LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

Fourth Edition

Deborah J. Barrett

Leadership
Communication

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Leadership Communication

Fourth Edition

Deborah J. Barrett
Rice University

McGraw Hill Education

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION, FOURTH EDITION

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Dedicated in loving memory of my mother and father

Dedicated to Jim and to my children, Davy and Mary

—Deborah J. Barrett, PhD

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About the Author

Deborah J. Barrett is Professor of the Practice of Writing and Communication at Rice University where she teaches leadership communication, consulting, negotiations, and organizational communication to the undergraduates and cross-disciplinary writing and research methods and creative nonfiction to the graduate students.

Deborah has specialized in professional writing and communication for most of her teaching career. She taught technical writing at Texas A&M University and Houston Baptist University, where she was an associate professor in English and director of the writing specialization and English internship programs. At Rice University, she was a senior lecturer of MBA communication at the Jones Graduate School of Business and also served as Director of the MBA Communication Program.

Deborah's years working as a consultant for McKinsey & Company, Hill & Knowlton, and University Connections, the consulting and executive development company of which she is cofounder, influenced her very practical approach to leadership communication. At McKinsey & Company, she worked as a communication consultant for over five years, serving as a leader in the change communication practice, developing and conducting Firm training, and leading and working with McKinsey teams on communication and general management consulting projects throughout the world. She was one of the few communication consultants Firmwide selected to attend McKinsey's Engagement Leadership Training, their advanced leadership training for senior associates. At Hill & Knowlton, Deborah was a senior managing director, brought in to build an employee communication and change management practice.

In her consulting work, Deborah has been able to put her academic experience and leadership communication concepts to the test. She has created communication strategies for many different types of organizational communication situations, including mergers and acquisitions, developed major change programs, designed and conducted vision/strategy development programs, developed internal communication improvement programs, and established strategic plans for nonprofit and for-profit organizations. She has coached many senior-level executives, including CEOs of major corporations, in writing, speaking, and interpersonal skills and has conducted numerous workshops for leaders at all levels.

Deborah has published articles in scholarly journals and presented papers at conferences on communication ethics, change

communication, employee communication, intercultural communication, virtual teams, PowerPoint, effective M.B.A. communication, emotional intelligence, and leadership communication and is currently researching the effect of social media on intercultural communication. She serves on the editorial boards of the *Business Communication Quarterly*, *Education Review of Business Communication*, *Corporate Communication: An International Journal*, and *The International Journal of Knowledge, Culture, and Change Management*.

Her B.A. in English and speech and her M.A. in English are from the University of Houston, and her Ph.D. in English is from Rice University.

Preface

Leadership Communication is a text to guide current and potential leaders in developing the communication capabilities needed to be transformational leaders. The content in this text is based on the author's years of experience working as a consultant and teaching and coaching in professional communication at all levels inside and outside of the university and on the lastest research on communication and leadership.

Leaders need core communication skills, such as analyzing audiences, developing communication strategy, speaking, writing, using and displaying emotional intelligence, and interacting and communicating with diverse audiences. They also need group and organizational communication abilities, such as managing global teams, conducting productive meetings, leading and working successfully in an organizational context, creating and communicating visions, leading change initiatives, and fostering external relations. *Leadership Communication* includes all of these subjects and covers important fundamental communication skills needed by all leaders in all disciplines.

Text Objectives

Mastering leadership communication means learning to do the following:

1. Project a positive ethos and develop transformational leadership abilities, including leading and communicating with integrity.
2. Analyze audiences and create targeted, meaningful messages.
3. Develop effective communication strategies for all situations.
4. Select and use the most effective media, including social media, to reach all audiences.
5. Use the language of leaders to influence diverse audiences.
6. Create well-organized, coherent communication.
7. Deliver presentations in person and online with confidence.
8. Display emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills.
9. Value diversity and understand how to communicate interculturally.
10. Lead small groups, whether in teams or meetings.
11. Function successfully in larger organizational contexts, including supervising, being supervised, mentoring, coaching, giving feedback, and networking.
12. Select and use the appropriate leadership style, including the transformational style.

13. Develop a vision and messages to guide and motivate others.
14. Design and deliver messages to reach external stakeholders with positive results.

