer’s expectations. Some new hires have no idea that excessive absenteeism or tardiness is grounds for termination. Others are surprised to learn that they are expected to devote their full attention to their duties when on the job. One young man wanted to read novels when things got slow.¹⁹ Some recent graduates had unrealistic expectations about their salaries and working hours.²⁰ Moreover, despite well-publicized warnings, some people continue to post racy photos and otherwise questionable content online, thus sabotaging their careers.²¹

Projecting and maintaining a professional image can make a real difference in helping you obtain the job of your dreams. Figure 1.2 reviews areas you will want to check to be sure you are projecting professionalism. You will learn more about soft skills and professionalism in Chapter 10.

1.1d How Your Education Drives Your Income

As tuition rises steeply and student debt mounts, you may wonder whether going to college or university is worthwhile. Yet the effort and money you invest in earning your degree or diploma will most likely pay off. Graduates earn more, suffer less unemployment, and can choose from a wider variety of career options than workers without a postsecondary education. Moreover, graduates have access to the highest-paying and fastest-growing careers, many of which require a degree.²² As Figure 1.3 on page 8 shows, graduates with college diplomas and bachelor’s degrees earn significantly higher salaries than high school diploma earners, and are much less likely to be unemployed.²³

Writing is one aspect of education that is particularly well rewarded. A survey of employers confirms that soft skills such as communication ability can tip the scales in favour of one job applicant over another.²⁴ Your ticket to winning in a tight job market and launching a successful career is good communication skills.

FIGURE 1.2 | Projecting Professionalism When You Communicate

	UNPROFESSIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
Speech habits	Speaking in <i>uptalk</i> , a singsong speech pattern that has a rising inflection making sentences sound like questions; using <i>like</i> to fill in mindless chatter; substituting <i>go</i> for <i>said</i> ; relying on slang; or letting profanity slip into your conversation.	Recognizing that your credibility can be seriously damaged by sounding uneducated, crude, or adolescent.
Email	Writing emails with incomplete sentences, misspelled words, exclamation points, IM slang, and senseless chatting. Sloppy, careless messages send a nonverbal message that you don’t care or don’t know what is correct.	Employers like to see subjects, verbs, and punctuation marks. They don’t recognize IM abbreviations. Call it crazy, but they value conciseness and correct spelling, even in brief emails.
Internet	Using an email address such as <i>hotbabe@hotmail.com</i> , <i>supasnugglykitty@yahoo.com</i> , or <i>buffedguy@aol.com</i> .	An email address should include your name or a relevant, positive, businesslike expression. It should not sound cute or like a chat room nickname.
Voice mail	An outgoing message with strident background music, weird sounds, or a joke message.	An outgoing message that states your name or phone number and provides instructions for leaving a message.
Telephone	Soap operas, thunderous music, or a TV football game playing noisily in the background when you answer the phone.	A quiet background when you answer the telephone, especially if you are expecting a prospective employer’s call.
Cellphones and smartphones	Taking or placing calls during business meetings or during conversations with fellow employees; raising your voice (cell yell) or engaging in cell calls that others must reluctantly overhear; using a PDA during meetings.	Turning off phone and message notification, both audible and vibrating, during meetings; using your cell only when conversations can be private.

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FIGURE 1.3 | The Education Bonus: Higher Income, Lower Unemployment

EDUCATION	EARNINGS*	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**
High School Graduate	\$38,808	6.5%
Trades Certificate/Diploma	\$46,176	6%
College/CEGEP	\$46,176	5%
Bachelor's Degree or Above	\$70,779	5%

*Average employment income, for graduates of Ontario postsecondary institutions, 25 to 64 year olds, by location of study, 2011.

**Unemployment rate for Ontarians 25 years of age and over, by educational attainment from Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

Source: <http://cou.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/COU-University-Works-Report-2015.pdf>

1.1e Meeting the Challenges of the Information-Age Workplace

Today's digital workplace is changing profoundly and rapidly. As a business communicator, you will be affected by many trends, including new communication tools such as social media, the "anytime, anywhere" office, and team-based projects. Other trends are flattened management hierarchies, global competition, and a renewed emphasis on ethics. The following overview reveals how communication skills are closely tied to your success in a constantly evolving networked workplace.

