THIRD EDITION

Business and Professional Communication

Steven A. Beebe · Timothy P. Mottet

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Principles and Skills for Leadership

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PEARSON

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Dedicated to:

Sue Beebe

—SAB

Rick Gonzalez

—TPM

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Brief Contents

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Contents

Preface

To be effective in the twenty-first-century workplace, you need to be able to communicate and influence others in positive and ethical ways. We agree with James Hume's well-crafted epithet: "The art of communication is effective leadership." Consequently, this book is about two things: communication and leadership. Communication and work go hand in hand; it's hard to talk about the workplace without also talking about the communication that makes work happen, from developing relationships with co-workers to building work teams and making presentations. Closely linked to any discussion of workplace communication is the art and science of leading others. As with our previous successful editions, the purpose of this revision is to prepare readers for the communication and leadership demands of the modern workplace. We do this by presenting key communication principles and skills and emphasizing how to apply those principles and skills in order to lead and be successful in business and professional settings.

What's New in This Edition

We are grateful to both students and faculty who have provided excellent confirming comments and constructive suggestions to enhance this book. Responding to their suggestions, we've made several revisions to this new edition.

Stronger Emphasis on Application

Recognizing the importance of using communication skills in today's workplace, the latest edition provides interactive practice opportunities in the form of writing exercises, and highlights real-world examples that show the relationship between solid communication skills and career advancement.

- Each chapter now closes with an interactive **Shared Writing** exercise that promotes discussion and prompts the reader to reflect on chapter topics and apply learned skills.
- New **Career Corner** feature boxes investigate the connection between successful careers and mastery of communication skills. Examples include tips for achieving career advancement by helping others listen more effectively, and a discussion of the key difference between simply regurgitating information and effectively communicating.

Increased Focus on Technology in a Global World

New technological tools have an ongoing impact on the global workplace and on our communication. In each edition we increase our coverage of digital communication and its influence. Updated **#Technology and Communication @ Work** features explore the latest communication technology, such as how to best use mobile devices in special presentations, and how and when to use text messages at work.

New Examples and Updated Special Feature Boxes Throughout

Figures, cartoons, examples, and boxes have been replaced and updated throughout to reflect technological trends and key developments. New opening stories about key leaders such as Jeff Wiener, CEO of LinkedIn, and Tony Dieste of Dieste Inc. offer compelling new leadership voices and visions.

Deeper Coverage of the Importance of Diversity

We live in a global world, and diverse project teams, both face-to-face and virtual, are increasingly common. The text includes new and updated examples and research about successful intercultural communication, including best practices for enhancing virtual team success and how a speaker can effectively interact with a diverse audience.

Updated and Expanded Research Base

This edition builds on the text's solid contemporary research base in communication studies and related fields, including new findings related to the role of technology, decision making, and intercultural communication.

Interactive Content, Streamlined Coverage, and Reduced Length

Now more than ever, students must juggle a variety of roles and deal with multiple demands on their time. We are committed to producing a concise text that maintains the breadth and depth of coverage that readers valued in the previous editions. To that end, discussions have been streamlined and focused to make the text both more accessible and concentrated on the key communication principles used in the workplace today. Opportunities to interact with the text, from informal review opportunities to dynamic presentations of key ideas, encourage reader engagement.

Plan of the Text

Our comprehensive text focuses on core communication principles and skills, with an emphasis on leadership for today's global workplace. Beginning in Chapter 1, we introduce students to key leadership approaches and then explicitly discuss how communication principles and skills are integral to being an effective and ethical leader.

A Focus on Leadership

Although some students may aspire to an influential leadership role, such as being CEO at a large company, many others are simply trying to figure out their vocational calling. Yet regardless of how firm a student's professional goals are (whether they aspire to be the next Donald Trump or Oprah Winfrey or simply get a job to pay the bills), students in the contemporary workplace will influence colleagues and co-workers with their communication skills. A person need not be anointed "the leader" to be a leader in the workplace. Regardless of how students perceive themselves, they will influence others as they communicate with their colleagues, which is the essence of leadership.

Every chapter of the text is infused with discussions related to principles and skills for leadership. Although most business and professional communication textbooks include a discussion of leadership, we have woven discussion and application of leadership into each chapter, from the opening scenarios that profile successful leaders to tips and guidelines for how to communicate and lead effectively in boxes and text discussions throughout.

A Focus on Communication Skill Applications

Rather than merely listing and describing communication skills, our approach is designed to help students apply communication skills to the workplace. The third edition continues to encourage application of communication skills to business and professional settings, from the chapter opening narratives and "Leading Questions," to practical tips and guidelines, to the writing activities at the end of chapters.

In business and professional contexts there are four primary communication skill sets that lead to success: relating, collaborating, presenting, and writing. We offer specific recommendations on how to develop these competencies, drawing upon the latest communication research and wisdom from seasoned leaders.

- **Relationship Skills** Relationship skills are essential in working with others in a variety of business and professional settings. In addition to helping students understand how professional relationships are established and maintained, we focus on specific skills, such as how to interview others, how to be interviewed, and how to manage interpersonal conflict.
- **Collaboration Skills** Working in groups and teams, and attending and leading meetings occupies a considerable amount of time in the contemporary workplace. Whether collaborating face-to-face or in electronically mediated situations, today's workers must understand how to work together effectively and appropriately. How to solve problems and make decisions as a team, as well as learning how to unleash the creative potential of groups during meetings, are key skills that are emphasized in Chapters 9 and 10.
- **Presentation Skills** In addition to relating and collaborating, contemporary workers are frequently called on to present their ideas to others. Whether one-on-one, during meetings, or to a larger audience, effectively presenting information to others as well as persuading others are essential communication and leadership competencies.
- **Writing Skills** Although our emphasis in this book remains on developing oral skill competence, being able to communicate ideas in writing is important when relating, collaborating, and presenting to others. Chapter 14 is devoted to the development of good business writing.

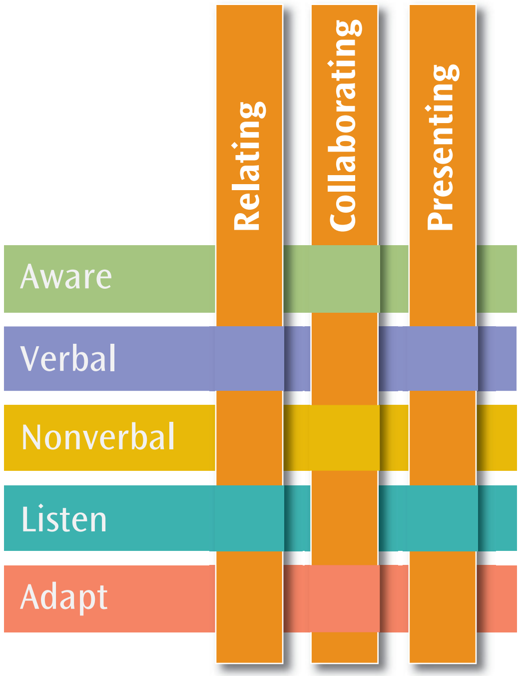
A Focus on Communication Principles

We've organized our study of business and professional communication around five fundamental communication principles that can enhance communication skill and leadership abilities. Together, these five principles provide readers with a useful framework for understanding how leaders can become effective communicators. The five principles are:

- Principle One: Leaders are aware of their communication with themselves and others.
- Principle Two: Leaders effectively use and interpret verbal messages.
- Principle Three: Leaders effectively use and interpret nonverbal messages.
- Principle Four: Leaders listen and respond thoughtfully to others.
- Principle Five: Leaders appropriately adapt messages to others.

In most business and professional communication texts, communication principles are introduced early in the book and then rarely explicitly mentioned. In our text, these core communication principles (as presented in figure below from Chapter 1) are clearly integrated into our discussion of business and professional communication skills throughout the book.

Communication Principles for a Lifetime



Refer to Figure 1.2

In addition to making explicit references to each principle in our discussions, summaries, called The Principle Points, connect the principles to specific chapter content.

The Principle Points sections appear at the end of each skill development chapter and not only help readers see how the principles relate to the chapter material, but also serve as a helpful summary feature to confirm students' understanding of key communication and leadership principles.

Overview of the Text

The opening chapter provides the prelude to the study of business and professional communication by explaining fundamental communication models and concepts. We then introduce the five communication principles and show how those principles are linked to the critical skills of relating, collaborating, presenting, and writing. Chapters 2 through 5 present each of the five communication principles in more detail. Chapter 2 discusses Principle 1, being aware of how you communicate at work, noting how a person's social style reflects his/her self-concept as well as how he/she perceives others. Helping students understand their own approach to leadership and the role of organizational culture also enhances their awareness of themselves and others. Chapter 3 presents the key principles of using and interpreting both verbal messages (Principle 2) and nonverbal messages (Principle 3). Our use of verbal and nonverbal symbols constitutes the messages we both send and receive. Chapter 4 describes Principle 4, the process of listening and responding to others. Chapter 5 helps students adapt to others (Principle 5) by understanding how one's personality, culture, and gender influence how we send and interpret messages. The remaining chapters apply the principles of communication to the three most important skill sets used in business and professional contexts: relating, collaborating, and presenting. We first apply the five communication principles to the skills of relating to others. Chapter 6 describes different types of workplace relationships and emphasizes how to understand and manage conflict at work. Chapters 7 and 8 cover essential information to help students relate to others during interviews. Chapter 7 emphasizes core principles and skills of interviewing, while Chapter 8 identifies the most common types of interviews encountered in business and professional settings: information gathering interviews, job interviews, and appraisal interviews.

Building upon the skill of relating to others in interpersonal contexts we turn our attention to collaborating with others. Chapter 9 helps students apply the five principles to a variety of group and team situations and understand how teams work. Chapter 10 focuses on the ubiquitous business meeting and how to make meetings effective. Skills for enhancing decision making, problem solving, and conducting creative meetings are presented along with skills for facilitating meeting discussion, avoiding groupthink, and reaching consensus.

The next three chapters discuss the vital professional skill of presenting messages to others. Chapter 11, a combination of the first edition's Chapters 11 and 12, explains how to develop a message, including how to find and use interesting and appropriate supporting material and organize a message for maximum clarity and impact. Chapter 12 focuses on how to deliver a message and use a wide array of technological tools to add visual and auditory support to a presentation. Chapter 13 offers tips and strategies for informing, persuading, and presenting special kinds of speeches in professional settings. Special emphasis is placed on developing business briefings and reports, as well as on how to use persuasive strategies to sell products and services to others. The last chapter is a primer on writing skills. A unique "time management" appendix offers strategies to help students communicate efficiently by managing their time and improving their work productivity by applying key time-management and communication-management strategies.

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Chapter 1

Communicating and Leading at Work

Learning Objectives

1.1 Review how communication skills determine leadership qualities

1.2 Recognize that communication occurs only when it reaches the desired audience

1.3 Examine how the leadership quality of influencing others through communication is an art

1.4 Describe the five fundamental principles to effectively increase communication and leadership skills

Howard Schultz grew up in the 1950s and had a variety of jobs, including tossing papers on his paper route, working in a knitting factory, and becoming a furrier. Vowing to escape the vocational history of his parents—not much pay, no benefits, and no job security—after college, he worked at Xerox and then for Hammerplast, a Swedish housewares company. But his career path took an interesting and lucrative turn when one of his housewares customers bought lots of drip-brewing thermoses.[1]

Although you're probably not familiar with Schultz's name, you are familiar with Starbucks. The company Schultz leads is the world's largest coffee retailer.[2] His ability to lead and influence others has made him one of the world's most innovative leaders. He bought Starbucks in 1987 when the company had only six stores; within five years Starbucks had 150 stores. At the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, there were over 16,000 Starbucks stores worldwide.

Although Starbucks has had its ups and downs as a company, it has a founding leader who knows the importance of communication in helping Starbucks remain competitive.

Schultz attributes his leadership success to his communication skills, which he developed as a communication major at Northern Michigan University.[3] He believes leadership is anchored in developing relationships with people. Rather than communicating to employees, shareholders, and customers through advertising and mediated messages, Schultz prefers face-to-face communication. According to Schultz, Starbucks is successful not because of its high-gloss and expensive Madison Avenue advertising campaigns, but because of its grassroots word-of-mouth advertising based on the relationships that Starbucks employees form with customers.[4] In summarizing his success as a communicator, Schultz notes, "We're not in the coffee business serving people, but in the people business serving coffee."[5]

Leading Questions

1. Howard Schultz uses a personal relational style of leading his employees. How would you evaluate your relational leadership skills? What would you like to learn that would enhance your communication and leadership skills?
2. Schultz had a variety of jobs before becoming CEO. How have the jobs you've held contributed to developing your communication and leadership skills?
3. What do you think Schultz means when he says, "We're not in the coffee business serving people, but in the people business serving coffee"?

1.1: Communication and Leadership

1.1 Review how communication skills determine leadership qualities.

This book is about two things: **communication** and **leadership**. Specifically, it's about how you can apply communication skills to lead in the workplace. Communication and work go hand in hand; it's hard to talk about the workplace without also talking about the communication that makes work happen. And closely linked to any discussion of workplace communication is the art and science of leading others. Leaders develop relationships, build teams, and make presentations before groups of people, using effective communication principles and skills. One study found that CEOs rated leadership and communication as the top job skills needed in business and professional settings.[6]

To be effective in the workplace, you need to be able to communicate effectively and appropriately to influence others in positive and ethical ways.

1.1.1: Communication and You

Would you be surprised if we told you we know precisely what you will do for a living? Perhaps you've known what your vocational goal was since you were in elementary school. Or you may still be uncertain as to what your specific career track will be. Regardless of whether your career goals are clear or fuzzy, we know what you will *do*. You will communicate. Research has consistently found that you will spend from 80 to 90 percent of your typical day communicating with others.[7] To live is to communicate. To work is to communicate. You can't help it. You *will* communicate with others.

A number of recent studies underscore the need for and importance of communication skills for the twenty-first-century workplace.[8] Research supports two important conclusions: If you possess effective communication skills, you are much more likely to be successful. Without communication skills, you are less likely to be successful.

- **COMMUNICATION IS THE MOST VALUED WORKPLACE SKILL.** In a recent survey of recruiters from companies with more than 50,000 employees, communication skills were cited as *the single most important factor* in choosing managers.[9] The survey, conducted by the University of Pittsburgh's Katz Business School, points out that communication skills (including written and oral presentations), as well as an ability to work with others, are the main factor contributing to job success.[10] One study found that as much as 75% of long-term success on the job is based on such "people skills" as communication and listening.[11] Communication skills, social skills, and teamwork skills—key skills emphasized in this book, are the most coveted.[12]
- **WITHOUT EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS YOUR CAREER MAY SUFFER.** People who communicate effectively do well on the job. Others struggle to meet communication demands, making their jobs challenging.[13] In a national survey of employers, the lack of basic oral/written skills and effective business communication skills appeared to be a major stumbling block for new entrants into the job market.[14] Employers also ranked the leadership skills of four-year college graduates as deficient, noting their inability to collaborate, work in teams or groups, and solve problems.[15]

  A study of one specific career group, information technology (IT) workers, conducted by the research firm Robert Half Technology, reports that they need more than technical abilities—they also need to be well-rounded business professionals. Nearly 45% of respondents said their IT staff members must improve their project management skills and could improve verbal and written communication abilities. The report also suggested that IT staff often need to develop stronger organizational and interpersonal skills.[16]

When he was chairman of General Electric, Jack Welch said the key characteristic he looked for in a leader was her or his ability to communicate well. Specifically, he wanted "someone who is comfortable talking to *anyone—anybody* in the world, in New Delhi, Moscow, Cairo, Beijing—*anywhere*!"[17] Warren Buffett, one of the richest persons on the planet, once announced to MBA students at his alma mater, Columbia University, that he would offer $100,000 to any student in the audience in return for 10% of future earnings. He then added that if the student would take a communication skill development course or public speaking training, he would increase his offer to $150,000. Buffett is a major advocate of communication skill training and has noted that taking a communication training course was one of the best investments he had ever made.[18]

When you complete your study of business and professional communication, you will be able to include a set of communication skills on your resume that can enhance your career success. Communication skills are leadership skills. These essential skills will immediately make you competitive in a global marketplace.

1.1.2: Leadership and You

You may think you're not really interested in being a leader. You don't want to be the boss; you just want to work. Or you may aspire to a major leadership role such as being a corporate chief executive officer at a large company. Regardless of your professional goals, you *will* influence others through the way you communicate with people.

Simply stated, *to lead is to influence others*. There is a difference between being a leader and exerting leadership influence. Your very presence in an organization, regardless of your job description or level within the organization, will influence others. You influence others through your communication. This is why leadership and communication are connected. By enhancing your communication competence you will also enhance your leadership abilities. You don't have to be anointed "the leader" to use leadership skills. You can't help but use them. To help you accomplish your professional goals—whether working in a large corporation, a small business, or in a profession such as law, medicine, or education—this book can enhance what you'll spend most of your time doing at your job: communicating and influencing others.

Career Corner

Which Way Is North?

From your present location, can you, with 100 percent certainty, point north right now? If you wanted to go north, but didn't know which direction north was, it would be hard to get there. The same could be said for your career goals. You need to know which direction you are headed. Which way is "north" in terms of your career goals?

Some people have known since childhood what their career or professional aspiration is. But for many others, the question of which way is "north" is difficult. There are several well-written books that can help you explore your own interests and backgrounds to help you find your path. Here are three of our favorites:

- Scott W. Ventrella, *Me, Inc.: How to Master the Business of Being You*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2007.
- Richard N. Bolles, *What Color Is Your Parachute: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2014.
- Nicholas Lore and Anthony Spadafore, *Now What? The Young Person's Guide to Choosing the Perfect Career*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008.

Whichever direction you choose as your true "north," one thing is for certain; you will use communication skills in your job.

1.2: Communication: Making Sense and Sharing Sense

1.2 Recognize that communication occurs only when it reaches the desired audience.

JetBlue Airlines, a low-cost airline from New York, apologized to its customers after customers were required to remain on a JetBlue aircraft for 11 hours during an ice storm. JetBlue managers used the company's website as well as YouTube to offer their apology to the traveling public.[19] However, many of the customers never saw the apology. What JetBlue learned was that just placing a message on a website doesn't mean that communication has occurred. Communication happens not when a message is crafted and sent but when the message has helped create meaning for someone.

1.2.1: The Nature of Communication

Reduced to its essence, *communication* is the process of acting on information.[20] Someone does something or says something, and there is a response from someone else in the form of an action, a word, or a thought. As JetBlue Airlines learned, presenting information to others does not mean that there is communication: *Information is not communication*. Would-be communicators often express exasperation when their efforts fail. "I put it in the memo. Why didn't you do what I asked?" "It's in the company policy statement." "It's on the website!" They assume that if they send a message, someone will receive it. Communication does not operate, however, in a linear, input-output process. What you send is rarely what others understand. Human communication is more sophisticated than simply sending and receiving messages. *Human communication* is the process of making sense out of the world and sharing that sense with others by creating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages.[21] Let's examine the key elements of this definition.

COMMUNICATION IS ABOUT MAKING SENSE We make sense out of what we experience when we interpret what we see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. To make sense out of a message we look for patterns or structure. We relate what happens to us at any given moment to something we've experienced in the past. An effective communicator attempts to learn as much as possible about his or her listeners in order to craft messages that make sense to them.

COMMUNICATION IS ABOUT SHARING SENSE We use words as well as nonverbal cues (such as gestures, facial expressions, clothing, music) to convey our thoughts and feelings to others. It's through the process of sharing our understanding of our experiences that we connect to other humans.

COMMUNICATION IS ABOUT CREATING MEANING Succinctly stated, *meanings are in people, not in words*. Both senders and receivers of messages *create* meaning in our hearts and minds based on our experiences, background, and culture. When, for example, you hear a rumor that there may be companywide layoffs you may think, "My job is safe; I'm a hard worker." Someone else who has had different experience may hear the rumor and create a different meaning for the same rumor, thinking, "Yikes, I may get fired!"

When we communicate with another person who is physically present, the communication is *transactional*, meaning that messages are sent and received simultaneously. As you talk to someone and create meaning, you respond to that person's verbal and nonverbal messages even as you speak[22] Whether in a brief visit in someone's office, or during a lengthy meeting, even if you remain silent or embarrassingly nod off to sleep, your nonverbal behavior provides information to others about your emotions and interest, or lack of interest. The transactive nature of communication suggests that you cannot *not* communicate. People interpret your communication even when you are not intentionally expressing an idea or feeling. Here's another way to summarize this idea: Ultimately, people judge you by your behavior, not by your intent. And because you are always behaving in some way (even when you are asleep), there is always the potential for someone to make sense out of your behavior.

COMMUNICATION OCCURS THROUGH VERBAL AND NONVERBAL MESSAGES Words and nonverbal behaviors are symbols you use to create meaning that makes sense to you. A *symbol* is something that represents a thought, concept, object, or experience. These words are symbols. Some symbols are nonverbal, such as your use of gestures, posture, tone of voice, clothing, and jewelry. Although the meaning you derive makes sense to you, for most of us nonverbal messages primarily communicate emotions—our feelings of joy or sadness, likes and dislikes, or our interest or lack of interest in others.

Our definition of human communication suggests that the message we express is not always the message that is interpreted as we intended it. Making sense and sharing sense with others is a fragile process.

1.2.2: The Components of Communication

The most basic components of communication include the source, message, channel, receiver, noise, feedback, and context. Understanding these elements can help you analyze your own communication with others. Let's explore these elements in greater detail.

- **SOURCE.** The *source* of the message is the originator of the ideas and feelings expressed. The source puts a message into a code that can be understood by a receiver. Putting ideas, feelings, and thoughts into a code is called *encoding*. Just the opposite of encoding is the process of *decoding*; this occurs when the receiver interprets the words or nonverbal cues.
- **MESSAGE.** The *message* is the information being communicated by the source. As you transactively communicate with others, it's important to understand that every human communication message has two key dimensions: the content and relational dimensions.

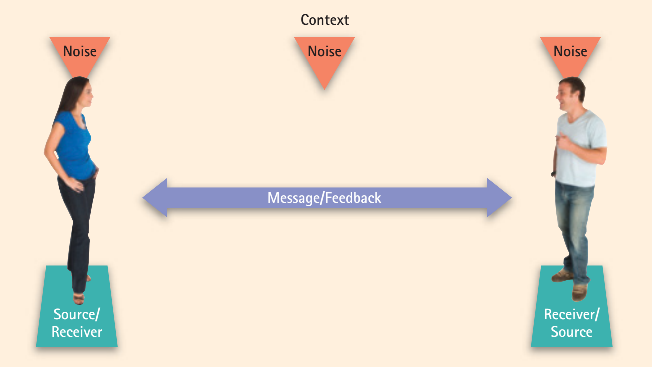
  The *content* of a communication message is the new information, ideas, or suggested actions the speaker wishes to express. Another name for the content dimension that may be more appropriate for the workplace is *task dimension*. Leaders, including managers, supervisors, or those who take charge of a particular project, communicate content messages with others to accomplish certain tasks, to get work completed.

  The *relational dimension* of a communication message is usually more implied; it offers cues about the emotions, attitudes, and amount of power and control the speaker feels toward others.[23] The relational dimension focuses more on nonverbal messages that convey cues about relationships among sender and receivers. Another way to distinguish between the content and relational dimensions of communication is to consider that the content of a message refers to *what* is said. The relational cues are provided in *how* the message was communicated. Although your supervisor may say "great job" about a project you've been working on, her lack of eye contact, monotone vocal inflection, and lackluster enthusiasm may actually suggest she is not all that pleased with your work.

- **RECEIVER.** The *receiver* of the message is the person or persons who interpret the message. When communicating with others, it's the receiver who will ultimately determine if your message was successful—whether it was understood and was appropriate. Effective communicators are receiver oriented; they understand that the listener is the one who ultimately makes sense of the message you express. If you're selling a product, for example, your prime focus should be on whether the customer understood your message.
- **CHANNEL.** The *channel* is the means by which the message is expressed to the receiver. If you're typical, you receive messages from a variety of channels. Increasingly, in business and professional settings (as well as in all communication situations), you are receiving messages via a mediated channel such as text messages, email, phone, video, or a Facebook post or tweet.
- **NOISE.** *Noise* is anything that interferes with the message being interpreted as it was intended. As we've emphasized, what we express isn't always interpreted as we intend. Noise happens. If there were no noise, then all of our messages would be interpreted accurately. But noise is always present. It can be literal—such as beeps coming from a BlackBerry or computer that tell you that you have incoming email—or it can be psychological, such as competing thoughts, worries, and feelings that capture your attention.
- **FEEDBACK.** Another element integral to communication is feedback. *Feedback* is the response to a message. Without feedback, communication is less likely to be effective. When your boss says, "Would you please give me a copy of the Williamson proposal?" you may say, "Is that the James Williamson proposal or the Kyra Williamson proposal?" Your quest for clarification in response to the request is feedback. Feedback can seek additional information, or simply confirm the message has been interpreted: "Okay, I'll have the Williamson proposal on your desk by this afternoon."
- **CONTEXT.** One final component of communication is *context*—the physical, historical, and psychological communication environment. As the saying goes, everyone has to be somewhere. All communication takes place in some context. A meeting held in the executive boardroom is likely to have different communication expectations and perhaps a different message from a brief conversation held around the water cooler. The context of the designer-decorated executive boardroom will likely result in more formal communication exchanges than conversation with people standing around a workroom water cooler. The physical environment has an effect on how people communicate.

Figure 1.1 shows the transactional nature of communication. We send messages at the same time we receive them. Even as we talk, we are also interpreting our partner's nonverbal and verbal responses. We also monitor the degree to which the other person understands our message, since noise can interfere with the quality and accuracy of the meaning of messages.

Figure 1.1: Communication as Transaction



1.3: Leadership: Influencing Others Through Communication

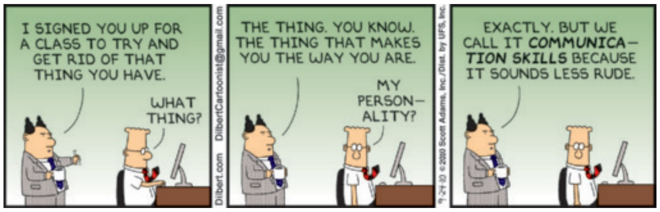
1.3 Examine how the leadership quality of influencing others through communication is an art.

In 1910, J. C. Hall hopped on a train to Kansas City with a couple of boxes of imported postcards under his arm and a vision for making money. He started a mail-order postcard business from his Kansas City YMCA room. After some initial success, however, he found that people weren't buying postcards like they used to. He needed to change the focus of his business. His brother Rollie joined him in 1915, and together they started making their own greeting cards. Things were going well until a fire destroyed their entire greeting card stock. Having listened to his customers' needs, J. C. decided to hire an illustrator to make Christmas cards. Good move: Business boomed.

J. C.'s other brother, William, joined the business and under J. C.'s leadership, and the brothers continued their success. In 1928 they started printing the word "Hallmark" on the backs of the cards. When J. C. died in 1982, he left $100 million to charity. Today Hallmark Cards has annual sales of more than $4 billion.[24]

J. C. was successful for two reasons. First, he was a master communicator. He knew what his customers wanted;

he listened to them. He used his communication skills to adapt to a changing marketplace. He crafted messages that connected to people. Second, he knew how to lead others. Whether it was working with his brothers to build the family business or being an innovative leader in establishing the greeting card industry, J. C. successfully influenced others. Can you learn the same principles and skills of leading others that J. C. Hall used to establish a $4 billion company? We believe the answer is an unequivocal yes.



Whether it's who comes out on top on *the latest reality show* or who becomes the next president of the United States, we're often fascinated with who emerges as number one. More specifically, we're interested in who becomes a leader, what a leader does, and how a leader maintains his or her leadership position.[25] Typically it's the leader who both sets the tone and establishes the work agenda of an organization or a team.

1.3.1: The Relationship Between Leadership and Communication

A key question we explore in this book is what are the underlying communication principles that enhance leadership? As we noted earlier, to lead is to influence. Here's a complete definition of leadership: *Leadership* is the process of influencing others to achieve goals through verbal and nonverbal messages. Researchers have emphasized several different perspectives on leadership.

- **LEADERS HELP MAKE SOMETHING HAPPEN.** James MacGregor Burns, in his classic book *Leadership*, described leadership this way: "Leadership is leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations—of both leaders and followers."[26]
- **LEADERS CREATE THE EXTRAORDINARY.** According to Alan Keith, "Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen."[27]
- **LEADERS ARE ETHICAL.** Leaders can make something extraordinary happen by influencing others through either ethical or unethical means. An ethical leader doesn't try to coerce others through brute force or knowingly using inaccurate or inappropriate appeals to fear.

We believe that what these perspectives have in common is that *leadership occurs through communication*, both verbal messages (what a leader says) and nonverbal messages (what a leader does). We also emphasize that leadership is not something only one person does. In most teams, groups, and organizations, there are many people who influence others. In fact, each team member undoubtedly influences what the group does or does not achieve.[28] So it's likely that you will provide leadership even though you may not be formally designated as "*the* leader." In an effectively led team, team members feel greater satisfaction, are more productive, and are less likely to be absent.[29] The quality of leadership influences virtually every aspect of what it feels like to be in any organization. In this first chapter we introduce you to the concept of leadership and describe five communication principles that can positively affect how you lead others. Although leadership is essentially a process of influencing others through your communication with them, we note how leading others is different from merely managing others.

An effective leader influences others through both verbal and nonverbal communication and with strong presentation skills.

Leaders Communicating @ Work

The Leadership-Communication Link

Because of the relationship between communication and leadership principles, in each chapter we feature leadership advice from chief executive officers or other experienced leaders from a variety of organizations. Although you may wonder whether the advice offered by leaders at the upper echelon of power applies to you, we assure you that it does. Communication and leadership principles have universal application, regardless of level of responsibility.

When asked about his key principles of leadership, chief executive officer of the Container Store, Kip Tendell, offered specific communication strategies for developing a positive, productive work climate:

> The way we create a place where people do want to come to work is primarily through two key points. One of our foundation principles is that leadership and communication are the same thing. Communication is leadership. So we believe in just relentlessly trying to communicate everything to every single employee at all times, and we're very open. We share everything. We believe in complete transparency. There's never a reason, we believe, to keep the information from an employee, except for individual salaries.[30]

For Tendell, leadership and communication are inextricably linked, and both help to explain and predict what it feels like to work in an organization. His key message: It's important to study both communication and leadership principles.

- Because of the communication-leadership connection, regardless of your level of leadership aspirations, when you study communication, you're also learning how to lead others.
- It's through communication that you influence an organization's work climate. Positive communication messages result in a supportive work climate, where workers are more productive and feel comfortable sharing their concerns and ideas.
- Possessing good communication skills can help you make authentic connections to others—to be transparent, honest, and real.

So regardless of the group, team, or organization in which you participate, communicating well and being open to create transparency are leadership behaviors that will serve you well.

1.3.2: Leading Versus Managing

There are differences between being a leader and being a manager. A *manager* is someone who has been appointed to coordinate and facilitate, whereas a leader influences others even if he or she has not been designated to assume a specific leadership role. Metaphorically speaking, a manager's job is to keep the trains running on time; the leader's job is to design the trains. Managers keep things organized and emphasize accomplishing specific tasks. Leaders are focused not just on short-term accomplishments but also on how the team, group, or organization will accomplish its goals over the long term.

Can a manager also be a leader? Yes, a good manager can also become a leader when influencing others. The typical function of a manager is to influence the more routine, mundane, and repetitive elements of the work. A manager becomes a leader when he or she takes on more innovative tasks and influences the group or organization in new and creative ways. The same person can both lead and manage.

1.3.3: Leading Versus Following

The relationship between leaders and followers is linked: A leader can't lead unless there are those who follow her or him; you can't have one without the other. If the key role of a leader is to influence others through communication, the prime task of a follower is to respond ethically and appropriately to the influence of a leader.

The word *follower* sometimes connotes a person who may wait to be told what to do rather than move forward on his or her own initiative. Without effective followers, however, little would get accomplished. So followers have more power and influence in organizations than they may perceive they have.

An effective follower does more than respond to a micromanaging leader; good followers use their own ideas and strategies to achieve their work goals. Precisely what do effective followers do? One researcher found that skilled followers engage in two activities: (1) They are independent and critical thinkers rather than passive and noncritical thinkers, and (2) they actively engage in the work, rather than waiting to be told what to do.[31] In most situations, the best followers are those who rate highly on both of these important attributes.

1.3.4: Leading and Technology

Another aspect of leadership involves the increased use of technology to do our work. We live in a digital age. Ubiquitous phone, text, and email messages are increasingly how we complete work tasks. However, technology and relationship scholar Sherry Turkle points out that even though we may be linked to others, we are nonetheless often literally alone, separated from others, while communicating electronically. As Turkle notes, "Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other."[32] So much of your leadership influence happens via technology. Whether you work in an office, an office cube, or telecommute from home, you will increasingly accomplish what you do using technology.

To be online rather than communicate face to face is to use electronicially mediated communication (EMC). Using mediated communication messages in the workplace is not new. People have used letters, another form of mediated messages, to conduct business for hundreds of years. In the 1800s, the introduction of telegraphs and telephones increased the pace of communication. Today, a plethora of electronic tools have resulted in an even quicker-paced work environment. These tools have powerful implications for leadership and workplace communication. Among the most important is that others can influence us almost 24/7 making work an ever-present part of our lives.

Sherry Turkle suggests the implications are even deeper, "Those little devices in our pockets don't only change what we do, they change who we are."[32]

Chances are you will spend considerable time working in virtual groups and teams connected to team members via Skype, or using software programs such as *GoToMeeting* to conduct your business. Webinars, seminars that are held via the Internet using voice or video or both, are saving companies money because people can work collaboratively without traveling to another city, state, or country. But it takes knowledge and skill to use technology effectively.

Throughout this book we will highlight this influential link between leadership, communication, and technology with a special feature called #Technology and Communication @ Work. As shown here, it is important to know the channel or type of technology that will best communicate your message.

#Technology and Communication @ Work

Matching Your Media to Your Message

People across the world today have increasingly easy access to communication via text messages, email, instant messaging, Skype, YouTube, Facebook, or other electronic means. This access, coupled with the increasing likelihood that you will be communicating with people from other cultures, means that you may need to decide when you need to share news face-to-face and when it may be more efficient to communicate virtually. One practical theory, called *media richness theory*, suggests that you can use the *richness* of different communication methods to help you evaluate when it is best to communicate in person rather than participate in mediated communication. A method or channel of communication is said to be rich if it has these characteristics:[33]

1. There is the possibility of instant feedback.
2. Both verbal and nonverbal cues can be processed by senders and receivers.
3. There is natural, informal use of language rather than formal language.
4. Messages are customized to individuals rather than communicated to a mass of people.

Face-to-face communication is media rich; writing a memo that goes out to all employees is media lean. The continuum of media-rich and media-lean methods of communication is presented here.

When should you use more media-rich methods of communication (which may involve travel and the expense of gathering in one place at one time), and when is it acceptable to use more efficient media-lean communication approaches? Here are a few tips.

Use media-rich methods if:

- Your message is likely to be misunderstood because it's highly detailed and complex.
- Your message is important to people (such as about their compensation).
- There is a high potential for interpersonal conflict.
- You want to know immediately how people will respond to your message.

Use media-lean methods if:

- The information is routine and noncontroversial, such as announcing the time and place of a meeting
- You will follow up the presentation of detailed information with a face-to-face meeting later.
- You want to communicate a simple message to many people quickly, such as the closing of a street or a parking garage for repairs.
- You already have a good interpersonal relationship with your intended audience because you have spent time in face-to-face collaboration on other projects.

Applying Your Skills

Given the principles of media richness theory, consider how best to collaborate with team members in these situations: You've had an e-meeting via the Internet with your colleagues. It's your job to distribute the minutes of the meeting. Should you use a media-rich or media-lean method of communicating the minutes to your coworkers?

WRITING PROMPT

As project manager, you've noticed increased conflict and relational tension between the team working in Houston, Texas, and the team based in Mexico City. During the last conference phone call it was clear the tensions were escalating between the two groups. To manage the conflict, should you use a media-rich or media-lean context? Specifically, what would be a good forum to help manage the conflict?

The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

1.4: Leading Others: Applying Communication Principles at Work

1.4 Describe the five fundamental principles to effectively increase communication and leadership skills.

As you begin your study of business and professional communication, the number of terms, ideas, and skills to learn about leadership and communication may seem overwhelming. To help you make sense out of the many ideas and the information that we present, we frame our study of business and professional communication around five fundamental principles that can enhance your communication skills and leadership abilities.[34] Together, these five principles provide you with a framework for understanding how communication works at work:

> Principle One: Leaders are aware of their communication with themselves and others
>
> Principle Two: Leaders effectively use and interpret verbal messages
>
> Principle Three: Leaders effectively use and interpret nonverbal messages
>
> Principle Four: Leaders listen and respond thoughtfully to others
>
> Principle Five: Leaders appropriately adapt messages to others

You may be taking a course in business and professional communication with the hope of just getting a good job and keeping it. Or you may already have a job and you have visions of someday climbing a bit higher on the corporate ladder. We've encouraged you to consider your professional career not only as just getting and keeping a job but also recognizing your potential to influence others using your leadership skills. These five principles can serve as a useful framework for assessing your communication and leadership skills regardless of your specific career objective.

1.4.1: Principle One: Leaders Are Aware of Their Communication with Themselves and Others

The first principle is to be aware of your interactions with others while at work. Effective communicators who skillfully lead others are conscious or "present" when communicating. Ineffective communicators mindlessly or thoughtlessly say and do things they may later regret. Being aware of your own (and others') communication involves two important processes:

- First, it's important to be aware of what motivates or drives a person to communicate. For example, if you know that one of your colleagues is getting a divorce, you may want to cut your coworker some slack when that person seems a bit edgy or tense during a staff meeting. Becoming aware of what motivates you and others to communicate will help you adapt your communication to make it more effective, which is the focus of our fifth communication principle.
- Second, it's important to be aware of how people perceive or see situations differently. No two people perceive a situation similarly. You may see a situation one way and a person who works for you may see it differently. For example, if you have no children but a colleague does have a child, you may not be interested at all in the new child-care facility that will be opened near your work, but your coworker is ecstatic not to have to pick up his daughter across town. Often, perceptual differences result in a number of communication problems at work simply because of differences; people can view the same situation with different interpretations. To be an effective leader or follower, regardless of the type of work involved, it's important to be aware of your own thoughts, assumptions, and communication behavior, and the behavior of others as well.

Communication Ethics @ Work

What's Your Ethics Credo?

In the workplace it's especially important to be aware and mindful of your personal and professional ethics. *Ethics* are the beliefs, values, and moral principles by which we determine what is right or wrong. An ethical communicator is one who considers the thoughts, feelings, and considerations of the people with whom a communicator is interacting. Ethics are essential because of the trust others place in you, especially when you manage their money or have access to their private information such as medical or financial records. The National Communication Association's Credo for Communication Ethics reemphasizes the importance of being an ethical communicator:

> Ethical communication is fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making, and the development of relationships and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media. Moreover, ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and others.[35]

WRITING PROMPT

What's your personal ethics credo? As you work with others in business and professional contexts, what are key ethical principles that guide you in communicating with others? Imagine you are being interviewed for a job and the interviewer asks you what your ethical principles are. What would you say?

▶ **The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.**

Submit

1.4.2: Principle Two: Effectively Use and Interpret Verbal Messages

The second principle is to effectively use and interpret verbal messages. We communicate through a *language*, which consists of symbols and a system of rules that make it possible for people to understand one another. As we noted earlier, symbols are words, sounds, visual images, or even gestures that represent thoughts, concepts, objects, or experiences. These words are symbols you use to derive meaning that makes sense to you. The effective communicator both encodes and decodes messages accurately; he or she selects appropriate verbal symbols, or words, to form a message and interprets carefully the messages of others. Because a number of today's organizations are global, with offices located throughout the world, it's becoming more important for employees to communicate verbally—to speak, read, and write—in at least two languages.

As a leader you will have ample opportunity to instruct others in how to complete a particular task. It's essential that your followers understand your verbal messages and that you understand their verbal messages. Mastering the principle of effectively using and interpreting verbal messages will enhance your role as a VIP—a *verbally* important person who understands the power of words to influence others.

1.4.3: Principle Three: Effectively Use and Interpret Nonverbal Messages

Nonverbal communication is communication other than written or spoken language that creates meaning for someone. Unspoken messages can communicate powerful ideas with greater impact than mere words alone. Our emotions are communicated primarily through our use of nonverbal messages. A leader patting an employee on the back or an employee slamming shut an office door not only conveys a message but also communicates emotions. If you have ever said, "It's not what he said that bothered me; it's the way he said it," then you already understand the power of nonverbal communication. A potential customer might tell you in her verbal message that she will call you next week. However, you know she will not call you because her nonverbal message was lacking sincerity. Again, it's not *what* she said ("I will call you next week") but how she said it (insincere voice, lack of eye contact, or fidgeting) that created and conveyed the meaning to you.

Understanding and interpreting nonverbal messages are especially important skills to have in the workplace. In one survey of more than 550 managers from 50 businesses and organizations, 92% of the respondents agreed that nonverbal communication was either "important" or "very important" in a variety of business situations.[36] This text provides you with skills to help you put into practice this vital communication principle for leadership.

1.4.4: Principle Four: Listen and Respond Thoughtfully to Others

Although effective leadership requires people to develop and send messages to others that are meaningful, it is equally if not more important for leaders to listen and receive messages from others. Listening involves being *other-oriented*, which occurs when we consider the needs, motives, desires, and goals of others. A crucial part of leadership is being able to meet the needs of the people you lead. There is evidence that the skill of being other-oriented or empathic is decreasing. One study found that college students in the early part of the twenty-first century are 40% less empathic than college students in the 1980s and 1990s—empathy skills seemed to drop off after about 2000.[37] Listening to others is essential to being empathically other-oriented. The only way you know what people need is to listen to them. What are they telling you? What are they not telling you? Listening is so important to leadership that Stephen Covey, a well-known leadership expert, featured listening as one of his seven habits of highly effective people. Covey noted, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood."[38]

Listening is a process. It involves receiving messages as well as responding thoughtfully to what others are saying. Responsive messages involve asking questions related to what the person is talking about, restating in your own words what you hear the other person saying, and being nonverbally responsive by leaning forward, making eye contact, and nodding your head. Responsive messages are affirming. They communicate to other people that they have been listened to and that you understand them.

1.4.5: Principle Five: Appropriately Adapt Messages to Others

A one-size-fits-all approach to communication doesn't work in the twenty-first century. For messages to have an impact, they must be tailored to the people receiving them. Your ability to lead and influence others effectively depends on your ability to adapt messages appropriately to others.[39] When you adapt a message to others you make choices about how best to develop a message to achieve your communication goal.

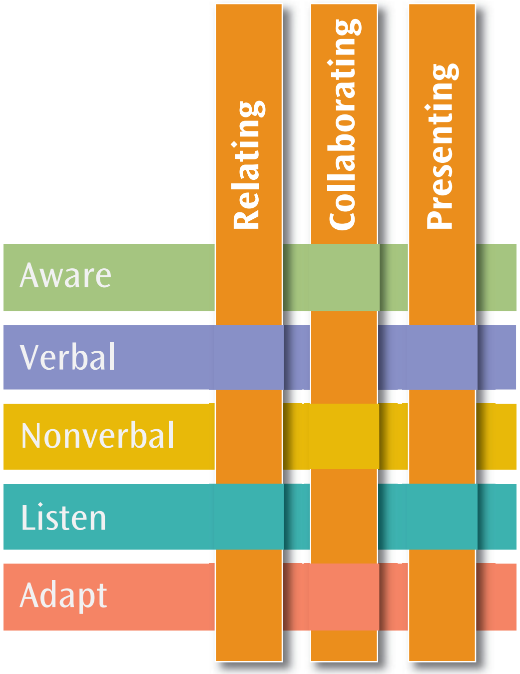
The workplace is full of diversity; chances are you will be working with people from all over the planet. Even men and women don't always understand each other because of gender differences in communication. Another way to tailor your communication is to adapt to another person's personality. Some people are talkative; others are quiet. Some people enjoy a good argument; others find arguing upsetting. As the #Technology and Communication @ Work feature discusses, you should also customize your choice of communication media. Your ability to adapt and adjust your communication makes others more comfortable and enhances understanding.

In the workplace, you communicate—make sense and share sense with others—to achieve specific work objectives. You achieve those objectives through three sets of communication skills:

- *Relating to others* Communication in the interpersonal context helps develop and manage workplace relationships.
- *Collaborating with others* Communication in the team context allows people to collaborate, or work cooperatively, with others.
- *Presenting messages to others* Communication in the public context takes place through effective business and professional presentations, such as presenting a progress report to a higher management team.

Although each context is different, the communication principles remain the same. As you see in Figure 1.2, you use the same five principles to develop and manage relationships as you do to make effective sales presentations to potential customers. What's different is how the communication principles are applied. You will see how the five communication principles are woven throughout the three contexts (interpersonal, team, and public) and how the context determines how the principles are applied to achieve communication goals as you assume leadership roles.

Figure 1.2: Communication Principles for a Lifetime



Recap

Communication Principles for Leadership

Communication Principle	Application
Principle One: Be **aware** of your communication with yourself and others.	Be mindful of your communication and conscious of what motivates you and others to communicate.
Principle Two: Effectively use and interpret **verbal** messages.	Select appropriate symbols to clearly communicate messages to others, and decode others' messages carefully.
Principle Three: Effectively use and interpret **nonverbal** messages.	Use unspoken symbols to communicate the emotional and relational aspects of your message.
Principle Four: **Listen** and respond thoughtfully to others.	Actively listen to others, using responses to ensure and demonstrate that you have understood the message correctly.
Principle Five: Appropriately **adapt** messages to others.	Customize messages to enhance message clarity; consider the personal, social, and cultural characteristics of listeners.

Summary: Communicating and Leading at Work

1.1: Review how communication skills determine leadership qualities.

Communication principles and skills are beneficial to any professional or career but especially to any career that involves leading others. To be effective in the workplace, you need to be able to communicate effectively and appropriately to influence others in positive and ethical ways.

1.2: Recognize that communication occurs only when it reaches the desired audience.

Human communication is the process of making sense out of the world and sharing that sense with others by creating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages. People who communicate effectively do well on the job.

1.3: Examine how the leadership quality of influencing others through communication is an art.

Leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve goals through verbal and nonverbal messages. Leading is different from managing. A manager coordinates and facilitates to keep things organized and accomplish a task. Leadership involves more opportunities and expectations to influence the behavior of others.

1.4: Describe the five fundamental principles to effectively increase communication and leadership skills.

Five communication principles are fundamental to enhancing leadership and business and professional communication skills. We refer to these principles throughout the book as a way of organizing the skills and applications of human communication.

- Leaders are aware of their communication with themselves and others. Being mindful of your communication is important to help you improve your communication.
- Leaders effectively use and interpret verbal messages. Words are powerful and influence our thoughts, our actions, and our relationships with others.
- Leaders effectively use and interpret nonverbal messages. Unspoken cues provide important information about our emotions, feelings, and attitudes.
- Leaders listen and respond thoughtfully to others. Being able to interpret accurately the messages of others enhances comprehension and relational empathy.
- Leaders appropriately adapt messages to others. It is important to adapt messages to others to enhance both understanding and empathy.

SHARED WRITING: YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

What are your best leadership attributes, and what leadership skills should you work to enhance? Make a list of your strongest leadership attributes, as if you were being considered for a leadership role in a business or professional setting. Make a second list of the leadership skills and competencies you'd like to enhance. Note the role and function of communication in your two lists.

A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post

0 characters | 140 minimum

Chapter 1 Quiz: Communicating and Leading at Work

Chapter 2

Being Aware of How You Communicate at Work

Learning Objectives

2.1 Analyze how being aware of the social skills of the self and of others helps to adapt effectively to the communication skills of others

2.2 Evaluate the different motivational approaches followed in organizations

2.3 Recognize the need to be aware of organizational culture for effective communication

2.4 Express the need to remain ethical in all forms of roles in an organization

Although you may not recognize the name Indra Nooyi, you're probably familiar with many of the products she is responsible for producing, including Pepsi, Gatorade, and Fritos. Nooyi is CEO of PepsiCo, which is responsible for Pepsi products as well as Tropicana, Frito Lay, Gatorade, and Quaker Oats products. *Fortune* magazine has listed her as one of the "50 Most Powerful Women" and *Forbes* magazine has listed her as one of the "World's 100 Most Powerful Women."

Although Nooyi considers herself a normal person, who juggles being a corporate leader with being a mother, a wife, a daughter, and a daughter-in-law, much of her success is grounded in her awareness of who she is as a person and her awareness of others, which was cultivated through her relationship with her paternal grandfather who taught her to be a thoughtful and mindful person. My grandfather "taught me to be a lifelong student. Don't ever think you've arrived, and remember that what you don't know is so much more than what you do[1]

Being aware of the many factors that influence how she communicates with others and how others communicate with her has allowed Nooyi to be more open to new ideas allowing her to learn and grow as a person. Through this self-awareness, she has become a more effective leader. Nooyi's keen self-awareness of others and the organizational culture at PepsiCo has allowed her to attract and retain her best employees. She invests time in developing the people who work for her. "We look at a 10- to 15-year development plan for our high-potential people," says Nooyi. "This looks at their children, their schools, their spouse's job, aging parents—anything that affects where they will be comfortable working. That way we can build opportunities to develop their careers in tandem with their personal lives."[2]

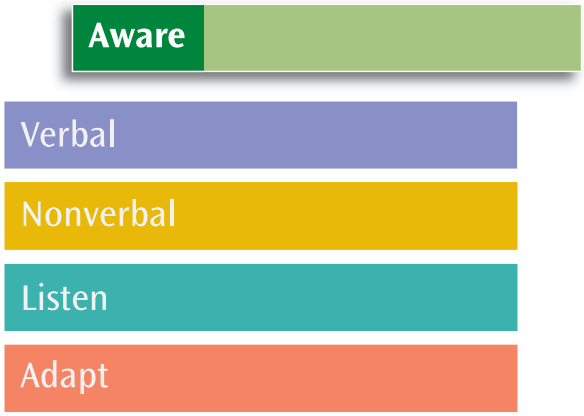
Another example of Nooyi's awareness of others is when she wrote to the parents of 29 of her senior executives' parents to inform them of what a great job they did in raising their child. She informed the parents of how much their now-grown child had contributed to the success of PepsiCo. In these personal letters, she considered each senior executive a gift. According to Nooyi, this letter-writing activity "unleashed emotions that were unbelievable, creating an emotional bond among executives, their parents, and me."[3]

Leading Questions

1. Nooyi attributes much of her success to being grounded and knowing who she is as a person and as a leader. How do you see self-awareness being related to leadership effectiveness?
2. Within the past five years, have you become a more self-aware person? If so, how has this influenced how you communicate with others?
3. What do you think motivated Nooyi to send thank you letters to her senior executives' parents? Why not send the letter to the senior executives?

The first principle that guides the communication and leadership skills in the workplace is to *become aware of your communication with yourself and others*. There are a number of factors that influence how you communicate at work including your approach to leading others, the assumptions you have about what motivates people to do a good job, the culture of the organization where you work, and your understanding of how power works in your organization. Having an understanding of how these factors influence workplace communication is the first step in your becoming aware of how you communicate with others and how others communicate with you. Figure 2.1 illustrates where Principle One fits into our model of Communication Principles and Skills for Leadership.

Figure 2.1: Communication Principles and Skills for Leadership



2.1: Be Aware of Leadership Approaches

2.1 **Analyze how being aware of one's own social skills and those of others helps to adapt effectively to the communication skills of others.**

Some people have a gift for leadership, meaning that it comes naturally to them. Others have to work at developing their leadership abilities. What do you think? Are people born with the ability to lead, or is leadership something that people learn and acquire? Your becoming aware of these approaches will enable you not only to develop a more complex answer to this oversimplified question but also will give you invaluable insight into your own leadership abilities and potential.

2.1.1: The Trait Approach

The question of whether leaders are born to lead is the focus of the trait approach to leadership. The *trait approach* to leadership suggests that there are certain psychological and communication traits as well as physical attributes that make leaders effective. Over the course of several years of study, leadership researchers have identified intelligence, confidence, extroversion, social skills (including communication skills), administrative skills, enthusiasm, and even physical height as some of the traits effective leaders typically possess.[4] One research study found that across several cultures, the most admired qualities of a leader are honesty, being forward-looking, competence, and being inspirational.[5]

2.1.2: The Functional Approach

The *functional approach* to leadership suggests that leaders exist to perform essential functions or behaviors that help an organization to achieve its goals. Rather than identifying personality characteristics or other traits, the functional approach to leadership divides the essential leadership behaviors into two categories: (1) task functions and (2) process functions. The two types of functions are similar to the content and relational dimensions of communication. *Task functions* are those leadership behaviors that help the team get the work done, such as delegating duties, facilitating meetings, and making sure all employees are trained. *Process functions* are those behaviors that leaders engage in to maintain a harmonious climate by appropriately managing conflict and rewarding work teams when goals are reached.

2.1.3: The Styles Approach

A leadership style is a preferred way of behaving to influence others. The styles approach to leadership suggests that leaders choose one of three primary styles when attempting to get work done: (1) authoritarian, (2) democratic, or (3) laissez faire. What differentiates the three styles are the strategies that leaders use to influence others.[6]

- *Authoritarian leaders* influence by giving orders and seeking to control others. Perhaps you've been in a group and wondered, "Who put her in charge?" Or, maybe you were appreciative of the person who stepped up and started leading by telling other people what to do in order to get the work done.
- *Democratic leaders* consult with others before issuing orders. This type of leader seeks to join in the process of influencing without bulldozing the group into action. Sometimes formal votes are taken, but the leader or leaders will gauge the reaction of the group through dialogue and by reading nonverbal cues. Research suggests that a democratic leadership style usually results in increased trust and greater cohesiveness and consensus than a dictatorial leadership approach does.[7]
- Laissez-faire leaders take a hands-off, laid-back approach to influencing others. *Laissez-faire* is a French phrase that implies noninterference. This leadership style is based on the assumption that the less direction provided by the leader, the better. In many ways this type of leader shies away from actively influencing the group. He or she influences only when pushed to lead.

2.1.4: The Situational Approach

Although most groups prefer a democratic leadership style, leaders sometimes need to be more assertive. During a crisis, people need a quick-thinking, decisive leader who can orchestrate what needs to be done. During more routine situations, the leader may just need to back off and let others do their thing. At other times a leader may need to play a more active role in gathering ideas and information from people. Because leadership style is not a one-size-fits-all concept, a skilled leader adapts to the situation. The *situational leadership* approach views leadership as an interactive process that links a particular style of leadership with such factors as culture, time limitations, group member personalities, and the work the group needs to do.

The situational leadership approach was exemplified by Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who adapted quickly to respond to the dire situation in New York City following the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

2.1.5: The Transformational Leadership Approach

To transform something is to change it from what it is now to something new and different. *Transformational leadership* is the process of influencing people to see the future in new ways.[8] The transformational leader influences members of the organization by giving them a glimpse of the future, energizing or realigning the culture, or giving the organization a new structure.[9] The leader influences by helping team members see all of the possibilities within the team, including those that may not yet be visible.[10] A transformational leadership approach has been linked to enhanced creativity, especially among a diverse workforce.[11] Entrepreneur Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, transformed the way people make social connections using the Internet. Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon, forever changed the way people buy not only books but just about everything else. Both leaders helped to transform the people they lead by building a shared vision, challenging existing ways of thinking, and thinking holistically, from a systems perspective.

Recap

Leadership Approaches

Approach	Description
Trait	Effective leaders possess certain traits or characteristics that contribute to their effectiveness.
Functional	Leaders influence others by performing two primary functions: • Task functions, which help accomplish the work. • Process functions, which help establish a positive climate.
Styles	Leaders tend to act in one of three primary styles: • Authoritarian leaders direct and control others. • Democratic leaders solicit input from others and seek to lead by involving others in the decisions. • Laissez-faire leaders intentionally influence others only when asked or directed by others to lead.
Situational	Leadership is an interactive process in which a leader adapts his or her approach based on the needs of the group. • More structured tasks and high-stress situations call for more directive leadership. • Less structured tasks and situations in which positive interpersonal relationships are important call for more democratic leadership.
Transformational	A leader influences others by: • Developing a shared vision. • Using listening and relationship-building skills to create a climate of trust.

2.2: Be Aware of Leadership Assumptions

2.2 Evaluate the different motivational approaches followed in organizations.

A large part of leadership involves motivating others. In order for you to lead in an effective manner, you need to be aware of the assumptions you possess about what motivates people to do their very best work. For example, some leaders assume money motivates people to perform, so they lead others by developing reward systems based on financial bonuses for a job well done. Other leaders believe it's not the money that motivates but how you treat people. Being aware of your assumptions gives you additional insight into how you lead and communicate with others. Researchers have identified three sets of leadership assumptions that influence how leaders approach motivation: classical, human relations, and human resources.

2.2.1: Classical Approach Assumptions

The *classical approach* to motivation is based on the principle of reward and punishment. Put simply, leaders assume workers are motivated to work hard when they are rewarded for good work and not rewarded for poor work. The classical approach to organizations also assumes that there is one best way for a team or organization to perform a given task. The leader's job is to influence the workers to behave in ways that help them produce goods or services in the most efficient and effective way possible. Fredrick Taylor's 1911 book *The Principles of Scientific Management* was influential in helping leaders structure work so that it could be done in effective and efficient ways.[12]

Under the classical approach, work is organized to minimize wasted motions. Employees are rewarded for completing work in an effective and efficient manner. Many fast-food restaurants organize and motivate their work teams using the classical approach. When you place your order for a hamburger, the people who make your meal don't typically huddle and say, "Well, what's the best way to make this hamburger?" The manager or the organization has already decided this for them. The procedure has been established, and the team members' job is to produce the hamburger as fast as possible, following this procedure. An organization or team that operates with a classical approach to leadership has identified a clear leader who is expected to keep things running like clockwork, and team members have accepted that they're fulfilling the role that is needed. Work is organized like an assembly line in which each person has been trained to do his or her part in producing whatever it is that the team is creating.

Communication between manager and employees at a fast-food restaurant chain is focused on completing specific tasks in an efficient manner.

2.2.2: Human Relations Assumptions

The *human relations approach* to motivation is based on the assumption that people are influenced not just by power and position but also by how they are treated at work. You can't just tell people what to do and expect that they will do it. People are motivated by leaders who pay attention to them and to their needs. Google is well known for offering its employees a menu of perks or benefits including free food, on-site haircuts and dry cleaning, and a fully equipped gym with swim-in-place pool.

One breakthrough large-scale research project had a major impact on our understanding of motivation in the workplace. Research conducted by Elton Mayo and Friz Roethlisberger at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company between 1927 and 1932 revealed what became known simply as the *Hawthorne effect*.[13] These studies found evidence that the way people are treated has an impact on their work. When trying to test whether changes in working conditions (such as improvements in the workroom lighting) had an effect on work productivity, the Hawthorne researchers found that just paying attention to workers and asking for their input on the working conditions influenced work output and work climate. In other words, it's not just directing people to do a job that influences the amount and quality of work that gets accomplished. People are motivated by their own desire for recognition and their need to feel positive about what they are doing. The research also documented the important role of communication in establishing a positive work climate, such as leaders listening to employees' concerns and asking for their input.

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Being Aware of How Others See Us[14]

Dan Rosensweig, president and chief executive of Chegg, is a powerful person. He is in charge of a large online textbook rental company with hundreds of people who report to him, yet he wants to increase his awareness of how he can be a better leader and a better person. He realizes that other people have insights about him of which he's often unaware. To increase his awareness of how others view him, he often asks his employees a simple question:

> "If you had my job, other than giving yourself more vacation and a raise, what's the first thing that you would do that you don't think we're doing yet?" I try to make it comfortable when you do the review process by asking people: What do you need more of from me? What do you need less of from me? What is it that I'm doing that you would like me to stop doing completely? And what is it that I'm not doing enough of that you'd like some more of? From there, it becomes a much more comfortable conversation.

To learn how others view you, consider asking a trusted friend or colleague "What are things that I should be doing that you don't think I'm doing?" or "What is something you think I need to know, but don't know about the way I communicate with others?" No, we're not suggesting that you ask such questions of everyone indiscriminately. But asking people you trust and who know you, such as a close friend, for perceptions about yourself that you may not be aware of can increase your self-awareness. With a better perception of how others see you, you can work on the skills that can enhance the quality of relationships you have with others.

WRITING PROMPT

How can you apply Rosensweig's question to enhance your own work effectiveness and increase your awareness of your communication skill?

▶ **The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.**

Submit

2.2.3: Human Resources Assumptions

The *human resources approach* to motivation assumes that in order to empower people to participate in the work of the organization or team, you have to give them more control over work processes. Leaders motivate others by making employees partners at work and giving them more decision-making and problem-solving responsibilities. To compare and contrast, the human relations approach assumes that people are motivated by leaders taking care of them and paying attention to their needs. The human resources approach assumes that people are motivated when leaders empower them to problem solve and make decisions.

Herb Kelleher, co-founder of Southwest Airlines, is probably the best example of a leader who motivated others through the human resources approach. He has often been quoted as saying that the best way to motivate people is to give them the tools, support, and conditions they need to solve problems and then get out of their way.[15] "I've never had control and I never wanted it," says Kelleher. . . . "If you create an environment where people truly participate, you don't need control. They know what needs to be done and they do it."

2.3: Be Aware of Organizational Culture

2.3 Recognize the need to be aware of organizational culture for effective communication.

Organizational culture is the learned pattern of beliefs, values, assumptions, rules, and norms that are shared by the people in an organization. Organizational culture includes what it feels like to be in an organization, whether the organization maintains a rigid, do-it-by-the-book approach or is a more relaxed, informal place to work. The culture of an organization also affects all aspects of how the work is accomplished. Your shopping experience at Walmart, for example, is probably different from your shopping experience at an upscale department store like Nordstrom. Both sell shirts, socks, and shoes, but what it feels like to shop at each place is distinctive and different from the experience at the other retail establishment. The stores have a different organizational culture in terms of how employees interact with customers. You are met at Wal-Mart by a greeter who shoves a shopping cart your way; at Nordstrom you receive more individual attention (and pay higher prices).

Organizational culture influences the way you do your work. How closely you adhere to deadlines, how quickly you respond to email messages, and how you observe unwritten rules (such as whether it's acceptable to hang out in the coffee room when the supervisor is there) may influence whether you get a pay raise or not, or even whether you'll keep your job. To be aware of more than just surface features of organizational culture, it's important to understand how organizational culture is developed and evolves.

Communication Ethics @ Work

Social Media and the 24/7 Employee[16]

Justine Sacco, a communications executive, went from being an unknown citizen to a racist pariah after she tweeted "Going to Africa. Hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white!" after boarding an international flight to South Africa. Having no awareness that her tweet had gone viral, she learned upon arriving in South Africa that she was the most hated woman on the planet and unemployed.

The level of outrage toward Sacco surprised some reporters. Reporter Joe Flint for the *Los Angeles Times* mentioned, "The level of outrage toward Sacco on the Internet had some media pundits wondering if the mob mentality that emerged was as disturbing as her tweet."[17] One blogger wrote, "On a late-December Friday night, an online lynch-mob destroyed the reputation, career, and life of a young woman and private citizen, and did so without the benefit of the doubt or hearing her side of the story."[18]

Although Sacco's example is egregious, it does raise some interesting questions:

- Should people's personal tweets, that some consider offensive, negatively impact their professional career?
- Do some types of careers give people more permission to tweet inflammatory tweets than other types of careers without the threat of losing their job? For example, does a small hotel manager face the same scrutiny as a global communication executive?
- Should employees be considered 24/7 working professionals when using social media?

2.3.1: Organizational Culture is Communicated Both Explicitly and Implicitly

Sometimes organizational culture is explicitly spelled out in written policies and verbal directives; in other instances, the culture is conveyed indirectly through the example set by others. Maybe you've worked in an organization that had explicit rules prescribing when you should arrive at work and take breaks; perhaps you had to punch a time clock, swipe an ID card, or log into a computer to let your manager know you were reporting to work on time. Yet in another organization, rules were more relaxed—you didn't have to report in at a precise time and you could come and go as you liked as long as the work got done. These are examples of implicit rules. Although the rules are not documented, there is an assumption that you are aware of the standards and expectations and that you will follow them. Often new employees follow the example set by others.

2.3.2: Organizational Culture Includes Multiple Factors

There is not just one factor that contributes to what it feels like to be in an organization, but many factors. The forces that contribute to the organizational culture include what you see, what you read, and what you hear when you visit an organization. What should you observe to get a sense of organizational culture? Here are a few of the factors that simultaneously shape and reflect organizational culture:

- **WRITTEN RULES AND POLICIES:** As we've noted, sometimes organizational culture is explicitly expressed in written polices. These rules and policies may be found on a website or in a handbook or presented during orientation sessions. But if you only looked at the written policies, you'd miss a lot of the forces that shape the culture. It's often more informal communication channels that give you the most important clues about organizational culture.
- **STORIES:** "Hey, did you hear what happened to Marcie last night?" Not only will such an opening line get your attention, but the story itself can offer clues to the culture of an organization. The stories and gossip that circulate in an organization reveal information about the values and expectations of the organization. Are supervisors

valued or made fun of? Are staff members respected? Do people express genuine warmth for others, or are suspicion and mistrust embedded in the tales that are told? Listening to the stories and how they are expressed (whether with playful humor or mean spirits) can help you identify organizational culture.

- **METAPHORS:** Noting the metaphors—the comparisons or analogies that are used to describe the organization—can provide clues about organizational culture. "We're all like family here," says your new coworker. That metaphor sends a different message than someone saying "Welcome to the crazy house."
- **CEREMONIES:** Noting organizational rituals and what gets celebrated and rewarded can give you insights into what is valued. If employees get awards for perfect attendance or for achieving high work output, then those achievements are clearly valued by the organization. If people get recognition for working ten, twenty, or thirty years at the organization, then you know that longevity is valued and rewarded. Do colleagues frequently go out to lunch together to celebrate birthdays? What gets celebrated and the behaviors that are spotlighted provide significant clues about organizational culture.
- **ARTIFACTS AND DECOR:** Do people have cubicles or private offices? Is there matching furniture, or do people have a hodgepodge of chairs and desks in their workspace? The attention given to what the physical space in the organization looks like is another clue that helps decode the organizational culture. Fine art on the office walls rather than tattered and torn posters suggests that top management wants to create an inviting work experience. For example, Facebook's corporate offices in Palo Alto, California, reflect an organizational culture that promotes cooperation. Rather than working in offices, Facebook staff members work in large open spaces or in conference rooms, which are called aquariums because they are glassed cubes within a room. One reporter described it this way: "No cubicles, no offices, no walls, just a rolling tundra of office furniture."[19] The appearance of an organization can give you insight into whether it's an austere, serious work environment or a place where people are encouraged to have fun and be innovative.

Physical space in an organization often defines the organizational culture, such as the open floor plan of the Facebook corporate offices in Palo Alto, California.

2.3.3: Using Organizational Culture to Lead

Leaders influence the culture of an organization by the symbols they use—both verbal symbols (what leaders say) as well as nonverbal symbols (what leaders do). Organizational culture expert Edgar Schein has identified five ways leaders communicate organizational culture through the symbols they use:

1. **what they focus on and pay attention to;**
2. **how they react to major events and crises;**
3. **their actions as role models, coaches, or teachers;**
4. **the criteria they use to reward others; and**
5. **the criteria used to recruit, promote, and "excommunicate" others from the group.**[20]

Each of these ways of transmitting culture to an organization involves using symbols to communicate which behaviors in an organization should increase or decrease. As business expert Stanley Davis has noted, "Caring for the culture cannot be delegated. It can be shared but not left for someone else to do. The leader is the fountainhead. . . . If the leader is a great person then inspiring ideas will permeate the corporation's culture."[21] As we've emphasized, leadership is not always embodied in one person—many people influence others through communication. So many people within an organization who influence or lead have the potential to influence the organizational culture.

Career Corner

Assessing Your Cultural Fit

Before considering an organization, make sure you're aware of the organization's culture and if you're a good cultural fit. To conduct your own audit, see if you can assess the cultural factors listed by reviewing the organization's website, visiting the reception area, observing employees from the parking lot, talking to people who work at the organization, and reviewing annual reports and other printed materials.

Environment

- Office equipment and furniture
- Cleanliness of facility
- Signage and branding
- Decorations
- Lighting
- Employee dress and grooming

Communication

- Employee greetings
- Use of formal or informal communication
- Use of humor
- Use of metaphors
- Consistent use of vision, mission, and values
- Upward or downward

Ceremonies and events

- Regular staff events
- Celebration of birthdays, holiday parties, and quarterly celebrations for reaching goals

Rules and Policies

- Literal policy enforcement
- Number of rules and policies
- Mention of standard operating procedures (SOP)
- Signage of rules
- Amount of training focusing on policy

Rewards

- Award criteria: quantity/quality
- Types of awards
- Frequency of awards

2.4: Be Aware of Organizational Power

2.4 Express the need to remain ethical in all forms of roles in an organization.

Power is the ability to influence others' behavior. You have power if you can get others to do what you want. Although status (prestige and importance) and power (ability to influence) sometimes go hand in hand, a leader may have status and still not be able to influence how others behave. You could, for example, be the designated leader but not be perceived as having much influence on the team because your ideas aren't valued, or you may have no resources to back up what you say and do. Because leadership is the process of influencing others through communication, it's important to be aware of the sources of power and the factors that enhance someone's ability to influence others.[22]

2.4.1: Types of Organizational Power

One way to become aware of the organizational power that others possess is by identifying the five sources of power: *legitimate power*, *referent power*, *expert power*, *reward power*, and *coercive power*. (See Table 2.1) These power bases explain why certain people have power and why others don't.[23] Even though we have categorized power into five different types, don't get the idea that individuals in an organization have just one type. In reality, employees typically have more than one source of power.

Table 2.1: Types of Organizational Power

Type of Power	Description	Examples of People with this Power
Legitimate power	Power that arises from being elected, appointed, or ordained to lead or make decisions for a group or a team	• The president of your university or college • The appointed chair of a team • The elected president of a group
Referent power	Power that arises from being well liked	• A friend you work with on a committee
Expert power	Power that arises from having information and being knowledgeable about issues or ideas	• An architect on a team choosing the design for a new library
Reward power	Power that arises from having the ability to bestow gifts, money, recognition, or other rewards valued by group members, or to remove unpleasant conditions	• A boss who can give a raise • A school principal who can loosen the school dress code
Coercive power	Power that arises from having the ability to punish others	• A boss who can fire you or lower your pay • A team captain who can make you do the unpleasant jobs

One of the first things to be aware of when managing power differences is the power basis. Say you're having a power struggle with your boss over when a project should be completed. It would be politically prudent to note the power bases that your boss has but that you don't possess: legitimate power on the basis of a management position, coercive power to fire you, and reward power to give you a raise.

2.4.2: Abuse of Organizational Power: Sexual Harassment

Whenever there are power differences, there is always the potential for abuse. One form of abuse due to organizational power is sexual harassment. According to Susan Webb, who runs a consulting firm that specializes in human relations issues, *sexual harassment* is "deliberate and/or repeated sexual or sex-based behavior that is not welcome, not asked for, and not returned" (p. 12).[24] Sex-based behavior is expressed through both verbal and nonverbal messages in face-to-face communication. To lead others more effectively, you need to be aware of how sexual harassment is experienced and how to avoid it.

To better understand how others experience sexual harassment, we examine three components of Webb's definition of sexual harassment. The first step is to be able to recognize when the verbal and nonverbal messages and behaviors in question are sexual or sex based in nature. This type of communication can be placed on a continuum from least to most severe. Examples of least severe include telling sexual jokes or making sexual innuendos, flirting, or asking someone out on a date. Examples of most most severe include forced fondling, attempted or actual rape, and sexual assault.

The second step is observing that the verbal and nonverbal messages are deliberate and/or repeated. Some messages are so graphic that the first time they are conveyed, they are considered sexual harassment. Other messages are more subtle and can be considered sexual harassment only if they are repeated—for example, brushing up against someone in the break room. According to Webb, "the more severe the behavior is, the fewer times it needs to be repeated before reasonable people define it as harassment; the less severe it is, the more times it needs to be repeated" (p. 13).[25]

Third, sexual harassment is not welcome, not asked for, and not returned. Webb mentions that "the less severe the behavior is, the more responsibility the receiver has to speak up; the more severe it is, the less responsibility the receiver has to speak up" (p. 14).[26] In other words, if an employee is being harassed with sexual jokes or innuendoes or is in the room when others are viewing pornography on the Internet, then it's the employee's responsibility to inform the others of how the behavior is affecting him or her. If the behavior is severe, such as fondling or sexual assault, then the employee should immediately discuss the situation with a supervisor, whose responsibility it is to manage the situation.

Also, there are two major classifications of sexual harassment: quid pro quo harassment and hostile environment harassment. *Quid pro quo sexual harassment* is actual or threatened use of rewards or punishment to gain sexual compliance from a subordinate.[27] (*Quid pro quo* is a Latin phrase that roughly translates as "something for something else.") An example of quid pro quo sexual harassment in the workplace would be a manager threatening not to promote an employee unless the employee has sex with the manager. It's sex or no promotion—something for something else. *Hostile environment sexual harassment* is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with a person's ability to perform a job or gain an education and that creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive working environment.[28] Examples of hostile environment sexual harassment in the workplace include constant use of lewd remarks and offensive language that demeans a person's sex.

#Technology and Communication @ Work

Sexual Harassment on the Internet

Employees today need to be aware of not only what is said and done in the physical office, but what is being said and done in the virtual office as well.

Sexual harassment on the Internet can occur in a number of ways.[29] Two common forms include the following:

- A harasser sends unwanted, abusive, threatening, or obscene messages to a victim via email or instant messaging.
- A victim is subject to unwanted, abusive, threatening, or obscene messages and/or comments on Internet forums, blogs, and discussion boards.

Types of Internet Sexual Harassment

Gender Harassment

Unwelcome verbal and visual comments and remarks that insult individuals because of their gender or that use stimuli known or intended to provide negative emotions.

Verbal Gender Harassment

Offensive sexual messages aimed toward a victim that are initiated by a harasser: gender-humiliating comments, rape threats, and sexual remarks that are unwelcome, and are neither invited nor consensual. Verbal harassment can be either passive or active, depending on whether the harasser targets a specific victim (active) or targets potential receivers (passive).

Graphic Gender Harassment

The intentional sending of erotic, pornographic, lewd, and lascivious images and digital recordings by a harasser to specific or potential victims. Graphic harassment often occurs via email, instant messaging, redirected/automatic linking, and pop-ups.

Unwanted Sexual Attention

A harasser uses direct personal communication to harass a victim. Additionally, the harasser uses personal communication to convey messages directly relating to sex and/or sexuality, which are unwanted or unwelcome by the victim. These messages often refer to the victim's sex organs; refer to the victim's sex life; refer to intimate subjects; impose sex-related images or sounds; or insinuate or offer sex-related activities.

Once you know what sexual harassment is, it's important to avoid it. Here are a few communication strategies for avoiding sexually harassing another person at work.

- **AVOID SEXUAL MESSAGES AND BEHAVIORS.** Sexual jokes, inappropriate touching, and sexual teasing are to be avoided. We often assume that others are like us and that they share our attitudes, beliefs, values—and our sense of humor. In the diverse workplace, this assumption is inaccurate. What one person takes as joking, another may find offensive and degrading.
- **AVOID SEX-BASED MESSAGES.** Sex-based messages are not necessarily sexual in nature but are based on the person's sex. Here are a few examples:

  "This is man's work. What are you doing here?"

  "You should be home having more babies."

  [To a stay-at-home dad] "Why aren't you out working like other guys? You need to bring home the bacon, not raise kids."

  "You're here only because of the affirmative action program."
- **STOP COMMUNICATING HARASSING MESSAGES.** Suppose that although you do not perceive your behavior as harassment, another person clearly does, and the individual takes responsibility and informs you of how he or she feels. To ignore this information is a clear violation of sexual harassment policy. Also, remember that jokes at first may not be bothersome, but over time, jokes cease to be funny and people become uncomfortable when they have to listen to them repeatedly.
- **BE AWARE OF OTHER'S BEHAVIORS.** Although people should be upfront and inform you when they find your messages sexually harassing, not everyone can be as assertive as they need to be in certain situations. Some may feel threatened; others may not want to be pegged as being uptight or not a team player. Because of peer pressure, they may not express their discomfort. Some may even say "It doesn't bother me." But how they're behaving reveals that they are bothered. (For example, their arms may be crossed, or they may be using an adaptor, such as tapping a foot.)

Summary: Being Aware of How You Communicate at Work

2.1: Analyze how being aware of one's own social skills and those of others helps to adapt effectively to the communication skills of others.

The trait approach to leadership suggests that leaders are effective because of the personality and communication traits they possess, which are internal and not observable to others. The other approaches to leadership focus on behaviors leaders choose to use when guiding others, which are external and observable.

The functional approach and the styles approach to leadership are similar in that they focus on the behaviors leaders use to get the work done. The two approaches differ in that the functional approach focuses on how leaders use communication to reach a goal. With the styles approach, leaders are recognized for having a style that they tend to use in a consistent manner.

The situational and the transformational approaches to leadership are different in that situational leaders use different leadership behaviors depending on the situation. Transformational leaders are more consistent and approach all leadership opportunities similarly in that they inspire others by allowing them to see what is possible.

2.2: Evaluate the different motivational approaches followed in organizations.

The classical approach to motivation is based on the principle of reward and punishment. Put simply, leaders assume workers are motivated to work hard when they are rewarded for good work and not rewarded for poor work.

The human relations approach to motivation is based on the assumption that people are influenced not just by power and position but by how they are treated at work. You can't just tell people what to do and expect that they will do it. People are motivated by leaders who pay attention to them and their needs.

The human resources approach to motivation assumes that in order to empower people to participate in the work of the organization or team, you have to give them more control over work processes. Leaders motivate others by making employees partners at work and giving them more decision-making and problem-solving responsibilities.

2.3: Recognize the need to be aware of organizational culture for effective communication.

Organizational culture is the learned pattern of beliefs, values, assumptions, rules, and norms that are shared by the people in an organization, including written rules, stories, metaphors, ceremonies, and artifacts. Culture is a recursive process. For example, leaders create organizational culture through the use of stories, metaphors, ceremonies, and artifacts. As employees internalize these messages, organizational beliefs and values emerge. Over time, these employees then recreate and strengthen the culture by sharing the same or similar stories and metaphors. Leadership is not always embodied in one person—many people influence others through the sharing of stories and metaphors or by participating in ceremonies. So many people within an organization who influence or lead have the potential to influence the organizational culture.

2.4: Express the need to remain ethical in all forms of roles in an organization.

Organizational power is the ability to influence others' behavior. Leaders influence others' behaviors using one or a combination of five power bases: legitimate power, referent power, expert power, reward power, and coercive power. If leaders need to use their title to have power, then they are using legitimate power. Referent power is when leaders use the quality relationships they have with others to influence. Some leaders are granted power from others because they are perceived to be very knowledgeable. Leaders who lead using reward or coercive power influence through others perceiving them to have the ability to reward or punish.

Whenever there are power differences, there is always the potential for abuse. One form of abuse due to organizational power is sexual harassment. Below is a list of recommendations for how to avoid or respond to sexual harassment in the workplace:

- **AVOID SEXUAL MESSAGES AND BEHAVIORS.** Sexual jokes, inappropriate touching, and sexual teasing are to be avoided.
- **AVOID SEX-BASED MESSAGES.** Sex-based messages are not necessarily sexual in nature but are based on the person's sex.
- **STOP COMMUNICATING HARASSING MESSAGES ONCE INFORMED.** Suppose that although you do not perceive your behavior as harassment, another person clearly does, and the individual takes responsibility and informs you of how he or she feels. To ignore this information is a clear violation of sexual harassment policy.
- **BE AWARE OF OTHER'S BEHAVIORS.** Although people should be upfront and inform you when they find your messages sexually harassing, not everyone can be as assertive as they need to be in certain situations. Some may feel threatened; others may not want to be pegged as being uptight or not a team player. Because of peer pressure, they may not express their discomfort. Some may even say "It doesn't bother me." But how they're behaving reveals that they are bothered.

SHARED WRITING: LEADERSHIP APPROACHES

Reflecting on your current job or a previous job, evaluate the organization in terms of the basic assumptions about leadership that guide the organization. Does your supervisor have a classical approach to leadership? Do you have a boss who consistently uses rewards and punishments? Or is the organization more aligned with the human resources approach? Give examples to support your ideas.

▶ **A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.**

Post **0 characters | 140 minimum**

Chapter 2 Quiz: Being Aware of How You Communicate at Work

Chapter 3
Using Verbal and Nonverbal Messages

Learning Objectives

3.1 Describe the three characteristics of clear verbal messages.

3.2 Identify and illustrate different ways of communicating supportive verbal messages.

3.3 Explain how an understanding of nonverbal messages is important to being an effective leader.

3.4 Identify and describe the different forms of nonverbal messages.

Jeff Weiner is the CEO of LinkedIn, which is the world's leading social networking site for working professionals. LinkedIn has grown from 20 members in 2002 to 259 million in 2014. Under Weiner's leadership, the company is growing at the rate of two new members every second. Recently, Weiner was awarded America's No. 1 CEO based on a poll conducted by jobs site Glassdoor.[1] He is rated No. 1 because of his communication skills. A survey of his employees revealed the following about his communication: "He inspires us," "He communicates in a clear manner," "He is transparent in his communication," and "The communication flows in this company."

Weiner has reduced his business mantra to just two words: "Next Play." Weiner borrowed the phrase from Duke University basketball coach Mike, who shouts "Next Play" every time the ball changes hands. Krzyzewski uses the phrase to make sure the Duke University Blue Devils don't lose their focus while celebrating their success or feeling down about missing some shots. Weiner uses "Next Play" to help team members focus on the next big challenge. On the day LinkedIn became a public company, employees received a black T-shirt with "Next Play" emblazoned on the back of the shirt.[2] To Weiner, "Next Play" means "What are we going to do next?"

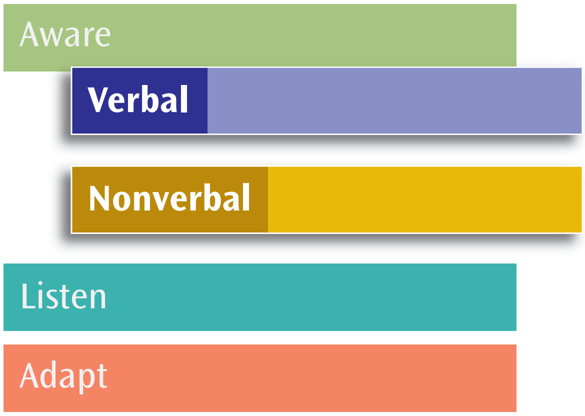
In an interview for *Inc.* magazine, Weiner explains the difference between being a leader and a manager. "For me, leadership is the ability to inspire others to achieve shared objectives. Managers tell people what to do. Leaders inspire them to do it."[3] Weiner inspires others through his communication by connecting employees' jobs and duties to the larger goal of the company. According to Weiner, "We help people become successful, and every employee at LinkedIn plays a significant role in making that happen."

Leading Questions

1. What do you think is more important—What Weiner says or how he says it? Could he inspire others with his verbal messages if he were not as approachable, warm, and open (nonverbal messages)?
2. Could other leaders adopt Weiner's communication style and be as effective? Why or why not?
3. Can you think of other corporate leaders (or just leaders) who use verbal and nonverbal messages effectively to influence others?

As a new leader, your first job will be to understand how to use and interpret messages that are appropriate for the workplace. To help enhance your leadership effectiveness, we're going to emphasize two more communication principles for leadership. Figure 3.1 illustrates where these principles fit in our model of communication principles and skills for leadership.

Figure 3.1: Communication Principles and Skills for Leadership



PRINCIPLE TWO: EFFECTIVELY USE AND INTERPRET VERBAL MESSAGES. *Verbal messages* use words to create meaning. Your ability to lead will depend on your ability to use and interpret verbal messages unique to your workplace. Using and interpreting verbal messages effectively will allow you to get the work done by making messages clear and supportive.

PRINCIPLE THREE: EFFECTIVELY USE AND INTERPRET NONVERBAL MESSAGES. *Nonverbal messages* are visual and audible symbols that do not rely on words or language to create meaning. Nonverbal messages are not only visual messages, such as hand gestures and posture, but also messages that we can hear. People sigh when they're bored; they use a vocal interrupter when they want to signal to others that they would like to add something to the conversation. Using and interpreting nonverbal messages effectively will allow you to get work done by focusing on the relational aspects of messages, those communicated by such means as physical appearance, posture and movement, facial expressions and eye contact, and touch.

3.1: Communicating Clear Verbal Messages

3.1 Describe the three characteristics of clear verbal messages.

To communicate clear messages, it's important to understand how people interpret verbal messages, both denotatively and connotatively. When we interpret the *denotative meaning* of verbal messages, we interpret the words literally; we use the dictionary's definition. When we interpret the *connotative meaning* of verbal messages, we interpret the words based on our personal experiences. To illustrate the difference between denotative and connotative interpretations, let's take a look at the word *merger*. Some people interpret the word literally, to mean the joining together of two or more companies or organizations. However, people who have survived a corporate merger may interpret the word based on their personal experiences; to them the word stimulates feelings of fear, anxiety, and anger and has connotations of disruption and stress brought on by layoffs or unfamiliar new routines.

To make messages clear, it's important to consider how others will interpret your verbal messages. If people receiving your verbal messages have experience with the topic you're communicating about, chances are they will interpret your message on a connotative level. If the information you're conveying is unfamiliar to others, they are more likely to interpret the message on a denotative level. Here are additional strategies to help you communicate clear messages.

Use *Concrete* Messages

A word is *concrete* if you can experience what the word refers to (the referent) with one of your senses. If you can see it, touch it, smell it, taste it, or hear it, then it's *concrete*. If you cannot do these things with the referent, then the word is an abstract word. For example, "interoffice communication" is abstract, and a "memo" is a concrete example of the process. "Professional development" is an abstract concept, whereas a "conflict-management training program" would be a concrete example of the *concept*.

Use Precise Words

Precise words are those that most accurately express meaning; they capture shades of difference. For example, when discussing a co-worker's communication in a meeting, Armando mentioned that the co-worker was "aggressive." To some people, aggressive communication means communication that is hostile and demanding. To others, aggressive is assertive and competitive. In this case, Armando might do better to describe the specific aggressive behaviors that were inappropriate, such as when his co-worker called the sales force "a group of slackers."