These are the primary objectives of this text. Leaders use all possible communication tools within reach and use them effectively. This text will help you know how to use those tools and show you how to improve your communication capabilities. As a result, you will learn to communicate more effectively and position yourself to be a transformational leader in your organization and beyond it.

Changes to This Edition

For those who have used previous editions of *Leadership Communication,* this edition has been revised to include even more emphasis and guidance on transformational leadership throughout and to provide even more instruction of use to advanced undergraduates as well as graduate students and executives.

In addition, the text is now organized into two sections instead of the three used in previous editions: (1) Core Leadership Communication and (2) Group and Organizational Leadership Communication. The chapters on emotional intelligence and intercultural communication are now included under the Core section.

The text includes the following new chapters:

1. Chapter 4—Social Media and Other Leadership Correspondence. In addition to continuing the coverage of social media, such as blogging, texting, Tweeting, using Facebook and LinkedIn, etc. and other technology, such as electronic presentations, shared workspaces, research management tools (Zotero) throughout the text, this new chapter provides more detailed information on how best to use social media and create e-communication.

2. Chapter 12—Leadership in an Organizational Context. This chapter provides all new content on the history and evolution of organizations, with an explanation of today's organizations, focusing on the human relations approach and the role of organizational communication. This chapter also provides new information on managing the supervisor and subordinate relationship, including establishing an ethical environment, and includes revised information on mentoring, coaching, feedback, and networking.

In addition to these new chapters, the text contains the following changes:

3. Chapter 3—The Language of Leaders has been substantially revised with the addition of several examples of leadership communication from leaders across all disciplines and more on influencing and persuading through effective use of language.

4. The chapters on presentations (Chapter 6) and graphics (Chapter 7) have been revised and now include some discussion of new presentation software, such as SlideRocket, Prezi, and instruction on how best to create and deliver a Webcast and to use video conferencing.

5. The team (Chapter 11) and meeting (Chapter 10) chapters have been reversed and now include even more on the use of video conferencing and virtual team technology.

6. The internal relations chapter (Chapter 13) has been revised and now provides more instruction on how to be a transformational leader and a section on selecting the appropriate leadership style to use in an organization depending on the context, audience, and situation.

7. As in past editions, the Applications highlight a number of case studies based on actual companies and professional situations, and new applications have been added to provide additional opportunities to apply and practice the instruction in each chapter.

8. The Self-Assessment (Appendix A) has been expanded and now includes a rating scale to allow students to quantify their results.

Instructor Supporting Materials

For instructors, this text is supported online at www.mhhe.com/barrett4e. Included on the site are PowerPoint lecture slides, suggested approaches to the chapters, discussions of all chapter applications with answers to exercises, a test bank, suggestions for using the book to prepare students for action or service learning or other similar consulting engagements, and sample syllabi.

Acknowledgments

Before recognizing each person to whom I am grateful, I want to thank two organizations for their direct and indirect contributions to the original creation and publication and the subsequent development of *Leadership Communication*:

McKinsey & Company—The Firm overall for the opportunity to work with some of the brightest thinkers and with executives and managers who exemplify leadership communication.

Rice University—The university for giving me the opportunity to work with excellent students, both the MBA students as I developed the concept of leadership communication and the outstanding undergraduates as I have expanded the leadership communication concepts to help students of all levels serve as leaders in the community and in whatever professional worlds they enter.

I want to thank my communication colleagues who contributed their time, energy, expertise, and friendship when I first developed the book and over the years since the first edition was published in 2006: Chuck McCabe, Beth O'Sullivan, Beth Peters, and Larry Hampton. In addition, I owe a thanks to Sandra Elliott, Director of Education Services at Webtrends, who stepped in on the third edition to add to the social media instruction and exercises, much of which I have maintained in this edition.

I also owe a huge thank you to all my students over the years, who continue to be my inspiration for constantly looking for ways to improve the teaching of communication.

Finally, I want to thank Jim, my husband, friend, and partner, who put up with my months of weekend work and numerous long days, for always being there to attempt to add some balance in my life.