- **Rapidly changing communication technologies.** New communication technology is dramatically affecting the way workers interact. In our always-connected world, businesses exchange information by email, instant messaging, text messaging, smartphones, fax, voice mail, powerful laptop computers, and tablets. Satellite communications, wireless networking, teleconferencing, and videoconferencing help workers conduct meetings with associates around the world. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube as well as blogs, wikis, forums, and peer-to-peer tools help businesspeople collect information, serve customers, and sell products and services. Figure 1.4 on pages 10–11 illustrates many new technologies you will encounter in today's workplace.
- **"Anytime, anywhere" and nonterritorial offices.** High-speed and wireless Internet access has freed millions of workers from nine-to-five jobs in brick-and-mortar offices. Flexible working arrangements allow them to work at home or on the road. Meet the "work shifter," a telecommuter or teleworker who largely remains outside the territorial office. The "anytime, anywhere" office requires only a mobile electronic device and a wireless connection.²⁵ Teleworkers now represent almost 20 percent of the working adult population.²⁶ To save on office real estate, some industries provide "nonterritorial" workspaces, or "hot desks." The first to arrive gets the best desk and the corner window.²⁷ At the same time, 24/7 availability has blurred the line between work and leisure, so some workers are always "on duty."
- **Self-directed work groups and virtual teams.** Teamwork has become a reality in business. Many companies have created cross-functional teams to empower employees and boost their involvement in decision making. You can expect to collaborate with a team in gathering information, finding and sharing solutions, implementing decisions, and managing conflict. You may even become part of a virtual team whose members are in remote locations. Increasingly, organizations are also forming ad hoc teams to solve particular problems. Such project-based teams disband once they have accomplished their objectives.²⁸ Moreover, parts of our future economy may rely on "free agents" who

will be hired on a project basis, a far cry from today's full-time and relatively steady jobs.

- **Flattened management hierarchies.** To better compete and to reduce expenses, businesses have for years been trimming layers of management. This means that as a front-line employee, you will have fewer managers. You will be making decisions and communicating them to customers, to fellow employees, and to executives.
- **Heightened global competition.** Because many Canadian companies continue to move beyond domestic markets, you may be interacting with people from many cultures. To be a successful business communicator, you will need to learn about other cultures. You will also need to develop intercultural skills including sensitivity, flexibility, patience, and tolerance.
- **Renewed emphasis on ethics.** Ethics is once again a hot topic in business. On the heels of the banking crisis and the collapse of the real estate market, a calamitous recession followed, caused largely, some say, by greed and ethical lapses. The government now requires greater accountability. As a result, businesses are eager to regain public trust by building ethical environments. Many have written ethical mission statements, installed hotlines, and appointed compliance officers to ensure strict adherence to their high standards and the law.

These trends mean that your communication skills will constantly be on display. Those who can write clear and concise messages contribute to efficient operations and can expect to be rewarded.

1.2 Developing Listening Skills

In an age that thrives on information and communication technology, listening is an important skill. However, by all accounts most of us are not very good listeners. Do you ever pretend to be listening when you are not? Do you know how to look attentive in class when your mind wanders far away? How about “tuning out” people when their ideas are boring or complex? Do you find it hard to focus on ideas when a speaker's clothing or mannerisms are unusual?

You probably answered *yes* to one or more of these questions because many of us have poor listening habits. In fact, some researchers suggest that we listen at only 25 to 50 percent efficiency. Such poor listening habits are costly in business, and they affect professional relationships. Messages must be rewritten, shipments reshipped, appointments rescheduled, contracts renegotiated, and directions restated.

To develop better listening skills, we must first recognize barriers that prevent effective listening. Then we need to focus on specific techniques for improving listening skills.

1.2a Overcoming Barriers to Effective Listening

As you have seen, bad habits and distractions can interfere with effective listening. Have any of the following barriers and distractions prevented you from hearing what has been said?

- **Physical barriers.** You cannot listen if you cannot hear what is being said. Physical impediments include hearing disabilities, poor acoustics, and noisy surroundings. It is also difficult to listen if you are ill, tired, or uncomfortable.
- **Psychological barriers.** Everyone brings to the communication process a unique set of cultural, ethical, and personal values. Each of us has an idea of what is right and what is important. If other ideas run counter to our preconceived thoughts, we tend to “tune out” speakers and thus fail to receive their messages.
- **Language problems.** Unfamiliar words can destroy the communication process because they lack meaning for the receiver. In addition, emotion-laden, or “charged,” words can adversely affect listening. If the mention of words or phrases

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“Rare is the new college hire who lacks skills involving Facebook, texting, or any other form of electronic communication. But face to face, many of these same people have difficulty reading interpersonal signals and communicating, especially in the increasingly multigenerational workplace. Most of the gaps I see are on the social, soft skills side.”

—Cindy Warkentin, CIO, Maryland Automobile Insurance Fund

Office Insider based on King, J. (2009, September 21). Crossing the skills gap. *Computerworld*, p. 30. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com>

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Did you know?

- *It is estimated that more than 50 percent of our work time is spent listening.*
- *Immediately following a ten-minute presentation, average people retain about half of what they hear and only one quarter after 48 hours.*
- *Sixty percent of all management problems are related to listening.*
- *We misinterpret, misunderstand, or change 70 to 90 percent of what we hear.*

—Valarie Washington, CEO, Think 6
Office Insider based on Washington, V. (n.d.). The high cost of poor listening. *EzineArticles.com*. Retrieved from <http://ezinearticles.com/?The-High-Cost-of-Poor-Listening&id=163192>