Use *Jargon* Carefully

Jargon is language used by a particular group, profession, or culture and may not be understood or used by other people. New employees at Walt Disney World, for example, attend the Disney University where they are introduced to new *jargon* that only employees understand—employees are "cast members," uniforms are "costumes," and customers are "guests." Use of *jargon* helps new employees fit in and makes them a part of the culture. If you're not an employee, this type of *jargon* can be confusing.

Use Concise Messages

A concise verbal message is brief and one from which unnecessary words and phrases have been removed. Rather than saying, "Although it is our policy to provide Internet access to enable employees to conduct the online communications necessary to enact their job responsibilities, the Internet should not be used for personal communications or nonbusiness-related activities," simply say, "Use the Internet only for company business."

#Technology and Communication @ Work

Texting

Texting has influenced how people use verbal messages to communicate in the workplace. In fact, many people consider texting to be a form of oral or spoken communication rather than a form of written communication.[4] According to linguistic researchers, "texters write it as though they are saying it."[5] Although there are numerous guidelines for using text messages, here are a few that are geared toward the workplace:[6]

- **USE TEXT-MESSAGES FOR CASUAL INFORMATION.** Don't use text messaging to convey important information. Remember the criticism Malaysia Airlines received when it texted families that "there are no survivors." Although the airline had been communicating with family members using all forms of communication, conveying this particular message in a text lacked good judgment according to many.[7] Put simply, don't discuss potential layoffs using a text message. Instead, have a face-to-face conversation. Text messaging is designed for casual information.
- **USE TEXT-MESSAGES FOR MESSAGES THAT ARE NOT CONFIDENTIAL, PRIVATE, OR POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING.** You never know when someone might be looking over the recipient's shoulder—or, worse, when your message might be sent to the wrong person.
- **IF YOU TEXT-MESSAGE SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T HAVE YOUR PHONE NUMBER, INTRODUCE YOURSELF.** Start your message by stating who you are: "Hi—it's Tim from work. Call me when you get a sec."

3.2: Communicating Supportive Verbal Messages

3.2 Identify and illustrate different ways of communicating supportive verbal messages.

Like a state or a region of the country, every workplace has a climate. Some workplace environments are supportive, meaning that there is a climate of trust, caring, and acceptance. Other workplace environments are competitive, meaning that there is a climate of hostility and mistrust. Hostile climates develop when employees are disgruntled, which often happens when two companies merge and form one larger company. This was the case when US Airways merged with American Airlines in 2014. Although the combined airline was financially stronger and had a larger share of the airline passenger market, the two employee groups did not trust each other because of different corporate cultures, a history of labor problems, and different ways of doing business.[8] What makes the difference in the climate of a workplace is the communication that is used in it.[9] Communication scholar Jack Gibb suggests several verbal communication strategies for creating a supportive workplace environment.[10]

3.2.1: Use Descriptive "I" Language Rather Than Evaluative "You" Language

Most people don't like to be judged or evaluated. Criticizing and name-calling obviously can create relational problems at work, but so can attempts to diagnose others' problems or win their affection with insincere praise. In fact, any form of evaluation creates a climate of defensiveness. One way to avoid evaluating others is to eliminate the accusatory you from your language. Statements such as "Your work is always late" or "You're not a team player" attack a person's sense of self-worth and usually lead to a defensive reaction.

Using "I" language when evaluating another's work contributes to a supportive workplace environment.

Instead, use the word *I* to describe the other person's behavior.[11] For example, suppose you are working with someone you perceive to have an attitude problem. Rather than saying "You have an attitude problem," which will only provoke defensiveness, try describing what you see and hear the other person doing and saying. In other words, what does a "bad attitude" *look* and *sound* like? Try saying,

> "I see you rolling your eyes, sighing, looking away from me, and crossing your arms, which leads me to believe that you're unhappy with me."

This type of message opens the door for conversation. "You" language is evaluative and judgmental; "I" language remains descriptive and detailed, which helps the other person see how his or her behavior is affecting you and your goals.

3.2.2: Solve Problems Rather Than Control Others

Most of us don't like others' attempts to control us. Someone who presumes to tell us what's good for us is likely to cause us to feel defensive and not supported. We suggest you communicate from a problem orientation rather than from a controlling orientation. A problem orientation is an approach that views a situation as a problem that can be solved together. Leaders who use this kind of approach make requests of others; in other words, they ask others for their help and support in solving a problem, hoping that they will buy into the solution. A controlling orientation is an approach that views a situation as a problem that one person solves by telling another person what to do. Leaders who use this kind of approach make demands on others. A problem orientation would sound like this:

> "We have a problem, and I need your help solving it."

A controlling orientation would sound like this:

> "There's a problem, and I need you to do this to fix it."

Again, the goal is to manage the situation without provoking defensiveness. Most people don't like being told what to do. Instead, people prefer being a part of the solution by being asked to help.

3.2.3: Be Genuine Rather Than Manipulative

To be genuine means that you seek to be yourself rather than someone you're not. It also means taking an honest interest in others and considering the uniqueness of each individual and situation. Try managing a difficult situation at work by being honest with the other person. For example, has your manager ever influenced you to work an extra shift by making you feel guilty? Have you ever been in a meeting where another person got his or her way by distracting the other group members from the real problem? Manipulation usually increases defensiveness and suspicion in others.[12] When they feel as though they've been manipulated, people usually say "Why didn't he just come out and say what the problem was?" or "Why did she have to go behind our backs?" To be genuine is to be honest and upfront about problems and issues that affect the workplace.

3.2.4: Empathize Rather Than Detach from Others

The word *empathy* comes from the Greek word for "passion" and from a translation of the German word *Einfuhlung*, meaning "to feel with." To empathize with someone is to try to feel what he or she is feeling, rather than to simply think about or acknowledge the feelings of another person. Empathy occurs when we try putting ourselves into the other person's shoes or try seeing a problem as he or she sees it. Rather than remaining detached, try saying "Help me to understand the problem from your perspective." When working through a difficult situation at work, some people say "I don't care. I'm not going to deal with this." Although they may believe that this is the best way to manage the situation, what they don't know is that these messages of detachment only cause more anger, ill feelings, and distrust. Even if what another person is saying to you feels like a personal attack, try empathizing.

Recap

Communicating Supportive Verbal Messages

Verbal Communication Strategie	Examples
Use descriptive "I" language rather than evaluative "You" language	Instead of telling a coworker "You're not a team player," say something like "I didn't see you participating in the meeting today."
Solve problems rather than control others	Instead of telling an employee you supervise "Don't do that," say "Maybe this will work better."
Be genuine rather than manipulative	Rather than making up an excuse about why you missed an important deadline (to get your manager to feel sorry for you), be honest with her about your mistake.
Empathize rather than detach from others	Don't ignore or quickly end a conversation with a member of your team if you know she needs someone to listen to her.
Be flexible rather than rigid	Rather than telling someone "I'm right; you are wrong," use more conditional language: "I may be wrong, but...."
Present yourself as equal rather than as superior	Ask an employee, "Can we get this done today?" rather than telling him, "I am the manager and I need you to do this now."

Hide All Cells Show All Cells

3.2.5: Be Flexible Rather Than Rigid

Flexible people qualify their language by using *conditional statements*, which qualify what is being said and leave room for interpretations. For example, a manager for a pharmaceutical sales company says, "In my opinion, one of the reasons sales are down is because the sales representative lacks communication skills." *Declarative statements* are expressed as truths and leave no room for interpretation. For example, a manager might say "Sales are down because the sales representative lacks communication skills." Rigid people have a tendency to use declarative statements rather than conditional statements. Do you know anyone who always has the answer to every question and the solution to every problem? This type of "always right" attitude, which is perceived as rigid and unbending, usually increases defensiveness in workplace settings.

3.2.6: Present Yourself as Equal Rather Than as Superior

You can anger others by letting them know that you view yourself as better than they are. You may be educated and consider yourself intelligent. However, you don't need to announce it. In many ways, being a humble leader and presenting yourself as equal and similar rather than as superior and different will enhance your leadership effectiveness. Some people manage difficult situations at work by "pulling rank" with others; they might say "I'm the leader and you're not" or "I have been here longer than you." We feel certain that you've already experienced these types of messages at school and work. Superior messages showcase differences rather than similarities. To enhance supportiveness, we encourage you to present yourself as an equal to others. For example, a message that reflects equality might be "Because we are colleagues and work together every day, it's important that we work out our differences."

Career Corner

Wanted: Technical Communicators

With the proliferation of high-tech companies and their products and services, there is a growing need for communication professionals who can write and talk about technical information in a clear manner. The industry used to refer to them as technical writers. Today, technical writers prefer to be called technical communicators.

Technical communicators create operating instructions, how-to manuals, assembly instructions, and "frequently asked questions" web pages, podcasts, videos, and social media to help customers use technology. They also consult with technical staff and designers on how to make products easier to use based on customer interaction.

According to *Money Magazine*, technical writer/communicator was listed as the thirteenth best job in America.[13] Employers generally prefer candidates with a bachelor's degree in journalism, English, or communication.

Core competencies of a technical communicator include the following:[14]

- Computer Skills: General computer and web literacy, including familiarity with Windows, Microsoft Applications, and Adobe Creative Suite
- Communication Skills:
  - Writing in a clear and concise manner
  - Managing projects using time management and planning documents that prioritize tasks
  - Interviewing customers to their assess needs and competencies
  - Researching how things work by reading and listening to subject matter experts, engineers, and other professionals
  - Developing relationship by listening and responding to others, being assertive and responsive, and learning to adapt

- Technical Skills: Understanding how to use HyperSnap, PhotoShop, Visio Diagramming, and markup language knowledge (HTML, XML)

To learn more about this possible career, contact the Society for Technical Communication at www.stc.org.

3.3: Understanding Nonverbal Message Characteristics

3.3 Explain how an understanding of nonverbal messages is important to be an effective leader.

How effective are you at reading others' nonverbal messages and emotions? The workplace is full of emotions both positive and negative, and your success is dependent on your ability to navigate these emotions. Social psychologist Albert Mehrabian concluded that 93% of the emotional meaning in messages is communicated through nonverbal channels.[15] Put simply, it's not *what* is said that is always important but *how* it is said. To help you effectively use and interpret nonverbal messages, it's important to understand some of the characteristics of nonverbal communication.

3.3.1: Nonverbal Messages Form Relationships

Nonverbal messages allow us to connect with others. As mentioned above, verbal messages convey the content of a message (*what* is being said), and nonverbal messages (*how* it is said) convey or establish the nature of the relationship. Nonverbal messages tend to convey meaning about the quality of the interaction that is taking place.[16] For example, upon leaving a job interview, the applicant hears the interviewer saying "Thanks for coming to the interview. I will be giving you a call." The verbal message (*what* was said) sounds promising; however, the nonverbal message (*how* it was said) suggests that the interviewer is not sincere and will probably not be calling soon to extend the job offer.

3.3.2: Nonverbal Messages Express Truth

Although people try to hide their true feelings, especially at work when others may be evaluating them, feelings have a tendency to leak out through nonverbal messages. Nonverbal leakage cues reveal how you really feel or think about a topic or a problem. For example, a man may say "Her comment didn't bother me," but you know the comment did bother this person: You saw his face drop and his posture slump when his coworker made the comment. When someone's verbal and nonverbal messages don't match, we have a tendency to trust the nonverbal messages.

3.3.3: Nonverbal Messages Are Culture Bound

The nonverbal messages that work in one culture may not work in another culture. Every culture has its own rules and standards for what is appropriate nonverbal behavior. In the French workplace, a closed door does not mean the same as it does in the American workplace. In France, office doors remain closed and can be easily opened by first knocking. The knock is simply a signal that one is entering. In the American workplace, a closed door usually means the occupant is busy and does not want to be interrupted. The closed door is not opened until the occupant opens it or says "Come in."[17]

3.4: Using and Interpreting Nonverbal Messages

3.4 Identify and describe the different forms of nonverbal messages.

Your ability to use and interpret nonverbal messages effectively at work depends on your ability to recognize various sources of nonverbal messages, including physical appearance, vocal qualities, gestures, eye contact, space, use of time, touch, and the environment.

3.4.1: Physical Appearance

Leaders in most organizations must project a professional image through their physical appearance. It is important to enhance your physical appearance so that others in the workplace perceive you as a leader.

PHYSICAL ATTRACTION Our attraction to others because of their appearance—their bone structure, weight, stylishness, and grooming—is referred to as *physical attraction*. Although many people don't want to believe that physically attractive people do better on the job than physically unattractive people, research suggests otherwise. For example, over a 10-year period, attractive MBA graduates earned more than unattractive MBA graduates.[18] (Individuals were deemed "attractive" based on a set of criteria established by the research, such as symmetrical facial features, among other characteristics.) Somewhat surprisingly, in the MBA study, good looks were more of a factor in men's salaries than in women's salaries.[19] In another study examining tipping behavior in restaurants, researchers concluded that female (and not male) servers earned more tips on average if they were physically attractive.[20]

Although some people may be disappointed in these research findings, they allow us to become more aware of how physical appearance affects communication. The next section details some of the ways you can enhance your physical appearance and, in turn, others' perceptions of your leadership effectiveness.

CLOTHING Dressing for success has been the subject of many books, for good reason.[21] How we dress on the job not only conveys our personal sense of style—it also creates meaning in the minds of others.[22] In other words, people notice our clothing and form impressions of us based on what we're wearing. This is one of the reasons some companies invest huge sums of money developing and designing company uniforms that communicate the appropriate image to customers.[23] It's important to dress not only in a manner appropriate for our workplace but in a manner that will lead other people to take us seriously and perceive us to be credible.

Most workplaces require employees to dress in a professional manner. Professional dress is associated with a number of important variables that benefit employees, such as perceptions of increased status, competence or knowledge, trustworthiness, and the ability to influence others.[24] Some organizations spell out professional dress. For example, flight attendants have to follow a rigid dress code that is detailed in a comprehensive employee handbook. There is different appropriate dress for walking through airports, boarding and deplaning passengers, and serving passengers while in flight.[25] Other organizations leave it up to the employees to figure out what professional dress entails.

Because our physical appearance in the workplace influences our ability to lead, it's important that you pay attention to this important source of nonverbal communication. Here are a few suggestions for how to communicate a professional physical appearance at work.

Monitor Physical Appearance Standards

Observe how a number of your coworkers dress in your office, unit, or division. What type of clothing are they wearing (suits or sport coats and slacks)? How are they wearing their clothing (shirts tucked in, hanging out)? What type of shoes are they wearing (open-toed or closed, wingtips, sneakers)? How much jewelry do they wear (earrings, nose studs)? What about their hairstyles (pulled back or down, facial hair)?

Match the Formality of Your Manager's Appearance

Observe your manager: If you're uncertain of appearance standards, it's always a good thing to match your manager's appearance in terms of formality. Your manager ultimately sets the standards for appearance in your work unit. Is your boss's appearance formal, or is it more relaxed?

Dress for the Occupation

Another appearance suggestion is to dress for the job or the occupation. Most occupations have an established standard for dress and grooming. For example, most bankers dress in dark suits, construction foremen wear jeans and steel-toed boots, and health professionals who have contact with patients wear scrubs.

When in Doubt, Dress for the Job You Want

Whenever you're in doubt about how you should dress and appear in the workplace, it's best to dress for the job you would like to have one day. In other words, appear more formal than informal. A more formal appearance gives the impression that you care about your work and your organization. Appearing too informal can give the opposite impression.

Appear Neat and Well Groomed

It is assumed that we will appear neat and well groomed when we go to work. Appearing neat means wearing clothing that is clean and pressed, shoes that are clean and polished, and appropriate artifacts (for example, a belt, a briefcase). Appearing well-groomed means being bathed, making sure your hair is styled, and having fresh breath and clean fingernails.

ARTIFACTS An *artifact* is a personal object we use to convey our identity; it's an accessory. Examples of artifacts include jewelry, eyeglasses, sunglasses, scarves, hairpieces, handbags, briefcases, and hats, to name a few. In many ways, we use artifacts to decorate the body. If used in moderation, artifacts signal to others our style and our unique sense of self.

When researchers asked recruiters to determine the appropriateness of jewelry for men and women on the job, their findings were very stereotypical and sex typed. Recruiters found three items of jewelry acceptable for women: button earrings, chain chokers, and necklaces. Although necklaces, rings, and earrings were considered acceptable for women, they were less acceptable for men.[26]

Communication researchers John Seiter and Andrea Sandry found that job candidates with either a nose piercing or an ear piercing were perceived by interviewers as significantly less trustworthy, less sociable, and less knowledgeable than candidates not wearing any jewelry. Although a nose or an ear piercing did not significantly affect how attractive the interviewer perceived the candidate to be, a single body piercing lessened the perceived hirability of the candidate—candidates with a single body piercing were less likely to be hired.[27]

3.4.2: Voice

How many times have you heard "It's not what you said, but how you said it that bothered me"? This common expression reveals the importance of *vocalics* (also referred to as paralanguage), which are the nonverbal aspects of our voice, including pitch (how high or low a speaker's voice is), rate (how fast the person speaks), and volume (how loudly the person speaks). Verbal messages help us *to say what we mean*, whereas nonverbal messages, and especially vocalics, help us *to mean what we say*.

One study found that managers who were perceived by their employees as varying their vocalic cues were more well liked than those who did not vary the pitch, volume, and rate of their voices and were perceived as being more credible and influential than managers whose vocalic cues were more monotonous or flat.[28] People who alter their vocalic cues are perceived as expressive and sociable, two perceptions that serve leaders well.[29]

An emblem is a gesture, such as a baseball umpire calling a player safe, that has a direct verbal translation and is immediately recognized by others.

3.4.3: Gestures and Body Movement

The study of gestures and body movement is referred to as *kinesics*. In one of their most comprehensive contributions to nonverbal research, Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen classified movement and gestures according to their functions. They identified three categories of gestures that are important for leaders: emblems, illustrators, and regulators.[29a]

EMBLEMS An *emblem* is a gesture that has a direct verbal translation and may substitute for a word or phrase. If you walk into your manager's office and he holds up an open palm without looking at you, you immediately know that your manager doesn't want to be interrupted. If you're giving a presentation and your supervisor holds up two fingers, you know you have two minutes to wrap up the presentation. Other common emblems that substitute for verbal messages include the time-out sign (e.g., a referee using two extended hands to form a T) and the quiet sign (e.g., placing an index finger up to the lips). Emblems are shortcuts that allow you to communicate with others, especially in situations when you cannot use verbal messages.

ILLUSTRATORS We frequently accompany a verbal message with an *illustrator* that illustrates (draws a picture) or complements the verbal message. Illustrators allow you to clarify or intensify the meaning of the message. For example, when we are giving directions to another person, most of us use our hands to draw a picture in the air of where the other person should go. Not only does your use of illustrators help others decode and interpret your message, but illustrators also help you in encoding or developing a message.[30] Research has also suggested that our use of illustrators helps us to remember our messages. People who illustrated their verbal messages remembered 20% more of what they said than those who didn't illustrate, or use gestures, when communicating.[31]

REGULATORS A *regulator* is a nonverbal cue that helps control the interaction and flow of communication between people. Regulators help you manage taking turns in a conversation. When someone tries to cut you off in a conversation, you hold up a hand or give the person a raised eyebrow, which signals "Wait, I'm not finished." When you're finished and you want the other person to speak, you give the other person a head nod, which signals his or her turn.

One type of regulator that is important in the development of quality relationships is a back channel cue. *Back channel cues* are nonverbal behaviors that signal to the other person that we are listening to them and we wish for them to continue talking. When listening to a friend, many of us will interject sounds such as "um," "uh-huh," and "hmm" to signal that we are listening and that we are interested in the conversation.[32]

3.4.4: Facial Expression and Eye Contact

Although there's a saying that some people "wear their emotions on their sleeves," they actually wear their emotions on their faces and in their eyes. In business and professional settings, it's important to monitor what your face and eyes reveal about who you are and how you're feeling.

Researchers have found that although our faces provide a great deal of information about emotions, we quickly learn to control our facial expressions.[33] In fact, some jobs require people to mask or hide their feelings.[34] These employees have learned to control the facial muscles that ultimately convey their feelings. Others try to mask their feelings and are less successful; their emotions leak from their faces and eyes.

In addition to conveying your emotions, your facial expressions and eye contact also influence how others perceive you. Researchers have concluded that people who smile more often are perceived to be more intelligent than those who smile less often.[35] Also, smiling behavior has been shown to enhance sales.[36] The research examining eye contact is equally powerful. Direct eye contact has been associated with a number of positive relational qualities that are valued and rewarded in the workplace. For example, researchers have concluded that direct eye contact enhances others' perceptions of your credibility, self-esteem, and emotional control or calmness, all perceptions that enhance leadership effectiveness.[37] Use of direct eye contact allows you to be more persuasive in getting others to comply with your wishes than someone who uses evasive or indirect glances.[38] Also, increased eye contact enhances your chances of being hired for a job and perceptions of your leadership potential.[39]

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Communicate Verbally and Nonverbally with Clarity[40]

Jilly Stephens, Executive Director of City Harvest, based in New York City, learned that one of the most important tasks for either a leader or follower is to communicate with clarity. Whether you're the boss or not, using just the right words and being specific about what you need can make interacting with others much more effective.

As Stephens explains, it's important that you communicate clearly with people who are going to be reporting to you, that you be as open as possible about who you are, what they should know about you, what they should understand about you, and how you like to operate. Again, just be very clear about what you expect of the people who are going to be reporting to you. Meet with them regularly. Help keep them on track. Understand what it is they need to succeed. That's it.

Especially when you are in a leadership role, it's important that those who report to you aren't trying to second-guess what you need and want. Meeting with people often to clarify any misunderstandings is vital for effective workplace communication

It's important not only to monitor your words to make sure that your messages mean what you intend but also to consider what you are expressing nonverbally. Stephens noted:

> I remember learning very early on in my own career the importance of having to sit and think about what I needed to let people know about me. I even said to people that I've been told that I look angry a lot of the time, and I'm usually not. It's just my face, so just don't be put off by that.
>
> What Stephens learned was that she had to be aware of how her nonverbal messages may be undermining her verbal messages. You may use the right words and think you're being clear, but the wrong nonverbal message can contradict your verbal message. As we've noted, the listener will believe your nonverbal message more than what you say. So be clear—both in what you say as well as the way you say it.

3.4.5: Space

Have you ever had a conversation with someone who stood too close to you? You slowly edged backward to add some distance, and the other person took a step forward to maintain the close distance. Rather than focusing on the conversation and what the other person was saying, you were distracted and uncomfortable. This scenario, which many people have experienced, reflects the importance of *proximity*, or the space and distance we maintain from others in our communication with them.

In his study of *proxemics*, Edward T. Hall identified four spatial zones that we unconsciously define for ourselves:[41]

- **INTIMATE SPACE.** Intimate space is the zone extending from 0 to 1½ feet from someone; it is reserved for only those with whom we are well acquainted, unless we're forced to stand close to another person, such as in a crowded elevator. Someone who wanted to intimidate another person might make a point to stand in that person's zone of intimate space.
- **PERSONAL SPACE.** Personal space is the zone that extends from 1½ to 4 feet from a person; it is our comfort zone, where most of our conversations with family and friends occur.
- **SOCIAL SPACE.** The zone of social space ranges from 4 to 12 feet from a person; it is reserved for most formal group interactions as well for as our professional relationships.
- **PUBLIC SPACE.** Public space begins at 12 feet from us; it is the distance from the audience used by most speakers making public presentations.

It's important to respect others' personal space when communicating with them at work. Although you probably don't consciously recognize how you use space to communicate, chances are you do notice when others violate your personal space or when they penetrate your intimate space (also known as your *body-buffer* zone).[42] Research clearly suggests that when you invade another person's personal space, the other person notices that you're too close, and this usually causes the person to perceive you less favorably.[43]

Culture also determines how we use space in our communication with others. For example, South Americans, Southern and Eastern Europeans, and Arabs communicate at closer distances than Asians, Northern Europeans, and North Americans, who require more conversational distance when communicating.[44] For these reasons, remaining respectful of others' use of space is important. Here are some behaviors to help you effectively interpret nonverbal proxemic cues in a diverse workplace environment:

- Increase distance. You will want to increase the distance between you and another person if you see the person stepping away from you, leaning back, crossing his or her arms, turning to the side, or failing to make direct eye contact.

- Decrease distance. You will want to decrease the distance between you and another person if you see the person stepping toward you, leaning forward, turning his or her body so that it directly faces yours, or making direct eye contact.

3.4.6: Time

Chronemics is the study of how people use and structure time. In U.S. workplaces, "Time is money," and most working professionals take time seriously. Researchers have concluded that people pay attention to how coworkers use time on the job. In a study of administrative assistants, researchers found that people who arrived on time for appointments were perceived more positively than people who were late and even people who were early. On-time arrivers were perceived as being more knowledgeable, composed, and friendly than late or early arrivers.[45] Researchers have also found that leaving work before the boss does conveys the message that a person is not dedicated to work, and such people are often overlooked for promotions.[46]

At times, we are in control of our time. We sit down and plan our work; we develop a work schedule. At other times, time is in control of us—as when we have to drop everything to meet a deadline at work. Put simply, we use time and are used by time differently. Anthropologist Edward Hall studied how people use time.[47] For example, a manager who schedules a staff meeting for 1:00 p.m. and begins the staff meeting exactly at 1:00 p.m. is a manager who has a *displaced point pattern*. This type of person uses time in a precise manner. Other people have a *diffused point pattern* and use and structure time in an approximate manner. A manager who schedules a staff meeting for 1:00 and begins the staff meeting at 1:15 is someone who has a diffused point pattern. Working professionals quickly learn about their coworkers' patterns in use of time. This knowledge then guides them in how they work.

3.4.7: Touch

The study of how human touch communicates is referred to as *haptics*. Touch is the most misunderstood source of nonverbal behavior.[48] You can probably remember a situation when someone touched you and you walked away confused, wondering what the touch meant. There are a variety of reasons why people use and interpret touch differently. Some of these reasons are based in personalities.[49] Some people simply have a tendency to communicate using a lot of touching—it's a part of who they are, their personalities. They hug when saying hello or goodbye and they put their arm around others while communicating. Other people are more *touch avoidant*, which is the tendency generally to avoid touch in interpersonal interactions.[50] People with high touch avoidance have a tendency not to touch others when communicating and prefer not to be touched by others.

Culture also affects how touch is used to communicate with others. For example, certain cultures are *high-contact cultures*, which means that touching is quite commonplace.[51] In European and Middle Eastern cultures, men kiss each other on the cheek as a greeting. Other cultures are *low-contact cultures*, in which touching is uncommon. In some Asian cultures, touching as a way to show affection is rare and is considered inappropriate.[52]

Because touch is often misunderstood, we recommend that leaders limit their touching to what is referred to as *social/polite touch*. This type of touch is used to acknowledge the presence of another person. An example would be a handshake when greeting someone.

3.4.8: Physical Environment

Your physical environment—the actual space that you work in—influences not only how others perceive you but also how you interact with others. In many organizations, physical environment is used to convey status. *Status* is an individual's importance and prestige. To communicate effectively and appropriately in professional settings, it's important to acknowledge status symbols. People in power assume you know that they have status. If you are uncertain of who has status and power in your organizations, you can begin by observing offices.

In some large corporations, men and women with the most power usually occupy the largest offices with the most windows.[53] These offices often have floor-to-ceiling

Effective professional communication requires acknowledgment of an individual's power. Observing status symbols, such as this office, can help you determine who in an organization has power.

walls and a door. To gain access to the offices, you usually have to enter through an adjoining office, which is where the administrative assistant works and serves as a *gatekeeper,* a person who controls the flow of communication within an organization. The gatekeeper controls who gets in and who doesn't. In other words, the gatekeeper controls the level of privacy that the high-status person has earned. Those with the least amount of status usually occupy what has been referred to as a cube. A *cube* is a small modular office unit that lacks floor-to-ceiling walls and a door. It includes no gatekeeper and offers minimal privacy. Cubes are usually spaced closely together to maximize office space. Some refer to these multiple modular office units as cube farms.

Summary: Using Verbal and Nonverbal Messages

3.1: Describe the three characteristics of clear verbal messages.

Use concrete messages. A word is **concrete** if you can experience what the word refers to with one of your senses. For example, "memo" is more concrete than "interoffice communication" or "MAC OSX Yosemite 10.10.1" is more concrete than "operating system."

Use precise words. Precise words are those that most accurately express meaning; they capture shades of difference. Rather than saying "You are aggressive in meetings," a more precise description may be "In meetings I hear you raising your voice and see you pointing your finger at others."

Use jargon carefully. **Jargon** is language used by a particular group, profession, or culture and may not be understood or used by other people. *End-user perspective*, *deliverables*, *expanding footprint*, and *pick the low-hanging fruit* are all examples of jargon that has meaning for only particular groups of working professionals.

Use concise messages. A concise message is brief and one from which unnecessary words and phrases have been removed. At times, people prefer when others get to the point and eliminate the backstory or history leading up to an event or problem.

3.2: Identify and illustrate different ways of communicating supportive verbal messages.

Use descriptive "I" language rather than evaluative "you" language. One way to avoid evaluating others is to eliminate the accusatory you from your language. Statements such as "Your work is always late" or "You're not a team player" attack a person's sense of self-worth and usually lead to a defensive reaction.

Solve problems rather than control others. A problem orientation is an approach that views a situation as a problem that can be solved together. Leaders who use this kind of approach make requests of others; in other words, they ask others for their help and support in solving a problem, hoping that they will "buy into" the solution.

Be genuine rather than manipulative. To be genuine means that you seek to be yourself rather than someone you're not. It also means taking an honest interest in others and considering the uniqueness of each individual and situation.

Empathize rather than detach from others. To empathize with someone is to try to feel what he or she is feeling, rather than to simply think about or acknowledge the feelings of another person. Empathy occurs when we try putting ourselves into the other person's shoes or try seeing a problem as he or she sees it.

Be flexible rather than rigid. Flexible people qualify their language by using conditional statements, which qualify what is being said and leave room for interpretations.

Present yourself as equal rather than as superior. You can anger others by letting them know that you view yourself as better than they are. Superior messages showcase differences rather than similarities.

3.3: Explain how an understanding of nonverbal messages is important to be an effective leader.

Nonverbal messages form relationships. Nonverbal messages allow us to connect with others. As mentioned above, verbal messages convey the content of a message (*what* is being said); nonverbal messages (*how* it is said) convey or establish the nature of the relationship.

Nonverbal messages express truth. Although people try to hide their true feelings, especially at work when others may be evaluating them, feelings have a tendency to leak out through nonverbal messages. Nonverbal leakage cues reveal how you really feel or think about a topic or a problem.

Nonverbal messages are culture bound. The nonverbal messages that work in one culture may not work in another culture. Every culture has its own rules and standards for what is appropriate nonverbal behavior.

3.4: Identify and describe the different forms of nonverbal messages.

There are eight types of nonverbal messages:

1. Physical appearance includes your use of physical attraction, clothing, and artifacts.
   Example: I will wear clothing that conceals my tattoos when attending a job interview because it may lead to an unfavorable first impression in some workplace interview situations.
2. Voice includes your use of vocalic cues to convey meaningful messages.
   Example: I will work hard to avoid my monotone voice because people who use multiple and varied vocalic cues are perceived to be more social and expressive.
3. Gestures and body movement include your use of emblems, illustrators, regulators, and back-channel cues.
   Example: I will use back-channel cues when listening to others because it communicates to others that I am responsive to them and listening to what they are saying.
4. Facial expression and eye contact include your use of smiling and direct eye contact.
   Example: I will use direct eye contact when interacting with others at work because it helps others perceive me to be believable and trustworthy.
5. Space refers to your use of proxemics, including intimate, personal, social, and public space.
   Example: I will be more aware of others' nonverbal messages about space because these messages may convey how others feel about me. For example, one moving closer to me may signal closeness, whereas when one steps back it may mean more distance is preferred.
6. Time refers to your use of chronemic cues to communicate.
   Example: I will pay more attention to how my colleagues communicate about time at work through their nonverbal messages because I don't want others to perceive me incorrectly. If my manager values starting and ending meetings on time and lets others know this through tapping her wristwatch, then it is probably best for me to be punctual to meetings.
7. Touch refers to your use of haptics to communicate.
   Example: I will limit my touch at work to social/polite touch (i.e., handshake) because it is considered acceptable and communicates that you acknowledge and recognize the other person.
8. Physical environment refers to how you use your environment to communicate status.
   Example: I will place my framed certificate on the wall because it conveys to others that I am certified in a specific skill set that is valued and needed.

SHARED WRITING: EFFECTIVE VERBAL AND NONVERBAL MESSAGES

Think of a leader who has been very influential in your life. This can be someone you know personally or a more widely known leader. Now, list some of the verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors this leader uses. What are the messages that are effective? How does this person communicate his or her leadership using verbal and nonverbal messages?

▶ **A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.**

Post 0 **characters | 140 minimum**

Chapter 3 Quiz: Using Verbal and Nonverbal Messages

Chapter 4

Listening and Responding

Learning Objectives

4.1 Describe listening problems and their possible solutions

4.2 Describe different ways of responding effectively to others

4.3 Describe the five stages of active listening

4.4 Express the importance of listening skills

4.5 Review the different ways of effective responses

Leaders listen and listen well, according to Jim Collins, former Stanford University professor and author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Good to Great*. According to Collins, listening is emerging as one of the essential qualities that all effective leaders have in common. Norman Brinker was a leader who attributed much of his success to listening. Although you may not recognize his name, you know the Chili's restaurant chain he chaired from its inception in 1975 until his death in 2009. Norman Brinker prided himself and his restaurant chain on their ability to listen. He listened to store managers, his managers listened to employees, and employees listened to customers.

One way that Brinker listened to customers was by strolling through parking lots and asking them questions about their experience at Chili's.[1] He would ask customers what they liked and didn't like about the food, service, and restaurant. After learning about the value of listening to customers from spending time in parking lots, Brinker invested more heavily in more formalized methods of customer research, such as surveys and focus groups. From this feedback Brinker learned that the average age of a Chili's customer had increased, so they responded to their customer feedback by lowering the volume of the music, increasing the size of print on the Chili's menu, and reducing the size of food portions. At the same time, Brinker promoted Chili's as a friendly place for younger couples with children, providing fast and efficient service and low prices. "You have to stay in the energetic group of customers, but you try to tone it down enough so that you don't turn off the older group."[2]

According to Brinker, listening pays big dividends. Almost 80 percent of Chili's menu items come from suggestions made by store managers.[3] If you're a fan of Chili's fajitas, baby back ribs, or their infamous molten chocolate cake with vanilla ice cream, you have other customers to thank for these menu items. Because of their input and the Chili's leadership team's ability to listen, the menu reflects customers' tastes and preferences.[4] Chili's is now located in all fifty states and in thirty international locations including Khobar, Saudi Arabia; Lisbon, Portugal; and Makati City in the Philippines.

Leading Questions

1. When you make a suggestion at work, does your supervisor or team leader listen to you? What happens with your ideas? Do you see them being considered or are they immediately dismissed?
2. When you lead others, how well do you listen to your team members? How do you let others know that you're listening to them?
3. What strategies do you use to get others to listen to you? Would you consider these strategies to be effective?

Listening is a communication leadership skill that most people struggle with on the job, primarily because people have not been taught how to listen.[5] Most of our communication training has focused on developing reading and writing competencies, and little if any attention has focused on developing listening and speaking competencies. This is unfortunate because research suggests that people who work in business and professional settings spend on average 32% of their communication time listening and 26% speaking, compared with 23% writing, and 19% reading.[6] Although it's certainly important to learn how to read and write, most of our communication time is spent listening to others—a skill in which we have the least amount of formal training and education.[7]

4.1: Hearing and Listening

4.1 Describe listening problems and their possible solutions.

This chapter introduces you to our communication Principle Four: *Listen and respond thoughtfully to others*. Figure 4.1 illustrates where this principle fits into our communication principles for leadership model. Being perceived as an effective listener is one of the best predictors of being an effective leader.[8] Effective leaders do more than just listen to others; they also respond to what others are saying. Responding thoughtfully with a follow-up question or nodding our head lets others know that we're actively listening to them.

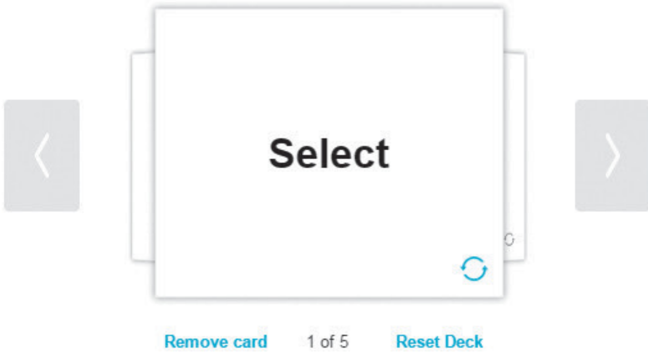
Figure 4.1: Communication Principles and Skills for Leadership

4.1.1: The Difference Between Hearing and Listening

Hearing is the physiological process of decoding sounds. We hear when the sound waves captured by our ears cause the eardrum to vibrate. The vibrating eardrum then causes the middle ear bones (the hammer, anvil, and stirrup) to vibrate. Eventually, the sound vibrations are translated into electrical impulses that signal the brain. Some people confuse hearing with listening. Although listening requires hearing, not all hearing is listening. Have you ever heard someone speaking to you, but seconds later found yourself saying "I'm sorry—what did you say?" You *heard* the person, but you were not *listening* to the person.

Listening is the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to verbal and nonverbal messages.[9] When we listen, not only do we hear the messages, but we also decode, or assign meaning, to them, and then we respond to the other person to let him or her know that the message was received. Listening is a process that involves five stages: selecting, attending, understanding, remembering, and responding.

The Five Stages of Listening



Listening and responding thoughtfully to others is a critical leadership communication skill because it helps us develop and maintain relationships with others in the three different workplace communication contexts that we review in this book: interpersonal, small group, and presentational speaking. In business and professional settings, good interpersonal relationships allow us to get the work done; they allow us to reach our goals. In small groups and teams, our ability to listen and respond thoughtfully to others allows us to provide vision and direction for the group while also facilitating group discussions and making sure that all group members have a voice in the problem-solving or decision-making process. Finally, when making presentations, our ability to listen and respond thoughtfully to others' questions before, during, and after the presentation allows us to continue clarifying our messages and persuading and influencing others.

4.1.2: Listening Problems

Although we spend a third of our communication time on the job listening, some say we don't use that time well. One day after hearing something, most people remember only about half of what was said. It gets worse. Two days later, our listening comprehension drops by another 50%. The result: Two days after hearing an informal discussion or a formal presentation, we remember only about 25% of what we heard.[10] What keeps you from listening well? Table 4.1 includes a list of listening problems and solutions.

Table 4.1: Listening Problems and Solutions

Listening Problem	Listening Solutions
I process information faster than the other person speaks. I get bored listening to others because I am way ahead of them.	• Take advantage of the extra time and mentally summarize what the speaker is saying. • Use nonverbal regulatory cues, such as head nods that let the speaker know that you understand and hand gestures that encourage the speaker to speak more quickly.
There's too much information. I cannot process all of it.	• Decide what you want to get from the speaker. Listen specifically for this information. • Ask the speaker for help in prioritizing information. • Record or take notes on the information.
I get nervous listening to new information.[11] I worry that I will get it wrong.	• Ask others to help clarify information. • Ask speaker for agendas, outlines, or copy of speaking notes. • Record or take notes on the information.
I have a habit of multi-tasking and end up missing important information.	• Recognize that researchers have concluded that the brain is not designed for multi-tasking.[12] • Commit to listening by paying attention to the speaker and message.
I'm a morning person. Seems like others want to talk to me late at night.	• If you're a morning person; and have an evening meeting, recognize that listening will he more challenging. • Let others know when it's not a good time for you to listen. If you're meeting deadlines, let others know.
I'm easily distracted by other sights, sounds, and smells.	• Change location—try to find a quiet place. • Let the speaker know if there is too much distraction.

Learning to listen effectively on the job involves developing a new set of skills. Although these skills appear simple, they're quite complex. To reduce the complexity, we encourage you to follow the Stop, Look, Listen, and Respond process for effective listening.

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Ask "What Do You Think?" Then Listen[13]

J. W. Marriott Jr., Executive Chairman and former CEO of Marriott International, learned early in life that work gets done by establishing quality relationships with others and asking their opinions and then just listening.

Marriott tells the story about when he was a young man coming home from Supply Corps School for Christmas and he found his father, founder of Marriott hotels, visiting with Ezra Taft Benson, Secretary of Agriculture and later president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and President and Mrs. Dwight Eisenhower in their living room. The question arose about whether they should go hunting on a cold, blustery day or stay by the fire. With a room full of high-status people Eisenhower turned to the young J. W. Marriott Jr. and asked, "What do you think?" Marriott said he learned an important lesson:

> That made me realize that how he [Eisenhower] got along with de Gaulle, Churchill, Roosevelt and others—by including them in the decision and asking them what they thought. So I tried to adopt that style of management as I progressed in life, by asking my people, "What do you think?"

Listening to others doesn't mean you always do what they suggest, but if asked for their opinion and really listened to, "they usually got on board because they knew they'd been respected and heard, even if I went in a different direction than what they were recommending."

4.2: Turning off Competing Messages

4.2 Describe different ways of responding effectively to others.

If you're serious about listening, then you need to be serious about turning off messages that compete for selection and attention, the first two stages in the listening process. It's not always easy to turn off competing messages in the workplace. A lot of literal and psychological noise distorts or interferes with the process of listening, such as cell phones ringing and vibrating or worries you may have about meeting a deadline. Many of these can become listening barriers, as we've seen.

When you commit to listening, you must become other-oriented rather than self-centered. Listening is not about you. It's about the other person. Becoming other-oriented requires a process called *social decentering*, which is stepping away from your own thoughts and attempting to experience the feelings of another person.[14] Social decentering allows you to have empathy with another person. To experience *empathy* is to feel what another person is feeling. In essence, you're asking yourself this question: "If I were the other person, how would I be feeling?" The process of social decentering requires mindfulness, or a conscious awareness, which is often difficult to achieve in a fast-paced and deadline-driven workplace. Social decentering occurs when you commit to turning off competing messages and to listening on both the content and the relational levels. Pay attention while listening to others. If your attention drifts, your self-awareness will help you redirect your attention back to the speaker.

Other strategies that may help you stop and turn off competing messages include:

- **PREPARE YOURSELF PHYSICALLY.** One way to prepare yourself physically to listen is to use the SOLER process.[15]

  S = Squarely face the person. Orient your body toward the person.

  O = Open the body position. Unfold arms and remove obstacles or barriers between you and the other person.

  L = Lean toward the person.

  E = Eye contact. Look directly at the person.

  R = Relax. Anxiety interferes with information processing. Try to be calm, and focus on the speaker or the interaction between people.

- **PREPARE YOURSELF BY SETTING THE SCENE FOR ATTENTIVE LISTENING.**[16] Avoid having serious conversations in locations that offer too many distractions. An overflowing desk, the instant messaging tone informing you of an ongoing conversation, or a ringing phone compete for your attention. As an alternative, use a conference room or go outside for a brief walk to talk and listen.

- **PREPARE YOURSELF BY ARRIVING EARLY TO MEETINGS.**[17] A few extra minutes will give you the time you need to make a transition mentally and physically from one activity to the next. According to Richard Bierck, a communication consultant and writer for the *Harvard Management Communication Letter*, people need time to compose themselves by asking themselves these questions: Am I ready to listen? What is the purpose of listening? What outcome do I want?

For many, information overload isn't limited to the workplace. A message meltdown is even more likely to occur when someone brings work home.

4.3: Listening with your Eyes

4.3 Describe the five stages of active listening.

Is it easier for you to listen to someone when you can see the person? Have you ever been in a conversation with someone on the phone or while texting and felt that you had to meet with the person face-to-face instead? Do you get annoyed when you are attending a lecture and someone sits down in the seat immediately in front of you, blocking your view of the speaker? If you're like most people, you prefer to look at the person you're listening to. Research suggests that we listen more effectively when we can see the other person.[18] Specifically, there is a significant increase in our listening comprehension when we can see *and* hear, rather than only hearing the other person speak.[19]

Learning to listen with the eyes requires paying particular attention to others' nonverbal messages, which is *Principle Three: Effectively use and interpret nonverbal messages*. Although listening with the ears allows you to capture the content of another person's message, the eyes allow you to more accurately decode and interpret the relational aspects of the message.[20] Nonverbal communication researcher Albert Mehrabian has pointed out that verbal messages convey the *explicit* meanings (the content) of our communication, whereas nonverbal messages convey the *implicit* (relational) meanings. According to Mehrabian, implicit messages are nonverbal behaviors that express feelings and attitudes about the content conveyed by speech."[21] For example, we may not detect the urgency (implicit) in someone's request to complete a task until we actually see the person's face. Once we see the person's face we have a visual nonverbal message to couple with the verbal message, allowing us to decode and interpret the message more accurately.

How effective are you in reading other people's nonverbal messages? In the workplace, people don't always speak their minds for a variety of reasons. It's frustrating, but true. You'll be expected to hear what others are "really" saying, even when they don't say a word—you'll be expected to read between the lines. Mehrabian found that we synthesize and interpret nonverbal cues along three primary dimensions: pleasure (liking), arousal (interest), and dominance (status).[22]

- **LOOK FOR LIKING CUES.** People who like what they're talking about and find the topic pleasurable will probably use some of the following observable behaviors: forward body lean, head nods, direct eye contact, smiling, open body orientation, and expressive gestures and voice.[23]
- **LOOK FOR INTEREST CUES.** People who have a genuine interest in and passion for what they're talking about will probably use some of the following observable behaviors: vibrant voice, dynamic gestures, excited facial expressions, and energetic body movements.[24]
- **LOOK FOR STATUS CUES.** People who consider themselves to be important (high status) will probably use some of the following observable behaviors when communicating with a person of lower status: relaxed body posture, less direct body orientation, a downward head tilt, and less smiling, head nodding, and facial animation.[25] People who perceive themselves to have less status than their communication partner will often display a tense body posture and a direct body orientation and are likely to break eye contact before the other person does.

When you attempt to interpret others' nonverbal communication, you must realize that there is a good deal of room for error. Humans are complex, and they don't always send clear messages. But the more you learn about nonverbal communication, especially the liking, interest, and status cues, the more likely you are to select, attend to, understand, remember, and respond to others effectively and appropriately.

4.4: Listening to Understand Both Major Ideas and Details

4.4 Express the importance of listening skills.

Communication Ethics @ Work

Should we hold doctors (and/or patients) accountable for ineffective listening?

Research evidence indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between doctors' communication skills and their patients' ability to follow through on doctor's orders, including taking medicine, engaging in appropriate health-preventative behaviors, and complying with the doctor's request for a follow-up appointment.[26] Put simply, if doctors listen carefully to their patients, they are more likely to accurately diagnose health problems and prescribe proper medical care and treatment.

Research also suggests that doctors do not always listen well to their patients' concerns. As a result of this lack of communication, patients are suing doctors for not listening to them.[27] A number of lawsuits have confirmed mistakes that doctors made due to not listening carefully to their patients.[28, 29]

Because of the number of lawsuits, the costs of doctor's malpractice insurance continues to increase, and these cost increases are often passed on to patients who pay more for their health care.

Doctors, on the other hand, are getting impatient and tired of patients who do not listen to them. According to doctors, we hear too often about physicians who don't listen to patients and less often about patients who do not listen to their doctors.

WRITING PROMPT

What do you think? Should doctors be able to sue patients for not listening to them? According to the American Medical Association's code of ethics, doctors are allowed to fire patients for noncompliance. Have you ever not listened to your doctor's medical advice? How would you feel if your doctor fired you for not listening to him/her?

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

Here's a question to think about: Do you learn best when a teacher gives you the big picture first and then the details, or do you prefer to hear details first and then get the big picture? If you prefer the big picture first, you would have trouble listening to a customer who goes into detail about a complicated problem that she is having with a product that you sold her last week. In fact, after she finished speaking you might still be confused about the actual problem. You would need to ask the customer "So what exactly is the problem?" If you prefer to hear details first, you would have trouble listening to a customer who explains in general terms a problem that she is having with the product. You would need to ask a number of detail-oriented questions to fully understand the problem. In many ways, learning and listening are very similar. Both processes require us to convert information into knowledge or to make sense out of what we're hearing from another person.

If you prefer getting the big picture first and then the small details, you're considered to have a *whole-part learning style*.[30] If you prefer learning the details first and then getting the big picture, you have what is considered a part-whole learning style.[31] Although we may have preferences for learning and listening, others don't always accommodate our particular preferences. To listen well, we have to be able to do three listening activities simultaneously: (1) listen for the major ideas in a message, (2) listen for the details in a message, and (3) link the details with the main ideas of the message.

4.4.1: Listen for Major Ideas in the Message

Some of us get bogged down in the details and miss the major idea of a message. In fact, studies suggest that poor listeners are more likely to focus on only facts and data, rather than the overall point of the message.[32] For example, you listen to a customer who is not happy with the service he has been receiving from your company. Rather than hearing the general idea that the customer is unhappy with the overall service, you're busy listening for the details of this customer's unhappiness: You want to pinpoint the cause of the unhappiness. Rather than listening on the relational level (recognizing that the customer is unhappy and wants you to acknowledge the unhappiness), you're listening on the content level (focusing on what's the problem and how to fix it). When this type of micro-listening occurs, we unfortunately fail to hear the larger idea.

Asking pre-questions is a strategy that has been shown to enhance macro-level listening, or listening for the larger ideas in someone's message.[33] A pre-question is a question that one formulates mentally prior to listening to another person speak. Prior to listening to a manager, coworker, subordinate, or customer, mentally formulate some questions that you want to find answers to while listening:

- How is this person feeling about the situation?
- What does this person want or need from me?
- Why does this person have this want or need?

Pre-questions serve to filter incoming information, preparing the brain to decode or process relevant information, which in this case are the "big ideas."[34] Research suggests that this type of listening strategy enhances the listening process.[35]

4.4.2: Listen for the Details in the Message

Some of us listen for only the big ideas and miss all the important details. This tendency can be a hindrance when you are trying to solve problems. How can you solve problems if you miss the important details? If you listen only on the relational level, you're going to miss important details you need to solve the problem. In many workplace situations, your job is to select, attend to, understand, and remember details. You can take notes or record the details in some other way and develop ways of jogging your memory. If details are not forthcoming, then you need to become more active in the listening process by probing and asking the other person the standard questions: Who? What? Where? When? How? and Why? Answers to these questions can provide you with the details you need.

Technology and Communication @ Work

Listening to Your Social Media

In the digital age, listening is no longer limited to audible messages but also includes written messages. Today, companies engage in organizational listening, which means they carefully monitor how others are talking about them and their business practices using social media.[36]

Here are five ways to listen between the lines while monitoring social media:

- **COMPLIMENTS.** They can be congratulations messages about a recent award or customers raving about the experience they just had with your product or with customer service.
- **COMPLAINTS.** Watch for posts complaining about your products or services, company, and staff. Catching something early means getting a chance to respond and demonstrate your problem-solving abilities.
- **EXPRESSED NEEDS.** People make known what they are doing and often ask the general public for advice when they are about to make a purchase. Both of these situations provide an opportunity for you to reach out with an offer of assistance or information related to your organization's products and services.
- **COMPETITOR RESPONSES.** Listen to what your competitors are doing and the public's response to their products and services.

- **CROWD INTERESTS.** Topics will often pop up online that draw huge crowds, such as protesters against Walmart's carbon footprint.[37]
- **INFLUENCER COMMENTS.** Determine who the opinion leaders are. They gain their power from how frequently they post on a topic, the number of people who link to their posts, the number of people gathering to comment, and how engaged visitors to their posts become. You want these folks on your side.

Take a few minutes and listen to your social media. Sign up for Google Alerts (http://www.google.com/alerts) or Tweet Beeps (http://tweetbeep.com) so you know when others are talking about you. What are they saying?

WRITING PROMPT

Visit the Facebook pages for a few of your favorite organizations. Take inventory of what people are saying. Do the postings fit one of the five ways to "listen-between-the-lines" just listed? Based on what you're reading and hearing, how would you advise the leader of this organization to respond?

▶ **The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.**

Submit

4.4.3: Link the Details with the Main Ideas

Listening is a complex skill that requires us to be able to link information together. One way to link is to use *elaboration strategies*, which are mental processing strategies that give information new meaning by organizing or restructuring[38] Here are a few suggestions for linking details and main ideas:

- **CREATE INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE DETAILS AND MAIN IDEAS.** How are they related? Is there a direct relationship, or is it an indirect relationship? Is there a cause-and-effect relationship? For example, Shelia is unhappy with how her team is performing. Try deciphering the cause-and-effect relationship while listening to Shelia. Is she unhappy with the team or is she frustrated with the current economic situation, the product line, or the lack of promotion and advertising? Or is it a combination? Ask questions to help clarify the relationships.
- **CREATE A MENTAL VISUAL MAP OF THE DETAILS AND MAIN IDEAS.** Now mentally draw arrows to show the various relationships. When asked to help others solve problems, picture the problem on a whiteboard. Using your imagination, put the problem in the middle of the whiteboard. To the left of the problem, mentally list the predictors or causes. To the right of the problem, mentally imagine the consequences or outcomes of the problem.
- **CONNECT THE INFORMATION (DETAILS AND MAIN IDEAS) TO WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW.** How is the information similar? How is it different? Think about how this problem or situation is similar or different from what you have experienced before. Rather than sharing your experiences, mentally check in and see how your experiences help you to understand the situation better. Because of your elaboration, you might be able to ask more informed questions to help the other person process the situation.

Recap

Skills for Listening Effectively to Others

Listening Skill	Listening Strategies	Examples
Stop: Turn Off Competing Messages	Prepare yourself physically.	Turn toward the person, look the person in the eye, and relax.
	Prepare yourself by setting the scene.	If necessary, move to another room away from distractions.
	Prepare yourself by getting to meetings early.	Arriving a few minutes early is best, but even being a few seconds early will help you to refocus on the new task.
Look: Listen with Your Eyes	Look for liking cues.	Look for forward body lean, head nods, direct eye contact, smiling, open body orientation, and expressive gestures and voice.
	Look for interest cues.	Observe for vibrant voice, dynamic gestures, excited facial expressions, and energetic body movements.
	Look for status cues.	Observe body posture, body orientation, head position, and amount of smiling, nodding, eye contact, and facial animation.
Listen: Understand Both Major Ideas and Details	Listen for the major ideas in the message.	Ask questions to get at the major point of the message, which may be the relational message.
	Listen for the details in the message.	Ask questions about the specific details in the message.
	Link the details with the main ideas.	Use elaboration strategies for organizing the information in order to fully understand the message.

4.5: Responding Effectively

4.5 Review the different ways of effective responses.

The title of this chapter, "Listening and Responding," reflects the active listening process that we introduced in the preceding section. Active listeners not only stop, look, and listen, they also respond to the speaker. As you'll recall, listening is a process that includes *responding*. Thoughtfully responding to others serves several purposes. First, it tells a speaker how well we understand his or her message. Second, it lets a speaker know how the message affects us, whether we agree or disagree with the message. Third, in many situations our response to a speaker validates the speaker; it lets the speaker know that we're "with" him or her. Ultimately, all of these responsive messages allow the speaker to adapt his or her communication more appropriately to ensure that listeners understand the messages.[39] There are three ways of responding: verbally, nonverbally, and empathically.

4.5.1: Responding Verbally

A number of verbal responses allow us to provide a speaker with important feedback. Here are a few of them:

- *Communicate messages that let the speaker know that you understand the message*; for example, "I understand. I see what you're saying."
- *Communicate messages that let the speaker know that you need clarification*; for example, "I'm confused. Can you give me another example?"
- *Communicate messages that let the speaker know that you're interested and need more information*; for example, "I find what you're saying fascinating. Do you mind going into more detail?"
- *Communicate messages that let the speaker know that you'd like him or her to continue speaking*; for example, "Okay, then what happened?"
- *Communicate messages that let the speaker know that you'd like to say something*; for example, "May I add something to what you're saying?"

What all of these verbal responses have in common is that they all convey that we've been paying attention to what the speaker is saying. Again, it's important that speakers use these messages as feedback and adapt their communication appropriately.

4.5.2: Responding Nonverbally

In some business situations, such as at a formal board meeting, it may not be appropriate to respond to a speaker with verbal messages. In these situations, we can respond with nonverbal messages, which are as important as (if not more important than) verbal messages. Nonverbal responsive messages include visual (sight) and aural (sound) cues. We've already noted a few visual nonverbal responsive cues: forward body lean, head nods, taking notes, and making eye contact with the speaker. A few of the aural cues include back channel cues, including vocal assurances that signal understanding and "vocal starters" or utterances that signal that the listener would like to add something to the conversation. To get an idea of how nonverbally responsive you are in conversations, complete the assessment measure in Rating Scale 4.1.

Rating Scale 4.1

Measure of Nonverbal Responsiveness

How responsive are you when listening to others? Take a few minutes to complete this self-report measure of nonverbal responsiveness.[40] The items comprising this measure will also make you aware of various nonverbal responsive behaviors.

Scoring Instructions

Sum your scores for the 13 items. Scores above 26 indicate high nonverbal responsiveness. Scores below 26 indicate low nonverbal responsiveness.

You might be asking yourself "Does a smile, head nod, or forward body lean really make that much of a difference when listening to others?" It does! Not only does using nonverbally responsive behaviors enhance listening comprehension, but speakers who see others using these behaviors when they respond feel motivated, satisfied, and effective in their communication.[41]

Listening and responding to others with empathy can accomplish many communication goals, including enhancing the quality of your workplace relationships.

4.5.3: Responding Empathically

Empathy is the process of feeling what another person is feeling. *Empathizing* is more than just acknowledging how another person feels; it is making an effort to feel what the other person is feeling. Responding with empathy is especially important when we want to support and encourage others. Although most people don't think of the workplace as a place where feelings are openly shared and people support and encourage each other by listening and responding with empathic messages, the role of emotions in the workplace is becoming more important.[42] For example, one study examined crying in the workplace and included seven hundred working Americans equally divided by sex and representing the full range of occupations and economic levels.[43] This study found that 48% of men and 41% of women reported that it's okay to cry and to express emotions at work.

Empathy is a communication tool that can be used to accomplish a number of communication goals, such as building important workplace relationships, repairing workplace relationships, defusing workplace conflict, and even influencing clients and customers to purchase your products and services. Three strategies can enhance your ability to respond to others with empathic messages.

ASK APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS As we listen for information and attempt to understand how another person is feeling, we may need to ask a number of questions. Most of our questions serve one of four purposes: (1) to obtain additional information ("Can you tell me more about the problem?"); (2) to check how the other person feels ("Are you frustrated because you didn't meet your deadline?"); (3) to ask for clarification ("What did you mean when you said we need to outsource?"); or (4) to verify that you have reached an accurate conclusion about the other person's intent or feeling ("So are you saying you'd rather work at home than at the office?").

PARAPHRASE MESSAGE CONTENT After we have listened and asked appropriate questions, we need to check whether our interpretations are accurate by paraphrasing the content of a speaker's message. *Paraphrasing* is restating in our own words what we think the other person is saying. Paraphrasing is different from repeating what someone has said; that would be parroting, not paraphrasing. When we paraphrase content, we summarize the details and the main ideas. Here are some common scripts, or ways to begin paraphrasing:.

Sample Script

"So here is what seems to have happened ...."

"Let me see if I got this right. You're saying that ...."

"Here's what I understand you to mean ...."

"So the point you seem to be making is ...."

"You seem to be saying ...."

When a listener paraphrases the content and feelings of a speaker's message, the speaker is not only more likely to know that the message was understood but also more likely to trust and value the listener.

PARAPHRASE EMOTIONS The most important goal of empathic responding is to make sure that we understand the speaker's feelings and let him or her know that we understand. How do we do this? Paraphrasing emotions is similar to paraphrasing content. For example:.

Sample Script

"So you feel ...."

"Emotionally, you're feeling ...."

"I get a sense that you're feeling ...."

"Is this how you're feeling: you're feeling ...."

Paraphrasing emotions or content can be especially useful in the following workplace situations:

- Before you take an important action
- Before you argue with or criticize your business partner or associate
- When your business partner or associate has strong feelings
- When your business partner or associate just wants to talk
- When your business partner or associate is using jargon that you don't understand
- When you encounter new ideas[44]

Career Corner

Advancing Your Career by Helping Others Listen to You

When others don't listen to you, who do you blame? Do you blame others or yourself? If you're like most people, you probably blame others. Have you ever thought that maybe you're the problem?[45] To help others listen to you, consider these strategies:

- **MAKE THE INFORMATION USEFUL.** Show that the information is useful: "Here's something that you will find helpful. . . ."
- **MAKE MESSAGES NOVEL.** Use humor or tell a story to convey your point.
- **MAKE MESSAGES CONCRETE.** Avoid jargon and abstract language. Rather than discussing the "interoffice communication problem," refer to the specific issue at hand: People aren't responding to their emails.
- **USE LISTENERS' FRAME OF REFERENCE.** When training new employees, refer to some of their experiences at their former employers to help

them make sense of the policies and procedures at your organization.

- **USE MEMORY JOGGERS.** During CPR training, the trainer encourages participants to remember the ABCs of CPR: A for Airway, B for Breathing, and C for Circulation.
- **USE THE PRINCIPLE OF PRIMACY AND RECENCY.** Put the most important information at the beginning and end of the message.
- **ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS AND NOTE TAKING.** Let listeners know that it is okay to interrupt with questions and take notes while you talk.

Summary: Listening and Responding

4.1: Describe listening problems and their possible solutions.

Hearing is the physiological process of decoding sounds. We hear when the sound waves captured by our ears cause the eardrum to vibrate. The vibrating eardrum then causes the middle ear bones (the hammer, anvil, and stirrup) to vibrate. Eventually, the sound vibrations are translated into electrical impulses that signal the brain.

Listening is the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to verbal and nonverbal messages. When we listen, not only do we hear the messages, but we also decode, or assign meaning to them, and then we respond to the other person to let him or her know that the message was received. Listening is a process that involves five stages: selecting, attending, understanding, remembering, and responding.

Several issues can get in the way of effective listening.

Problem: Listeners may process information quickly and become bored because they are way ahead of the speaker.

Solution: Mentally summarize what the speaker is saying. Use nonverbal regulatory cues to show understanding and encourage the speaker to speak more quickly.

Problem: The amount of information is overwhelming for the listener.

Solution: Listen specifically for desired information, and ask the speaker for help in prioritizing information. Record or take notes.

Problem: The listener worries about not understanding the information.

Solution: Ask others to help clarify information. Ask the speaker for agendas, outlines, or a copy of speaking notes.

Problem: Multi-tasking and missing important information.

Solution: Commit to listening by paying attention to the speaker and message.

Problem: The time of day is not ideal for a meeting.

Solution: Recognize that listening will he more challenging. Let others know when it's not a good time for you to listen.

Problem: Listeners are distracted by noises, sights, and smells.

Solution: Change location—try to find a quiet place. Let the speaker know if there is too much distraction.

4.2: Describe different ways of responding effectively to others.

Turning off competing messages includes understanding what gets in the way of your paying attention to others' communication. A lot of literal and psychological noise distorts or interferes with the process of listening, such as cell phones ringing and vibrating or worries you may have about meeting a deadline.

Strategies include preparing yourself physically using SOLER, setting the scene for attentive listening by removing distractions and arriving early to a meeting to clear your head.

4.3: Describe the five stages of active listening.

Although listening with the ears allows you to capture the content of another person's message, the eyes allow you to more accurately decode and interpret the relational aspects of the message. Verbal messages convey the *explicit* meanings (the content) of our communication, whereas nonverbal messages convey the *implicit* (relational) meanings.

Look for liking cues: forward body lean, head nods, direct eye contact, smiling, open body orientation, and expressive gestures and voice.

Look for interest cues: vibrant voice, dynamic gestures, excited facial expressions, and energetic body movements.

Look for status cues: High-status individuals will have relaxed body posture, less direct body orientation, a downward head tilt, and less smiling, head nodding, and facial animation. Low-status individuals will have tense body posture and a direct body orientation and are likely to break eye contact before the other person does.

4.4: Express the importance of listening skills.

If you prefer getting the big picture first and then the small details, you're considered to have a whole-part learning style. If you prefer learning the details first and then getting the big picture, you have what is considered a part-whole learning style. Although we may have preferences for learning and listening, others don't always accommodate our particular preferences. To listen well, we have to be able to do three listening activities simultaneously: (1) listen for the major ideas in a message, (2) listen for the details in a message, and (3) link the details with the main ideas of the message.

4.5: Review the different ways of effective responses.

Listening is a process that includes responding. Effectively responding to others involves using both verbal and nonverbal messages and communicating with empathy.

Responding with verbal messages allows us to select messages that provide the speaker with important information about our understanding of the message, as well as to offer feedback.

Effective nonverbal responses include visual and vocal messages—such as eye contact, head nods, and vocal assurances—which indicate our attention and interest.

Communicating with empathy involves asking appropriate questions, paraphrasing the content of the message, and paraphrasing the emotion.

SHARED WRITING: STRATEGIES FOR LISTENING AND RESPONDING

Think of a time when you felt your message was not understood by the receiver. In particular, have you experienced a situation at work when a supervisor or coworker didn't understand a concern you had? Discuss what you could have done differently, focusing on the strategies listed in this chapter for helping others understand you. How will you remember to use these strategies in your future communication?

▶ A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post **0 characters | 140 minimum**

Chapter 4 Quiz: Listening and Responding

Chapter 5
Adapting to Differences

Learning Objectives

5.1 Examine how an awareness of the three basic personality traits is required for effective communication

5.2 Explain why understanding and adapting to cultural diversity are important for effective communication

5.3 Analyze how being aware of the communication differences between men and women increases leadership effectiveness

5.4 Describe strategies to overcome generational differences in communication

Learning to adapt is a fundamental principle if you want to remain in business in the twenty-first century, according to Elise Mitchell, president and CEO of Mitchell Communications Group, who was named the 2012 *PRWeek* Agency Professional of the Year. Her company's portfolio of clients includes a "who's who" of national brands, such as Walmart, Sam's Club, Tyson Foods, and J.B. Hunt.

Elise and her team need public relations professionals who have cultural competencies that will enable them to better serve their clients. Put simply, they need PR professionals who understand the nuances of a cultural group—including language, attitudes, beliefs, and values—and professionals who can help develop and adapt messages and interact with diverse groups of people in meaningful ways. For example, Mitchell Communications Group develops content for their clients' websites. When you develop content in both English and Spanish, you need a PR professional who is not only fluent in Spanish but also understands the Latino market to make sure the content is translated appropriately.

Because Elise wants her talent pool to be more diverse, she is developing innovative ways to enhance the ethnic makeup of her public relations team.[1] For example, Mitchell Communications Group launched a new talent initiative called "Big Break."[2] This week-long mini-internship for high-performing college seniors from diverse ethnic backgrounds offers real-world work experience and a firsthand look at how her agency works. From a pool of more than a hundred applicants, the group selected nine students from four universities; paid for the students' airfare, lodging, and meals; and prepared a daily schedule that included face time with agency leaders and an opportunity to develop and present a PR plan for two area nonprofits.

According to Elise, her goal is to cultivate and attract diverse talent to Mitchell Communications Group. It's more than simply adding employees of different ethnic groups to her payroll. Diverse colleagues bring with them their cultural knowledge to the agency. They teach her and members of her team about the nuances and complexities of a cultural group. They help her group develop communication campaigns that appeal to the values and beliefs of diverse audiences while remaining respectful about the specific needs of these important markets.

Leading Questions

1. What cultural competencies do you possess and bring to the workplace? How comfortable are you in working and interacting with diverse groups of people?
2. How do you go about communicating with people who are different from you, whether it be because of their personality, culture, gender, or generational differences?
3. Can you recall a time when someone adapted a message to you to make sure you understood it? What did they do to adapt the message? Was it effective? How do you adapt your communication to others to make sure they understand you?

One characteristic of the workplace that is both a benefit and a challenge for leaders is that no two people are alike. We're different in terms of our social styles, cultural backgrounds, gender, and generational differences. Although this diversity adds a richness of ideas and perspectives to the business and professional setting, it also challenges leaders to adapt their communication. A communication style that works for one individual doesn't necessarily work for another. Effective leaders have the ability to assess how people are different and then adapt their communication to fit the unique needs of the individual.

Principle Five: Appropriately adapt messages to others reminds us that a one-size-fits-all communication style doesn't work in the twenty-first-century workplace. Figure 5.1 presents our now-familiar model. In the workplace, effective leaders are those who adapt messages to others rather than expecting others to adapt to the leader's messages.

Figure 5.1: Communication Principles and Skills for Leadership

5.1: Adapting to Social Style Differences

5.1 Examine how an awareness of the three basic personality traits is required for effective communication.

Your *social style* is a pattern of communication behaviors that others observe when you interact with them.[3] A manager who immediately gets up from her desk and greets you with a warm smile and a handshake, compliments you on your appearance, and asks you about your family has a social style that is noticeably different from that of a manager who greets you without eye contact while completing an email, then asks you numerous questions about the status of the project you're leading (and grumbles about the answers you give). Your social style is similar to your signature—your handwritten signature is unique. Similarly, your social style is unique; no one has a social style that perfectly matches your own. Effective leaders recognize other people's unique social styles and finds ways to adapt to them.

5.1.1: Identifying Social Style

Identifying a social style is a combination of two primary dimensions: assertiveness and responsiveness. *Assertiveness* is the capacity to make requests; to actively disagree; to express positive or negative personal feelings; to initiate, maintain, or disengage from conversations; and to stand up for oneself without attacking another.[4] *Responsiveness* is the capacity to be sensitive to the communication of others, to be seen as a good listener, to make others comfortable in communicating, and to recognize the needs and desires of others.[5] To assist you in becoming more self-aware of your own social style, we encourage you to complete the self-report measure in Rating Scale 5.1. Depending on your self-reported levels of assertiveness and responsiveness, your social style will fall into one of the following four quadrants: amiable, analytical, driver, or expressive.[6] To identify another person's social style, complete the measure while thinking about the other person. Although the other person may not share your perception of his/her social style, we communicate with others based on how we perceive them and not on how they perceive themselves.

Those in service professions, like this doctor and nurse, tend to be amiables. Their social style is characterized by responsiveness to others.

AMIABLE If you're an *amiable*, you are a relationship specialist and are high on responsiveness and low on assertiveness. Adjectives used to describe amiables include *conforming, unsure, pliable, dependent, awkward, supportive, respectful, willing, dependable*, and *agreeable*. Amiables seem to be most comfortable working in environments where they can provide services and be supportive and helpful in their relationships with others. Such people are often drawn to careers in teaching, human resources, social work, psychology, and other helping professions.

ANALYTICAL If you're an *analytical*, you are a technical specialist and are low on both responsiveness and assertiveness. The adjectives used to describe analyticals include *critical, indecisive, stuffy, picky, moralistic, industrious, persistent, serious, exacting*, and *orderly*. Professions such as science, engineering, construction work, accounting, and certain aspects of law often have a high proportion of people with this style. Some research suggests that analyticals are more likely to be apprehensive about communication and thus more withdrawn and quiet.[7] As a result, analyticals may be less effective communicators than others and more resistant to interacting with others.

DRIVER If you're a *driver*, you are a control specialist and are low on responsiveness and high on assertiveness. Among the adjectives used to describe drivers are *pushy, severe, tough, dominating, harsh, strong-willed, independent, practical, decisive*, and *efficient*. These people might be small-business owners, top managers, production managers, administrative personnel, politicians, or those in other decision-making positions. Because of their ability to take responsibility and direct others, top management often puts these individuals into positions of control.

EXPRESSIVE If you're an *expressive*, you are a social specialist and high on both responsiveness and assertiveness. The adjectives used to describe expressives include *competent, excitable, versatile, reacting, ambitious, stimulating, enthusiastic, dramatic*, and *friendly*. Persons with an expressive social style are often found in sales, entertainment, and advertising; or they may be artists, musicians, or writers. These people know how to use their communication skills to gain recognition and attention, and they like being seen and noticed by others.

Rating Scale 5.1

Identifying Social Style[8]

Review the following list of 20 personality characteristics. Indicate the degree to which you believe you display each characteristic while interacting with others by marking whether you (5) *strongly agree* that you exhibit the characteristic, (4) *agree* that you exhibit it, (3) are *undecided*, (2) *disagree* that you exhibit the characteristic, or (1) *strongly disagree* that it applies. There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly; record your first impression.

To begin, download the list of personality characteristics.

View the Scoring Instructions

Add your ratings for these characteristics to determine your assertiveness score:

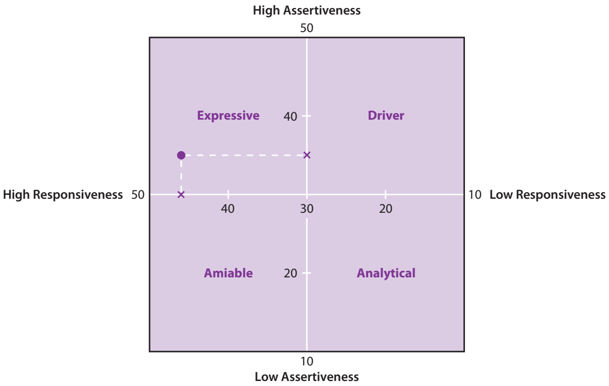
2 + 3 + 5 + 6 + 9 + 11 + 14 + 18 +19 + 20

Add your ratings of these characteristics to determine your responsiveness score:

1 + 4 + 7 + 8 + 10 + 12 + 13 + 15 + 16 + 17

- Scores above 34 indicate high assertiveness or responsiveness.
- Scores below 26 indicate low assertiveness or responsiveness.
- Scores between 26 and 34 indicate moderate levels of assertiveness or responsiveness.

Now map your assertiveness and responsiveness scores on the graph below to determine your social style. First, find the point on the vertical axis that corresponds to your assertiveness score, and draw a horizontal dotted line in from that point on the axis. Then find the point on the horizontal axis that corresponds to your responsiveness score, and draw a vertical dotted line up from that point on the axis. Place a dot at the point where these two lines intersect; the quadrant in which the dot falls indicates your social style. For example, if you scored 35 on assertiveness and 46 on responsiveness, you would fall within the "Expressive" quadrant.



Communication Ethics @ Work

Should Assessment Instruments Be Used To Place People In Jobs?

Have you ever been asked to complete a personality or social style measure during an employment interview? How comfortable are you with knowing that your score on the measure may influence whether you are hired for the position? To some job applicants, a personality measure coupled with a job interview seems reasonable. But what about when the personality measure is used as a screening tool to determine if one gets the interview?

Why do many researchers have reservations about using assessment instruments for pre-employment screening?

- Some personality measures are not valid, meaning that they do not measure what employers think they are measuring.[9] For example, if you are shy and don't like to lead others, then Rating Scale 5.1 should not classify you as a "Driver," which is someone who likes to talk and lead.
- Some personality measures do not predict job success or performance.[10] In theory, the measure should give an employer some idea if the potential employee will be successful in the job if he/she were to be employed. Research does not always support the relationship between how someone did on the measure and how they will perform on the job.

How do you know if an instrument is valid and predicts appropriately?

In order for an instrument to be valid, it needs to have been tested numerous times by qualified researchers. For example, Rating Scale 5.1 has been tested close to 500 times, meaning that there are close to 500 published research studies . . .

How do you assess if an instrument is valid?

- Follow the paper trail. Published assessment instruments should have a bibliography of published research studies using the instrument. Many of the titles of these publications should include the word "validation."
- Enter the name of the instrument in Google Scholar and see what you find. For example, the instrument used in Rating Scale 5.1 is known as the Socio-Communicative Orientation Measure. When you enter the search terms "Assessment of the Socio-Communicative Orientation Measure," you see 494 published manuscripts that have tested this particular instrument, suggesting that it has a very long paper trail.

Does a valid instrument mean an ethical use of an instrument?

- Not always, but it is a start.
- If the assessment instrument is used in addition to other sources of data, then an employer is assessing multiple points of data and not just a single score from an assessment measure, making it a more ethical process.

5.1.2: Adapting to Social Styles

Being aware of your social style and the social styles of others allows you to adapt your communication, which enhances your ability to be effective. *Style flexing* is a process of adapting your communication to how others communicate. For example, if you're an analytical leader who is working with a team of drivers, you will enhance your leadership effectiveness if you communicate more like a driver. This would include being direct with members of the team, focusing on outcomes, and allowing them the freedom to determine goals and objectives. Again, this is not your preferred way of communicating with others, but it's how drivers communicate.

According to management communication consultants Robert and Dorothy Bolton, style flexing is a way of tailoring communication to another person's processes.[11] When you style flex, you maximize the fit between you and another person. Most men have their suits tailored to ensure that they fit perfectly. When your suit fits you perfectly, you look and feel better. When workplace relationships fit, you're more productive and effective. Table 5.1 suggests ways to help you style flex to others' social styles.

Table 5.1 Style Flexing Guidelines for Enhancing Communication Effectiveness

Style flexing occurs when you adapt your communication to meet how others communicate.[12] To style flex, follow three steps: (1) identify your social style, (2) identify the other person's social style, (3) use the following style-flexing strategies and communication skills.

If You Have an Amiable Social Style		
When communicating with an **Analytical** person • Be punctual, focus on the task, use a formal tone. • De-emphasize feelings: minimize eye contact, avoid touch. • Be systematic: develop a plan, follow the rules. • Be organized: prepare in advance, use specific details in presentations.	When communicating with an **Expressive** person • Increase your speed, respond and decide promptly, minimize paperwork. • Increase your energy: stand up straight, use expressive gestures and eye contact, talk louder, faster, and with more intensity than you might normally. • Focus on the big picture: prioritize topics and focus on those of highest priority; avoid specific details. • Initiate conversations, avoid tentative language, disagree tactfully.	When communicating with a **Driver** • Set realistic goals and develop a plan. • Prioritize topics and focus on those of highest priority, avoid the details. • Be organized: present options, anticipate questions and prepare answers, focus on results. • Avoid tentative language. • Identify problems, disagree tactfully.
If You Are a Driver		
When communicating with an **Analytical** person • Slow down: analyticals react negatively to pressure to be speedy; avoid pushing. • Listen more: drivers tend to want to talk; invite the person to speak, and paraphrase what she or he says. • Minimize expressive gestures and monitor your speech; speak more slowly and with less intensity than you might normally when communicating with an **Analytical** person. • Prepare thoroughly; gather all necessary details and information to build credibility.	When communicating with an **Expressive** person • Be aware of and acknowledge the other person's feelings; be warm and enthusiastic. • Allow for fun and joking; pay attention to and comment on the other person's physical space (office decorations, photos). • Be confirming: recognize the other's contributions, be supportive, provide incentives when communicating with an **Expressive** person. • Be flexible with your time, listen and respond, practice patience.	When communicating with an **Amiable** person • Be genuine: engage in personal conversation and offer appropriate self-disclosure. • Be supportive: be a good listener, paraphrase what the other person says and respond appropriately, be appreciative and helpful. • Focus on feelings: pay attention to the other person's nonverbal cues; amiables will not always voice their unhappiness. • Slow down: as a driver, you often speak fast because you like to get things done; relax deadlines and avoid rushing.
If You Have an Expressive Social Style		
When communicating with an **Analytical** person • Be task focused, punctual, formal. • Be systematic: follow the rules, have a plan. • Prepare thoroughly, focus on facts and specific details, provide evidence. • Minimize expressiveness; avoid dramatic gestures and vocal intensity.	When communicating with a **Driver** person • Be task focused, punctual, formal. • Plan your work: determine specific goals and objectives. • Be organized: prepare thoroughly and know what you intend to say; use facts and be results oriented. • Avoid power struggles: both Expressives and Drivers are assertive; make an effort to listen more; slow down and be willing to negotiate.	When communicating with an **Amiable** person • Allow the other person to speak more; paraphrase what you hear. • Be supportive: make the other person feel understood; listen with empathy. • Minimize expressiveness, use tentative or provisional language ("possibly," "maybe," and "could"). • Slow your speech, relax deadlines, avoid rushing; amiables tend to take longer to make decisions.
If You Have an Analytical Social Style		
• Be warm, build rapport, offer appropriate self-disclosure. • Speak more rapidly than you might normally; react quickly. • Say what you think: speak up, disagree tactfully, identify problems rather than ignoring them. • Be flexible; improvise, relax the rules, be encouraging when communicating with an **Expressive** person.	• Prioritize your information and share the most important points; avoid subpoints or details unless asked. • Be results oriented and practical. • Say what you think. • Present options but allow the person to determine his or her own objectives and goals; relax the rules when communicating with a **Driver**.	• Be genuine; build rapport; offer appropriate self-disclosure; be loyal. • Provide structure: define the job, assist in planning. • Avoid logical appeals; focus on main points and leave out details. • Be supportive and helpful; make the other person feel understood; recognize his or her contributions when communicating with an **Amiable** person.

5.2: Adapting to Cultural Differences

5.2 Explain why understanding and adapting to cultural diversity are important for effective communication.

Culture is a learned system of knowledge, behavior, attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms shared by a group of people.[13] Culture and communication, says anthropologist Edward T. Hall, are inseparable—you can't talk about one without discussing the other.[14] There is ample evidence to document the influence of culture on how you work and live.[15] According to researcher Geert Hofstede, your culture is like "mental software" that helps you understand the world.[16] Like the software and operating system in a computer, your culture provides a framework that shapes the messages you send and receive every day.

Leaders Communicating @ Work[17]

The Power of Perspective

You're undoubtedly familiar with the story of the three blind men who came across an elephant. The one who bumped into the elephant's trunk was certain that he'd found a snake. The unsighted man holding on to the elephant's tail thought he'd found a broom, and the man who embraced the elephant's leg was convinced he was clinging to a tree. A leader who relies only on his/her observations can easily miss seeing the whole picture. Effective leaders know the importance of looking at issues from diverse points of view to gain an accurate understanding of issues and problems.

Susan Docherty, who leads the U.S. sales, service, and marketing team at General Motors, wants to make sure she sees the elephant and not the snake, broom, or tree. She makes it a point to ensure that there are different types of people who offer her advice and opinions on a variety of issues.

> I like building teams with people who come from very different backgrounds and have very different experiences. I don't just mean diverse teams, in terms of men and women or people of different color or origin. I like people who have worked in different places in the world than I have because they bring a lot more context to the discussion. That's something that I value a tremendous amount.
>
> I make sure that when I'm looking at people for my team, it's not just what's on their resume—their strengths or weaknesses or what they've accomplished—but it's the way they think. I can learn twice as much, twice as quickly, if I've got people who think differently than I do around the table.

Whether you are in a leadership role or not, it's important to understand and value the perspective of others. Each of the blind men was undoubtedly convinced of the accuracy of their own conclusion as to what they had discovered when encountering the elephant. But if they would have shared their different perspectives, they would have reached a more informed conclusion. To make sure you know an elephant when you bump into one, seek diverse perspectives to make sure you're getting the whole picture.

Understanding the relationships between personality and communication traits reveals how and why individuals differ in their workplace communication. Understanding how and why people differ in their workplace communication will allow you to adapt your communication to them more effectively. Some of your communication behaviors are natural, meaning that they are influenced by your biology or the genes you inherited. However, you can learn to modify and adapt your communication in order to interact more effectively with others and become a leader in the workplace.

If you're like most people, you're unaware of your computer's software until a glitch occurs and your computer fails to work properly. Your cultural software is very similar. It remains invisible until there's a problem. Problems occur when you work with others whose "cultural software systems" are different from your own. For example, some cultures are less time sensitive than others. Rather than meeting an important deadline for a particular project or arriving early for a meeting, you might find people from some cultures not being worried about punctuality and deadlines. To them, deadlines and start times for meetings are fluid and can always be changed. Such problems occur with regularity in business and professional settings, particularly as the workplace becomes more diverse and as we interact more often with people from different or unfamiliar cultures.[18] For example, by 2050, whites will make up 46% of the population and blacks will make up 15%. Hispanics, who make up about 15% of the population today, will account for 30% in 2050. Asians, who make up about 5% of the population currently, are projected to increase to 9% by 2050.[19]

5.2.1: Cultural Context

If there is a problem, one way to resolve it is to better understand the *cultural context* for the communication, which consists of the nonverbal cues that surround and give meaning to the messages.

In *high-context cultures*, nonverbal cues are extremely important in interpreting messages. Communicators rely heavily on context—they gather subtle information from facial expression, vocal cues, and even silence in interpreting messages. People from Asian, Arab, and Southern European countries are more likely to draw on context to help them interpret messages.

To understand the cultural context of communication, it helps to attend to all nonverbal cues, including the attire of your communication partner.

People in *low-context cultures* rely more explicitly on language and on the meanings of words and use fewer contextual cues to send and interpret information. Individuals from low-context cultures, such as North Americans, Germans, and Scandinavians, may perceive people from high-context cultures as less attractive, knowledgeable, and trustworthy because they violate unspoken low-context cultural rules of conduct and communication. For example, people from high-context cultures may be perceived to be "beating around the bush" rather than getting to the point, and indirectness may sometimes be perceived as manipulation. Individuals from low-context cultures often are less skilled in interpreting unspoken contextual messages.[20]

5.2.2: Cultural Values

By paying attention to what a culture values, you can learn important clues about how to adapt your communication so that you respond appropriately to others' communication, establish quality relationships, and avoid making embarrassing errors. Geert Hofstede has identified five dimensions of cultural values: individualism versus collectivism, distribution of power (either centralized or decentralized), avoidance of uncertainty versus tolerance for uncertainty, short-term versus long-term orientation, and masculine versus feminine cultural perspectives.[21]

INDIVIDUALISM VERSUS COLLECTIVISTIC People from *individualistic cultures*, like that of the United States, have learned to value their own interests more than those of the overall group. Individualistic cultures offer their members a great deal of freedom, based on the belief that freedom makes it possible for each person to achieve personal success. The U.S. workplace reflects the individualistic culture, with, for example, performance reviews that determine whether individuals are rewarded, based on whether they met their goals and objectives, and salary bonuses that reward individual effort.[22]

People from *collectivistic cultures*, like that of Japan and other East Asian cultures, learn to value the interests of their group or community more than their individual interests. Collectivistic cultures value what people do together and reward group achievement. In collectivistic cultures, to receive individual recognition would be considered dishonorable because it elevates the individual above the group. One of this book's authors, who used to work in the airline industry, remembers a flight to Tokyo on which one of the employees of a Japanese company refused his first-class seat so as to not dishonor the other members of the group with whom he was traveling.