Core Leadership Communication

Emotional
intelligence
& interpersonal
skills

Diversity &
intercultural
communication

Writing

Teams

Strategy

Meetings

Organizational
communication

Speaking

External
relations

Internal
relations

Chapter 1

What Is Leadership Communication?

Courtesy: Official white house photo by Pete Souza

Chapter Objectives

In this chapter, you will learn to do the following:

- Identify leadership with an emphasis on transformational leaders.
- Connect leadership to communication.
- Define leadership communication.
- Appreciate the importance of projecting a positive ethos.
- Recognize and manage ethical issues.

A leader must be able to communicate effectively. When asked to define leadership, theorists and practioners alike frequently use the words "influence," "inspire," and "transform," all of which depend on communication, verbal and nonverbal. Leaders lead through their words and their actions. This text focuses on both,

thus the emphasis throughout on emotional intelligence, the ability to understand the self and others. The leadership focus here is on inspirational and transformational leadership. The hope is that the present and future leaders using this text will learn to communicate to bring about positive results for themselves and for their organizations or communities.

In *Leading without Power: Finding Hope in Serving Community,* Max De Pree says, "Leaders are constantly communicating."[1] In a business setting, studies have shown that managers spend most of their day engaged in communication, with communication occupying 70 to 90 percent of their time every day.[2] The sheer amount of time we spend communicating underscores how important strong communication skills are in whatever leadership position we assume or in whatever career we pursue. Mastering leadership communication becomes a priority for all individuals who want to lead others and want their groups, their organizations, or the broader community to follow them, trust them, and consider them leaders. Simply put, "effective leadership is still largely a matter of communication."[3]

This chapter begins by identifying leadership and exploring how leadership and communication are connected, then defines "leadership communication" and the framework that governs the organization of the text, and concludes by explaining the importance of projecting a positive ethos and of recognizing and managing questions of ethics.

Identifying Leadership

What exactly is leadership? Theorists and practitioners have devoted thousands of words and numerous articles and books to the subject. Google lists 76,000,000 entries under "leadership (definition)." Many universities offer leadership programs. Job descriptions frequently ask for candidates with leadership skills, and many corporations encourage and provide leadership development. According to the *Leadership Development Factbook*, companies "will spend $13.6 billion on leadership development in 2012."[4]

What, however, does leadership entail? Researchers seldom agree completely on how best to define it, some saying they know it when they see it. Pressed, most would agree that leaders are individuals who guide, direct, motivate, or inspire others. They are the men and women who influence others in an organization or in a community. They command others' attention. They persuade others to follow them or pursue goals they define. They control situations. They improve the performance of groups and organizations. They connect with others, and they get results.

These individuals may not be presidents of countries or CEOs of companies, but they could be. They could also be experienced employees who step forward to mentor those who are less experienced, researchers who discover a cure for some disease or invent something to make our lives easier, managers who direct successful project teams, vice presidents who lead divisions and motivate their staff to achieve company goals, educators who inspire their students to achieve their potential, or students who bring about positive change in their schools or in the broader community.

Leadership theorists define leadership by the traits leaders possess, by the tasks they perform, by the positions they hold, and by the accomplishments they achieve:

> Traditional theories of leadership focus on the traits of leaders (personality, charisma, referent power), the process by which individuals become leaders (the tasks, the people, and the situation), or the interactions individuals have with others that create their leadership status. In the last, the focus is either on the exchange or transaction between the leader and others, or on the impact the leader has on individuals or an organization which inspires change or a difference of some sort, a transformation.[5]

The leadership focus in this text is on the type of leadership called "transformational."[6] This type of leader possesses a positive ethos (authority and credibility), inspires trust and respect, connects with others individually and in groups, articulates a clear and motivating vision, and skillfully motivates and guides others to act. The transformational leader displays four primary behavioral characteristics: "idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration."[7] In addition, he or she exhibits important communication abilities, such as listening, persuading, and articulating ideas effectively.[8]

Examples of transformational leaders in business are Lou Gerstner, who is credited with turning around IBM; Steve Jobs, who revolutionized the computer industry; and Jeff Bezos, considered in one study of company performance to be the "top CEO."[9] In world politics, Nelson Mandela is a transformational leader as was Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Some recent researchers argue that King's "I Have a Dream" speech "provides an outstanding example of the transformational leadership process of identifying and articulating a vision" and clearly, he motivated others and brought about major changes in the United States.[10]

Discussions on leadership often come back to one question: Is a leader born or developed? In other words, can individuals learn to be leaders? The short answer is yes they can: "Organizations and individuals can indeed directly influence the quality and the quantity

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King addresses gathering of followers after march in Selma, Ala.

Source: © Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

of their leadership. . . . It is not a matter of whether leaders are born or made. They are born *and* made."[11] However, most do have to work at it and becoming a leader can require practice and depends on actions: "Leadership is not something that is gained because of birth or tenure but rather something that is practiced in every moment of opportunity. It is truly 20 percent technique (tools, methods) and 80 percent actions (behaviors)."[12] Avolio argues that, in particular, "transformational leadership skills can indeed be developed."[13] *Leadership Communication* is devoted to helping individuals develop as transformational leaders by mastering the most important capability they need, the ability to communicate effectively.

Connecting Leadership to Communication

The fundamental premise on which this book rests is that effective leadership depends on effective communication, that ability to connect to others and, through that connection, guide, direct, motivate, and inspire. Good communication skills enable, foster, and create the understanding and trust necessary to encourage others to follow a leader. Without effective communication, leaders accomplish little. Without effective communication, a leader is not a leader.

Being able to communicate effectively is what allows individuals to move into leadership positions. In organizations, it is what allows them to get in the door. The National Association of Colleges and Employers found in their Job Outlook 2013 survey that good communication skills are what companies are looking for when hiring and without them, candidates cannot get in the door much less advance to a leadership position. They write, "in this year's survey, participants rated 'ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization' . . . and 'ability to work in a team structure' . . . as the two most important candidate skills/qualities."[14]

Defining Communication

Communication is the transmission of meaning from one person to another or to many people, whether verbally or nonverbally. Traditionally, this transmission model of communication or as it is often called, the "rhetorical situation," is commonly depicted as a simple triangle consisting of the sender, the message, and the receiver (Exhibit 1.1).

The triangle in Exhibit 1.1 suggests very simple and ideal communication. There would be no miscommunication or misunderstandings. The communicator (sender) would understand the context and the audience (receiver), select the right medium, and send a clear message. The receiver would receive and understand that message exactly as the sender intended.

In reality, communication takes place in a context and is much more complex and interactive, with many opportunities for messages and meanings to go astray. The medium itself can influence the message. Years ago, Marshall McLuhan, a communication theorist, argued that "the medium is the message" by which he meant that

EXHIBIT 1.1
The Traditional
Diagram of
the Rhetorical
Situation
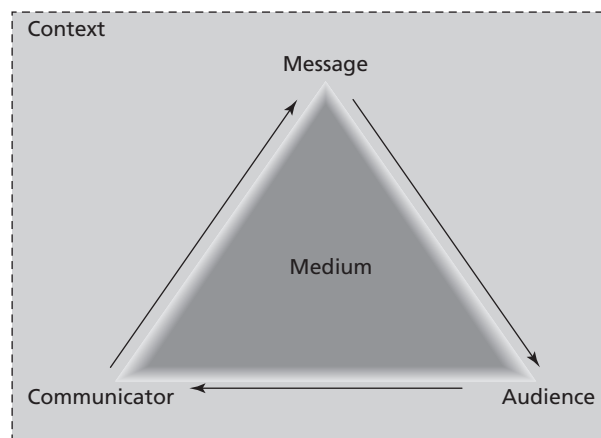
the form or medium influences how the message is received and perceived.[15] Today, with the array and immediacy of social media, the validity of this conclusion is even stronger. We enter any one of our communication events with preconceptions and expectations as we create and as we receive messages. For example, we expect a text message from our friends to contain the abbreviations we always use to communicate with one another, but those outside of our "friend" circle would not expect us to communicate in the same way and could be confused by these abbreviations. We expect our Facebook page to reach our friends and for our friends to feel free to post messages on our wall that only we will fully understand. In other words, our messages and our media are very intertwined.