DECENTRALIZED VERSUS CENTRALIZED POWER Some cultures, referred to as *decentralized power cultures*, value a broad distribution of power. The power is in the people, or the many, not in any one single person or group. In the workplace, this cultural value is reflected in how decisions are made. For example, it's not unusual for a leader to conduct a meeting at which employees examine and discuss problems together, and then each employee has a vote on how the problem should be solved or what decision is going to be made. The power is in the individual votes or voices of the employees rather than in a single leader. Research suggests that people from Australia, Israel, Denmark, New Zealand, and Ireland typically prefer minimal power differences between members of the culture; they strive for more equal distribution of authority and control.[23]

#Technology and Communication @ Work

Using Apps to Adapt to Language Differences[24]

A large part of adapting to others is learning to speak their language. Today, there are a number of apps available to help you navigate language differences. Based on a recent survey of International business travelers, here are the top five apps:

SayHi Translate

This app costs $2.99. SayHi Translate has accurate speech recognition in over 40 languages. The app combines language and dialect to help you break down barriers when traveling throughout the world. Currently rated as number one in both the App Store and Apple's "What's Hot."

Languages

This app costs 99 cents and includes 12 full language dictionaries. The best feature of the app by far is the offline mode, which means you don't need an Internet connection.

Google Translate

This app is free and allows you to translate using voice commands for over 15 languages. You can also listen to spoken translations in over 20 languages.

Universal Translator

This app costs $2.99. Both parties must have a Google Chat account, however only one party needs to have the app installed. Once your mutual languages are defined, every message you type is automatically translated.

iTranslate

The app is free. This app allows you to enter any phrase, choose one of the many stored dialects, and the app will speak the phrase in that dialect. This feature includes both male and female voices, and you can slow down or speed up the output for better clarity.

Other cultures, referred to as *centralized power cultures*, value a more concentrated or narrow distribution of power. The power is in one person or a select few. The general assumption is that some people will have more power, control, and influence than others. Professionals from cultures that value centralized power are probably more comfortable with managerial styles in which clear lines of authority are followed. Rather than calling a meeting and asking employees to vote on how a problem should be solved or how a decision should be made, leaders are more likely to make the decision without consulting with group members and without group members objecting to the leader having most of the power.

ACCEPTANCE OF UNCERTAINTY VERSUS PREFERENCE FOR CERTAINTY The contemporary workplace is full of uncertainty and change.[25] *Uncertainty avoidance* is a measure of how accepting a culture is of a lack of predictability. Cultures low in uncertainty avoidance are those in which people tolerate uncertainty; they have learned to live with the fact that their ability to predict the future is limited. Many professionals from these cultures are more comfortable taking risks, and they tend to be more tolerant of others who engage in behavior that goes against what is considered normal. Verbal messages such as "It will work itself out" or "Let's go with the flow" are indicative of cultures in which uncertainty avoidance is low. People from Singapore, Hong Kong, Jamaica, Denmark, and the United States are more comfortable with uncertainty.[26]

Cultures high in uncertainty avoidance are those in which people don't like uncertainty; thus they learn ways to structure their lives to provide as much certainty and predictability as possible. Cultures in which people need certainty to feel secure are more likely to develop and enforce rigid rules for behavior and to establish elaborate codes of conduct. Verbal messages—such as "Let's develop an action plan that includes the tasks that need to be completed, who is responsible for the task, and the deadlines" or "What does company policy say about that issue?"—are indicative of cultures in which uncertainty avoidance is high. People from Greece, Portugal, and Guatemala generally do not like uncertainty.[27]

SHORT-TERM VERSUS LONG-TERM ORIENTATION Given the pressure they are under to make money and turn an instant profit, it's difficult for some leaders and professionals from Western industrialized cultures to understand that not all of the world's organizations are interested in short-term results. Cultures that have a long-term orientation value long-term commitment, thriftiness, and perseverance. People in these cultures value delayed gratification and are willing to work hard, knowing that the profits and rewards of their hard work may not materialize for a number of years. Countries that tend to have a long-term orientation include Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China. In contrast, people in cultures that have a short-term orientation value fulfilling social obligations and protecting oneself from embarrassment. These cultures tend to be focused on short-term results, such as turning a profit quickly. Countries that tend to have a more short-term orientation include Norway, Pakistan, Canada, East Africa, and the United States.[28]

MASCULINE VERSUS FEMININE VALUES Some cultures emphasize traditional male values, such as getting things done and being more assertive; other cultures place greater emphasis on traditional female values: building relationships and seeking peace and harmony with others. These values are not only about biological differences; they also are general approaches to interacting with other individuals. People from *masculine cultures* tend to value more traditional roles for men and women. People (both men and women) from masculine cultures value achievement, heroism, material wealth, and making things happen. They tend to have more of a task orientation. People from Japan, Australia, Venezuela, Italy, Mexico, and Great Britain tend to have a cultural value that is more masculine than feminine.[29]

Men and women from *feminine cultures* tend to value caring for the less fortunate, being sensitive to others, and enhancing the overall quality of life.[30] They tend to have more of a social orientation and to focus more on collective concerns, such as cooperative problem solving and maintaining a friendly atmosphere. People from Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Chile, and Thailand tend to have a cultural orientation that is more feminine than masculine.[31]

5.2.3: Strategies for Adapting

In their book *Globality: Competing with Everyone from Everywhere for Everything*, consultants Harold Sirkin, James Hemerling, and Arindam Bhattacharya examine how globalization is causing organizations to rethink how they do business.[32] The authors urge U.S. companies to "adapt, adopt, and synthesize ideas from everyone and everywhere" to compete in a global marketplace.[33] Put another way, our ability to survive in a global marketplace will depend on our abilities to cross cultures and to work with people who don't think, believe, or act as we do. These strategies have been shown to help people interact more effectively in international and multicultural environments.

- **BE PATIENT.** Keep in mind that working in an intercultural setting may be just as frustrating for the people you are trying to communicate with as it is for you. It is important to understand that being patient will communicate openness and tolerance.
- **ESTABLISH RULES.** Because cultures place different values on things such as meeting deadlines and punctuality, some rules for business should be established. Rather than having the ground rules imposed from someone who is not directly involved in the exchange, try developing some rules by soliciting ideas and discussing these with team members.
- **ASK QUESTIONS.** Do not be afraid to find out the answers to some confusing messages the old-fashioned way: by asking. A simple explanation may be all you require to move ahead with agreement. Often, such directness is what is missing from an intercultural exchange.
- **RESPECT OTHERS.** You cannot earn respect without first demonstrating it to others. This is the basis for all

intercultural communication and will go a long way in enhancing your experience.

- **WRITE THINGS DOWN.** It has been shown that people who do not yet speak another language proficiently can generally better understand the written word. Writing things down is another way to ensure you have the most accurate communication possible.
- **BE AWARE OF TIME.** Not everyone in the world thinks "time is money." Fostering an understanding about time and how it is viewed in another culture will help to build quality business relationships. Keep that in mind when making decisions about deadlines and meetings.
- **EXERCISE CAUTION WITH HUMOR.** Be very careful about using humor in an intercultural environment. What you may find funny could be quite offensive to another. In some cultures, such as in Russian culture, humorous banter is not appropriate in a business environment.
- **DOUBLE-CHECK SOLUTIONS.** In any business setting, double-checking is important to ensure that all parties are in agreement. This means repeating solutions, conclusions, meeting dates and times, and deadlines. Having everything in written form also helps with double-checking.
- **BE POSITIVE.** When faced with problems, steer clear of blame and conflict. Stay positive, analyze the problem, and work as a team to build strategies and solutions to ensure that the problem never occurs again.
- **ENGAGE IN SELF-REFLECTION.** A good intercultural communicator not only looks outward but also looks inward. Take time to reflect on your own communication and management style and see where you can improve as an individual.

Globalization requires workers to adapt to working with others despite different cultural orientations. This was exemplified by the crew members of Expedition 28 (including NASA astronauts, Russian cosmonauts, and a Japanese astronaut), who are shown here in the service module of the International Space Station.

Understanding the relationships between culture and communication traits allows us to better understand how people communicate and interact with each other. Next, we examine the relationships between gender and communication.

Recap

Cultural Values

Cultural Values	Description
Individualism	Individualistic cultures value personal interests above group interests.
Collectivism	Collectivistic cultures value group or community interests above individual interests.
Decentralized Power Distribution	Decentralized cultures value putting power in the hands of the population, rather than one person or group.
Centralized Power Distribution	Centralized cultures value putting the power in the hands of one leader or a select few.
Tolerance of Uncertainty	Cultures that accept uncertainty tolerate not knowing and understand that their ability to predict the future is limited.
Need for Certainty	Cultures that value certainty learn ways to structure life to provide as much certainty and predictability as possible.
Short-Term Orientation	Short-term orientation cultures value change and are more interested in and focused on short-term results.
Long-Term Orientation	Long-term orientation cultures value long-term commitment and respect for tradition.
Masculine Values	Masculine cultures value a task orientation and being more assertive.
Feminine Values	Feminine cultures value caring for others and enhancing the overall quality of life.

5.3: Adapting to Gender Differences

5.3 Analyze how being aware of the communication differences between men and women increases leadership effect.

Men and women communicate differently at work.[34] Becoming aware of these differences and adapting communication accordingly is just another way you can enhance your leadership effectiveness in the workplace. Although *sex* and *gender* are related, and although the terms often are used interchangeably, there are some distinctions that we would like to make.

Sex refers to biological characteristics that are present from the time of birth. Different pairs of chromosomes—XX for females, XY for males—provide clear genetic coding for how the body will develop. We use the terms *male* and *female* to describe biological sex.

Gender refers to the cultural and psychological characteristics that are associated with our biological sex; gender is a cultural construction of what it means to be a man or women. The terms *masculine* and *feminine* are used most often when referring to gender. In many ways, your gender is an implicit rulebook that informs you of how you are to behave and communicate. Unlike sex, which is biological, gender is learned or developed through the nurturing process and through your interactions in your culture.

Although not all biological males (people of a particular sex) communicate in a masculine manner (that is, in a way considered typical or appropriate for their gender), nor all females in a feminine manner, sex and gender are highly correlated. Research reveals that men in many cultures tend to approach communication by focusing on the content dimension of communication, whereas women tend to approach communication by focusing on the relational dimension.[35] The *content dimension* of human communication focuses on *what* is said, or the verbal message. The *relational dimension* involves *how* the verbal message is said, based on tone of voice, facial expressions, and other nonverbal behaviors. The latter dimension often tells us how to interpret the former. Next we explore how gender affects communication at work by examining conversational rituals.

Gender differences in language use and conversational rituals affect communication in the workplace.

5.3.1: Conversational Rituals

Linguist Deborah Tannen examines how men and women communicate differently on the job.[36] Tannen argues that men and women use different *conversational rituals*, which are routine scripts we have learned to use when talking and responding to others. According to Tannen, men learn to send and receive messages through a *status lens*. A status lens is a perception process that leads men to focus on who has more prestige and power in the conversation. The language men use puts them in a one-up or one-down position in conversation and determines their status level. The stereotypical example of men one-upping each other with the size of fish they caught on their fishing trip illustrates how men use communication to assert status. According to Tannen, when men want to put someone down, they use direct statements, such as "Your fish is smaller than the one I caught."

"Must you precede everything you say with 'This is your captain speaking'?"

Many women, according to Tannen, communicate using a *connection lens*. A connection lens is a perception process that leads women to focus on who is closer or further away from them psychologically or emotionally. Many women use communication to bring others closer or to keep others at a distance. For example, a woman may fail to invite another woman to an after-work social function. According to Tannen, women punish others by pushing them away and keeping them at a distance.

The problem with conversational rituals is that they can sometimes misfire. Put simply, the message sent doesn't equal the message received. Tannen mentions that when someone in the United States greets you, they often use the conversation-opening ritual "Hi. How are you doing?" They expect the other person to interpret the question ritually rather than literally. They expect "I'm fine. How are you?" If they get a complete health report, the ritual has misfired.

Here are a few of the conversational rituals that Tannen has identified in her research:[37]

RITUAL APOLOGY Women often say, "I'm sorry" and mean it not as an apology but as a *conversational smoother* or as a way of expressing concern. Like a drop of oil added to a squeaky hinge, a conversational smoother allows a person to communicate more smoothly and with less friction. For example, during a meeting Angelica states, "Oh, I'm sorry, I have one more item that I would like to add to the agenda." With this statement, Angelica is not actually apologizing but rather using ritual apology to appear less abrupt and possibly to express concern for other people's time. In terms of the female connection lens, Angelica uses ritual apology as a way to bring others closer. Ritual apology may misfire when men interpret the ritual as an actual apology. From the point of view of a male status lens, Angelica may be undermining her authority by appearing less organized and therefore weak.

RITUAL OPPOSITION Men often play the role of devil's advocate in conversations with others, and this conversational ritual has been known to misfire when it is used with women. Consider the following conversation between Dean, who is editor of a men's fitness magazine, and Sarah, who is a writer for the magazine. Sarah pitches the following idea for a feature article.

Sarah: How about a story about men who are compulsive about fitness to the point that it's dangerous and unhealthy?

Dean: How does your idea fulfill the mission of the magazine, which is to promote health and fitness?

Sarah: Well, the article would conclude with a list of ways that men can be fit and healthy in a balanced manner.

Dean: But isn't compulsive fitness an issue that women face more than men?

A woman may interpret this conversation ritual as a challenge or a rejection of her idea, whereas a man might use the ritual to tease out ideas and explore them more critically. Based on this exchange, Sarah may decide the idea is not a good one and drop it. However, Dean may not be opposed to the idea but wants to probe Sarah's thinking and her angle for the feature article.

COMPLIMENTS Exchanging compliments is a conversational ritual, especially for women. According to Tannen, when a woman compliments another woman, she also expects to receive a compliment.[38] Exchanging compliments is a way to relate to and connect with another person. The ritual misfire can occur when men don't reciprocate compliments. Consider Dahlia and Tomas, who are colleagues. Following a meeting, Dahlia compliments Tomas on his presentation. Because Tomas doesn't reciprocate the compliment, Dahlia is forced to ask "What did you think of my presentation?" Then, rather than following the ritual and complimenting Dahlia, Tomas provides a detailed critique of what he thought of her presentation. This is clearly a ritual misfire. At times, men interpret messages literally rather than ritually. Dahlia was not expecting a critique of her presentation. Instead, she expected her ritual compliment to be reciprocated with a compliment.

SMALL-TALK RITUALS Men and women often use small talk to relate to others. Small talk is a type of social lubrication that allows conversations to run more smoothly. Men and women have different small-talk rituals, which can be misinterpreted. As noted earlier, according to Tannen, many women use rapport talk and many men use report talk.[39] *Rapport talk* focuses on sharing information about relationships, whereas *report talk* focuses on sharing factual or statistical information. Both forms of small talk are used to relate and connect with others. However, men and women go about talk quite differently in their conversation rituals. Women tend to interpret men's report talk as too impersonal, and men tend to interpret women's report talk as too personal.[40]

5.3.2: Strategies for Adapting

The best strategy for helping others adapt to gender differences is to bring these differences into the open. According to Tannen, "Raising awareness is the most important thing. Simply knowing that men tend to be more authoritative and brusque and that women tend to prefer collaboration and indirection can help both genders work together."[41]

Rather than communicating in a strictly masculine or a strictly feminine manner, research is beginning to suggest that flexibility is needed in the twenty-first-century workplace. The professional workplace will benefit if women adopt more masculine conversational styles and men adopt more feminine conversational styles. Tannen argues that both conversational styles have benefits. Her claims have been supported by research indicating that employees who perceive their managers and supervisors using mixed or blended speech styles consider them to be more effective than supervisors who use the speech style associated with their sex (a man using rapport talk, a woman using report talk).[42] Here are a few recommendations to enhance your use and understanding of conversational rituals:

- **BE AWARE THAT MEN AND WOMEN HAVE DIFFERENT CONVERSATIONAL RITUALS.** If you're male, understand that a woman's use of ritual apology is a way to express concern. If you're female, understand that a man's use of ritual opposition is a way to explore ideas.
- **MONITOR OTHERS' NONVERBAL BEHAVIORS TO CONFIRM THAT THEY INTERPRETED YOUR RITUAL CORRECTLY.** Nonverbal expressions such as a raised eyebrow may signal misunderstanding.
- **IF YOU'RE MALE, TRY USING RITUAL APOLOGY AND RAPPORT TALK WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH A FEMALE.** A woman will likely appreciate it

if you temporarily suspend ritual opposition and report talk rituals when communicating with her.

- **IF YOU'RE FEMALE, TRY USING RITUAL OPPOSITION AND REPORT TALK WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH A MALE.** A man will likely appreciate it if you temporarily suspend ritual apology and rapport talk when communicating with him.

5.4: Adapting to Generational Differences

5.4 Describe strategies to overcome generational differences in communication.

Human resource researchers and practitioners have learned over the years that it's critical to study generational differences at work and to use the research findings to help working professionals adapt to the generational differences.[43] Put another way, generational differences represent another form of intercultural communication; groups of employees born in one generation (cultural group) are communicating across another generation. Although it's important to understand that groups of people born in different generations share more similarities than differences, it's vital to be aware of, appreciate, and value the differences between the generations.

5.4.1: Understanding Generation Y

A new generation of employees are joining the business and professional workforce. They belong to what researchers refer to as generation Y, which includes those born between 1982 and 2000.[44] This generation is the "connected" generation, which reflects their tech savvy and need to remain connected and engaged. Members of generation Y, also known as Millennials, seek work that is fulfilling and enables them to make a difference.[45] According to one study, the number-one factor that Millennials wanted in a successful career was a sense of meaning. Researchers concluded that "meaningful work was the most important faculty defining career success."[46] One of the most common reasons younger workers leave their jobs is because they are not fully engaged. Leaders can keep them engaged by continually educating and training them and providing them with professional development opportunities.

One way to better understand how generation Y communicates is to compare and contrast it with other generations. Researchers have identified a number of small but important communication style differences across generational groups. A brief summary of these findings is depicted in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: Adapting Communication for Generational Differences

Communication Characteristics	Veteran (Born before 1946)	Boomer (1946–1964)	X'er (1965–1981)	Y'er (1982–2000)
Style	Formal	Semiformal	Not so serious; irreverent	Eye-catching; fun
Content	Detail; prose-style writing	Chunk it down but give me everything	Get to the point—What do I need to know?	If and when I need it; I'll find it online
Context	Relevance to my security; historical perspective	Relevance to the bottom line and my rewards	Relevance to what matters to me	Relevance to now, today, and my role
Attitude	Accepting and trusting of authority and hierarchy	Accept the "rules" as created by the Veterans	Openly question authority; often branded as cynics and skeptics	Ok with authority that earns their respect
Strategies	Print; conventional mail; face-to-face dialogue or by phone, some online information and interaction	Print; conventional mail; face-to-face dialogue; online tools and resources	Online; some face-to-face meetings (if they're really needed); games; technological interaction	Online; wired; seamlessly connected through technology
Speed	Attainable within reasonable time frame	Available; handy	Immediate; when I need it	Five minutes ago
Frequency	In digestible amounts	As needed	Whenever	Constant

Career Corner

Finding the Right Career

A part of adapting is finding the right career. You're asking, "How will I know if I'm in the wrong career?" Answer: It feels like a job. If you're in a career, you're not counting down the minutes until you get to go home. Instead, you're trying to find more hours in the day to get everything done. Careers are rewarding and meaningful jobs. If you're in a job and not a career, then it's time you do some adapting and find a new career.[47]

Here are a few tips:

- Research the marketplace. Review the *Labor Department's Occupational Outlook Handbook* (http://www.bls.gov/ooh). This website will let you know what types of careers are in most demand.
- Take assessment tests to identify your talents and positions that match your talents. Try taking the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Strong Interest Inventory, and Campbell Interest & Skill Survey. All of these measures can be found on the Internet.
- Conduct information-gathering interviews.
- Find an internship or enroll in a specific class if you don't have the skills or experiences needed.
- Adapt your resume to highlight skills and experiences that are most relevant to your desired new line of work.
- Seek out a professional career coach.

Additional tips

Using a search engine, enter the following search terms into your engine:

- How to identify industries that are hiring
- How to quit a job
- How to find a career coach
- How to find recruiters in your niche

5.4.2: Strategies for Adapting

The International Association of Business Communicators conducted a survey of thirteen hundred of its members regarding generation Y and how to adapt to this new generation of employees.[48] Three key findings suggest that 64% of those surveyed do not have a clear understanding of the communication preferences and perspectives of generation Y; 75% reported that current communication methods were ineffective with young professionals; 90% indicated that their own, or their client's, organization will be at risk if they fail to significantly adapt their communication methods and technology. Because of these concerns, researchers have identified a number of important ways that people can adapt messages to members of generation Y. Here are a few of the recommended strategies:[49]

- **BE DIRECT AND STRAIGHTFORWARD.** They need to know what is expected of them and be told what to do. Younger employees thrive under deadlines and like task-oriented projects.
- **MAKE THEM ACCOUNTABLE BY DELEGATING TASKS.** The accountability that comes from being given and then completing a project is extremely rewarding and is a good way to foster self-esteem and professional confidence.
- **KEEP CONVERSATION CASUAL.** Conducting casual conversations at a coffee shop is a great way to engage Gen Y'ers and make them feel like part of the team.
- **TELL THEM WHY.** As much as the younger generation wants to be directed, they also want to know why they are being told to do what they are being told to do. They want to know why certain decisions were made and why particular rules were established. Gen Y'ers don't bow to authority just for authority's sake. They need to know who's making the rules, how they got into the rule-making position and the principles behind the rules being established.
- **ASK THEIR OPINION.** Open communication is critical. Leaders who ask for their ideas or opinions, and listen to their suggestions for how to improve the organization, will gain their respect.
- **STRUCTURE THEIR WORK AND MEETINGS.** Agendas are very beneficial if meetings are to be productive. Providing agendas prior to meetings, and not just as the meetings start, will help them come prepared to produce and feel secure about their presence in the group.

Because of changing demographics, it's very likely that you may be leading others who are older than you and from the boomer generation.[50] Although you always want to be careful with broad generalizations, researchers who study the boomer generation consistently agree that members of this generation tend to be competent, caring, and honest leaders.[51] In addition, boomers are known for their strong work ethic and loyalty to organizations.[52] If you find yourself leading older employees, then you may want to consider the following adaptation strategies:

- **COMMUNICATE WITH OLDER EMPLOYEES IN A FACE-TO-FACE MANNER OR AT LEAST OVER THE TELEPHONE RATHER THAN USING EMAIL OR TEXT-MESSAGING.** For example, when providing older employees with performance feedback, they expect a more formal, face-to-face meeting that is conducted in an office rather than through email.
- **MONITOR USE OF SLANG AND TECH TALK.** For example, words like *cool, you guys, like, dude, awesome, right on*, or *man* are commonplace in the vocabulary of younger employees. Other examples of slang that older employees may not understand include *drill down, friend me, avatar*, and *second life*.
- **AVOID STEREOTYPING.** Not all older employees are inflexible, tired, or too old to change. The reality is that they can change if you involve them in the change and engage their experience to help you and your team move forward.
- **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OLDER EMPLOYEES' KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES.** A number of organizations worry about knowledge vulnerability with the large number of baby boomers preparing to leave the workplace.[53] Losing your knowledge base can weaken some organizations and put a strain on leadership. More supervision is usually required, and this becomes problematic as organizations are downsizing. Take advantage of the knowledge that the more mature worker brings to the organization or work team. Older employees, because of their age, have more life experience, and the knowledge generated from these experiences can be invaluable to a new leader.

Summary: Adapting to Differences

5.1: Examine how an awareness of the three basic personality traits is required for effective communication.

Your social style is a combination of two primary dimensions: assertiveness and responsiveness. Assertiveness is the capacity to make requests, whereas responsiveness is the capacity to be sensitive to the communication of others.

The four different social styles are expressive, amiable, driver, and analytical.

It is also important to identify others' social styles to more effectively communicate with them.

Style-flexing skills are strategies for adapting your social style to others' social styles to ensure productive communication.

5.2: Explain why understanding and adapting to cultural diversity is important for effective communication.

Researchers have identified five dimensions of cultural values, including high- and low-context cultures, individual and collectivistic cultures, high- and low-uncertainty avoidance, masculine and feminine cultures, and decentralized and centralized power cultures.

Strategies for adapting to cultural differences include being patient, asking questions, writing things down and double-checking for clarification, remaining self-reflexive, or evaluating your own communication in these contexts.

5.3: Analyze how being aware of the communication differences between men and women increases leadership effectiveness.

Sex refers to biological characteristics that are present from the time of birth. We use the terms *male* and *female* to describe biological sex. Gender is a cultural construction of what it means to be a man or woman. The terms *masculine* and *feminine* are used most often when referring to gender. To enhance your communication effectiveness, it is best to consider gender rather than sex differences. Not all women prefer a feminine approach to communication, and not all men prefer a masculine approach.

At work, we often converse ritualistically, rather than literally. These rituals, such as masculine ritual opposition and feminine ritual apology, are often interpreted literally, leading to communication problems.

Adapting to gender differences in communication involves becoming aware of these differences, and monitoring your own communication to ensure you haven't incorrectly interpreted a message. In addition, it is beneficial to use more of the opposite gender's style in your own communication at work.

5.4: Describe strategies to overcome generational differences in communication.

Generation Y is the newest generation entering the job market. Gen Y'ers are different from previous generations in their need for information, their style and preferences for communicating at work, and their ability to multitask.

Adapting to these generational differences involves providing structure, communicating directly and authentically, and maintaining a casual tone. For example, structure Millennials' work by providing them with clear expectations of work to be completed along with deadlines, and how their work will be evaluated. Rather than communicating to them in a formal manner, this generation is more receptive to informal but polite and appropriate communication. Rather than a memo, a quick text would probably suffice.

SHARED WRITING: STYLE FLEXING

To become more aware of how others perceive you, we encourage you to complete Rating Scale 5.1 again. This time, however, ask a classmate or someone you work with to use the measure to evaluate you. This way, you can become more aware of how others perceive your social style and you can compare those perceptions with your own self-perception. This information will also help you better understand why others communicate with you in a particular manner.

▶ A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post   0 characters | 140 minimum

Chapter 5 Quiz: Adapting to Differences

Chapter 6

Relating to Others at Work

dieste

provoke action.

Learning Objectives

6.1 Review the four different types of work relationships

6.2a Define relational conflict

6.2b Describe ways of managing relational conflict

6.3 Discuss negotiation strategies and solutions at work

6.4 Interpret the different styles of conflict

6.5 Report the different ways of managing conflict in the workplace

Tony Dieste is the Chairman of Dieste, Inc., the largest multicultural agency in the United States. The company is well known for developing creative solutions and a unique multicultural approach for growing its clients' businesses. As an innovator in the field of marketing and the most awarded agency in its class, Dieste is a three-time Ad Age Multicultural Agency of the Year winner. The agency's work spans from business consulting and product innovation to mobile/social communications, e-commerce, and brand development. Dieste's clients include Procter & Gamble, AT&T, Hershey's, Duracell, Goya Foods, and many others.[1]

Tony, who was born and raised in Mexico, learned how to lead from his father. He describes himself as a "manically creative and work obsessed person who hires other manically creative and work obsessed people." When asked about leading others, Tony stated the following:[2]

> Over the years I've hired extremely competent employees and treated them with as much respect and attention as I gave clients and prospective clients, maybe even more.

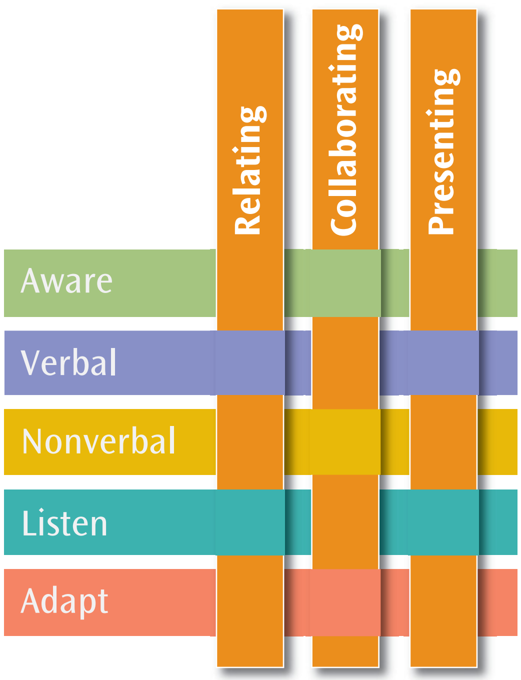
I've always provided an environment and managed in a style that allows people to take creative risks and enable their "inner child" to become unleashed. This is when you get the best work. Anyone who's been in the creative businesses knows that the best work comes from company cultures that have clearly defined values, are having fun, respect one another, but get crazy and a little goofy at times. I don't take myself too seriously, focus on the work, not position or titles, and always communicate both in person and via email on a very regular basis. I consider myself to be a highly adaptive leader that focuses on developing others.

Leading Questions

1. How well does your supervisor relate to others at work? What does your manager do to develop relationships with others? What advice could Tony Dieste give to your boss?
2. How well do you relate to others at work? How would you describe the relationships you have with those above and below you? What have you learned from Tony Dieste about relating to others?
3. How well do you think Tony Dieste manages conflict at work? Do you think he is receptive to conflict or do you think he avoids conflict? Why?

The purpose of this chapter is to help you relate to others in a professional manner by helping you relate to different types of leaders. Relating to others requires using the five communication principles for leadership illustrated in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1: Communication Principles and Skills for Leadership



6.1: Relating to Your Manager

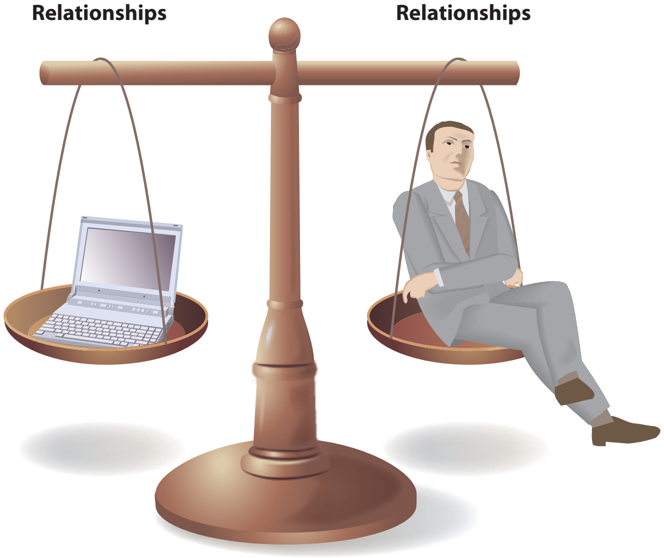
6.1 Review the four different types of work relationships.

A person's ability to lead depends on his or her ability to develop and maintain constructive relationships. A *relationship* is an ongoing connection made with another person through interpersonal communication. Have you ever worked for someone who took a genuine interest in you, listened to your needs, gave you work assignments that showcased your strengths, and recognized your efforts when you met performance goals? Chances are you have also worked for a supervisor who was only interested in getting the job done. Although this person may have said he or she was genuinely interested in you as a person, he or she rarely listened to your needs, had a tendency to take credit for the work you and your team members completed, and assigned more work rather than taking time to recognize you for what you had just accomplished. The two leaders reflect opposite ends of the person-task continuum of workplace relationships. The first leader described is a *person-focused leader*: someone who understands the importance and value of getting to know people on a personal level. For this type of leader, the person takes priority over the work. When a leader gets to know an employee, the employee is more likely to be motivated to do the work and do it well. The second leader described is a *task-focused leader*: someone who believes that work takes priority over the person, who might be overheard saying "Who's got time to get to know the employees on a personal level? There's too much work to get done in a short amount of time." In reality, most leaders know that the workplace requires leaders who can balance both the personal and task dimensions of the workplace. Figure 6.2 illustrates this relationship continuum.

At the left end of the continuum is the task dimension. At the right end of the continuum is the person dimension. Effective leaders develop workplace relationships that balance both of these extremes. Leaders know that if they are too task oriented, they forget about the person doing the work. If leaders are too person oriented, they forget about the work that needs to get completed. Effective leaders have learned how to manage both the task and the person dimensions of workplace relationships—that is, they operate in the middle zone of the continuum.[3]

One of the more important relationships that you have at work is the one you have with your manager or supervisor. The ability to relate to your manager is a major factor in determining your success at work.[4] Research suggests that your performance and job satisfaction improve as you communicate more effectively with

Figure 6.2: Workplace Relationship Continuum



your manager.[5] Because of the power difference between you and your manager, the relationship usually begins with a task focus. As your relationship develops, it usually becomes more balanced, focusing equally on task and the person. Unfortunately, some managers and employees lack the relational communication skills needed, and this limitation has a negative effect on employees' job performance and satisfaction. This communication skill deficiency prevents relational development, and the relationship remains unbalanced—more task focused, less person focused.

To ensure that your relationship with your supervisor is balanced, it's important to develop skill in the use of *upward communication*, which is the communication that flows from employees to managers. Managers who are receptive to their employees' upward communication have employees who are more productive, motivated, satisfied with their work, and likely to adopt change and to perceive their manager to be more open and approachable.[6]

"Managing up" is a communication concept that continues to receive attention in the academic literature and the popular press.[7] Managing up occurs when subordinates first identify their managers' goals, strengths and weaknesses, and preferred working style and then adapt their communication to meet the needs of their managers. For example, if your manager has a tendency to conduct disorganized meetings, you may be able to manage up by asking if you can help plan meetings. If your manager agrees, you might recommend some strategies that would ensure a productive meeting, such as seeking input from others as to what should be discussed at the meeting and developing an outline or an agenda that will help your manager process the meeting.

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Develop a Diverse Relationship Network[8]

It's been said that *everything* happens because of the relationships we have with others. Stephen I. Sadove, chairman and chief executive of Saks, Inc., believes that our professional development depends not only on our ability to develop relationships with others but to help others develop important relationships. With new leaders, he stresses the importance of differentiating oneself from others. One way to do this is to develop relationships with others outside your chain of command. Sadove notes,

> I use opportunities to get involved and develop relationships with a diverse set of people, as opposed to the narrow group of people I was dealing with day-to-day, and that made a huge difference. It shaped my philosophy in terms of the importance of relationship-building. It really underlies my entire philosophy of how to run a business.

Sadove also brings social value to the organization—in other words, who and what he knows as a result of having a diverse network of relationships.

Equally important to Sadove is helping others develop relationships. Relationship building is particularly important in the luxury retail business, such as Saks. Customers are willing to pay luxury prices for services, which ultimately means a three-way relationship among the sales associate, client, and merchandise. Not only is the sales associate and client relationship important, but also the relationship that the sales associate develops between the client and the merchandise.

You may not yet have a philosophy of how to run a business, as Sadove does; but if your life philosophy is based upon developing quality interpersonal relationships with a diverse group of people, you will be well on your way to developing a network of friends and colleagues who can help you achieve your goals and with whom you can return the favor. We develop relationships with others not just so that we can get what we want out of life, but also so that we can enjoy the fellowship and friendship of others.

Unfortunately, not all managers are receptive to upward communication. Here are five guidelines that have been shown to reduce manager resistance: Upward messages should be positive, timely, supportive of current policy, and sent directly to the person who can act on them; they should also have intuitive appeal (that is, they should make sense).[9] Although it is easier to communicate successes than failures, unfortunately, part of the relationship that you have with your manager is to communicate failures and negative information. Thad Green and Jay Knippen, management professors and consultants, have outlined eight communication procedures for communicating negative information or failures upward to a boss:[10]

1. Introduce the problem.
2. Provide background information.
3. Tell about the failure.
4. Discuss resolving the failure.
5. Acknowledge responsibility.
6. Note positive results of the failure.
7. Summarize key points.
8. Thank the manager.

According to Green and Knippen, these eight steps will help ensure that the negative communication flows upward and will help enrich the relationship that you have with your manager.

6.2: Relating to Your Coworkers

6.2a Define relational conflict.

6.2b Describe ways of managing relational conflict.

Developing quality relationships with your coworkers is important for several reasons.[11] First, you spend more time on the job with your coworkers than you do at home with your loved ones.[12] According to a Harris Interactive poll, the 9-to-5 workday is becoming a thing of the past. Americans are spending more time working than they did 30 years ago. Juliet Schor, who wrote *The Overworked American*, concluded that in 1990 Americans worked an average of nearly one month more per year than in 1970.[13] According to a recent Bureau of Labor Statistics report, more than 25 million Americans—20.5% of the total workforce—reported they worked at least 49 hours a week in 1999. Eleven million of those said they worked more than 59 hours a week.[14] Although not a substitute for our families, quality workplace relationships make our working lives more meaningful. Another reason that quality relationships with coworkers are important is that your coworkers are instrumental in showing you the ins and outs of a new job—your coworkers teach you how to survive in the organization and provide you with information you need to do your job well. Finally, quality coworker relationships are positively related to job satisfaction, job productivity, and job involvement, and they are negatively related to employee turnover.[15] In other words, having colleagues who are also your friends keeps you from quitting.

Because coworkers usually have equal power (meaning that they don't have any authority over each other), their relationships tend to be more person focused than task focused. This equality in power promotes *horizontal communication*, which is the communication that occurs between peers working at the same level within an organization.[16] One important aspect of the horizontal communication that occurs between coworkers is their use of the grapevine, or the informal network for workplace information. Coworkers use the grapevine to send and receive information about such news items as who got fired and hired, what is happening in the various units within an organization, and what job openings are available that would advance their careers.[17] Research suggests that information from the grapevine is valued almost as much as information from one's direct supervisor.[18] There are reasons why coworkers believe the information they get from the grapevine or other coworkers. Management researcher Keith Davis reported that between 75% and 95% of all grapevine information is correct.[19]

Developing quality relationships with your coworkers is an important part of workplace satisfaction.

So what are employees talking about? It's not always about work. In fact, a group of researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire reported that the Millennial generation, or those born between 1982 and 2000, talk a lot about what researchers refer to as "life-talk" or non–work life discussions. Researchers reported that Millennials are concerned about work-life balance, which is not becoming obsessed with work and continuing to have a life outside of work. In fact, Millennials are less likely to tie their personal identity to their work or professional identity. Research suggests that employees use "on-the-job" life-talk conversations to develop closer relationships, to give and get advice, and for entertainment reasons.[20]

At times, life talk turns into workplace romance. According to a survey of a thousand employees, 47% of the employees reported having been involved in a workplace romance, and an additional 19% would welcome the opportunity for an office romance.[21] Because Americans spend on average 48 hours per week on the job, it is not surprising that people find potential partners within their workplace.[22] *Office romances* are the romantic relationships that develop between workers who are employed by the same company.

A Few Recommendations

Although workplace romances are common, they are often perceived as negative.[23] Some organizations even have formal policies regarding workplace dating because of the inherent challenges that such relationships may present to more people than just the dating couple.[24] This may be because individuals who are engaging in workplace romances are not always motivated by love. Some individuals date their bosses, peers, or subordinates to fill ego needs (e.g., excitement, adventure, sexual experience) or for job-related motives (e.g., advancement, money, job security).[25] These are some of the primary issues associated with workplace dating:[26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32]

⊗ What is the rank of each person?

If a superior and a subordinate are dating one another, there could be concerns about each person's real motives (e.g., the superior is demonstrating power over the subordinate, the subordinate is using sex as a means to get a promotion). Other workers could also feel jealous or suspect that the subordinate has an unfair advantage.

⊗ Are individuals working in the same department?

When two workers in the same department date one another, this could make it awkward for the rest of the people in the department. For example, some coworkers may have problems with public displays of affection (e.g., a back rub) from their work associates. Furthermore, it can be tricky to determine when coworkers consider the two people to be separate individuals and when they are considered a united couple.

⊗ What happens if the relationship ends?

When office romances end, this may be problematic for more people than just the two employees who had been in the relationship. Relationships with other coworkers may be affected. The organization may also have to invest additional resources if individuals are transferred or terminated or if there are legal issues associated with the breakup.

6.3: Relating to Those You Lead

6.3 Discuss negotiation strategies and solutions at work.

Many people who work in business and professional settings look forward to the opportunity to lead and manage others. Although some new professionals enter the workforce ready to manage, many do not possess the relational communication skills needed to lead others.[33] In fact, many fail to see management for what it is—a relational communication process. Successful managers understand that work gets done through relationships. Managers who cultivate high-quality and trusting relationships with their employees have satisfied and committed employees who see to it that the manager and employees succeed together.[34] These employees comply with their managers' requests and directions and remain loyal to them.[35] Many of them go above and beyond the call of duty for their manager.

"There's no easy way I can tell you this, so I'm sending you to someone who can."

Because of the power difference that exists between managers and employees, the relationship usually begins with a task focus. Effective managers quickly learn that in order to cultivate nurturing and trusting relationships, they must learn to balance the relationship so that it is equally task focused and person focused.

Effective leaders manage from the middle of the workplace relationship continuum. These managers understand that by taking care of their employees (within reason), they will ensure that the employees take care of them. Managing from the middle of the continuum requires *downward communication*, or the communication that flows from managers to employees. (As noted previously, managers must at the same time remain receptive to upward communication, or the communication that flows upward from their subordinates.)

An important part of how managers relate to those they supervise is how they delegate duties and responsibilities. *Delegation* is a manager's assignment of a specific task or project to an employee.[36] Have you ever had a manager who told you to complete a project but didn't tell you how to do it, give you any additional help, or tell you when the project was due? When this happens, employees can feel dumped on; the manager is being too task focused and not person focused. To manage from the middle of the task-person continuum, managers must learn to delegate carefully by focusing not only on the task but also on the person; and they must understand what the employee needs to complete the project. DRGRAC is an acronym that will help you delegate effectively to others.[37] Table 6.1 presents the DRGRAC method of delegation.

Table 6.1: DRGRAC Method of Delegating

Downward Communication for Delegation	
Desired **R**esults	• Describe the task or project. • Define its purpose and note how it fits into the big picture. • Detail what the end result should look like. • Describe the intended outcomes.
Guidelines	• Describe guidelines for accomplishing the project. • Detail the rules for completing the project (e.g., it must be completed by a particular deadline, with a budget not to exceed a certain amount). • Discuss feasible deadlines for completing the project.
Resources	• Detail resources for completing the project (money, tools, materials, technology, special training). • Identify other personnel who will be involved, if any, and describe their roles.
Accountability	• Detail how the employee will be evaluated. • Establish agreed-on standards of performance and measures of success. • Describe individual responsibilities. • Establish metrics, or measures, for such things as quality (What level of quality is to be achieved? How will it be measured?), time (How will time be measured? Workdays only? Weekends?), and cost (What is over budget? Under budget? What's acceptable?). • Agree on a date to review progress.
Consequences	• Describe the rewards of accomplishing the project with the available resources. • Describe the consequences of not accomplishing the project with the available resources.

In many ways, DRGRAC is a quick summary of five types of downward messages. It covers job instructions, job rationale, policy and procedures, feedback, and motivation. The DRGRAC method of delegation and downward communication focuses equally on the task and the person. In each step, there is obvious attention to the task. Each step also protects the manager-employee relationship because each person in the relationship has a complete understanding of the desired results, guidelines, resources, accountability, and consequences. DRGRAC promotes a mature relationship based on mutual trust and respect.

Recap

Types of Workplace Communication

Relationship Type	Communication Direction	Definition
With Manager	Upward Communication	Communication that flows from subordinates to superiors.
With Coworkers	Horizontal Communication	Communication that occurs between those working at the same level in an organization. This tends to be more person-centered communication.
With Those You Lead	Downward Communication	Communication that flows from superiors to subordinates. This requires a conscious effort to communicate from both a task perspective and a relational perspective.

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6.4: Understanding Conflict Styles

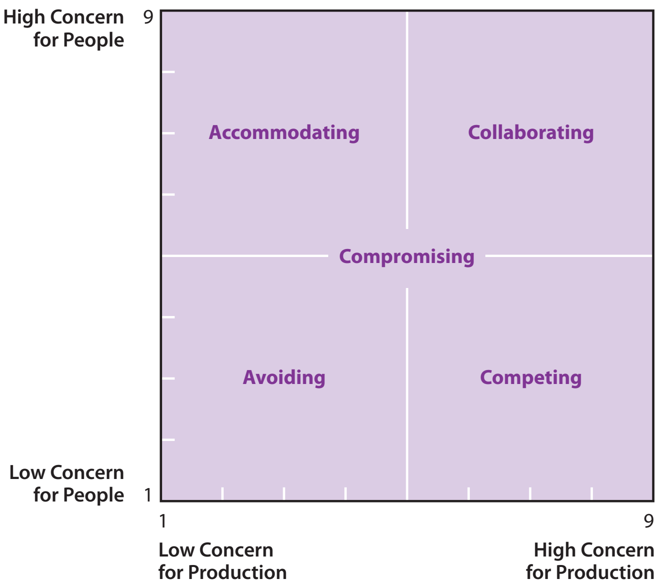
6.4 Interpret the different styles of conflict.

Relational conflict at work is inevitable. Conflict occurs when someone prevents you from reaching your goals. Workplace conflict is so common that you will experience it almost every day of your professional work life. You will experience conflict with your manager, with your colleagues and coworkers, and with those you supervise and lead.

Relational conflict is not uncommon in the workplace. The ability to manage such conflict is one of the most important skills a leader can have.

A useful tool for understanding different people's *conflict styles*, which is the way people are perceived to express and manage conflict, is the managerial grid developed by Ralph Kilmann and Kenneth Thomas.[38] The horizontal axis (the bottom of the grid) reflects your concern for production, or tasks. This dimension focuses on getting the job done. If you have a high concern for task, your focus is on production or output; if you managed a coffeehouse, your concern would be on the total number of cups of coffee or coffee specialty drinks sold in a single day of operation. If you have a low concern for task, you are less concerned about output. See Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3: Kilmann and Thomas's Managerial Grid



The vertical axis (the left of the grid) reflects your concern for people. This dimension focuses on the relationships you have with others, including your boss, coworkers, subordinates, vendors, and customers. If you have a high concern for people, your focus is on meeting their needs rather than meeting your own needs. Again, if you managed a coffeehouse, your concern would be on ensuring that your employees were satisfied with their jobs by trying to meet their scheduling, social, and inclusion needs. You would also be concerned with whether your customers were satisfied with their coffee and the overall experience. If you have a low concern for people, you are less concerned about meeting others' needs and more interested in ensuring that your own needs are met. By rating your own or another person's concern for task and concern for people on a scale from 1 (low) to 9 (high), you can identify people's conflict styles, or the way they probably approach communicating conflict. Five conflict styles have been identified. Which style best describes how you communicate conflict? Becoming aware of your own conflict style will not only help you manage relational conflict more effectively, it will also help you adapt to others' conflict styles.

6.4.1: Avoider

An individual with a low concern for task and a low concern for people is an *avoider*. These individuals manage conflict by steering clear of it; if they do get involved in conflict, they quickly remove themselves from the situation. At other times, they deny that problems even exist. An avoider might manage conflict by stating the following:

- "This is not a problem for me. I don't have a conflict."
- "I need to run. See you later."
- "I'm going to go and let the two of you work this out."

6.4.2: Accommodator

An individual with a low concern for task and a high concern for people is an *accommodator*. These individuals manage conflict by giving in and surrendering. They have a desire to please others and will often ensure that others' needs are met at the expense of their own needs and at the expense of the tasks or the jobs that need to get accomplished. An accommodator might manage conflict by stating the following:

- "Although this is not going to help us get the job done, I agree with you."
- "This is important to you, so let's do it your way."
- "To manage this conflict, I want what you want."

6.4.3: Competitor

An individual with a high concern for task and a low concern for people is a *competitor*. These individuals manage conflict by being assertive and pushing their ideas or solutions to problems on others regardless of what others think, believe, or feel. A competitor might manage conflict by stating the following:

- "This is the way it's going to be; I don't care what you think."
- "To manage this conflict, there is only one solution."
- "I have experience with this issue and you don't. Let's fix it my way."

6.4.4: Collaborator

An individual with a high concern for task and a high concern for people is a *collaborator*. These individuals manage conflict by working with others to solve problems and make decisions. They take into consideration others' opinions and feelings before making any final decisions. A collaborator might manage conflict by stating the following:

- "What do you think we should do to manage this conflict?"
- "Together, let's look at the various issues on the table."
- "This solution has been proposed. Can you support it?"

6.4.5: Compromiser

An individual with a moderate concern for task and a moderate concern for people is a *compromiser*. These individuals manage conflict by being able to give up part of what they want in exchange for the other person's giving up part of what he or she wants in a particular conflict situation. A compromiser may manage conflict by stating the following:

- "I'm willing to give this up if you're willing to give that up."

- "To manage this conflict, I'm willing to meet you halfway."
- "Let's both go back and revise what it is we need and want."

Regardless of your conflict style, there are times when you need to adapt your style because of the situation. Some guidelines on when you might want to adapt your conflict style to fit the situation are given below:[39]

Use an Avoiding Style

- When an issue is trivial, or more important issues are pressing
- When you perceive no chance of satisfying your own concerns
- When potential disruption outweighs the benefits of resolution
- When you need to let people cool down to regain perspective
- When gathering information supersedes making an immediate decision
- When others can resolve the conflict more effectively
- When issues seem tangential or symptomatic of other issues

Use an Accommodating Style

- When you find you are wrong—to allow a better alternative to be presented, to learn, to show your reasonableness
- When the issue is more important to others than it is to you—to satisfy others and maintain cooperation
- When you need to build social credits for later issues
- When you need to minimize the loss when you are outmatched
- When harmony and stability are especially important
- When you need to allow subordinates to develop by learning from mistakes

Use a Competing Style

- When quick, decisive action is vital
- When the conflict is over important issues with unpopular consequences (such as cost cutting, enforcing unpopular rules, discipline)
- When the conflict is over issues vital to company welfare and you know you're right
- When working with people who take advantage of noncompetitive behavior

Use a Collaborating Style

- When both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised so you need to find an integrative solution
- When your objective is to learn
- When your objective is to learn
- When you need to merge insights from people with different perspectives
- When you need to gain commitment by incorporating concerns into a consensus
- When you need to address emotional issues that have interfered with a relationship

Use a Compromising Style

- When goals are important but not worth the effort or potential disruption of more assertive modes
- When opponents with equal power are committed to mutually exclusive goals
- When you need to achieve temporary settlement on complex issues
- When you are under time pressure to arrive at expedient solutions
- When you need a backup when collaboration or competition is unsuccessful

6.5: Managing Conflict at Work

6.5 Report the different ways of managing conflict in the workplace.

Some workplace conflict is trivial, such as conflict arising from a person playing a radio too loud or an employee consistently arriving late to meetings. Other workplace conflicts are quite serious, such as conflict caused when a manager sexually harasses employees or a colleague bullies coworkers. In many ways, workplace conflict is like a disease. If it goes untreated, it becomes contagious and infects others. If the disease is properly diagnosed and treated, relationships can eventually heal. To manage conflict effectively, you will need to develop three sets of communication skills: managing emotions, managing conflict conversations, and managing bullies.

6.5.1: Skills for Managing Emotions

One problem that most people have when trying to manage conflict is controlling their emotions. Most conflicts provoke emotional responses: anger, hurt feelings, frustration, fear, or defensiveness. Of all the emotions that people can feel on the job, frustration and anger are the most commonly experienced emotions.[40] According to Anne Kreamer, who studies and reports on workplace emotions, the main cause of the frustration and anger is coworkers who are not doing their share of the work.[41] So what do you do with your emotions at work? Should you check them at the office door or should you recognize and process them? Kreamer argues that "it's high time we get rational about emotions in the workplace."[42]

SELECT A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE TIME AND PLACE TO DISCUSS THE CONFLICT Let the other person know that you would like to discuss something important and find out when the other person might be available. Make sure this time works for you and your schedule too. If you or the other person is tired, there's a risk of becoming locked in an emotion-charged confrontation. It's best to have a conflict conversation when you're both well rested. Also, make sure you have some privacy for your conversation.

MONITOR THE EMOTIONAL TEMPERATURE Let the other person know that you expect the conversation to be respectful and that if the conversation becomes too emotional, you will call a time-out or postpone the conversation until the emotions have subsided. For example, you might say, "I know we both feel strongly about the decision not to promote Leslie to unit manager, but I hope we can calmly discuss other alternatives for her career development." Verbal messages like this acknowledge feelings but also reinforce expectations for being polite to one another.

BE NONVERBALLY RESPONSIVE TO OTHERS Emotions are conveyed primarily through nonverbal messages. And remember that we don't have as much control over our nonverbal messages as we do our verbal messages; emotions have a tendency to leak out of us in our nonverbal behavior. Many times these leaked cues convey negative emotions. Although it is natural to have a closed body orientation (to cross arms and pull back) during conflict conversations, try remaining nonverbally responsive to the other person. Make appropriate eye contact. Ensure an open body position by facing the person, uncrossing arms and legs, leaning forward, and using appropriate head nods. Nonverbally responsive messages have a tendency to defuse or neutralize negative emotions.

AVOID PERSONAL ATTACKS, NAME-CALLING, PROFANITY, AND GUNNY-SACKING Because conflict situations are usually emotionally charged, it is easy to resort to what conflict researchers refer to as "below-the-belt" fighting.[43] This type of conflict is expressed by attacking the individual and making the conflict personal. Profanity, which is usually not acceptable in the workplace, or a personal attack is usually reciprocated by the other person. This cycle of negative emotional expression needs to be broken if there is to be any hope of managing the conflict constructively. Another way to manage emotions is to avoid engaging in gunny-sacking, or kitchen-sink fighting.[44] Gunny-sacking occurs when a person begins discussing a single conflict situation and then continues to unload or dump on the other person all of the things that have been bothering him or her. Essentially, it's emptying the "gunny-sack" of grievances. This type of conflict management is perceived as unfair by most people and increases negative emotions. To avoid gunny-sacking, limit the scope of your conflict conversation to a single issue rather than multiple issues.

Career Corner

Social Media Specialist

Have You Considered a Career in Social Media?

There is a growing need for social media specialists.[45] A two-minute Google search for social media specialist positions that pay between $30,000 and $49,999 yielded a search including 2,700 positions. Here is a summary of one from Air France.

Build an online relationship with consumers and maintain a continuous dialogue with Air France and KLM fans and followers including use of blogs, Facebook accounts, Twitter accounts, newsletters, as well as the creation and management of social media campaigns. Here are some of the job duties:

- Write daily messages for the Air France and KLM Twitter accounts and maintain a Facebook page.
- Find and manage online events that capture new followers and fans using various social sites such as YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest, Instagram, and other emerging settings.
- Participate in events to film and add multimedia to the local social sites.
- Respond to consumer content on social sites and determine response levels.

Could you do that? With your college degree coupled with courses in communication, you too may be ready to apply for positions that use your communication and social media skills.

6.5.2: Skills for Managing Conflict Conversations

Imagine you're having a problem with your coworker Michael. Rather than talking behind his back, you discuss the problem with Michael directly. But while you're talking, something happens almost without your knowing it: Michael "spins" the conversation so that the problem seems to be about you and not him. It happens quite often, and it can be frustrating. If we're not careful, people can hijack conflict conversations. When this happens, we walk away from the conflict conversation asking ourselves "How did that happen? Why did I let him do that?" In reality, the problem is not just the other person's and it's not just yours. Because you and the other person are interdependent, the problem belongs to both of you.

To keep your conflict conversation on track and work toward a solution acceptable to both individuals, consider structuring your conversation using what we refer to as the PUGSS model of conflict management. Each letter of the PUGSS acronym represents a different part of the conversation:[46]

- P = Describe the *Problem*
- U = Achieve *Understanding*
- G = Identify *Goals*
- S = Brainstorm *Solutions*
- S = Select the best *Solution*

The advantage to using the PUGSS model is that it keeps conflict conversations focused, and it helps people prepare their conflict messages. Here's how the process works.

DESCRIBE THE PROBLEM What is the other person saying or doing that is bothering you? Using "I" language, describe the problematic behavior. "This is what I see you doing. This is what I hear you saying. This is how I'm feeling."

ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING Make sure the other person understands the problem. Simply ask "Do you know why this is a problem?" You might want to ask the person to paraphrase what she or he hears you saying to confirm understanding. If the person doesn't understand, which is common, then continue to describe the problem but in a different way. It is important not to continue to the next step in the conversation until you're confident that the other person understands the problem.

Also, make sure the person doesn't hijack or deflect the conversation and make the problem about you. For example, if you're discussing with an employee the fact that the person is frequently late, the employee may change the subject and mention that you need to be less rigid and more understanding. If this occurs, tell the person that you'd be happy to follow up at another time to hear his or her thoughts about your being rigid and not understanding. Then redirect the conversation back to the employee's tardiness problem. In other words, keep the conversation focused on the employee's behaviors, not on yours. That's a different conversation that should be conducted at another time.

IDENTIFY GOALS Next, let the other person know what you want and need. Find out what the other person wants and needs. Once you have identified individual goals, identify the goals you have in common. Build on your common goals. For example, if you're working with an employee who is constantly late to work, you might mention that the goal you have in common is for this person to remain employed. You might say "I know you want to keep your job, and I want you to keep your job too. Our goal is the same. Now let's work together to reach this goal." People are usually surprised to find out that they have a number of common or similar goals.

BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS Now that the problem and goals have been identified, it's time to find a solution. Ask "What can we do to fix the problem? How can we ensure that both of our goals are met?" Withhold all evaluation and generate as many creative solutions as possible.

SELECT THE BEST SOLUTION Finally, select the best solution. Evaluate each of the brainstormed solutions and compare each to the goals you've identified. If a solution doesn't meet the goals of both people, then it's not the *best* solution. Continue evaluating each solution until you come up with one that meets all the goals identified earlier.

Figure 6.4 reflects how PUGSS might unfold in a real relational conflict in the workplace. This particular conflict, which actually occurred, involves two employees who work in the same office. One of the employees, Marisa, brings her infant daughter to work because she has been unable to arrange child care. The other employee, Rick, is distracted by the child's crying and often ends up doing Marisa's work.

Figure 6.4: The PUGSS Approach to Conflict

Describing the *Problem*

Rick:	Do you have a second? I have a problem and I know that you can help me fix it.
Marisa:	Sure, come in. What's the problem? How can I help?
Rick:	Something has been bothering me.
Marisa:	What is it?
Rick:	I haven't been able to get much work done lately. I begin a project that requires concentration, and then I hear your child crying. The other day she cried from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00. I was feeling very frustrated.
Marisa:	Yes, she was not having a good day. I'm so sorry.
Rick:	I have also had other employees assign me work that is usually given to you. Yesterday, the director of marketing asked me to stuff all of these envelopes, and I don't even report to her. I feel like I'm getting dumped on because others don't want to burden you with additional work. I'm feeling a bit abused by this situation, and I'm frustrated and anxious.

Achieving *Understanding*

Rick:	Do you understand why this is a problem for me?
Marisa:	I think so. Here's what I hear you saying: My child bothers you, and others are dumping my work on you because they perceive me as having too much to do, with my child and everything else.
Rick:	Your child is not the distraction, but her crying is.
Marisa:	I also didn't know that others perceived me as ineffective.
Rick:	I don't think anybody thinks you're ineffective at all—I just think they perceive you as having your hands full with your workload and your child.
Marisa:	I understand. Again, I apologize for this, and I'm glad you brought this problem to my attention. Let's fix it.
Rick:	What do you suggest we do to fix the problem?

Identifying *Goals*

Marisa:	What do you need to get your job done?
Rick:	I need a quiet work environment. I also need others to know that you're available so they stop giving me your work. I don't feel our work is equally distributed. What do you need?
Marisa:	I need to be able to care for my daughter and work at the same time. Being a single working mother is challenging.
Rick:	Well, yes—I can't even imagine how hard it must be.
Marisa:	Well, we both need our jobs and we like working here. . . .
Rick:	Also, we're good friends, and I don't think we want this to damage our friendship.
Marisa:	I agree completely. What do you see as being a workable solution?

Brainstorming *Solutions*

Rick: How about having your parents care for her while you're working?
Marisa: I could see if I could change offices so we wouldn't bother you.
Rick: How about seeing if the company might help you finance day care?
Marisa: How about you change your work schedule and work nights? Is that a possibility?
Rick: Could you get a babysitter with whom you could exchange babysitting services? For example, you sit with the other person's child on the weekends and this person could sit with your child during the week.

Selecting the Best *Solution*

Marisa: Why don't I see if I could change my office so that my daughter and I will be out of your way?
Rick: I think that would meet my need for a quiet workplace; however, I still believe people will perceive you as having your hands full and they will come to me. Is it possible for your parents to care for your child during the day?
Marisa: Well, unfortunately my parents aren't capable of caring for my daughter. They're not comfortable around babies. My mother pops Valium every time we step foot in the house and my dad leaves once my daughter begins to cry.
Rick: What about exchanging babysitting services with a neighbor?
Marisa: That idea might work. . . . My neighbor is a firefighter and he works two 24-hour shifts during the weekend. I could watch his kids all weekend, and I believe he would be willing to watch my daughter during the workday.
Rick: That would meet both of my needs and yours. Do you agree?
Marisa: I do agree. All I want is good childcare for my daughter and to keep my job.

For most people, working through conflict is troublesome and difficult because there's so much uncertainty. We have no idea how the conflict conversation is going to go. This uncertainty produces a lot of anxiety. One of the advantages of using PUGSS to structure your conflict conversations is that it makes managing and resolving conflict like working through a script. To reduce the uncertainty and anxiety, we encourage you to plan your conflict conversations and structure them using the PUGSS model.

There is simply no way to escape relational conflict at work. To manage conflict when it occurs, first ensure that the workplace climate is conducive to managing conflict. Workplace environments that are supportive, trusting, caring, and accepting ensure that relational conflict is managed well. Second, manage your emotions carefully by managing conflict at the appropriate time and place, explaining your expectations for how you will treat each other during the conflict conversation, being nonverbally responsive, and avoiding personal attacks, name-calling, profanity, and gunny-sacking. Third, plan and structure your conflict conversations to ensure that you reach a solution you both can agree on.

Communication Ethics @ Work

How Ethical is Your Boss?

Complete the following 10-item instrument using the following scale.[47]

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Moderately Disagree
3. Slightly Disagree
4. Slightly Agree
5. Moderately Agree
6. Strongly Agree

1. My boss is honest and can be trusted to tell the truth.
2. My boss keeps his/her actions consistent with his/her stated values ("Walks the talk").
3. My boss is fair and unbiased when assigning tasks to members.
4. My boss can be trusted to carry out promises and commitments.
5. My boss insists on doing what is fair and ethical even when it is not easy.
6. My boss acknowledges mistakes and takes responsibility for them.
7. My boss sets an example of dedication and self-sacrifice for the organization.
8. My boss opposes the use of unethical practices to increase performance.
9. My boss is fair and objective when evaluating member performance and providing rewards.
10. My boss puts the needs of others above his/her own self-interest.

Scoring: Sum all 10 items together. Scores can range from 10–60: 10–26 = Low in Ethical Leadership; 27–43 = Moderate in Ethical Leadership, 44–60 = High in Ethical Leadership.

After completing the instrument, consider the following questions:

- Does your boss's level of ethical leadership influence the conflict you experience in your organization? How? Why?
- Do you see a relationship between your boss's level of ethical leadership and his/her conflict style?
- Would you ever consider using the PUGSS model to have a conversation with your boss about his/her behavior?

WRITING PROMPT

How does your boss's level of ethical leadership influence your behaviors and feelings at work?

▶ **The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.**

Submit

6.5.3: Skills for Managing Bullies

Although we're used to hearing about bullies on playgrounds and in high school hallways, we're not used to hearing about them in business and professional contexts. Unfortunately, bullying is becoming more and more of a problem in the workplace. Communication researcher Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik and her colleagues report that 1 in

3 of all workers in the United States have been bullied sometime during their work history. According to Lutgen-Sandvik, *workplace bullying* is an extreme, negative, and persistent form of emotional workplace abuse achieved primarily through verbal and nonverbal communication.[48] Four characteristics differentiate workplace bullying from other forms of employee abuse:

- Bullying communication behaviors are extreme and intense.
- Behaviors persist over long periods and result in negative effects.
- Targets or those bullied believe these communication acts are intentional.
- Targets feel they cannot defend themselves in the situation.[49]

Examples of bullying may include some of the following behaviors organized into the three categories shown in Table 6.2:[50]

Table 6.2: Categories of Bullying

Social and Professional Attacks	Overt Aggression	Isolation
• Used email or other online media to attack your reputation or degrade you • Spread false rumors about your personal life and character • Blamed you for errors for which you were not responsible	• Made intimidating eye contact or physical gestures • Threatened you with physical violence or harm • Engaged in yelling, cursing, angry outbursts	• Intentionally withheld information from you • Flaunted his/her status over you in a condescending manner • Situated your workspace in a physically isolated location

A leader is held responsible for managing these difficult and often challenging situations. There are a number of strategies for managing bullies in the workplace. There are two best practices: talking to the bully and writing a letter to the bully.

⊗ Talk to the Bully

Appropriate when . . .	There are times when the working relationship is constructive. The problems are recent.
Not appropriate when . . .	There have been threats or threatening behavior.
Before the meeting, do the following:	Identify the bullying behaviors. Write down the behaviors in a journal; be specific including time and frequency of events.
At the meeting, do the following:	Use the PUGGS model from above. Clearly describe the behaviors to the bully. Say that these behaviors are unacceptable. Describe the appropriate behaviors. Seek agreement.
Benefits	Issues can be resolved quickly. Relationships can be improved.

⊗ Write a Letter to the Bully

Appropriate when . . .	Talking to the person has not brought about the expected results. A meeting is not possible due to time or location.
Not appropriate when . . .	The person is unprepared to talk about the difficulties directly.
Before writing the letter, do the following:	Identify the behaviors that you want the person to change. Identify alternative, appropriate behaviors.
While writing the letter, do the following:	Clearly describe the negative behaviors. Explain why the behaviors are inappropriate. Describe the appropriate behaviors. Ask the person to acknowledge receipt of the letter.
Avoid the following:	Do not make the letter too long. Avoid making it personal. Address the behaviors. Rather than saying. "You were disrespectful," say, "Your behaviors were . . ."

#Technology and Communication @ Work

The Do's and Don'ts of Using Facebook for Work[51]

Many of today's entrepreneurs are using their Facebook account for work and for pleasure. Because of their careful use of social media, these ambitious leaders are blurring the lines between their private and public lives in a seamless manner. One example of this is Ms. Randy Yezak, an animal science major from Texas A & M University, who uses her Facebook account to sell necklaces, bracelets, earrings, rings, and other accessories under the name "Southern Jewlz," in addition to managing her personal relationships. Her two-year-old business has 8,000 fans on Facebook, and her online sales have doubled in a six-month period.[52]

⊗ Don't have two profiles—one for personal and one for professional use.

If Facebook learns that you have two profiles, they may shut down your account. The lines between personal and professional are blurring. You should be transparent and confident enough to let them blur. Of course there are some photos that you may not want your workplace colleagues to view. Facebook has excellent privacy settings that can be customized so your professional connections are limited in what they can view. Become familiar with these privacy settings.

⊗ Do create a Facebook page for your business.

Profiles are meant for people, whereas pages are meant for business. Because pages were meant for businesses, they have different features that make them more valuable for a business. For example, business pages don't need to "accept" friend requests; they can get "liked" by anyone. Also, business pages come with viewer information so you know if you're reaching your customers and market on Facebook.

⊗ Don't turn off wall posts for your business page.

The point of Facebook is to interact with your customers. Turning off wall posts or comments screams to your customers, "We don't want to hear from you." Be prepared for what customers might post, and be ready to respond in a timely and authentic manner. Every time a user interacts with your page, that interaction gets in front of that user's network, spreading your reach far beyond your existing customer base. Use this unique opportunity carefully.

⊗ Do update your business page on a regular basis.

If you ignore it, your customers are going to ignore it as well. Your Facebook page should be an interactive platform where you and your customers interact regularly. If you update your business page with interesting content, your users are more likely to engage with your page, and their interactions get shown to their networks, expanding your reach exponentially. This virality is what makes Facebook such an incredibly powerful tool for businesses.

Summary: Relating to Others at Work

6.1: Review the four different types of work relationships.

Managing up occurs when subordinates first identify their managers' goals, strengths and weaknesses, and preferred working style and then adapt their communication to meet the needs of their managers.

Five guidelines have been shown to reduce manager resistance: Upward messages should be positive, timely, supportive of current policy, and sent directly to the person who can act on them; they should also have intuitive appeal (that is, they should make sense).

6.2a: Define relational conflict.

6.2b: Describe ways of managing relational conflict.

Horizontal communication is the communication that occurs between peers working at the same level within an organization. Coworkers using the grapevine to send and receive information about such news items as who got fired and hired, what is happening in the various units within an organization, and what job openings are available that would advance their careers exemplify horizontal communication.

6.3: Discuss negotiation strategies and solutions at work.

DRGRAC is a model of delegation. To use this model effectively, leaders need to spend some time preparing the conversation where they will delegate the work to others. For example, it is always helpful if the leader prepares a memo or an email where the following information is detailed and documented. The leader can then refer to the memo or email during the conversation.

DR = Desired Results

- Describe the task or project.
- Detail what the end result should look like.

G = Guidelines

- Describe guidelines for accomplishing the project.
- Discuss feasible deadlines for completing the project.

R = Resources

- Detail resources for completing the project (money, tools, materials, technology, special training).
- Identify other personnel who will be involved, if any, and describe their roles.

A = Accountability

- Detail how the employee will be evaluated.
- Establish metrics, or measures, for such things as quality (What level of quality is to be achieved? How will it be measured?), time (How will time be measured? Workdays only? Weekends?), and cost (What is over budget? Under budget? What's acceptable?).

C = Consequences

- Describe the rewards of accomplishing the project with the available resources.
- Describe the consequences of not accomplishing the project with the available resources.

6.4: Interpret the different styles of conflict.

An individual with a low concern for task and a low concern for people is an avoider. An avoider might manage conflict by stating the following:

- "This is not a problem for me. I don't have a conflict."
- "I need to run. See you later."
- "I'm going to go and let the two of you work this out."

An individual with a low concern for task and a high concern for people is an accommodator. An accommodator might manage conflict by stating the following:

- "Although this is not going to help us get the job done, I agree with you."

- "This is important to you, so let's do it your way."
- "To manage this conflict, I want what you want."

An individual with a high concern for task and a low concern for people is a competitor. A competitor might manage conflict by stating the following:

- "This is the way it's going to be; I don't care what you think."
- "To manage this conflict, there is only one solution."
- "I have experience with this issue and you don't. Let's fix it my way."

An individual with a high concern for task and a high concern for people is a collaborator. A collaborator might manage conflict by stating the following:

- "What do you think we should do to manage this conflict?"
- "Together, let's look at the various issues on the table."
- "This solution has been proposed. Can you support it?"

An individual with a moderate concern for task and a moderate concern for people is a compromiser. A compromiser may manage conflict by stating the following:

- "I'm willing to give this up if you're willing to give that up."
- "To manage this conflict, I'm willing to meet you halfway."
- "Let's both go back and revise what it is we need and want."

6.5: Report the different ways of managing conflict in the workplace.

To manage conflict effectively, consider structuring your conversation using what we refer to as the PUGSS model of conflict management. Each letter of the PUGSS acronym represents a different part of the conversation:

P = Describe the *Problem.* Describe rather than evaluate. Using "I" language, describe the problematic behavior. Avoid "you" language where you evaluate and judge another person.

U = Achieve *Understanding.* Make sure the other person understands the problem. Simply ask "Do you know why this is a problem?" If the person doesn't understand, which is common, then continue to describe the problem but in a different way.

G = Identify *Goals.* Let the other person know what you want and need. Find out what the other person wants and needs. Once you have identified individual goals, identify the goals you have in common.

S = Brainstorm *Solutions.* Ask "What can we do to fix the problem? How can we ensure that both of our goals are met?" Withhold all evaluation and generate as many creative solutions as possible.

S = Select the best *Solution.* Evaluate each of the brainstormed solutions and compare each to the goals you've identified. If a solution doesn't meet the goals of both people, then it's not the *best* solution. Continue evaluating each solution until you come up with one that meets all the goals identified earlier.

SHARED WRITING: CONFLICT STYLES

Review the different types of conflict styles discussed in the chapter and decide what type of conflict style you often use. What makes you think so? What kinds of strategies can you use to be more effective in your conflict conversations? Share your thoughts with a classmate.

A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post

0 characters | 140 minimum

Chapter 6 Quiz: Relating to Others at Work

Chapter 7

Interviewing Principles and Skills

Learning Objectives

7.1 Identify the three basic skills required to prepare for an interview

7.2 Describe the different interview structures, topics, and questions

7.3 Explain the three parts of the interview process

7.4 Identify the basic ethical principles to which both the interviewer and the interviewee need to adhere

CNN journalist and news anchor Anderson Cooper has become known for his unique style of journalism that emerged during Hurricane Katrina in 2005 in New Orleans. His ability to interview the people of New Orleans during and after Katrina allowed him to tell stories that ranged from the horrifying to the heroic. During a guest lecture for Columbia University's Journalism School, he talked to students about what it means to be a reporter.[1] According to Cooper, your job as an interviewer is to ask questions that will allow people to tell their stories. Once they begin telling their stories, you guide them and then get out of the way so the camera can capture the interview.

During his interactive discussion with journalism students, Cooper stressed the importance of authenticity. During the Katrina crisis he was sometimes criticized for telling the story through his lens rather than through the eyes of the people of New Orleans. He noted that when you're on the scene before the relief workers, and people want to use your phone to call a loved one to let them know that they're still alive or to get on your boat because they're tired of swimming, the interviews and the story change. According to Cooper, these were not staged events. The news was unfolding before our eyes; and through the interviews and stories he told, people at home literally watched others survive or perish.

Some media professionals have described Anderson's interviewing style as emotional, which is unusual because most reporters are trained to hide or mask their emotions.[2] Anderson responds to this description by saying, "Yeah, I would prefer not to be emotional and I would prefer not to get upset, but it's hard not to when you're surrounded by brave people who are suffering and in need. The best thing I can do is just be myself and not pretend to be this hard-bitten reporter."[3] According to reporter Jonathan Van Meter, Anderson removed the filter while covering the Katrina disaster. "But it wasn't just his raw emotion that set him apart; there are plenty of hotheads on television, and tearing up became more and more common as the tragedy continued to unfold. It was his honest humanity; he comes off as genuine because he is. He connected to those in the hurricane's path, and to the people watching at home."[4]

Leading Questions

1. How can you become more authentic during the interview process? Do different types of interviews allow you to be more authentic than others?
2. How do you see your emotions enhancing an interview? How can your emotions get in the way and become a distraction?
3. How would you describe your style of interviewing? Does your style change when you're the interviewer versus the interviewee? If so, how?

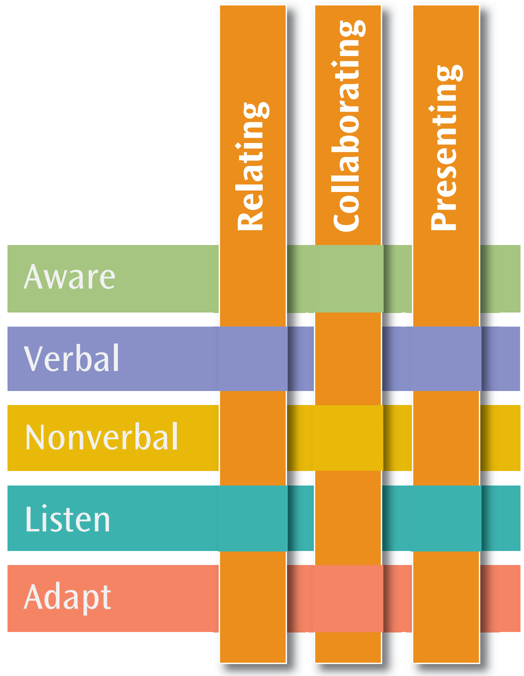
In your professional life you will have an opportunity to be both an interviewer and the interviewee. When looking for a job, you will be the interviewee. When trying to get information for a news story to be published in a local magazine, you will be the interviewer. Many of the principles and skills we discuss in this chapter apply to both the interviewer and the interviewee. There are times, however, when a particular set of skills will be required for a particular role. Consider the following everyday workplace examples of interviewing:

Examples of Interviewing

- Lisa, a department store manager, conducts an appraisal interview with Brian, a wardrobe consultant, about his job performance during the fourth quarter.
- Alexi conducts an information-gathering interview with Sophie, who is a project leader for a prominent software company. Alexi wants to find out more about Sophie's job duties and the skills needed in this profession.
- Nick, a journalist, interviews a church official about an allegation of child abuse between a pastor and a child of one of the parishioners.
- Monique is being interviewed by Celeste, her personal trainer at the gym, to identify her personal fitness goals.

Regardless of the type of interview, the five communication principles for leadership, which are illustrated in Figure 7.1, are important to the interview relationship. Through your use of these five principles, you will be able to interview others effectively as well as be interviewed by others.

Figure 7.1: Communication Principles for Leadership



7.1: Preparing the Interview

7.1 Identify the three basic skills required to prepare for an interview.

An *interview* is a form of oral interaction structured to achieve a goal; it often includes just two people (interviewer and interviewee) but can include more than two people, who take turns speaking and listening. Interviewing is an interpersonal process of asking and answering questions. An effective interview meets three criteria:

- It's *structured*. The interview is a planned conversation that includes an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.
- It's *goal oriented*. The planned conversation has a purpose. The goal of Nick's interview with the mayor was to obtain information. The goal of Lisa's interview with Brian was to review his job performance.
- It's *role directed*. The interview includes two roles: the interviewer and the interviewee. Usually, the primary

role of the interviewer is to lead and facilitate the conversation by asking questions. The primary role of the interviewee is to answer questions. In most informal conversations, the talk time of two individuals is equal. In an interview, the talk time is unequal, with the interviewee usually talking 70 percent of the time and the interviewer talking only 30 percent of the time.[5]

There are several different types of interviews. An *information-gathering interview* is a focused, structured conversation where the goal is to seek out important information from another person. The goal of the structured conversation in a *job interview* is to assess the qualifications and skills of a person for employment. An *appraisal interview* is a conversation in which a supervisor or employer shares information with an employee about his or her job performance. If your goal is to sell a product or service, then you want to conduct a *persuasive interview*, which is a structured conversation intended to influence a person's attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors. For example, if you're selling wireless telephone services, you would want to ask the potential customer a series of questions to identify his or her needs and then demonstrate how your wireless phone services meet these needs.

Unlike an ordinary conversation between two people, an interview is a planned conversation that requires preparation, which is the first stage of interviewing. Preparing an interview involves three skills: identifying the interview goal, identifying the appropriate person, and arranging the interview.

7.1.1: Identify the Interview Goal

Whether you're the interviewer or the interviewee, the interview has a goal. In fact, it has primary and secondary goals. The primary goals are obvious. If you're conducting an information-gathering interview, your goal is to obtain information. If you're interviewing for a job, your goal is to get the job. The secondary goals, which fall into two types—task goals and relational goals—are the same regardless of the interview type and whether you're the interviewer or interviewee. Task goals include asking and answering questions in a clear, concise, and thoughtful manner to acquire and convey appropriate information. Relational goals include using interpersonal skills so as to be perceived as interpersonally attractive and believable. Achieving the secondary task and relational goals allows you to reach your primary goal.

For example, if you're going for an employment interview, your primary goal is to get the job. Your secondary goal is to answer all of the interviewer's questions in a clear and concise manner that reveals how your educational background, job skills, and employment experiences meet the needs of the organization. Another task goal is to ask thoughtful questions of the interviewer that reveal your knowledge of the organization and your understanding of the organization's needs. Your relational goal is to demonstrate your interpersonal skills, such as your ability to listen carefully, self-disclose appropriately, and resolve conflict constructively while also appearing open and approachable.

7.1.2: Identify the Appropriate Person

Much time is wasted when you interview the wrong person or when the wrong person interviews you. It's important to spend time in the preparation stage of the interview process identifying the appropriate person for the interview. Who will allow you to reach your interview goal? If you're preparing to conduct an information-gathering interview, then you need to know who has the information you need. If you're looking for a job, then you need to make sure you interview with the person who makes hiring decisions. If you're conducting a persuasive interview and trying to sell a potential client on a new product, you need to make sure you interview the person in an organization who is approved to make such decisions. Here are a few suggestions for identifying the appropriate person for an interview:

CONSULT PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORIES Most organizations have a professional association and a directory of names and contact information that can help you identify the appropriate person. If you're interested in careers in training and development and want to conduct an information interview with a training and development practitioner, you might locate a practitioner through the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD), the professional association for men and women who work in the training and development business. You could consult the ASTD membership directory at http://www.astd.org/ASTD.

USE ORGANIZATIONAL WEBSITES The Internet makes it much easier to locate appropriate individuals. If you're a sales rep for a pharmaceutical company and you need to identify a specific physician at a local hospital with whom to conduct a persuasive interview, you can use the Internet to find the hospital, the appropriate physician, and additional biographical information about the physician that will help you conduct a more effective persuasive interview.

USE PERSONAL CONTACTS, ACQUAINTANCES, AND NETWORKS Most people undervalue their personal networks—they don't think of them when they want to locate the appropriate person for an interview. It's important that you use both your primary and secondary networks. Your primary network is made up of your family and friends. Your secondary network includes your friends' friends. Your family members and your friends can connect you to their own personal and professional networks. This type of networking increases your chances of identifying the appropriate person for an interview.

USE YOUR INSTRUCTORS Another great way to locate the appropriate person is to ask your instructors. College and university instructors and professors are experts in their fields and have a number of important personal and professional contacts. Your instructors may be able to refer you to the appropriate person.

CALL THE ORGANIZATION DIRECTLY You can always contact the organization or office where you believe the appropriate person works and ask the receptionist for his or her assistance: "Can you put me in touch with the person who would be able to. . . ."

7.1.3: Arrange the Interview

If you're the interviewer, you need to arrange the interview, which includes arranging the time, location, and setting.

SCHEDULE TIME Before beginning the interview, have an idea of how much time will be needed to reach the interview goal and then let the person you will be interviewing know how much time will be needed. It's important to structure and conduct the interview so as to honor this time commitment. It's also important to ensure that the interview time fits into the rhythm of the interviewee's workday. For example, if you're conducting an information-gathering interview with a restaurant manager to assess the manager's needs, it's probably best to schedule the interview after the breakfast rush or during the mid-afternoon lull to avoid the lunch and dinner rush.

IDENTIFY LOCATION Finding the appropriate location is another aspect of arranging an interview. Because effective interviewing requires an intense period of listening, it's important to find a location with as few distractions as possible. If you are conducting a performance appraisal interview or a health interview, you will want a location that ensures privacy because such interviews can include conversations about sensitive and private information. If interviewees don't feel that their conversations are private, they may not divulge important and necessary information, thus preventing interviewers from reaching their goals.

ARRANGE PHYSICAL SETTING How the furniture is arranged for an interview communicates how the interview is going to take place. When interviewers sit behind their desks, they communicate power, status, and formality. When interviewers sit face-to-face with interviewees at a small table, they communicate equality, accessibility, and informality. The physical arrangement influences the tone of the interview. Some airport lounges have lavish conference rooms that may at first glance seem quite appropriate for interviews. But closer inspection reveals that these ornate and formal rooms are cold and impersonal. The long and wide conference table puts a physical barrier between interviewer and interviewee. To remedy this physical barrier, the interviewer and interviewee may decide to sit side by side. However, this physical arrangement makes it difficult to see each other. Setting up the room ahead of time while keeping in mind how the physical arrangement will influence the interview is an important aspect of arranging an interview.

#Technology and Communication @ Work

The Virtual Interview

If you are planning on venturing into the job market soon, be prepared for the possibility that you will have to make a good first impression—in front of your laptop or iPad. Companies looking to cut expenses are streamlining their budgets, and that often means a big cut in funds for travel.[6] Skype and Facetime allow for simultaneously two-way interaction, whereas a new one-way interviewing recording platform provided by HireVue in Draper, Utah, allows candidates to record their answers to questions, thus creating a movie file that is eventually distributed to committee members to review at their leisure.[7]

To prepare yourself for these new types of virtual interviewing processes, we recommend the following:

If You're an Interviewer

- **KNOW THE TECHNOLOGY.** The first step to implementing video interviews successfully is to install and practice with the technology. Know how to troubleshoot problems, and become comfortable with the software and setting.
- **CONSIDER TIME ZONES.** When scheduling interviews, be aware of time zone differences. Because Skype interviews can save companies money on travel, it is common for these interviews to take place between faraway locations. It may be noon where you are, but your interviewee had to roll out of bed at 4:00 a.m. to talk with you. Keep that in mind.
- **CONSIDER RECORDING.** You may want to record Skype interviews for further review. Skype provides the recruiter with the option of reviewing an interview again to further vet a candidate or compare a few top candidates. It's always important to ask the candidate for permission if you're recording the interview.

If You Are an Interviewee

- **PRACTICE USING THE TECHNOLOGY.** Practice with the webcam; make sure the microphone works. Don't wait until the interview is scheduled to discover there is something wrong with the technology.
- **MAINTAIN TYPICAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.** Although you do not have to show up to the interview in person, typical interview

protocol still applies. Presenting a professional appearance and with any prepared notes/resume in hand provides a good start for an interview.

- **PAY ATTENTION TO AESTHETICS.** Both the interviewer and interviewee need to consider the setup of the shot. Bright lights or windows behind the speaker make them look black or shadowed. Positioning the webcam too close or too low could provide an uncomfortable view. Show your head and shoulders in the shot, sit slightly off to one side, and light your face from the front.
- **USE EYE CONTACT.** We have a tendency to want to look down at the person on the computer screen when answering questions; however, for the person watching, that view often reveals the top of the head. However, webcams do provide us the opportunity to simulate eye contact. Looking directly into the camera while answering questions will allow you to make "eye contact" with the interviewer, because it will appear you are looking straight at them.

7.2: Structuring the Interview

7.2 Describe the different interview structures, topics, and questions.

The second stage of interviewing, structuring the interview, is the responsibility of the interviewer, not the interviewee. Structuring the interview includes identifying interview topics and writing and sequencing interview questions.

7.2.1: Identify Interview Topics

An *interview topic* is a standard theme explored with a particular category of questions that are asked during the interview. Each type of interview has a standard set of topics; for each topic, there is a set of questions. For example, when news reporters and journalists conduct information-gathering interviews, they usually structure their interview questions around the five "W" questions: Who, What, Where, When, and Why. For instance, with the "Who" interview topic, an interviewer might ask "Who was involved?" "Who are they?" "Who do they belong to?" "Who do they want to influence?"

When conducting a job interview with a job applicant, the interviewer usually develops and arranges questions by employment-related topics: education, job skills, prior work experience, career path, and career goals. For each of these interview topics there is a set of specific questions that relate to the topic. For example, when focusing on the topic of education, the interviewer might ask interviewees questions about where they went to school, their degree programs, and their major fields of study. Interviewees, too, have a set of questions to ask the interviewer that are structured and arranged to cover such interview topics as job requirements, manager expectations, advancement opportunities, and salary and benefits. Such questions help interviewees reach their own interview goal: to appear competent, articulate, and ambitious. For example, an interviewee who asks an interviewer about the opportunities that new employees have for advancement within the organization reveals his or her level of motivation and ambition.

Interviewers must understand the structure of the interview they're conducting and identify topics and questions appropriate for that structure.

When managers conduct appraisal interviews, they usually structure and arrange questions by the following interview topics: employee's self-appraisal, performance gaps, causes of performance gaps, and ways to reduce performance gaps. The manager may begin by asking a set of questions that tap into the topic of the employee's self-appraisal, such as "Tell me how you think you're doing in your new position" and "Do you consider yourself to be reaching your performance goals?" Answers to these questions allow the manager to gauge the questions to ask when exploring the other interview topics. If an employee says that she's reaching her performance goals in her new position, the interviewer might use this response to explore a new line of questioning focusing on teamwork. For example, the interviewer might ask "What role did the team play in helping you reach your performance goals?"

Whether you're structuring an information-gathering interview, job interview, appraisal interview, or persuasive interview, you begin the structuring process by identifying interview topics that will allow you to reach your interview goal. Once you have identified the interview topics, it's time to begin writing the interview questions that will allow you to obtain the information you need about each of the identified topics.

Career Corner

Making Your Interviewing Skills Work for You

If you like to interview others, you may want to consider a career in workforce planning and employment. The typical entry-level positions are often called interviewer or recruiter, and these positions are usually found in departments of human resources in large organizations. Recruiters are responsible for helping organizations find skilled individuals to fill needed positions within an organization. The work includes implementing the organization's recruiting strategy, interviewing applicants, administering pre-employment tests, assisting with conducting background investigations, and processing transfers, promotions, and terminations.

Other examples of job titles include headhunter, search firm specialist, talent manager, recruitment and retention specialist, or staffing manager. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), there is a growing need for professionals who like to assess employment needs and identify the gaps and then recruit professionals to fill the gap.[8]

For more information, contact the Society for Human Resource Management at www.shrm.org and put your interviewing skills to work for you.

7.2.2: Write Interview Questions

Writing effective interview questions is another communication skill that interviewers are responsible for when structuring an interview. We examine four major categories of interview questions: open questions, closed questions, probing questions, and hypothetical questions.

OPEN QUESTIONS An *open question* is broad and unstructured and allows the respondent considerable freedom to determine the amount and kind of information she or he will provide. Most open questions are either questions of value, questions of process, or questions of policy. *Questions of value* ask respondents to discuss what they consider to be important. *Questions of process* ask respondents to talk about how they might do something. *Questions of policy* ask respondents to talk about what they might change or propose. For example, suppose you're conducting an information-gathering interview with the new president of the university for an article to appear in the school newspaper. Here are some open questions you might use in this type of interview:

Open Questions: Information-Gathering Interview

The italicized word in each of these questions is a clue to the question type. Questions of value usually include a word that gets at the worth of something (such as *excellent*). Answers to value questions usually reveal what a respondent considers to be important or the respondent's priorities. Questions of process usually begin with *How*, which encourages the respondent to discuss a series of actions. Answers to process questions usually reveal the steps a respondent would take to accomplish a particular goal. Questions of policy usually include the word *should*. Answers to policy questions can reveal the actions the respondent wants to take in the future or changes the respondent would like to make. Here are some questions that tap into values, processes, and policies and that might be asked of an applicant in a job interview:

Open Questions: Job Interviews

Because open questions encourage an interviewee to share information almost without restriction, they are useful in determining opinions, values, and perspectives. Open questions are most appropriate in less structured interviews when time is not limited.

CLOSED QUESTIONS A *closed question* is one that limits the range of possible responses and requires a simple, direct, and brief answer. Consider a personal trainer at a gym who is talking to someone considering purchasing a gym membership. The trainer conducts an informal persuasive interview to help the potential customer identify his needs and goals and to convince him that the gym can meet those goals. The trainer might ask a number of closed questions:

- What is your weight?
- How many complete meals do you eat daily?
- How many times per week do you exercise?

All of these questions can be answered with direct and brief responses. Some closed questions allow you to select from a range of responses:

How would you classify your physical condition?

a. Very good
b. Good

c. Average
d. Poor
e. Very poor

Closed questions enable an interviewer to gather specific information because they restrict interviewees' freedom to express personal views or elaborate on responses. They also allow an interviewer to ask a greater number of questions in a limited amount of time. Closed questions are most appropriate in structured interviews.

PROBING QUESTIONS A *probing question* encourages the interviewee to clarify or elaborate on partial or superficial responses and usually guides the discussion in a particular direction. The use of probing questions is one way to tell an experienced interviewer from a novice. The novice interviewer sticks to scripted questions and doesn't deviate from the script regardless of the interviewee's response to a question. The experienced interviewer, however, carefully listens for ways to deviate from the scripted questions to get additional relevant and precise information from an interviewee. The following paragraphs describe four of the more popular types of probes and ways to use them.[9]

A *nudging probe* encourages the respondent to continue responding to a question; it nudges the person. Interviewers use the nudging probe when they feel an interviewee's response is incomplete. The nudging probe is usually a single word or a very short phrase, such as:

- Go ahead. . . .
- Please continue.
- And then . . . ?
- So . . . ?

A *clearinghouse probe* is used when interviewers want to make sure they have exhausted the questioning on a particular topic. Because interviewers sometimes don't ask important questions, clearinghouse probes encourage interviewees to volunteer information that may provide a more complete answer to an asked or unasked question. Following are examples of clearinghouse probes:

- Is there anything else that you would like to add about this issue?
- Is there anything that we have not covered that you consider important?
- What question have I not asked that you want to answer?

An *informational probe* is used when an interviewer wants the interviewee to elaborate on a response to clarify a point. For example:

- To clarify, can you tell me more about that concern?
- What do you mean when you say . . . ?
- How did you respond to that situation?

A *reflective probe* is used when an interviewer wants to ensure that he or she understands the interviewee's response to a question or a series of questions. Reflective probes are a way to resolve uncertainty. Here are a few examples:

- Are you saying that . . . ?
- This is what I hear you saying.
- You think, then, that in this situation you would. . . .
- Am I correct in assuming that you believe that . . . ?

HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS A *hypothetical question* is one that asks for an interviewee's reaction to an imaginary emotion-arousing or value-laden situation to gauge the person's likely reaction in a real situation. For example, Gerri is a member of the human resources team at a large publishing company. She is interviewing people to assess the workplace environment. During her information-gathering interview with Chance, an employee in the information technology department, she asks the following questions:

- Would you want your son or daughter to work for this company? Why or why not?
- If you were the president of this company, what five changes would you make immediately and why?

Hypothetical questions are also used during job interviews to find out how potential new employees might respond to unique circumstances. For example:

- You believe one of your coworkers is stealing from the company, but you're not certain. What would you do?
- Your coworkers continue to look at pornography on the Internet after you've told them that this makes you uncomfortable. If you discuss the problem with your manager, you know that your coworkers will make things uncomfortable for you. How would you handle this situation?

Recap

Writing Interview Questions

Sample Questions	Definition	Question Type
• What are you looking for in a company? • How do you lead others? • How should managers motivate employees?	A question that is broad and unstructured and allows the respondent considerable freedom to determine the amount and kind of information she or he will provide	Open
• Are you willing to relocate? • How many times have you missed work? • How many meals do you eat daily?	A question that limits the range of possible responses and requires a simple, direct, and brief answer	Closed

• Tell me more about your concern. • What do you mean when you say…? • And then what happened?	A question that encourages the interviewee to clarify or elaborate on partial or superficial responses and that usually directs the discussion in a particular direction	Probing
• You believe that one of your coworkers is stealing from the company, but you're not certain. What would you do? • If you were to become the manager of this unit, what five changes would you make and why?	A question that asks for an interviewee's reaction to an imaginary emotion-arousing or value-laden situation to gauge the person's likely reactions in a real situation	Hypothetical

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7.2.3: Sequence Interview Questions

Open, closed, probing, and hypothetical questions may be used in any combination, as long as their sequence is thoughtfully planned. An *interview schedule* is a guide that lists all of the questions and follow-up probes to be used in an interview so that the interviewer can sequence interview questions. An interview schedule serves as the interviewer's script. Depending on the goals of the interview, interview questions may be arranged into one of three basic sequences: funnel, inverted funnel, or tunnel.

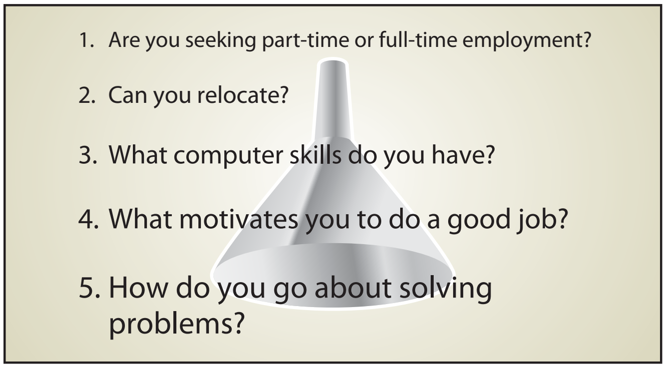
FUNNEL SEQUENCE A questioning sequence that begins with broad, open questions and proceeds toward more closed questions is a *funnel sequence*. Using a funnel sequence allows an interviewee to express views and feelings without restrictions, at least early in the interview. For example, Seth, a senior in college, is conducting an information-gathering interview with a corporate event planner because he thinks he would like to pursue event planning as a career. Seth structures his interview using the funnel sequence of questions shown in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2: Funnel Sequence

Seth's first question is an open-ended one about the rewards of the profession. He becomes a bit more specific in his second question by asking about the two different types of event planning. With his third question, he narrows the focus further by asking about only corporate events. His fourth question asks about specific steps the event planner took to get his job in corporate event planning. Finally, Seth's fifth and final question is a closed question that requires a yes-or-no response. With the funnel sequence, the interview begins with open questions and the increasingly closed questions serve as probes.

INVERTED FUNNEL SEQUENCE A questioning sequence that begins with closed questions and proceeds to more open questions is an *inverted funnel sequence*. Using the inverted funnel sequence encourages the interviewee to answer questions quickly. It's an easy way to begin an interview because the questions require only brief responses or descriptions. For example, Jamie manages a temp agency and is responsible for interviewing people to find out their job skills and work-related experiences so that she can place them in jobs that fit their skills and experiences. Figure 7.3 illustrates how Jamie structures her interview questions using the inverted funnel sequence.

Figure 7.3: Inverted Funnel Sequence



Jamie's first two questions are closed questions that require only brief responses. Jamie's third, fourth, and fifth questions are more open-ended questions that require greater elaboration. These open-ended questions are intended to get interviewees to reveal not only their attitudes and values but also how they might handle a particular situation at work. With the inverted-funnel sequence, the interview begins with closed questions and the open-ended questions serve as probes.

TUNNEL SEQUENCE A questioning sequence that uses a combination of open and closed questions to gather a large amount of information in a short amount of time is a *tunnel sequence*. With this type of questioning sequence, no probing or follow-up questions are asked. The interviewer is interested in breadth rather than depth of responses. Rather than using an information probe ("Tell me more about that") or a hypothetical question to get at more detailed information (more depth), the interviewer simply moves to the next open or closed question to capture more breadth (more topics) during an interview. Again, the reason for using the tunnel sequence is that it allows an interviewer to gather a lot of general information in a limited amount of time. For example, Kole is a wardrobe consultant at an upscale department store. His goal is to persuade Leticia to let him pull together a wardrobe for her. He interviews Leticia to get a better idea of her wardrobe needs by asking a series of questions such as these:

1. What type of outfits are you expected to wear at work?
2. What do you typically wear when you entertain friends at your home?
3. How do you dress when you go to the ballet or theater?
4. What do you wear when working out at the gym?

All of Kole's questions focus on a different aspect of Leticia's lifestyle and her wardrobe needs. The questions are a way to tunnel through her lifestyle; they allow Kole to assess Leticia's needs quickly so that he can pull together a wardrobe that Leticia will purchase. Kole's interview goal is to capture the breadth of Leticia's fashion needs rather than to learn about them in depth. Again, with the tunnel sequence, the interview consists of a series of open and closed questions that capture as much breadth (the greatest number of topics) as possible. The interview doesn't include probing questions, which usually capture depth or details.

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Look Them in the Eye. Always Tell the Truth[10]

Bobbi Brown has interviewed hundreds of people during her successful business career as founder of Bobbi Brown Cosmetics. Her advice when participating in an interview is simple: Have eye contact and be truthful. She also recommends that when considering a specific organization for a job or career move, you optimistically start with realistic positions where you can enter the company and then look for opportunities to move up.

> When you're talking to someone, look him or her in the eye. Always tell the truth. And you have to start at the bottom. I don't care who you are and what you do, you have to start at the bottom. If there's a job as a receptionist at a company you would love to work at and there's nothing else, get that job. And don't just sit there.
>
> A lot of people have moved up in this company. Be open and be a sponge. I've always been a sponge. You're around really cool, creative people, you see what they're doing, how they're dressing, what they're reading, what their tastes are. I mean that's what makes someone better at what they do—they're just open to what's going on.

Whether you've had a career for several years or will soon be entering the job market, her suggestions about being open and receptive to what you see around you is good advice, not only when trying to observe the organizational culture but also when participating in an interview. Use your skill in observing nonverbal cues (principle three in our five principles for leadership) to help you enhance your leadership and communication skills. You will be more aware (principle one) of the possible common bonds with coworkers as well as how others are advanced or have been promoted. You will be better able to adapt (principle five) to others, both in the interview setting and in the organization as a whole.

7.3: Conducting the Interview

7.3 Explain the three parts of the interview process.

Conducting the interview is the third stage. Although an interview differs from an ordinary conversation in being planned and structured, in one way an interview is similar to a conversation with a friend. Most conversations have three parts. First, you greet someone to open the conversation. Second, you conduct the conversation, which communication scholars refer to as processing the body of the conversation. Third, you bring the conversation to a close. Interviews have these same three parts. Although it is the interviewer's responsibility to structure and conduct the interview, it's important that interviewees become aware of how interviews are conducted so they know what to expect in the opening segment, the body, and the closing segment of the interview conversation.

7.3.1: Open the Interview

The opening of any interview is crucial because it sets the stage for the interview. The opening creates a climate that influences how the interview will unfold. Although most openings include both task and relational messages, they're more focused on relational messages. *Task messages* focus on the content of the interview and might include information about how the interview will be structured and how long the interview will take. *Relational messages* focus on building rapport and establishing a relationship; they're more personal. Asking the other person how she or he is doing, commenting on the weather, or discussing plans for the weekend are examples of relational messages.

Opening the interview includes three skills: making a positive first impression, establishing rapport, and clarifying the goals of the interview.

MAKE A POSITIVE FIRST IMPRESSION First impressions are important, especially in interview situations; interviewers have been shown to treat interviewees more positively during an interview if their first impression of the interviewee is favorable.[11] In addition to being on time and being appropriately dressed for the interview, another way to make a positive first impression is to make direct eye contact and use a firm handshake. One study found that perceptions of conscientiousness or a person who is perceived to be intelligent, dependable, and goal driven are created when interviewers see interviewees using direct eye contact.[12] Research on handshaking etiquette and business protocol strongly suggests that a handshake has a meaningful impact on people's first impressions of others and how they evaluate them.[13] Specifically, a firm handshake is associated with positive personality and communication traits, whereas a limp handshake is associated with negative personality and communication traits. A firm handshake is characterized by completeness of grip (palm to palm), moderate strength (not too weak, not too strong), a moderate amount of energy, and moderate length (not too brief, not too long), and is accompanied by direct eye contact.[14]

Interviewers treat interviewees more positively if they are on time and appropriately dressed for the interview. An interviewee's firm handshake, accompanied by direct eye contact, also contributes to a strong first impression.

ESTABLISH RAPPORT Developing a connection or an emotional bond makes the interview process more comfortable and enjoyable for both the interviewee and the interviewer. One way to establish rapport is to initiate conversations about current events, sports, film, or local items of interest. Linguist and communication researcher Deborah Tannen refers to these polite conversational starters as rapport talk. According to Tannen, rapport talk "greases the wheels" of a conversation and enhances liking for each other.[15] Both interviewer and interviewee can establish rapport by listening actively to the other, using nonverbal responsive behaviors, and asking appropriate follow-up questions. While establishing rapport, it is also important that the interviewee never uses profane language, even if the interviewer is using this type of language.[16] Sometimes as rapport is established and two people become more comfortable with each other, they have a tendency to begin talking like the other person. It's important to avoid this natural rapport-building strategy during an interview.

CLARIFY INTERVIEW GOALS Finally, it's important to open the interview by clarifying the goals of the interview. To do this, the interviewer needs to state the purpose of the interview explicitly—for example, "The purpose of our interview today is to collect information about your job skills and work experiences." It's also important for the interviewer to clarify for the interviewee how the interview will be structured. An interviewer might say "I'll begin with a set of questions about your job skills. Then I would like to discuss your accomplishments in your current position. To wrap up the interview, I would like to answer your questions." Finally, it's considerate for the interviewer to inform the interviewee of how long the interview will take.

To summarize, interview openings are usually more focused on relational messages than on task messages. Your goal when opening an interview is to make a positive first impression, establish rapport with the other person, and, if you're the interviewer, to clarify the goals of the interview.

7.3.2: Process the Interview

Once the interviewer has made efforts to put the interviewee at ease during the opening of the interview, the interviewer begins processing the body of the interview. This part of the interview tends to focus more on task-related messages than on relational messages. The body of the interview is where the interviewer and the interviewee ask each other questions. As noted earlier in this chapter, interviewing experts suggest that participation in most interviews (with the exception of persuasive interviews) ought to be distributed in roughly a 70:30 ratio, with the interviewee doing most of the talking. We first discuss the interviewer's role in processing the body of the interview and then the interviewee's role.

INTERVIEWER'S ROLE The interviewer is responsible for processing the body of the interview by accomplishing several communication tasks:

- **LISTEN ACTIVELY TO THE INTERVIEWEE.** Pay attention not only to what interviewees say but also to how they say it. Inexperienced interviewers sometimes become so distracted by keeping track of how much time they have or by thinking ahead to the next question that they fail to listen to interviewees' responses to questions.
- **CONTROL THE BREADTH AND DEPTH OF THE QUESTIONING.** If the goal is to obtain a lot of information on a variety of topics in a limited amount of time, then the interviewer is going for breadth (range of topics) and not depth (details of a single topic). If the goal is to probe one particular idea, event, or episode, then the interviewer will focus on depth by probing the interviewee's responses to questions.
- **RECORD THE INTERVIEW.** An interviewer does this by recording the interview or by taking notes during the interview, or both. If you're going to record the interview, you must get the interviewee's permission before you begin. Note taking must be done carefully. If you spend too much time taking notes, you may miss important information and the interviewee may perceive you as disrespectful.
- **ANSWER THE INTERVIEWEE'S QUESTIONS.** Anticipate what these questions might be and be prepared to answer them clearly and concisely.
- **KEEP THE INTERVIEW ON SCHEDULE.** Being conscious of the interviewee's time is an effective way of communicating respect for the person.

INTERVIEWEE'S ROLE The interviewee is responsible for processing the body of the interview by accomplishing three important tasks:

- **LISTEN ACTIVELY.** Carefully listen to the question, and before responding make sure you understand by paraphrasing the question: "I hear you asking. . . . Is that correct?" This ensures that you're not answering questions that were not asked. It also demonstrates a communication skill that many working professionals value.
- **PROVIDE THOUGHTFUL AND CLEAR RESPONSES.** Thoughtful interview questions require thoughtful responses. Become comfortable with a few seconds of silence, and mentally compose your response to an interview question so that your responses are meaningful.
- **ASK APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS.** At some point most interviewers will ask the interviewee "Do you have any questions for me?" Appropriate questions are those that reflect positively on the interviewee. For example, Audrey is interviewing for a job as a sales manager for an upscale hotel chain. During her interview she mentions that she is aware that the chain has received numerous prestigious awards for service excellence from travel magazines and that the company will be adding hotels on the West Coast. Audrey asks, "What makes your hotels different from other hotels?" and "Are there advancement opportunities on the West Coast for interested employees?" These questions show the interviewer that Audrey has prepared herself for the job interview by researching the company's background. Questions that demonstrate preparedness reflect positively on job candidates.[17]

7.3.3: Close the Interview

Like opening the interview, closing the interview tends to focus more on relational rather than task-related messages. Closing the interview requires four tasks: review and summarize the interview, encourage continued friendly relations, discuss the next step, and exchange thank-yous.

SUMMARIZE THE INTERVIEW A primary function of the conclusion of an interview is to summarize the interview. Both the interviewer and the interviewee should be aware of and agree on what happened during the interview. To ensure understanding and agreement, the interviewer needs to summarize the highlights of the discussion and ask for any clarification. Comments such as "I believe we accomplished . . . today during our interview. Do you agree?" or "Let me take a few minutes to summarize our interview. . . . What clarifications are needed?" help the interviewer and the interviewee review the highlights of the interview.

ENCOURAGE FRIENDLY RELATIONS Another function of the conclusion is to encourage friendly relations. The rapport established during the opening of the interview needs to be threaded throughout the interview all the way through the conclusion. Because not all interviews are positive experiences for interviewees (as when a manager conducts a performance appraisal with an employee who is not performing up to expectations), it's important to maintain the relationship. Comments such as "I'm glad we had a chance to talk about this problem" or "Thank-you for sharing and listening" enable both parties to feel that they have had a positive and productive interview.

DISCUSS THE NEXT STEP Have you ever left an interview wondering "Now what?" All interviews, regardless of the type, need to be closed by discussing the next step. For example, if you're conducting an information-gathering interview to find out what someone likes and

"Your resume states that you've worked with 2 presidents, won the Nobel Prize and climbed Mt. Everest. That's all fine and dandy, but how are you at telemarketing?"

dislikes about his or her chosen profession because you're interested in a similar career, the next step may be to ask the person to email you names of other individuals you may want to interview. If you're conducting an appraisal interview with an employee who is not performing his or her job well, then the next step is to inform the employee of the behaviors that need to be changed or modified and schedule a follow-up meeting. The next step for a job interview is to inform the applicant when decisions will be made and how applicants will be notified.

EXCHANGE THANK-YOUS The final task in closing an interview is to exchange thank-yous. Interviewing requires another person's time, and in the business and professional setting, time is a limited resource. Linda Kaplan Thaler and Robin Koval, authors of *The Power of Nice*, argue that being nice (remembering names, saying "Thank-you") is an undervalued habit.[18] Thaler and Koval attribute the success of their New York ad agency to their being civil to their clients. Although saying thank-you is quite easy and is a matter of courtesy and common sense, it is not done enough, according to these authors.

Although closing an interview requires some task-related messages, the bulk of the messages have a relational focus. Without appropriate closure, interview participants leave the interview with questions and uncertainty. To ensure that this doesn't occur, interview participants need to review and summarize the interview, encourage continued friendly relations, discuss the next step, and exchange thank-yous.

Recap

Conducting the Interview

Interview Steps	Communication Skills
Open the Interview	Make a positive impression Establish rapport Clarify interview goals
Process the Interview	**Interviewer's role** • Ask questions • Listen actively • Control breadth and depth of questioning • Take notes • Answer interviewee questions • Monitor time **Interviewee's role** • Listen actively • Provide thoughtful and clear responses • Ask appropriate questions
Close the Interview	Summarize the interview Encourage friendly relations Discuss the next step Exchange thank-you

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7.4: Interviewing Ethics

7.4 Identify the basic ethical principles to which both the interviewer and the interviewee need to adhere.

Our fourth and final stage is understanding the ethics of interviewing for both the interviewer and interviewee. Because interviewing is a structured oral interaction in which important information is exchanged and decisions are made based on this information, it's important that you communicate in an ethical manner. Whether you're the interviewer or the interviewee, you have a responsibility to ensure that the interview is conducted ethically.

Ethics are the beliefs, values, and moral principles by which we determine what is right and wrong. One way to better understand ethical communication is to examine unethical communication. Unethical communication manipulates listeners, restricts listeners' choices, and contains false information. In the interview context, both interviewers and interviewees have been known to engage in unethical communication. In fact, one study conducted by Ward Howell International, Inc., an executive headhunting firm, found that more than one in four executives reported that in the previous year, their organizations had hired employees whose job qualifications, educational credentials, or salary histories had been misrepresented during the interview process.[19]

Although some types of interviews are subject to specific ethical guidelines unique to those types of interviews, all interviewers and interviewees, regardless of interview type, should adhere to the following basic ethical principles:

- Don't manipulate the other person.
- Don't restrict the other person's choices or answers to questions.
- Don't convey false or misleading information to the other person.

There are several communication strategies that both interviewers and interviewees can use to ensure that interviews are ethical.

7.4.1: Interviewer Ethics

There are several things an interviewer needs to do to interview another person in an ethical manner.

Both the interviewer and interviewee have a responsibility to communicate and conduct the interview in an ethical manner.

STATE YOUR PURPOSE IN ADVANCE One way to avoid manipulating the interviewee is to state clearly and in advance what you, as the interviewer, need and want from the interviewee. For example, have you ever answered your door to find someone who wants to interview you about the last time you cleaned your carpets? If you're not careful, this person will end up in your living room cleaning your carpets with a new line of steam cleaners that you can purchase for "a low monthly fee." If you're like most people, you resent this type of persuasive interview and you feel manipulated. A more ethical approach would be for the salesperson to first state his name, the company he represents, and the purpose for his visit.

ALLOW THE INTERVIEWEE TO MAKE UNCOERCED RESPONSES Because there is a power differential in many interview situations—the person conducting the interview has more power than the person being interviewed—it is important for the interviewer to avoid coercing or influencing the interviewee to answer a question he or she would prefer not to answer or to respond in a manner that would be against his or her will. For example, during a performance appraisal interview, your interviewer puts you in an awkward position by asking you about another employee's work performance. A more ethical approach would be to ask whether other employees' job performance affects your job performance. This question is more general and doesn't box you into a corner.

ASK UNBIASED QUESTIONS Another way to make sure your communication is ethical during an interview is to avoid using biased questions, or leading questions, which suggest (implicitly, and sometimes even explicitly) the expected or desired answer. An interviewer using a leading question leads the interviewee toward a particular answer by making "it easier or more tempting for the respondent to give one answer than another."[20] For example, during an employment interview, an interviewer might ask, "I'm assuming that you're willing to relocate. Is that correct?" A more ethical way to ask this important question would be "If this job were to require you to move to a new city, how willing would you be to relocate, on a scale from 1—completely unwilling to relocate—to 10—eager to relocate?" This question doesn't make an assumption about moving or force the interviewee into answering yes or no but instead allows the interviewee to choose from a range of responses. Put simply, this type of unbiased question gives the interviewee the opportunity to make a free, uncoerced response.

AVOID UNLAWFUL QUESTIONS A number of questions are illegal to ask during interviews, especially job interviews. The following interview questions are considered unlawful, and interviewers should not be asking interviewees these questions:[21]

- How old are you?
- What religion do you practice?
- Are you married? Divorced?
- Do you have a family? Do you intend to have a family?
- What is your race?
- What is your sexual orientation?
- What is your national origin/ethnicity/ancestry?
- Are you a citizen of the United States? (Although this information is important for an interviewer to know when seeking an employee to work in the United States, the question cannot be asked in this manner. Instead, the interviewer needs to ask "Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?")
- Are you disabled? (Again, because the answer to this question is important for some job descriptions, interviewers need to get the answer by asking a lawful

question: "Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job without accommodation?")

- Have you been arrested? (Unless the interviewee is applying for a security-sensitive position, this question is unlawful.)
- Have your wages ever been withheld for legal reasons?

CONVEY HONEST, ACCURATE INFORMATION To make sure that interviewees can make decisions in their best interests, it's important to be honest about the information you present during the interview and to avoid intentionally withholding information from the interviewee. For example, during a job interview, a candidate asks when the position is going to be filled. Knowing that the new job has not been approved by the vice president of human resources, the interviewer says, "We hope to extend an offer soon." This statement is misleading because the interviewer is intentionally withholding important information. It is the interviewer's responsibility to explain to the interviewee that she cannot give an exact date when the position will be filled because the job has not yet been approved.

RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY The ethical principle of *confidentiality* requires interviewers to keep information disclosed during an interview private. If an interviewee asks an interviewer to keep something said during the interview confidential, it is unethical for the interviewer to share that information with others. For example, during a job interview, the job candidate mentions that he is interested in transferring to a new position within the company because of poor management in his current department. It would be unethical for the interviewer, who happens to be friends with one of the managers in this interviewee's department, to share this information with the manager. During interview situations, "What's said in the office stays in the office."

7.4.2: Interviewee Ethics

Someone who is being interviewed also has a responsibility to communicate in an ethical manner.

ANSWER QUESTIONS HONESTLY It's the interviewee's responsibility to answer all of the interviewer's questions honestly. By giving honest answers to questions, we adhere to two of the three basic ethical principles: We avoid manipulating the interviewer, and we don't limit the interviewer's options and choices. For example, to say during a job interview that you can begin work immediately when you know you can't is dishonest. If the interviewer needs to fill the position immediately and extends an offer that you know you cannot accept, you have both manipulated the interviewer into giving you a job and limited the interviewer's choices. Had the interviewer continued to interview additional job candidates, he might have found a qualified person who could begin the job immediately.

Answering questions honestly when being interviewed also means not misrepresenting the facts about your history or prior positions you've held. For example, a 21-year-old college student who sold advertisements for the school newspaper for four semesters cannot honestly claim to have five years of full-time sales and marketing experience. Similarly, you can't say you have international work experience when the only experience you have is one month studying Spanish in a Mexican border town to fulfill your foreign language requirement for graduation. It is unethical to claim to have a skill needed for a particular position when you don't have the skill. Instead, you can say you will do what is necessary to acquire the skill as soon as possible.

KEEP YOUR WORD Don't make promises that you cannot keep. Interviewers are expected to keep their word, and the interviewee has the same responsibility. If you say that you can begin work in two weeks, you will be expected to begin the new job in exactly two weeks. Sometimes we make promises we know we cannot keep out of fear of the other person's response. Such empty promises will eventually backfire in business and professional contexts, where an individual's credibility is vital to his or her success in the organization.

RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY Because some of the information that is exchanged in an interview can be personal or sensitive, it's important to keep the information to oneself and not to share it with others, particularly if the interviewer specifically asks you to keep the information confidential. For example, if you learn through an informational interview that an employee is about to be fired, you should not share this sensitive information with anyone. Violating this type of trust with an interviewer will ultimately backfire on the interviewee. Although the business and professional world appears very large, professionals are highly networked through professional organizations and technology—so their world is actually quite small. If you fail to respect confidentiality, or engage in any other unethical interviewing behavior, the word travels quickly, eliminating the likelihood of you reaching your interview goal.

Interviewers and interviewees are responsible to each other during an interview. A number of communication skills ensure that interviewers and interviewees conduct the interview in an ethical manner.

Summary: Interviewing Principles and Skills

7.1: Identify the three basic skills required to prepare for an interview.

Identifying the interview goals. When interviewing there are primary and secondary goals. If you're conducting an information-gathering interview, your primary goal is to obtain information. If you're interviewing for a job, your goal is to get the job. Secondary goals, fall into two types: task goals and relational goals. Task goals include asking and answering questions in a clear, concise, and thoughtful manner to acquire and convey appropriate information. Relational goals include using interpersonal skills so as to be perceived as interpersonally attractive and believable.

Selecting the appropriate person to interview. To do this, consult professional organizations and membership directories; use organizational websites, personal contacts, acquaintances, networks, and your instructors; or call the organization directly.

Arranging the interview, considering time, location, and setting. Before beginning the interview, have an idea of how much time will be needed to reach the interview goal and then let the person you will be interviewing know how much time will be needed. Because effective interviewing requires an intense period of listening, it's important to find a location with as few distractions as possible. Finally, the physical arrangement influences the tone of the interview.

7.2: Describe appropriate interview questions, structures, and topics.

Interview Questions	Types	Example
	Open Questions	What makes an excellent university? How do you lead? What changes should be made to improve the university?
	Closed Questions	What is your weight? How many complete meals do you eat daily? How many times a week do you exercise?
	Probing Questions	Is there anything else that you would like to add about this issue? Is there anything we have not covered that you consider important? What questions have I not asked that you want to answer?
	Hypothetical Questions	You believe that one of your coworkers is stealing from the company, but you're not certain. What would you do? If you were to become the manager of this unit, what five changes would you make and why?

Interview Sequence	Types	Description
	Funnel	A questioning sequence that begins with broad, open questions and proceeds toward more closed questions
	Inverted Funnel	A questioning sequence that begins with closed questions and proceeds to more open questions
	Tunnel Sequence	A questioning sequence that uses a combination of open and closed questions to gather a large amount of information in a short amount of time

Funnel sequence. A questioning sequence that begins with broad, open questions and proceeds toward more closed questions is a funnel sequence. Using a funnel sequence allows an interviewee to express views and feelings without restrictions, at least early in the interview.

Inverted funnel sequence. A questioning sequence that begins with closed questions and proceeds to more open questions is an inverted funnel sequence. Using the inverted funnel sequence encourages the interviewee to answer questions quickly. It's an easy way to begin an interview because the questions require only brief responses or descriptions.

Tunnel sequence. A questioning sequence that uses a combination of open and closed questions to gather a large amount of information in a short amount of time is a tunnel sequence. With this type of questioning sequence, no probing or follow-up questions are asked. The interviewer is interested in breadth rather than depth of responses.

7.3: Explain the three parts of the interview process.

	Interviewer Responsibilities	Interviewee Responsibilities
Opening	Make a positive impression. Establish rapport. Clarify interview goals.	Make a positive impression. Establish rapport.

Body	Ask questions and listen to answers. Keep interview focused by controlling the breadth and depth. Record the interview. Answer interviewee questions.	Listen carefully to make sure you understand the question. Answer questions thoughtfully and with clear responses. Ask appropriate questions.
Closing	Summarize the interview. Continue rapport building. Discuss the next step. Express thanks.	Continue rapport building. Discuss the next step. Express thanks.

7.4: Identify the basic ethical principles to which both the interviewer and the interviewee need to adhere.

An ethical interviewer is straightforward with the interview's purpose and does not coerce answers or ask biased questions. In addition, the interviewer should avoid unlawful questions and be honest with the interviewee.

An ethical interviewee must be honest and clear while answering questions and respect the confidentiality of the information shared during the interview.

SHARED WRITING: INTERVIEWING ETHICS

Reflect on the ethical responsibilities mentioned in the chapter. Using a real-world example from your own experience, discuss interviewer and interviewee responsibilities in the specific situation.

A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post

0 characters | 140 minimum

Chapter 7 Quiz: Interviewing Principles and Skills

Chapter 8
Interviewing Goals

Learning Objectives

8.1 Discuss why information-gathering interviews are the most common form of interview

8.2 Evaluate the different aspects of job interviews

8.3 Analyze ways to get the maximum benefit in an appraisal interview

How to hire a good hotel desk clerk is a question that Chip Conley has finally figured out.[1] Chip is CEO of Joie de Vivre Hospitality, which he founded in 1987 and which is California's largest boutique hotel company. While interviewing potential hotel employees, Chip asks candidates a number of questions to find out what motivates them to get up in the morning and go to work. He ultimately wants to know what the candidate considers to be meaningful work. According to Chip's experiences, a paycheck doesn't motivate; meaningful work does.[2] Chip elaborates: "It's obvious why we would ask that question, right? If making other people feel good makes you feel good, you're going to like working as a front-desk clerk. You'll greet every guest who approaches the desk with a smile, and genuinely look forward to helping them in any way you can. If you don't much like helping people, you'll see the job as eight hours of drudgery and the guests will notice."[3]

For example, when Joie de Vivre staff interview job candidates who want to work as a host at the front desk of one of their hotels, they ask the candidates to talk about a time in the last month when they did something for someone else that made the other person happy and made them happy, too.

For the hotel, that's the difference between repeat business and a disappointed guest. For the front-desk clerk, it's the difference between a calling and a job. "A calling energizes you," Chip says. "A job depletes you."

Chip Conley is surprised by how casually companies interview and hire people. He invests considerable time in hiring the right people and creating a workplace where they can grow and thrive.

Leaders, like Chip Conley, participate in the interview process on a regular basis. Whether they're interviewers or interviewees, they apply the communication skills discussed in Chapter 7: preparing, structuring, and conducting the interview; listening and responding during the interview; and being responsible and ethical throughout the interview. As a professional, you will use these skills in three primary types of interviews: information-gathering interviews, job interviews, and appraisal interviews.

You take part in an information-gathering interview when you need information from others or when others need information from you. For example, if you're the editor of a company newsletter, you probably conduct information-gathering interviews with employees so you have information to include in the newsletter. You will take part in a job interview when you're looking for a job for yourself or when it's your responsibility to hire other people. An appraisal interview occurs when your manager reviews your work performance with you at the end of the year or when you conduct a performance review with one of the employees you lead.

Although interviews differ depending on whether you're the interviewer or the interviewee, it's important to remember that all interviews are relationships. Whether you're collecting information, trying to get a job, or informing employees about their work performance, an interview is a conversation in which people relate to each other by asking and answering questions to achieve a specific goal. To ensure that these interview conversations go well, you need to understand how to prepare, conduct, and follow up on information-gathering, job, and performance-appraisal interviews.

Leading Questions

1. If you were asked by an interviewer to describe the kind of work that would make you happy, what would you say?
2. Can you tell the difference between an employee who is doing a job versus one who is doing what he or she was called to do? What do you see him or her doing that makes the difference? Describe the communication behaviors.
3. As an interviewer, what is the best way to ask questions that will get an interviewee to tell you about what motivates him or her?

8.1: Information-Gathering Interviews

8.1 Discuss why information-gathering interviews are the most common form of interview.

An *information-gathering interview* is a focused, structured conversation whose goal is to seek out information from another person. Of the three interview types, it is the most common and is one that leaders use daily.

Newspaper and television reporters conduct information-gathering interviews to uncover and report on a news story.

8.1.1: Preparing an Information-Gathering Interview

IDENTIFY THE INTERVIEW GOAL To prepare an information-gathering interview, the interviewer needs first to be aware of his or her goal for the interview. What type of information do you need? Table 8.1 lists possible goals of information-gathering interviews:

One interview goal of many students who are taking a class in business and professional communication is to gather information on the different types of careers and jobs that are available to them after graduation. This type

Table 8.1: Goals of Information-Gathering Interviews

Goals	Information
To investigate an issue or an event	Newspaper and television reporters are responsible for reporting the news, which includes finding and locating information. Reporters identify appropriate individuals and then ask them questions such as Who? What? Where? When? How? and Why? to uncover a news story.
To conduct research to identify patterns and trends	Some businesses have research units that are responsible for conducting market research. These professionals make phone calls and survey customers to identify their needs and levels of satisfaction with products and services.

To diagnose and to solve problems and develop interventions	For example, nurses and doctors interview patients to diagnose health problems and devise appropriate treatment. Personal trainers, who work in fitness centers, interview new members to identify physical fitness needs and goals in order to recommend appropriate cardiovascular, muscle toning, and resistance workout routines. Financial advisors interview clients to diagnose investing problems and help the clients develop new investing habits.
To learn why employees are leaving an organization	In an exit interview, an employer gathers information from an employee about his or her work experiences. Because turnover can be expensive, leaders are interested in understanding why good employees leave an organization. They use this information to enhance the workplace environment and prevent additional turnover.

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of information-gathering interview is referred to as a *career-search information interview*. Research suggests that 25% of the people who get hired at any organization are known to the employer before a job opening actually exists, and half of all jobs are filled by the time they are advertised.[4] Conducting a career-search information interview is a way for those in an organization to get to know you even when a job is not available. When a position does become available, these people may consider you for the position even before they begin the search process. In the following sections we discuss this particular type of information-gathering interview.

IDENTIFY THE PERSON AND SCHEDULE THE INTERVIEW Once you have a clear interview goal, it's time to identify the appropriate person and schedule the interview.

- **IDENTIFY A WORKING PROFESSIONAL WHO HOLDS A POSITION THAT YOU FIND INTERESTING AND THAT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO HAVE ONE DAY.** For example, one of the authors of this book decided during his senior year in college that he wanted to become a buyer for Macy's. Through a family contact, he was able to interview a buyer. (See Career Corner for more information.)
- **PHONE THE PERSON'S OFFICE AND SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW.** Some sources suggest writing a letter to arrange the information-gathering interview.[5] Others suggest emailing the identified person to make the necessary arrangements. However, according to some career consultants, because postal mail may get lost and email is too easy to dismiss, the phone is the preferred way to arrange a career-search information interview.

Arranging a career-search information interview tends to be quite easy because most people like talking about themselves and their work. Many professionals are flattered to be asked for an interview and enjoy helping others get started in a career.

Career Corner

Using the Strength of Weak Ties to Get the Job Interview

According to sociologist Mark Granovetter, most people believe that their job contacts will be close friends and relatives, or their "strong ties"—when the reality is just the opposite. According to Granovetter, job contacts usually come from our friends' and relatives' network of friends (or our "weak ties").[6] After surveying over 280 residents in a Boston suburb who had taken a new job within the past year, Granovetter learned that only 17% of the people surveyed had found their jobs through close friends and relatives. The majority learned about their new positions from people who were only distant associates—old college friends, former colleagues, friends of friends—or weak ties.[7]

One of the authors of this book was able to get his first job as an assistant buyer with the Macy's corporation through weak ties. Not knowing anyone in the Macy's organization, he started asking his family members for assistance. One of his uncles heard he wanted to talk with a Macy's employee. As it turned out, this uncle worked for a man at the Pepsi-Cola Corporation whose best friend's wife was a buyer for Macy's. Through this network of weak ties, he identified the appropriate person for the interview. The interview went well and resulted in a job offer from Macy's.

Try the following:

1. Identify the job you want.
2. Inform your close friends about this job. Ask them if they know of anyone who might be able to help you get an interview for this particular job.
3. Develop a list of possible contacts and then begin reaching out to them through email or phone calls.

8.1.2: Conducting an Information-Gathering Interview

OPEN THE INTERVIEW As the interviewer, you open the interview by ensuring that you make a positive first impression, establish rapport, and clarify your interview goals.

- *Dress as though it were a job interview and in a manner that reflects the culture of the organization*. To do this, you might want to check with your friends and professional acquaintances who might have insight into the dress standards of the organization. You could also check for photos on a company website to get an insight into appropriate dress.

- *Offer a warm greeting, a firm handshake, and an expression of appreciation for the person's taking the time to meet with you.*
- *State your goal or your purpose for the interview:* "I am interested in learning more about the work that you do, since I believe it may be something that I would like to do after graduating from college."

PROCESS THE INTERVIEW Now it's time to begin the interview dance—the give-and-take of the interview conversation. Below are some open-ended questions that would be appropriate for your interview schedule—which is a guide that lists all of the interview questions in a single document and is helpful for sequencing the questions.

Questions for a Career-Search Information Interview

The following questions have been shown to be helpful for gathering information when interviewing people about jobs and careers that you find interesting:

- How did you get into this line of work? Into this particular job?
- What do you like most about your job? What do you like least?
- If you had to do it all over again, would you choose this line of work?
- Can you walk me through your typical workday?
- What has surprised you about your current position?
- Describe the ideal person for this career or job.
- What questions could I expect to be asked if I were interviewing for this position?
- What should I look for in a company when interviewing for this type of position?
- What trends do you anticipate occurring in this line of work over the next 10 years, and how are you going to prepare to meet these changing trends?
- How do you recommend I begin preparing myself to adapt to these changing trends?
- In what ways were you prepared for your job? In what ways were you not prepared for your job?
- What college or university courses do you wish you had taken to prepare you for this position? Do you wish you had concentrated on a different major?
- What professional organizations do you recommend I join to begin building my professional network?
- Who else should I talk to about this type of career, position, or job? Could you provide me with additional names or contacts?

- *Follow the 70:30 ratio rule: The interviewee should talk about 70% of the time and the interviewer about 30% of the time.*
- *Listen carefully to how the interviewee answers your questions and show that you're listening by making as much eye contact as possible and by using nonverbal responsive behaviors.*
- *Paraphrase what you hear the interviewee saying.*
- *Ask the interviewee if there are questions you have not asked that should be asked.*

CLOSE THE INTERVIEW To close a career-search information interview, it's important to summarize the interview, get the name of another contact if possible, and express your thanks and appreciation to the interviewee.

- *Summarize the interview by restating some of the main ideas or themes that you learned during the interview.*
- *Ask for contact information of another possible interviewee.* Because of the importance of personal and professional networks in getting a job, ideally you'll want to leave the interview with a lead or the name of a contact for another interview.
- *Close the interview by expressing your thanks and appreciation to the interviewee for taking his or her time to meet with you.*

WRITING PROMPT

Review the list of career-search interview questions. Which questions would you remove from the list? Why? Based on your particular career aspirations, which questions would you add? Why? Keep a record of these for future reference when doing career-search interviews.

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

8.1.3: Following Up an Information-Gathering Interview

EXPRESS THANKS One of the goals when following up on an interview is to leave a positive impression and to thank the interviewee for his or her time.

- *Send a note of thanks to the interviewee.* The note can be short and simple: *"I wanted to thank you for talking with me yesterday about your job and career path. I very much appreciated your taking time out of your busy schedule to do this. Again, thank you. Best wishes,"* followed by your signature. To ensure that you know the correct spelling and address, take the person's business card.[8]
- *Send an email or a note to thank the individual who referred you to your interviewee.* This type of personal expression leaves a good impression on many people and reflects a maturity and thoughtfulness that are appreciated.

PROCESS YOUR NOTES Another follow-up activity is to take time to process the interview notes. Review the questions and the interviewee's responses and summarize the key findings. Take a few minutes to write additional notes. What questions remain? What concerns did the interview uncover? What did the interviewee say that clarified your thinking?

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Do What You Love: Love What You Do[9]

Are you one of those people who have not yet settled on your specific vocational calling? The word “vocation” comes from the Latin word *vocare*, which means “voice” or “to call.” Rather than thinking of your vocation as a job that you seek, think of it as “a calling” (a voice or *vocare*) that you hear that calls you to your life’s work. But perhaps you’ve not yet decided on your specific vocation—perhaps you’ve not heard your personal call as to what you’ll do when you complete your education. Maybe you’ve had advice from countless well-intentioned friends and family members, but you are still uncertain as to what job you’ll pursue.

Steve Hannah, chief executive officer of the satirical newspaper *The Onion*, suggests that your vocational calling should ultimately be something that you have a passion for—something you love to do. Here’s Hannah’s vocational advice:

> *Find what you really love to do and then go after it—relentlessly. And don’t fret about the money. Because what you love to do is quite likely what you’re good at. And what you’re good at will likely bring you financial reward eventually.*
>
> *I’ve seen too many people who have plotted a career, and often what’s at the heart of all that plotting is nothing other than a stack of dollar bills. You need to be happy in order to be good, and you need to be good in order to succeed. And when you succeed, there’s a good chance you’ll get paid.*

As you read this chapter, we echo the advice of Steve Hannah. As you listen for your vocational call and make decisions about which company to interview with, consider this counsel: Do what you love and love what you do.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP Finally, make sure to follow through on the next step. Make an appointment with your next interviewee, develop additional questions based on your prior interview experiences, and begin the process all over again. The purpose of conducting multiple career-search information interviews is not only to learn more about the career field that you find interesting but also to develop your professional network.

8.2: Job Interviews

8.2 Evaluate the different aspects of job interviews.

The goal of the structured conversation in a *job interview* is for the interviewer to assess the interviewee’s qualifications and skills for employment. During the information interview, you played the role of the interviewer. In the job interview, you will be the interviewee.

8.2.1: Preparing a Job Interview

To prepare the job interview, you need to (1) identify your interview goal, (2) develop your resume, (3) identify and research the appropriate organization, position, and contact person, (4) write a cover letter, and (5) arrange the interview.

8.2.2: Identify the Interview Goal

As the interviewee, you need to clarify your interview goal. You do this by conducting a self-assessment and becoming aware of your skills. You begin by asking yourself what you know and what you can do that an employer would consider desirable. Your task is to identify skills that are marketable. According to one survey of employers, more than 90% of the people they interviewed could not adequately describe the skills they possessed.[10] To help you identify your skills, we describe three types: adaptive skills, transferable skills, and job-related skills.

Adaptive Skills

Allow you to be social and to function every day. They allow you to adjust to a variety of situations. Some of these adaptive skills are based in your personality and include such social qualities as being approachable, warm, good-natured, humble, loyal, committed, and flexible. Other adaptive skills are functional and allow you to get things done, including being able to manage time and meet deadlines; being organized, punctual, and motivated; following instructions, taking initiative, and being resourceful.

Transferable Skills

Are useful in a variety of jobs and positions. These skills include interviewing, conflict management, meeting management, group problem solving, and sales presentation skills. Other important communication-related transferable skills include leading, negotiating, instructing, establishing and maintaining relationships, and counseling. The ability to think critically, to analyze data, and to use technology are other highly valued transferable skills in today’s organizations.

Job-Related Skills

Are specific to a particular occupation. For example, to be an accountant, you need to understand standard accounting practices, (such as double-entry bookkeeping) and the various categories of accounting (such as financial, management, and tax accounting). To be considered for a position as an airline pilot, you need to be able to fly an airplane and to have logged a certain number of flight hours.

Most jobs or professional positions have a *job description*, which is a document outlining the specific skills required for that particular position. The following resources will help you learn more about the various types of jobs and career fields that are available:

- *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, which are more than likely located in your library

- The U.S. Department of Labor's *Occupational Information Network* (O*NET) at www.onetcenter.org
- *JIST* is a publisher devoted to career information. The website at www.jist.com contains helpful information on job descriptions, self-assessment tools, sample resumes, and interview tips.

Before applying and interviewing for a position, you need to conduct an inventory of your job-related skills. Because many college students have limited professional work experience, it's important to identify job-related skills you have developed while a student. For example, many students interested in careers in public relations have taken courses focusing on public relations; students interested in journalism may have worked as staff members for the college newspaper. From experiences such as these, you can begin to identify job-related skills that you're developing that fit the job description. Although you may not be as proficient at the skills as you would prefer, such extracurricular activities are an excellent beginning.

It can be frustrating to read job descriptions that require applicants to have professional work experience or skills that come only after working in the profession for a number of years. It may help to know that although job-related skills are important, a study conducted jointly by the U.S. Department of Labor and the American Association of Counseling and Development, titled *Workplace Basics—The Skills Employers Want*, indicates that adaptive and transferable skills appear to be more important than job-related skills.[11]

The ultimate interview goal is to identify a job that is a good fit with your personality type, skills, and abilities. You begin this process by carefully assessing your adaptive, transferable, and job-related skill sets.

Communication Ethics @ Work

Is Honesty the Best Policy?

Ellen O'Hara, a book editor from New York, may be learning the hard way about lying on your resume.[12] When she told her new employer about her previous salary, she decided to bump up the number by $5,000, hoping to be hired in at the higher rate. It worked. However, when she decided to post to a blog about the idea, she was quickly chastised for her unethical behavior. The criticism was so loud that the blog had to pull down her post and apologize. The blog's founder, Amanda Steinberg, wrote on her site, "We've heard from a number of HR executives in the DailyWorth community that even slight salary history inflations are illegal and could jeopardize your job application, and to that extent, we will be retracting this post completely."[13]

Ms. O'Hara hasn't lost her job over the issue, but it has sparked an intense debate over compensation and unethical job search behavior. So what do you think? Current trends in employment show more workers available than jobs. Job-hunting skills are essential in the sometimes vicious postgrad job search. However, employers are placing more and more scrutiny on their prospective new hires, and you need to stand out from the crowd.

During the job hunt, you must remain ethical. Behaviors that may help you land a job, if unethical, in the end may cost you that same job. Following are guidelines for remaining ethical during the job search:

- **AVOID MISREPRESENTING YOURSELF.** Don't lie on a resume, on a cover letter, or in an interview. Don't put inaccurate or embellished information about your education, experience, training, or salary. These things could cost you big time.
- **DON'T ACCEPT ON-SITE INTERVIEWS IF YOU ARE NOT SERIOUS.** Unless you are seriously considering a particular opportunity, don't accept an offer of an on-site interview. It can be quite clear if you are not serious about an employer, and they will likely not appreciate financing your trip if you don't intend to take their job.
- **DON'T CANCEL AN ON-SITE INTERVIEW.** Unless you have decided to accept another job offer, avoid canceling on-site interviews, which makes you look irresponsible. Word could get around.
- **THOUGHTFULLY ACCEPT AN OFFER.** Don't accept an offer if you are not certain you can commit. And don't back out of an offer once you have accepted. It is best to contact any other employers you have been considering once you decide to accept an offer.

8.2.3: Develop a Resume

A *resume* is a concise, well-organized written description of your background, training, and qualifications for a job. How long should your resume be? Many employers don't expect it to be longer than two pages; some will look only at a one-page resume. (Resumes of experienced career professionals may be longer than two pages, however.) Although your resume is important in helping you land a job, its key function is to help you get an interview—it's how you perform in the interview that determines whether you get the job. Employers rarely hire someone based only on a resume. Most employers spend less than a minute—and some only a few seconds—looking at each resume. Therefore, your resume should be clear and easy to read and should focus on the essential information an employer seeks.

These essential pieces of information should be included on your resume:

- **PERSONAL INFORMATION.** Employers will look for your name, address, phone numbers, email address, and web page address (if you have one). Provide phone numbers where you can be reached during the day and the evening.
- **CAREER OBJECTIVE.** Many employers will want to see your career objective. Make it brief, clear, and focused. You may need to customize your career objective for the different positions you seek.

- **EDUCATION.** Include your major, your degree, your graduation date, and the institution you attended.
- **EXPERIENCE.** List your most recent relevant job first. Include employers' names, dates, and a brief description. For each entry, use the PAR method: What Problems did you encounter? What Actions did you take to solve the problem? What were the Results from your actions?
- **HONORS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.** List any awards, honors, offices held, or other leadership responsibilities.
- **OPTIONAL INFORMATION.** If you have volunteer experience, have traveled, or have computer skills or other pertinent experience, be sure to include this information if it is relevant to your objective and the job.
- **REFERENCES.** *References* are people who can speak positively about your skills and abilities to an employer. At the bottom of your resume, indicate that your references are available on request. If a list of references' is requested, you can attach a separate page.

Most employers will be looking for standard information on your resume. Study the sample resume in Figure 8.1.[14]

Figure 8.1: Sample Resume

Jacqueline Vasquez
109 East 4th Avenue
Edinburg, TX 78539
(956) 282-1052
jlvasquez@yahoo.com

Professional Objective:
Seeking a position in human resources as a training specialist.

Education:
Bachelor of Arts degree
Major: Communication Studies; Minor: Business
The University of Texas–Pan American
Graduation date: May 20XX

Professional Experience:
20XX–Present: Intern, Convergys, McAllen, TX
Assisted in creating a leadership training program. Wrote copy for flyers and display ads. Made cold calls to prospective clients.

20XX–August, 20XX: Intern, Target, Edinburg, TX.
Developed sales training seminar. Coordinated initial plan for writing advertising copy for Crest, Inc.'s ad campaign.

20XX–20XX: Supervisor, S&B Associates, Mission, TX.
Supervised three employees and edited training materials.

20XX–20XX: Advertising sales representative and reporter, *The Pan American*, Edinburg, TX. Sold ads for the university paper and worked as student life reporter.

Other Experiences:
20XX–20XX: Summer jobs and part-time work

Skills:
Team Leadership, Photography, Computer Proficiency, Research and Analysis, Public Speaking, Customer Service

Accomplishments and Honors:
Paid for the majority of my college education while maintaining a 3.5 GPA
Presidential Scholarship
Vice-President of the University of Texas–Pan American's Communication Studies Club
Coordinator of *Panorama*, the student yearbook

Professional Organizations:
American Society for Training and Development
Communication Studies Club
National Communication Association

Interests:
Photography, tennis, softball, theatre

References:
Available on request.

A recent study of hiring managers who are also members of the Society for Human Resource Management report certain preferences regarding resumes:[15]

Findings of the Human Resource Management Report:

- 100% indicated spending less than 5 minutes looking at any one individual resume.
- 66% prefer chronological resumes listing work history and education in reverse order.
- 21% prefer bulleted formats.
- 38% prefer resumes that include all relevant work history, 9% prefer reporting 11 to 15 years of work history, 38% prefer the last 8 to 10 years, another 15% indicating no preference.
- 90% prefer resumes that are tailored to the job or industry.
- 80% indicated that an applicant should explain why he/she was fired or laid off.
- 50% indicated that applicants don't need to draw attention to gaps in work history.
- 68% prefer to get resumes through their websites or emails.
- 60% prefer to get thank-you notes following an interview.

Biggest Mistakes:

- Grammatical errors
- Spelling errors
- Missing job history details and dates

8.2.4: Identify and Research Appropriate Organization, Position, and Contact Person

Once you have your resume in hand, you identify and research the organization, position, and person you will contact to arrange an interview. Some experts suggest that students may want to begin the process of identifying the appropriate position first and the organization second. Others suggest identifying the organization first and the position second. For example, if Anthony is interested in a managerial position, he may want to identify as many entry-level management positions as possible and begin the research process. He doesn't care about the type of organization or industry that is offering the job, as long as it's an entry-level management position. He might end up interviewing to be a manager of a waste management company, a local coffee shop, or the accounts receivable department of a large hospital.

Anthony could also conduct his job search by first identifying the type of organization or industry that he would like to be associated with, and then focusing on finding the right position within the industry. Many students tend to be more certain of the types of organizations they would like to be associated with and less certain of the types of positions that might be available. For example, some students may want to work in the entertainment industry (film, music, restaurants, nightclubs); some may want to work in the health-care field (hospitals, clinics, labs, surgical units, hospice care); others may want to work in the transportation industry (airlines, cruise ships, trains, mass transit). Let's assume that Anthony is interested in airline marketing and sales, but there are no positions available. It may be wise for Anthony to get his foot in the door of the industry by interviewing for a position as a ticket agent and then searching for jobs within the industry using trade publications, internal job postings, and professional networks.

According to Richard Nelson Bolles, author of *What Color Is Your Parachute*?—a popular job-hunting book—students tend to underestimate the power of their personal networks (friends, family, acquaintances) when researching and locating a job. The three worst ways to look for a job, according to Bolles—which also happen to be the ways most often used by college students—are these:

- Using the Internet
- Mailing out resumes to employers at random
- Answering advertisements in professional or trade journals

The three best ways to look for a job, according to Bolles—and the least often used by college students—are:

- Asking for job leads from family members, friends, people in the community, and staff at career centers—in other words, using personal networks
- Knocking on the door of any employer, factory, or office that interests you, whether the firm currently has a vacancy or not
- Using the Yellow Pages to identify subjects or fields of interest to you in the town or city where you want to work, and then calling up the employers listed, to ask if they are hiring for the type of position you can do[16]

8.2.5: Write a Cover Letter

Once you have inventoried your skills, developed a resume, and identified the organization and position you want to interview for and the person who will conduct the interview, you need to write a cover letter. A *cover letter* accompanies a resume and is a sales pitch that argues why you're the best candidate for the position. Cover letters need to be targeted to a particular job and person. You want your cover letter to result in a job interview, so it needs to be written persuasively and to argue that your educational training, work experience, and career interests are a fit for the position. Figure 8.2 is one example of a cover letter. For additional samples, visit www.jobweb.com/Resources/Library/Samples.

As Figure 8.2 illustrates, a cover letter should include the following parts:

- **INTRODUCTION.** If you're responding to an advertisement, refer to the job title and the publication in which you found the ad. If you're applying for a position that someone referred you to, indicate the name of the person who referred you.
- **BODY.** This section should show that you have the skills and knowledge required and that you're a good fit for the position and the organization. Provide enough details to convey that you're familiar with the organization and the requirements of the position.
- **ACTION STEP.** In this part of the letter, you want to let your reader know the next step you will take—usually, this is a request for an interview. Let your reader know when you will call and your intentions when you call.
- **CONCLUSION.** End the letter by expressing your appreciation for the reader's time and consideration of your resume.

Figure 8.2: Sample Cover Letter

1234 West Avenue
McAllen, TX 78541
April 10, 20XX

Ms. Maria Pulido
Director of Human Resources
University Hospital
1201 West University Drive
McAllen, Texas 78541-4646

Dear Ms. Pulido:

I am applying for the Communication Specialist position that was advertised through the University of Texas–Pan American Career Services Office. I consider this position to be a fit with my educational training, work experience, and career interests.

First, my educational training has prepared me to manage communication to internal and external audiences, two aspects of the position mentioned in the advertisement. I have completed a number of courses related to the position you advertised, including interpersonal communication, organizational communication, health communication, and writing for the media. These courses focused not only on developing messages targeted to specific audiences, but also on developing relationships with members of internal and external audiences.

Second, I have work experience in corporate communication that will allow me to immediately make a contribution to University Hospital. As a communication intern for Memorial Hospital, I was responsible for conducting survey research to assess employees' needs regarding internal communication and then developing communication products and services to meet those needs.

Third, this position is a fit in terms of my career interest, which is to become a communication professional in the health field. I enjoy the hospital environment and working with health professionals. University Hospital has an excellent reputation and I would like to become a part of the team responsible for this reputation.

Please consider my request for a personal interview to discuss further my educational training, work experience, and career interests. I will call next week to see whether a meeting can be arranged. Should you wish to reach me, please feel free to contact me at 956-566-0899 or pthomas@utpa.edu.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Patrick Thomas

Patrick Thomas

8.2.6: Schedule the Interview

Finally, it's time to schedule the interview, which means communicating with the identified person and asking for an interview. According to career consultant Michael Farr, most jobs are filled before they are advertised, so if you have a choice, don't wait until the job is advertised to ask for an interview.[17] In fact, one study reports that up to 32 percent of all open positions are filled by internal transfers or promotions.[18]

> The best time to search for a job is before anyone else knows about it. Most jobs are filled by someone the employer meets before a job is formally open. So the key is to meet people who can hire you before a job is available. Instead of saying, "Do you have any jobs open?" say "I realize you may not have any openings now, but I would still like to talk to you about the possibility of future openings."[19]

Some career consultants suggest that arranging an interview by phone is preferred to using email because email is easily ignored. Phone calls get the contact person's attention and provide a more interactive experience, and saying no to a potential interviewee is harder on the phone. It is also recommended that you develop a phone script prior to placing a phone call to ask for an interview. This script should take no more than 30 seconds to communicate. Here are a few pointers for developing your script:[20]

1. **INTRODUCE YOURSELF.** "Hello, my name is. . . ."
2. **STATE YOUR INTEREST IN A POSITION.** "I am interested in a position as. . . ." Do not ask "Do you have any jobs?" This question is easily answered with a "No." If you're interested in a hotel management position, then you need to state "I'm interested in a management position within the hospitality industry."
3. **DESCRIBE YOUR STRENGTHS AND SKILLS.** Describe your transferable and job-related skills. "I have well-developed communication skills, including speaking clearly, listening actively, and solving customer service problems in a constructive manner. I also have experience using hotel reservation software."
4. **MENTION YOUR ADAPTIVE TRAITS.** "I am a committed and loyal employee who is dependable, mature, and resourceful. I learn quickly and require minimal direction."
5. **ASK FOR THE INTERVIEW.** "When can I come in for an interview to discuss employment opportunities with your organization?" This appropriate and assertive question makes it more challenging for a potential employer to reject your request.

8.2.7: Conducting a Job Interview

OPEN THE INTERVIEW In many ways, a job interview is like a first date. Although the interviewee and the interviewer are vaguely familiar with each other—assuming that both have done their homework—there is still much uncertainty. This uncertainty usually causes you to feel nervous and apprehensive because you don't know the outcome of the interview. Will the interviewer like me? Will the interviewer consider me qualified for the position? Will I get a second interview? Will I get the job? Interestingly, many interviewers also find the process of interviewing nerve-racking. Research suggests that many interviewers have limited experience in interviewing others. Because of this inexperience, they too experience anxiety and fear.[21] The purpose of the interview is to reduce this uncertainty and to determine if there is a good fit between the position and the organization and the interviewee's skills, experiences, and values. Both the interviewee and the interviewer must agree on whether there is a good fit.

To open a job interview, it is important for the interviewee to make a positive first impression, including dressing appropriately and greeting the interviewer in a pleasant, positive manner.

To open the job interview, it's important for the interviewee to make a positive first impression.[22]

The following factors will help to make a positive first impression:[23,24,25]

Acknowledge the Administrative Assistant

Never underestimate the power and influence of an administrative assistant or other support staff. Did you greet the person in a pleasant manner? Did you establish rapport? Did you arrive early, just in time, or late for the job interview? Did you leave the waiting area as you found it when you arrived? Did you wish the person a pleasant day when you left?

Dress Appropriately

Several studies have found that interviewers judged job candidates' credibility and attractiveness on the basis of their interview dress rather than on their interviewing skills. When interviewing for professional positions, wear clean, pressed clothes that appropriately cover the body (no exposed midriffs); wear polished shoes (no flip-flops, sandals, or open-toed flat shoes); be well-groomed including clean and styled hair, clean and appropriate-length fingernails, fresh breath, and no strong cologne or perfume; wear moderate amounts of jewelry; remove hats, sunglasses, cell phone earpiece devices, earphones, and chewing gum before the interview; cover or hide tattoos, and remove any jewelry in a nontraditional location, such as nose, tongue, or multiple ear piercings.

⊗ Assess Your Social Media Image

What would an interviewer learn about you if he or she were to Google your name or view your Facebook page? If you find something in a Google search that you'd rather the world didn't see, contact the site's owner and ask that it be removed. Make sure your Facebook privacy settings allow you to control who gets to view your postings and photos.

⊗ Make the Interviewer Feel Comfortable with You

In some situations, the interviewer may be as nervous as you are. When introducing yourself, offer a warm greeting, direct eye contact, and a firm handshake, and express your appreciation for the interview. Begin a conversation by commenting on something in the interviewer's office: "I notice the picture of the sailboat. Do you sail?" This type of informal conversation has been shown to reduce the nervous energy that both interviewer and interviewee may be experiencing.

Some companies are beginning to request video resumes in addition to the traditional paper resume.[26] For many employers, "showing" (video resumes) is becoming more important than "telling" (paper resumes). According to one human resource professional, video captures personality and helps an employer determine whether the individual would be a good fit for the organization.[27,28]

⊗ Pointers to Prepare a Video Resume

- **Keep it brief.** Managers have limited time. You don't want the interviewer or hiring manager to turn you off before you have showed them who you are and what you can do for them.
- **Dress appropriately.** Your video resume is going to be the first impression. You need to dress like you're going to a job interview.
- **Adapt to the audience.** Adapt your video to the position, organization, and industry. The video you prepare for a position at a bank should not be the same video you prepare for a position at an art gallery.
- **Show your personality.** This is your chance to go beyond your paper resume. Allow the future employer to see your personality and your communication style and to see why you're a good fit for their organization.

Video resumes and e-portfolios can capture an applicant's personality and showcase his or her presentation skills and abilities.

8.2.8: Process the Interview

Be prepared to answer standard job interview questions. Numerous interview guides agree on some of the most popular interview questions:[29]

- Can you tell me about yourself?
- Why do you want this job?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Where do you see yourself in the future?
- If I called your former employers, what would they say about you?
- Why did you leave your last job?

Continuously find ways to demonstrate how you can help the organization meet its needs and goals. We'll discuss a few strategies that may help you appropriately adapt your message:[30]

- **TELL A STORY.** Discuss your accomplishments by presenting a specific situation you were involved in, the people involved, the challenge, how you overcame the challenge, and the outcome. Use enough detail so that the interviewer can visualize your accomplishment.
- **PROVIDE QUANTITY.** When discussing your accomplishments, quantify them—mention how many customers served or the budgets and accounts for which you were responsible.
- **EMPHASIZE RESULTS.** Offer data to support results. For example, "I increased sales by 5 percent each year I was with the organization."
- **CONNECT YOUR RESULTS TO THE ORGANIZATION'S NEEDS.** Make sure the interviewer can connect your accomplishment to the needs of the organization—for example, "With my experiences and accomplishments, I feel confident that I can meet the needs you have expressed during this interview, specifically the need to increase sales."

There comes a time during most job interviews when the interviewer asks if you have any questions. This is your cue to take the lead in the interview dance. The questions you ask during the job interview can be revealing, so you want to make sure you're asking questions that reflect positively on you. Here are five additional questions that job-hunting experts recommend asking. Listening carefully to how these questions are answered should give you a fairly accurate picture of what's going on behind the interview:[31]

1. "What priorities will need to be addressed immediately in this position?" Many times, the job description, which details the duties of the position, does not jibe with how the interviewer describes the duties of the job. It is important to have the duties and responsibilities clarified before accepting a position.

2. "How long was the previous person here?" If there is a "revolving door" with this particular position, meaning that the organization cannot keep anyone in the position, this reflects a problem with the position itself and/or the supervisory staff.
3. "Tell me about your management style. How do you bring out the best in your employees?" The answer to these questions reveals how the manager works with his or her employees. Is the manager a hands-on or hands-off manager?
4. "What types of people tend to excel here? Does the organization have a formal or an informal feel? Is the organization more traditional, or is it more progressive?" Answers to these questions let you know about the work culture and if you're a fit with the culture.
5. "How long have you been here? Why do you stay?" The answers to these questions will give an indication of the health of the department or company. If there is constant turnover, then there are probably going to be a lot of inconsistencies in the work of the department and the department will feel splintered and fractured.

8.2.9: Close the Interview

To close a job interview properly, you need to do the following: (1) express thanks and appreciation for the interviewer's time, (2) ask for the job, and (3) ask "next step" questions. A few task and relational messages may help you close a job interview.

The following relational messages reflect competent communication behaviors because they're other focused and illustrate your awareness of the interviewer's limited time and energies:

- "I would like to thank you for your time. I realize interviewing takes a lot of time, and I appreciate the time you have given me."
- "I know you must be incredibly busy, and I appreciate the time you have given me."

Although many interviewees find it awkward and difficult to ask for the job they just interviewed for, doing so is incredibly important and reinforces in the interviewer's mind your commitment to a particular position:

- "I hope I have made it clear why I feel my skills and experiences meet your needs. I would like to be given a chance to join your organization. Can you offer me the job?"
- "I would like to be given the opportunity to help you meet your needs and the needs of this organization. Could I have this job?"
- "I would like the opportunity to serve this organization in this position. Is that possible?"

To plan the next step of a job search, you need answers to the following questions before leaving the job interview:

- "Do you want me to come back for another interview, perhaps with some other members of the staff?"
- "When may I expect to hear from you?"

8.2.10: Following Up on a Job Interview

Following up on a job interview is very similar to following up on an information-gathering interview. You need to complete two tasks: express thanks and follow through on any additional requests made by the interviewer.

EXPRESS THANKS People have a tendency to remember and be influenced by information received at the beginning and end of a social interaction.[32] This effect is referred to as the principle of primacy and recency. There is a strong possibility that your interviewer will remember the first and last moments of his or her encounter with you. Because of this effect—and because it is common courtesy to do so—it is important to send a thank-you note to the interviewer immediately following the interview. Below are a few pointers for preparing and sending thank-you notes:[33]

- *Email or handwritten notes.* Depending on the timing and formality, an email message may be more appropriate. For example, if the employer is going to fill the position immediately, you may want to forward an email to save time. If the organizational culture is more formal, a handwritten note may be more appropriate.
- *Don't skimp on paper.* Stationery stores have quality thank-you notes and cards in a variety of styles.
- *Err on the side of formality.* It's preferable to write "Dear Ms. Saavedra" rather than "Dear Marisa."
- *Be friendly.* Remember that the purpose of the thank-you note is to thank someone for doing something for you. Although it's best to avoid making a hard sales pitch in a thank-you note, you can provide a subtle reminder of your skills, qualifications, and accomplishments.
- *Don't forget your signature.* Sign your first and last names and make sure that both are legible.
- *Be prompt.* Prepare and mail your note within the first 24 hours following an interview.
- *Text messaging is generally not appropriate.* "Thx for the IView! I Wud ? 2 Work 4 U!!" is too casual and highly inappropriate for a thank-you note. A recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* notes that corporate recruiters and hiring managers are turning away otherwise qualified job candidates because of their lack of judgment when it comes to using technology to communicate and the informality of their communication.[34]

Figure 8.3: Sample Thank-You

March 8, 20XX

Dear Ms. Saavedra,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to interview for the spa manager position at SPA360. After our interview, I am more convinced that I am a good fit for this position and your organization.

Although my experience managing a restaurant may at first appear to be unrelated to your position, I consider my management experience and skills to be highly transferable to your spa. I have a proven track record in managing a business that consistently provides superior service while also yielding a considerable profit at the end of each business cycle. I feel confident in my ability to manage your spa in a similar manner.

Per your request, I have enclosed a list of professional references, including their names and contact information. These individuals look forward to hearing from you soon.

Again, thank you for taking the time to meet with me. I enjoyed our visit and learning more about you and your organization.

Best wishes,

Rick Gonzalez
(956) 287-3421

Figure 8.3 shows a sample thank-you note that would be appropriate following a job interview.

FOLLOW THROUGH In many job interviews, the interviewer asks you for additional information, or you may have offered to provide additional information following the interview. If you said you would forward a list of professional references as soon as possible, then this is what you must do. Interviewers notice whether or not interviewees follow through. In fact, one of your authors worked with a manager who purposely made a number of tedious requests during job interviews to see if job candidates followed instructions carefully. The positions the manager was trying to fill required professionals who were detailed oriented, and this is how this particular manager assessed the job candidates' attention to detail.

8.3: Appraisal Interviews

8.3 Analyze ways to get the maximum benefit in an appraisal interview.

An *appraisal interview*, also known as a *performance review*, is an interview in which a leader or employer shares information with an employee about his or her job performance. The appraisal interview serves as a feedback loop between the leader and the employee, in which two types of feedback are usually discussed: supportive and corrective. *Supportive feedback* encourages desirable behavior. *Corrective feedback* attempts to alter negative or inappropriate behavior. Leaders are wise to use both supportive and corrective feedback to achieve maximum benefit in a performance review.[35]

The most effective appraisal interviews are problem-solving conversations that use both top-down and bottom-up communication.

In most organizations, employees receive an appraisal interview from their supervisors, who detail where the employees are exceeding performance standards, where they are meeting standards, and where they are failing to meet standards. In traditional organizations, appraisal interviews usually include top-down communication with the supervisor sharing information with the employee; the structure of this type of interview is formal, and the interview occurs once a year. According to Norman Maier, an expert on appraisal interviews, this type of appraisal interview is referred to as the "tell and sell" method.[36] The supervisor's role is to tell and then to sell, or persuade the employee, that his or her observations are correct. Research reveals that the formal top-down approach to evaluating employee performance usually leads to disgruntled employees and fails to correct inappropriate behaviors.[37]

In less traditional organizations, appraisal interviews usually include two-way communication—top-down and bottom-up—with the supervisor and the employee sharing information with each other. The structure of this type of appraisal interview is less formal; some organizations refer to these as *coaching sessions.*[38] It is not uncommon for a manager and an employee to have a number of coaching sessions throughout the year. According to Dayton Fandray, this type of an appraisal interview is a problem-solving conversation with the supervisor serving as a coach or counselor.[39] Many of these appraisal interviews include an employee's self-appraisal of his or her performance. Rather than the manager informing the employee of appropriate and inappropriate behavior, the employee takes the lead and informs the manager of his or her performance. This approach to appraisal interviews has been shown to produce a number of positive outcomes for both employees and organizations.[40]

Many college graduates find themselves in entry-level leadership positions in which one of their duties is to conduct appraisal interviews with their team members. To assist you in developing this important interview skill, we next discuss preparing the interview, conducting the interview, and closing the interview.

8.3.1: Preparing an Appraisal Interview

To prepare the appraisal interview, you need to identify the interview goal, analyze the individual's performance, and arrange the interview.

IDENTIFY THE INTERVIEW GOAL The primary goals of most appraisal interviews are for the interviewer (1) to acknowledge and reinforce employee behaviors that meet or exceed performance expectations by using supportive feedback and (2) to identify and discuss employee behavior that fails to meet performance expectations using corrective feedback. Your secondary goals are for employees to feel supported and valued and to understand how their workplace behaviors affect others within the work unit or organization.

ANALYZE THE INDIVIDUAL'S PERFORMANCE You begin preparing the appraisal interview by analyzing the individual's job performance. Most business and professional positions have goals or standards that employees are expected to meet. For example, one of the authors used to work for an international airline as a service manager. His annual performance review was based on how well he met the following performance standards:

- A 10% decrease in customer complaints
- A 20% reduction in employees' use of sick time
- A 5% increase in on-time departures
- A 15% reduction in employee injuries on the job

These four performance standards guided the annual appraisal interview that his manager conducted with him.

When preparing for the appraisal interview, an interviewer must be able to answer the following three questions prior to meeting with the employee:

1. Which performance expectations does the employee exceed?
2. Which performance expectations does the employee meet?
3. Which performance expectations does the employee fail to meet?

If the employee is failing to meet performance expectations, then the interviewer must also conduct what is referred to as a *gaps analysis*, which is an analysis of the identified gap between a performance standard and the employee's actual performance.[41] For example, if the airline service manager was only able to increase on-time departures by 1% for the year, then there would be a gap of four percentage points between the performance expectation and actual performance. To conduct a gaps analysis, an interviewer must be able to answer the following three questions:

1. Where is the employee's performance now?
2. Where does the employee's performance need to be?
3. What is causing the gap?

One of the main reasons appraisal interviews are conducted is to provide employees with corrective feedback to help them reach their performance goals. As an interviewer, you must be prepared to discuss what is causing any gap between the performance standard and an employee's actual performance and help the employee identify ways to close the gap. Ferdinand Fournies, a leading training consultant, conducted an important study in which he asked 25,000 supervisors and managers the following question: "Why don't employees do what they are supposed to do?" Here are the top thirteen reasons:[42]

Why Don't Employees Perform?

1. They don't know what they are supposed to do.
2. They don't know how to do it.
3. They don't know why they should do it.
4. There are obstacles beyond their control.

5. They don't think it will work.
6. They think their way is better.
7. They are not motivated.
8. They are personally incapable of doing it (personal limits).
9. There is not enough time for them to do it.
10. They are working on wrong priority items.
11. They think they are doing it (no feedback).
12. They have poor managers.
13. They have personal problems.

When providing corrective feedback to your employees, you can use Fournies's research to guide how you provide corrective feedback. The reasons Fournies identified may assist you in helping the employee close the performance gap.

Technology and Communication @ Work

Performance Review Software

Before leaders conduct appraisal interviews with employees, they're responsible for writing performance appraisals for individual employees. Preparing written performance appraisals are time-consuming and can cause much stress for new leaders.

In the past, leaders used countless paper forms and records to complete a performance review. Today, a number of software tools are available to help you. These tools help you do the following:

- Review past performance reviews.
- Develop annual goals for individual employees or teams of employees.
- Track progress where both supervisors and employees can make notations throughout the year.
- Document employee performance with the help of performance notes, with "cut and paste" programmed scripts that help you describe employees who are underperforming in a constructive manner.
- Communicate job performance to employees using an embedded email tool, which research suggests has been shown to be more timely and to help employees save face and endure less embarrassment.[43]

Performance appraisal software not only saves leaders time but also gives them the language they need to prepare appraisals that are descriptive and evaluative. These systems enable leaders to focus on identifying top talent and developing employees to better fit the needs of an organization.

The top ten most recommended employee performance appraisal and review software tools are listed at http://www.softwareadvice.com/hr/performance-review-software-comparison.

SCHEDULE THE INTERVIEW Appraisal interviews need to be scheduled when both the interviewer and the interviewee have ample time to have a private conversation about the interviewee's job performance. Timing can be important and must be considered when arranging the appraisal interview. For example, if the interview is going to include considerable corrective feedback, is it best to conduct the interview at the beginning, the middle, or the end of the workday? If you conduct the interview at the beginning of the workday, the employee is probably rested; however, the interview may affect the employee's job performance for the rest of the day following the interview. If you conduct the interview at the end of the workday, you don't have to worry about affecting the employee's job performance because he or she will be going home following the interview. However, the employee is likely to be tired and may not be as receptive to corrective feedback as he or she might be when feeling rested. We suggest that you be mindful of the employee and provide him or her with some scheduling options so that together you can select the time that works best.

WRITING PROMPT

What role does scheduling play when conducting an appraisal interview that will include considerable corrective feedback?

▶ **The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.**

Submit

8.3.2: Conducting an Appraisal Interview

Like information-gathering and job interviews, an appraisal interview includes three activities: opening, processing, and closing.

OPEN THE INTERVIEW An appraisal interview is a more sensitive conversation than an information-gathering or a job interview because it includes a discussion of job performance. Thus it's important to open the interview appropriately by establishing a supportive tone. Opening the appraisal interview involves three tasks: expressing thanks, stating your purpose, and describing the process.

THANK THE EMPLOYEE FOR HIS OR HER TIME. Although the appraisal interview is usually not optional (meaning that employees are usually required to participate), you can show your appreciation for the employee's time. This type of courtesy indicates that you are mindful of others, which may help set the tone for the appraisal interview.

STATE THE PURPOSE FOR THE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW. For example, "The purpose of an appraisal interview is to help us develop employees. We want employees to be successful, and this interview allows us to have a conversation about what's helping you to become successful and what's getting in the way of you becoming successful."

PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW. Research suggests that productive and constructive appraisal interviews tend to be less formal and structured and to feel more like a give-and-take conversation in which interviewer and interviewee spend equal amounts of time talking and listening to each other.[44] Most appraisal interviews begin with a review of supportive feedback followed by a review of corrective feedback: "I would like this to be a conversation. I will begin by sharing with you some of my observations about where I see you excelling on the job. Following these observations, I would like to hear your assessment of areas where you excel. Then I'll provide you with some feedback about areas of your job performance that need more development. Following this, I'd like to have your impressions of my feedback: Where do you agree? Where do you disagree?"

PROCESS THE INTERVIEW Processing the interview includes providing supportive and corrective feedback as well as being receptive to receiving supportive and corrective feedback. During this process you will use the principles and skills we have been discussing throughout this text, including having an awareness of your communication, using verbal and nonverbal messages, listening, and adapting appropriately.

The following strategies may help convey supportive feedback to another person in an appraisal interview: [45,46,47]

Make It Timely

Timeliness refers to how quickly you provide feedback to someone following the performance of appropriate behaviors. Have you ever received feedback too late? If so, you probably didn't even remember what you did to deserve the supportive feedback. It's best to provide supportive feedback immediately following the behaviors you find appropriate and desirable.

Make It Specific

Specificity refers to the level of detail contained in the feedback messages. Feedback messages that are more specific and detailed are preferable. For example, rather than saying, "You're doing a great job working with our customers," say, "During the past twelve months, you have grown your customer base by 50 percent and increased your sales by 62 percent over the prior year. This is exceptional performance."

Make It Frequent

Frequency refers to the number of times feedback is given. Unfortunately, people working in business and professional settings don't receive supportive feedback as often as is warranted. To maximize the effectiveness of supportive feedback, it needs to be communicated frequently—not just once a year during the appraisal interview.

Make It Appropriate

With all types of feedback (both supportive and corrective), it's important to be aware of the other person's feelings and to appropriately adapt the feedback accordingly. Sensitive feedback demonstrates a concern for the recipient's feelings.

One of the more challenging duties of a professional who is responsible for leading others is to provide them with corrective feedback. Research suggests that employees are more receptive to corrective feedback if they have a quality relationship with their supervisor and if they perceive their supervisor as successful, knowledgeable, and caring or understanding of others.[48] Put simply, a quality relationship between supervisor and employee will undoubtedly enhance how constructive the employee perceives corrective feedback to be.

Like supportive feedback, corrective feedback should be communicated in a specific, timely, and sensitive manner. The following communication behaviors have been shown to enhance the effectiveness of the appraisal interview:[49]

DESCRIBE THE PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIORS. Using "I" language, describe what you see the employee doing (nonverbal messages) or hear him or her saying (verbal messages) that remains a problem. For example, "I *see* you coming to meetings late and I *hear* you blocking all of the proposed ideas without offering any of your own ideas."

GET AGREEMENT THAT A PROBLEM EXISTS. Ask "Do you agree that this is a problem?"

- If the employee agrees, ask the person to paraphrase. For example, "I'm glad you agree. In your own words, what do you hear me saying the problem is?"
- If the employee does not agree, then adapt your communication accordingly. For example, "Let me try describing the problem from a different perspective."

MUTUALLY DISCUSS ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS. According to Fournies, people are more likely to adopt solutions they generate than solutions that are imposed on them.[50] It's best to get the person involved in generating possible solutions to the problem:

- "What are some possible solutions or ways to remedy the problem?"
- "What could you begin doing that would solve the problem?"

MUTUALLY AGREE ON ACTION TO BE TAKEN TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. To do this, the leader and the employee must carefully listen to each other and agree on which solution will be adopted to change the problematic behavior. To confirm your understanding, it's important to paraphrase—for example, "This is the solution that I hear you agreeing to in order to solve the problem. . . . Is that correct?"

BE NONVERBALLY RESPONSIVE. Many people, when receiving corrective feedback, have a tendency to become nonverbally *unresponsive.* They may take a step back, cross their arms, look away, and sigh. We usually interpret these verbal and nonverbal messages as defensiveness. Interestingly, defensiveness and the nonverbal behaviors that signal defensiveness are contagious. People have a tendency to "catch" each other's emotions.[51] When one person acts defensively, the other person has a natural tendency to mimic the person's nonverbal behavior (e.g., take a step back, cross arms, look away, and sigh) without being aware of it, and eventually this person becomes defensive.[52] To break this natural cycle of defensiveness, it is important to be aware that it happens. Interviewers are encouraged to remain nonverbally responsive even when their natural instinct is to become defensive.