Breakdowns in communication occur when something interferes with the transmission of a message, whether the context, the medium, sender, or receiver causes them. The context in which the information is sent, the noise that surrounds it, the selection of the medium, the words used in the message, the image of the speaker—all influence the meaning as it travels successfully, or as intended, from one person to another.

Defining Leadership Communication

Effective leadership communication requires the ability to anticipate the potential interruptions in the transmission of the message, appreciate the context, understand the audience, select the right medium, and craft messages that allow the meaning to reach the specific receiver as intended.

One goal of mastering all aspects of leadership communication is to move us as close as possible to the ideal of meaningful message transfer. Leadership communication necessitates minimizing or eliminating all interruptions and interferences by understanding the receivers (the audience) and developing a communication strategy (objective and plan) to facilitate the effective transmission of messages. It involves our using our emotional intelligence to understand ourselves and the ones we want to reach well enough to create our messages appropriately and with the care they need. In many cases today, that means slowing down a bit even as our fingers fly across our phone, tablet, or computer.

So what is leadership communication?

Leadership communication is the controlled, purposeful transfer of meaning by which individuals influence a single person, a group, an organization, or a community by using the full range of their communication abilities and resources to connect positively with their audiences, overcome interferences, and create and deliver messages that guide, direct, motivate, or inspire others to action.

Applying the Leadership Communication Framework

Leadership communication as defined and used in this text consists of expanding abilities from core strategy development, effective writing and speaking, emotional intelligence, and intercultural communication abilities to the use of these skills in more complex situations, such as working in teams, conducting meetings, functioning effectively in organizations, and handling internal and external relations. Thus, this text *Leadership Communication* starts with the core communication topics (Exhibit 1.2), then expands to applying the core skills to a wider array of audiences and increasingly complex organizational situations.

The leadership communication framework is depicted as a spiral to avoid suggesting a hierarchy, since all effective communication depends on the core skills. To be a leader, we need to master the core leadership communication skills. We also need to expand our skills to include those needed to lead and work in groups and organizations and to interact successfully with all internal audiences and external stakeholders as we take on even more elevated leadership roles.

Core Communication

Communication strategy is included in the section on core skills (Section 1), but leaders will find they usually need to take a strategic approach to be a master of leadership communication. Therefore, developing a communication strategy will be emphasized throughout all sections of the text as we move from inside to the outer rings of the spiral. Strategy is the foundation on which any effective communication

EXHIBIT 1.2
The Leadership
Communication
Framework

depends. Leaders need to be able to analyze an audience in every situation and develop a communication strategy that facilitates accomplishing their communication objectives, including selecting the best medium.

Leaders need to be able to structure and write effective simple and complex correspondence and documents, from tweets, text messages, and e-mails to proposals and reports. They need to be able to write and speak in the language expected of leaders, language that is clear, appropriate for the context, and persuasive. In addition, they need to be able to create and deliver in person and online presentations confidently and persuasively, using graphics that contribute to delivering the messages.

Finally, as core capabilities, leaders need emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills, and they need to understand and value diversity and cultural differences and to be able to communicate successfully across and work within different cultures.

Group and Organizational Communication

The organizational communication section (Section 2) starts by discussing how to manage teams effectively and conduct productive meetings, both essential capabilities for today's leaders. Then, the topic of group leadership is expanded to the larger organizational context, which is then expanded even more to those abilities needed to lead an organization and address a broader community. Communication becomes even more complex when we need to think about how best to communicate to all internal and external stakeholders. Again, any good communication depends on having a strategy, but as the audiences become more diverse and larger, the communication strategy becomes more complicated. Leaders find as they move into higher levels of an organization that they need to be able to direct change programs and lead vision development. In addition, they take on greater responsibility for the organization's reputation and become the company's face and voice for the public.

Projecting a Positive Leadership Ethos

Leadership communication at all levels and across the spiral depends on the ability to project a positive image, or more specifically, a positive ethos. The word "image" is often associated with illusion or superficiality. It embodies what an audience thinks of us initially based on mostly superficial perceptions. "Ethos" refers to qualities of greater depth and substance. It ties more directly to our character, which our audience judges according to the culture in which we are communicating.