Although communicating corrective feedback is difficult for an interviewer, equally if not more challenging is receiving corrective feedback as an interviewee. You may find the following guidelines useful when listening to corrective feedback; these are known as the four As: acknowledge, ask, align, and add.[53]

First, *acknowledge* the feedback. Listen carefully, rather than jumping the gun and immediately explaining your behavior, making excuses for your behavior, or informing the interviewer that his or her observations are inaccurate. Acknowledge the corrective feedback both nonverbally and verbally, by paraphrasing what you heard—for example, "This is what I hear you saying. . . . Is that correct?"

Second, *ask* for additional information to help you better understand the problem. Your questions will also convey to the interviewer that you're interested in the corrective feedback, whether you agree with it or not. Also, the more the interviewer feels that you have fully listened to and understand the corrective feedback, the more likely the interviewer is to be receptive to your response.

Third, *align* with something the interviewer has said; in other words, find agreement—for example, "I agree with your observation that I am consistently late to meetings. I can see why this is a problem and why you might be frustrated with me." Following this agreement, offer an apology and detail how the behavior will be changed.

Fourth, *add* your point of view if you don't agree with the corrective feedback. You do this by first asking permission—for example, "Is this a good time for me to share my observations with you?" or "May I tell you my perspective?"

CLOSE THE INTERVIEW To close an appraisal interview, you need to accomplish two tasks. First, you need to express your thanks for the interviewee's taking the time to discuss his or her job performance with you. Second, you need to inform the interviewee of how you plan to follow up the appraisal interview. Most interviews will result in an action plan or a detailed set of steps for addressing performance gaps. You want to be able to assess how well the plan works. Thus you might tell the employee "Before you leave, I would like to recommend that we follow up this appraisal interview. I would like to meet in two months to review your progress."

8.3.3: Following Up an Appraisal Interview

Unfortunately, supervisors sometimes neglect to follow up on appraisal interviews because of time constraints or other tasks that take priority.[54] However, it's essential that you, as the interviewer, follow up your appraisal interview with additional feedback if you're serious about helping another individual change his or her behavior.[55] You do this by acknowledging changed behavior and by readdressing unchanged behavior.

ACKNOWLEDGE CHANGED BEHAVIOR Acknowledging changed behavior communicates to the interviewee that you're serious about wanting the interviewee to change. It also communicates that you care about the interviewee and his or her behavior. Finally, acknowledging changed behavior serves as reinforcement for continued behavioral change.[56] You acknowledge changed behavior by communicating supportive feedback that is timely, specific, frequent, and communicated in a sensitive manner.[57]

READDRESS UNCHANGED BEHAVIOR If the interviewee has not changed the behavior discussed during an appraisal interview, then it's important to continue the dialogue. Keep in mind Fournies's research, which examined the reasons employees don't do what they're supposed to. Examining and probing some of these reasons with the interviewee may give you additional insight into why the interviewee has not changed his or her behavior.

Recap

Providing Supportive and Corrective Feedback

Feedback Type	Strategy	Example
Supportive Feedback	Make it timely.	Praise an employee who effectively leads a meeting as soon as the meeting is over.
	Make it specific.	Tell an employee that he has the department's highest percentage of policy additions this month, rather than simply referring to him as a top seller.
	Make it frequent.	Share with an employee whenever you notice effective behavior throughout the quarter, rather than waiting for her quarterly review.

Feedback Type	Strategy	Example
	Be sensitive.	Understand that all messages, even supportive feedback, may need to be adapted to the listener.
Corrective Feedback	Describe the problematic behaviors.	Say "I see you using company time to shop online" rather than "You never do your job."
	Get agreement that a problem exists.	Ask the employee to confirm that she has been doing what you describe.
	Mutually discuss alternative solutions.	Ask the employee if he has some ideas for solutions to the problem.
	Mutually agree on action to be taken to solve the problem.	You have not come to a conclusion until both people agree on the solution. Ask the employee if she thinks a suggested action will solve the problem.
	Be nonverbally responsive.	Make eye contact, listen respectfully to the employee's views, and be careful not to mimic any defensive behaviors used by the employee, which could cause you to become defensive.

Summary: Interviewing Goals

8.1: Discuss why information-gathering interviews are the most common form of interview.

Information-gathering interviews include any interview intended to get specific ideas, details, or information from others. This is the most commonly used interview.

Preparing for an information-gathering interview involves first identifying the goal of the interview, then selecting the appropriate person, and, finally, scheduling the interview.

When conducting an information-gathering interview, properly open the interview by establishing rapport and clarifying the goals, then ask and answer questions honestly and clearly. As you close the interview, include any important follow-up information.

Follow up an information-gathering interview by expressing thanks, processing your notes, and taking the next step where necessary.

8.2: Evaluate the different aspects of job interviews.

Conduct a self-assessment and identify your interview goal. Then develop a resume and research the best organizations, divisions, and contact people for your industry. Use the Internet for a job search.

Make a good first impression, maintain a professional appearance and demeanor, establish rapport, answer questions clearly and honestly, and close the interview with a thank-you. Be prepared with questions for your interviewer, follow up with an expression of thanks, and follow through on any other actions that need to be taken.

8.3: Analyze ways to get the maximum benefit in an appraisal interview.

To prepare, identify the goals of the interview, then analyze the employee's performance against the goals or standards of the organization, and, finally, schedule the interview.

When conducting a performance-appraisal interview, open, process, and close the interview using sensitivity, remaining verbally and nonverbally responsive. Use feedback strategies to help ensure mutual understanding.

Follow up an appraisal interview by exchanging thank-yous and also acknowledging any appropriate changes in behavior. If those changes have not taken place, then follow up by readdressing the unchanged behavior.

SHARED WRITING: JOB INTERVIEW STRATEGIES

Invent a hypothetical organization that is currently hiring. Write out an exhaustive list of potential interview questions for a certain position. With a classmate, take turns role-playing the interview from each perspective. The interviewer should select questions randomly from the list, so the interviewee will need to prepare in advance as he or she would for a real job interview. As the interviewee, how did you demonstrate that you could help the organization meet its needs and goals?

▶ A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post   0 characters | 140 minimum

Chapter 8 Quiz: Interviewing Goals

Chapter 9
Collaborating in Teams

Learning Objectives

9.1 Explain the different elements of effective teamwork

9.2 Describe and evaluate the different dynamics that come into play in team situations

9.3 Describe how to improve team dynamics

9.4 Analyze different approaches to improving teamwork

Do you or your family own any Tupperware? Chances are the answer is yes. Invented in the 1940s, the lidded plastic bowls and other kitchen storage containers that keep food fresh by burping air out of the container became so ubiquitous that in recent years, the product could be found in 90% of American homes. But the pervasive influence of Tupperware almost didn't happen. The inventor of Tupperware, Earl Silas Tupper, was a genius at creating new products, but he didn't know how to sell them. Fortunately, Tupper met Brownie Wise, an energetic marketing genius. Wise's ideas for home sales meetings known as Tupperware parties made *Tupperware* a household word. Worldwide today, a Tupperware party is held every 2.5 seconds, resulting in annual sales of over $1.2 billion.[1] Tupper and Wise's collaboration is a testament to how people with different skills and talents, working together in groups, can create something that neither one could do on their own.[2]

Leading Questions

1. Brownie Wise and Earl Tupper each had different talents: Wise was the salesperson and Tupper the inventor. When have you been part of a group or team that included people with different talents and backgrounds that accomplished more than was possible if the individual group members had worked alone?
2. When you have worked with people who were different from you, what strategies have you used to bridge the differences? What would you like to learn that would help you collaborate with people who have different skills, talents, and backgrounds than you?

One research study found that at the turn of the millennium, over 70% of corporations were team based, and the number was continuing to grow.[3] Given increased globalization and management's increased emphasis on collaboration, it's likely the number of team-based organizations will continue to grow.

At the heart of effective teamwork is effective communication. Yet many employees are not equipped with the skills they need. One study found that corporations spend over $200 million annually training people to work together in teams.[4] Because you'll spend considerable time collaborating with others, you'll benefit by developing teamwork skills early. This chapter offers insights into how groups and teams work, which can help you be successful in team-based organizations.

9.1: Elements of Teamwork

9.1 Explain the different elements of effective teamwork.

Teamwork works, whether making Tupperware or the latest technology. In business and professional settings, most truly powerful transformations happen through collaboration. One person's idea connected to another person's vision has resulted in such innovations as eBay, Google, Infosys, Apple, Amazon, and Dell computers. One person with one idea may be the seed that starts a company, but it's collaboration that makes companies grow. Although one person may be appointed the team leader, each person in a team can exhibit leadership skills to make a team successful. Not only *can* each team member exhibit leadership—he or she *should* do so. Leadership (influencing through communication) is a responsibility of all team members. In this chapter we discuss how to develop leadership skills when collaborating with others.

There is clear evidence that in contemporary organizations you *will* work in small groups and teams. Today's technology makes it easier for you to collaborate in teams with someone across the hall or across the globe. Estimates suggest that lower-level to mid-level managers will spend at least one-third of their time in groups and as much as two-thirds of their day working in teams, attending meetings, or preparing for collaboration.[5] As you climb higher in any organization, you are likely to spend *more* rather than less time working in small groups. In fact, research suggests that your entire workplace is likely to be a *team-based organization*, one that has more of a flat structure than tall, hierarchical structure (one with many layers and levels of supervisors).[6]

Why do we spend so much of our workdays collaborating with others? The simple fact is that, most of the time, two heads are indeed better than one. We work collaboratively because research suggests that when we collaborate we usually end up with a better outcome.[7] Here's why:[8]

- Teams have more information available to them than individuals do.
- Teams stimulate creativity.
- Teamwork increases the likelihood that we'll remember what we discuss because we're actively involved in the discussion.
- Team members are usually more satisfied with a decision if they are involved in the discussion.
- Team members learn about themselves through feedback they receive from their fellow team members.

Despite the advantages of teamwork, however, some people hate working in groups, attending meetings, or participating in *any* type of team collaboration. One researcher has even coined the term *grouphate* to label the loathing many people have for collaborating with others in groups and teams.[9] Grouphaters focus less on the advantages and more on the disadvantages of collaborating with others:

- One individual may dominate the discussion.
- Team members may pressure others to conform.
- Team members may rely too much on just a few people.[10]
- Teamwork takes more time than working individually.[11]
- Teams have difficulty rebuilding trust once trust has eroded.[12]

Understanding more about groups and teams may help you enjoy being a member more.

9.1.1: Differences Between Groups and Teams

Is there a difference between a *group* and a *team*? The two terms are often used interchangeably. By exploring this question, you can better understand what groups and teams do and develop strategies for improving group and team performance.

WHAT'S A GROUP? What's a group or—more precisely—what is small group communication? *Small group communication* consists of communication among a small group of people who share a common purpose, who feel a sense of belonging to the group, and who exert influence on each other.[13] Let's look at this definition more closely.

A Group Consists of a Small Number of People It takes at least three people to make a group; two people are a dyad, not a group. Yet if a group becomes too large, it typically operates as a collection of subgroups rather than a single body. When more than a dozen or so people meet together, it is difficult for all members to participate; usually, when the group gets too big for everyone to talk, it is likely that a few people will monopolize the discussion.[14]

A Group Has a Common Purpose

To be a group, people need to be united by a common goal. They must all seek the same thing. A collection of people waiting for a bus may all want to go to Dallas, but if they haven't organized their efforts so they are going to meet once there, they probably do not share a common purpose.

Group Members Feel a Sense of Belonging

To be a group, the members must realize that they are part of the group. For example, the commuters waiting for the bus don't think of themselves as part of a group. Group members develop a sense of identify with their group. They know when they are in the group or not in the group.

Group Members Exert Influence on Others in the Group

Group members are interdependent; what one group member says or does affects other group members. Each member's comments help shape what the group does next. Even silence, facial expressions, eye contact (or lack of it), and presence or absence at meetings affect what the group does. It is this element of being a group that explains why each person in a group or team is, to some extent, a leader. Inherent in being in a group is the idea that each person in the group influences others—sometimes by speaking, other times by listening.

WHAT'S A TEAM? Most of us have participated on a sports team at various times. Whether it was soccer, baseball, football, or water polo, the goal of a sports team is usually to win the game or competition. In business and professional settings, a work team has some of the same characteristics as a sports team.[15] Instead of winning the game, the goal may be to get the contract, decide where to build a new shopping mall, or reach a fund-raising target. *A team* is a coordinated group of people organized to work together to achieve a specific common goal.[16]

Every team is a group, but not every group is highly organized or coordinated enough to meet the definition of a team. Because of the prevalence of teams and the fact that the word *team* rather than *group* is used in corporate and organizational settings, we primarily use the term *team* to describe a collection of people who work together to achieve a specific goal.

Several specific distinctions are made between groups and teams. Being aware of these differences can help you assess the nature and function of the collaboration process.

TEAMS DEVELOP CLEARLY DEFINED RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TEAM MEMBERS. On a sports team, most team members have specifically assigned duties, such as shortstop, pitcher, quarterback, or fullback. On a work team, team members' duties and roles are usually explicitly spelled out. Team members may perform more than one function or role, but they nonetheless have well-defined duties,[17] such as the person who will research the new building site, the person who will take notes (or the minutes), or the colleague who will network with people outside the team.

TEAMS HAVE CLEARLY DEFINED RULES FOR TEAM OPERATION. Team members develop explicit rules for how the work should be done.[18] Just as there are written rules in a game of Monopoly, teams usually develop explicit rules that describe how the team will function. For example, a team may establish a rule that if someone is going to be absent, he or she should tell another team member. Team members know what the rules are and know how those rules affect the team.

TEAMS DEVELOP CLEAR GOALS. Whereas groups have a common goal, it may be less specific or structured.[19] For example, a book group's goal might be to enjoy discussing books together. Team goals are usually stated in ways that the goal can be measured, such as to win the game, sell more cornflakes than the competition, or get to the North Pole before anyone else.

TEAMS DEVELOP A WAY OF COORDINATING THEIR EFFORTS. Team members spend time discussing how to accomplish the goals of the team. Their work is coordinated to avoid duplication of effort. Watching a skilled sports team at work is like watching a choreographed dance. Team members have developed a system of working together rather than at cross-purposes. When teams are permitted the freedom to manage themselves, team members have reported greater satisfaction than when team members are told what to do by someone outside their team.[20]

Although we have differentiated groups and teams, don't get the idea that they are completely different entities. Both groups and teams are made up of a small number of people who are striving to achieve a goal. Think of groups and teams as existing on a continuum; some deliberations will be more like a group, whereas others will be closer to our description of a team—a more coordinated and structured process with clear rules and explicit goals. Because every team is a small group, whenever we refer to a team we are also suggesting that it's also a group.

As evident in this group, the group members share a common purpose, feel a sense of belonging, and exert influence on each other through verbal and nonverbal messages.

Recap

Comparing Groups and Teams

	Groups	Teams
Roles and Responsibilities	Individual responsibilities may not always be explicitly defined.	Team member roles and responsibilities are clearly stated and explicitly discussed.
Rules	Rules are often not formal or written down; rules evolve depending on the group's needs.	Rules and operating procedures are clearly identified to help the team work efficiently and effectively.
Goals	Group goals may be discussed in general terms.	Clearly spelled-out goals are the focus of the team's efforts.
Methods	Group members may or may not decide to divide the work among group members.	Team members develop clear methods of collaborating and coordinating their efforts to achieve the team goal.

9.1.2: Characteristics of Effective Teams

Several researchers have been interested in studying how to make teams function better.[21] One study found that team members need compatible work schedules, adequate resources to obtain the information needed to do the work, leadership skills, and help from their organization to get the job done.[22] Another study concluded that it's not how smart team members are but how well they communicate that improves teamwork.[23] Using studies of several real-world teams (such as teams at NASA and McDonald's, and sports teams), researchers Carl Larson and Frank LaFasto identified eight characteristics of an effective team. The more of these attributes a team has, the more likely it is to be effective.[24]

SPECIFY A CLEAR, ELEVATING GOAL Having a well-defined goal is the single most important attribute of an effective team.[25] This goal should be perceived by the team as *elevating* and *important*—it should excite team members and motivate them to make sacrifices for the good of the team. An elevating goal is also one that could not be accomplished by an individual. Sports teams use the elevating goal of winning the game or the championship. Teams in business and professional settings also need an exciting goal that all team members believe is important,[26] such as selling more running shoes than the competition or landing the biggest contract in company history.

DEVELOP A RESULTS-DRIVEN STRUCTURE *Team structure* is the way in which a team is organized to process information and achieve the goal.[27] A results-driven structure is one in which team members are looking for the *verb*—the action step; all activities of the team are focused on achieving the team goal. A structure that is not results driven is one that tolerates ineffective meetings, busywork, and "administrivia." It is useful, therefore, for teams to develop a clear sense of the roles and responsibilities of each team member. [28]

INCLUDE COMPETENT TEAM MEMBERS Team members need to know not only what their assignments are but also how to perform their jobs.[29] Team members need to be trained (to have the proper skills) and be educated (to have the information they need) so they know what to do and when to do it. Without adequate training in both teamwork skills and job skills, the team will likely flounder.[30] One research study found that the most effective team members have experience and problem-solving skills; are open, supportive, and action oriented; have a positive personal style; are optimistic about team success; disclose information about themselves appropriately; and are outgoing.[31]

DEVELOP A UNIFIED COMMITMENT It's vital for all team members to be "on the same page"—to have a common perception of how they are working together to achieve a goal. Josh and Amanda, for example, were on the same human resource development team. Although they shared the same goal—enhancing their company's success—they were not unified in their approach to achieving that goal. Josh's approach was to increase salaries for workers, whereas Amanda's was to try to hold down costs and limit pay increases to an absolute minimum. In successful teams, members need to be united in their commitment, dedication, and approaches to achieving the goal.

When differences exist, team members should work collaboratively to clarify the overall goal and then identify differences. After the issues are identified, team members should address them using skilled approaches to managing conflict.

Communication Ethics @ Work

Should You Go Along to Get Along?

Although team members are encouraged to collaborate and to unite with other team members to achieve the mission, what if you disagree with the goal of the team or the actions of a team member? When is it appropriate to voice your concern? What if doing so means diverting the team from its stated objective?

A team of financial analysts was working on developing budget proposals for the new fiscal year. They had to cut the budget in some way. When reviewing the analysts' proposals, Alison noted that the entire training and development budget had been cut. She felt strongly that this would be a major mistake. Cutting the training and development department budget would eliminate the department. The company would either have no training, which would decrease productivity, or would have to outsource the training, which would cost the company more money, not less. Yet if the training and development department were cut from the budget, the result would be considerable savings for the company, and the financial team would immediately achieve its goal. Alison checked with other team members; they all agreed the training and development budget should be cut.

WRITING PROMPT

How should Alison voice her concerns about the project while maintaining a collaborative and effective working environment?

▶ **The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.**

Submit

CREATE A COLLABORATIVE CLIMATE Effective teams foster a positive, supportive group climate and encourage development of the skills and principles needed to achieve their goals.[32] Team members should affirm one another, support one another, and listen to one another as they perform their work.[33]

MAINTAIN HIGH STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE A team is more likely to achieve its goal if it establishes high standards. Goals that cause the team to stretch a bit can serve to galvanize team members into action. Unobtainable or unrealistic goals, however, can result in team frustration. If the entire team is involved in setting goals, the team is more likely to feel a sense of ownership of the standards it has established.

DRAW UPON EXTERNAL SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION Teams in any organization do not operate in isolation. They need outside support to acquire the information and materials needed to do the job.[34] Team members also need to be recognized and rewarded for their efforts by others outside the team. Positive, reinforcing feedback enhances team performance and feelings of team importance. There's evidence that receiving less support from others discourages some team members from giving their full effort; negative feedback causes more group members not to give their full effort. Most coaches acknowledge the home field advantage that flows from the enthusiastic support and accolades of team followers. Corporate teams, too, need external support and recognition to help them function at maximum effectiveness.

REINFORCE PRINCIPLED LEADERSHIP Teams need effective leaders. However, a team does not require an authoritarian leader to dictate who should do what. On the contrary, teams usually function more effectively when they adopt shared approaches to leadership.

Indra Nooyi, the CEO of PepsiCo, exemplifies the qualities of a principled leader. Her philosophy: "Don't ever think you've arrived, and remember that what you don't know is much more than what you do."[35] With this principle in mind, she encourages others, as well as herself, to learn, change, and grow.

In most effective teams, leadership responsibilities are spread throughout the team. An effective team leader not only collaborates with team members but also has a network of support outside the team. An effective team leader keeps the team informed about how events and factors external to the team may affect the team's work.[36]

One of the top-selling management books, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, nominated five things team members do that make teams ineffective and dysfunctional:

1. Mistrust other team members
2. Fear conflict
3. Lack commitment to the team
4. Avoid accountability
5. Fail to focus on achieving results[37]

If you've been in a dysfunctional team, these five characteristics may be familiar to you. If you want to have a dysfunctional team, be a dysfunctional team member. Or, if you want to be part of a highly functional team, flip those dysfunctions around to perform these positive functions:

- Trust others.
- Embrace conflict.
- Be committed to the team.

- Be accountable for your team assignment.
- Focus on results.

It's one thing to know what effective team members should do to be effective, but more important than only *knowing* what to do is actually putting these prescriptions into practice. The research is clear: It helps if team members receive training in how to be a good team member. Teamwork training enhances teamwork.[38]

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Clear Communication = Effective Collaboration

Simple, clear communication promotes simple, clear collaboration. That's the advice of Susan Docherty, who leads the U. S. sales, service, and marketing team at General Motors. Especially in the context of a group or team, with multiple points of view being expressed or people jockeying for position (or trying to get out of doing more work), it's important to be clear and to the point. When asked for advice about how to make collaboration effective, Docherty said,

> Whether you have a really small team or a really big team, communication needs to be at the forefront. It needs to be simple. It needs to be consistent. And even when you're tired of what the message is, you need to do it again and again and again. Because everybody listens at different levels, and everybody comes to the table with a different perspective and a different experience. And the same words mean different things to different people.
>
> On some very key things, people need to internalize it, and they need to own it. And when they do, you'll know that you're effective as a leader, because you hear them saying it.[39]

As Docherty suggests, one way you know your ideas are getting across to others is when you hear your friends or colleagues restating some of your ideas and suggestions. So listen to others to assess whether your ideas have been heard and understood. Whether you're part of a work team at General Motors or collaborating with others for a class project, what's the best way to make sure your ideas are accurately interpreted by others? Remember Susan Docherty's advice: Make messages clear and simple—then repeat as necessary.

9.1.3: Working in Virtual Teams

Increasingly when groups and teams need to collaborate in business and professional settings, especially if team members are not physically close to one another, they connect using technology rather than meeting face-to-face. Because of the increased costs of travel, many businesses and professional organizations are doing more collaborative work using virtual teams.[40] A *virtual team* interacts via a channel other than face-to-face communication. Not all virtual teams are separated by geography. Even if we work in the same building with our colleagues, we may nonetheless connect electronically rather than interact face-to-face.[41] How is electronically mediated, virtual teamwork different from live, face-to-face conversation? There are four key differences:[42]

ⓧ **Anonymity**

In some instances, you may not know with whom you are collaborating. Some software programs permit people to share ideas without identifying who they are.

ⓧ **Physical appearance**

There is typically less emphasis on a person's physical appearance and nonverbal communication online, with the exception of some video and Facebook.

ⓧ **Distance**

Although we certainly can and do send text and email messages to people who live and work in the same building, there is typically greater physical distance between people who are communicating virtually.

ⓧ **Time**

You have greater control over the timing and pacing of the messages you send and receive. You can decide, for example, when to retrieve a text or email messages or when to respond to a message you receive. Your interaction with others can be *asynchronous*—which means your messages are out of sync with the time in which you send them; there often is a time delay between when you send and receive a message. Or they can be *synchronous*—the messages are received the moment they are sent.

A vast array of technological tools makes it possible for us to be psychologically close to someone even if that person lives and works on the other side of the world.

TELEPHONE CONFERENCES The telephone conference call—one of the first uses of technology to support group and team meetings—involves a group of people agreeing to convene at a certain time by phone. Most cell phones have features that easily accommodate conference calls. Many businesses use special services offered by telephone companies for larger calls or when several of the callers are in the same physical location.

WRITING PROMPT

Identify all of the ways you have communicated using media and technology during the past week. Identify how different levels of anonymity, physical appearance, distance, and asynchronicity have had an effect on your virtual communication.

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

EMAIL AND TEXT COLLABORATION We don't need to tell you that email and text messaging are two of the most prevalent methods used to send and receive messages in organizations—or anywhere. If you're typical, you regularly send and receive email and/or text messages about both personal and work-related topics. If you are between ages 18 and 29, one study found that you send and receive about 90 text messages each day.[43] The research on *group* use of email and text messages, however, is still in its early stages[44] and is somewhat contradictory. Here are some of the advantages and disadvantages of electronic collaboration.[45,46,47,48,49]

Advantages of Electronic Collaboration

- Anonymous electronic correspondence minimizes status differences that may be present if people meet face-to-face.
- Language style has a significant impact on the impression created by email. In general, someone who uses a more assertive language style (such as saying "I want you to do this") is perceived as more powerful, credible, and even physically attractive than someone whose language style is weak or timid ("It might be nice if you consider doing this sometime.")
- Groups that communicate by email while solving a problem are more likely to do a better job of analyzing the problem than groups that interact face-to-face.
- Being able to read and reread detailed information may help group members focus better on details and message content.

Disadvantages of Electronic Collaboration

- Although email and text messaging can be effective for discussing routine business, some messages (such as those intended to manage conflict) are best presented in person.
- There is some evidence that groups that make decisions by email are *less* likely to reach agreement.
- Once a message is sent, you can't take it back. Although it's possible to retract or apologize for something you've sent, as the Russian proverb puts it, "Once a word goes out of your mouth, you can never swallow it again."
- With text-only messages, there is some loss of emotional information communicated by facial expression, vocal inflection, gestures, and body posture that may lead to misunderstanding.

Although emotional information may be less prevalent when we send messages, we nonetheless try to express emotions when we send messages. We're sure you've noticed that some people use emoticons—keyboard symbols that are typed in certain combinations to express emotions— by using emoticons or just put our feelings into words: "I have a big grin on my face as I read what you sent me." Emotions *are* expressed when using email; it just may take more time for relationships to develop and emotions to be expressed.[50]

VIDEOCONFERENCES The videoconference—a relatively media-rich use of technology—takes place between two or more individuals who are linked by the Internet or by closed-circuit TV. Free and easy-to-use software programs such as Skype and FaceTime have dramatically increased the use of videoconference meetings. Like conference calls, videoconferences have the obvious advantage of permitting groups to interact over long distances when it may be very expensive to have all members travel to one destination. But videoconferences have an advantage over a conference phone call because participants can see the nonverbal behavior (facial expressions, eye contact, and posture) of others that allows the transmission of relational messages. When participating in videoconferences, consider these research conclusions and tips:[51,52]

Tips for Successful Video Conferences

- A videoconference is more likely to be successful if team members have met *before* the videoconference.
- Videoconferences are more productive when an agenda is sent to all video conference participants *before* the video meeting (a good practice in any meeting situation).
- Videoconferences work best when what is to be discussed follows a more linear, logical, structured format rather than free-wheeling, unstructured conversation.
- Team members seem to be prepared better for videoconferences than for face-to-face meetings, perhaps because in some organizations they are a novelty and people spend more time preparing for something that is new and unusual.

Video conferencing allows virtual teams to collaborate, even when team members are in different parts of the country or the world.

WEB-BASED COLLABORATION Group and team members can collaborate in the same electronic space using a common web page that functions as an electronic bulletin board. Members can go to the web page for information and may be permitted to add, edit, or delete information. Each member has access to what others have gathered and shared. If you have a Facebook page, you are well aware of the power and uses of a web page to connect with others, share and receive information, and enhance the quality of existing relationships.

Wikis are another specific type of web-based collaborative site that permit collaborators to jointly edit and revise information on the site. Popular Wiki sites include the encyclopedia Wikipedia and the "how-to" instruction site WikiHow. Google Docs and Dropbox offer other methods of using a common electronic space to collaborate in teams and jointly edit and revise information.

Research on the impact of technology on team problem solving is continuing. The following bulleted strategies and observations, as well as those in #Technology and Communication @ Work, may offer some guidance to you and your team as you participate in virtual groups and teams:

- Electronically mediated communication seems to work best for more structured, linear tasks, such as reacting to a report or defining a problem.
- In computer-mediated meetings, ideas can be captured and recorded with speed and accuracy.
- The increased speed of information transfer allows less time for reflection. Thus, technology sometimes allows us to make mistakes faster.
- Using technology does not inherently result in better solutions and decisions. Technology may allow greater access to accurate information, help structure the process, and keep a group focused on facts, but problems are solved and decisions are made by people.
- Ultimately, it's not technology that makes teams better; it's the ability of team members to think critically, communicate effectively, and relate positively to others.[53]

#Technology and Communication @ Work

Best Practices for Collaborating Electronically

Two researchers recommend these six best practices that can enhance virtual team success:[54]

- **GET STARTED EARLY.** It takes longer to develop relationships when participating in virtual teams than face-to-face, especially if team members have diverse backgrounds.
- **COMMUNICATE FREQUENTLY.** The messages need not be lengthy, but more frequent exchange of messages lets other group members know you're still involved and connected.
- **MULTITASK ELEMENTS OF THE TEAM PROJECT.** Teams can work on more than one task at a time by dividing and conquering the work. So it's okay to make assignments and have different team members working on different parts of the project at the same time.
- **OVERTLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU HAVE READ ANOTHER PERSON'S MESSAGE.**
- **BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE THINKING AND DOING.** People can't easily guess what you're thinking because they can't see you. So spell out what you think and feel.
- **SET DEADLINES AND STICK TO THEM.** Team members should have clear, specific due dates and report whether or not they are meeting those deadlines.[55]

Applying Your Skills

When you are in a leadership role and are encouraging others to collaborate virtually, there are several things you can do to support a virtual group. Here's what seems to help virtual teams function best:

- Provide teams with adequate resources, such as the right people, enough time to do the work, and enough money to buy what they need to get the job done.
- Make sure teams have the right technology. For mere exchange of information, a conference phone call may be best. But for more detailed, emotion-filled conversations, media-rich video conferencing might be better.
- Recognize team members for their work and reward them fairly. Two of the biggest conflict triggers are (1) perceptions of lack of fairness—someone is rewarded or punished inaccurately, and (2) lack of equity—a team member has received a disproportionate share of resources or pay.

9.2: Understanding Team Dynamics

9.2 Describe and evaluate the different dynamics that come into play in team situations.

At his first day of work at Samsung, Shuntaro was assigned to a team that was developing new solar energy panels. He noticed that other team members were an average of 10 minutes late to the two staff meetings held that day. Although Alex was the supervisor, the other team members treated him no differently than anyone else; in fact, they sometimes ridiculed Alex behind his back. The most influential member of the team was Hailey, who although quiet and soft-spoken, seemed to wield the most power because of her knowledge and experience. What Shuntaro was observing were team dynamics—the various factors that determine what it feels like to belong to a team.

9.2.1: Team Roles

If no leader has been assigned to a team you're part of, do you often take charge, or are you more comfortable blending in and taking directions from others? Are you the one who makes sure the team gets the work done instead of just having a good time? Maybe you're the team member who seems especially gifted in managing conflict and disagreement. Or, perhaps you have no typical pattern—your role depends on the group and who else is in the group. Your *role* on a team is the consistent way you communicate with others on the team. You work out your role as you balance your own expectations of yourself and the expectations others have of you. There is also evidence that your personality and the personality characteristics of other team members have major influences on team role development.[56]

Over 60 years ago, group communication scholars Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats identified a list of group roles that remains a classic way of identifying the group and individual roles that group and team members typically assume.[57]

In business and corporate settings, your specific role may be prescribed by your job title or position. If you are the boss, you may be expected to be the procedural leader and conduct meetings, set the meeting agenda, or assign people to do certain jobs. But even if your position in the organization prescribes your role, there are still some roles that are shaped by the specific situation and job at hand. The roles people assume in teams can be classified into three types.

TASK ROLES *Task roles* are behaviors that help the group achieve its goal and accomplish its work. Gathering and sharing research with the group, taking minutes of meetings, and writing ideas on a chalkboard are examples of task role behavior. These roles are listed in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1: Task Roles

Task Roles	Description	Example
Initiator/contributor	Offers new ideas or approaches to the group; suggests ways of getting the job done	"How about developing an agenda to help us organize our work?"
Information seeker	Asks for additional clarification, facts, or other information that helps the group with the issues at hand	"Can anyone tell me how many times we have had to cancel our fall conference because of bad weather?"
Opinion seeker	Asks group members to share opinions or express a personal point of view	"So, what do you all think of the new uniform that all of the service workers have been asked to wear?"
Information giver	Provides facts, examples, statistics, or other evidence that relates to the task confronting the group	"Within the past year, the Vice President for Information Technology has told us to use two different information management systems."
Opinion giver	Offers opinions or beliefs about what the group is discussing	"I think the new information technology policy will decrease our productivity."
Elaborator	Provides comments or examples to extend or add to the comments of others	"Jessica, that's a good point. The same thing happened to me when I worked for our main competitor two years ago."
Coordinator	Clarifies and notes relationships among the ideas and suggestions that have been offered by others	"Travis, your ideas sound a lot like Sondra's suggestion. Sondra, why don't you elaborate on your idea and we'll see if Travis agrees or disagrees with you."
Orienter	Summarizes what has occurred and seeks to keep the group focused on the task at hand	"I think we're getting a bit off track here. Let's go back to the issue on the agenda."
Evaluator/critic	Assesses the evidence and conclusions that the group is considering	"How recent are those statistics? I think there are newer figures for us to consider."
Energizer	Spurs the group to action by making comments to motivate the group to work harder	"Come on, team. We can do it if we just keep at it! Don't stop now."
Procedural technician	Helps the group accomplish its goal by handling tasks such as distributing reports, writing ideas on a whiteboard, or performing other tasks that help the group	"I'll write your ideas on the board. After the meeting, I'll copy them and summarize them in an email to each of you."
Recorder	Makes a written record of the group's progress by writing down specific comments, facts, or the minutes of meetings	"I'll take notes of today's meeting."

SOCIAL ROLES *Social roles* focus on behavior that manages relationships and affects the group climate; these roles help resolve conflict and enhance the flow of communication. Soothing hurt feelings and helping the group celebrate its accomplishments are examples of social role behavior. These roles are listed in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2: Social Roles

Social Roles	Description	Example
Encourager	Offers praise and support and confirms the value of other people and the ideas they contribute	"You're doing a great job. Thanks for working overtime on this project."
Harmonizer	Manages conflict and mediates disputes between group members	"Grover, you and Nicole seem to be agreeing more than you are disagreeing. Both of you want the same goal. Let's brainstorm some strategies that can help you both get what you want."
Compromiser	Resolves conflicts by trying to find an acceptable solution; seeks new alternatives	"Muriel, you want us to meet at seven oclock p.m., and Samantha, you'd like us to start at eight o'clock. What if we started at seven-thirty? Would that work?"

Social Roles	Description	Example
Gatekeeper	Encourages people who talk too much to contribute less and invites those who are less talkative to participate	"Blair, we've not heard what you think. What do you suggest we do?"
Follower	Goes along with the suggestions and ideas of other group members	"I can support that option. You have summarized the issue about the same way I see it."
Emotion expresser	Verbalizes how the group may be feeling about a specific issue or suggestion	"We seem to be frustrated that we are not making more progress."
Group observer	Summarizes the group's progress or lack of progress	"We are making great progress on all of the issues except how much salary we should offer the new person we've just hired."
Tension reliever	Monitors stress within the group and offers suggestions for breaks, using humor or other appropriate strategies	"Hey, what we need is a good laugh. Here's a joke I saw on the Internet today."

INDIVIDUAL ROLES *Individual roles* are those that focus attention on the individual rather than the group. These are roles that do *not* help the group; they emphasize individual accomplishments and issues rather than those of the entire group.[58] Dominating group discussions to talk about personal issues or concerns, telling jokes that get the group off track, and constantly complaining are examples of individual roles. These roles are listed in Table 9.3.

Table 9.3: Individual Roles

Individual Roles	Description	Example
Aggressor	Deflates or disconfirms the status of other group members or tries to take credit for the work of others	"Lee, not a bad idea, but too bad your idea won't work in the real world."
Blocker	Is negative, stubborn, and disagreeable without an apparent reason	"I just don't like it. I don't have to tell you why; I just don't like it."
Recognition seeker	Seeks the spotlight by dwelling on his or her personal accomplishments; seeks the praise of others	"I offered that suggestion two meetings ago. I'm the one who usually makes things happen for this team."
Self-confessor	Uses the group as a forum to disclose personal feelings and problems unrelated to the group's task	"I'm not happy at home, so that's why I seem a bit off at this meeting. My kids are driving me crazy."
Joker	Wants to crack jokes, tell stories, and have fun instead of focusing on the task or what the group needs	"Hey, let's just go have coffee. Then I'll tell you the gossip about Harvey in accounting. What a nutcase!"
Dominator	Tries to take control of the group, talks too much, and uses flattery or aggression to push his or her ideas on the group	"Now here's what we're going to do: Martin, you will take notes today; Alice, you go get us some coffee; and Luke, I want you to just sit there in case I need you to run back to my office to get the Simpson file."
Special-interest pleader	Seeks to get the group to support a pet project or personal agenda	"My boss would like it if we would support the new downtown renovation project. I'll stand a good shot at a promotion if I can get you on board."
Help seeker	Seeks to evoke a sympathetic response from others; often expresses insecurity stemming from feelings of low self-worth	"I'm not very good with people. I just feel like I don't relate well to others or have many friends."

Developing clear role expectations minimizes conflict and enhances team performance. What are the best or worst roles to assume? We recommend that you avoid assuming *any* individual role; by definition, these roles focus attention on an individual rather than the group. Groups need people to take on a balance of task and social roles, not draw attention to themselves. Most of us typically enact several roles when we collaborate with others. Effective team members adapt their behavior to what is happening or needed in the group.

What is the proper balance between task roles and social roles? Some experts recommend a 60:40 balance between task and social roles.[59] It's clear that a group whose approach is all work and no play is not the most effective. Conversely, an out-of-balance group that focuses on just having a good time is not going to achieve its task goals. In general, more of the group's interactions should be about getting the work done than about having fun or managing the social climate—but don't forget to make sure that there are good working relationships among group members.[60]

9.2.2: Team Norms

When George Lucas, president of Lucasfilm, and Micheline Chau, chief operating officer of Lucasfilm, wanted to merge two separate units of the company into one unit, they decided it would be best to create new work norms by moving the teams together into one building rather than keeping them in their separate locations. They wanted the new teams to develop new collaborative norms for work productivity and procedures. *Norms* are standards that determine what behavior is appropriate and inappropriate in a group. Common team norms help develop team coordination and cooperation. As the word suggests, norms reflect what's normal behavior in the group; they influence how group members are supposed to behave—such as the type of language that is acceptable or the casualness of the clothes they wear. Norms can evolve into more formal rules, which, as we discuss later in this chapter, are more explicit prescriptions that spell out how group members should interact.[61]

What norms does this group of people appear to have?

How can you discover what the norms of any group are? Watch the group. Listen and observe any repeated verbal or nonverbal behavior patterns. Note, for example, consistencies in the way people talk or dress. To help you spot norms in your groups, consider these questions:

- What are group members' attitudes toward time (do meetings start and stop on time)?
- How do group members dress?
- Is it acceptable to use informal slang terms or to use obscenity?
- What kind of humor is acceptable?
- How does the group treat the leader?

Noting when someone breaks a norm can also help you spot a norm. If a member waltzes into a meeting twenty minutes late and several folks grimace and point to their watches, that's a sure sign that a norm has been violated. The severity of the punishment corresponds to the significance of the norm.[62] Mild punishment is usually unspoken—silent glances or a frowning stare. More serious punishment can be a negative comment about the behavior in front of other group members or even expulsion from the group. You don't have to worry about whether your group will have norms or not; norms happen. You should, however, monitor the group norms to ensure that your behavior doesn't distract from the work of the group or to note whether an unproductive group norm has developed that the group should talk about.

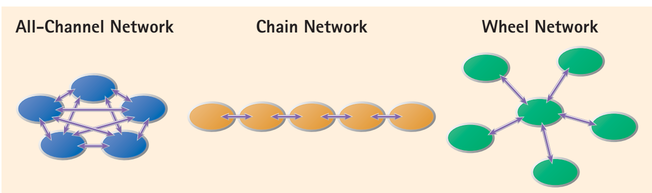
9.2.3: Team Networks

If you are a member of one of the popular social networking sites, you have some idea of the power and significance of social networks. People have a need to connect to others. And just as on those sites, *communication interaction patterns* emerge in groups and teams, based on who talks to whom and how often. Some groups have an equal distribution of interaction among members; others develop distinct patterns of interaction between two or more people.[63] Whether we're communicating via the Internet or in person, it's normal to develop preferences for talking to certain people but not others. Group communication scholars have studied and classified the various patterns that emerge when people talk to one another in groups.

In most teams, people speak to certain individual people rather than to the team as a whole. We tend to speak to people who have more power and status. In addition, we talk to people we like more than to people we don't like. There will also be more communication directed toward someone on the team who holds an opinion different from the rest of the group. This person is called a group deviate. (Some members may call this person a pain in the neck.) Group members may spend considerable talk time trying to change a group deviate's opinion.

ALL CHANNEL A group in which everyone talks to everyone else is called an all-channel network. As illustrated in Figure 9.1, all channels are open and used. There is considerable interaction, and there are no cliques or subgroups that emerge. A *clique* is a smaller group of people within a larger group who form a common bond among themselves. Perhaps you have special friends on your team whom you seek out and who seek you out when you attend meetings. During meetings you probably sit together, share private jokes and stories, and may talk about other members. Although there is nothing wrong with having special friends and colleagues at work, cliques can become detrimental to a team if they foster rivalries within the team or if they inhibit the flow of communication with others. Teams should avoid cliques that can develop divisive power plays that foster conflict. You don't want cliques ratcheting up the emotional tension as the team seeks to deliberate rationally. The first step to avoiding cliques is to be aware that one exists. Then make a conscious effort to be less exclusive and more integrated into the conversation of the entire group.

Figure 9.1: Team Communication Networks



CHAIN NETWORK In a team with a chain network, people send messages through one person at a time rather than to all group members. Many business and professional organizations have a hierarchical chain communication pattern. For example, the president of the company sends a message to the vice president, who, in turn, talks to the director; the director talks to a manager, who eventually gives the message to the other employees. As you might suspect, passing a message through many different ears and minds often results in misunderstanding by the time the message reaches the last person in the chain.

WHEEL NETWORK The wheel network pattern occurs when one person in the team or organization *receives* more messages from other members; this pivotal communicator also is the prime *source* of information to other team or organization members. Perhaps in your group of friends there is one person who seems to know everything that's going on. The wheel pattern emerges when there is a strong leader or when the group members do individual tasks and need someone to keep them informed about what others are doing.

Which interaction pattern is best? It depends. There may be times when the structured nature of the chain or wheel pattern may be needed. For example, during the huddle before a football play, when time is short, usually the quarterback does most of the talking while others listen (wheel network). But most teams function best if there is an all-channel pattern of communication, especially when the group is not too large and is trying to generate new, creative ideas.

As you participate in or lead team meetings, be aware of the general pattern of communication. Are all members participating? Do some people whisper their ideas only to a few and not share with the rest of the group? Is a group deviate monopolizing the conversation or blocking progress? By being observant of interaction patterns, you can help the team enhance cohesiveness and develop appropriate roles to get the work done.

9.3: Improving Team Dynamics

9.3 Describe how to improve team dynamics.

Now that you can describe team roles, norms, and networks, you may wonder if there are specific ways to improve team dynamics. One way to clarify roles is to establish clear ground rules about how the team should best operate. Making sure the team has a clear mission statement contributes to good dynamics: Effective teams have a clear, elevating goal. Managing differences in status and power can also help reduce tension. And implementing strategies to enhance team cohesiveness can help teams work together more effectively.

9.3.1: How to Develop Team Ground Rules

Team ground rules are explicit, agreed-on prescriptions for acceptable and appropriate behavior. Although team norms typically develop without anyone explicitly spelling out what the norm should be, a team may decide to develop more explicit rules to help get the work accomplished. For example, although it may be a norm that meetings usually start on time, a team could decide to establish a ground rule that all meetings will *always* begin on time. There's evidence that teams are more effective if they develop clear rules that help the team organize routine tasks and procedures and operate efficiently.[64] Rules help keep order so that meaningful work can be accomplished.[65] Rules also state what the team or organization values. Honesty, fairness, adherence to schedules, and personal safety are typical values embedded in team ground rules.

Teams clearly operate better if team members develop their own ground rules rather than having them imposed from "on high." How does a team develop ground rules? Soon after the formation of a team, the team leader may facilitate a discussion to establish the ground rules. If a team has no designated leader, any team member can say "To help us get organized and accomplish our task, let's develop some ground rules." Here are some questions that can help a group develop clear and appropriate ground rules:

- How should we record the results of our meetings?
- Who should set meeting agendas?
- How long should our meetings last?
- Should we have a regular meeting time and place?
- What should a member do if he or she can't attend a meeting?
- Should we make our decisions by majority vote or seek a consensus on every decision?

9.3.2: How to Develop a Team Mission Statement

A *team mission statement* is a concise description of a team's goals or desired outcomes. A clearly worded mission statement helps a team know not only whether it's on task or off task but also when it has completed the task.[66]

A good team mission statement should pass the SMARTS test—it should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound, and should Stretch the team.[67]

Here is an example of a team mission statement that passes the SMARTS test:

- Our team will make 10% more widgets by the end of the month.

Career Corner

Highlighting Your Collaboration Skills

In kindergarten you may have been evaluated as to whether you could get along with others. Your ability to work with other people remains a coveted skill when seeking a job. Since much work is accomplished in groups, prospective employers want to know if you can work well with others in teams. How do you promote your teamwork skills? Consider these suggestions when developing your resume to highlight your collaboration skills:

- Explicitly note that you have had instruction in teamwork and collaboration through the courses you have taken in college (including this course).
- Briefly describe leadership roles—such as president, vice president, or secretary—that you have held in organizations. Note specific accomplishments you have achieved as a leader.
- When listing previous jobs you've held, make a brief note of how you have collaborated with others, especially if you have been on any project teams.
- Look for ways you can participate in collaborative projects and then discuss your success in working as a team. Don't forget to include teamwork projects as well as your experiences in co-curricular activities.

9.3.3: How to Manage Team Status Differences

Status refers to an individual's importance and prestige. Your status in a group influences to whom you talk, who talks to you, and even what you talk about. Although some people underestimate their perceived status and influence in a group, research suggests that you are probably quite aware of your own status level when communicating with others.[68] Your perceived importance affects both your verbal and your nonverbal messages. Typically, a person with high status:

- Talks more than those of lower status.
- Directs comments to other high-status group members.
- Has more influence on the decisions the group makes.
- Is listened to by group members.
- Makes more comments to the entire group.[69]

Being aware of status differences can help you predict who talks to whom. If you can discern status differences, you'll also be better able to predict the type of messages communicated.

Status influences group communication, but just because a person has high status does not mean that his or her ideas are good ones. Don't let status differences influence your perceptions of the value of the ideas contributed. Some groups get into trouble because they automatically defer to the person with more status without reviewing the validity of the ideas presented. Similarly, don't dismiss ideas out of hand because the person who suggested them doesn't have high status or prestige. Focus on the quality of the message, not just on the messenger.

9.3.4: How to Manage Team Power Differences

Power is the ability to influence others' behavior. You have power if you can get others to do what you want. Although status (prestige and importance) and power (ability to influence) sometimes go hand in hand, a group member could have status and still not be able to influence how others behave. You could, for example, be the designated team leader but not be perceived as having much influence on the team because your ideas aren't valued, or you may have no resources to back up what you say and do. Because leadership is the process of influencing others through communication, it's important to understand the sources of power and the factors that enhance someone's ability to influence others.[70] Ultimately who does and doesn't have power in a group influences how people relate to one another.

Research supports the conclusion that teams with equal power distribution usually have better quality outcomes.[71] A group in which power is not balanced could have problems; the "power people" might dominate the discussion. When one or more members dominate the discussion, the group loses the contributions and insights of others.[72] People with less power tend to participate less in group discussion, unless they're trying to gain power.

A power struggle often creates ripples of conflict and contention through a group. On the surface a conflict may seem to revolve around a simple disagreement, such as when a report is due, but underlying the disagreement may be a power struggle. The real issue may be who gets to decide when the report is due.

Even though we have categorized power into different types, don't get the idea that group members have just one type. In reality, every group or team member typically has more than one source of power. One classic discussion of how individuals become powerful identified five power bases:*legitimate power*, *referent power*, *expert power*, *reward power*, and *coercive power*, as described in

Table 9.4. These power bases explain why certain people have power and why others don't.[73]

Table 9.4: Power Bases

Type of Power	Description	Examples of People with This Power
Legitimate power	Power that arises from being elected, appointed, or ordained to lead or make decisions for a group or a team	• The president of your university or college • The appointed chair of a team • The elected president of a group
Referent power	Power that arises from being well-liked	• A friend you work with on a committee
Expert power	Power that arises from having information and being knowledgeable about issues or ideas	• An architect on a team choosing the design for a new library
Reward power	Power that arises from having the ability to bestow gifts, money, recognition, or other rewards valued by group members, or to remove unpleasant conditions	• A boss who can give a raise • A school principal who can loosen the school dress code
Coercive power	Power that arises from having the ability to punish others	• A boss who can fire you or lower your pay • A team captain who can make you do the unpleasant jobs

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One of the first things to be aware of when managing power differences is the power basis. Say you're having a power struggle with your boss over when a project should be completed. It would be politically prudent to note the power bases your boss has but that you don't possess: legitimate power on the basis of a management position, coercive power to fire you, and reward power to give you a raise.

In addition to being aware of people's power bases and conflict resolution strategies, it is useful to keep in mind the other communication principles that we've discussed throughout this book. Your verbal and nonverbal messages can either create more tension or help to manage the tension that a power struggle produces. The sensitivity established through listening and responding will help you appropriately adapt your messages to help manage power issues that arise in teams.

9.3.5: How to Enhance Team Cohesiveness

Perhaps you've read about the Three Musketeers or have seen a movie about them; if so, you know that their motto was "One for all, all for one." They were a cohesive group; they liked being with each other. Group *cohesiveness* is the degree of attraction that members of a group feel toward one another and the group. Research has found that cohesive teams are usually more effective than noncohesive teams.[74] In a highly cohesive group, the members feel a high degree of loyalty to one another; the goal of the team is also the goal of the individuals.[75] Members of cohesive groups listen to one another, care about what each other thinks, and feel a sense of collective belonging to the team.

Teams become cohesive because of a variety of forces that attract people to the group and to each other. Similarity of goals, feelings of genuine liking, and similarity of background and culture are variables that influence group cohesion. Cohesiveness also is more likely to develop when team members' emotional needs are satisfied by participating in the group.[76]

Cohesiveness is more likely to occur if group members have the opportunity to talk freely with one another about the group goal and if this interaction increases affection and liking for one another. Teams that have greater control over how they conduct their work are also likely to be more cohesive.[77] Ernest Bormann found that groups that engage in what he called fantasy chaining or developing fantasy themes—which occurs when group members build off of each others stories, and jokes—have enhanced cohesiveness.[78] Teams that aren't cohesive typically don't have a clear, shared goal, and the team members don't like one another and haven't spent much time focusing on relationship development roles. An uncohesive team is also likely to include people who perform individual roles rather than team task or relationship development roles[79]. Table 9.5 summarizes some specific strategies that enhance team cohesiveness.

Table 9.5: Suggestions for Enhancing Team Cohesiveness [80]

Cohesive Teams	Uncohesive Teams
Talk about the group in terms of "we" rather than "I"	Tend to emphasize the individual contributions of group members
Reinforce good attendance at group meetings	Make less effort to encourage group members to attend every meeting
Establish and maintain group traditions	Make less effort to develop group traditions
Set clear short-term and long-term goals	Avoid setting goals or establishing deadlines
Encourage everyone in the group to participate in the group task	Allow only the most talkative or high-status members to participate in the group task
Celebrate when the group accomplishes either a short-term or a long-term goal	Discourage group celebration; group meetings are all work and little or no fun
Stress teamwork and collaboration	Stress individual accomplishment

Can a team be too cohesive? Yes: If the team becomes focused primarily on cohesiveness and enjoying one another's company, team members will produce *less* work. Strive for team cohesiveness, but balance cohesiveness with a focus on accomplishing the team's task.

9.4: Approaches to Enhancing Teamwork

9.4 Analyze different approaches to improving teamwork.

Almost everybody who has ever been on a team is interested in enhancing the experience and performance of teams. Team experts have used three major approaches to analyze how teams work and how to make them more effective. A *descriptive approach* details patterns that tend to occur at various phases of a team's development. The *functional approach* focuses on how effective team members meet task requirements in the way they communicate with other team members. A *prescriptive approach* offers prescriptions, or recommendations, for precise strategies that effective teams should employ. A key element of being an effective team leader is understanding which approach may be best in developing the team's potential.

9.4.1: The Descriptive Approach—Describing Team Development

When you describe an object or experience, you look for ways to categorize or classify it. A *descriptive approach* to team development seeks to identify the typical ways teams behave when they attempt to solve a problem. Some researchers have found that groups go through certain phases or sequences of talk when they meet to solve a problem.[81] Researchers don't agree on the exact nature of these phases, or even on the number of phases; some researchers have found three phases, and most have found four.

One of the most descriptive four-phase models was developed by group communication researcher Aubrey Fisher.[82]

Fisher's four phases of group talk are (1) orientation, (2) conflict, (3) emergence, and (4) reinforcement. Even if you have difficulty identifying these phases or their precise order in your group, you will probably see some elements of these four types of talk during the history of your group meetings.

ORIENTATION When you join a group for the first time, you have high uncertainty about how the group will be organized, who's in charge, and exactly how things will work. When people first get together in a group, they must become oriented to what they are doing. This happens in both face-to-face and virtual groups. During the *orientation phase*, group members become oriented to at least two things: (1) who's in the group and (2) what they will be doing.[83] During the orientation phase people often experience *primary tension*, which results from the uncertainty and discomfort they feel when the group meets for the first time.[84] Some group members who don't like uncertainty and are eager to start sorting things out may suggest an agenda: "Hello. My name is Steve. Let's each introduce ourselves." Other group members are quite content to simply sit quietly in the background and let others take the lead. As people begin to become acquainted and group members start talking about the group's purpose, typical groups experience the second phase: conflict.

CONFLICT People are different. That unprofound observation has profound implications for human communication, and nowhere is it more evident than in a group discussion after the group gets down to business. The *conflict phase* typically, but not always, follows the orientation phase. During the orientation phase, group members form opinions about what the group should be doing and who should be doing it. As they become more comfortable in and oriented to the group, they start asserting their opinions.

If you dislike conflict, you can take some comfort in knowing that conflict is an expected part of group deliberations. The conflict phase is necessary for both solving problems and maintaining group relationships. The conflict phase occurs when people are honest about sharing their opinions. If there is no conflict, it usually means people aren't being honest about how they really feel. When ideas aren't challenged and tested, the group usually makes stupid decisions. Also, honest yet tactful expression of personal disagreement is more likely to foster genuine relationships rather than phony ones.

EMERGENCE You know your group is in the *emergence phase* when decisions begin to be made and the group begins to solidify a common point of view. Though conflict is still a part of phase three, what sets the emergence phase apart from the conflict phase is the way in which group members manage the conflict. Norms, roles, ground rules, and leadership patterns that have been established in the group now help the group get work accomplished. In the emergence phase, a group settles on norms and moves toward consensus or agreement.

REINFORCEMENT Group members become more unified in the fourth phase, the *reinforcement phase*. During the orientation, conflict, and emergence phases, group members struggle through getting acquainted, developing cohesiveness, competing for status and prominence, and puzzling over issues and action the group could take. The group eventually emerges from those struggles and develops a new sense of direction; this results in a more positive feeling about the group. The group more clearly develops a sense of "we." In fact, one of the ways you can identify the reinforcement phase is when group members use more collective pronouns (*we*, *us*, *our*) than personal pronouns (*I*, *me*, *my*) to talk about the group.

THE PROCESS NATURE OF TEAMS The descriptive approach to team problem solving has identified these phases and can help provide a general overview of how many groups operate, but not all teams neatly process through these phases exactly the same way. In fact, more recent research suggests some teams don't go through these phases at all.[85] Teams may spiral through phases, get stuck on one or more phases or bounce between two phases, or quickly gloss over a phase.

TEAMS MAY SPIRAL THROUGH PHASES. For example, a team trying to design a new health care policy may spiral through several phases during the same meeting. They could go through several rounds of getting oriented on a specific issue, have conflict, experience a decision emergence, reinforce their decision, and then get oriented on a different issue or problem.

TEAMS MAY GET STUCK ON ONE OR MORE PHASES. Have you ever participated in a group that could never quite figure out what it was supposed to do? If so, your group may have gotten stuck on the orientation phase and not have overcome the initial uncertainty of who does what when or determined what its goal was. The group started bewildered and stayed there. Some groups get stuck in the conflict phase, or perhaps they bounce between orientation and conflict, trying to figure out what to do and then disagreeing about what to do. Eventually something will emerge (phase three) from the group even if it is not a wise decision or quality solution. Or the group may decide to disband and never meet again because the team members are so dysfunctional. Something emerged—the group members quit—but that's not the reason the group was formed. Reinforcement is likely to occur because we like to make sense out of what happens to us. Even if the group disbands we are likely to celebrate its demise or reinforce the decision to disband. Some groups get stuck in reinforcement; they simply want to have a good time, but little gets accomplished.

TEAMS MAY GLOSS OVER ONE OR MORE PHASES. Many groups, especially those that emphasize efficiency and productivity, may spend very little time on the reinforcement aspects of group celebration. Wise group leaders and participants make sure that victories are celebrated and both group and individual efforts are recognized. The cohesiveness and positive feelings that result from such celebrations will be helpful as the group prepares for its next task.

9.4.2: The Functional Approach—Understanding Team Functions

The *functional approach* to team development suggests that for a team to be effective, certain communication functions must occur. Researchers have identified these essential communication functions by studying both effective and ineffective groups. Effective group members did things differently than the ineffective group members. Identifying what these behaviors are led to the labeling of key behaviors or functions that, when present, are more likely to produce better results.[86]

A vigilant thinker focuses on the "big picture" of how the group is doing overall and examines whether the ideas suggested are useful in helping the team achieve its goal.

An important skill of an effective group member is to be a vigilant thinker.[87] *Vigilant thinkers* pay attention to the *process* of how work is done in teams rather than focusing only on techniques used to achieve a goal. A vigilant thinker also assesses, evaluates, and tests ideas. One research team identified four essential questions that vigilant-thinking group members should consider:[88]

Essential Questions to Consider

1. Does something in the present situation need to be changed?
2. What goal does the group want to achieve?
3. What choices does the group have that will help achieve the goal?
4. What are the positive and negative implications of the choices?

Even though these questions are usually discussed in the order listed, some groups don't follow this sequence.[89] What is clear, however, is that if one or more of these critical questions is *not* discussed, the group is less effective. These questions lead to the achievement of the critical functions that groups need to consider. The following five functions seem critical to effective group performance.

GOAL FUNCTION As we've discussed, it is important for a group or team to have a clear goal and to develop a team mission statement. Thus taking time to talk about the team goal is an essential team function. Articulating a clear and elevating goal is one of the earliest functions that team members should enact. It is important therefore, for group members to ask and answer the question "What's our clear, elevating goal?" Most group goals boil down to something that you want either more of or less of. Group members can determine the goal by asking themselves, "Do we need to change something that is happening now?" If there is no need for a change, then there is nothing that the group wants more or less of.[90]

ANALYSIS FUNCTION Another critical function of team communication is to analyze data, information, or evidence that can help the group achieve its goal.[91] To analyze something is to break it into parts and critically evaluate its causes, symptoms, and history. An effective team does at least the following three things:

1. Identifies the data, information, or evidence the group currently has
2. Identifies the additional data, information, or evidence the group needs in order to make a decision
3. Draws accurate conclusions from the data, information, and evidence that it has

As is true of other team communication functions, when group members don't do these things, or do them poorly, the group is more likely to make inappropriate decisions. Having too little evidence—or no evidence at all—is one of the reasons groups sometimes don't analyze their present situations correctly. Even if group members do have plenty of evidence, they may not have tested the evidence to see if it is true, accurate, or relevant. For example, the team that coordinated the space shuttle landing had to decide whether the weather would permit the shuttle to land either in Florida or in California. If the team didn't have weather data, had an outdated forecast, or interpreted the forecast inaccurately, it risked reaching a poor decision.

IDEA GENERATION FUNCTION Another hallmark of an effectively functioning team is that team members generate many ideas and potential solutions after analyzing a situation. Effective teams don't just settle on one or two ideas and then move on; they list multiple approaches. The most effectively functioning teams have members who make high-quality statements. Researchers define high-quality statements as precise rather than unfocused and abstract. High-quality statements don't ramble, and they are consistent with evidence, relevant to the topic under discussion, and positively reinforce what other group members are saying.[92] We provide specific tips and strategies for generating ideas and enhancing team creativity in the next chapter.

Sometimes teams get stuck and ideas just don't flow. Rather than continuing to hammer away at the problem, the group may want to take a break from it for a while. Perhaps you've had a great idea come to you when you were taking a walk, or driving home. Taking a break can give your subconscious mind a chance to thrash through some of the issues and perhaps generate a breakthrough solution.[93] The communication principle of awareness operates here: Team members need to become aware of the group's ability to generate high-quality ideas. Leaders have a special responsibility to be mindful of the team process and help steer the team back to productive territory.

EVALUATION FUNCTION Another characteristic of high-performing teams is that team members know a good idea when they see it. They are able to evaluate evidence, opinions, assumptions, and solutions and separate the good from the bad. Low-performing teams are less discriminating. A team that is eager to make decisions only to finish its job usually comes up with poor-quality decisions.

An effectively functioning team examines the pros and the cons of an idea, issue, or opinion. When the team is zeroing in on a particular course of action, an effective team member says, "Let's consider the positive and negative consequences of this decision." Some teams literally make a written list of the pros and the cons. Teams that do this are more likely to come up with a better decision than teams that don't systematically evaluate the pros and cons of a potential solution or decision.[94]

PERSONAL SENSITIVITY FUNCTION Most of the group functions we've described so far focus on getting the work done effectively and efficiently. However, as we noted when discussing cohesiveness, being too task oriented is not beneficial to the functioning of a team. Effectively functioning team members also are sensitive to the needs of others. They listen to what each group member has to say—even those who may hold a minority opinion. One of the benefits of working collaboratively comes from hearing a variety of ideas. If opinions of others are quickly squelched because they are not what most other team members think or believe, the team loses the power of many different points of view. Effective team members are aware of how the comments they make might be perceived by other group members. Finally, effectively functioning group members use appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication and appropriately adapt their communication to others.

9.4.3: The Prescriptive Approach—Identifying Team Strategies

Just as a prescription from your doctor is a suggestion or instruction to take a specific medicine to treat a particular ailment, a *prescriptive approach* prescribes specific things to do to address particular problems and enhance the communication health of the team. A prescriptive approach to teams is based on the assumption that team members need to use specific steps and techniques to stay on task and remain productive while still being sensitive to other team members. In the next chapter we offer a wealth of suggestions, strategies, and techniques to help improve the process of collaborating with others.

Summary: Collaborating in Teams

9.1: Explain the different elements of effective teamwork.

A group consists of three to fifteen people who share a common purpose, who feel a sense of belonging to the group, and who exert influence on each other. A team is a coordinated group of people organized to work together to achieve a specific common goal. A team differs from a group in that it is more structured and involves greater coordination of roles and procedures.

Effective teams tend to have the following characteristics: (1) a clear, elevating goal, (2) a results-driven structure, (3) competent team members, (4) unified commitment, (5) a collaborative climate, (6) standards of excellence, (7) external support and recognition, and (8) principled leadership.

Virtual teams interact by channels other than face-to-face, employing such technology as telephone conferences, videoconferences, and web-based collaboration.

9.2: Describe and evaluate the different dynamics that come into play in team situations.

Team members can take on several different task, social, and individual roles to either improve or detract from group effectiveness. Group norms for expected or appropriate behavior can also add or impede effectiveness, as can members' communication networks—habitual patterns of who talks to whom.

9.3: Describe how to improve team dynamics.

Clear ground rules that establish what is explicitly agreed upon behavior, as well as a mission statement that states the overall purpose of the team, can enhance a team's effectiveness. It is also important for team members to be aware of their own and others' status, or importance, and sources of power—the ability to influence. Appropriately cohesive teams are also more effective than those that either do not get along or are too close.

9.4: Analyze different approaches to improving teamwork.

The descriptive approach to teams identifies phases and communication behaviors that typically occur when people collaborate. The functional approach identifies key functions or general patterns of behavior in effective teams and team members. The prescriptive approach specifies strategies and techniques that enhance team performance.

SHARED WRITING: VIRTUAL COLLABORATION

Consider a team that you are currently participating in or a team with which you have worked in the past. Identify norms, rules, and any explicit ground rules that were developed for the team. Reflect on the team's goals and objectives. Evaluate the team mission statement (or develop one, if the team had no explicit mission statement), based on information presented in this chapter.

▶ **A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.**

Post **0 characters | 140 minimum**

Chapter 9 Quiz: Collaborating in Teams

Chapter 10
Enhancing Team Meetings

Learning Objectives

10.1 Identify and describe structure and interaction as the two key defining components of any meeting

10.2 Describe the preparatory steps that are required before any meeting

10.3 Describe the key elements of problem-solving meetings

10.4 Report strategies and techniques that help in developing team creative solutions

10.5 Identify different ways of facilitating meeting interaction

Most of us wouldn't do what Donald Fisher did to solve a simple problem. When he tried to exchange a pair of Levi's at a jeans store in San Francisco because they were an inch too short, he was told "No, we don't make exchanges." So he decided the world needed a store that sold jeans in various sizes that could be returned if they didn't fit. Donald and his wife Doris opened their first store in 1969. Because the late 1960s was the era dubbed "the generation gap," he called this first store simply Gap. Within a year there were six Gap stores. By the mid 1970s there were more than a hundred stores. But after ending up on the losing end of price wars, in the late 1970s and early 1980s Gap experienced a major dip in profits and looked like it was headed for bankruptcy. Then in 1983 Fisher hired Mickey Drexler, who had recently revitalized Ann Taylor, another clothing store that almost lost its shirt but, thanks to Drexler's help, became highly successful.

The real turnaround for Gap came when Drexler came to executive meetings with a single simple strategy. Soon after the meeting started he distributed plaques to all meeting participants, embossed with one word: "Simplify." He used the technique not at just one meeting, but in many meetings. And "simplify" was not only a meeting-management strategy. It also became the leadership strategy that made Gap flourish. When purchasing executives wanted to branch out to selling other brands, Drexler evoked his "simplify" meeting mantra. When designing a new look for the retail stores, once again "simplify" was the goal. By focusing on simplicity as a company mission statement that percolated through each meeting, Gap has flourished, despite economic roller-coaster rides. The company has spun off several sister stores, including Old Navy and Banana Republic. Now the Gap organization has over four thousand retail stores worldwide. All share the same philosophy—keep it simple.[1]

Leading Questions

1. Think of a recent meeting you participated in that seemed to go on much too long. How could Mickey Drexler's mantra of "simplify" have improved your unnecessarily long meeting?
2. How does the mantra "simplify" apply to being an effective leader? Think of a leader you know, from your own experiences or from politics, business, or other professions, who has a clear, simple elevating goal that keeps the group moving forward. Or identify a leader who doesn't but should be more focused on a clear goal. What could the leader do to enhance his or her effectiveness?

For better or worse, the context leaders use to make decisions, solve problems, and unleash the power of collaboration is a meeting. Research has also found that how you are perceived in meetings affects your overall image as a worker in the organization.[2]

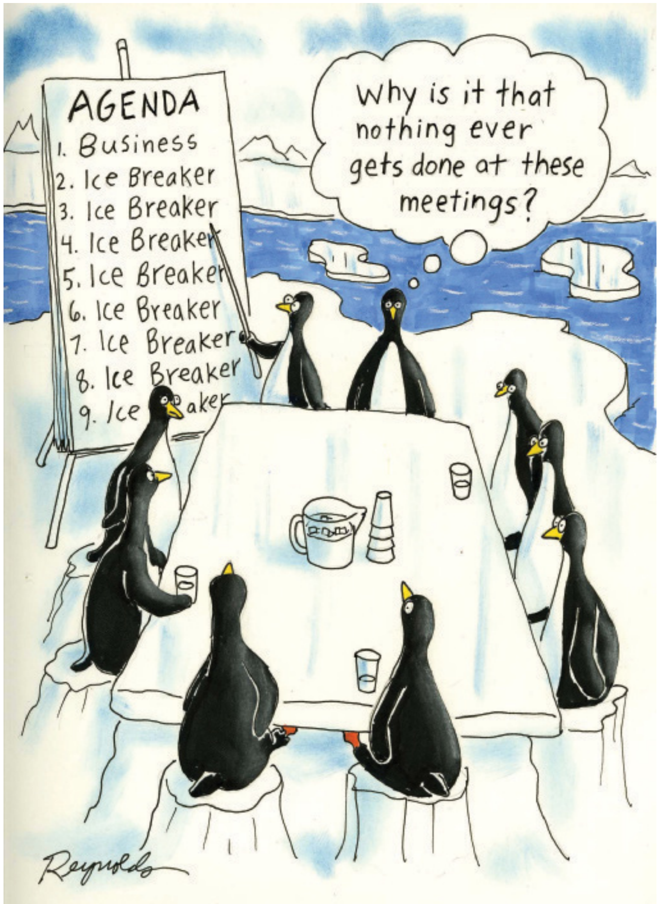
Yet, in spite of their importance in business and professional settings, meetings don't enjoy a good reputation. Perhaps humorist Dave Barry had heard the phrase "death by meeting" when he compared business meetings with funerals. At both meetings and funerals, he noted, "You have a gathering of people who are wearing uncomfortable clothing and would rather be somewhere else. The major difference is that most funerals have a definite purpose. Also, nothing is ever really buried in a meeting."[3] It's not just Dave Barry who doesn't like meetings. One study found that 42% of meeting participants evaluated their meetings as poor or ineffective.[4] There is also evidence, however, of a self-fulfilling prophecy effect for meetings: If you think you will have a bad meeting, you are more likely to have one.[5]

Why do meetings inspire such negative reactions? Often it's because meeting participants have not mastered the communication and leadership skills we've introduced in this book. In this chapter we apply communication and leadership principles to meetings in the hope that the multiple meetings you will lead and attend will be lively rather than deadly dull.

10.1: Meeting Essentials—A Balance of Structure and Interaction

10.1 Identify and describe structure and interaction as the two key defining components of any meeting.

A *meeting* is a structured conversation among a small group of people who interact to accomplish a specific task. Because meetings are the ever-present format for collaborating in most contemporary organizations, you have undoubtedly been to many meetings.[6] And you'll attend more. Research suggests that most managers spend about a quarter of their time in meetings. Top-level leaders spend



even more time—about two-thirds of their time—in meetings or preparing for meetings.[7] The simple fact is this: The broader your leadership responsibilities, the more time you'll spend in meetings.

How can you ensure that meetings you attend and lead are productive? Note two key elements in the definition of a meeting: (1) a *structured* conversation and (2) people who *interact* to accomplish a specific task. Being able to ensure both meeting structure and interaction is vital for the success of any meeting.

10.1.1: Providing Meeting Structure

One author team compiled the following list of the top-ten "meeting sins" from people's reports of their meeting experiences [8]

1. Getting off the subject
2. No goals or agenda
3. Too lengthy
4. Poor or inadequate preparation
5. Inconclusive
6. Disorganized
7. Ineffective leadership and lack of control
8. Irrelevance of information discussed
9. Time wasted during meetings
10. Starting late

Each of these problems is a symptom of a meeting without proper structure to keep conversation productive and focused. Meeting *structure* consists of the agenda and other techniques that help a group or team stay focused on the task at hand. Given this list of meeting problems, you'll not be surprised to learn that research has found that meetings with no planned structure or agenda have many more procedural problems than structured meetings. Groups that are "naturally occurring," in which conversations rattle on without leadership, direction, or an agenda, are much more likely to evidence these problems:

1. Meetings are overly long.
2. Members focus on a solution rather than analyzing the issues.
3. People inappropriately jump at the first solution mentioned.
4. Team members hop from one idea to the next without focusing on the big picture.
5. The team is more likely to be controlled by one person.
6. Conflict is more likely to be unmanaged.[9]

The bottom-line conclusion to this research: Because meeting members have relatively short attention spans, people who meet in groups and teams need structure to keep them on track. Several researchers have documented a profound observation: *Meetings without leadership and structure are likely to shift topics about once a minute unless there are specific goals and an agenda to keep them focused.*[10]

Can a meeting have too much structure? Yes. A meeting run by a heavy-handed leader who dominates the discussion and allows no, or a minimum of, discussion does not capitalize on the benefits of why meetings are held: to benefit from the conversations and ideas of others. Meetings need something to balance the structure: interaction.

10.1.2: Encouraging Meeting Interaction

Interaction is the give-and-take talk and conversation that occurs when people collaborate. It is vital for the exchange of ideas. For a meeting to be productive, the group or team should be small enough so that each participant can participate in the conversation.[11] Without interaction the meeting would be more like a speech in which one person talks and the others simply listen. An effective meeting has rich high-quality interaction that is focused on helping the group manage the task or maintain relationships. Group researcher Robert Bales found that most task-oriented groups spend a little over 60% of their time talking about the task and almost 40% of their time talking about social, relational, or maintenance matters.[12]

Too much interaction, and meeting members experience the chaos of unbridled, unfocused talk; it's hard to stay on task. Too much structure, and one person dominates; the team loses the freedom to listen and respond with sensitivity to what others are saying. As suggested in Figure 10.1, the key is to find the right balance between structure and interaction.

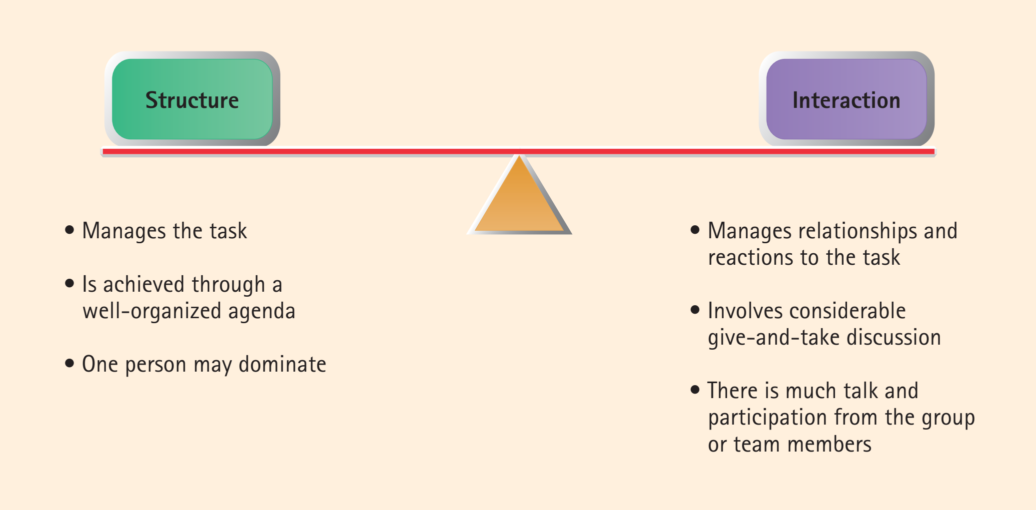
In this chapter we help you prepare for meetings, structure problem-solving and creative meetings, facilitate meeting interaction, and lead meetings to create a balance of structure and interaction.

10.2: Preparing for Meetings

10.2 Describe the preparatory steps that are required before any meeting.

The best way to have a good meeting is to prepare for it. The first key task in preparing for meetings is deciding whether you even need to hold a meeting. If a meeting is needed, you'll need to determine what the meeting goals are and how to structure precisely what you'll talk about to achieve the meeting goals. Perhaps the most important task in preparing the meeting is to develop the meeting agenda.

Figure 10.1: Groups Need a Balance of Structure and Interaction



10.2.1: Determining Whether to Have a Meeting

To meet, or not to meet? That is the first question. The cardinal rule of meetings is this*: Meet only when you have a reason to meet.* This principle may seem like common sense, but it is often not common practice. If you want to be a hero in your organization, regardless of whether you work in a small three-person office or for a large Fortune 500 corporation, don't hold a meeting if you don't need to have one.

You can accomplish quite a bit of work without meeting face-to-face. One leader we know periodically sends out what he calls a "meeting in a memo" that summarizes key announcements, reports, or reminders.

You also may want to ponder whether a meeting is premature: If people aren't prepared for the meeting, aren't well informed, or are embroiled in tension and conflict, holding a meeting will only make things worse. So when do you really need to hold a meeting? Read on.

WHEN COLLABORATION IS NEEDED Perhaps you've heard it said that many hands make light work. When a task is too big for one person and you need a team effort to gather information, evaluate information, make a decision, or solve a problem, you probably need to call a meeting to sort through the myriad options and choices.

WHEN UNCERTAINTY IS HIGH A key function of meetings is to reduce uncertainty. Actually, a primary function of *all* communication is to manage uncertainty. People who are uncertain don't know what to do or how to proceed. When people need clear, accurate information, such as about a new company policy, and you want to ensure that the messages are clearly communicated, hold a meeting. During an interactive, collaborative meeting you can do a better job of managing uncertainty, clarifying misunderstandings, and ensuring that messages are clearly understood than you could achieve with other communication methods.

WHEN PEOPLE MAY RESIST A DECISION OR A PROPOSED SOLUTION People are more satisfied with an outcome if they participate in the process that leads to it, rather than just being told what to do.[13] A meeting is a good method for developing a solution to a problem or making a decision if you think the solution to the problem could be controversial. But don't hold a meeting simply to manipulate a group. Giving people the illusion of control without the power to shape the outcome will likely create resentment, mistrust, and dissatisfaction. Do hold a meeting when you seek honest input and participation.

WHEN INFORMATION COMES FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES If you want to know the company budget, client demographic data, changes in customer buying patterns, or other work-related information that an individual expert could readily tell you, ask the expert rather than holding a meeting. There may be times when you need a lot of information from different sources; in that situation, a team meeting can help coordinate the efforts to get the information. In most cases, however, meetings are best used to process and evaluate information, rather than obtain it.

WHEN THE TASK OR PROJECT IS COMPLEX Simple tasks can often be delegated to one person. But if you have a multistage complex project to complete, a meeting (or several meetings) may be needed to coordinate the process. Of course, it's the complexity of a decision or a problem, such as trying to figure out why sales are slumping and then fixing the problem, that makes managing meetings a challenge. Team members typically assume different task and maintenance roles during collaboration. With a complex task or project, it is useful to establish clear roles and responsibilities, develop a clear mission statement, and establish ground rules to ensure efficient and effective collaboration.

Once you're convinced that a meeting is the best way to accomplish a task, you'll need to determine the precise outcome you want to achieve.

You may need a meeting to compile information from several sources or when a task is complex.

10.2.2: Determining the Meeting Goal

Every meeting should have a goal. (If you don't have a goal, don't hold a meeting!) Regardless of the task or project, most meetings are intended to achieve one or more of the following three outcomes: (1) sharing information, (2) discussing information, and (3) taking action.[14]

SHARING INFORMATION Many weekly staff meetings are primarily gatherings during which someone shares information with others. Although these information-giving sessions are called meetings, such a gathering really isn't a meeting in the true sense of the word if only one person presents information. If there's virtually no interaction and the "meeting" is so heavily structured that one person does all or most of the talking, you're really attending a presentation or briefing, not a meeting. For example, if the goal is to explain a new policy and you want or expect minimal discussion, then you're presenting a briefing, rather than holding a meeting. If the person doing most of the talking is giving her spiel with PowerPoint slides, that's a good indication that you are in a briefing, in which the speaker's primary purpose is imparting information rather than soliciting feedback.

There certainly are times when you want to share information in person to emphasize its importance or to get a reaction from others—such as when you need to explain a change in policy, procedures, or sales goals. Briefings also have an important function in business and professional settings; sometimes, particularly in businesses with global divisions, the purpose can be simply to see other team members once a week to get an update on projects and assess team member needs. There is value in the ritual of seeing other people on the team and enhancing relationships.

However, a briefing does differ from a collaborative meeting. If people think they are going to attend a meeting and it's really a speech or a briefing, the participants may end up feeling frustrated rather than enlightened. If your only task is to share information, you may want to consider whether or not you really need a meeting at all—perhaps a "meeting in a memo" or email will suffice.

DISCUSSING INFORMATION An information-discussing meeting is one in which there is considerable interaction and give-and-take, such as nurses reviewing a medical case, real estate agents providing feedback about a new electronic multiple listing website, or student teachers discussing policies. The goal is to gather and assess reactions to information, policies, or procedures. It's important not to let a discussion meeting become a series of long-winded speeches. You want to encourage interaction. Also, at a discussion meeting it is easy for conversations to get off the topic. If gathering information is a key meeting goal, it's important to develop strategies to ensure that meeting participants can freely share information, particularly new ideas or statistics. There is a tendency for group members to only share information that all group members already know. When the goal is to discuss information, it's important to encourage all group members to participate in the conversation and share ideas, data, opinions, and information.[15]

TAKING ACTION A meeting to take action often involves making a decision, solving a problem, or implementing a decision or solution. For example, deciding who to hire for a job vacancy or figuring out how to save money on travel expenses involves taking action. Prior to taking action, a team must gather information, analyze the information, and discuss it. A meeting can have a single agenda item of making a decision; but if so, team members have likely had prior conversations and have shared information and options, and come to the meeting with the background needed to make the decision.

Many, if not most, meetings have multiple goals. Those attending a meeting may first hear information presented, then discuss the information, and finally take some action to accomplish the meeting goal. If you are the meeting leader, you need to know the meeting goal before beginning to draft your agenda; you also want to identify what you would like to have happen as a result of the meeting. A typical goal might be "At the end of this meeting we will have decided who to hire for the new advertising job" or "At the end of this meeting we will have discussed and evaluated the sales figures for the last three months." Without a specific goal, it's likely you'll accomplish little.

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Making Meetings Stick

Bill Flemming, President of Skanska USA Building Inc., likes to make sure that decisions made in a meeting don't get unmade later:

> Sometimes people will try to change a decision after it's been made. You can't leave a meeting with the possibility that that might happen. So you have to have a little more formalized approach, and be clear about what was decided.[16]

Bill uses a technique which helps ensure that what gets done in a meeting stays done. Here's what works for him:

> I like to conclude meetings with two things. One is: "What do you think of this meeting? Was it time well spent?' And two is: "What's your commitment to this team? What are you going to commit to doing when you leave this room?"[17]

Taking time to evaluate the quality of the meeting and affirming a commitment to implementing the decisions that were made can help make what was decided at meetings stick. It's easier to ask these two questions if you are the meeting leader. But even if you are not the designated leader, periodically asking "How can we improve our meetings?" and "So what have we each agreed to do?" can help make what gets accomplished in meetings stick.

10.2.3: Developing the Meeting Agenda

Once you have identified goals and assessed what you need to talk about, if you are leading the meeting it's your responsibility to develop an *agenda*—the written list of issues, questions, or topics that serves as the primary tool to help you structure the order in which you talk about each topic. The agenda is your key tool to give your meeting structure. Following are the key steps to developing a meeting agenda.

IDENTIFY MEETING ISSUES AND QUESTIONS Your first task in developing your agenda is to consider all of the topics, issues, and questions you need to discuss to achieve your meeting goals. As you start to identify the various agenda items, you don't need to worry about what order to place them in (you'll make those decisions later). First, just identify the agenda items.

We recommend that that you *make each agenda item a question to be answered,* rather than using a single word or short phrase. Instead of simply writing "hiring policy" on the agenda, write, "What changes should we make in our hiring policy?" By using a question you invite interaction. You and other meeting participants also know precisely why you are having the discussion: to answer a specific question. Using a question as an agenda item, as shown in Figure 10.2, also helps meeting participants be better prepared for the meeting. You'll also know when you have finished a particular agenda item. You're finished when you've answered the question.

GROUP ISSUES AND QUESTIONS ACCORDING TO MEETING GOALS Organize the agenda around your meeting goals. Use the subheadings *Information Items*, *Discussion Items*, and *Action Items* to signal your goals to team members. If your meeting goal is to discuss the pros and cons of the new strategic plan, then your agenda would likely include such straightforward questions as "What are the benefits of the new strategic plan?" and "What are the disadvantages of the new strategic plan?"

Figure 10.2: Sample Agenda

Meeting Place: The Centennial Building, Abernathy Conference Room

Meeting Time: Tuesday, September 19, at 3:30 PM

Meeting Goals: At the end of the meeting, meeting participants should be able to

1. Identify positive and negative reactions to the finance report.
2. Describe how the new employment policy will influence hiring practices.
3. Identify strategies to increase sales.

I. DISCUSSION ITEMS
   A. Are there any other agenda items we need to discuss today?
   B. What are positive and negative reactions to the finance report distributed before the meeting?
   C. How will the new employment policy influence hiring practices?

II. ACTION ITEMS
   What can be done to improve our sales figures during the next sales period?

III. INFORMATION ITEMS
   Announcements

ESTIMATE HOW MUCH TIME TO BUDGET FOR EACH QUESTION OR ISSUE Before making final decisions about which items you will discuss, estimate how long you think the team will need to discuss each item. The amount of time you budget for a discussion will help you decide where to place the item on the agenda.

STRATEGICALLY SEQUENCE AGENDA ITEMS There is an art to determining the order in which you introduce agenda items. Your goal in developing the agenda sequence is to maximize the efficient use of meeting time while also balancing structure and interaction.

Some meeting management experts suggest putting your most important item first because usually what is introduced first takes the most time. So rather than beginning a meeting with routine information items that are likely to spark digressions from the agenda, it may be best to make your first agenda item something of vital importance to the group that clearly relates to one or more of your meeting goals. By placing a high-priority item early in the meeting, you also take advantage of having people talk about an issue when they are fresher.

Table 10.1 summarizes potential meeting agenda problems and how to manage those problems.

Table 10.1: Meeting Agenda Pitfalls and Strategies for Managing Them

Potential Pitfall	Suggested Strategy
Participants tend to spend too much time on early agenda items.	Make the first agenda item something worthy of discussion rather than beginning with a trivial report or announcement.
Participants find a way to talk even if you don't want them to talk.	Invite input and discussion early in the meeting rather than having participants trying to interrupt.
Participants aren't prepared for the meeting; they have not read what they were supposed to read.	Clarify the team's ground rules about being prepared for meetings. Consider taking a few minutes to have participants read information or have them prepare by writing ideas or suggestions using a silent-brainstorming technique.
Participants won't stick to the agenda.	Remind the group what the meeting goals are, or, with input from the group, change agenda items.
A meeting is scheduled late in the day or participants are tired.	Begin with an agenda item that involves all meeting participants rather than having participants sitting silently at the beginning of the meeting.
The agenda includes a controversial item that will create conflict and disagreement.	Put one or more noncontroversial items on the agenda ahead of the conflict-producing item. Addressing easier agenda items first will establish a feeling of accomplishment and agreement before the group tackles the more controversial item.

In addition to avoiding and managing potential meeting mistakes, keep in mind the following agenda sequencing tips and suggestions:

Agenda Sequencing Tips and Suggestions

- Start your meeting by actively involving members in finalizing the agenda; ask them for reactions to how you have structured the discussion. Asking participants if they have other items to include on the agenda can help avoid digressions and surprise agenda additions later.
- Consider making your first agenda item a question or issue that will immediately involve all meeting members in active discussion.
- Consider placing the most challenging issues for discussion in the middle of the meeting, thus giving the group a chance to get oriented at the beginning and ease out of the discussion at the end.
- If you have an issue that you know is contentious and will generate conflict, place it after an agenda item on which you think the team will reach agreement. Use the positive energy of the agreement to help when there are issues that may divide the team.
- You may want to first string together several small issues so you can dispense with them before getting into the meat of the meeting. Quickly zipping through several agenda items can give the team energy.
- Consider placing routine reports at the end of the meeting; if you run out of time you can distribute the information in a memo or by email.

Always distribute an agenda to meeting participants *before* the meeting. Without an agenda or some knowledge of what will be discussed at the meeting, participants won't know how to prepare. In addition to asking for feedback about the meeting agenda before you begin the meeting, periodically ask meeting participants if the agenda is serving its purpose. Ask "Are we still discussing useful information?" or "Is our agenda helping us achieve our meeting goals?"

In addition to distributing copies of the agenda before the meeting and having copies of the agenda to distribute when you meet, it's sometimes useful to display the meeting agenda using a flipchart, a PowerPoint or similar slide, or some other visual means. Having a common image to look at can help keep a group focused on its goal.

Having adequate structure is important not only for meetings that take place in person but also for virtual groups that meet via teleconference or the Internet. A virtual team will make better decisions during a meeting if it has appropriate instructions for framing the decision as well as enough time to process the information.

#Technology and Communication @ Work

How to Plan a Virtual Meeting

In the twenty-first century it's increasingly likely you'll be involved in meetings without meeting face-to-face. It may be as informal as a few people using the conference-call or video capabilities of their phones or as elaborate as one company's annual sales conference, with thousands of participants participating from videoconferencing-equipped meeting rooms in multiple time zones and countries.

Virtual meetings are popular because they save money, time, and the planet. Companies don't need to pay airline, hotel, or other costs for participants to travel to meetings or use employees' time to gather people together in one location. Another benefit: They also can reduce carbon emissions and paper use.[18]

With the increase in virtual meetings you may be called on to organize or facilitate a virtual meeting.

Applying Your Skills

Leslie Wolff, a virtual meeting consultant, recommends the following strategies to ensure a productive virtual meeting.[19]

Before the Meeting

• **Always Distribute an Agenda Prior to the Meeting.** A good practice for any meeting but especially important in a virtual meeting.

• **Ask Someone to Assist You as a Backup Facilitator.** Review the agenda with one or more people prior to the meeting to help you keep the meeting productive and positive.

• **Test the Technology.** Don't wait until just before the meeting begins to see if the technology works.

At the Beginning of the Meeting

• **Arrive at Your Virtual Meeting Early.** If virtual meeting members are connected to the call or videoconference early, you will be there to help them get oriented.

• **Greet Each Person When They "Arrive."** As each person connects to the meeting, welcome them by name. Make sure team members know each other.

During the Meeting

Start on Time. Establish a ground rule that meetings begin on schedule.

Don't Multitask. Also make it a ground rule that during the meeting, members aren't checking email, tapping text messages, or taking phone calls.

Facilitate Interaction. Listen to make sure one or more people aren't dominating and that others are not participating. Be a gatekeeper just as you would in a face-to-face meeting.

Know When to End the Meeting. When the work has been accomplished or conversation lags because the major task is complete, end the meeting. Don't worry about ending the meeting too early. People like it when meetings take *less* rather than more time.

After the Meeting

Distribute Meeting Notes. Ask participants to correct errors or add anything that is missing.

Post the Notes. Send each person the link where the meeting summary is posted.

Follow Up. Make sure that meeting assignments are completed on time.

10.2.4: Leading Team Meetings

Leaders often are the ones who determine whether to have a meeting. They help set the meeting goal and shape the agenda. Although the leader is a key influence in making these decisions, the wise leader collaborates with other team members and works side by side with others.[20] One study found that groups generated more and better ideas when team leaders simply listened and waited for team members to contribute ideas before stating their own ideas than they did when the leader spoke first.[21] Different groups accept (or tolerate) different levels of directions from their designated leaders.

> One simple rule of thumb is this: *A group will generally allow a leader who emerges naturally from the group or who leads a one-time-only ad hoc group to be more directive.*

Beyond giving direction and taking a leadership role in goal setting and developing the agenda, certain tasks are generally expected of meeting leaders. In general, meeting leaders are expected to do the following:[22]

Responsibilities of Meeting Leaders

- Call the group together, which may involve finding out when participants can meet.
- Call the meeting to order.
- Review the agenda. Ask if there are additional agenda items to discuss.
- If it is a formal meeting, determine if there is a quorum—the minimum number of people who must be present to conduct business.
- Keep the meeting moving; go on to the next agenda item when a point has been thoroughly covered.
- Use a flipchart, chalkboard or whiteboard, or some other method to visibly summarize meeting progress; the written notes of a meeting become the "group mind" and help keep the group on track.
- If the meeting is a formal one, decide when to take a vote. Make sure the

One of the time-tested strategies for leading a large group is *parliamentary procedure*—a comprehensive set of rules that prescribe how to take action on specific issues that come before the group. Parliamentary procedure provides the needed structure to help large groups of twenty or more people to stay focused and conduct business. It is less useful for small groups. Research suggests that for small, informal discussions, the formal rules of making motions and amending motions can be overkill; they get in the way of having people just talk and listen to each other.[23] For a summary of *Robert's Rules of Order*, the standard source for parliamentary procedures, see www.robertsrules.com.

After you have decided that a meeting is needed, developed your goal(s), and prepared your agenda, you need to develop strategies to accomplish the tasks you've outlined.

Recap

How to Prepare for a Meeting

Determine Meeting Goals

- Sharing Information: The team needs to know something it does not know now.
- Discussing Information: The team needs to express ideas and understand information.
- Taking Action: The team needs to do something or make a recommendation.

Develop the Meeting Agenda

- Identify items that need to be discussed to achieve the meeting goal(s).
- Organize the agenda items to achieve the goal(s). Consider:
  - Making the first agenda item a chance for participants to offer input about the meeting agenda.
  - Placing the highest-priority agenda item first on the agenda.
  - Placing an item on which the group is likely to reach consensus first on the agenda to build a positive team climate.
  - Placing routine information items last on the agenda.

10.3: Planning Problem-Solving Meetings

10.3 Describe the key elements of problem-solving meetings.

Because of the power of collaboration, groups and teams are often called on to solve challenging problems in business and professional settings. Understanding the nature of the problem-solving process and how to implement the steps of problem solving can help you and your team figure out how to get more or less of what you want. As this chapter's Career Corner discusses, knowing how to solve problems can also help you get the job that makes you part of the team.

Career Corner

Be the Solution: Get the Job

Prospective employers will hire you if you can be a solution to a problem rather than be a problem employee. How can you be the solution? When researching a prospective employer or specific company, identify specific problems that the organization has. Try to figure out what kind of problems you will be expected to solve if you are hired.

During your interview, look for ways to demonstrate your ability to solve problems. Use open-ended questions as a chance to show that you are aware of the issues and problems that the organization faces. Being able to describe problem-solving steps discussed in the chapter and knowing how to use problem-solving techniques and implementing solutions can help you distinguish yourself from others. No, you don't need to rattle off memorized lists and sound like a textbook or a professor, but letting prospective employers know that you have problem-solving skills and experience can result in you being the solution to the employer.

You know that the prospective employer has at least one problem to solve: who to hire for the position. Be the solution.

10.3.1: The Nature of Problem Solving

Problem solving is the process of overcoming obstacles to achieve a specific goal. For groups and teams, a problem consists of three elements: (1) an undesirable existing situation, (2) a goal the team wants to accomplish, and (3) one or more obstacles that prevent a team from achieving its goal.[24] *Almost every problem can be phrased in terms of something you want more of or less of.*[25] Perhaps what you want more of is time, money, sales, information, or how to cut costs without sacrificing quality. You may want to lessen errors, customer complaints, or absenteeism.

One researcher suggests that problems can be classified on a continuum of structured or unstructured.[26] An unstructured problem is one in which there is high uncertainty about how to solve the problem; there is little information, and the team is confused. The team needs information to help orient its members. For example, how to best merge two well-functioning departments in an advertising firm is an unstructured problem; there is no one right answer, uncertainty is high, and many possible strategies could accomplish the outcome. A more structured problem might be this: What is the best way to purchase and install new energy-saving light bulbs in our manufacturing plant? This problem is more straightforward; doing a simple cost-benefit analysis is a more structured process than trying to predict how well two departments can merge.

The Problem with Team Problem Solving. What are the most common barriers that keep teams from achieving their goals? Communication researchers Benjamin Broome and Luann Fulbright spent over six years asking business and professional people who participated in group and team discussions what barriers keep their team from operating at full capacity. The most common barriers can be summarized as either lack of a clear goal or lack of opportunity for meaningful interaction. Not having a clear goal or agenda (lack of clear structure) was the most frequent barrier. For example, a sales team that gets together to discuss how to enhance Internet sales will make better progress if team members seek to answer specific questions and follow a well-crafted agenda rather than just visiting about how things are going. Other problems include poor communication, lack of cultural sensitivity toward others, time pressures, and generally not being supportive of others.[27]

The Solution to Team Problem Solving. The prescriptive approach to teamwork focuses on giving teams specific structures, agendas, or using structured techniques to help them do their work. One researcher has identified over 70 methods or sequences of prescriptive steps and techniques that can be used to solve problems.[28] Several researchers have sought to identify which particular sequence works best. However, they found that *no one single prescriptive method works best, but having some structured sequence of steps or questions works better than having no structure.* The following problem-solving steps and strategies can help you structure a problem-solving meeting.

10.3.2: The Steps of Problem Solving

The problem-solving steps that we present here were originally developed by educator and philosopher John Dewey in his 1910 book *How We Think.*[29] Dewey's approach, which he called *reflective thinking*, is not a one-size-fits-all prescription. However, it is one useful way of structuring the problem-solving process to manage uncertainty and to ensure that the key functions (identify the goal, analyze the issues, generate ideas, evaluate ideas, and be sensitive to interpersonal dynamics) are included in your team discussion.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY AND DEFINE THE PROBLEM Teams work best when they have identified a clear, elevating goal that focuses their problem-solving effort. And as we've also noted, the goal is often to have more of something (money, time, work quality) or less of something (errors, conflict, wasted time).[30] To reach a clear specification of the problem, consider asking the following questions:

- What is the specific problem that concerns us?
- What do we want more of, or less of?
- What terms, concepts, or ideas do we need to define in order to understand the problem?
- Who is harmed by the problem?
- When do the harmful effects of the problem occur?

Most team experts agree that an effective way to give your problem-solving task appropriate structure is to phrase your problem in the form of a policy question. A policy question is phrased so the answer is some action (policy) intended to eliminate, reduce, or manage the problem. Policy questions begin with the words "What should be done about . . . ?" or "What could be done to improve . . . ?" For example:

- What should be done to lower the cost of tuition at our university?
- What could be done to decrease property taxes in our state?
- What should be done to make health care more affordable for all U.S. citizens?

One specific technique for identifying a problem is the Journalists' Six Questions technique.[31] Most news reporters are taught to include the answers to six questions when writing a news report: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Posing these six questions can help your team identify and then further define and limit the problem as well as help you move to the next step in the process—analyzing the problem.

STEP 2: ANALYZE THE PROBLEM Many teams want to cut to the chase quickly and start spinning out solutions before taking the time to thoroughly analyze the problem. But research clearly suggests that analyzing the problem well is an important prerequisite to finding an effective solution. You analyze the problem by subdividing the issues and identifying criteria for a solution.

Break the Problem Into Pieces. To analyze something is to break it down into smaller pieces; to analyze a problem is to consider its causes, effects, symptoms, history, and other information that will inform the team about how to best solve the problem. Here are some questions that can help your team approach problems:

Essential Questions to Analyze Problems

- How long has the problem existed?
- How widespread is the problem?

- What are the causes of the problem?
- What are the effects of the problem?
- What are the symptoms of the problem?
- What methods already exist for managing the problem?
- What are the limitations of existing methods?
- What obstacles keep the team from achieving the goal?

Develop Criteria. In addition to considering these questions, when analyzing a problem team members should develop criteria—standards and goals—for an acceptable solution. For example, does the solution need to fit within a certain budget or be implemented by a certain date? Who needs to agree to the solution in order for it to be implemented? Identifying clear criteria can help you spot a good solution when you see one.[32] The following are some sample criteria for solutions:

STEP 3: GENERATE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS You've now identified a specific problem and analyzed its causes, history, and so on. You are ready to identify possible ways to solve the problem. The classic technique for identifying possible solutions is called *brainstorming*. An advertising executive developed it more than a half century ago to encourage a team to be creative. You've probably already used this technique. With brainstorming, team members are encouraged to suggest many options or ideas without evaluating them first. We discuss brainstorming in more detail later in this chapter.

This team has already analyzed the situation, identified its goals, and generated several alternative ideas. Team members are now evaluating each alternative before selecting the best one.

STEP 4: SELECT THE BEST SOLUTION Once team members have completed step 3 and generated different options to solve the problem, the team takes the list of ideas generated and determines which ones best meet the criteria identified in the initial analysis of the problem (step 2). They also determine which solutions best achieve the team's clear, elevating goal.

It is usually easier for teams to expand alternatives (brainstorm) than it is to narrow alternatives. Teams can use one of the following three methods to whittle down a long list of alternatives to a manageable number for more serious debate:

- **RANKING.** Tell team members to rank their top five choices from 1 to 5.
- **RATING.** Ask team members to rate each solution on a scale from 1 to 5. The solutions rated best get the most serious discussion.
- **VOTING.** Team members simply vote for the alternatives they like.

What seems to work best is for team members to first discuss their criteria and remind themselves of their analysis of the problem before taking a vote or even before rating or ranking. The following questions can help focus the discussion on analysis before selecting a solution:

- Which of the solutions deals best with the obstacles identified?
- Does the suggestion solve the problem in both the short term and the long term?
- Does the solution meet our criteria?
- Do we have the resources to implement the solution?

Once you've narrowed your list of solutions to a handful or a couple of options, it's time to systematically evaluate the pros and the cons of each potential solution. An easy way to structure this discussion is to use a T-chart for each solution, listing the pros of the solution side by side with the cons or drawbacks. For example, suppose one option for a company that needs to cut costs is to move the corporate headquarters to a new location. Team members studying this issue could list on a T-chart the advantages and disadvantages of moving. The team leader could compile a master list of all pros and cons and then use the list to spark discussion on whether the corporate headquarters should be relocated.

Communication Ethics @ Work

Eight Ethical Questions

In his book *Character Matters*, Tom Lickona presents eight questions to help make ethical decisions. Before your group makes a decision, consider asking yourself these eight questions to help your group assess the ethics of the decision:

Golden Rule Question: Would we want others to do this to us?

Truth Question: Is this the whole truth?

Everyone-Does-It Question: Would we want to live in the world if everyone else did this?

Parents Question: Would we want our parents to know we made this decision?

Religion Question: What would a religious leader say about this decision?

Conscience Question: Will we feel guilty if we make this recommendation?

Consequences Question: Will the consequences be good if we make this decision?

Front Page Question: Would we want this decision printed on the front page of the paper?[33]

STEP 5: TEST AND IMPLEMENT THE SOLUTION Once you have identified your solution(s), your team needs to consider the question "Will it work?" You may want to do a pilot test or ask a small group of people what they think of your idea before you "go public" with it. Bouncing your proposed solution off an expert and checking to see if the solution was successful for others who may have adopted it can also help you test the solution's likely effectiveness.

If the team not only has to identify a solution but also put it into action, it will need structure to make sure that the job gets done and that everybody has a role and assumes specific responsibilities. Perhaps you know the people in the following story.

> This story is about four people: Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when actually Nobody asked Anybody.

Making sure you have clearly identified who does what can keep everybody from blaming somebody and ensure that the solution is implemented.

Recap

Problem-Solving Steps and Techniques

Steps	Techniques
1. Identify and define the problem.	• Phrase the problem as a policy question. • Use the Journalists' Six Questions (Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?) to help define the issues.
2. Analyze the problem.	• Develop clear criteria that clarify the issues and can help in evaluating solutions.
3. Generate possible solutions.	• Use brainstorming.
4. Select the best solution.	• Narrow alternatives using ranking, rating, or voting. • Evaluate the pros and cons of each solution. • Ask ethics questions about the proposed solutions.
5. Test and implement the solution.	• Develop a clear action plan. • Make a written list of who should do what.

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10.4: Developing Creative Solutions

10.4 Report strategies and techniques that help in developing team creative solutions.

Group and team members often want to know how to enhance their creativity. Sometimes teams simply stumble on a creative discovery while looking for something else. For example, Spencer Silver was a researcher at 3M trying to develop a new glue for adhesive tape when he discovered a low-tack, or not very sticky, adhesive. His colleague Art Fry was irritated when the little bookmarks he used in his hymnbook kept falling out. Fry had a creative idea: He thought that if he used Silver's low-tack adhesive on little pads of paper, he would have sticky bookmarks that wouldn't fall out. Eureka! Post-it Notes were born.[34]

There is evidence that creative groups sometimes make intuitive decisions—decisions that just feel right based on hunches and team members' gut feelings. Creativity may seem like a mystical process, but it can be developed. Gut feelings and chance discoveries aside, in the long run teams are more creative if they take the time to thoughtfully consider a number of alternatives when trying to solve a problem, make a decision, or invent a new process or product.[35] Teams are also more creative if they think they are creative.[36] In addition, as noted previously, sometimes groups and teams need the structure of a technique to stimulate a creative breakthrough.[37] Such techniques include brainstorming, the nominal-group technique, the Delphi technique, and electronic brainstorming.

10.4.1: Traditional Brainstorming

Brainstorming, a problem-solving technique that helps a group generate creative options, has been used by businesses, committees, and government agencies to improve the quality of group decision making. Although it can be used in several phases of group discussions, it may be most useful if a group needs original ideas or has trouble coming up with any ideas at all. A traditional brainstorming session follows these steps:

1. **IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM THAT NEEDS SOLVING.** Be sure that all group members can identify and clearly define the problem.
2. **SET A CLEAR TIME LIMIT.**
3. **ASK GROUP MEMBERS TEMPORARILY TO PUT ASIDE ALL JUDGMENTS AND EVALUATIONS.** The key to brainstorming is ruling out all criticism and evaluation. Alex Osborn, the advertising executive who originally conceived of brainstorming, had these suggestions:[38]
   - Acquire a "try anything" attitude.
   - Avoid criticism, which can stifle creativity.
   - Remember that all ideas are thought-starters.
   - Today's criticism may kill future ideas.
4. **HAVE GROUP OR TEAM MEMBERS THINK OF AS MANY AS POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM AS THEY CAN AND SHARE THE IDEAS WITH THE GROUP.** Consider the following suggestions:
   - The wilder the ideas, the better.
   - It is easier to tame ideas down than to think ideas up.
   - Think out loud and mention unusual ideas.
   - Someone's wild idea may trigger a good solution from another person in the group.
5. **MAKE SURE THAT THE GROUP UNDERSTANDS THAT PIGGYBACKING OFF SOMEONE ELSE'S IDEA IS USEFUL.** Combine ideas; add to previous ideas. Adopt the philosophy that once an idea is presented to the group, no one owns it—it belongs to the group and anyone can modify it.
6. **HAVE SOMEONE RECORD ALL THE IDEAS MENTIONED.** Ideas could be recorded on a flipchart, chalkboard, or overhead transparencies so that each group member can see them. Audio or video recordings could also be made of discussions.
7. **EVALUATE IDEAS WHEN THE TIME ALLOTTED FOR BRAINSTORMING HAS ELAPSED.** Consider these suggestions:
   - Approach each idea positively and give it a fair trial.
   - Try to make ideas workable.
   - Encourage feedback about the success of a session.
   - Remember that if even one or a few of the ideas generated by a group are useful, the session has been successful.

During brainstorming it's important to come up with lots of ideas, even odd or unusual ones. But if someone laughs at a suggestion, nods in appreciation, says "That's cool," or comments "That's stupid," the idea has been evaluated. *The key to making brainstorming work is to separate the generation of ideas from the evaluation of ideas*. In oral brainstorming it's hard not to evaluate ideas—but evaluation can stifle the sharing of ideas. Criticism and evaluation diminish creativity.[39] Even if group members do not verbalize their evaluation, their nonverbal expressions often convey positive or negative reaction to ideas. Another problem is that some people are apprehensive or nervous about speaking up in a group, and using traditional oral brainstorming makes it less likely that the communication-apprehensive members will participate. In addition, researchers have found that with traditional brainstorming sometimes the creative talents of some members seem to be restricted just by the very presence of others.[40]

Research suggests that a trained facilitator can improve the execution of group brainstorming.[41] Including diverse and creative group members with diverse ideas and options also enhances brainstorming. Nonverbal communication also can contribute to effective brainstorming. One study found that group members who build off and are in sync with one another's gestures are more likely to develop more collaborative and creative ideas than group members who aren't nonverbally in sync with one another. The researchers speculated that such nonverbally syncing among team members enhances the overall creative climate.[42] In addition, nominal-group technique uses silent brainstorming to overcome some of the disadvantages researchers have discovered with exclusively using oral brainstorming.

10.4.2: Silent Brainstorming—Nominal-Group Technique

The *nominal-group technique* is a procedure that uses some of the principles and methods of brainstorming but has members write their ideas individually before sharing them with the group.[43] Because members work on problems individually rather than during sustained group interaction, the group is a *nominal* group (it is a group in name only). After writing their own ideas individually, group members can come together to modify, elaborate on, and evaluate ideas. The generation of ideas (writing them down) has been separated from the evaluation of ideas. The following steps summarize how to use the nominal-group technique:

The Nominal-Group Technique

1. All group members should be able to define and analyze the problem under consideration.
2. Working individually, group members write down possible solutions to the problem.
3. Group members report the solutions they have identified to the entire group, one at a time. Each idea should be noted on a flipchart, chalkboard, or whiteboard for all group members to see.

4. Group members discuss the ideas gathered, not to advocate for one idea over another but rather to make sure that all the ideas are clear.

5. After discussing all proposed solutions, each group member ranks the solutions. If the list of solutions is long, group members can rank the five solutions they like best. The results are tabulated.

6. The entire group discusses the results of the rankings. If the first round of ranking is inconclusive or if the group is not comfortable with the results, the options can be ranked again after additional discussion.

Research suggests that using this organized method of gathering and evaluating information results in better solutions than attacking a problem in a disorganized fashion.[44] One researcher has found that the nominal-group technique works better than other prescriptive approaches, such as reflective thinking.[45]

Both traditional brainstorming and the nominal-group technique can be used at any phase of the problem-solving process. Silent brainstorming can be done even before a group meets for the first time; you could describe a problem and ask group members to brainstorm individually before assembling. Email makes this approach easier. One research team found that electronic brainstorming—discussed in more detail later—worked just as well as face-to-face brainstorming in generating ideas.[46]

Group and team members may generate more ideas if members first work alone and then regroup. Silent brainstorming encourages even apprehensive team members to participate by first writing their ideas. Once they have a written script, they are more comfortable sharing their ideas. Researchers have also found that people work more diligently if they have an individual assignment than if they have a group assignment.[47] Team members using the nominal-group technique are also more likely to remember the ideas suggested.[48]

However, although the nominal-group technique can result in more ideas being generated, they may not always be better ideas. It still takes creative, intelligent team members to develop high-quality ideas. They may not even generate more ideas, overall. One study found that nominal groups generated more ideas than brainstorming groups only during the first 10 minutes of their work. That study also found that groups using the nominal-group technique were less cohesive than traditional brainstorming groups.[49] Training can help overcome these drawbacks. Team members who are trained to use nominal-group technique do develop more creative ideas than untrained members.

10.4.3: Absentee Brainstorming—Delphi Technique

Whereas the nominal-group technique invites participants to contribute ideas by first writing them down and then sharing them with the group, the Delphi technique takes this idea one step further. This method, named after the ancient oracle at Delphi, has been called absentee brainstorming because individuals share ideas in writing or via email and do not meet face-to-face. One person coordinates the information and shares it with the rest of the group. For example, when Software.com, a multinational company, wanted to develop a new computer game, they involved teams from their London, Tokyo, Austin, and San Francisco offices using the Delphi technique. The coordinator of the brainstorming session, using the Delphi technique, simply described the goal to the teams and asked them to generate ideas. The coordinator collected the ideas and then shared them with all groups for evaluation.

The Delphi technique is especially useful when conflict within a group inhibits effective group interaction, or when time and distance constraints make it difficult for group members to meet.[50] Here is a step-by-step description of the Delphi technique:

1. The group leader selects a problem, issue, policy, or decision that needs to be reviewed.
2. The leader corresponds with group members in writing, informing them of the task and inviting their suggestions and input; often a specific questionnaire is developed. Group members are asked individually to brainstorm suggestions or reactions to the issue confronting the group.
3. The respondents complete the questionnaire or generate a list of their brainstormed responses and send it to the leader.
4. The leader then summarizes all the responses from the group and shares the summary with all group members, asking for additional ideas, suggestions, and reactions. Team members are asked to rate or rank the ideas and return their comments to the leader.
5. The leader continues the process of summarizing the group feedback and asking for more input until general consensus emerges. Several rounds of soliciting ideas and evaluating them may be needed to achieve consensus.

This method often produces many good ideas. All participants are treated equally because no one is aware of who submitted which idea. It is, however, a time-consuming process. And because there is no face-to-face interaction, some ideas worthy of elaboration and exploration may get lost in the shuffle. Using the Delphi technique in combination with face-to-face meetings can help eliminate some disadvantages of the procedure.

10.4.4: Electronic Brainstorming

Electronic brainstorming is a technique whereby team members generate ideas and submit them using their computer or phone devices; the individual lists are then displayed to the entire group. This high-tech method resembles the nominal-group technique in that group members write ideas before sharing them with the group. It also is similar to the Delphi technique but improves on it because all team members, not just the leader, can see all ideas in written form; thus, group members can piggyback off the ideas of others. Electronic brainstorming can be performed by group members who are all in the same room or by geographically distant members through their computers or phones. Hybrid combinations of face-to-face and electronic brainstorming are also possible.

One of the benefits of electronic brainstorming is that team members—those in the office and those working elsewhere—can look at lists of ideas together and then build on those ideas.

Research suggests that groups using electronic brainstorming generate more ideas than traditional face-to-face brainstorming groups.[51] One research team found that when some members of a group meet face-to-face, and are supported with ideas from electronically submitted ideas from group members who are not physically present, more ideas are generated and these are of higher quality than if all members meet face-to-face.[52] Some electronic meeting software programs and brainstorming apps permit team members to submit ideas and suggestions anonymously. Members feel less fear or anxiety about being criticized for unconventional ideas because no one knows who suggested them.[53] And when group members move to the phase of evaluating ideas, they are not sure whether they are evaluating an idea coming from a boss, a group leader, or a new intern. All ideas are considered on their own merit. Yet, there is also evidence that we like to know who gives us praise and compliments.[54]

One obvious disadvantage of electronic brainstorming is the need for all group members to have access to an appropriate software program or phone app. But recent evidence strongly supports the value of this variation of the brainstorming method, in which technology adds structure to the process.

Recap

Comparing Creative Techniques

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Brainstorming	• Easy to use • No special materials needed • Group members can piggyback off each other's ideas	• High potential for group members to evaluate ideas as they are being generated • Takes more time than more structured techniques, such as nominal-group or Delphi • Quiet group members less likely to participate
Nominal-group technique	• Group members can build on ideas of others • Provides a written record of ideas • Controls more talkative, dominating group members by limiting participation	• Group members can build on ideas of others • Provides a written record of ideas • Controls more talkative, dominating group members by limiting participation
Delphi technique	• Group does not have to meet in person • Provides a written record of ideas • Helps group members prepare for upcoming meeting	• No synergy created by hearing the ideas of others • Minimizes opportunities for elaborating on ideas • Group members may be suspicious that someone has manipulated the results
Electronic brainstorming	• Very efficient • Anonymous options can increase number of ideas	• Need computers and software and training to use them • It takes time to describe procedures of electronic brainstorming to team members

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10.5: Managing Meeting Interaction

10.5 Identify different ways of facilitating meeting interaction.

Without interaction—the give-and-take of dialogue and the contributions that participants make during meetings—meetings become monologues. With too much interaction, meetings can become disorganized, with rambling, redundant, or digressive discussions that waste time and are inconclusive. Meeting leaders and participants can help ensure a balance of structure and interaction by using the facilitation skills and other strategies we describe.

10.5.1: Facilitating Discussion

The essential task of a meeting facilitator is to manage the interaction to achieve the goals of the group. A meeting facilitator may be someone other than the leader, boss, or supervisor of the team. A facilitator's job is to help manage the flow of conversation and keep the group on track.[55]

Facilitating Meetings

- Ask questions that help the group identify information it needs at the beginning of team deliberations.
- Get as many people in the team as possible to participate in the conversation.
- Make sure team members understand the comments and suggestions offered by other team members.
- Solicit high-quality, on-task, relevant contributions from team members.

Communication researchers Fred Niederman and Roger Volkema, in studying the effects of meeting facilitators on group productivity, found that the most experienced facilitators helped orient the group toward the goal, helped members adapt to what was happening in the group, and involved the group in developing the agenda for the meeting.[56]

BE A GATEKEEPER Meetings should not consist of a monologue from the meeting leader or be dominated by just a few participants. A gatekeeper encourages less talkative members to participate and tries to limit lengthy contributions by other group members. A meeting facilitator needs to be a skilled listener who is sensitive to both individual members' needs and the overarching team goals and knows when to step in. Gatekeepers make comments such as "Alice, we haven't heard your ideas yet. Won't you share your thoughts with us?" or "Mike, thanks for sharing, but I'd like to hear what others have to say." Polite, tactful invitations to talk or limit talk usually work. If worse comes to worst, a facilitator may need to speak to an unruly talker privately to let him or her know that a more balanced discussion is preferable.

FOCUS ON THE GOAL A leader often has to keep the group on course toward its meeting goals, and one of the most effective tools for doing so is summarizing. Periodically review your understanding of the group's progress with brief comments and questions, such as "Okay. Dennis agrees with John that we need to determine how much our project will cost. Are we ready for the next issue?" Such summaries coupled with a question help a group take stock of what it has done and what it has yet to accomplish.

MONITOR TIME Another job of a meeting leader is to keep track of how much time has been spent on the planned agenda items and how much time remains. Think of your agenda as a map, helping you plan where you want to go. Think of the clock as your gas gauge, telling you the amount of fuel you have to get where you want to go. If you are running out of fuel (time), you will either need to fill up the tank (budget more time) or recognize that you will not get where you want to go. Begin each meeting by asking how long members can meet. If you face two or three crucial agenda items, and a third of your group has to leave in an hour, you will want to make certain to schedule important items early in the meeting.

STRUCTURE INTERACTION To ensure that all members participate in the discussion, you may need to use some of the problem-solving tools and techniques mentioned earlier in this chapter, such as the Journalists' Six Questions or the various brainstorming techniques for generating creative options. For example, if your meeting goal is to identify new ideas for reducing customer complaints, consider using the nominal-group technique, in which team members write individually and then share with the group. as a way to generate ideas. Structured methods of inviting involvement are effective in garnering contributions from all group members.

Recap

Strategies for Effective Meetings

How to Give a Meeting Structure

Prepare an effective agenda by

- Determining your meeting goals
- Identifying what needs to be discussed to achieve the goals
- Organizing the agenda to achieve the goals

How to Ensure Managed Interaction

Keep discussion on track by

- Using effective gatekeeping skills
- Reminding the group of elapsed time and time remaining for deliberation
- Using strategies to manage interaction (for example, nominal-group technique or silent brainstorming)

10.5.2: Avoiding Groupthink

Be cautious if all team members agree too quickly. Your team may be experiencing groupthink instead of consensus. *Groupthink* is a faulty sense of agreement that occurs when team members seemingly agree but primarily just want to avoid conflict. It's an illusion of agreement, or an ineffective consensus.

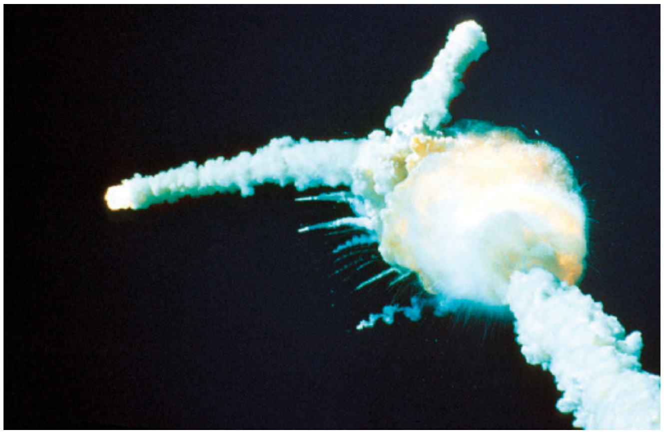
If a team does not seriously examine the pros and cons of an idea, it's likely that the quality of its decision will suffer.[57] Effective groups do experience conflict, and then they seek productive ways to manage the conflict. When conflict occurs in a group, the entire group may experience a feeling of dissonance or discomfort. Some group members may want to manage the dissonance by quickly agreeing. But members of a well-functioning group realize conflict is part of the process of collaborating in groups and teams.[58]

GROUPTHINK TRIGGERS There are several causes of groupthink. Sometimes it occurs because team members are not particularly interested in the topic or the team may just be tired and want to get on with other work. If a team has a highly revered leader, someone that all team members respect, the team is more likely to agree with the leader rather than testing and challenging the leader's ideas. Groupthink also occurs when team members feel they can do no wrong—they feel invincible. Rather than taking time to test and evaluate ideas, the team may quickly decide and assume that the decision is a good one. Groupthink is also likely to occur when (1) the team feels apathetic about its task, (2) team members don't expect to be successful, (3) one team member has very high credibility, so team members tend to believe what he or she says, (4) one team member is very persuasive, or (5) team members don't usually challenge ideas; it's expected that team members will agree with one another.[59] Be on the lookout for these symptoms in your groups and teams.

HOW TO AVOID GROUPTHINK Failure to test ideas and the resulting groupthink can have serious consequences: Wrong, dangerous, or stupid decisions can be the result.

To overcome groupthink, consider the following strategies:[60]

1. **ENCOURAGE TEAM MEMBERS TO BE INDEPENDENT, CRITICAL THINKERS.** Reward people for being honest and stating their true feelings. Establish a climate of acceptance of others' ideas.
2. **EXAMINE THE IDEAS OF OTHERS CAREFULLY, REGARDLESS OF THEIR POSITION.** Consider the merit of the idea, not the rank or title of the person making the suggestion. Of course, you have to be tactful when disagreeing with individuals who may have more power and status than you do.
3. **ASK AN OUTSIDER TO EVALUATE THE GROUP'S DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.** Or take a few moments to evaluate the group's decision-making skill at the end of the meeting.
4. **PURPOSELY LOOK FOR DISADVANTAGES OF A PROPOSED IDEA.** This strategy is especially useful if no one disagrees with an idea. You can even assign someone to be a devil's advocate. There is evidence that teams with team members who are skilled in arguing for and against ideas and evidence make better quality decisions.[61]
5. **BREAK TEAMS INTO SMALLER GROUPS TO CONSIDER PROS AND CONS.** Consider assigning people to small groups or pairs to evaluate the pros and cons of a proposed solution. Sometimes team members may feel more comfortable expressing their disagreement in a smaller group than in a larger group or team.



The tragedy of the *Challenger* explosion might have been avoided had group members been willing to challenge the decision to launch in cold weather.

10.5.3: Reaching Consensus

Consensus occurs when all group members support and are committed to a decision. To manage conflict and disagreement to reach consensus takes time and skill, but to reap the benefits of group and team deliberations it's useful, if time permits, to strive for team consensus on key issues and decisions.[62] Conflict, whether in face-to-face or virtual teams, can be helpful in ensuring that groups don't experience groupthink, but too much unmanaged conflict can lower team member satisfaction and overall team performance.[63] So it's important for teams to invest energy in seeking consensus and managing conflict.

Three strategies can help teams reach consensus. First, because teams often bounce from topic to topic, it's important to keep the team oriented toward the goal. When you see the team starting to stray from its task, whether you are the official team facilitator or not, remind the team what the goal is. It also helps to write ideas and facts on a flipchart or chalkboard to keep the team focused. Table 10.2 compares the behavior of effective and ineffective members in a group that is attempting to achieve consensus.

USE METADISCUSSION A key strategy to keep a team focused on its goal is to use metadiscussion. *Metadiscussion* literally means "discussion about discussion"—it is comments about the discussion *process* rather than the topic under consideration. A metadiscussional comment helps the group stop and reflect on what it's doing or become aware of how it's operating. A metadiscussional statement might be "I'm not following this conversation. What is our goal?" or "Can someone summarize what we've accomplished so far?" Periodically using metadiscussional statements can also help keep the team on track and focused.

Table 10.2: Suggestions for Reaching Group and Team Consensus

Effective Group Members	Ineffective Group Members
Keep the group oriented toward its goal: • Remind the group what the goal is. • Write facts and key ideas on a flipchart or chalkboard. • Talk about the discussion process; ask questions that keep the group focused on the agenda.	• Go off on tangents and do not stay focused on the agenda. • Fail to summarize or rely on oral summaries to keep group members focused on the goal. • Do little to help clarify group discussion.
Listen to the ideas of others: • Clarify misunderstandings. • Emphasize areas of agreement. • Maintain eye contact when listening to someone and remain focused on the speaker without interrupting.	• Do not clarify misunderstandings or check to see whether others understand their messages. • Ignore areas of agreement. • Avoid eye contact with a speaker, do not focus attention on the speaker, interrupt the speaker.
Promote honest dialogue and discussion: • Seek out differences of opinion. • Do not change their minds simply to avoid conflict. • Try to involve everyone in the discussion.	• Do not seek other opinions from group members. • Quickly agree with other group members to avoid conflict. • Permit one person or just a few people to talk too much and dominate the conversation.

SOURCE: Adapted from Steven A. Beebe and John T. Masterson, *Communicating in Small Groups: Principles and Practices*, 10th ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2012).

For example, saying "Peggy, I'm not sure I understand how your observation relates to our meeting goal" can help gently guide a team member back to the topic at hand.

Metadiscussional phrases need to be tactful and respectful. Use "I" messages rather than "you" messages to bring the team back on track. Rather than saying "You're not following the agenda" or "Your point doesn't make any sense," you can express these same ideas, but with less of a negative edge, by saying "I'm not sure where we are on the agenda" or "I'm not sure I understand how your point relates to the issue we are discussing." Being able to use metadiscussion is an exceptionally powerful skill, and you can offer metadiscussional statements even if you are not the appointed leader.

LISTEN AND SUMMARIZE A second general strategy for promoting consensus is to listen carefully to the ideas of others. Maintain eye contact with the speaker and give him or her your full attention. Work to clarify misunderstandings. The active listening technique, whereby you sometimes paraphrase key ideas to ensure that you understand what someone is saying, is another useful tool to help a team get unstuck when consensus seems elusive. When listening to others, try to find areas of agreement rather than just trying to convince someone that his or her idea is wrong and yours is right. Consensus is more likely to blossom when the team can find some areas of agreement rather than just hammering away at the most contentious issues. When you do agree with something that is said, say so. Team members who help promote a positive climate, express agreement, are open to new ideas, and look for ways to support other team members enhance the likelihood that consensus will occur.[64]

KEEP IT REAL A third general strategy is to promote honest dialogue and discussion. True consensus is more likely to occur if many ideas are shared and team members don't just give in or change their minds to avoid conflict. Some teams may be tempted to take a quick vote to settle issues. Although voting can be a useful way of seeing where team members stand on an issue, be wary of taking a vote too quickly before the team has had an opportunity to discuss it. Consensus is most likely to be genuine if the team has explored several alternatives, despite the time it takes to have these discussions.

Summary: Enhancing Team Meetings

10.1: Identify and describe structure and interaction as the two key defining components of any meeting.

When leading meetings, your primary task is to provide a balance between needed structure to keep a meeting on track and meeting interaction—the give-and-take talk that occurs during a meeting. Be aware of your team's need for structure to keep meetings moving forward when people get off task and off topic. Be aware of team members' need for interaction when one or more members talks too much or too little.

10.2: Describe the preparatory steps that are required before any meeting.

To develop a well-organized meeting agenda, carefully choose placement of high-priority items and information items. Consider placing items that will garner agreement earlier in the meeting. Always distribute an agenda before a meeting.

10.3: Describe the key elements of problem-solving meetings.

One of the most traditional ways of structuring a problem-solving discussion is to use the standard problem-solving agenda, which consists of:

- Identifying and defining the problem
- Analyzing the problem
- Generating possible solutions
- Selecting the best solution
- Testing and implementing the solution

10.4: Report strategies and techniques that help in developing team creative solutions.

Teams are often called on to develop creative solutions when making decisions or solving problems. Brainstorming is one of the most-used techniques to structure creative conversation in meetings. Forms of silent or absentee brainstorming, including nominal-group technique and Delphi Technique, can help teams avoid some of the pitfalls of oral brainstorming.

10.5: Identify different ways of facilitating meeting interaction.

Three strategies can help a team reach consensus: Orient the group toward its goal. Listen to the ideas of others, especially minority viewpoints. Promote honest dialogue and discussion.

The following tactics can help minimize groupthink (a false sense of agreement): Encourage independent, critical thought. Assign someone to be a devil's advocate to challenge ideas. Break into smaller teams (even in two-person dyads) to evaluate the pros and cons of ideas proposed.

SHARED WRITING: DEVELOP A MEETING AGENDA

Develop a meeting agenda for an upcoming meeting. Develop a meeting goal or goals, and identify the sequence of agenda items. After you have written your agenda, write a brief explanation of why you structured your agenda as you did.

A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post **0 characters | 140 minimum**

Chapter 10 Quiz: Enhancing Team Meetings

Chapter 11
Developing Your Professional Presentation

Learning Objectives

11.1 Identify the primary causes of communication apprehension and identify strategies to overcome apprehension

11.2 Investigate the importance of knowing your audience

11.3 Describe the factors that need to be considered while selecting the presentation topic

11.4 Recommend appropriate ways to develop and use supporting material in a speech

11.5 Express ways to effectively deliver your presentation

Pierre Omidyar and Jeff Skoll had a major presentation to make. They were asking executives from Benchmark Capital to invest millions of dollars in their new idea, which they were calling AuctionWeb. They considered a variety of different ways to present their information and organize their talk. They also thought about which method of delivery—a formal style or a more informal, relaxed approach—would be most effective. They decided that because they were speaking to an audience that might initially be skeptical and might not jump at the chance to invest in their idea, they needed to present facts, strong statistical evidence, and clear arguments as to why an Internet auction might be the next big marketing innovation. After presenting all of the facts and figures of their investment deal in a logical, clear outline, while also using their best presentation skills, they were delighted to get the go-ahead from Benchmark Capital executives to invest in their little company. Because of their skill in presenting the idea, as well as the idea itself, that investment is not so little today. Within 10 years of starting the company—you know it as eBay—they made nearly $10 billion.[1]

Leading Questions

1. If you were Pierre Omidyar and Jeff Skoll and were pitching eBay to a group of investors, how would you have described the concept to your listeners?
2. What are the key skills of presenting information to an audience? What strategies do you think would be most effective in establishing your credibility with listeners?
3. Why are presentation skills valuable in business and professional settings?

To lead is to speak. Of course you can lead, or influence others, while listening—but effective leaders are also effective speakers. Delivering public presentations is an essential part of being a leader in contemporary business and professional settings. One study found that perceptions of your public speaking skill are a key factor in determining how you are perceived as a leader.[2] This chapter is about the inevitable public presentations that will punctuate your professional life.

Not all of your presentations will have as much at stake as the investment pitch make by Omidyar and Skoll. Yet regardless of your precise professional or business role, you will be expected to give presentations to others. Speaking to others—whether live and in person, presented on streaming video, narrowcast via Skype, or captured on YouTube—remains an integral part of business and professional communication. Some of your talks will be presented to only one person, but many talks will be presented to a larger audience. During some presentations you'll likely be seated around a conference table, perhaps to promote a new product that you hope your customers will buy. If you aspire to a major leadership role in an organization, it's possible that you may find yourself speaking to a large audience anxiously waiting for you to tell them whether they are still employed. As management consultant Tony Jeary has noted, "Life is a series of presentations."?[3]

11.1: Confidently Communicating to Others

11.1 Identify the primary causes of communication apprehension, and identify strategies to overcome apprehension.

If you get nervous when you speak in public, you are not alone, many—if not most—people are nervous about giving presentations. In a frequently cited survey seeking to identify people's fears, public speaking ranked as the top anxiety-producing experience most people face.[4] Among all people responding, 41% said public speaking was their greatest fear; when the ratings were tallied, fear of death ranked only sixth! Other research suggests that more than 80% of people feel nervous when they give a presentation.[5] And about 20% of all college-age students are highly apprehensive about speaking with others.[6] Because there may be much at stake when you speak in business and professional contexts (such as getting the sale, getting the contract signed, or negotiating a major deal), the anxiety of giving a public presentation may seem overwhelming. Although you may find some comfort in knowing that you are not alone in experiencing public-speaking anxiety, you may still welcome some tips and strategies to help you manage your nervousness. One of the biggest comforts can simply be having more information about *why* you experience nervousness and anxiety.

11.1.1: Understanding Your Apprehension

Virtually every speaker gets nervous to some degree.[7] Many well-known polished presenters admit they get nervous. Speakers and TV personalities such as Katie Couric, Conan O'Brien, Seth Meyers, and Oprah Winfrey admit to getting nervous before a speech.[8] In the previous century, both President John Kennedy and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill were hailed as outstanding orators—both got very nervous before speaking.

WHY DO YOU BECOME NERVOUS? Believe it or not, your anxiety stems from your brain trying to help your body adapt to a stressful situation. Sometimes, however, your body offers more "help" than you need.

Your view of the speaking assignment, your perception of your speaking skill, and your self-esteem can interact to create anxiety.[9] You want to do a good job, but you're not sure you can or will.[10] Presented with this conflict, Your brain switches to its default fight-or-flight mode: You can either fight to respond to the challenge, or flee to avoid the trigger of the anxiety. Your brain signals your body to prepare for fight or flight by increasing your oxygen supply through increased breathing, pumping more adrenaline to give you energy, and causing more blood to rush through your veins.[11] Although you view these physical responses as problems, your body is simply trying to help you with the task at hand—to speak effectively.[12]

WHEN ARE YOU MOST LIKELY TO FEEL NERVOUS? You are most likely to feel apprehensive about giving a presentation just moments before you deliver it. Anxiety is also likely to surge when you first learn you have a presentation to deliver, such as when your boss assigns you to talk about your team's project.[13] As you begin preparing your presentation, your anxiety decreases somewhat; that's because you are taking positive action to respond to the speaking opportunity. Now that you know this typical pattern, you can make the most effort to manage your apprehensions at the time when you need the most help—right before you give your speech. It is also helpful to remember that your anxiety begins to decrease as you begin delivering your speech.

HOW MUCH DOES YOUR NERVOUSNESS SHOW? You are going to feel more nervous than you look. Worrying about your speech and continuing to focus on your fear may actually increase your fear. Instead, realize that your audience cannot see what you feel; unless you announce your fear, the audience can't see your fear.

HOW CAN YOU USE NERVOUSNESS PRODUCTIVELY? Being aware of the causes of the communication apprehension can help you rather then hurt you. Extra adrenaline, increased blood flow, increased endorphins to block pain, increased heart rate, and other physical changes triggered by anxiety actually enhance your energy level and help you function better than you might otherwise. Don't let your initial fear convince you that you cannot speak effectively.

11.1.2: Tips for Building Your Confidence

Other than understanding what is causing your fear, are there specific things you can do to enhance your confidence? We're happy to report that the answer is yes! Here are some tips and strategies to decrease anxiety and increase your poise.[14]

DON'T PROCRASTINATE One research study reached this commonsense conclusion: Speakers who are more apprehensive about speaking put off working on their speeches.[15] The lack of thorough preparation often results in a poorer performance, thereby reinforcing the perception that making a presentation is difficult. Take charge by preparing for your talk early; give yourself every chance to be successful.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE Learn as much as you can about your listeners. The more you can anticipate their reactions to your presentation, the more comfortable you will be in delivering your message.[16] As you are rehearsing your speech, periodically imagine what your audience members may be doing or how they may respond to your presentation. In other words, be audience centered, not speaker centered. Don't keep telling yourself how nervous you are going to be; that's being speaker centered.[17] An audience-centered speaker focuses on connecting to listeners.

RECREATE THE SPEECH ENVIRONMENT WHEN YOU REHEARSE When you practice your presentation, imagine you are actually delivering the speech to the audience you will be addressing.[18] Picture what the room looks like. Practice rising from your seat, walking to the front of the room, and beginning your speech. Stand up, and practice out loud; don't just think about what you are going to say. The more your brain and body experience actually presenting your speech, the less they will try to deal with the challenge by increasing adrenaline, heart rate, and breathing.

VISUALIZE SUCCESS Imagine not just giving your speech but giving it effectively and comfortably. Studies have found that positive visualization can help you feel more confident and reduce anxiety.[19]

BREATHE Nervous speakers often tend to take short, shallow breaths. To help break this anxiety-induced breathing pattern, consider taking a few slow, deep breaths before you speak. No one will be able to detect that you are taking deep breaths if you just slowly inhale and exhale before beginning your talk. While breathing deeply, relax your entire body. Deep breathing coupled with visualizing your success can help you relax.

CHANNEL YOUR NERVOUSNESS Typical symptoms of anxiety are shaking hands and wobbly knees. Your muscles may move whether you've asked them to move or not. One way to release tension is to take a leisurely walk before you arrive wherever you will be speaking. Another technique is to grasp the edge of your chair (without calling attention to what you are doing) and gently squeeze the chair to release tension. Just squeeze and relax, squeeze and relax. You can also purposely tense and then release the muscles in your legs and arms while you're seated. You may also want to keep both feet on the floor and ever so gently wiggle your toes. These tactics will ensure that every body part will be wide awake and ready to go when it's your turn to speak.

GIVE YOURSELF A PEP TALK Mentally tell yourself positive, encouraging messages rather than negative, fear-laced ones. There is research evidence to support this advice: Worry begets more worry and anxiety. There's also research to suggest that if you can *cognitively restructure* the defeating messages you tell yourself, you can decrease your anxiety.[20] Whenever you find yourself drifting into self-defeating negative thoughts, stop that fearful self-talk and replace it with more positive, encouraging messages. Mentally tell yourself "I've practiced this speech. I've got good notes. I'm prepared." Or "I can do this! My listeners want me to succeed."

LOOK FOR FRIENDLY FACES WHEN YOU SPEAK If you think your audience is not going to like you or agree with your message, you are more likely to feel nervous.[21] So look for friendly, positive support when you speak. Find the people who will nod affirmatively in agreement with your message. Look for smiles, reciprocal eye contact, and other positive reinforcement.

SEEK SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES The way you get better at anything is through practice. There is evidence that as you gain public-speaking experience your anxiety will decrease.[22] So, rather than fleeing from speaking opportunities, look for ways to increase rather than decrease your public-speaking experience, such as volunteering to present your team's report at the sales meeting.

Career Corner

A Toast to Toastmasters

Perhaps you've heard the story of the new arrival to New York City who asked a stranger, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?" and the answer was "Practice, practice, practice." It's an old joke, but with a contemporary point. The best way to get better at something is to practice. One of the best forums for practicing your public-speaking skills is to join Toastmasters, a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing speaking skills.

You will find a Toastmasters group in virtually every community, large or small. Simply click on Toastmasters.org to find a group near you. In this friendly, supportive community you will gain skill and confidence in speaking to others. As a first step, visit a Toastmasters group. Just check it out. You will likely find others, including beginners, who have communication apprehension but who seek to polish their presentation skills.

BE PREPARED Here's a formula that applies to most speaking situations you are likely to experience: The better prepared you are, the less anxiety you will experience. Being prepared means you have researched your topic and practiced your speech several times before you deliver it. Being prepared also means being able to adapt your message to your audience on the spot.[23] If you thought you were giving a 20-minute presentation, be prepared to cut your speaking time in half if necessary. By preparing—even overpreparing—you'll gain confidence and skill.

Recap

Tips for Speaking with Confidence

Before You Speak

- Don't procrastinate—start early.
- Know your audience.
- Be well prepared.
- Rehearse by re-creating the environment in which you will speak.
- Visualize your success.
- Use breathing techniques to help you relax.
- Channel nervous energy.
- Give yourself a mental pep talk.

During Your Speech

- Focus on connecting to your audience rather than on your fear.
- Look for and respond to positive listener support.

After Your Speech

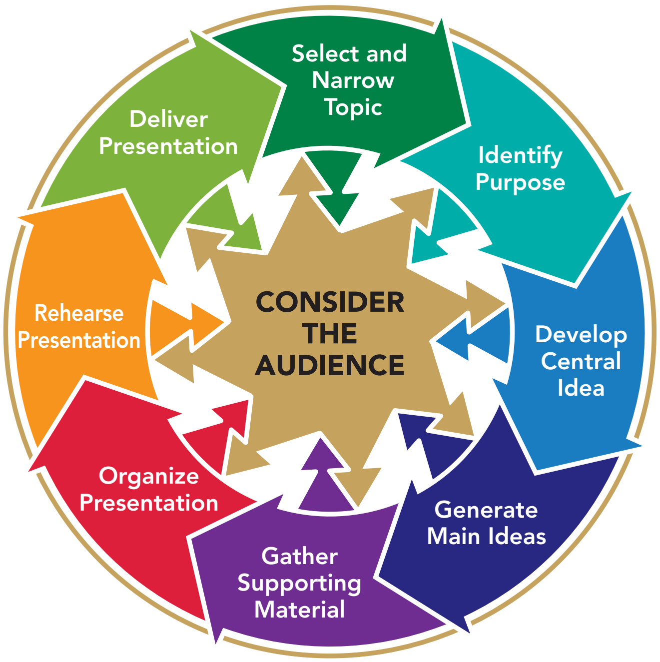
- Seek other speaking opportunities to boost your experience level and confidence.
- Focus on your success and accomplishments.

11.2: Consider Your Audience

11.2 Investigate the importance of knowing your audience.

At the heart of the professional speaking process is considering your audience. You'll notice that double-headed arrows connect the center of the following model (Figure 11.1) with every other element in the speaking process. View the model as you would a clock. You'll find "Select and Narrow Topic" at the top (12:00). The process proceeds clockwise in the direction of the arrows to "Deliver Presentation." As shown in Figure 11.1, focusing on the audience is ever-present—it is where you start and end the speaking process.

Figure 11.1: An Audience-Centered Model of the Presentational Speaking Process



The central focus of professional speaking should be the audience because ultimately your listeners will determine whether you get the sale, land the contract, convince a philanthropist to give your organization money, or achieve your speaking goal.

Effective leaders ethically adapt or customize their message to their audiences. Being audience centered involves using what you know about your audience to make decisions about what you say and how you say it before you speak. In a sense, your audience "writes" the speech[24] by playing a central role in determining what you should say. Being audience centered also means being aware of your audience's responses during the presentation so that you can make appropriate adjustments to your message or your style of delivery.[25]

These audience members, who are clearly engaged in a presentation, appear to be listening to a speaker who considered their needs, interests, and goals when developing his or her presentation.

Effective speakers also acknowledge that cultural, ethnic, and other traditions affect the way people process messages. In addition, each organization, whether a for-profit business or a nonprofit organization, has its own organizational culture. Audience-centered professional speakers are inherently sensitive to the variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds of contemporary audiences.

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Talk Their Language to Lead People Out of the Forest

Now that he is the chief executive officer, Kon Leong, co-founder and president of ZL Technologies, a company that specializes in email and file archiving, uses his many years of experience as a salesperson to help him fine-tune his business presentations. When he first began his sales career, he viewed communication as a very logical and rational process of giving people information. Now he knows effective communication means being able to talk the language of the audience. Leong says, "You have to present your story in their context, not yours." He uses metaphors to explain:[26]

> If they're in the deep part of the forest, you've got to talk the language of the deep forest. … The challenge is to share the same framework so that you're seeing the same page in the same way.[27]

Leong echoes our advice in this chapter: *To be an effective communicator you need to be audience centered*. You need to spend time thinking about where your listeners are, what their needs and interest are, and what they expect from you.

11.2.1: Analyzing your Audience Before You Speak

As noted, before thinking about how to narrow your topic or proceeding with any other task in preparing for your presentation, you *consider your audience*. One way to do this is to gather information about them. You'll also want information about the speaking situation (including where you will speak and the overall environment in which you'll talk).

CONSIDER DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION The more background information you have about your listeners, the better able you will be to adapt to them and ethically achieve your speaking goal. Among the key types of information to learn is *demographic information*, or statistics about such audience characteristics as age, gender, ethnicity, and cultural background.

Audience Demographics

- How old are your listeners?
- What is the ratio in the audience of people who identify as male and female?
- Are there differences in cultural background related to a national or religious heritage?
- What is the typical education level of your audience?
- Are listeners members of religious, political, social, or service groups?
- What are the range of income and the occupations of your audience?

One of the biggest challenges speakers face is how to adapt to an audience that is highly diverse. You may have to focus on a target audience within the larger audience. A *target audience* is a specific segment of your audience that you most want to influence. The challenge when focusing on a target audience is not to lose or alienate the rest of your listeners—to keep the entire audience in mind while simultaneously making a specific attempt to appeal to the target segment.

Another strategy when speaking to a diverse audience is to use a variety of different supporting materials—such as illustrations, examples, statistics, opinions—which we discuss in more detail later in this chapter. Tell stories. Most people like to hear a good, well-told, relevant story. With an exceptionally diverse group, consider relying on visual materials that transcend language and cultural differences. Finally, with a highly diverse audience, seek *common ground*: Identify values that many people in the audience may hold.

CONSIDER THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE OF YOUR AUDIENCE Because you are probably not a trained psychologist, you may wonder how to develop a psychological profile of your listeners. It's not as tricky as it may seem. You need not conduct a detailed personality inventory of your audience to gain general *psychological information*, such as listeners likes, dislikes, and whether they are interested or uninterested in, or feel favorable or unfavorable toward, you and your topic. You can ask someone who knows your audience well about their attitudes, beliefs, and values. Or you could speculate about their position on the issues you will discuss, based on their demographic characteristics, as well as the nature of their jobs and their roles in the organization.

- What are their *attitudes,* their likes and dislikes? Overall, does your audience have a positive attitude toward you and what you are going to say? Or are they, like many audiences, simply neutral or apathetic toward your message?
- What are their *beliefs*? That is, what do they hold to be true or false? Do they have a different sense of what the world is like compared to your view of the world?
- What are their *values*, their concepts of good and bad, right and wrong? Values are the hardest to change.

#Technology and Communication @ Work

Using Technology to Analyze Your Audience

We have stressed the importance of understanding your audience in any speaking situation. If you are speaking to an organization that you don't know much about, you can gather information from the organization's website:

- Look for information you can use to customize your message. For example, look at the organization's mission, vision, or values statement for ways you can align your message with the organization's overall mission and goals.
- Look for success stories or other examples or illustrations that you can use to illustrate one of your points or ideas.
- Look for descriptions of the jobs of the people to whom you will be speaking to help you adapt your message to their specific duties and responsibilities.
- Look for news that the organization may post on its website. Let your audience know you are aware of the stories and issues that are important to the organization.

Applying Your Skills

For an important presentation, you may want to gather information more formally to assess your listeners' opinions, attitudes, and beliefs. Consider these strategies:

- Selectively email a few people who you know will be in your audience to ask for their opinions or attitudes about issues you will present.
- Consider inviting audience members to visit a web survey or a Facebook page that you've developed to gather audience-member demographics and assess their attitudes and opinions.

CONSIDER THE SITUATION Situational audience analysis includes a consideration of the time and place of your presentation, the size of your audience, and the reason you are speaking. Although these elements are not technically characteristics of your audience, they can have an important effect on how your listeners react to what you say. If you're speaking to people who are not quite awake or are tired, for example, you may have to throttle up your energy level when talking.

A crucial piece of information to know before any presentation is when your listeners expect you to conclude. A general rule of thumb is to *never exceed your time limit*—in fact, if possible, conclude just slightly before your listeners expect you to end. Most listeners don't complain if a talk is too short, but they will not appreciate you if you take too much of their time.

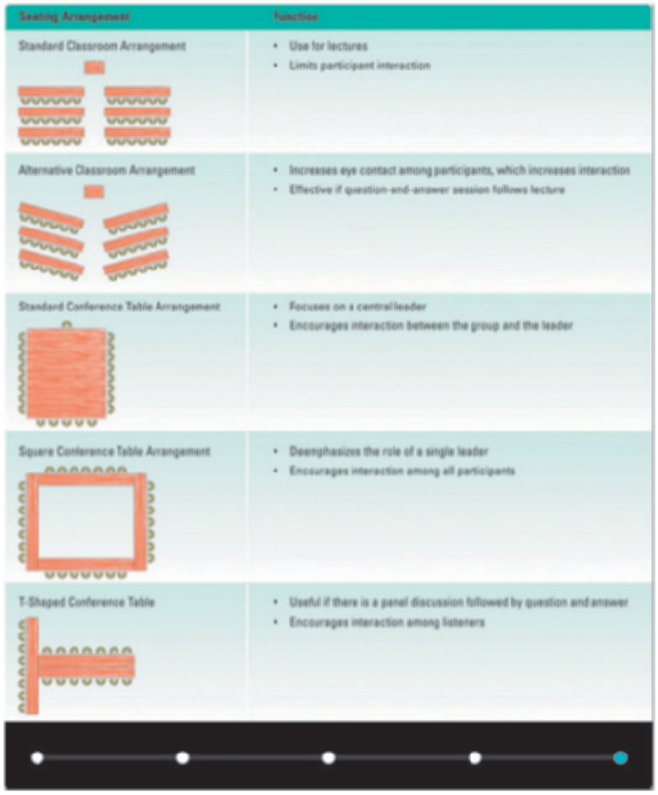
The location of your presentation will influence your overall style and speaking approach. A key variable that affects audience interaction is the amount of eye contact audience members have with the speaker and with one another. Eye contact encourages interaction. As shown in Table 11.1, the seating arrangement can have an effect on the interaction patterns during or following a presentation.

11.2.2: Analyzing Your Audience as You Speak

Being audience centered involves more than thinking and planning your message before you speak. An effective speaker also looks for cues from the audience during the speech to help him or her adjust speaking content or delivery. Delivering a presentation is a lot like playing in a jazz ensemble and responding to what the other musicians are playing. If you know what to look for, you can find cues from your listeners that will help you know how to connect with them.

During most presentations, your listeners will not be talking back to you. It's your audience's nonverbal cues

Table 11.1: Different Kinds of Seating Arrangements



Seating Arrangement	Function
Standard Classroom Arrangement	• Use for lectures • Limits participant interaction
Alternative Classroom Arrangement	• Increases eye contact among participants, which increases interaction • Effective if question-and-answer session follows lecture
Standard Conference Table Arrangement	• Focuses on a central leader • Encourages interaction between the group and the leader
Square Conference Table Arrangement	• Deemphasizes the role of a single leader • Encourages interaction among all participants
T-Shaped Conference Table	• Useful if there is a panel discussion followed by question and answer • Encourages interaction among listeners

that will tip you off to how successful you are and whether you need to modify your message or delivery. Nonverbal cues are the primary way people communicate likes and dislikes, feelings, and emotions; and if you know what to look for you'll be able to interpret your listeners' unspoken cues accurately. Here's where Principle Four, listening and responding, is applicable to presentational speaking: A good speaker is listening with both ears and eyes to monitor the audience so that he or she can adapt by adding an example, repeating a key idea, or stopping to ask for questions if the listener seems confused.

OBSERVE EYE CONTACT The best indicator that your listeners are with you is their eye contact. The more eye contact your listeners make, the more likely it is they are connecting to your message.

OBSERVE FACIAL EXPRESSION Someone who is looking at you with a slight head tilt and a frozen, "in-a-stupor" expression is probably not mentally in the same room with you. An interested listener not only looks at you but also responds to your messages with facial expressions. Smiling at appropriate times, laughing at your humor, nodding their heads in agreement, or even shaking their heads in disagreement are signs that audience members are listening.

OBSERVE MOVEMENT A bored audience expresses its boredom with finger tapping, toe jiggling, foot wagging, and other squirms and jitters, such as shuffling papers or discreetly trying to check their cell phone messages. An attentive audience doesn't move much while you are speaking; but if you ask for a show of hands in response to a question, an attentive audience will respond. When you have an audience's attention, they look at you and focus on your message.

OBSERVE RESPONSES The effective speaker not only watches the audience but also listens for any audible information that may indicate that the audience is in agreement or opposition. During smaller, informal presentations, your listeners may respond verbally to questions you ask or ideas you express. Even in a large group, audience members may respond verbally; they may mouth "yes" or "no" to a question you ask or respond aloud to something you've said. If your listeners express disagreement with an idea, you now have information you can use to adapt to them.

RESPOND TO YOUR OBSERVATIONS More important than just observing your listeners is responding to them. If audience members are responsive to you and in agreement with your ideas, you have the luxury of presenting the message you planned. But if you see indicators of disagreement or inattentiveness, you'll be wise to adapt and adjust your message, your delivery, or both. It takes experience to both "read" an audience and then respond appropriately to listeners. Below is a summary of ways to adapt to your listeners (Principle Five) if you see these things happening while you speak.[28]

⊗ If Your Listeners Appear Bored

- Tell an appropriate story.
- Use a personal example.
- Remind your listeners why your message is of interest to them.
- Eliminate a planned discussion of abstract facts, statistics, and details.
- Consider using appropriate humor.
- Make a direct reference to the audience; consider using members' names or mentioning something about them.
- Encourage listeners to participate by asking them for an example.
- Ask a rhetorical question.
- Speak a bit faster with more intensity and energy.
- Pause for dramatic effect.

⊗ If Your Listeners Don't Seem to Understand You

- Ask someone in the audience to summarize a key point you are making.
- Repeat your main points.
- Restate your information using a different example, if you have one. Effective speakers have backup examples and illustrations they could use if they need to add depth or clarity to their ideas.
- Use a presentation aid (such as a whiteboard, chalkboard, or flip chart) to focus listener attention.
- Clarify the overall organization of your message, noting what point you are on now and what point you will make next.

If Your Listeners Appear to Be Disagreeing with You

- Identify those parts of your message in which you and your listeners do agree.
- Provide additional data and evidence, if you have them, to support your key point.
- Rely less on anecdotes and emotional support and more on facts to document your case.
- Write key facts on a whiteboard, chalkboard, or flip chart.
- If you don't have the answers, tell your listeners you will get back in touch with them with more information.

One strategy that can help you respond to your audience on the spot is to *overprepare* your message. By this we mean you may need to have stories, examples, statistics, or facts you could add to your message once you actually see your audience and observe how they are responding. You may not use all the information you've prepared. You may, for example, have a handout that spells out detailed costs of the project you're proposing; you'll distribute the handout only if you find your listeners have questions about your project's expenses. Yes, it takes additional time to overprepare. But an investment in extensive preparation can be worth it. As we've noted, effective leaders adapt and respond to others.

11.2.3: Analyzing Your Audience after You Speak

You may think that after you give your talk there is nothing left to be done. But gauging the outcomes of your presentation can help you determine whether or not you have achieved your goals. Post-presentation analysis also can help you prepare your next presentation. The effective leader is interested in results. Following are ways of assessing how effectively your listeners received your presentation.

NONVERBAL RESPONSES Did your audience applaud? Gauging the level and intensity of applause you received is a simple way to determine if your audience liked what you had to say. Smiles, head nods, and eye contact are also cues to observe when you conclude.

VERBAL RESPONSES Listen to audience members' comments and ask them for feedback to gather more specific information about your message. If a listener says "Nice job" or "Good talk," follow up by asking what part of the speech was the most helpful or what part she agreed with the most. Asking "Is there anything you disagreed with?" may also help you glean useful feedback.

SURVEY RESPONSES If you presented a more formal presentation to a large audience, you may want to survey your audience after you speak using a short written, phone, or email survey.

BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES The ultimate test of whether your message was effective is whether your listeners do what you wanted them to do following your presentation. If you were selling a product or service, did they purchase it? Did they sign the petition or vote as you wanted them to vote? If you presented training, can they now perform the skill you taught them?

11.3: Select and Narrow Your Topic

11.3 Describe the factors that need to be considered while selecting the presentation topic.

When speaking professionally you typically don't have to rack your brain trying to think of a presentation topic. Unlike a high school or college public-speaking class in which your instructor asks you to give an informative or persuasive speech on a topic of your choice, your professional presentation topic is typically a no-brainer, in that you are speaking for a specific reason—such as selling a product or service, trying to enhance the image or reputation of your organization, seeking donations, or reporting on a project.

Although the topic of your presentation may be evident, you will need to narrow and customize it to fit your time limits and to adapt to your listeners. For example, if you've been working for three weeks with a team of people studying ways to trim the budget and you only have five minutes to give your report, you'll have to be selective. To narrow your topic, you'll need to consider three things: your audience, the occasion, and yourself.

Given what we've already said about the centrality of the audience, it shouldn't be surprising that your topic should be one that is interesting to your listeners. The occasion will also dictate the type of presentation you make. Whether you are giving a sales talk, briefing stockholders, presenting a short report, or addressing the media, the specific purpose helps you decide how to approach your topic. The third element is you: Your own interests and skills, your role in the organization you represent, and whether you are presenting information or persuading others all help you tailor your topic.

11.3.1: Determine Your Purpose

Your presentation topic and your presentation purpose are two different things. Your *topic* is what you are talking about; your *purpose* is the goal you seek to accomplish.

DETERMINE YOUR GENERAL PURPOSE In business and professional contexts, that goal will likely be to *inform*, as when sharing information at a briefing, seminar, or lecture, or to *persuade*, as when convincing your listeners to buy something or support the organization's mission statement. The Sample Speech at the end of this chapter is an example of a speech to inform. Some presentations have a third goal: to *entertain*. This might be your goal if you were delivering a speech that your audience expected to be funny, such as an after-dinner speech. So with your topic settled, you'll need to decide what your overarching purpose is—to inform, persuade, or entertain others.

Many presentations may have more than one purpose. You may first need to inform listeners about a product or service before you persuade them to purchase it. And you could certainly use entertaining humor when informing or persuading. Although you may have multiple purposes, it's a good idea to think about and be aware of the ultimate purpose or purposes of your presentation.

DETERMINE YOUR SPECIFIC PURPOSE After making sure you understand your general purpose, you will need to develop your specific purpose. A *specific purpose* is a concise statement that indicates precisely what you want your listeners to be able to do, remember, or feel when you finish your speech; your specific purpose statement indicates the audience response you seek. Once again, we emphasize the importance of focusing on the audience as you develop your specific purpose. If you don't know what your precise purpose is, chances are your audience won't know either. Here are two examples of specific purpose statements:

- At the end of my presentation, the audience should be able to identify the three reasons our stock price increased during the last quarter.
- At the end of my presentation, the audience should increase their order for one or more of the products our company makes.

Note that both of the examples begin with the same words: "At the end of my presentation, the audience should be able to . . . ." The next word should be a verb that describes an observable, measurable action that the audience should be able to complete when you finish your presentation. If your general purpose is to inform, then you will use verbs such as *list*, *explain*, *describe*, or *write*. If your general purpose is to persuade, then you'll use such verbs as *purchase*, *order*, *act*, or *write*. Don't use words such as *know*, *understand*, or *appreciate* because you cannot measure what an audience knows, understands, or appreciates unless your listeners perform a specific behavior such as explaining, describing, or listing.

A specific-purpose sentence states what you want the audience to be able to do—not what you, the speaker, will do. A sentence such as "I want to describe the history of our company" tells what the speaker will do. If you phrase your specific-purpose sentence as "At the end of my presentation, the audience should be able to describe the four transforming events in our company's history," then the focus of the presentation shifts to the listeners rather than the speaker.

Your specific-purpose sentence is a technique that you use to help you achieve your speaking goal. It usually isn't something that you explicitly state to your audience.

> You don't necessarily say "At the end of my speech you should be able to list and describe the four new organizational goals of our company." You may simply tell them "Today I'll visit with you about four new directions our company will take."

Use your specific-purpose sentence to guide you in accomplishing your speaking goal. Some speakers write their specific-purpose sentence on a note card or a sticky note so that they can refer to it as they prepare their message. The shorter the speech, the more important it is to have a clear sense of direction because a short talk needs to be tightly focused; you don't have extra time to be off topic.

11.3.2: Develop Your Central Idea

The essence of your message is your *central idea* (sometimes called a *thesis sentence*): a one-sentence summary of your presentation. The difference between a central idea and a purpose statement is that the central idea focuses on the content of your presentation, whereas the purpose statement focuses on audience behavior. The central idea is often compared to an elevator pitch, a single sentence that can express the key ideas of a presentation to an audience member who happened to be sharing an elevator with you. What would you say during the short ride to communicate your key ideas?

Although your central idea focuses on the content of your speech, your audience should be the prime factor that determines how you develop it. In addition, remember these guidelines.

ONE SENTENCE The central idea should be a complete sentence—not a phrase, a sentence fragment, or a question. The language in the central idea sentence should be clear and direct. For example, "federal laws and business" is not a complete sentence, and it doesn't provide a sense of the key content of the message. It's a description of a topic, not a central-idea sentence.

ONE KEY IDEA The central-idea sentence should also contain just one major idea. Here's a good example of a central-idea sentence: "The Acme Computer Store is the best computer store because of our low prices, high quality, and excellent customer service." This sentence summarizes the key content of the presentation. It has one idea that is supported by several reasons. Here's another example: "New federal laws require every company to increase security at manufacturing plants." It's an effective statement because it's short, clear, and contains only one idea.

AUDIENCE CENTERED The content of your speech, as summarized in your central-idea sentence, should be tailored to your listeners. For example, speaking to plant workers about four ways to increase security at manufacturing plants is appropriately audience centered. But the same central idea is not appropriate for a talk to the plant's customers gathered for a new product demonstration.

Recap

Identify Your Purpose and Central Idea

Your General Purpose

- **To inform**: To define, describe, or explain a thing, person, place, idea, or process
- **To persuade**: To change or reinforce a listener's attitude (likes or dislikes), beliefs (sense of what is true or false), values (view of what is good or bad), or behavior
- **To entertain**: To amuse an audience

Your Specific Purpose

- A description of the specific behavior you want your audience members to be able to do by the end of your presentation
- Begins "At the end of my presentation, the audience should be able to...."
- Includes a verb, such as *list, describe, identify, purchase,* or *build*

Your Central Idea

A one-sentence summary of your presentation that:

- Is a short, clear declarative sentence.
- Contains only one idea.
- Focuses on the audience's interests and needs.

11.3.3: Generate Your Main Ideas

With your central idea sentence in hand, you are now ready to add depth and dimension to your presentation by identifying the key ideas you will talk about. Although we've suggested that your central-idea sentence should contain a single idea, it will probably be an idea that you can subdivide and organize into smaller ideas that you will present to your audience one at a time.

At times it's a challenge for speakers to figure out what the major points of their talk will be. But if a speaker hasn't taken the time to think about how to divide the information into manageable pieces, it will be more difficult for listeners to follow the speaker's train of thought. In fact, "train of thought" is an apt metaphor: Think about your speech as a train with separate cars being pulled by the engine; the major ideas are the cars. Each car is separate, but all are connected to make up the entire train. Your speech will have separate pieces as well; each piece is a main idea.

To help you chunk your speech into manageable pieces, ask yourself three questions about your well-worded central-idea sentence:

- **DOES THE CENTRAL IDEA HAVE LOGICAL DIVISIONS?** These may be indicated by a phrase such as "There are three types of software I'll discuss." If, for example, your central idea is "There are three parts to completing your corporate insurance claim forms," your presentation can be organized into three parts.
- **CAN YOU THINK OF SEVERAL REASONS THE CENTRAL IDEA IS TRUE?** If you are trying to persuade someone to do something, you may identify several reasons why they should do what you are suggesting. If your central idea is "The San Marcos Advertising Agency is the best advertising agency for your company," your main ideas might explain three reasons the statement is true:
  - The San Marcos Advertising Agency gets results.
  - The San Marcos Advertising Agency is affordable.
  - The San Marcos Advertising Agency is creative.

  Note that each of the reasons is a complete sentence that summarizes a key reason why the central-idea sentence is true.
- **CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR CENTRAL IDEA WITH A SERIES OF STEPS OR A CHRONOLOGICAL PROGRESSION?** If you are giving a talk telling someone how to perform a task, then you'll probably be able to organize your presentation into a series of steps by noting what should be done first, second, third, and so on to perform the task. Many training, orientation, or teaching presentations use a chronological pattern or step-by-step sequence to teach people how to do something. Your central-idea sentence would describe the steps in the process: "Requesting an office transfer involves three easy steps, starting with having your boss fill out a simple form, then submitting the request to the corporate office, and ending with scheduling the move."

Virtually any central-idea sentence can be subdivided by finding its logical divisions, the reasons the idea is valid, or the steps involved. Once you have chiseled your talk into these smaller pieces, you can gather materials that support the main points you want to make.

11.4: Support Your Presentation

11.4 Recommend appropriate ways to develop and use supporting material in a speech.

Speaking to plant workers shortly after an emergency at a corporate jet plant, then CEO of General Electric Jack Welch began with a story about his grandmother. His grandmother had always told him to be prepared for the unexpected. Rather than using a barrage of data, Jack Welch knew the power of a well-told story to provide encouragement and motivation.[29] Stories are just one of the powerful ways you can support the key points you make in a presentation.

Supporting material includes illustrations, explanations, descriptions, definitions, analogies, statistics, and opinions—material that will clarify, amplify, and provide evidence to support your main ideas and your thesis. Supporting material makes your message memorable, interesting, and credible.

What makes supporting material interesting? Consider these three tips:

Make It Personal

When appropriate, describe your own experiences or tell stories based on them. Like Jack Welch, you can also share stories of people you know.

Make It Concrete

Provide vivid descriptions of things that are tangible so your audience can visualize what you are talking about. Make it real. Describe events and scenes so they come to life.

Appeal to the Senses

The more senses of touch, hearing, taste, and smell you trigger with words, the more interesting your presentation will be. Help your listeners mentally "hear" what it was like to experience the grating crunch of metal during a car crash, or describe the sweet smell of gardenias wafting through the greenhouse when you first made a fundraising pitch to a client during a visit to her home.

You may need a lot of supporting material. The secret to keeping your listeners interested in you and your message is to pace the flow of new ideas and information. Communication expert Frank E. X. Dance recommends that you spend only 30% of your speaking time presenting new ideas and information. That means that the large majority of your time, 70%, should be spent supporting the ideas with vivid examples, interesting stories, and other materials.[30] We'll first discuss sources of supporting material and then offer tips and strategies for using the material you find in your professional presentation.

11.4.1: Sources of Supporting Material

How do you go about finding just the right supporting material for a presentation? By developing good research skills. It is not only important to have good ideas, it is also important to build on your existing knowledge by searching for good ideas. Three potential sources of supporting material are the Internet, the library, and people you know.

THE INTERNET Typically, the Internet is the first place you turn when faced with a research task. You have probably accessed material on the web using a search engine, such as Google, Yahoo!, or Ask.com.

Sometimes an Internet search can result in too much information. To be more selective consider using an advanced, or *Boolean search*, which lets you enclose phrases in quotation marks or parentheses, so that a search yields only those sites on which all the words of the phrase appear together, rather than sites that contain just one of the words. You can also insert the word *or* between two parenthetical phrases, directing your search to include documents in which either phrase appears. Or you can insert the word *and* between phrases to indicate that you wish to see results that contain both phrases. These relatively simple strategies can help you narrow a list of hits from, in some cases, millions to a more workable number.

The Internet is typically the first place to find supporting materials for a presentation; but other sources include periodicals, databases and news programming, as well as friends, colleagues and other people you know.

THE LIBRARY Despite the explosion of Internet resources in recent years, the library remains a rich source of supporting material. Most libraries, from the largest research university library to the smallest village public library, can provide you access to books, periodicals via full-text databases, and a host of other reference resources.

- **FULL-TEXT DATABASES.** Although each library is different, many provide access to a wide array of full-text databases, which you can often use online, without physically visiting the library, to read entire articles from news sources and periodicals—which include popular magazines as well as scholarly and most professional journals. Some of the frequently used periodical indexes and full-text databases include Academic Search Complete and JSTOR for journal articles on a wide variety of subjects, ABI/Inform Global for business articles, LexisNexis for legal and business information, and Newspaper Source.

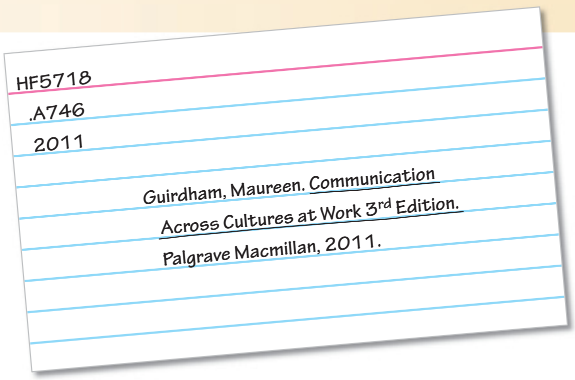
- **REFERENCE RESOURCES.** Many encyclopedias, dictionaries, directories, atlases, almanacs, yearbooks, books of quotations, and biographical dictionaries are now available online. But if you are not able to find a specific reference resource online, you may be able to locate a print version by using your library's card catalog. You might also wish to consult a reference librarian, who can often point you toward print or electronic resources you might otherwise overlook.
- **BOOKS.** In spite of predictions that electronic resources will someday make books obsolete, books continue to remain central to the holdings of most libraries. Today large library card catalogs that describe all books in the library are not literal cards but electronic ones that are accessible online, as shown in Figure 11.2.

Figure 11.2: Entry from an Electronic Card Catalog and Corresponding Bibliography Card

Author: Guirdham, Maureen
Title: Communicating Across Cultures at Work, Third Edition
Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011
Subjects: Business communication

Library holdings: General Collection, Floor 5

1. Call number: HF5718 .A746 2011



YOU AND PEOPLE YOU KNOW You don't necessarily need to click on the Internet or run to the library for every piece of supporting material for every topic on which you speak. Don't overlook your own expertise and experience or those of the people you know. As an audience-centered speaker, realize, too, that personal knowledge or experience has the added advantage of heightening your credibility in the minds of your listeners.

Communication Ethics @ Work

Is All Fair in Love, War, and Making a Sale?

Before making a major presentation to the sales team he manages, Jordan decides to pose as a customer of a major competing company in order to learn the inside scoop on the competitor's sales and marketing plan. Is it ethical for Jordan to pretend to be a customer just to do research for his presentation?

11.4.2: Types of Supporting Material

If you have discovered material on the Internet, examined a variety of library resources, and explored your own knowledge and the insights of people you know, you will probably have a wealth of potential supporting material. Now you need to decide what to use in your speech and how to use it. Understanding the different types of supporting material, as well as keeping in mind your audience's knowledge, interests, and expectations will help you.

ILLUSTRATIONS Everybody likes to hear a story. An *illustration* is a story or anecdote about an idea, issue, or problem a speaker is discussing. A well-told and relevant illustration almost always ensures audience interest. It can be as short as a sentence or two, or as long as several well-developed paragraphs. Sometimes speakers will offer a series of brief illustrations.

Sometimes, instead of a real example, a speaker will use a *hypothetical illustration*, a description of something that has not actually occurred but that could happen. If you decide to use a hypothetical illustration, it is important to make clear to your audience that the scene you describe never really occurred. Using such phrases as "Imagine what you would do . . ." or "What would you do if the following experience happened to you?" are typical ways of signaling that your illustration is hypothetical. A speaker effectively gained and maintained his listeners' attention with this hypothetical illustration:

> Imagine you've just received a call from your boss informing you that she has to reduce the number of employees in your organization by the end of the day. She's asked you to report to her office in one hour to document your worth to the company. What evidence would you offer? Do you know how to prove your worth to your organization on a moment's notice?

These suggestions should help you use illustrations effectively in your speeches:

- Be sure that your illustrations are relevant to the idea or point they are supposed to support.
- Choose illustrations that are typical, not exceptions.
- Make your illustrations vivid and specific.
- Use illustrations with which your listeners can identify.
- Remember that the most effective illustrations are often personal ones.

Should you tell jokes to illustrate your talks? One well-known professional speechwriter suggests using anecdotes rather than jokes to make your point. The speechwriter suggests that the difference between jokes and anecdotes is the difference between fiction and fact:

> The subject of an anecdote is famous or at least real, and what that subject did has to be believable. As professional speech writer James Humes suggests, a story about "Jesus on the golf course" . . . fails to meet the test.[31]

Nonetheless, a joke can be a good attention getter and can relax your audience and win their goodwill. But be sure you can tell the joke well and that it will have the effect you intend. If you're no Fallon, Seinfeld, Degeneres, or Colbert, it may be best to stick with other material that you know will achieve your intended result.

DESCRIPTIONS AND EXPLANATIONS Probably the most commonly used forms of supporting material are *descriptions* and *explanations*. To describe or explain well, provide detailed images that allow an audience to see, hear, smell, touch, or taste whatever you are describing. Descriptions can make people, places, and events come alive for an audience, as does this description of being a drug addict, that Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, received in an email and included in a speech to a group of businesspeople:

> I have no social life and no job and feel more and more isolated. I have less and less hope to break free of this hell. My life is a mess and I did several attempts to break with my addictions in the past. Now, as I am so tired of trying, I find it very difficult to keep on fighting, even more so because of the depressed mood and feelings of dissatisfaction while being clean. I do not feel whole without the damn drugs anyway.[32]

Although descriptions and explanations are found in most speeches, they lack the inherent interest of illustrations. To keep audiences from yawning through your descriptions and explanations:

- Avoid too many descriptions and explanations.
- Keep your descriptions and explanations brief.
- Describe and explain in specific and concrete language.

DEFINITIONS Here's our definition of *definition*: a brief explanation that identifies and clarifies what something is through classification or description of how something operates. Speakers should offer definitions of all technical or little-known terms in their presentations. But only use them when you think your listeners won't understand the term. Note the two ways a word or concept can be defined: by classification or operational description.

Classification is the typical approach used in a standard dictionary definition of first placing a term in the general class, group, or family to which it belongs and then differentiating it from other members of its class. Besides simply turning to a dictionary for a word or phrase, you could define a term in your own words.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION A second way of defining a word or concept, is explaining how the word or phrase being defined works or what it does. Here's an example of an operational definition—defining something based upon how something works or the general operation:

> Here's what I mean by high-performing local economy: New housing starts increase 10 percent over the previous year, the Chamber of Commerce fields several calls a day from businesses that want to relocate to our community, and sales tax revenue is up by double digits for the past three years. Now that's what I call a high-performing economic base.

To use definitions effectively, consider these tips:

- Use definitions only when necessary because they can be uninteresting and abstract.
- Be certain that your definitions are clear to your listeners.
- Be sure that your definition accurately reflects your use of the word or phrase throughout your entire presentation; don't change how you use a term you've defined.

ANALOGIES *Analogies* are comparisons that demonstrate how unfamiliar ideas, things, and situations are similar to something the audience already understands. Speakers can use two types of analogies in their speeches. The first is a *literal analogy*, or a comparison of two similar things—for example, comparing the available memory in a flash drive to a CD's storage capacity.

One business leader who wanted to illustrate the value of the European Union to a group of chief financial officers used a literal analogy:

> What if each state in the United States had its own currency, had different requirements and rules for weights and measurements, and had no unified constitution that provided basic rights for its citizens? That would not encourage economic prosperity, would it?

A literal analogy can help clarify an idea or persuade listeners to support the speaker's point.

A *figurative analogy* is one that compares two unlike things or events that nevertheless share some feature. Figurative analogies, although less useful to prove a point, can be especially useful when clarifying an idea. Comparing the memory capacity of a computer to a person's mental capacity to remember something would be a figurative analogy. Jim Grieve used this figurative analogy to clarify his point:

> You are like Cirque du Soleil performers—you make astonishing feats of bravery and talent look effortless and inevitable.[33]

When using a figurative analogy be certain that the two things you compare are similar so that listeners can make the connection.

STATISTICS *Statistics* are simply numerical data that summarize several examples. They can represent hundreds or thousands of illustrations and can thus help a speaker express the significance or magnitude of a situation. Statistics can also help a speaker express the relationship of a part to the whole. Note communication expert Richard Weaver's clever use of statistics from his speech titled "Sticky Ideas":

> Trying to get listeners to understand what the word *billion* means is a good example of making statistics meaningful. Politicians use the word *billion* in a casual manner, and there is no doubt it is a difficult number to comprehend. Did you realize that a billion seconds ago it was 1959? A billion minutes ago, Jesus was alive; a billion hours ago, our ancestors were living in the Stone Age; a billion days ago, no one walked on the earth on two feet; a billion dollars ago was only 8 hours and 20 minutes, at the rate our government is spending it—and that does not include spending for the war.[34]

Skilled speakers learn how to use statistics to their advantage. For example, they try to make huge numbers more readily understandable and more dramatic to their audiences. Rather than saying, "525,600 people are turning 65 this year," the speaker more memorably said, "Every seven seconds another American turns 65."[35]

In addition to simplifying and dramatizing your information, statistics can be effective if you utilize two suggestions:

- Round off large numbers.
- Use visual aids such as bar, line, or pie graphs to present your statistics.

Cite the sources of your statistics. To integrate an *oral citation* into your speech, simply tell your listeners the source of your information. For example, when describing the number of Facebook users, you might say, "According to the Facebook website, published in October 2015 on the Facebook Pressroom Online Version, there are more than one billion active Facebook users worldwide."[36] Note that this citation includes three things:

- The title of the report
- The date when it appeared
- The organization responsible for the website.

The address itself need not be given in the oral citation, although the speaker should have that information available if someone wants to confirm the information.

Visual aids, such as the chart this man is using for his presentation, can be very effective when presenting statistics to an audience.

OPINIONS The opinions of others can add authority, drama, and style to a speech. A speaker can use three types of opinions: expert testimony, lay testimony, and literary quotations.

Expert testimony, the opinion of a recognized authority on a topic, is perhaps the most frequent type of opinion employed by speakers. If you lack authority on your topic, cite someone who can offer such expertise. For example, to convince company employees that the winter months are the most common time of year to contract the flu, a speaker noted "Influenza virus is more likely to be transmitted during winter on the way to the subway than in a warm room, according to Dr. Peter Palese, a flu researcher who is professor and chairman of the microbiology department at Mount Sinai Medical College in New York City."[37]

Lay testimony is an opinion or a description offered by a nonexpert who has firsthand experience. Like illustrations, lay testimony can stir an audience's emotions. Although neither as authoritative nor as unbiased as expert testimony, lay testimony is often more memorable.

Literary quotations—opinions or descriptions by writers—can be used to illustrate or clarify a point. The best literary quotations make a point in an interesting, memorable, or humorous way. Quotations on every conceivable topic are easily found with an Internet search.

Whether you use expert testimony, lay testimony, or literary quotations, consider the these suggestions for using opinions effectively in your speeches:

- Be certain that any authority you cite is actually an expert on the subject you are discussing.
- Identify your sources with an oral citation.
- Cite authorities who are perceived by your listeners as unbiased.
- Cite opinions that are representative of prevailing opinion. If you cite a dissenting viewpoint, identify it as such.
- Quote or paraphrase your sources accurately.
- Use literary quotations sparingly.

Recap

Supporting Your Speech

Illustrations

- Make them directly relevant to the point you are making.
- Choose illustrations that are typical, not exceptions.
- Make them vivid and specific.
- Use illustrations with which your listeners can identify.
- The most effective illustrations are often personal ones.

Descriptions and Explanations

- Avoid too many descriptions and explanations.
- Keep descriptions and explanations brief.
- Use concrete language.

Definitions

- Use definitions only when necessary.
- Be certain that definitions are clear to listeners.
- Be sure that a definition is accurate.

Analogies

- When using a literal analogy, be certain that the two things you compare are very similar.
- When using a figurative analogy, make the similarity between the two objects apparent to the audience.

Statistics

- Round off large numbers.
- Use visual aids to show comparisons and trends.
- Cite your sources.

Opinions

- Be certain that any authority you cite is actually an expert.
- Identify your sources.
- Cite unbiased authorities.
- Cite representative opinions, or identify dissenting viewpoints as such.
- Quote or paraphrase accurately and in context.
- Use literary quotations sparingly.

11.5: Organize Your Presentation

11.5 Express ways to effectively deliver your presentation.

Developing a presentation is like building a house. Just as a construction contractor develops the frame for a house early in the building process, a speaker develops the frames for a presentation by completing the first four stages of the speech-preparation process—selecting and narrowing a topic, identifying a general and a specific purpose, determining a central idea, and generating main ideas. Framing completed, the contractor assembles all the materials needed for the house: windows, doors, cabinets, hardware, and flooring; the speaker finds and adds supporting materials to the speech "frame." Once the house is framed out and the building materials are ready, the contractor must organize the work of the electricians, plumbers, carpenters, and carpet layers. Similarly, the speaker must organize ideas and supporting material.

Like a contractor who builds the framework for a house, a speaker constructs the framework of his or her presentation by completing the first four stages of the speech-preparation process.

11.5.1: Organizing Your Main Ideas

An organized message is easier for your listeners to remember *and* easier for you to remember. Note the two columns of words. Don't you find the words in column B easier to remember than the ones in column A?[38]

Column A	Column B
be	to
question	be
to	or
that	not
not	to
the	be
be	that
is	is
to	the
or	question

Giving careful thought to how you structure your message, whether you use a pattern that is already familiar to your audience or one that you create to help your listeners make better sense of your message, is the mark of an effective communicator.

We'll first discuss strategies for organizing the main ideas of a speech and then focus on organizing supporting material and developing signposts and transitions. Next, we will identify how to effectively introduce and conclude your presentation and, finally, how to outline your ideas and supporting material.

ORGANIZE IDEAS CHRONOLOGICALLY *Chronological organization* is organization by sequential order, according to when each step or event occurred or should occur. If you are explaining a process, you will want to organize your explanation of the steps of that process from first to last. If you are providing an historical overview of an event, movement, or policy, you might proceed in the order events occurred or begin with the end result and trace its history backward in time.

Examples of presentation topics that might lend themselves to chronological organization include training on how to perform a skill or task or a description of the development of an idea or process. Here's an outline of a speech that follows a chronological organizational pattern.

Central Idea: 3 Steps to Develop a Business Meeting Agenda

1. Determine whether the goal of the meeting is to give information, to get information, or to take some action.
2. Identify the agenda items that need to be discussed to achieve the meeting goal or goals.
3. Organize the agenda items.

ORGANIZE IDEAS TOPICALLY If your main ideas are natural divisions of your central idea, you will likely want to use *topical organization*. Topical organization may be simply an arbitrary arrangement of main ideas that are fairly equal in importance. For example, if you are giving a briefing in which you describe the athletic apparel your company makes, you could use a topical organization plan to group the three primary types of products your organization manufactures—running shoes, clothes, and hats. The order in which you discuss the products may not really matter.

A topical organization plan for a talk designed to recruit salespeople to join the organization would look like this:

Central Idea: Education Options for Employee's Children

1. Parents can send their children to the local, nationally recognized public school.
2. Parents can send their children to one of two private schools.
3. Parents can apply for low-interest loans from our company to cover college tuition.

In this example, the order of the ideas may not be important. At other times, topical organization is less arbitrary; you may decide to arrange your major points in a specific order.

ORGANIZE IDEAS BY IMPORTANCE What comes first or last is often viewed as more important than what comes in the middle. That's because first and last impressions are more likely to make an impact than what happens in-between. So when organizing a message, you can use the principles of primacy or recency to augment the importance of your ideas based on how you sequence the ideas.

The principle of *primacy* suggests that what comes first will gain extra prominence. If you think your audience may tune you out early, perhaps because they disagree with you, present your most convincing idea first. Or, to adapt to audience members who may be skeptical of some of your ideas, discuss first those points on which you all agree.

The principle of *recency* suggests that audiences remember best what they hear last. So if you want your audience to remember a specific point or to emphasize its importance or significance, put it last.

ORGANIZE IDEAS BY THEIR COMPLEXITY Another type of topical organization is organization according to *complexity*—moving from simple ideas and processes to more complex ones. Many skills you have learned in life have been taught by order of complexity. In first grade, you learned to read easy words first, then moved on to more difficult ones. In third grade, you learned single-digit multiplication tables before moving on to more complex double- and triple-digit multiplication problems. And in high school, you learned to drive by practicing simple maneuvers in the parking lot before cruising on the highway.

ORGANIZE IDEAS SPATIALLY When you offer someone directions, you organize your ideas spatially. *Spatial organization* is arrangement according to location, position, or direction. Speeches that rely on description are good candidates for spatial organization—for example, a speech about the layout of a manufacturing plant or a new shopping center would lend itself to spatial organization. For example:

Central Idea: Functions Within Our Corporate Headquarters

1. At the western edge of the campus is the employee recreation and sports complex.
2. In the central part of the campus are the buildings that house the financial operations.
3. At the eastern edge of the campus are the top executive offices.

ORGANIZE IDEAS TO SHOW CAUSE AND EFFECT *Cause-and-effect organization* actually refers to two related patterns: identifying a situation and then discussing the resulting effects (cause–effect), and presenting a situation and then exploring its causes (effect–cause).

A speaker who discusses the impact of high taxes on the local economy will probably use a cause–effect pattern, establishing first that the tax rate is a major burden on local business and then providing evidence that the high taxes are causing business owners to close their doors. A speaker who does the opposite—documenting the loss of businesses in a downtown area and then providing statistics on recent tax increases instituted by the local county commissioners—is using an effect–cause organizational pattern. A cause–effect pattern emphasizes effects; an effect–cause pattern emphasizes causes.

Here's how one speaker organized a presentation using a cause–effect organizational pattern:

Central Idea: Higher Taxes Will Force Businesses to Close

1. (Cause) Our school board and city council have raised our tax rate for the past five years.
2. (Effect) The hardware store has closed because it can no longer afford the business tax levied by the school board and city council.
3. (Effect) One of our two grocery stores has closed because it can no longer afford the business tax.

ORGANIZE IDEAS BY PROBLEM AND SOLUTION If, instead of exploring causes or consequences of a problem or issue, you want either to explore how best to solve the problem or to advocate a particular solution, you will probably choose *problem-and-solution organization*. When addressing the dip in your company's stock price, you could first identify the problems associated with the downturn in the stock and then suggest strategies that could boost the stock price. Or, when delivering a motivational speech to new employees, you could first describe the implications of poor customer service—loss of company revenue and the potential loss of employment for workers. You could then offer specific solutions so that the problem of poor customer service doesn't occur.

Here's an outline of a speech organized using a problem-and-solution organizational framework:

Central Idea: High Mortgage Rates Cause for U.S. Economy Down

1. (Problem) When the mortgage rates in adjustable rate mortgages increase, many people can no longer afford to pay the mortgage and end up losing their homes.
2. (Solution) The federal government should implement a new guaranteed home mortgage plan to help homeowners avoid foreclosures.

As you make final decisions about organizing your presentation, keep these general strategies in mind:

- **ORGANIZE THE BODY OF YOUR PRESENTATION BEFORE YOU PREPARE YOUR INTRODUCTION OR CONCLUSION.** You won't know how to introduce your ideas or summarize your message until you've made decisions about the major points you are presenting.
- **MOST BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS WILL HAVE FROM THREE TO FIVE MAJOR IDEAS.** Audiences are more likely to remember fewer key points than a lengthy list of abstract ideas. If you have more than five major ideas, make sure you have ample time to develop each idea with clear and interesting supporting material.
- **MAKE SURE EACH MAJOR POINT IN YOUR SPEECH PRESENTS ONLY ONE IDEA.** Don't confuse your listeners by having multiple ideas jumbled into one point. The major points are the big ideas of your speech. Keep them separate.

Recap

Organizing Your Main Ideas

Pattern	Description
Chronological	Organization by time or sequence
Topical	Organization of natural divisions of an idea according to recency, primacy, or complexity or in an arbitrary arrangement
Spatial	Organization according to location, position, or direction
Cause and effect	Organization by discussing a situation and its causes or a situation and its effects
Problem and solution	Organization by discussing a problem and then various solutions

Hide All Cells Show All Cells

ADAPT ORGANIZATION TO CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS OF YOUR AUDIENCE What's the shortest distance between two points? Why, a straight line, of course. In organizing a message, it may seem that the most logical strategy is to develop a structure that moves from one idea to the next in a logical, "straight" way. But not every culture organizes ideas using that logic. In fact, each culture teaches its members unique patterns of thought and organization that are considered appropriate for various occasions and audiences.

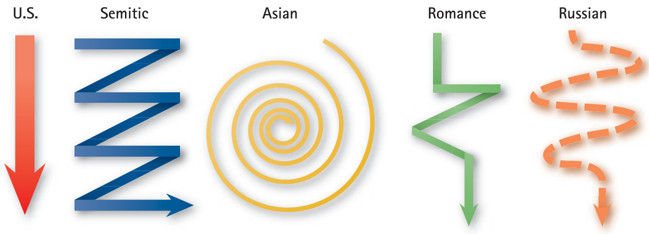
In general, U.S. speakers tend to be more linear and direct than do Semitic, Asian, Romance, or Russian speakers.[39] For example, a U.S. speaker might say, "There are two reasons you should move your company to our city. First, we have a university located in our town so you'll have a steady supply of educated employees. And second, the nearby international airport means you can easily travel from our city to anywhere in the world."

In contrast, Semitic speakers sometimes support their main points by pursuing tangents that might seem "off topic" to many U.S. listeners. When speaking to someone from a Semitic culture, instead of ticking off points one and two, you could offer several anecdotes or a short story about others who have enjoyed having corporate headquarters in your city.

Some, though certainly not all, Asian speakers may only allude to a main point through a circuitous route of illustrations and parables. Instead of using well-documented points when speaking to such Asian listeners, you could tell a story about how those who are in the best location flourish and those in the wrong place are subject to disaster.

Speakers from Romance and Russian cultures tend to begin with a basic principle and then move to facts and illustrations that are only gradually related to a main point and that to a North American listener may seem less relevant. Yet listeners from Romance and Russian cultures may find the illustrations more compelling than too quickly getting to the "bottom line" with explicit facts and statistics. A more gentle, indirect route to get to the point may be best. Figure 11.3 illustrates these culturally diverse patterns of organization.[40]

Figure 11.3: Cultural Preferences of Message Organization



Of course, *these are very broad generalizations*. As an effective speaker who seeks to adapt to your audience, you should use the organizational strategies best suited to your particular audience. In addition, when you are listening to a speech, recognizing the existence of cultural differences can help you appreciate and understand the organization of a speaker from a culture other than your own.

ORGANIZING YOUR PRESENTATION FOR THE EAR You now have a fairly complete, logically organized plan for your speech. But if you tried to deliver the speech at this point, your audience would probably become confused. You need to provide listeners with cues to help them understand the organization of your presentation. These organizational cues for the audience's ears are called *signposts*. They include previews, verbal or nonverbal transitions, and summaries.

PREVIEWS A *preview* is a statement of what is to come in a speech—it tells your audience what you're going to tell them. Previews help your audience members anticipate and remember the main ideas of your speech. They also help you move smoothly from the introduction to the body of your speech and from one main idea to the next.

The *initial preview* is a statement of the main ideas of a speech, usually presented in conjunction with, and sometimes as part of, the central idea of the speech. In addition to offering an initial preview, a speaker may also offer *internal previews* at various points throughout a speech. These previews introduce and outline ideas that will be developed as the speech progresses.

VERBAL TRANSITIONS A *transition* is a verbal or nonverbal signal that you have finished discussing one idea and are moving to another. *Verbal transitions* are words or phrases that show relationships between ideas in your speech. They include simple enumeration (*first, second, third*); repeated words or synonyms or pronouns that refer to previously used words or ideas (the word *they* at the beginning of this sentence refers to the phrase "verbal transitions" in the previous sentence); and words and phrases that show relationships between ideas (*in addition to, not only … but also, in other words, in summary, therefore, however*). As you begin to rehearse your speech, you might need to experiment with various verbal transitions to make your message clear.

NONVERBAL TRANSITIONS *Nonverbal transitions* are behaviors used alone or in combination with verbal transitions that help to show relationships among ideas in a speech. An effective nonverbal transition might be a facial expression, a pause, a change in vocal pitch or speaking rate, or movement. Most good speakers use a combination of verbal and nonverbal transitions to help them move from one idea to the next throughout their speeches.

SUMMARIES A *summary* is a recap of what the speaker has already said. Like previews, summaries provide an additional opportunity for an audience to grasp a speaker's most important ideas. Most speakers use two types of summaries: internal summaries and a final summary.

Internal summaries, like internal previews, occur within and throughout a speech. You might want to use an internal summary after you have discussed two or three main ideas, to ensure that the audience keeps them firmly in mind as you move into another main idea.

You may also want to provide your audience with a restatement of your main ideas, in the form of a *final summary* in your conclusion. Just as your initial preview gave your audience their first exposure to your main ideas, your final summary will give them their last exposure to those ideas.

11.5.2: Introducing Your Presentation

At this point, you have well-developed ides and content for your presentation, and you have strategies for organizing that material. But you have not yet given much thought to how you are going to begin the speech. That's okay. *Even though you will deliver your introduction first, you usually plan your introduction last.* You first need to know what you're introducing, especially your central idea and main ideas.

Although they make up a relatively small percentage of the total speech, your *introduction* and conclusion provide your audience with important first and final impressions of you and your speech. Your introduction should convince your audience to listen to you. More specifically, it must perform five functions: get the audience's attention, introduce the topic, give the audience a reason to listen, establish your credibility, and preview your main ideas.

GET THE AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION If an introduction does not capture the audience's attention, the rest of the speech may be wasted on them. You have to wake up your listeners and make them want to hear more.

There are several potentially effective ways to gain an audience's attention. One commonly used and quite effective one is to open with a story. Other strategies include asking a rhetorical question, stating a startling fact or statistic, quoting an expert or a literary text, telling a humorous story, or referring to an historical or recent event. An Internet search for "this day in history" can help you discover notable events that you may be able to reference. Note the clever introduction that refers to the date of the speech:

> It is perhaps fitting that we are meeting on this particular day, because this is the 15th of March, the dreaded "Ides of March" . . . and I am going to address a subject of growing concern and distress to many people—the subject of globalization."[41]

Still other speakers might get their audience's attention by referring to a personal experience, referring to the occasion, or referring to something said by a preceding speaker. While these strategies will not work for every speech, at least one of them should be an option for any speech you deliver. With a little practice, you may find yourself being able to choose from several good possibilities for a single speech.

INTRODUCE THE TOPIC Within the first few seconds of listening to you, your audience should have a pretty good idea of what your topic is. The best way to achieve this objective is to include a statement of your central idea in your introduction.

GIVE THE AUDIENCE A REASON TO LISTEN Not only do you have to get your audience's attention and introduce your topic, you have to motivate your listeners to continue to listen. Show the audience how your topic affects them directly. By the end of your introduction, your audience should be thinking "This concerns *me*!"

ESTABLISH YOUR CREDIBILITY A credible speaker is one the audience judges to be competent, trustworthy, and dynamic. You can increase your credibility by telling your audience about your expertise and about experiences you have had that are related to your topic.

PREVIEW YOUR MAIN IDEAS As discussed previously in this chapter, you should provide an initial preview of your main ideas at or near the end of your introduction, to allow your listeners to anticipate the main ideas of your speech.

Here's how Gupta Yash, dean of the Carey Business School at Johns Hopkins University, clearly introduced his four key ideas in a speech about the business implications of an aging population:

> I think there are four areas in which it will have enormous importance. First: at the societal or sociological level. Second: in the economic and thus the political sphere. Third, in all matters related to health care, and in particular, how resources within this $2 trillion industry are allocated.

> And finally, number four, in the realm of education. In the next few minutes I'd like to consider what the demographic changes ahead mean in each of these four areas.[42]

Note how Yash numbered each of his key ideas. His listeners have a clear road map that lets them know where they are headed.

11.5.3: Concluding Your Presentation

Long after you finish speaking, your audience may mentally hear the echo of your final words. An effective *conclusion* serves four functions: summarizes your speech, reemphasizes the main idea in a memorable way, motivates the audience to respond, and provides closure.

SUMMARIZE THE SPEECH The conclusion offers a speaker a last chance to repeat his or her main ideas. As mentioned previously in this chapter, most speakers include a final summary of their main ideas between the body of the speech and its conclusion or in the first part of the conclusion.

REEMPHASIZE THE CENTRAL IDEA IN A MEMORABLE WAY The conclusions of many famous speeches contain many of the lines we remember best:

> . . . government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth. (Abraham Lincoln)[43]

> Old soldiers never die; they just fade away. (General Douglas MacArthur)[44]

Although business and professional presentations don't usually have such memorable or emotion-packed conclusions, consider how even the most routine briefing or report can be enhanced by a strong call to action or reiteration of the expense budget statistics or other points. Word your final thoughts so that your audience cannot help but remember them.

MOTIVATE THE AUDIENCE TO RESPOND Think back to your specific purpose. What do you want your audience to be able to do by the end of your speech? If your speech is informative, you may want your audience to think about your topic or to seek more information about it. If your speech is persuasive, you may want your audience to take some sort of action—to write a letter, make a phone call, volunteer for a cause, and so on. Your conclusion is where you can motivate your audience to respond.

PROVIDE CLOSURE Perhaps you've listened to a speech and, at the end, found yourself uncertain about whether it was over. That speaker did not achieve the last purpose of an effective conclusion: providing *closure*, or cueing the audience that the speech is ending by making it "sound finished." One good way to provide closure is to refer to your introduction by finishing a story, answering a rhetorical question, or reminding your audience of the startling statistic you presented in your introduction. For example, Joseph Vranich began his speech with this line: "A famous American newspaper editor, Horace Greeley, popularized the phrase 'Go West, young man.'" Following the body of his speech, which detailed the problems of doing business in California, Vranich concluded his speech with his own variation of the opening quotation: "Go East, young man, go East."[45]

You can also achieve closure by using verbal and nonverbal signposts. For example, you might use such transitions as "finally" and "in conclusion" as you move into your conclusion. You might pause before you begin the conclusion, slow your speaking rate as you deliver your final sentence, or signal by falling vocal inflection that you are making your final statement. Experiment with these strategies until you are certain that your speech sounds finished.

Recap

The Purposes of Introductions and Conclusions	
Your speech introduction should	• Get your audience's attention • Introduce your topic • Give your audience a reason to listen • Establish your credibility • Preview your main ideas
Your speech conclusion should	• Summarize your speech • Reemphasize your central idea in a memorable way • Motivate your audience to respond • Provide closure

11.5.4: Outlining Your Presentation

With your introduction and conclusion planned, you are almost ready to begin rehearsing your speech. During your rehearsal, you will likely rely on, and at the same time, adjust an initial, detailed outline of your speech that will eventually become the shorter notes you use as you speak.

A preparation outline of your speech helps you rehearse the speech; a delivery outline provides notes that you can use as reminders as you deliver your speech.

PREPARATION OUTLINE Although few speeches are written out word for word in manuscript form, most speakers develop a *preparation outline*, a fairly detailed outline of the central idea, main ideas, and supporting material in a speech; it may also include the specific purpose, introduction, and conclusion of your speech.

When outlining a speech, it is helpful to use *standard outline format*. Standard outline format lets you see at a glance whether your main ideas are clearly related to your central idea, and that your main ideas are logically and adequately reinforced by your supporting materials. Even if you haven't had much experience with formal outlines, these guidelines can help you produce a correct outline.

Use standard numbering. Outlines are numbered by using Roman and Arabic numerals and uppercase and lowercase letters, followed by periods, as follows:

- **I.** First main idea
    - **A.** First subdivision of I
    - **B.** Second subdivision of I
        - **1.** First subdivision of B
        - **2.** Second subdivision of B
            - **a.** First subdivision of 2
            - **b.** Second subdivision of 2
- **II.** Second main idea

You will probably not need to subdivide beyond the level of lowercase letters in most speech outlines.

Use at least two subdivisions, if any, for each point. You cannot divide anything into fewer than two parts. On an outline, every I should have a II, every A should have a B, and so on. If you have only one subdivision, fold that information into the level above it.

Line up your outline correctly. Main ideas, indicated by Roman numerals, are written closest to the left margin. The periods following these Roman numerals line up, so that the first letters of the first words also line up:

- **I.** First main idea
- **II.** Second main idea
- **III.** Third main idea

Letters or numbers of subdivisions begin directly underneath the first letter of the first *word* of the point above:

- **I.** First main idea
    - **A.** First subdivision of I
    - **B.** Second subdivision of I

If a main idea or subdivision takes up more than one line, the second line begins under the first letter of the first word of the preceding line:

- **I.** First main idea
    - **A.** A rather lengthy subdivision that takes many words to express and runs more than one line
    - **B.** Second subdivision

Within each level, make the headings grammatically parallel. Regardless of whether you write your preparation outline in complete sentences or in phrases, be consistent within each level. In other words, if I is a complete sentence, II should also be a complete sentence. If A is an infinitive phrase (one that begins with *to* plus a verb, such as "To guarantee greater security"), B should also be an infinitive phrase.

DELIVERY OUTLINE As you rehearse your speech, you will find that you need your preparation outline less and less. You have both the structure and the content of your speech well in mind. At this point, you are ready to develop a shorter outline that will serve as your *speaking notes*.

Your speaking notes should not be so detailed that you will be tempted to read rather than speak to your audience, but this outline should include enough detail to let you make your presentation as you rehearsed. Here are a few suggestions for preparing your speaking notes:

- Use single words or short phrases whenever possible.
- Include your introduction and conclusion in abbreviated form.
- Use standard outline form.

You might display your speaking notes on your laptop or mobile device, using an app made for the purpose. Many speakers still use note cards. If you use note cards, organize them to reflect blocks of material, using one note card for your introduction, one or two for the body of your speech, and one for your conclusion. Number your note cards to prevent getting them out of order while you are speaking.

As you rehearse your speech, add *delivery cues* to your speaking notes, such as "Louder," "Pause," or "Walk two steps left." These will remind you to communicate the nonverbal messages you have planned. Write your delivery cues in a different color font or ink so that you don't confuse them with your verbal content.

Sample Speech *by Douglas Starr*

Presented to the International Association of Business Communicators.[46]

Writing for the Web

The best news is that you don't need to learn a different writing style to write for the World Wide Web.

Writing news stories and news releases for the World Wide Web, writing online, is no different from writing for print, particularly writing for newspapers. It is amazing how many newspaper techniques are recommended for web writing.

Starr began his speech by simultaneously catching attention and summarizing his key idea.

And the best part is that you already know all of those techniques. You learn them in journalism school, and you've been doing it all your professional lives—at least, you should have.

The speaker makes a personal, direct connection with his listener.

I am speaking about only the writing, not the audio, the video, the blinking buttons, and other gimmicks of websites. Moreover, researchers agree that web readers, like newspaper readers, are attracted by the headline and the text rather than by graphics or pictures.

The technique of writing for newspapers—as taught in schools of journalism throughout the country—is simple: Write tight, be clear and concise, write short sentences and short paragraphs, use words correctly, obey the rules of grammar and spelling, and get to the point quickly with the inverted pyramid lead: the Who, What, Where, When, How, and Why of the story.

The addition of the web to the time-honored tools of writing has no effect on those techniques of writing. They remain the same. The web does not require a different style of writing; it only provides a more broadly based medium for much wider dissemination of information.

In past centuries, some of the finest writing was done with a goose quill pen and a pot of ink. Over time, as technology advanced, the goose quill pen and pot of ink gave way to pens and pencils, to movable type and Linotype machines, to typewriters, to computers, to desktop printing, and, finally, to the Internet and the World Wide Web. Along the way, a curious thing happened. With each change in technology, writers and scholars equated the tools with the techniques of writing, holding that if the tool changed, so must the writing change.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The tool of writing has little to do with the technique of writing. Writing is writing. It is a means of communicating information to a large number of readers. The challenge to the writer using the Internet remains the same as the challenge to the writer using the goose quill pen—to communicate, to hold onto and to inform the reader.

This conclusion is borne out by continuing research by writing research centers—the Pew Research Center, the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, Sun Microsystems—and by individual scholars, teachers, and professionals who publish in *Communication World*, *Public Relations Tactics*, *Poynter Report*,*Writer's Digest,* and *Quill Magazine*, and on various websites.

Here the speaker is effectively enhancing his credibility by citing research by other sources that his audience would find credible.

A survey of that research and those publications shows almost unanimous agreement on the techniques for writing on the web. They grew out of the demands of reporting from the field and have been taught in journalism schools almost from the beginning.

Today, in general, researchers and professionals agree that web readers, like newspaper readers, want to know quickly what the story is about, and most of them do not want the details of a full story. Therefore, the recommendation is that web stories follow the traditional inverted pyramid style of writing news—summary lead to get to the point quickly, short sentences, short paragraphs, and no more than one screen of copy. That's 250 words, or one sheet of paper, double-spaced.

Most public relations news releases are too long. Studies show that newspapers seldom use more than half of any news release, and most use only the first one or two paragraphs, preferring not to give away too much space to an outside writer.

One of the pioneer researchers in web writing, Jakob Nielsen, recommends that because readers read 25 percent slower on the web than in newspapers, writing for the web ought to be half as long as newspaper stories.

A researcher for the Poynter Institute for Media Studies in St. Petersburg, Florida, Roy Peter Clark, believes that any story can be told in 800 words. The Bible story of creation is told in 754 words.

Starr makes his statistic understandable and memorable by comparing the number of words in a news story with the number in the Bible creation story.

Because large blocks of type tend to lose readers, the recommendation is that no paragraph be longer than five lines on screen and that paragraphs be separated with a blank line. All of that is nothing more than the electronic equivalent of newspaper white space.

There is no question about the writing; it must be accurate, clear, concise, vivid, and with strong verbs. Researchers recommend using a conversational style that avoids overuse of punctuation marks, all of which provides for a smooth flow of language and ease of understanding.

If you do need a lengthy story, the recommendation is that you rely upon the old newspaper technique of using subheads to break up the copy, to provide more white space, and to alert readers as to what is coming next. In addition, you should write in "chunks," that is, completing one topic before moving on to another. Chunk writing normally is restricted to under 100 words, further attesting to the value of tight writing.

The speaker does a good job of providing specific recommendations that his audience would find practical and useful.

But be careful. Web readers generally are newspaper readers, and they read the web the way they read newspapers. Most newspaper readers don't scroll; they read no more than the first four or five paragraphs and move on to another story.

On the web, those who do scroll read an average of six websites, though some read up to three times that many. These readers are seeking additional information because they are interested in that specific topic. Those additional websites are called "hypertext," meaning "beyond text" or "additional text," and they are nothing more than the electronic name for the newspaper "sidebars."

Here are specific suggestions for making website news releases readily understandable and interesting.

- Write in the conversational active voice: subject, verb, object. Tell, rather than write, your story.
- Avoid synonyms; repeating key words reinforces understandability.

- Obey the rules of grammar, punctuation, syntax, precise word use and spelling, subject-verb agreement, noun-pronoun agreement.

  Starr continues to keep his audience's attention by providing a list of cogent ideas that will help them with their work as well as summarizing his key advice.

- Write objectively; no opinion words.
- Use strong verbs.
- No paragraph longer than five lines on screen.
- No line longer than five inches on screen.
- Paragraphs separated with a blank line.
- Write tight. No story longer than one screen, 250 words.
- For lengthy stories, use subheads and hypertext sidebars.
- Get to the point quickly with the summary lead—the Who, What, Where, When, How, and Why of the story—and the inverted pyramid.

Summary: Developing Your Professional Presentation

11.1: Identify the primary causes of communication apprehension and identify strategies to overcome apprehension.

To manage communication apprehension: Don't procrastinate, know your audience, recreate the speech environment when you rehearse, visualize success, breathe, channel your nervousness, give yourself a pep talk, look for friendly faces when you speak, seek speaking opportunities, and be prepared.

11.2: Investigate the importance of knowing your audience.

Before you speak consider demographic information, the psychological profile of your audience, and the situation. As you speak, observe eye contact, facial expression, movement, and listen for verbal responsiveness. After you speak, look for nonverbal and verbal responses, survey your listeners, and assess whether they do what you have asked them to do.

11.3: Describe the factors that need to be considered while selecting the presentation topic.

To give your speech focus, determine your general purpose: to inform, persuade, or entertain. Define your specific purpose: the audience response you seek. Develop your central idea, which is a one-sentence summary of your speech, and then generate your major ideas.

11.4: Recommend appropriate ways to develop and use supporting material in a speech.

Sources of supporting material include the Internet and the library, as well as yourself and people you know. You can use interesting illustrations, descriptions and explanations, definitions, analogies, statistics, and opinions.

11.5: Express ways to effectively deliver your presentation.

Organize main ideas chronologically, topically, by importance, by complexity, spatially, by cause and effect, or by problem solution. Organize for listeners' ears by using previews, verbal and nonverbal transitions, and summaries. Introduce your presentation, get the audience's attention, introduce the topic, provide a reason to listen, establish your credibility, and preview main ideas. Conclude the presentation by summarizing, reemphasizing the central idea in a memorable way, motivating the audience to respond, and providing closure. Outline the presentation, and prepare speaking notes using appropriate outline techniques.

SHARED WRITING: CREATING A MEMORABLE, INTERESTING, AND CREDIBLE MESSAGE

After choosing a speech topic, identify a general purpose and develop a specific-purpose. What kind of supporting materials would clarify these main ideas and purposes, and why?

▶ A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post   0 characters | 140 minimum

Chapter 11 Quiz: Developing Your Professional Presentation

Chapter 12

Delivering Professional Presentations

Learning Objectives

12.1 Describe the four common delivery methods of communication ideas

12.2 Identify ways of maximizing presentation effectiveness

12.3 Describe tips a speaker should consider when addressing the media

12.4 Recognize tips to make an effective question-and-answer session after the actual presentation

12.5 Interpret the power of visual and auditory aids as supplements to the speech presentation

She was born in Kosciusko, Mississippi, on January 29, 1954, and raised on a pig farm. Although she lived with her parents, her paternal grandparents were her primary caregivers until she was 6 years old. When her parents separated in 1960, she lived with her mother for several terrible years, in which she was repeatedly sexually abused by male family members and "friends." At age 13 she was almost locked up in a youth training center but instead sent to live with her father. Life continued to be a struggle. At age 14, she had a baby, who died shortly after birth.

Her first big break in life came at age 16 when she was named Miss Fire Prevention for Nashville, which led to a gig as a news reader on a local radio station. It quickly became evident that she had the gift of speaking to others.

After studying speech, theater, and English at Tennessee State University, she became co-anchor of a TV news program. Others spotted her talent. She was hired as an anchorwoman at a Baltimore TV station's news program—but after she kept ad-libbing during the news, the station moved her to a morning talk show called *People Are Talking*. It was there she truly found her voice.

We'll bet you've heard her voice: The voice and face of Oprah Winfrey are among the most recognized in America. Despite an early life of obstacles and challenges, because of her communication skills and her abundant empathy, today Oprah (her first name is all she needs) is among the wealthiest people in the communication industry.[1] Clearly Oprah has many talents, but chief among them is her skill in connecting to an audience. She knows how to deliver messages that hold and maintain interest. A leader's energy, charisma, and overall perception of leadership competence are communicated through his or her delivery of messages.

Leading Questions

1. You've undoubtedly seen Oprah communicate with an audience. Which of the communication skills that she uses make her one of the most admired communicators today?
2. Does Oprah have any signature message delivery skills that make her style of communication unique?
3. Oprah is an influential leader as well as communicator and is often rated as one of the most influential people in America. What factors make her such an admired and influential leader? How would you describe her leadership style?

In this chapter we focus on the delivery skills that can help you create a favorable impression of you and your message, regardless of whether you're giving a formal speech to hundreds of people, sharing a few impromptu ideas in an informal meeting, or convincing your boss to give you a raise. Specifically, we focus on methods of delivery and the use of delivery cues such as eye contact, gestures, posture, movement, facial expression, vocal delivery, and your overall appearance. In addition, we'll discuss computer-generated slides, such as PowerPoint, as well as other types of visual and technological tools to enhance your presentations.

Since ancient times, people have debated the question of whether the content or delivery of your message is more important. There is considerable research to support those who believe that delivery is the foremost factor in determining the overall impact of your message. One classic research study found that listeners believe the most important factors that make a speaker effective are direct eye contact, alertness, enthusiasm, a pleasant voice, and animated gestures.[2] Another researcher concluded that delivery was almost twice as important as content when students gave persuasive presentations.[3] However most contemporary communication teachers suggest that *both* content and delivery are vital because, as one executive communication coach has suggested, "In the real world—the world where you and I do business—content and delivery are always related. And woe be to the communicator who forgets this."[4]

So how do you achieve a delivery style that makes your message memorable and interesting? That's what you're about to find out.

12.1: Methods of Delivering Your Presentation

12.1 Describe the four common delivery methods of communication ideas.

Whether you are selling insurance, summarizing quarterly profits, or just making a few brief remarks, you have a decision to make about your delivery. You first need to determine, from among the four common methods, the delivery method you'll use to communicate your ideas to others. The four methods of presentation delivery are as old as the hills but also as contemporary as today's news headlines. Whether you choose to read your speech, memorize it, make it up on the spot, or speak conversationally from an outline, the method of delivery you choose will have an impact on your listeners. In keeping with our emphasis on adapting to your audience, focusing on your listeners' expectations and the specific speaking situation will help you determine which delivery method to select.

12.1.1: Manuscript Speaking

You could write your speech word for- word and then read your speech. This method is called *manuscript speaking*. One advantage of manuscript speaking is that you don't have to worry about forgetting what you're going to say. You simply write exactly what you're going to say and then read it. Manuscript speaking also has the advantage of letting you carefully craft each word. When possible, during times of crisis, statements to the press by government, business, or education leaders should be worded precisely, rather than tossed off casually. An inaccurate or misspoken message could have serious consequences.

Yet, despite these advantages, manuscript speaking is *not* a preferred method, because listening to someone reading a speech is not inherently interesting. Reading a speech can be one of the *least* effective methods of maintaining audience interest. It takes considerable skill to make a manuscript speech sound interesting and lively. Also, when you read a message your voice tends to fall into a singsong pattern that sounds like you're reading rather than talking naturally with your listeners. Another disadvantage: When reading a speech, you'll have minimal eye contact with your audience. So consider manuscript speaking primarily when you need to make sure your message is clearly worded or when you need to be very careful about what you are presenting.

When you do use a manuscript speaking style, consider these tips from media consultant Roger Ailes, who has advised leaders including U.S. presidents and corporate CEOs:[5]

- Type your speech in short, easy-to-scan phrases on the upper two-thirds of the paper so you don't have to look too far down into your notes.
- Rehearse your speech so you can have maximum eye contact when reading your message.
- Use an index finger to follow along on each line of your message so when you do break for eye contact you'll be able to quickly find your place and seamlessly keep on reading without missing a beat.
- Don't read too quickly; try to speak as you typically do when not using a manuscript.
- Vary your vocal inflection to mirror the way you normally talk.
- Use appropriate gestures and movement to add interest and emphasis to your message.

The goal when delivering a manuscript speech is to sound like you are not reading a speech.

12.1.2: Memorized Speaking

If you've ever been in a play and had to memorize lines, you already know both the advantages and the disadvantages of delivering a speech from memory. *Memorized speaking* has the advantage of allowing you to have constant eye contact with your audience while also saying precisely what you want to say. As with manuscript speaking, you can carefully develop your message and work on both word choice and the overall message.

A prime disadvantage of memorized speaking is that you might forget what you've rehearsed. Another disadvantage: Most memorized speeches sound like they are memorized—stiff, stilted, and overrehearsed. Also, you won't be able to adapt to your listeners if you've memorized every word.

Given those disadvantages, are there instances when it is appropriate to memorize your message? If you have a very short message to present, such as when accepting an award, introducing a speaker, or making an announcement, a memorized talk may be best. But even in those situations you may want to have notes available so you can use them if you need them. If you do memorize your message, avoid rehearsing it using exactly the same vocal inflection each time you practice. Vary your voice to sound as natural and as conversational as possible. Memorize this: *Unless a speech is short, don't try to memorize it*.

12.1.3: Improvising—Impromptu Speaking

You've given more impromptu speeches in your life than any other type of speech. *Impromptu speaking* is delivering a speech without any advance preparation. You simply respond to a question, comment, or invitation to speak. Impromptu speaking is also called "thinking on your feet" or "speaking off the cuff." Whether in a meeting when someone turns to you for a short briefing on a topic or when you respond to something said during a conference call, you'll undoubtedly give many impromptu speeches. Leaders are expected to think on their feet and to speak fluently.

The key advantage of impromptu speaking is that you can speak conversationally (because you didn't prepare your message ahead of time) while maintaining direct eye contact with your listeners. You can also adapt your comments to your listeners, based on the remarks of a previous speaker or something that has just occurred. A skilled impromptu speaker can customize a message to hold an audience's interest and attention. The problem is that a speaker needs to be especially skilled and talented to be a good impromptu speaker. Another potential disadvantage is that an impromptu speech may lack a coherent organizational structure. You're also not able to carefully gather facts and other information for an impromptu speech; you can include only the supporting material that comes to mind when you're speaking.

The following tips can help you present impromptu speeches that sound professional and polished.

IDENTIFY THE NUMBER OF POINTS YOU WISH TO MAKE Before you open your mouth to respond to another speaker or to ask to speak, think about how many major ideas you will mention. Just as in any speech, as you develop a brief introduction to your comments, you could say "I have two responses" or "There are three points I want to make." You'll impress listeners with your clarity of thought and give your message an immediate structure.

ORGANIZE BEFORE YOU SPEAK In addition to enumerating your major points, think about the order of your major ideas. For example, consider using the primacy-recency principle: Whatever you present first or last is most likely to be remembered. If you think your audience may be opposed to your message, start with your strongest idea. Or, you may want to build to a strong conclusion, saving your strongest point for last. Or, use a simple problem-solution, topical, or chronological pattern. With just a few seconds of reflection, you can develop a mental outline of your key points and place them in an order for maximum impact.

BE BRIEF Because it's an impromptu speech, most listeners won't expect (or want) your message to be lengthy. A typical impromptu speech lasts from one to three minutes, although depending on the issue, or your leadership role, and the specific audience you are addressing, an impromptu speech could be longer than three minutes.

SPEAK HONESTLY AND DRAW ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCE More than likely, you will support your key ideas with personal experience or stories, since you've not had time to conduct research. But be careful to self-censor your remarks to make sure you're not making an emotional heat-of-the-moment response. When you do provide impromptu personal examples and illustrations, we recommend using short—and we emphasize *short*—anecdotes or stories to make your point; long, rambling offerings will likely not be well received.

ALWAYS KEEP YOUR AUDIENCE IN MIND As stressed throughout the discussion of professional speaking, be audience centered. Always think about your audience's needs, interests, and background as you begin an impromptu message. A quick way to be audience centered and adapt your message to your listeners is, for just a few moments, to *be* your audience: Imagine that you are different members of your audience, with their different roles and experiences. If you were them, what would you expect or want a speaker to say?

12.1.4: Conversing—Extemporaneous Speaking

The delivery style advocated by most communication experts is extemporaneous delivery. *Extemporaneous speaking* is speaking from a written or memorized outline without having memorized the exact wording of what you are going to say. You've worked hard to gather research, refine your ideas, organize your message, and even practice saying what you'll say. Yet, because you haven't memorized the exact wording of your talk, you really are creating your message in front of the audience. Extemporaneous speaking sounds conversational, fluid, and thoughtful. As one communication consultant noted, "Great presentations, masked as conversations, always get you closer to your audience. The closer you get, the better the chance you get what you want."[6]

To make an extemporaneous speech sound conversational while displaying ample research and reflection, follow the steps of the audience-centered speaking process discussed in Chapter 11. Then, with the content of your message in hand, move to the rehearsal phase of preparation. As you rehearse your message, try to rely less and less on your notes, but don't memorize your message word for word. In fact, if you find yourself starting to say exactly the same things during rehearsal, stop rehearsing. You don't want to sound like a computer-generated voice—you want to sound live and immediate. As you master the overall structure of your message, you'll rely less on your notes and focus more on adapting your ideas to your audience. The final draft of your speaking notes may be an abbreviated outline or a few key words, facts, quotations, statistics, or other bits of information you don't want to commit to memory.

Recap

Methods of Delivery

Delivery Method	Tips
Manuscript speaking Reading your speech	Write like you speak. Use shorter sentences. Use personal pronouns (*I*), contractions (*don't* instead of *do not*), and be more redundant than when you write.
Memorized speaking	Use only for short messages.
Giving a speech from memory with no notes	Budget time to rehearse your memorized message.
Impromptu speaking	Enumerate your main points.
Delivering a speech without advance preparation	Be audience centered, organized, and brief. Be honest, but monitor what you are saying.
Extemporaneous	Follow the steps for preparing a speech, including developing a full-content outline.
Knowing the major ideas, which you have outlined, but not memorizing the exact words of a speech	Rehearse the speech until you know the overall structure of the message, but stop rehearsing when you start saying exactly the same words each time you rehearse.

12.2: Effective Delivery Strategies

12.2 Identify ways of maximizing presentation effectiveness.

"Should I look over their heads so I don't get nervous?"
"Should I stand or sit when delivering my presentation?"
"What do I do with my hands while speaking?"
"Should I vary the pitch, rate, and intensity of my voice?"

The answers to these common questions about delivering a speech (No; It depends; It depends; and Yes) have important implications for you the next time you deliver a speech. However, you may need more than one-word responses to gain worthwhile insights about how to best deliver a presentation. In this section we offer tips about eye contact, gestures, posture, facial expression, vocal cues, and your personal appearance to help you deliver a speech with power and credibility.

12.2.1: Look Up—Maximize Eye Contact

The most important tip to remember, if you do nothing else during a presentation, is to look at your listeners. As James Humes, famed speech writer for business leaders and several presidents, says, "There is only one rule you have to follow: *Never, never, never let words come out of your mouth when your eyes are looking down*."[7] Known for being an excellent speaker, President Ronald Reagan used a specific technique to ensure maximum eye contact when delivering his presentations. He would look at his notes, make a mental "snapshot" of what he would say next, and then look up to deliver his lines.[8]

For most Americans, having direct eye contact with audience members has been shown to increase speaker credibility and listener comprehension.[9] A study by one of your authors found that speakers with less than 50% eye contact are considered unfriendly, uninformed, inexperienced, and even dishonest by their listeners.[10] Look at them, and they will like you more and will be more likely to remember what you tell them.

Is there such a thing as too much eye contact? Probably not for most North American listeners. But you don't want to stare at just one person; that will likely make him or her uncomfortable. Also be aware that not all people from all cultures prefer as much eye contact as North Americans do. Asians, for example, typically prefer less.

When it's your time to speak, walk to the lectern or the area where you've been asked to stand while speaking, pause briefly, and look at your audience before you say anything. Eye contact nonverbally sends the message "I am interested in you. Tune me in. I have something I want to share with you." Have your opening sentence firmly in mind so you can deliver it without looking at your notes or away from your listeners.[11]

Keep these eye contact tips in mind as you speak:

- Establish eye contact with the entire audience, not just with those in the front row or only one or two people.
- Make eye contact with individuals, establishing person-to-person contact with them—not so long that it will make a listener feel uncomfortable but long enough to establish the feeling that you are talking directly to that individual.
- Don't look over your listeners' heads (listeners know if you're not looking directly at them).

12.2.2: Move Meaningfully—Use Appropriate Gestures, Movement, and Posture

When you write, you use punctuation, CAPITALIZATION, *italics*, and **boldface** to help your reader interpret your message and add emphasis to words. When you speak, gestures, movement, and your overall posture often serve those functions. You move to emphasize ideas, enumerate items, and describe objects.

GESTURES If you don't know what to do with your hands while speaking, think about the message you want to express. As in ordinary conversation, your hands should simply help emphasize or reinforce your verbal message.

Tips for Using Gestures When You Speak in Public

- Focus on the message you want to communicate. Your gestures should naturally coincide with what you are saying.
- Be definite. If you want to gesture, go ahead and gesture. Avoid minor hand movements that may appear accidental to your audience.
- Don't, however, overdo your gestures. Listeners should focus on your message, not your gestures.
- Vary your gestures. Don't use the same hand to gesture or one all-purpose gesture all of the time.
- Adapt your gestures to fit the situation. When speaking to a large audience in a formal setting, use bolder and larger gestures. For a smaller group, your gestures would likely be less dramatic.
- Adapt your gestures to the cultural expectations of your audience. Listeners from Asia, for example, typically prefer a quieter, less flamboyant use of gestures. British listeners seem to prefer a speaker to stay behind a lectern and use few gestures. Europeans often say they can spot an American speaker because Americans typically are more animated in the use of gestures, movement, and facial expression.

We've provided several do's and don'ts for using gestures, but the most important point about gestures is this: *Use gestures that work best for you*. Your gestures should fit your personality. It may be better to use no gestures—to just put your hands comfortably at your side—than to use distracting, awkward gestures or to try to mimic someone else's gestures.

MOVEMENT Oprah Winfrey does it and so do many newscasters: They sometimes move around when they talk. Should you move when speaking in a business or professional situation? The best advice we can give you is to be aware of and adapt to the expectations of your listeners. If you're seated at a conference table and all of the other speakers have delivered their presentations while seated, then probably you should remain seated too, unless you purposely want to change the mood or momentum of the meeting. Consider these tips as you evaluate whether to add movement to your message:

Move—but Don't Distract Listeners from Your Message

You don't want your listeners to be thinking about your graceful movements; you want them to listen to your message. Movement should make sense—it should be neither artistic expression nor aimless meandering.

Move to Reduce Physical Barriers

Barriers such as a lectern, rows of chairs, or a projector may act as obstacles between you and your audience. If such physical barriers make you feel too far removed from your audience, move closer and reduce the physical separation.

Move to Signal a New Idea or Tone

Your movement can signal the beginning of a new idea or major point in your speech. As you move into a transition statement or change from a serious subject to a more lighthearted one, movement can be a good way to signal that your approach to the speaking situation is also changing.

POSTURE Your posture is a strong nonverbal cue that communicates your credibility, power, and the overall intensity of your message. Research has found that a slumped-over, casual posture violates what listeners expect to see and can lower your credibility.[12] Whereas your face and voice play the major role in communicating a specific emotion, your posture communicates the intensity of that emotion. If you are happy, your upright posture and quick movements communicate the intensity of your joy. So make sure that your posture is consistent with your verbal message. Furthermore, audience members may believe what they see more than what you say. If you announce how happy you are to speak to an audience, yet your frozen posture expresses your discomfort, your listeners will believe your nonverbal message rather than your claim that you're pleased to be there.

Adapt your posture to your topic, your audience, and the formality or informality of the speaking occasion. For example, it may be perfectly appropriate, as well as comfortable and natural, to sit on the edge of a desk during a very informal presentation, such as a brief update on a project to a small team of colleagues. For a class presentation, however, most teachers frown on casually sitting on a desk and dangling your feet. In professional speaking sessions, always consider the expectations and culture of the audience members to guide you in the posture you adopt. An effective and audience-centered leader would tend to adopt a more formal posture to convey a professional approach.

Regardless of the specific situation, consider these suggestions to enhance your posture when speaking to others:

- **PLANT YOUR FEET.** When standing, place your feet on the floor with one foot slightly in front of the other one; this will keep you from being tempted to sway from side to side. With one foot in front of the other one, you may move slightly forward and back, but this is less noticeable or distracting than swaying.
- **STAND TALL.** To enhance your posture, pull your shoulders back a bit (as one posture expert suggests, "Put your shoulders in your back pocket") and then imagine a string holding up the top of your head. Shoulders back, head up.

Like your gestures, your posture should not call attention to itself. It should reflect your interest in and attention to your audience and your message.

12.2.3: Express Emotions—Use Appropriate Facial Expressions

Your face is the primary source of whatever specific emotion you communicate to your audience. Your audience sees your face before they hear what you are going to say. Thus, through your facial cues, you have an opportunity to set the emotional tone of your message before you utter a word.[13]

Throughout your presentation, your facial expression, like your body language and eye contact, should be appropriate to your message. The Roman orator Cicero said that you could help your listeners experience the emotion you wish them to experience by displaying the emotion yourself. If you want listeners to be joyful, you must express joy. To have them feel sorrow, communicate your sadness with your face. Not in a fake way—audience members can spot a phony—but with a facial expression that genuinely expresses how you feel. Present somber news with a serious expression. Tell a funny story with a smile.

Although humans are capable of producing thousands of different facial expressions, researchers have classified six primary emotions that are expressed on the face: happiness, anger, surprise, sadness, disgust, and fear.[14] According to cross-cultural studies by social psychologist Paul Ekman, these basic facial expressions conveying emotions are virtually universal. So even though when we speak to others our faces communicate a blend of expressions, rather than a single emotion, even a culturally diverse audience will be able to interpret your emotional expressions.[15]

Consider these suggestions to enhance your use of facial expressions when speaking to others:

- **BE AWARE OF YOUR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS.** When you rehearse your speech, stand in front of a mirror or, better yet, videotape yourself. Note whether you are allowing your face to help communicate the emotional tone of your thoughts.
- **ENSURE THAT YOUR FACIAL EXPRESSION SUPPORTS YOUR VERBAL MESSAGE.** As we've suggested throughout our discussion of delivery, your nonverbal message should be consistent with your verbal message.

- **ASK SOMEONE TO WATCH YOU REHEARSE, OR MAKE A VIDEO PAYING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO YOUR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS.**

12.2.4: Look Good—Monitor Personal Appearance

Your personal appearance affects how other people respond to you and your message. A key principle to keep in mind when monitoring personal appearance is to adapt to the norms of your situation. At the California corporate offices of Google, for example, casual clothing is the norm. Someone who wore a coat and tie or a dressy suit would not be perceived as part of the team. The late Steve Jobs, founder of Apple, typically wore jeans and a black turtleneck sweater. Microsoft founder and philanthropist Bill Gates often leaves his tie at home in favor of an open-collared shirt.

Be wary of one-size-fits-all prescriptions for how to dress. The ultimate judge of your style choices is not a fashion editor from New York or Paris but the people in your audience. If you violate your listeners' expectations or the style or culture of the organization where you are making a presentation, you will be less successful in achieving your purpose. Whenever possible, monitor the audience's dress code before deciding what to wear or what not to wear.

Consider these general guidelines to help you adapt your personal appearance for maximum credibility:

- If you're in doubt about the dress code, ask someone who is familiar with the audience and the occasion to help you decide whether to dress up or dress down.
- Dress slightly better than your audience members.
- Never wear clothing that would be potentially distracting—for example, a shirt or blouse that displays printing that advertises something unrelated to your topic.
- When in doubt, select clothing that is conservative.

Audience members attending a speech by Steve Jobs, the late CEO of Apple, would have been surprised to see him appear in a suit and tie. Remember to adapt your personal appearance to the norms of the situation so that you meet your audience's expectations.

12.2.5: Speak Clearly—Use Appropriate Vocal Delivery

As a leader, you can influence others not only with the power of your ideas, but with the power of your vocal delivery. We don't mean you need to shout or try to sound like someone you're not—but thoughtfully monitoring your voice can help you enhance your leadership image.

A speaker has at least two important vocal obligations to an audience: Speak to be understood, and speak to maintain interest. How do you achieve both of those goals? Monitoring your volume, pitch, rate, articulation, pronunciation, and dialect are the key elements in being both understood and interesting.[16]

VOLUME Your speaking *volume*—how loud or soft your voice is—is the most fundamental aspect of your voice. The volume of your speech is determined by the amount of air you project through your larynx, or voice box. More air results in a louder sound. Your diaphragm, a muscle in your upper abdomen, helps control sound volume by increasing airflow from your lungs through your voice box. Breathing from your diaphragm—that is, consciously expanding and contracting your abdomen as you breathe in and out—can increase the volume of sound as well as enhance the quality of your voice.

With many speakers, the problem is not the volume of the voice but a lack of intensity. You can enhance the intensity of your voice by increasing vocal energy using a combination of increased volume, clear articulation of speech sounds, and varied pitch.

ARTICULATION *Articulation* is the enunciation of speech sounds. You should articulate distinctly to ensure that your audience can clearly determine what words you are using.

Many errors in articulation result from bad habits, from emulating the sounds of others who use poor articulation, or from simple laziness. It takes more energy to articulate speech sounds clearly. Sometimes we are in a hurry to express our ideas, but more often we simply get into the habit of mumbling, slurring, or abbreviating—saying "dint" instead of "didn't" or "lemme" instead of "let me." Such vocal flaws may not keep your audience from understanding you, but poor enunciation does reflect on your credibility as a speaker.

How do you improve your articulation? First, identify words or phrases that you have a tendency to slur or cut short. Once you have identified these, practice saying the words correctly. Work to hear the difference between improper and proper articulation. Listen to the way newscasters or other media announcers articulate speech sounds. Consult a dictionary; many online dictionaries pronounce the words for you.

PRONUNCIATION Whereas articulation refers to the clarity of speech sounds, *pronunciation* is the degree to which words conform to standard English. Mispronouncing words can detract from your credibility. You may not be aware that you're mispronouncing a word unless someone tells you.

Some speakers reverse speech sounds, saying "aks" instead of "ask." Some allow an *r* sound to intrude into some words, saying "warsh" instead of "wash," or "Warshington" instead of "Washington." Another common pronunciation error is to leave out sounds in the middle of words, as in "ackchally" instead of "actually" or "Febuary" instead of "February." Some speakers accent syllables in nonstandard ways; they say "pÓlice" instead of "police" or "um?'brella" rather than "umbrella."

If English is not your native language, you may have to spend extra time working on your pronunciation and articulation. Try these strategies:

- Make an effort to prolong vowel sounds. Speeeeeak tooooo prooooloooooong eeeeach voooowel soooound yoooou maaaaaake. Such exaggerations of speech sounds will help you become more aware of how to avoid clipping vowel sounds.[17]
- To reduce choppy-sounding pronunciation, blend the end of one word into the beginning of the next. Make your speech flow from one word to the next, instead of separating it into individual chunks of sound.

DIALECT A *dialect* is a consistent style of pronouncing words that is common to an ethnic group or a geographic region such as the South, New England, or the upper Midwest. In the southern part of the United States, people prolong some vowel sounds when they speak. And in the northern Midwest and Canada, the word *about* sometimes sounds a bit like "a boat."

Although a speaker's dialect may classify the person as being from a certain part of the country, it won't necessarily affect an audience's comprehension of information, unless the dialect is so pronounced that the listeners can't understand the speaker's words. Research does suggest, however, that listeners tend to prefer a dialect similar to their own.[18] If your word pronunciation is significantly distracting to your listeners, you might considering modifying your dialect (although radically altering a dialect is difficult and time consuming). However, you don't want to try to develop a fake dialect—unless you have the acting skill of Meryl Streep or Tom Hanks, people will be able to detect that your dialect is phony.

PITCH Vocal *pitch* is how high or low your voice sounds. When you sing, your pitch changes to produce a melody. When you speak, your pitch also has a natural variation. Not varying your vocal pitch is one of the worst things you can do while speaking; a monotone voice is boring.

Everyone has a habitual pitch. This is the range of the voice during normal conversation. Regardless of your habitual pitch, it's important to have a varied inflection when you speak. Vocal *inflection* is the variation in pitch as you pronounce words or sounds.

For English-speaking people, vocal inflection adds interest and helps communicate emotions and subtle nuances of meaning. Your inflection helps determine the meaning of your utterances. A disappointed "Ah" sounds different from a surprised "Ah!" or a quizzical "Ah?"

In some languages, vocal inflection plays a significant role in determining the meanings of words. Thai, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese languages use such inflections as monotone, low, falling, high, and rising inflections to vary the meaning of messages.[19] If you are a native speaker of a language in which pitch influences meaning, be aware that listeners do not expect these kinds of variations in many Western languages, although all languages rely on some variation in inflection to communicate emotions and nuances of meaning.

RATE Another way you express your interest and energy is by your speaking *rate*. Most speakers average between 125 and 180 words per minute. Research suggests that speaking more than 300 or less than 125 words per minute makes listening difficult.[20] At the upper end of that range you'd be speaking at a fairly fast clip. The ideal speaking rate depends on the topic, the occasion, your own natural style of speaking, and the preferences of your audience.

Sometimes when speakers are nervous they speak rapidly. This is because their anxiety leads to an increase in adrenaline and thus extra energy; speaking rapidly is a manifestation of their anxiousness.

Effective speakers vary their speaking rate. You need not deliver your entire speech at the same pace. When you are excited or wish to communicate excitement and interest, speak faster. Slow your pace to emphasize an idea. As with any aspect of delivery, you don't want listeners to focus on your speaking rate—you want them to focus on your message. The pace of your delivery should make sense in terms of the ideas you are sharing with your listeners.

Your use of well-timed *pauses* can greatly enhance the overall impact of your message. When you are trying to tell a joke, a serious tale, or a dramatic story, your use of a pause can determine the effectiveness of your anecdote.

Although pauses can add impact and dramatic effect, many beginning speakers are uncomfortable with silent pauses and fill them with "Umm," "Er," "You know," and "Ah." Try to avoid making these unnecessary vocalizations.

Silence can be an effective tool in adding emphasis to a particular word or sentence. A well-timed pause coupled with eye contact can powerfully accent your idea. Silence is a way of saying to your listeners "Think about this for a moment."

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Presence Is Priceless

There's more to communication than just presenting information—just ask Robert W. Selander, chief executive of MasterCard. To him, speaking well is about making an impact not only with the delivery of your message but with your presence.

To have presence is to have charisma, energy—a certain electricity that keeps your listeners riveted on you and your message while you're speaking and helps them remember you after you sit down.

How do you achieve presence? According to Selander, it's more than body language or energetic delivery; it's also about the level of audience-centered message detail you present. Present too much information and you'll bore them; present too little and you'll confuse them. According to Selander, know your subject well but also know your audience. Presence occurs when you and your audience are connected and in sync.

What is key, suggests Selander is to be audience centered. Sound familiar? It's the core advice we have emphasized in how to deliver a presentation with skill and credibility. It's your audience that determines if you have presence. Selander suggests that presence comes from knowing what to say and what not to say. Don't add too many details—strive to hit the "sweet spot" of information your listeners need.[21]

To have presence is to read your audience to give them the information they need and want—not to smother them with details or make up for lack of substance with a overly-slick delivery style. You'll have presence if you know what to edit out of your message and what to keep. Bottom line: Knowing your audience is the key factor that determines what information stays in the message to give you presence. From the CEO of Mastercard's perspective, that advice is more than powerful, it's priceless.

12.2.6: Speak Up—Tips for Using a Microphone

In many business and professional settings, especially with a large audience, you will be expected to use a microphone so that all your listeners can hear you clearly. There have been some classic blunders when speakers didn't know the microphone was on, including the gaffe when Vice President Biden dropped the f-bomb when congratulating President Obama on the passage of a major overhaul of health care. A good guideline: Any time you're near a microphone, assume that it's on.

You will likely encounter one of two kinds of microphones. A lavaliere microphone is the clip-on type often used by newspeople and interviewees. Worn on a collar or lapel, it requires no particular care other than not thumping it or accidentally knocking it off. In contrast, a stationary microphone is attached to a lectern, sits on a desk, or stands on the floor. Generally, the stationary mikes used today are multidirectional. You don't have to remain absolutely anchored to the floor in front of a stationary microphone while delivering your speech—it can pick up your voice even if you're a couple of feet away. Regardless of the type of microphone you use, here are a few tips for using it well.

Tips for Using a Microphone

- Microphones amplify sloppy habits of pronunciation and articulation. You'll need to speak clearly and crisply when using a mike. Be especially careful when articulating *b* and *p* sounds; they can be overamplified and produce slight popping sounds. Microphones can also intensify the sibilance of the *s* sound at the beginning or ending of words. You may have to articulate these sounds with slightly less intensity to avoid overamplifying them.
- If you must test a microphone, ask the audience whether they can hear you. Blowing on an active mike produces an irritating noise. Just say "microphone test" or "one, two, three" in your normal speaking voice.
- Don't tap or pound the microphone or shuffle anything nearby. If you are using note cards, quietly slide them aside as you progress through your speech. Full sheets of paper are more difficult to handle quietly; if you must use them, try to shuffle them as quietly as you can.
- When you are delivering your presentation, talk directly into the microphone at your normal volume. Some speakers lower their volume and become inaudible when they have a microphone in front of them.
- If you can, practice before you speak with the type of microphone you will use. If you have the opportunity, conduct the microphone test before your audience arrives. Practicing in the room where you will be speaking will help you adapt to echoes or other distortions so that these sounds don't surprise you during your presentation.

Recap

Characteristics of Effective Nonverbal Delivery

- Gestures should be relaxed, definite, varied, and appropriate to your audience and the speaking situation.
- Movement should be purposeful.
- Posture should feel natural and be appropriate to your topic, your audience, and the occasion.
- Eye contact should be established before you say anything and sustained as much as possible throughout your presentation.
- Facial expression should be alert, friendly, and appropriate to your message.
- Vary your vocal volume, pitch, and rate; articulate your words, and pronounce them correctly.

WRITING PROMPT

Attend or watch on television, C-SPAN, or YouTube a political campaign speech or a speech by a business or professional leader. Pay particular attention to the leader's delivery. Critique his or her use of gestures, movement, posture, eye contact, facial expression, vocal delivery, and appearance. What advice would you give this speaker based on the principles of effective delivery presented in this chapter?

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

12.3: Adapting Your Presentation for the Media

12.3 Describe tips a speaker should consider when addressing the media.

Whether your message will be broadcast on national TV, transmitted using Skype or FaceTime, or presented during a videoconference, it is increasingly likely that you will deliver a presentation that will be conveyed via video transmission. For the most part, you'll follow the same guidelines for delivery we've already discussed. Good eye contact, varied vocal inflection, and appropriate posture and gestures are expected, but consider these additional strategies if there is a video camera present.

CONSIDER TONING DOWN YOUR GESTURES You don't need to use large sweeping gestures when speaking via a webcam or the broadcast media. Dramatic gestures that are appropriate when addressing a large audience will likely appear too demonstrative on video. Most newscasters use subtle head nods and facial expressions rather than gestures to emphasize their points. Use fewer gestures, and don't fidget with pens, your hair, or your clothing. Also, keep your hands away from your face. When you watch someone on TV or Skype, it's more like having an interpersonal conversation than hearing a formal oration. If your primary audience is the live audience in the room when you present your message, then that should be the key audience to whom you adapt your speaking style. If the target audience is watching on monitors elsewhere, tone down the gestures a bit.

DRESS FOR VIDEO SUCCESS Avoid large patterns, bold stripes, jangling jewelry, and overly frilly or complicated necklines, especially if you're being televised in high-definition TV.[22] Solid colors typically look best. The camera can add five to ten pounds to your appearance. You don't need to go on a crash diet, but do wear clothes that make you look and feel your best.

MONITOR YOUR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS Because TV amplifies your facial expressions, your listeners are seeing your expression up close rather than from a distance. Therefore, if you have a tendency to use exaggerated or dramatic facial expressions, realize that they will be seen from the camera's perspective rather than from the audience's perspective. Smile appropriately, but make sure you're not smiling at inappropriate times. If you are asked a serious question about company layoffs but have a big grin on your face when the camera cuts to you, it will appear that you are insensitive to the question.

KEEP IT SHORT If you are speaking for the broadcast media, realize you will only be given a few seconds (or sound bites) of airtime. Editors are looking for short answers, short phrases, and quotable lines.

CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WITH CARE AND STYLE The sound bites often broadcast are those phrases that are particularly memorable or attention catching. Repeating key words, speaking in parallel structures, and using alliteration and other stylistic devices enhance the likelihood that your message will be quoted or broadcast.

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE TECHNOLOGY BEFORE YOU SPEAK If you are being taped or broadcast from a studio, be sure to arrive with plenty of time in advance so that you won't have to rush around making last-minute adjustments to your microphone.

12.4: Responding to Questions

12.4 Recognize tips to make an effective question-and-answer session after the actual presentation.

Often the sale is made or lost, or your funders decide whether to support your project, during the Q&A (question and answer) portion of your presentation. During a Q&A period that follows a prepared presentation, your delivery methods change to impromptu speaking. In addition to the strategies for impromptu speaking offered earlier, here are additional tips to make a Q&A period effective.[23]

PREPARE How can you prepare for a question that hasn't been asked yet? Anticipate the kinds of questions listeners may have by analyzing your audience. Think of possible questions those particular listeners might ask you, and then prepare and rehearse your answers.

REPEAT OR REPHRASE THE QUESTION There are several reasons why it's a good idea to repeat questions. First, your restatement makes sure that everyone can hear the question. Second, paraphrasing ensures that *you* understand the question before you respond. Third, by paraphrasing, you can succinctly summarize long, rambling questions. Finally, by repeating the question, you give yourself more time to think about your answer.

ASK YOURSELF THE FIRST QUESTION One way to prime the audience to ask questions is to ask yourself a challenging question first. For example, you might say, "As we move into the question-and-answer portion of the presentation, several of you may be wondering. . . ." State the question and answer it. Doing this also gives you a comfortable way to make a transition between the presentation and the Q&A period. Asking yourself a tough question tells the audience that you're open for serious questions and that they'll have your attention.

STAY ON MESSAGE Sometimes listeners may ask questions unrelated to your talk. If so, gently guide your questioner back to the message you have presented. Your answers, rather than the questions, are what are important. We're not suggesting that you dodge questions, but you can ensure that your key ideas remain the focus of the Q&A session. Some seasoned speakers suggest that you save a bit of your presentation to deliver during the Q&A session. It's called giving a "double-barreled" talk.[24] You first deliver your presentation, and then, during the Q&A period, you give your second, much briefer talk.

LISTEN CAREFULLY AND NONJUDGMENTALLY Your listeners expect you to be polite and attentive. When you listen to questions, keep your eyes focused on the person asking the question and lean forward slightly to communicate your attentiveness. If you think a question is stupid, don't say so. Just listen and respond courteously. Audience members will judge for themselves whether a question was appropriate or not. Don't wince, grimace, or scowl at the questioner. You'll gain more credibility by keeping your cool than by losing your composure.

NEUTRALIZE HOSTILE QUESTIONS Hostile questions give you an opportunity to score points with your listeners. Why? Because you'll have your listeners' attention; use that attention to your advantage. Here are some tips to help you do that:

- **RESTATE THE QUESTION.** If the question was a lengthy diatribe attacking you, focus on the essence of the issue. If the question is "Your ideas are just stupid! I'm angry that you have no idea how to proceed. The program has been a complete failure. Why are you still trying to make it work?" a paraphrase could be "You're asking me why I'm still trying to make a program successful. From your perspective, the program has failed."
- **ACKNOWLEDGE EMOTIONS.** For example, you could say, "I can certainly understand why you're angry. I share your anger and frustration. It's because of my frustration that I want to give my proposal more time to work."
- **DON'T MAKE THE ISSUE PERSONAL.** Even if the question has made you the villain, don't counterattack the questioner. Keep the conversation focused on issues, not personalities.
- **GET TO THE HEART OF THE ISSUE.** Respond directly to a hostile question. Consider restating the evidence you presented, or provide a new example to support your position. A hostile listener is more likely to be persuaded with evidence and facts than by opinions or increased vocal volume.
- **WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER, ADMIT IT.** It's better to admit you don't know an answer to a question than to try to fake an answer. Promise to find out more information and get back to the person later. If you make such a promise, follow through on it.
- **BE BRIEF.** Make your responses short and to the point.

USE ORGANIZATIONAL SIGNPOSTS Listeners will be impressed if you can enumerate the number of points you'll make in response to a question. For example, you might say, "I have two responses to your question." When you get to your second point, say, "My second point is. . . ." Signposts will both help you stay organized and impress your listeners with your clarity.

SIGNAL WHEN THE Q&A PERIOD IS CONCLUDING You might say to the audience, "I have time for two more questions." Let them know that the Q&A session will soon conclude. Even if you have someone helping you moderate the discussion, you should remain in control of concluding the presentation.

During the Q & A portion of your presentation, your delivery methods change to impromptu speaking and may include gestures that add emphasis to your responses or help focus your listeners' attention.

12.5: Presentation Aids

12.5 Interpret the power of visual and auditory aids as supplements to the speech presentation.

In many professional settings, you'll be expected to use some kind of presentation aid when you speak. A *presentation aid* is any object or image that reinforces your point visually so that your listeners can better understand it. Today's audiences often expect to see computer-generated slides such as PowerPoints, featuring lists of bulleted words, phrases, images, and even video; if you don't use professional-looking presentation aids, you'll lose credibility. In this section, we offer tips, pointers, and strategies to make sure you gain rather than lose credibility when using presentation aids.[25]

12.5.1: Why Use Presentation Aids?

The short answer to the question "Why use presentation aids?" is "For many professional presentations, you're expected to." But there are several research-based reasons why presentation aids enhance professional presentations.[26]

ENHANCED ATTENTION Appropriate and well-chosen visual images not only can grab the attention of your listeners but also can maintain interest when words alone might not. Rather than just describe the new manufacturing plant, show a picture of it. The key to gaining and maintaining interest is not in just using presentation aids but using them in interesting and novel ways. Using the same old PowerPoint slides or other presentation aids may not necessarily make your presentation pop with pizzazz.

ENHANCED UNDERSTANDING People are more likely to comprehend information they can both see and hear than information they only hear. Because your audience has become accustomed to visual reinforcement by watching TV and images on the Internet, it is wise to consider how you can increase understanding of your message by using presentation aids.[27]

ENHANCED MEMORY It's well-known that you remember most what you understand best. Your listeners will not only have an improved understanding of your presentation; they will also better remember what you say as a result of visual reinforcement.

ENHANCED ORGANIZATION Briefly listing major ideas on a chart, a poster, or a PowerPoint slide can add clarity to your talk and help your audience understand your overall organizational strategy. Using verbal signposts ("I have three points. My first point is. . . .") and clear transition statements is helpful, but visually displaying your major points ensures that your listeners understand your presentation's architecture. However, use words sparingly; audiences respond more favorably to pictures and images than to wordy sentences. Presentational-speaking expert Granville Toogood even suggests getting rid of all text-heavy slides.[28] Consider using visual images such as a photo, chart, or picture as organizational markers of key ideas (or even very brief bullet points) instead of detailed verbal messages.

ENHANCED SEQUENCING If you're giving a how-to or training presentation, visually listing the steps or procedures in a process can help your audience understand a step-by-step process. Showing rather than just describing how to do something is more likely to teach your audience how to perform a task or function.[29]

12.5.2: Types of Presentation Aids

You can use a wide variety of presentation aids to enhance your message.

Objects

Objects add interest because they are tangible. They can be touched, smelled, heard, or even tasted, as well as seen. Make sure any object you use is large enough to be seen clearly by your listeners. One powerful prop you can use is a copy of the daily newspaper if you are referring to a late-breaking news event—it adds immediacy, and you can connect the events of the day with your topic.

Models

If it is not possible to bring the object you would like to show your audience, consider showing them a model. Again, make sure the model is big enough for your listeners to see.

Drawings

Today, unless they are artists, most speakers use computer-generated drawings. Yet there may be some situations in which a small freehand drawing on a flipchart or whiteboard may be more appropriate, such as when you want to show a very simple diagram.

Photographs

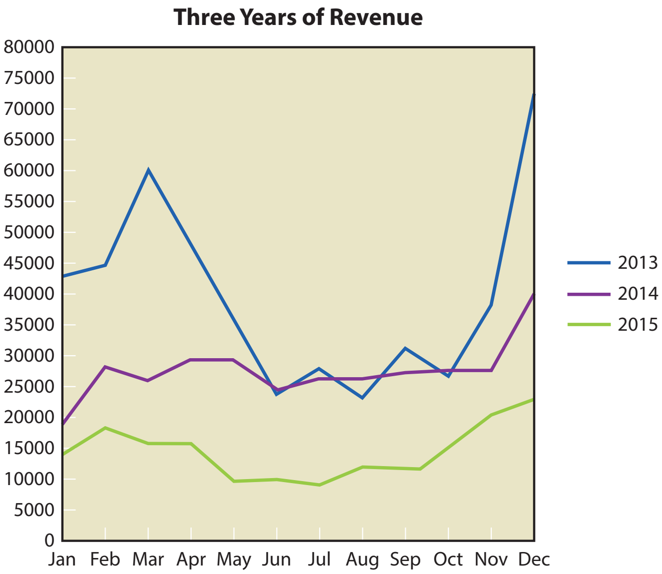
A photo can show objects, places, and people that can't be illustrated with drawings or that an audience cannot view directly. Most contemporary presentations add a digital photo to a PowerPoint or similar computer-generated presentation so it can be large enough for listeners to see clearly, rather than using a printed photo.

Graphs

A graph is a pictorial representation of statistical data in an easy-to-understand format. Most listeners find that graphs help make data more concrete. Graphs are particularly effective in showing overall trends and relationships among data. The four most common types of graphs are line graphs, bar graphs, pie graphs, and picture graphs. Presentation software programs such as PowerPoint let you quickly and easily create charts and graphs.

Line graphs show relationships between two or more variables and organize statistical data to show overall trends. A line graph can cover a greater span of time or numbers than a bar graph without looking cluttered or confusing. A simple line graph, as in Figure 12.1, communicates better than a cluttered one.

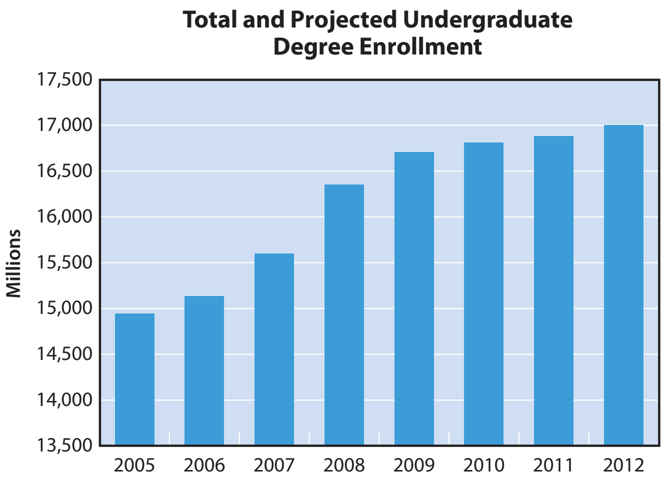
Figure 12.1: Line Graph



SOURCE: http://www.ferris.com/research-library/industry-statistics

A *bar graph* consists of flat areas—bars—of various lengths to represent data or information, as shown in Figure 12.2.

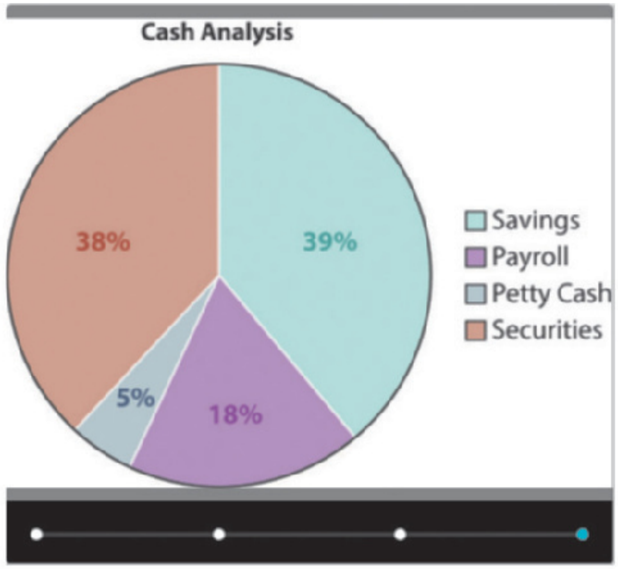
Figure 12.2: Bar Graph



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics.

A *pie graph* shows the general distribution of data. Pie graphs are especially useful in helping your listeners quickly see how data are distributed in a given category, as in Figure 12.3.

Figure 12.3: Pie Graph



SOURCE: *S. Roberts, Who We Are Now, 42.*

Picture graphs look less formal and less intimidating than other kinds of graphs. One of the advantages of picture graphs is that they need few words or labels, which makes them easier for your audience to read.

Here's another tip: Consider using a simple graph to show positive news, such as an upward-sloping line to communicate that sales are up or a simple downward-sloping line to indicate that customer complaints are down. Use a more detailed (but still clear and easy-to-read) chart when you have a more complex point to make or the news is less than positive.[30]

CHARTS *Charts* summarize and present a great deal of information in a small amount of space. They are easy to use, reuse, and enlarge. They can also be displayed in a variety of ways. You can use a flipchart, a poster, or an overhead projector, which can project a giant image of your chart on a screen. When creating charts with presentation software, remember that simple, professional-looking, large charts using a large font, such as 24-point type, are best. Figure 12.4 shows an example of a chart.

FLIPCHARTS A *flipchart* consists of a large pad of paper resting on an easel. You can either prepare your visual aids on the paper before your presentation or draw on the paper while speaking. Flipcharts are best used when you have brief information to display or when you want to summarize comments from audience members during a presentation. If you prepare your flipchart ahead of time, leave a blank page between your images so you can reveal your information when you are ready to refer to it. Lettering should be two or three inches tall.

OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCIES Overhead projectors project images drawn or printed on clear sheets of plastic,

Figure 12.4: Charts

Marital Status in the United States

Status	Number (rounded)	%
Population 15 years old and older	222,000,000	100.0
Never married	60,000,000	27
Married (not separated)	120,000,000	54
Married but separated	5,000,000	2
Widowed	15,000,000	7
Divorced	22,000,000	10

called transparencies, onto a screen so a large group can see the images. As with other types of presentation aids, overhead transparencies have been replaced by computer-generated slides such as those created in PowerPoint. We mention them here because some speakers like to make overhead transparencies of their PowerPoint slides as a backup in case there are technical problems with the PowerPoint slides.

VIDEO Used selectively, video from DVDs, YouTube, and other sources can help illustrate your talk. With a video camera that is as close as your smartphone, you can, if you need to, make your own video images of things you'd like your audience to see and hear. The key to using any video image is to make sure that the video selection doesn't take over your presentation. In most instances, short clips will be best. Many speakers use tablet computers or MP3 players to store video images. Video images can also be easily embedded in a computer-generated program such as Prezi or PowerPoint.

AUDIO You may decide to support your message with sound as well as visual images. A digital device—such as an iPod, smartphone, or CD player—may be just what you need to play a short excerpt of music or an interview you've recorded. As with video, don't let the audio sound track become the primary focus of the message. Used sparingly—audio aids can help set a mood or illustrate a point.

12.5.3: Designing Presentation Aids

Whether you are using computer-generated slides, a whiteboard, or a flipchart, there are some basic principles to keep in mind when designing visual images for a speech. Although we'll offer several specific suggestions for developing PowerPoint slides later in the chapter, the following suggestions are basic principles of "visual rhetoric" that can help you develop appealing as well as effective visual messages.[31]

Be sure to rehearse with your presentation aid and to time its display to control your audience's attention. A skilled presenter knows when to show a presentation aid and when to put it away.

MAKE THEM EASY TO SEE The most violated principle of visual aids is also the most basic: Make visual images and words large enough to be seen easily by everyone in your audience. If you don't do anything else, do this: *Make messages big*.

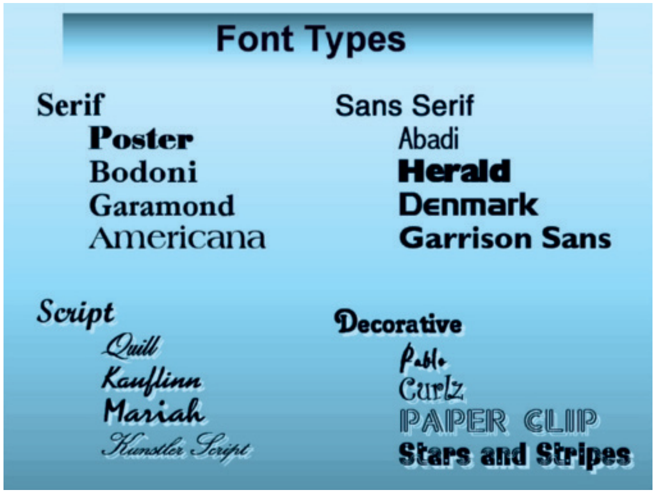
MAKE THEM SIMPLE Simple and brief are usually better than cluttered and lengthy. Limit text to essential words or phrases. If you have a considerable amount of information, use two or three simple charts or slides rather than putting all of your information on one visual. Keep the emphasis on your speech rather than on your visual message. Simple drawings and easy-to-grasp images or pictures have more power than images that take the viewer a long time to decipher.

DEVELOP A CONSISTENT VISUAL THEME Choose one basic design and color scheme and use it throughout your presentation. Repeating words, symbols, styles, or fonts throughout the presentation conveys a sense of unity. Too much repetition can be boring, so you may want to vary your visuals a little, but keep in mind that a consistent graphic theme will help your audience process and remember complex information.

COMMUNICATE NUMERICAL DATA VISUALLY Numbers and statistical summaries are abstract. Listeners like concrete, visual information. A well-developed graph can often convey the information that you wish to present without requiring your audience to absorb and interpret complex numerical data. If your listeners need or want more detailed data, consider sharing it with them in a handout that you distribute after your talk. If you absolutely must present complex data during your talk, walk the audience through the information rather than just pointing to a number-laden sheet of paper or briefly displaying a complex graph.

CHOOSE A FONT WITH CARE A *font* is a typeface of a particular style and design. Fonts are divided into four types: serif, sans serif, script, and decorative. *Serif fonts* (like those in the text you are reading) have lines, called serifs at the tops and bottoms of the letters. Serif fonts are easier to read for longer passages, because the serifs guide the eye from one letter to the next. *Sans serif fonts* do not have extra lines, and all the lines in the letters are of uniform thickness. *Script fonts* imitate handwriting, but are precise and uniform. They can be fancy and complicated as well as hard to read, so be cautious about using them. *Decorative fonts* are designed to convey a feeling or tone. The letters in a decorative font may even be stylized drawings (for example, flowers) in the shape of letters. Use these fonts sparingly for emphasis. (Figure 12.5)

Figure 12.5: Typefaces Grouped by Font Type



Regardless of the style of font you use, your visuals must be big enough to be seen by people in the back row of your audience. Consider using 44-point type for titles, 32-point type for subtitles or for text if there is no subtitle, and 28-point type for the text if there is also a subtitle.

USE ALL CAPITAL LETTERS SPARINGLY ON PRESENTATION AIDS Because our eyes are used to seeing contrasting shapes, when we read we recognize not only the individual letters but also the shapes of the words. Because the shape of a word in all capital letters is less familiar, it's harder for most people to read a message in all capital letters.[32]

USE COLOR TO CREATE A MOOD AND MAINTAIN ATTENTION Graphic designers have long known that warm colors (oranges and reds) communicate excitement and interest. (Note that fast-food restaurants often use red, yellow, or orange in their color schemes to create excitement and stimulate hunger.) Warm colors tend to come forward, whereas cool colors, such as green and blue, have a more calming effect and recede into the background. Consider using warm colors for positive messages (for example, "Profits are up") and cool colors for more negative messages (for example, "We're losing money").

DESIGN FOR CONTRAST If you're designing computer-generated slides, consider using dark type on a light-colored background. Research suggests that audiences don't like white text on a dark background.[33] Black, dark blue, or dark red type stands out crisply from a white, light gray, or light yellow background. The use of purple, for example, against a blue background is not effective; both colors are dark, so the purple letters don't stand out. Yellow against a blue background is more effective because the colors are contrasting yet harmonious. To unify your presentation, consider using the same color for all of your backgrounds and then varying the complementary colors you use for the text. Two different colors of text on one background color are usually sufficient. But be cautions about using green and red together; the combination is difficult to read and people who are color-blind will not be able to distinguish between these two colors.

USE BLACK AND WHITE EFFECTIVELY If your budget or equipment limits you to using only black and white, you can still use contrast to create attractive graphics. By choosing contrasting typefaces, spacing text widely or more compactly, using larger or smaller text, and using both bold and lightface text, you can create differences in textual emphasis.

USE A STORYBOARD TO PLAN YOUR MESSAGE A *storyboard* is a technique for planning how words and pictures will be used in a presentation. Experienced speakers sometimes use storyboards as a substitute for a detailed formal outline when they are preparing a presentation.

To use this method, first, as when planning any message, think about your audience. Then, with your audience in mind, make a list of the main points you'd like to cover. Once you have decided on your main points, you can begin creating your storyboards. For each main point, divide a piece of paper or flip chart page down the middle, creating two columns. In the left column, write notes about what you'll be saying. Include the main idea and notes about supporting points you plan to make.

In the right column, sketch the visuals you plan to include. Don't worry if you are not a skilled artist. These sketches are simply placeholders for the finished visual aid that you will prepare later on a computer. When you draft your sketches, be conservative about the number of visuals you plan to use. Select key supporting points to be illustrated with a few memorable words or images.

When you finish your storyboards, convert them into a more formal presentation outline. Use the storyboard and outline to guide you as you prepare your PowerPoint slides or whatever other form of visual you plan to use. Then practice with your outline and visuals to ensure that your visuals are large enough, that they communicate your key points, and that you talk about them as you show them.

#Technology and Communication @ Work

Going Mobile: Using Mobile Devices to Help You Present

Devices you may use primarily for entertainment or personal communication can also help you when you need to speak to a group. Consider these new ways of putting mobile technologies to work:

- **YOU CAN USE PUBLIC SPEAKING APPS TO HELP YOU PREPARE YOUR TALK.** Apps for your phone or tablet computer can help with nearly every step of preparing your talk, from apps that help manage apprehension to those that count—and reduce—vocalized pauses, such as "um" while you rehearse.
- **YOU CAN STORE AND DISPLAY YOUR SPEAKING NOTES.** You can use a specialized app to help you create an outline (or even one that turns your phone or tablet computer into a TelePrompter), or create your own notes.
- **YOU CAN CREATE YOUR PRESENTATION AIDS.** Slide-generating apps make it possible to create computer-generated presentation aids on your phone or tablet. As we've discussed in this chapter, the cameras built into phones and many tablets also make it possible for you to create your own photo and video presentation aids.
- **YOU CAN STORE AND DISPLAY YOUR PRESENTATION AIDS.** Devices such as MP3 players or iPods, designed for music storage and playback, can easily be connected to speakers and video screens to provide words and images to enhance your message, as can many phones and tablet computers. Devices enabled with Wi-Fi or cellular phone capabilities can allow you to connect to YouTube- and other Internet-based information to add visual and audio support to your message.

12.5.4: Using Computer-Generated Images

According to Microsoft, in the early twenty-first century, more than 500 million people use PowerPoint.[34] And it's not just PowerPoint software that is being used today. Prezi and Keynote are two additional software programs gaining in popularity.

Prezi is a software program that stores your images on an Internet "cloud" rather than on your own computer. Although Prezi has many of the same features as PowerPoint, it also lets you easily zoom in and out of an image in order to more easily adapt to your listeners.

Keynote is a software program developed by Apple that can also be used on PC computers. It works similarly to PowerPoint, but many users like its sleek and contemporary images.

Yet, according to audience surveys, there are a lot of bad PowerPoint presentations. The same is likely true for Prezi and Keynote. According to one survey of business professionals, these are the top five problems:

1. The speaker read the slides to us.
2. The text was too small.
3. There were full sentences instead of bullet points.
4. Poor use of color: Slides were hard to read.
5. There was annoying flying text or graphics (sometimes with annoying sound).[35]

The advantages of computer-generated slides are that they are relatively easy to use and add a professional look to a presentation. They also have the potential to create problems if used improperly. Computer images can distract from your verbal messages; listeners may be tempted to focus on the visual message and not hear your verbal message. If overused, computer images can turn a live speaking event into a canned media presentation that may lack immediacy. A presentation is powerful because it's live and happening now. Used poorly, computer-generated slides can make listeners assume the catatonic pose of watching TV rather than participating in a live presentation. Used effectively and appropriately, however, computer-generated slides can add to rather than detract from your presentation.[36]

USE WORDS SPARINGLY Research suggests that the best use of computer images is to present pictures, images, and other nontext information.[37] Don't clutter a slide with lots of text; use images to support your points. Using too many words on your slides tempts listeners to become readers instead of listeners. Using words sparingly on your slides keeps the cognitive and linguistic focus on you rather than on prepared words and text.

KEEP SIGHTS AND SOUNDS SIMPLE In most aspects of communication, simple is better. The purpose of a presentation aid is to support rather than to compete with your message. Resist the temptation to add sound effects. Cute sounds often lose their novelty after the first slide or two and can become irritating. *You* should be the soundtrack, not your computer.

APPROPRIATELY TIME THE DISPLAY OF YOUR SLIDES It's best to introduce a slide verbally before you show it. By talking about your slide first you let your audience know you are the master of the material rather than needing the slide as a prompt to speak. As one expert noted, "You don't want your audience thinking that if the electricity goes down, you would suddenly be at a loss for words."[38] What we're suggesting is that you *tell and show*, rather than *showing and telling*.[39]

REPEAT VISUAL ELEMENTS TO CREATE UNITY As mentioned in the discussion of visual rhetoric, you get a professional, polished look if you use a similar visual style for each of your images. Use a common visual element, such as a bullet or a symbol, at the beginning of each word or phrase on a list. Use common color schemes and spacing to give your visuals coherence. Also, avoid mixing fonts in the same presentation.

USE CLIP ART AND OTHER IMAGES Clip art consists of images that are in print form or stored in a computer file. Even if you did not excel in art class, you can easily incorporate these images into your visuals, as shown in Figure 12.6. But try to avoid using the cartoonish clip art that comes with popular software programs; most people have seen those same stick figures or graphics that come prepackaged with the software. Many original clip art graphics can be purchased on the Internet for a nominal fee. You can customize your slides by taking your own photos or, if you have the time and skill, using drawing or image manipulation software.

Figure 12.6: Clip Art Can Be Used to Illustrate Visuals

ALLOW PLENTY OF TIME TO PREPARE YOUR PRESENTATION AIDS Consider developing your slides as you are developing your message. Using the storyboarding method presented previously can help you integrate your visual message with your verbal message. Waiting until the last minute to develop your visuals can result in a sloppy, amateurish presentation that will detract from your credibility.

12.5.5: Using Presentation Aids

It's one thing to select a presentation aid and prepare it; it's quite another task to actually use your presentation aid in your talk. Just as there is an art to developing presentation aids, there is an art to using them. As you review the list of suggestions, you may think that some of them are fairly obvious (like not talking to your presentation aids). However, even some of the most seasoned presenters violate these tips and techniques.

REHEARSE WITH YOUR PRESENTATION AID The opening sentences of your sales presentation to the marketing team extolling the virtues of the new product should *not* be the first time you use your PowerPoint or Prezi slides. Practice with your presentation aids until you feel at ease with them.

MAKE EYE CONTACT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE, NOT WITH YOUR PRESENTATION AID Don't be tempted to talk to your presentation aid rather than to your audience. Your focus should remain on your audience. Of course, you will need to glance at your visual aid to make sure that it's the correct one and isn't upside down. But do *not* keep looking at your slide, chart, or poster; keep making eye contact with your audience.

TALK ABOUT YOUR PRESENTATION AID, DON'T JUST SHOW IT "Well, here are our production statistics for the second quarter," says Meredith. "Now let's move to the third quarter. And here are the fourth-quarter statistics." Don't do what Meredith just did—she simply projected information and data without explaining. Remember that a presentation is a talk, not just a slide show. Visual support performs the same function as verbal support. It helps you communicate an idea. Make sure that your audience knows what that idea is.[40]

DO NOT PASS OBJECTS AMONG MEMBERS OF YOUR AUDIENCE It's usually not a good idea to pass a small object or handout around from listener to listener while you are speaking. Your listeners will stop being listeners and will focus on the object that is coming their way instead of on your message. It may be best to let people observe your object after your talk. Or, if the audience is only two or three rows deep, you can hold up the object and move in close to audience members to show it while you maintain focus and control.

USE HANDOUTS EFFECTIVELY Audiences in many business and professional settings often expect to be looking at written material you've distributed while they are listening to your presentation. The problem is, however, that your listeners may focus on the written message instead of on your oral message. Consider these tips for using handouts:

Tips for Using Handouts

• Only distribute handouts during the presentation if your listeners must refer to the material while you're talking about it. If your listeners don't need to have the handout material while you speak, tell them you will distribute a summary of the key ideas at the end of your talk.
• If you see that your listeners are giving the written material more attention than they are giving you, tell them where in the handout you want them to focus. For example, you could say, "I see that many of you are interested in the third page of the report. I'll discuss those points in just a few moments. Let's look at the information on page one."
• Number the pages of your handout material so you can easily and quickly direct audience members to specific pages. You may even add numbers to paragraphs to help point your listeners to specific passages.
• By projecting the content of your handout on an a PowerPoint slide, you can nonverbally let your audience members know which page of the material they should be looking at.

TIME THE USE OF VISUALS TO CONTROL YOUR LISTENERS' ATTENTION. A skilled presenter knows when to show a supporting visual and when to put it away. It's typically not a wise idea to begin your speech with splashy, eye-popping graphs or charts while you are presenting your opening remarks. Your visuals would just compete with your verbal message. Time the display of your visuals to coincide with your discussion of the information contained in them:

- Remove your visual aids when you move to your next point.
- Have your computer-generated image already cued up and ready to display.
- If necessary, ask a colleague beforehand to help you change slides or transparencies; if you do ask someone to assist you, it's best to have a short rehearsal so that the presentation is professional and polished.

No matter what medium you plan to use, you should give your audience enough time to absorb what you place in front of their eyes and to listen carefully to your verbal message before asking them to shift their attention to another image.

Career Corner

Information is Not Communication

We are surrounded by a barrage of information. Technology makes it possible for us to swim in a sea of data, facts, and numbers, but being able to spew information is not the same as communicating with others. Communication is the ability to help others *make sense* of the information that surrounds them.

When seeking employment or a promotion, being able to *communicate* rather than merely provide information can help you achieve your career goals. If you are making a presentation that can land you an important job or contract, show that you can communicate by connecting information to the hearts and minds of your listeners and readers. When presenting facts and figures in presentation aids, handouts, or talks, make sure that you answer listeners' "So what?" question: *So what does this information have to do with me?* Use short stories, metaphors, and analogies, along with images, to make your point in a way to which your listener can relate.

Recap

Tips for Preparing and Using Presentation Aids

Preparing Presentation Aids

- Keep drawings simple and large.
- Be sure photographs are large enough to be seen easily.
- Limit the amount of information you put on a single chart or PowerPoint slide.
- Keep graphs simple and uncluttered.
- Use only brief audio and video clips.
- Be sure that any models you use are large enough to be seen easily.

Using Presentation Aids

- Rehearse with your presentation aids.
- Rehearse with people who will assist you with presentation aids.
- Have any needed equipment set up and ready to go before you speak.
- Maintain eye contact with your audience, not with your presentation aids.
- Explain your presentation aids.
- Time the display of your presentation aids to coincide with your discussion of them.
- Do not pass out objects, pictures, or other small items to your audience.
- Use handouts effectively.

Summary: Delivering Professional Presentations

12.1: Describe the four common delivery methods of communication ideas.

The four types of delivery are manuscript, memorized, impromptu, and extemporaneous speaking. In most business and professional settings, extemporaneous speaking—using an outline and speaking conversationally—is best.

12.2: Identify ways of maximizing presentation effectiveness.

- Look up: Maximize your eye contact with your listeners and don't look over their heads or bury your eyes in your notes.

- Move meaningfully: Use appropriate gestures, movement, and posture to reinforce key ideas in your presentation.
- Express emotions: Your facial expressions and your voice are the key ways of expressing your emotion to your listeners.
- Look good: If you're not sure about the dress code, ask others who know the audience expectations about what you should wear.
- Speak clearly: Use appropriate volume, inflection, and intensity.
- Speak up: Use a microphone appropriately when needed.

12.3: Describe tips a speaker should consider when addressing the media.

Consider toning down gestures. Dress for TV success. Monitor your facial expressions. Be brief. Choose words with care and style. Be familiar with the technology.

12.4: Recognize tips to make an effective question-and-answer session after the actual presentation.

Consider these suggestions: Be well prepared. Repeat or rephrase the question. Ask yourself the first question. Stay on message. Listen carefully and nonjudgmentally. Neutralize hostile questions.

12.5: Interpret the power of visual and auditory aids as supplements to the speech presentation.

Presentation aids include objects, models, people, drawings, photographs, maps, charts, graphs, video images, and audio.

In professional settings, the most ubiquitous method of displaying images (as well as sound) is through the use of computer-generated images made with PowerPoint, Prezi, or Keynote software.

or

SHARED WRITING: DELIVERING REMOTE PRESENTATIONS

After choosing a speech topic, identify a general purpose and develop a specific-purpose. What kind of supporting materials would clarify these main ideas and purposes, and why?

▶ A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post 0 characters | 140 minimum

Chapter 12 Quiz: Delivering Professional Presentations

Chapter 13

Informing, Persuading, and Making Special Presentations

Learning Objectives

13.1 Describe some of the strategies to enhance the effectiveness of a persuasive message

13.2 Describe how developing leadership skills are important to developing persuasion skills

13.3 Describe communication strategies for making special speaking presentations

When Andrea Jung joined Avon in 1993 as a consultant, the company was in big trouble. With more women in the daytime labor force, door-to-door cosmetic sales had become much more challenging than in the company's heyday during the mid twentieth century. The company's iconic slogan—"Ding dong, Avon calling"—was no longer a message for success.

Jung knew Avon could do better. She joined the company's marketing department in 1994 and, on the basis of her communication talents and sales instincts, rose to CEO in 1999.[1] As CEO, she reengineered Avon from top to bottom, establishing a trendy flagship store and spa on Fifth Avenue, thereby rejuvenating the brand and helping to shed its old-time image as a line of cosmetics that housewives bought in their homes. She also expanded the company's reach to untapped markets throughout the world and enhanced the sales force by upgrading the use of online sales tools.

Today, you can still purchase Avon products from individual sellers, but you also have many more buying options. Avon is now available in its own stylish boutiques, at other cosmetic stores around the globe, and online. Since Jung took over the company's leadership, the stock price has risen 165 percent. Avon was earning $4 billion per year when she became CEO; in 2013 it had grown to a $10 billion company.[2] To remind her of the importance of leadership and being number one, Jung has a pillow in her New York office that reads, "If you are not the lead dog, the view never changes."

Andrea Jung not only knows how to sell cosmetics. She also knows how to sell ideas that change the culture of a company. She is an excellent communicator. As we have emphasized throughout this book, leadership and communication are linked—two sides of the same coin. Jung was able to reinvent Avon by articulately expressing her vision to her executive colleagues. She also knows something about how to both present and persuade. Her application of the five principles for leadership was the prime factor in her success. She became aware of what needed to be done, communicated well both verbally and nonverbally, listened, and appropriately adapted her message to transform a company. When persuading others, it's especially vital that you adapt or customize your message to the listener.

Leading Questions

1. Andrea Jung is a good salesperson. She first had to sell her new colleagues on the idea that Avon needed a makeover before company salespersons could sell more Avon products. What are the characteristics of a good salesperson?
2. Women have made dramatic gains in serving as corporate CEOs and in other top leadership roles, yet they continue to face challenges. What factors contribute to these challenges?
3. What needs to change for more women to serve in top leadership roles?

Your general communication purpose influences how you present your message. In this chapter, we discuss communicating for the two most common business purposes: to inform and to persuade. In addition to informing and persuading, there are special occasions when you will be called on to say a few remarks. These special occasions can be informative, such as when you introduce someone before he or she speaks; more often they will be ceremonial, such as when you are presenting or receiving an award, giving a toast, or giving a short speech of thanks or congratulations. Throughout the discussion of informative, persuasive, and special occasion speaking, keep in mind the five communication principles for leadership.

13.1: Informing Others

13.1 Describe some of the strategies to enhance the effectiveness of a persuasive message.

Think of the best teacher you ever had. He or she was probably a great lecturer with a special talent for making information clear, interesting, and memorable. As a leader, you no doubt will be called on in your professional life to present information to others. To *inform* is to share information with others to enhance their knowledge or understanding of the information, concepts, or ideas presented. When you inform someone, you assume the role of a teacher by defining, illustrating, clarifying, or elaborating on a topic. In a professional context, briefs, reports, lectures, and training presentations are typical formats for informing others.

Skilled leaders are also expected to be skilled educators. However, speaking to inform others can be a challenging task. The information you communicate to someone else is rarely, if ever, understood exactly as you intend it: Simply presenting information does not mean that communication has occurred. Communication happens when listeners make sense of the information they receive. What do effective leaders/educators do to communicate information to others? They simplify so listeners understand the message, pace the information to avoid information overload, directly address the needs and problems of their listeners, and reinforce their messages nonverbally or visually.

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Sometimes You Need to Inform and Sometimes You Need to Persuade

Knowing whether your audience expects you to inform or persuade is important. For example, Roman Stanek, CEO of GoodData, doesn't like it when people just bring him information. He wants to know what the pieces of information mean; he is looking for the "So what?" of what he hears. Stanek also wants to be persuaded, not just informed: "A manager is not a messenger. I don't like my managers essentially talking to their people without being able to express their opinion and position what they're discussing."[3]

Of course, not everyone wants a persuasive message from you. It's important to know your audience, even if it's an audience of one (especially if that single audience member is your boss) to determine whether you are expected to provide that audience with information or to also take a position on the information that you share, in order to persuade.

Whether informing or persuading, be aware that some audiences don't like or have time to process long messages. Stanek, for example, candidly admits, "People know that I hate long e-mails and that all of the e-mails they send me, with a few exceptions, should always be short enough to fit on the screen of my iPhone. If you send me an e-mail, and I need to scroll down to read it all, you've lost me."

Again, not all of the people you communicate with will like bite-size messages; some will want more detail. What's important is to remember that some people have very specific expectations about the messages they receive. As we've said throughout this book, assess your audience to determine the goal of your message as well as the best format for communicating it.

USE SIMPLE IDEAS Mark Twain told a story about a Missouri farmer who ran for the state legislature five times but lost each election. He didn't lose because he didn't practice his campaign speeches; he gave his speeches to his cows each morning. The problem was, according to Twain, that he used "high-falutin'" words when he should have used shorter terms. He described his audience as "my enlightened constituents" and suggested he was trying to "obtain a mandate" for his "legislative mission." During one of his morning rehearsals, one of his cows knocked out his front teeth in such a way that the farmer could only use one-syllable words. The result: He won every election in his career from that day on.[4]

When you inform others, your job is to get your ideas across to your audience, *not* to see how much information you can cram in. The simpler your ideas and phrases, the greater the chance that your audience will remember them. We don't mean you should talk down to your audience. Listeners can sense a speaker's superior know-it-all attitude, and they won't like it. Simplify your message, but don't be condescending.

PACE INFORMATION FLOW Organize your talk so that you present an even stream of information, rather than bunch up a number of significant details around one point. If you present too much new information too quickly, you may overwhelm your audience, and your listeners' ability to understand may falter.

USE ADULT LEARNING STRATEGIES If your audience consists of adult listeners, you will need to ensure that you deliver your message in the way that adults learn best. *Adult learners* prefer:[5]

- To be given information they can use immediately
- To be actively involved in the learning process
- To connect their life experiences with the new information they learn
- To know how the new information is relevant to their busy lives
- To know how the information will solve a problem
- To receive information that is relevant to their needs

Most people who work in business have in-baskets on their desks to hold work that must be done. Similarly, each of us has a kind of mental in-basket: an agenda of what we want or need from a presentation. Remember the characteristics of adult learners and the importance of adapting your message to others. You will hold your audience's interest, and also have more success in informing them, if you tailor your information to address what is in your audience's literal or metaphorical in-basket.

REINFORCE IDEAS NONVERBALLY Gestures serve the purpose of accenting or emphasizing key phrases, as italics do in written communication. A well-placed pause can emphasize or reinforce a point. Raising or lowering your voice can also reinforce a key idea. Movement can help emphasize major ideas. Moving from behind the lectern to tell a personal anecdote can signal that something special and more intimate is about to be said. Finally, photos, images, charts, and other visual information may be just what your listeners need to better understand your key ideas, rather than you piling on more words.

13.1.1: Presenting Briefings

A *briefing* (or a *brief*), as you might guess from the name, is a short talk that provides information to an audience. A briefing can focus on what has happened in the past, what is currently happening on a given project or topic, or what may happen in the future. The military, public safety organizations (police departments, security departments), medical organizations, and other organizations that need clear, short summaries of information almost exclusively rely on briefings to ensure the exchange of information.

Briefings are short (from 5 to 15 minutes), so they typically don't have an extended or formal introduction. You should still be mindful of catching your listeners' attention, but not with a lengthy story or illustration. Just get to your points after a very short overview. Listeners expect a brief to be quick.

Because several briefs are often presented one after another, the first brief may provide a longer introduction to introduce the briefings that will follow. For example, if you're giving a briefing about the income-and-loss statement for the past quarter and you're part of a four-person team, each of whom is sharing information, provide a short overview of your message, present your key ideas, summarize them, link to what the next person will say, and sit down.

The organizational pattern for briefings is usually topical or chronological. It's still appropriate to use transition phases and signposts ("I have three points to make. First. . . ."), but the transitional phrases are shorter and less pronounced than in a more extended informative presentation.

Some briefings can be quite formal, and listeners may expect a no-nonsense delivery style with little use of humor and lots of information. In other organizational cultures, however, a briefing is expected to be informal and casual. It's important to be aware of your audience as you make decisions on how to customize your briefing content.

13.1.2: Presenting Reports

A *report* is a summary of what has been accomplished in the past or an update on a project. In contrast to a briefing, a report is often a longer, more detailed summary of a past, present, or future event. For example, a briefing could provide a summary of reactions to the new employee-training program; a report on the same topic could include information about the rationale for the new training, a summary of the training content, and a review of methods of assessing the training. Briefs are brief; reports are longer. Some organizations, however, use the terms *report* and *briefing* interchangeably. You may be asked to report on how to increase sales in the next quarter or to present the findings of a market survey your division has conducted in the past several months. Whatever the specific objective of the report, the general purpose is to communicate information or policy; some reports include a persuasive appeal to try some new course of action. Consider the following when preparing a report:

- **ADAPT TO YOUR AUDIENCE.** When you are presenting your report, keep in mind that your audience is there to hear you address a particular need or problem. Begin by briefly acknowledging that situation.
- **PRESENT CONCLUSIONS, THEN EXPLAIN HOW YOU REACHED THEM.** If you are reporting on a particular project or study, first discuss what your research group decided to do to explore the problem. Then explain how you gathered the information.
- **END A REPORT WITH SOLUTIONS OR IDENTIFY WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.** Most listeners want to know what the bottom line is. The most important part of some reports is a summary of new courses of action or changes in present policy. When your report proposes changes, tell your audience what's in it for them—what benefits will accrue to them directly as a result of the new proposal. One business consultant suggests this report technique:

  > Tune your audience into radio station WIIFM—What's In It For Me. Tell your listeners where the benefits are for them, and they'll listen to everything you have to say.[6]

In addition to listening to a report, audience members usually expect to receive a hard copy or email version of the report, or at least a summary of the report's key conclusions.

13.1.3: Presenting Public Relations Presentations

In a *public relations presentation*, the speaker is specifically providing information to promote a positive public image for the person or organization the speaker is representing. People who work for professional associations, hospitals, utility companies, government agencies, universities, religious organizations, or charitable institutions, as well as those employed by commercial enterprises, are often called on to speak to an audience about what their organization does or about a special project the organization has taken on. Although the purpose of many public relations (PR) speeches is to present information, there is often a persuasive edge to public relations messages, too. The speaker may be trying to maintain a positive general impression of the organization, or, because a particular program or situation has raised some questions or concerns, to convince listeners of the positive features of the organization.

Here are some suggestions for developing PR presentations:

- **NOTE HOW THE COMPANY, ORGANIZATION, OR POLICY HAS SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS FOR THE LISTENER.** Often a PR speech describes the virtues of the policy or program the speaker is promoting.
- **IF A SPECIFIC PROBLEM OR ISSUE HAS PROMPTED THE SPEECH, IDENTIFY AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONCERNS.** Then go on to explain how the company or organization can meet the need, solve the problem, or why there really is no problem.
- **ANTICIPATE CRITICISM AND OBJECTIONS.** Especially if the primary purpose of your speech is to change opinions or address a controversial issue, be sure to acknowledge the listeners' points of view. Then, counter potential problems or objections with your explanation of how the company or organization has carefully worked through potential pitfalls and drawbacks. Demonstrate that what may look like a problem actually can easily be addressed.

13.1.4: Presenting Training Sessions

Business and professional organizations invest billions of dollars each year in training their employees.[7] *Training* is a special type of informative speaking through which the trainer seeks to develop specific skills in listeners to help them perform a specific job or task more effectively.[8] Many organizations have extensive training departments whose function is to orient new employees to the organization and teach specific job skills, including communication skills. The goal of a training session is for listeners not only to be able to recall information but also to perform specific tasks. Compared to traditional classroom education, training focuses more on behavioral learning, whereas education emphasizes the cognitive domain. Broadly speaking, training emphasizes doing, and education emphasizes knowing. Since the goal of training is to implement behavior change, training presentations also seek to persuade or motivate listeners to perform the skill or task being taught as well as to provide them with information.

Presenting training is similar to any presentation; it's essential to focus on the needs, interests, and backgrounds of your listeners. Training that does not address a trainee's needs or specific job functions is not effective training. Because the primary purpose of any training program is to respond to the learning needs of the trainee, Figure 13.1 presents a *needs-centered model*.

Figure 13.1: A Needs-Centered Training Model

Drawing on adult learning theory, a trainer should view himself or herself less as a lecturer and more as a facilitator. Adult learners bring their own experiences to the training session; they want to focus on real problems that are in their literal or metaphorical in-baskets or on their to do lists. A trainer follows the steps in Figure 13.1 in order to draw on those experiences and equip trainees to address problems.

ANALYZE ORGANIZATIONAL AND TRAINEE NEEDS You may notice that Figure 13.1 closely resembles the audience-centered model of presentations that we introduced in Chapter 11. At the center of the model in Figure 13.1—and the first and crucial ongoing step in any training—is the process of identifying the needs of the organization and those of the specific trainees who will attend the training session: the audience. *Every other aspect of designing and delivering a training presentation depends on the needs of the trainees.*

The process of identifying trainee needs is quite similar to analyzing your audience when delivering a presentation. For example, many trainers determine their audience's needs by asking them—using surveys, questionnaires, or interviews—what they need. In addition to analyzing the needs of individuals, it's also important to consider the needs of the organization. What does it need employees or volunteers to do?

ANALYZE THE TRAINING TASK Viewing the model in Figure 13.1 as a clock, begin at the top and work your way around clockwise to explore the steps of designing and delivering a training presentation. After you've figured out what trainees need (for example, skill in listening or conflict management), an early critical step in designing a training program is to thoroughly analyze the specific task you want the trainees to perform. You conduct a task analysis. A *task analysis* is a detailed, step-by-step description of precisely what a trainee should do and know in order to perform a particular skill. As the trainer, if you are going to teach someone how to prepare and deliver a sales presentation, you first need to know what the steps in that process are before you teach them to others. Most likely, you will have only limited time to teach a skill, so you may have to focus only on the most critical steps. A task analysis lets you discover what the essential elements of a task are. (Our needs-centered training model is itself a simplified task analysis of how to train someone. Each piece of the model represents an essential step in the process.)

DEVELOP TRAINING OBJECTIVES After you have figured out the steps in teaching a particular skill, it's important to develop objectives or learning outcomes that you want your trainees to achieve. It's important to specify the precise behavior you want trainees to perform at the end of the training. We begin each chapter in this book with a list of learning objectives. Reviewing those objectives will give you an idea of the format and style for training objectives. Training objectives are also similar to the specific purpose statement for a presentation, discussed in Chapter 11. Training objectives specify what you want trainees to be able to do following the training presentation.

ORGANIZE TRAINING CONTENT Once you have your precise training objectives in hand, you can begin drafting the information that trainees need to know and describing in more detail the behaviors that they will be expected to perform. The most typical organizational patterns for training content include (1) chronological (a step-by-step sequence of what someone does first, second, and so on), (2) by complexity (from simplest or easiest to learn to more complex or more detailed information), and (3) topical (identifying the natural divisions in a topic).

DETERMINE TRAINING METHODS To train someone, you don't just talk to them. Adult learners are not interested in hearing a three- or four-hour lecture; that's not good training. So you'll need to develop effective methods of presenting information to your trainees. You may decide that, rather than presenting a lecture, it would be better to have trainees participate in role-playing situations, discuss a case study, or brainstorm solutions to a problem that you pose. A typical training session may involve a mix of methods, including the following:

Training Session Methods

A trainer's job is to facilitate rather than to lecture. Demonstrating a skill and then having trainees practice performing it is much more effective than merely describing the skill.

SELECT TRAINING RESOURCES Perhaps you've discovered an excellent video that masterfully illustrates the skill you want to teach in the training session. Or, maybe you've decided to use a small-group method and you want trainees to respond to discussion questions. Whether it's a video, a list of discussion questions, PowerPoint presentation slides, or some other type of resource, you'll need to decide what materials you'll need to prepare for the training presentation.

COMPLETE TRAINING PLANS After you've developed your objectives and settled on the content of the training, the methods you will use to present your message, and the resources you need, it is important to develop a comprehensive written plan that describes how you will present your session: a training plan (sometimes called a *lesson plan* in educational settings). There are many different formats. Some training plans are simply detailed outlines of the training content and methods. Other plans offer a complete narrative transcript of the training lesson. Most training plans include a description of the objectives, methods, training content, and training resources needed, along with an estimate of how much time each part of the training will take.

DELIVER TRAINING After developing a well-crafted plan, you are now ready to bring the training presentation to life. You deliver your training not only by presenting lectures, videos, and activities but also by asking good questions to facilitate class discussion. An effective training presentation should be much more interactive than a speech, although the elements of effective speech delivery (such as eye contact, good posture, effective gestures, and varied vocal inflection) are essential when training others.

ASSESS THE TRAINING PROCESS When the training session is over, a trainer's job is not complete. Effective trainers evaluate how their training was received (Did trainees like it?) and even more important, whether trainees learned what they needed to. The ultimate test of a training session is whether trainees can use the new skills on the job. Did the training make a difference?

Each piece of the needs-centered model of training reflects an essential element of what a trainer does. Trainers first and foremost focus on the needs of learners and then carefully develop a training program that meets those needs. Training others well involves more than just talking to them. Effective training develops a specific skill by having trainees practice and receive feedback to master the skills being taught.

#Technology and Communication @ Work

Communicating via the Web

Contemporary technology is making it easier to share messages with others who are separated in space and time. Here are a few of the technology-based methods of connecting with an audience that you are likely to use an alternative to face-to-face business presentations:[9]

- *Web. 2.0.* Web 2.0 is a general term that describes the second generation of presenting and gathering information on the Internet. Web 1.0, the first generation of Internet technology, was "read-focused": The primary function was to present messages that were only designed to be read by someone. Web. 2.0 is a "read-write" technology. In addition to sharing information, the receiver of the message can easily respond by writing back to the message sender. Facebook is an example of a read-write Web 2.0 technology that permits communicators to interact with one another with seamless ease, including sharing photos, videos, web links, and instant-messaging capabilities.

- *Wikis*. Wikis are collaborative web-based sites that permit many people to share information with one another. The distinctive feature of wikis is the open-editing function that permits all users to develop a resource collaboratively. Well-known sites, such as the encyclopedia Wikepedia, the travel guide Wiki Travel, and the how-to manuals WikiHow, are places on the web where you not only can share information with others but also can contribute to the information presented. Of course, when retrieving information from a Wiki source, consider the source. Although evidence indicates that the self-policing of the content helps keep the information current and accurate, there is always the potential for misinformation to be posted on a wiki site.
- *Internet Video.* If you've used Skype, FaceTime, or a host of other Internet video software programs and apps, you know how easy it is to hold a video conversation with someone who is miles or continents away from you. The software or apps you need are often free, and the video cameras and microphones required for video conversations come built-in to most computers and all smart phones.
- *Podcast.* A podcast is a radio broadcast that uses the technology of an iPod through iTunes to share a message with others. Originally, podcasts were audio messages, but through v*odcasts* it's now relatively easy to share video and audio messages. You don't need to travel to India, China, or even San Francisco; you can present your report to your superiors with a podcast or vodcast.

Regardless of the technology used to solve problems and share information, it's *people* that make communication possible, an important point to keep in mind in all your workplace interactions. Malcolm Gladwell, in noting the importance of the human element in communicating with others, said this:

> Technology does not and cannot change the underlying dynamics of "human" problems: it doesn't make it easier to love or motivate or dream or convince.[10]

13.2: Persuading Others

13.2 Describe how developing leadership skills are important to developing persuasion skills.

Peruse the management and leadership section of Amazon or any brick-and-mortar bookstore, and you'll find books about how to influence others. The best-selling business management book of all time is Dale Carnegie's classic *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. At the heart of influencing others is being able to persuade them. To *persuade* someone is to change or reinforce the person's attitudes (likes and dislikes), beliefs (what is perceived to be true or false), values (what is considered good or bad), or behavior. As we discuss later in this chapter, sales presentation is a type of persuasive presentation you'll commonly encounter in a professional setting.

Informative and persuasive speaking are related processes. When you interview for a job, you're doing more than simply presenting information about yourself; you're making a persuasive presentation on why the organization should hire you. A key difference is that in a persuasive presentation, you want the listener to do more than merely remember what you say; you want to change or reinforce what the listener likes, believes, values, or does.

We've noted that to lead is to influence, so being able to persuade others is a vital leadership skill. Think of any great leader, in business or politics, past or present, and undoubtedly you'll be thinking of someone who possessed effective persuasion skills. Not all leaders use the same persuasive methods. Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Mahatma Gandhi led through promoting nonviolent means of achieving their goals. In leading the United States out of the Depression and through World War II, Franklin Roosevelt used his skill as a communicator as well as his behind-the-scenes power and influence to achieve his goals. Warren Buffett and Jeff Bezos are examples of business leaders who are sometimes controversial but also inspire and motivate others.

To develop strong leadership and persuasive skills, you need first to understand principles of persuasion and then learn specific strategies for persuading others.

13.2.1: Principles of Persuasion

How does persuasion work? What motivates people to do things that they wouldn't do unless they are persuaded to do them? Let's look at four possible explanations.

PEOPLE RESPOND TO RESOLVE DISSONANCE When you are confronted with information that is inconsistent with your current thinking or feelings, you experience a kind of psychological discomfort called *cognitive dissonance*. You can be persuaded by being convinced that you have a problem and then pointed in a direction that will solve your problem. For example, if you have ever driven an automobile after consuming a drink or two, then seen a public service announcement from Mothers Against Drunk Driving documenting how even two drinks can contribute to serious traffic accidents, you've likely experienced cognitive dissonance. The incompatibility of your behavior and your knowledge is likely to make you feel uncomfortable. And your discomfort may prompt you to change your thoughts, likes or dislikes, feelings, or behavior so that you can restore your comfort level or sense of balance—in this case, by not driving after drinking.

Skilled persuasive speakers know that creating dissonance and then offering their listeners a way to restore balance is an effective persuasive strategy.

Communication Ethics @ Work

Is Manufacturing Dissonance Ethical?

Advertisers on TV, the Internet, and billboards frequently use the principle of cognitive dissonance to entice you to buy their products. They try to make you feel inferior, unglamorous, or unpopular if you don't use their product. Is it ethical to "manufacture" problems or dissonance to get you to buy something or do something? Is it appropriate and ethical to make listeners feel harm will come to them by trying to convince them they have problems of which they may not be aware?

WRITING PROMPT

Research also documents that fear appeals are effective in motivating people to take action. But is it ethical to create fear and panic by arousing listener's emotions by threatening them.

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

PEOPLE RESPOND TO MEET NEEDS Besides creating cognitive dissonance, effective persuaders attempt to identify your needs and then convince you that they can meet those needs. For example, executives of a manufacturing company may observe people moving out of your town in search of jobs elsewhere. The manufacturing company's executives can see the town's need for jobs and can craft a message explaining to the town council how the company will meet the need by expanding its factory and persuading the council members to offer tax incentives for the factory expansion. As a speaker, the better you understand what your listeners need, the better you can adapt to them and the greater the chances that you can persuade them to change an attitude, belief, or value or get them to take some action.

Abraham Maslow developed the classic theory that outlines basic human needs.[11] If you've taken a psychology course, you have undoubtedly encountered this theory, which has important applications to persuasion. Maslow suggests that all human behavior is motivated by a *hierarchy of needs*.

Maslow's Five Levels

Although research does not completely support the notion that humans have a fixed hierarchy of needs (as Maslow originally thought), the theory does serve as a useful way of classifying basic human needs. Figure 13.2 illustrates Maslow's five levels of needs, with the most basic at the bottom.

Figure 13.2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

One practical application is to do everything in your power to ensure that your audience's physiological needs are met. For example, if your listeners are sweating and fanning themselves, they are unlikely to be very interested in listening to your sales presentation. If you can turn on air conditioning or fans, you will have a greater chance of successfully making a sale. Another way in which you can apply the need hierarchy is to appeal to an audience's higher-order needs. The U.S. Army once used the recruiting slogan "Be all that you can be" to tap into the need for self-actualization, or achievement of one's highest potential.

PEOPLE RESPOND TO FEAR MESSAGES Fear works. One of the oldest ways to convince people to change their minds or their behavior is by scaring them into compliance. The appeal to fear often takes the form of an if-then statement: *If* you don't do X, *then* awful things will happen to you. "If you don't buy this insurance policy, then your loved ones may not be able to pay the mortgage and they may be homeless." "If you don't wear a seat belt, then you are more likely to die in an automobile accident." "If you don't support the development of a new hospital in our community, lives could be lost if we have to travel to the next county for medical attention." A variety of research studies support the following principles regarding the use of fear as a motivator.[12]

- A strong threat to a family member or someone whom members of the audience care about will often be more successful than a fear appeal directed at the audience members themselves.
- The more respected the speaker, the greater the likelihood that the appeal to fear will work.
- Fear appeals are more successful if you convince your audience that the threat is real and will affect them unless they take action.

PEOPLE RESPOND TO POSITIVE MESSAGES A TV commercial for a "big box" department store pledges, "For every dollar you spend in our store, we will return 5 percent to the public schools in your community; your students will have new computers to help them learn." A candidate for chair of the board of directors asserts, "If you support me for board chair, I can assure you our stock price and sales will increase." We've all encountered these kinds of positive appeals. Politicians, salespeople, and most successful business and professional persuaders know that one way to change or reinforce your attitudes, beliefs, values, or behavior is to use a positive motivational appeal. Positive motivational appeals are verbal messages promising that good things will happen if the speaker's advice is followed. The key to using positive motivational appeals is to know what your listeners value. Most people value a comfortable, prosperous life; stimulating, exciting activity; a sense of accomplishment; world peace; and overall happiness and contentment. In a persuasive speech, you can motivate your listeners to respond to your message by describing what positive things will happen to them if they follow your advice.

13.2.2: Strategies for Persuading

Greek philosopher and scholar Aristotle said that rhetoric is the process of discovering the available means of persuasion.[13] What are those available means? Aristotle singled out three primary strategies: (1) emphasize the credibility or ethical character of a speaker, which he called *ethos*; (2) use logical arguments, or *logos*; and (3) use emotional appeals, or *pathos*, to move an audience. The following strategies for developing your credibility as a speaker, and using logic, evidence, and emotion to persuade and motivate listeners are based on Aristotle's three strategies and bolstered by contemporary research. We'll also revisit some of our strategies of message organization and discuss how to adapt ideas to people and people to ideas.

EFFECTIVELY ESTABLISH YOUR CREDIBILITY If you were going to buy a new computer, to whom would you turn for advice? Perhaps you would consult your brother, the computer geek, or your roommate, the computer science major. Or you might seek advice from *Consumer Reports*, the monthly publication of studies of various consumer products. In other words, you would turn to a source you consider knowledgeable, competent, and trustworthy—a source you think is credible.

Credibility is a listener's perception of a speaker's competence, trustworthiness, and dynamism. Remember that your listeners, not you, determine whether you have credibility. It's important to be perceived as credible when presenting any message, but especially critical when trying to persuade someone. The more credibility you have, the more likely it is that your listeners will believe you, trust you, and like you.

How do you establish your credibility? It's a centuries-old question. Aristotle thought public speakers should be ethical, possess good character, display common sense, and be concerned for the well-being of their audience. Quintilian, a Roman teacher of public speaking, agreed, advising that a speaker should be "a good person speaking well." Modern research has generally supported these ancient speculations about the elements that enhance a speaker's credibility.

Credibility is not a single factor but consists of multiple elements. Your goal is to be perceived as highly credible on each element of credibility when you speak. Ideally, you should be perceived as competent, trustworthy, and dynamic.

- *Competence* is the perception that a person is skilled, knowledgeable, and informed about the subject he or she is discussing. You will be more persuasive if you can convince your listeners you know something about your topic. How? You can use verbal messages effectively by talking about relevant personal experience with the topic. If you have lived in a high-rise condominium, you'll have more credibility as a high-rise condo salesperson than someone who has only lived in a ranch-style house. You can also cite evidence to support your ideas. Even if you have not lived in a high-rise condo yourself, you can be prepared with information about the advantages of apartment living.
- *Trustworthiness* is a second element of credibility. While delivering a speech, you need to convey honesty and sincerity to your audience. You can't do this simply by saying "Trust me." You have to earn trust. You can do so by demonstrating that you are interested in and experienced with your topic. Again, speaking from personal experience makes you seem a more trustworthy speaker. Conversely, having something to gain by persuading your audience may make you suspect in their eyes.

That's why salespersons and politicians often lack credibility. If you do what they say, they will clearly benefit from their sales commissions or political influence.

- *Dynamism*, or energy, is the third element of credibility. Dynamism is often projected through delivery. Applying the communication principle of effectively using and understanding nonverbal messages, a speaker who maintains eye contact, has enthusiastic vocal inflection, and moves and gestures purposefully is likely to be seen as dynamic. *Charisma* is a form of dynamism. A charismatic speaker possesses charm, talent, magnetism, and other qualities that make the person attractive and energetic. Former General Electric CEO Jack Welch, well-known talk-show host Oprah Winfrey, and motivational speaker Anthony Robbins are considered to be charismatic speakers by many people.

The credibility of a speaker, such as well-known soccer star David Beckham—here launching "Four Codes of Football" for Adidas—increases the chances that listeners will be persuaded or motivated to do or buy something or to change a behavior.

EFFECTIVELY AND ETHICALLY USE EVIDENCE AND REASONING In addition to being considered a credible speaker, you will gain influence with your audience if you can effectively use logically structured arguments supported with evidence. The goal is to provide logical proof for your arguments. *Proof* consists of both evidence and the conclusions you draw from it; *evidence* is the illustrations, definitions, statistics, and opinions that are your supporting material. *Reasoning* is the process of drawing conclusions from your evidence. There are three major ways to draw logical conclusions: inductively, deductively, and causally.

Reasoning that arrives at a general conclusion from specific instances or examples is known as *inductive reasoning*. You reason inductively when you claim that a conclusion is probably true because of specific evidence. For example, if you were giving a sales pitch to convince your customer that Hondas are reliable cars, you might use inductive reasoning to make your point. You have a 2006 Honda Civic that has 140,000 miles on it and has required little repair other than routine maintenance. Your brother has a Honda Accord and has driven it twice as long as any other car he has ever owned. Your friend just returned from a 3,000-mile road trip in her Honda Odyssey minivan, which performed beautifully. Based on these specific examples, you ask your listener to agree with your general conclusion: Hondas are reliable cars.

Reasoning by analogy is a special type of inductive reasoning. An analogy demonstrates how an unfamiliar idea, thing, or situation is similar to something the audience already understands. Analogy is not only a type of supporting material; it can also be used to reason inductively. For example, you might reason, "Even though we're a small business, we should start a retirement plan for our company. If we don't, we could lose our top employees. Our top competitor started a new 401(K) retirement plan for her employees and she's had much less employee turnover." The key to reasoning by analogy is to make sure that the two things you are comparing (your company and your competitor's company) are similar so that your argument is a sound one.

Reasoning from a general statement or principle to reach a specific conclusion is called *deductive reasoning*. Deductive reasoning can be structured as a *syllogism*, a three-part argument that has a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. In attempting to convince the marketing department at a car dealership to advertise on television, you might offer this syllogism:

> MAJOR PREMISE: All of the top-selling automobile dealers in our county advertise on television.
>
> MINOR PREMISE: Your automobile dealership is in this county.
>
> CONCLUSION: Your automobile dealership should advertise on television.

If you use deductive reasoning correctly, your conclusion is certain, rather than probable as it is with inductive reasoning. To make sure your conclusion is certain, your major and minor premises must both be true. If you can prove that all top-selling auto dealers advertise on TV, and if it is true that those that advertise sell more cars, then your conclusion will be sound.

You use *causal reasoning* when you relate two or more events in such a way as to conclude that one or more of the events caused the others. For example, you might argue that public inoculation programs during the twentieth century eradicated smallpox.

As noted when we discussed cause and effect as a persuasive organizational strategy, there are two ways to structure a causal argument. One is by reasoning from cause to effect, predicting a result from a known fact. You know that you have had an inch of rain over the last few days, so you predict that the aquifer level will rise. The inch of rain is the cause; the rising aquifer is the effect. The other way to structure an argument is by reasoning from a known effect to the cause. National Transportation Safety Board accident investigators reason from effect to cause when they reconstruct airplane wreckage to find clues to the cause of an air disaster.

Recap

Inductive, Deductive, and Causal Reasoning

Type of Reasoning	Reasoning Begins With	Reasoning Ends With	Conclusion is	Example
Inductive	specific examples	a general conclusion	probable	Dell and IBM computers are all reliable. Therefore, PCs are reliable.
Deductive	a general statement	a specific conclusion	certain	All financial officers at this company have advanced degrees. Tom Bryson is the chief financial officer at this company. Therefore, Tom Bryson has an advanced degree.
Causal	something known	a speculation about causes or effects of what is known	likely	The number of people with undergraduate degrees has risen steadily since 1960. This increasing number has caused a glut in the job market for people with degrees.

Trying to establish a causal link where none exists is one type of **logical fallacy**. Unfortunately, not all people who try to persuade you will use sound evidence and reasoning. Some will try to develop arguments in ways that are irrelevant or inappropriate. To be a better informed listener, as well as a more ethical persuasive speaker, you should be aware of the common logical fallacies described in Table 13.1.

Table 13.1: Reasoning Fallacies

Fallacy	Explanation	Example
Causal Fallacy An inappropriate or inaccurate cause-and-effect connection between two things or events.	There is no logical or causal connection between the annexation of a subdivision and the days of sunshine.	If we annex the new subdivision into our city, then we are likely to have more days of sunshine.
Bandwagon Fallacy The argument that because everyone believes something or does something, the belief or behavior must be valid, accurate, or effective.	Saying "everybody knows" is a fallacious attempt to suggest that because everyone agrees, others should "jump on the bandwagon" and also agree.	Everybody knows this product is defective.
Either-Or Fallacy The oversimplification of an issue into a choice between only two outcomes or possibilities.	There are more than two options for solving the problem. For example, less expensive portable classrooms can be purchased without a bond election.	Because of the overcrowding at our schools, either we pass the school bond to build new schools or we'll have to bus our students to another school district.
Hasty Generalization Reaching a conclusion from too little evidence or nonexistent evidence.	One example does not provide enough evidence to reach a sweeping general conclusion that Mega-Low Mart is trying to cheat customers. It could simply have been an isolated error.	Because I didn't receive the correct change when I made my purchase at Mega-Low Mart, this is evidence that Mega-Low Mart is trying to cheat their customers.
Personal Attack Attacking the personal characteristics of someone connected with an idea, rather than addressing the idea itself.	The idea may be a sound one. Simply attacking the person without critiquing the idea proposed does not address the proposal itself.	Janice's idea that we decrease property taxes is a crazy idea because Janice never had a good idea in her life.
Red Herring Using irrelevant facts or arguments to distract the listener from the issue under discussion.	The representative is trying to use the colleague's indiscretion to distract questioners from the issue of funds misuse, rather than address it directly.	A member of Congress who is attacked for inappropriately using funds responds by talking about the sexual indiscretion of a colleague.
Appeal to Misplaced Authority Using someone without the appropriate credentials or expertise to endorse an idea or product.	Simply because a well-known athlete endorses a breakfast cereal does not prove the cereal is good, healthy, or tasty.	Because superstar Bart McCoy likes this breakfast cereal, you will like it too.

Hide All Cells Show All Cells

USE EMOTION EFFECTIVELY AND ETHICALLY TO PERSUADE People often make decisions based not on logic, but on emotion.[14] Advertisers know this. Think of the soft-drink commercials you see on television. There is little rational reason that people should spend any part of their food budget on soft drinks; they are "empty calories." So soft-drink advertisers turn instead to emotional appeals, striving to connect their product with feelings of pleasure.

One way to make an emotional appeal is with emotion-arousing verbal messages. Words with positive connotations (such as *mother, flag,* and *freedom)* and those with negative connotations (such as *slavery, the Holocaust,* and *terrorism)* trigger emotional responses in listeners. Patriotic slogans, such as "Remember 9/11" and "Give me liberty, or give me death," are examples of phrases that have successfully aroused emotions in their listeners. McDonald's "I'm lovin' it" and Nike's "Just do it" are short phrases that appeal to positive feelings and the satisfaction of accomplishment.

Speakers can use nonverbal messages to effectively appeal to an audience's emotions.

Another way to appeal to emotions is through concrete illustrations and descriptions. Although illustrations and descriptions are themselves types of evidence or supporting material, their impact is often emotional. Research has found that telling an interesting story with an emotional punch is a very useful persuasive strategy.[15] When trying to convince her listeners to purchase high-quality child safety seats, a speaker used this example to evoke an emotional response in support of her goal:

> Michelle Hutchinson carefully placed her three-year-old daughter into her child safety seat. She was certain that Dana was secure. Within minutes Michelle was involved in a minor accident and the seat belt that was never designed to hold a child safety seat allowed the seat to lunge forward, crushing the three-year-old's skull on the dash. Dana died three days later.[16]

Effective use of nonverbal messages can also appeal to an audience's emotions. Smiling people, upbeat music, and good times are usually part of the formula for selling soda pop. As a speaker, you can use visual aids to evoke both positive and negative emotions. A photograph of a dirty, ragged child alone in a big city can evoke sadness and pain. A video clip of an airplane crash can arouse fear and horror. A picture of a smiling baby makes most of us smile, too.

When you use emotional appeals, you do have an obligation to be ethical and forthright. Making false claims, misusing evidence or images, or relying exclusively on emotion without any evidence or reasoning would violate standards of ethical public speaking.

ORGANIZE YOUR PERSUASIVE MESSAGE EFFECTIVELY Besides knowing how to motivate listeners, an effective persuader knows how to structure a persuasive message for maximum effect. Most persuasive speeches are organized according to one of four strategies: problem and solution, cause and effect, refutation, and the motivated sequence—a special variation of the problem-solution format that lends itself well to sales presentations.

Problem-and-solution organization is the most basic organizational pattern for a persuasive speech. The problem-and-solution strategy works best when a problem can be clearly documented and a solution or solutions proposed to deal with the problem. When describing the problem, your goal is to create dissonance or to identify an unmet need.

When you use problem-and-solution organization, apply the principle of appropriately adapting messages to others. If you are speaking to an apathetic audience or one that is not even aware that a problem exists, you can emphasize the problem portion of the speech. Your fellow members of the Chamber of Commerce, for example, who don't see how a new shopping mall in a nearby community will affect retail sales in your downtown area, may need to be jolted from apathy: You can point out that the presence of malls has resulted in drastically declining retail sales in other communities. If your audience is already aware of the problem, you can emphasize your proposed solution or solutions (perhaps to try to stop the mall from being built or to aggressively promote your community as the best destination for shopping). In either case, your challenge will be to provide ample evidence that your perception of the problem is accurate and reasonable. For example, you would need to find statistics that document how a mall can lower sales. You'll also need to convince your listeners that the solution or solutions you advocate are the most appropriate ones to solve the problem. Again, evidence in the form of statistics or examples is needed.

Consider another example of using the problem-solution structure. The president of a Chamber of Commerce is trying to convince the local school board to address the public perception that the school district is inferior compared to nearby school districts. The community is not attracting new businesses because of perceptions of academic mediocrity. The Chamber of Commerce president analyzes the problem and proposes a solution:

I. PROBLEM: Students in public schools in our community are not learning as well as students in other nearby communities.

- **A.** Our student test scores are down.
- **B.** Our teachers are paid less than teachers in nearby school districts.
- **C.** Parents are not volunteering in our schools.

- **II.** SOLUTION: We should slightly increase property taxes to raise money to finance improvements in our schools.
  - **A.** We could hire additional teachers to help improve test scores.
  - **B.** We could increase compensation for our best teachers.
  - **C.** We could hire a volunteer coordinator to increase parent volunteers in our school.

In the *cause-and-effect organization* pattern, a speaker can either identify a situation and then discuss the resulting effects (cause-effect) or present a situation and then explore its causes (effect-cause).

Regardless of which variation you choose, you should once again apply the principle of being aware of your communication with yourself and others. Specifically, you must analyze the problem and determine the critical causal link and then convince your listeners that the link is valid. An effect may have more than one cause. For example, sales at your company are 10% behind sales figures at this time last year. As sales manager, you are responsible for analyzing the issues and presenting your analysis to the company CEO. Here's a way you could organize your message:

- **I.** CAUSE: The design of our product line is out of date.
  - **A.** We have not hired any new engineers in the past five years.
  - **B.** Our engineers are using outdated computer equipment.
  - **C.** Our engineers are relying on outdated software to design our product.
- **II.** EFFECT: Our sales are down.
  - **A.** Our customers find our competitor's product more up-to-date.
  - **B.** Our customers are replacing the products they have purchased from us with products from our competitor.
  - **C.** Our customers have indicated that they do not intend to purchase our product in the future.

When using a cause-and-effect organizational strategy, it's not enough just to assert your causes and probable effects. You need to provide evidence to provide the link between the causes and effects.

A variation on cause and effect is organizing a presentation from effect to cause. For example:

- **I.** EFFECT: Holiday sales are sluggish. People aren't buying as many gifts as they did in previous years.
- **II.** CAUSE: The recession has decreased customers' purchasing power.

A third way to organize your efforts to persuade an audience is especially useful when you are facing an unreceptive audience—one that does not agree with your point of view or your specific proposition. *Refutation* is an organizational strategy by which you identify objections to your proposition and then refute those objections with arguments and evidence. It is better to present both sides of an issue rather than just your own position if your audience is skeptical of your position.

It is most effective to organize a persuasive speech by refutation when you know what your listeners' chief objections to your proposition are. In fact, if you do not acknowledge such objections, the audience will probably think about them during your speech anyway. Credible facts and statistics will generally be more effective than emotional arguments in supporting your points of refutation.

Suppose you represent a large hotel chain that wants to build a new luxury hotel in a southwestern city. The hotel chain has purchased most of the property it needs to start construction, except for one prime piece of property owned by two sisters who have a tamale stand on their property. You have approached the sisters, but they don't want to sell. They have agreed to meet with you to hear your final offer, so you'll need to be especially effective in refuting their concerns. You understand that the price you're offering is not the reason they are balking at selling. Rather, they promised their mother, who passed away last year, that they would always maintain the family business at the same location where their mother started the business. Here's an outline for a presentation to the two sisters based on the refutation organizational strategy:

- **I.** We would like to build a hotel on this property, and we will honor your mother by naming our exclusive rooftop restaurant after her.
- **II.** In addition to purchasing your property, we would like to purchase your mother's recipe for tamales and feature them in our new restaurant.
- **III.** We would like to hire both of you as consultants to the hotel to work in the restaurant and be in charge of quality control of all food served in the hotel.

The presentation to the sisters consists of major points offered to directly refute their objections. When you use a refutation strategy, you address the specific concerns and offer solutions to the objections you know you will encounter.

Like refutation, the fourth organizational strategy is unique to persuasive speaking. The *motivated sequence*, devised by Alan Monroe, is a five-step organizational strategy for a persuasive presentation.[17] This simple yet effective strategy integrates the problem-and-solution organizational method with principles that have been confirmed by research and practical experience. The five steps involved are attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, and action.

1. *Attention*. Your first task, and the first stage in appropriately adapting your message to others, is to get your audience members' attention. Distracted and multitasking listeners are difficult to persuade.[18] Using a rhetorical question, illustration, startling fact or statistic, quotation, humorous story, or reference to historical or recent events are ways of starting a speech to gain favorable attention. The attention step is, in essence, your application of one of these strategies.

   Business executive Raymond Kotcher used this attention-catching opener to begin a speech in which his goal was to encourage recent graduates with communication degrees to become involved in the global marketplace:

   > Now, I have a request. I want you graduates to consider what I have to say to you this afternoon not as a commencement address. Rather, think of my remarks—and I'll keep them brief—as an email, written just to you. An email written to you, an emerging communicator. And as with most personal notes that are written to mark milestones in our great and privileged society—setting off for college; yes, graduating from college; that first job; committing to that someone special; the first child—the email offers advice, encouragement, warnings about and hope for the future. Don't hit delete just yet![19]

2. *Need*. After getting your audience's attention, establish why your topic, problem, or issue should concern them. Tell your audience about the problem. Adapt your message to them by convincing them that the problem affects them directly. Argue that there is a need for change. During the need step (which corresponds with the problem step in a problem-and-solution speech), you should develop logical arguments backed by evidence. It's during the need step that you create dissonance or use a credible fear appeal to motivate listeners to respond to your solution.

   In trying to convince his audience that the world is changing and that they ought to be contributing to the global conversation, Kotcher points out that in order to be contemporary, they need to be up-to-date on cyberworld applications:

   > The audience of widely read blogs . . . rivals the size of the audiences of the online versions of major newspapers. Each day, 200 million Google searches are conducted, and half aren't in the English language. There are two billion cell phone subscribers in the world today.[20]

3. *Satisfaction*. After you explain and document a need or problem, you identify your plan (or solution) and explain how it will satisfy the need. You need not go into painstaking detail at this point in your talk. Present enough information so that your listeners have a general understanding of how the problem may be solved. You'll provide the specific action you want them to take later (in the action step). For now, identify in general terms what the solution to the problem is—satisfy the need you have identified. Here's the satisfaction step in Raymond Kotcher's message:

   > Relish the idea of joining the conversation. Today's media are participatory—integrating people with people to build community. Gone are the days of command and control. And this new networked world requires a new generation of communication leaders and leadership. Apply what you've learned at [college] and in your life so far. Already, one in five college-age students has traveled abroad in the past three years. More than one in three of you speak at least two languages. And your generation truly wants to help build this global community.[21]

4. *Visualization*. Now you need to give your audience a sense of what it would be like if your solution were adopted or, conversely, if it were not adopted. Visualization—using words to create an image in audience members' minds—applies the principle of effectively using verbal messages. With a *positive visualization* approach, you paint a rosy picture of how wonderful the future will be if your satisfaction step is implemented. With a *negative visualization approach*, you paint a bleak picture of how terrible the future will be if nothing is done; you use a fear appeal to motivate your listeners to do

A persuasive speaker, such as former U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, addressing Columbia Business School students, might use an organizational strategy such as the motivated sequence to craft an effective message.

what you suggest to avoid further problems. In either case, you use word pictures—lively descriptions that appeal to listeners' senses (sight, taste, smell, sound, and touch). Or you might combine both approaches: The problem will be solved if your solution is adopted, but things will get increasingly worse if it is not.

Here's how Kotcher helped his listeners visualize how the world is changing and how some previous college graduates have capitalized on being globally aware and active:

> Justin Lane, for instance, a 1995 . . . graduate, is the New York bureau chief for the European Pressphoto Agency. He won the Pulitzer in 2002 for breaking news photography for his freelance contributions to the *The New York Times*' coverage of the September 11 attacks. A year later, he traveled to Iraq to document cultural looting, the crisis facing Iraqi women, and the uncovering of mass graves. His photographs from Iraq garnered two gallery shows in New York and appearances in numerous newspapers, magazines, and books.
>
> Then there's Chris McKee, also class of 1995. . . . He made an award-winning documentary that has opened up the little-known world of Mongolian nomads to the rest of the world. And Tyler Hicks, class of 1992, named by *American Photo* magazine as one of the twenty-five most important photographers, in large part because of his compelling images from war-torn places like Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan.[22]

5. *Action.* The action step is your speech's conclusion. You remind your audience of the problem (outlined in the need step), give them the solution (the satisfaction step), remind them of the great things that will happen if they follow your advice (positive visualization) or the bad things that will happen if they don't (negative visualization). Finally, you tell them what they need to do next (the action step).

   To finish his presentation, Raymond Kotcher made this specific recommendation to his listeners:

> So, this email to you is just about finished. Yet I can't close without giving you some personal advice—about what I have gleaned in my career and life since those impossibly cold mornings walking to class at 640 Comm Ave. Here goes:
>
> - Engage your curiosity. Be indefatigable in ferreting out the answers to questions that will inform a world, assist a client, uncover an injustice, right a wrong.
> - Never forget your integrity and credibility. Develop your voice. You're a skilled communicator. Always strive to improve and develop your communication skills and apply them atop a deep understanding for all that has preceded you. Combine that with your personal experiences and what is important to you. And be willing to listen and to be taught, because learning NEVER ends.
> - Foster your creativity. Oh, how the world, especially the business world, seeks creative and innovative thinkers who can communicate their imaginative ideas.[23]

Donald C. Bryant defines rhetoric as "the process of adjusting ideas to people and people to ideas."[24] You can adapt the motivated sequence to the needs of your topic and your audience. For example, if you are speaking to a knowledgeable, receptive audience, you do not need to spend a great deal of time on the need step. The audience already knows that the need is serious. They may, however, feel helpless to do anything about it. Therefore, you would want to emphasize the satisfaction and action steps.

However, if you are speaking to a neutral or apathetic audience, you will need to spend time getting their attention and proving that a problem exists, that it is significant, and that it affects them personally. You will emphasize the attention, need, and visualization steps. And if you are speaking to a hostile audience, you should spend considerable time on the need step. Convince your audience that the problem is significant and that they should be concerned about it.

Persuading the Receptive Audience

- Identify with your audience by stating how you are similar to them, stressing characteristics you have in common.
- Emphasize common interests and describe areas of agreement.
- Provide a clear objective; because they are receptive to you, tell your listeners what you want them to do.
- Use emotional appeals appropriately. Using stories, illustrations, and other methods of ethically appealing to emotions can be effective with a receptive audience.

Persuading the Neutral Audience

- Because your listeners are not engaged or may be uninterested in you or your topic, gain and maintain their attention using appropriate attention-catching methods such as rhetorical questions, quotations, startling statistics, and interesting examples.
- Refer to beliefs, attitudes, and concerns that are important to the listener.
- Identify the needs of the listener and address those needs.
- Show how the topics affect people your listeners care about.
- Be realistic about what you can accomplish given that your listeners are neutral or apathetic.

Persuading the Unreceptive Audience

- Because your listeners are not in agreement with your goals and objectives, don't tell them you are going to try to convince them to change their minds and support your position.
- Make sure you present your strongest arguments first.
- Acknowledge opposing points of view and then use evidence and facts (rather than emotional appeals or opinion) to refute their ideas.
- Don't expect a major shift in attitudes or behavior.

Is there one best way to organize a persuasive speech? The answer is no. The organizational strategy you select must depend on your audience, your message, and your desired objective. What is important is to remember that your decision can have a major effect on your listeners' response to your message.

Recap

Organizational Patterns for Persuasive Speeches

Organizational Pattern	Definition	Example
Problem and Solution	Organization by discussing a problem and then various possible solutions	I. Problem: The company's sales revenues dropped in the last quarter. II. Solution: The company should beef up advertising efforts to bolster sales.
Cause and Effect	Organization by discussing a situation and its causes, or a situation and its effects	I. Cause: Most HMOs refuse to pay for treatment they deem "experimental." II. Effect: Patients die who might have been saved by "experimental" treatment.
Refutation	Organization according to objections your listeners may have to your ideas and arguments	I. Although you may think that our new, higher-premium insurance policy will reduce your standard of living, its comprehensive coverage will save you money over time. II. Although you may think that the high cost of insurance may cost the organization more money and place your jobs in jeopardy, it will actually help us attract and retain higher-quality workers.
Motivated Sequence	Alan H. Monroe's five-step plan for organizing a persuasive speech: attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, and action	I. Attention: "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." What has happened to the old adage? Why has it changed? II. Need: Pesticides are poisoning our fresh fruits and vegetables. III. Satisfaction: Those of you who purchase food for hotels and restaurants should purchase organic fruits and vegetables for your guests. IV. Visualization: Remember the apple poisoned by Snow White's wicked stepmother? You may be feeding such apples to your own guests if you don't buy organic fruits and vegetables. V. Action: Buy fruits and vegetables raised organically.

13.2.3: Presenting to Sell

When Dietrich Mateschitz was on a trip to Thailand as a marketing executive for Procter & Gamble, he tasted a drink called Krating Daeng, which is Thai for "red water buffalo." He thought it might have possibilities as a beverage that could be sold to people who needed an energy boost. After considerable marketing research and product development, Mateschitz debuted his product in 1987 in Europe. It sold well, and he launched it in the United States in 2001. Chances are you've sampled his creation—Red Bull.[25]

Dietrich Mateschitz figured out how to sell a product even before people had expressed a need for the product. Now that's good selling. What did Mateschitz know that could help you be a top-notch salesperson? We're about to tell you.

To sell is to persuade someone to buy or use a product or service. You experience hundreds of sales messages every day, and sales and marketing experts spend billions of dollars crafting those messages, all to get you to buy or use what they are selling.

Sales involves more than simply selling products. You can also sell an idea, a proposal, or a policy rather than a tangible object. Sales skills are important leadership skills. We've noted that to lead is to influence others through communication, and often leaders need to sell ideas and methods. So, as we discuss the principles and strategies of sales, keep in mind that leaders sell ideas—whether informally and one on one, in groups and teams, or when speaking to many people.

Since selling is persuading, the principles of and skills for persuasion that we've already discussed are the key strategies that you will use when selling someone something. To maximize your sales potential, we suggest that you first, analyze the sales situation, and second, plan your persuasive sales message using time-tested strategies that, to paraphrase Donald C. Bryant, help you adjust products and services to people and people to products and services.

Career Corner

Have You Considered a Career in Sales?

People with effective communication skills make good salespersons. And salespersons make good money. Why? Because regardless of the technological advances that are made and the evolving nature of business, a good salesperson is always in demand. Here's a ten-step guide from SalesHQ for considering a career in sales:[31]

1. **UNDERSTAND THE SALES UNIVERSE.** Read books about sales and talk to people already working as salespersons to better understand sales as a career.
2. **FIND YOUR NICHE.** Think about the kinds of products or services you would be good at selling.
3. **RESEARCH YOUR INDUSTRY.** Go online and assess specific products and businesses.
4. **LEARN TO TALK THE TALK.** Job-shadow a salesperson to learn specific tips and techniques of the sales profession.
5. **GET THE EDUCATION YOU NEED.** Taking a course in business and professional communication is excellent educational preparation.
6. **BUILD YOUR NETWORK.** Talk to more than one person; use and expand your network of friends, colleagues, teachers, and family members to establish a sales network.
7. **RESEARCH YOUR PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER.** Again, go online to investigate specific places where you would like to work.
8. **POLISH YOUR RESUME.** Make sure your resume highlights your skills in communication and persuasion.

9. **NEGOTIATE FOR YOUR FIRST JOB.** Find a job that seems to be a good fit with your skills, then negotiate your salary and commission.
10. **SET YOUR FIRST-YEAR SALES GOALS.** In consultation with your employer, determine your first-year sales estimate.

13.2.4: Developing Your Sales Message

We've discussed the importance of motivation in persuasion. Selling is persuasion, and motivating customers is essential in selling. Communication consultant Granville Toogood suggests that when making a sales pitch, you motivate customers by connecting with their needs. As Toogood puts it:[26]

- You're not selling soap. You're selling sex.
- You're not selling perfume. You're selling love.
- You're not selling cars. You're selling excitement.
- You're not selling jeans. You're selling adventure.

You also need to organize your message. Most sales presentations are organized using the problem-and-solution pattern. The five-step motivated sequence (which, as we noted, is a form of the problem-and-solution approach) is a good formula for structuring sales presentations by catching attention, establishing need, satisfying the need by offering a solution, visualizing the benefits of the solution or describing how the need will not be met if the solution is not adopted, and then identifying a specific action to take. The suggestions for organizing a sales presentation we describe below are based on the motivated sequence.[27]

HOOK YOUR LISTENER As we've noted, presenters need to get listeners' attention. A good salesperson does more than merely get a customer's attention; a good salesperson is able to "hook" the customer, to gain and keep the person's focus. In most cases, you have to grab your listeners quickly. To hook them, ask them an opening question that is based on what you suspect they may need ("Are you interested in a car that costs less yet looks expensive?") or addresses a fear they may have ("Would you like a car that will protect your family if you have an accident?").

IDENTIFY THE CUSTOMER'S KEY ISSUE After hooking the customer, you need to address what he or she needs or wants. Knowing your customer's interests, needs, desires, fears, and hopes is essential for making a sale. How do you find out what your customer likes and needs? Ask. After you ask, you have one more task: Listen. An effective sales message doesn't begin with the salesperson immediately extolling the virtues of the product. First, ask questions that qualify your customer. To qualify a customer is to identify whether the customer can afford the product or service you are selling and to learn how to best approach the customer. Does the customer have a family? If so, would he or she be motivated by appealing to concerns for their safety? Is the customer most interested in a low price? Knowing what customers want can help you adapt and customize your messages to them, just as any good presenter adapts a message to his or her audience.

It's also important to have a positive relationship with your customers. Joe Girard, the number-one car salesman in the United States for 11 years in a row, would send more than 13,000 cards to his customers. He'd wish them everything from happy birthday to happy George Washington's Day. The message on the front of each card was simple. It said, "I like you." He sold twice as many cars as whoever came in second place. Customers identified with Joe; they liked him. And they came back to buy more cars from him.[28]

If the customer does not explicitly tell you what he or she wants, you may need to ask specific questions, such as the following, to identify the customer's needs or issues:

- What do you like best about what you are currently using?
- What would an ideal product look like?
- What do you like least about what you are currently using?
- What is missing from what you're currently using?
- How many of these do you use each week?
- What are the key things you're looking for in a new . . . ?
- If you bought our product, when would you need it delivered?
- What could we do to get your business?

If you already suspect what the customer's needs are, then you can directly identify how what you are selling meets the needs, solves a problem, or addresses an issue that concerns the customer. Your knowledge of what your competitor has to offer and what the customer needs and your ability to briefly and quickly get to the heart of what the customer wants will increase your chances of making the sale.

MAKE THE RECOMMENDATION After you have analyzed, or qualified, the customer, you'll want to note how your product or service addresses the issues you've identified. Although you don't need to ask for the sale quite yet, you need to describe what you're selling and link your product or service to the customer's needs. Especially if you're selling several models or versions of the same product (such as a car, a computer, or an insurance benefit package), you'll need to direct the customer to a specific recommendation.

When making your recommendation, explain and demonstrate how the product works. Provide a step-by-step overview of what the product does. If appropriate, let the customer try the product. Most grocery stores know that one way to sell cheese is to give away free samples. Letting your customer use the product to experience the benefits may be your most important sales tool.

Research has found that a method of making a request called the *door-in-the-face technique* can be effective. This strategy involves first making a more extravagant or overreaching request, which is then followed up with a more modest request. For example, a life insurance salesperson who first asks a customer to take out a $5 million life insurance policy (which is rejected) but then follows up with a $500,000 request, which is purchased, is using the door-in-the-face technique. It's called door-in-the-face technique because being refused after the first request is like having the door slammed in your face.[29]

Making specific recommendations creates a relationship between your product and a customer's needs.

STRESS BENEFITS, NOT FEATURES All customers are interested in the benefits of what you're selling to them. This next point is essential: *You must stress the benefits of what you're selling, not just list the features.* What's the difference between a feature and a benefit? A feature is simply a characteristic of whatever the product or service is. For example, if you say, "This computer screen is very bright," you're describing a feature of the product. A benefit is a good result or something that creates a positive response in a customer. Rather than simply noting that the computer screen is bright, you could describe a benefit of the bright screen: "This means that you won't experience eye strain or headaches, and you can get your work done more quickly." Describing a benefit is a customer-centered way of helping the customer visualize the positive things that will happen to him or her if he or she buys what you are selling. Table 13.2 provides additional examples of features and their corresponding benefits.

Table 13.2: Features and Benefits

Customer Features	Customer Benefits
This floor is a no-wax floor.	Because this is a no-wax floor, you will never again have to get down on your hands and knees to scrub another floor.
If you sponsor this concert, your company name and logo will be listed in the program.	Sponsoring this event promotes your company and lets everyone in the community know how much you care about supporting the arts. People will view your company in a positive light, which will increase your sales and maintain the goodwill of your customers.
This ergonomically designed chair will keep your back straight.	This ergonomically designed chair will eliminate backaches, increase your productivity, and give you more time to spend on more pleasurable tasks.

MAKE THE CLOSE Every good salesperson knows the most critical part of making a sale is the close. The close is when you ask for (and ideally get) the sale. Most closes involve summarizing how the product or service solves a problem or meets a need, cogently listing the benefits, and then asking for the sale.

Some closes use the yes technique. A salesperson using the yes technique asks the customer a series of questions to which the answer is always yes. For example:

Salesperson: "So, Mr. Affolter, you like the Oxford model the best?"

Customer: "Yes."

Salesperson: "And you like the cobalt blue?"

Customer: "Yes."

Salesperson: "You also like the cruise control, satellite radio, and GPS system, right?"

Customer: "Yes, I do."

Salesperson: "So if I can get the Oxford model, in blue, with the features you like, and we can agree on a price, will you buy the car today?"

Customer: "Okay, yes."

The yes technique is based on the principle that "It's better to get a message out of someone than to put one in him or her." Get the customer to state what he or she likes and, when asked to make the purchase, to reach the conclusion that the correct answer is yes.

RESPOND TO OBJECTIONS Textbooks have a way of presenting models or specific strategies that make it seem as though all you need to do is follow the suggested sequence of steps or specific prescriptions and you'll be successful. When attempting to sell something to someone, you'll soon discover that it's usually not quite that easy. In most sales

"If they don't like our proposal I'll show them the kittens. Everybody likes kittens."

situations, the customer is not likely to simply say yes or "I'll take it" after you've hooked the person, identified the issue, made the recommendation, stressed the benefits, and provided a closing. Customers will likely have questions, concerns, and objections to the claims you've made. How you respond to those will often determine whether you get the sale or not. Consider the following suggestions.

Some customers may not explicitly state what is bothering them. For example, they may not say, "I don't have enough money to buy what you're selling." So, you need to listen between the lines if the customer says something like "I'm not sure I'm prepared to buy this product now" or "Buying this product doesn't fit into my plans right now." If price appears to be the unspoken objection, you may need to suggest a payment plan spread over a period of time, direct the customer to a less expensive option, or reconfigure the product so it costs less. The more you can remove hidden agendas, the more likely you are to be able to address the specific concern.

How do you determine a customer's real objections? You listen, observe, ask good questions, and listen some more. Open-ended questions such as "What questions do you have about this product?" or "Is there something that I could do today that would help you make a commitment?" can often help you find a customer's underlying objection. If you can then successfully address that objection, you've got the sale.

If a customer says no, or "I'll need to think about this" or "I'm not sure I'm ready to decide today," avoid pressuring the customer, but try to keep the conversation going. We don't encourage such high-pressure tactics as "This is a one-time offer, only good in the next hour" or "You must decide today." It's also unethical to claim that the product is the last one left when there are more in the back room. Instead, just continue to do your best to listen and see if you can identify what it is that is keeping the customer from saying yes. By asking follow-up questions, exploring objections, listening for clues, and observing nonverbal behavior, you may still be able to successfully respond to a rejection. Although some people actually do need more time to think, you're less likely to get the sale if the customer leaves your location or if you are no longer in contact with the person.

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Ethics Is Everything

According to Barbara J. Krumsiek, chief executive and chair of the Calvert Group Ltd., an investment firm, ethics is everything when it comes to leadership. She describes her view that ethics is an element in *every* communication action, especially in the finance world.

> Ethics is how you think about things when it's not written down. I tell Calvert people you make decisions every day, hundreds of them, that have ethical content. We couldn't possibly write codes of ethics to cover everything you do. So therefore, you're going to have to do the right thing. I'm counting on you to do the right thing.[30]

Ethics are implicit in every communication and leadership action you undertake, *especially* if you're trying to persuade someone to do something or sell them something. You have an ethical responsibility to present information that is honest, accurate, relevant, and on point.

A customer may ask you something about what you're selling that you don't know. *If you don't know the answer to a question, say so, and find the answer quickly*. Promise to get back to the customer with the answer by a specific time or date. Be sure to keep your promise.

One maxim that has served salespeople well is "Underpromise and overdeliver." Don't promise more than you know your product or service can offer, and work to provide even more than the customer expects. Although customers generally do not like surprises, they are usually delighted when what they've purchased surprises them with more than what was promised.

One of the biggest sales mistakes new salespeople make is talking too much after they have made a sale. Once the customer has made the decision to buy a product or service, don't keep describing additional benefits.

13.3: Making Special Presentations

13.3 Describe communication strategies for making special speaking presentations.

Besides informing and persuading others, you may be called on to introduce another speaker, present an award, receive an award (because you're such a good leader and communicator), or make a toast. In these special presentation situations, the audience has certain expectations of what you may say. When introducing someone, for example, it's assumed you will extol the virtues and credentials of the person you're introducing. Toasts are expected to be brief yet interesting.

13.3.1: Introducing Others

The purposes of an introduction are to arouse interest in a speaker and his or her topic and to establish the speaker's credibility. When you are asked to give a speech of introduction for a featured speaker or honored guest, your purposes are similar to those of a good opening to a speech: You need to get the attention of the audience, build the speaker's credibility, and introduce the speaker's general subject. You also need to make the speaker feel welcome while revealing some of the speaker's personal qualities so that the audience can feel they know the speaker more intimately. There are two cardinal rules for giving introductory speeches: Be brief and be accurate.

- **BE BRIEF.** The audience has come to hear the main speaker or honor the guest, not to listen to you.
- **BE ACCURATE.** Nothing so disturbs a speaker as having to begin by correcting the introducer. If you are going to introduce someone at a meeting or dinner, ask that person to supply you with biographical data beforehand. If someone else provides you with the speaker's background, make sure the information is accurate. Be certain that you know how to pronounce the speaker's name and any other names or terms you will need to use.

The following short speech of introduction adheres to the two criteria we have just suggested: It's brief and it's accurate.

> This evening, friends, we have the opportunity to hear one of the most innovative mayors in the history of our community. Mary Norris's experience running her own real estate business gave her an opportunity to pilot a new approach to attracting new businesses to our community, even before she was elected mayor in last year's landslide victory. The Good Government League recently recognized her as the most successful mayor in our state. Not only is she a skilled manager and spokesperson for our city, but she is also a warm and caring person. I am pleased to introduce my friend Mary Norris.

Finally, keep the needs of your audience in mind at all times. If the person you are introducing truly needs no introduction, do not give one! Just welcome the speaker and step aside.

13.3.2: Presenting an Award

Presenting an award is somewhat like introducing a speaker or guest: Remember that the audience came not to hear you but to see and hear the winner of the award.

First, when presenting an award, refer to the occasion. Awards are often given to mark the anniversary of a special event, the completion of a long-range task, the accomplishments of a lifetime, or extraordinary achievements.

Next, talk about the history and significance of the award. This section of the speech may be fairly long if the audience knows little about the award; it will be brief if the audience is already familiar with the history and purpose of the award. Whatever the award, a discussion of its significance will add to its meaning for the person who receives it.

In the final section of an award presentation, name the person to whom the award is given. The longest part of this segment is the description of the achievements that elicited the award. That description should be given in glowing terms. Hyperbole is appropriate here. If the name of the person getting the award has already been made public, you may refer to the person by name throughout your description. If you are going to announce the individual's name for the first time, you will probably want to recite the achievements first and leave the person's name for last. Even though some members of the audience may recognize the recipient from your description, save the drama of the actual announcement until the last moment.

13.3.3: Accepting an Award

Anyone who receives an award or nomination usually responds with a brief acceptance speech. Acceptance speeches have received something of a bad reputation because of the lengthy, emotional, rambling, and generally boring speeches delivered annually on prime-time TV by the winners of the film industry's Oscars.

The same audience who may resent a lengthy oration will readily appreciate a brief, heartfelt expression of thanks. In fact, brief acceptance speeches can actually be quite insightful, even inspiring, and can leave the audience feeling no doubt that the right person won the award.

If you have the good fortune to receive an award, your acceptance speech may be impromptu, because you may not know that you have won until the award is presented. A fairly simple formula should help you compose a good acceptance speech on the spur of the moment.

- First, thank the person making the presentation and the organization that he or she represents. It is also gracious to thank a few people who have contributed to your success—but resist thanking a long list of everyone you have ever known, down to the family dog.
- Next, comment on the meaning or significance of the award to you. You may also wish to reflect on the larger significance of the award to the people and ideals it honors.
- Finally, find some meaning in the award for your audience—people who respect your accomplishments

and who may themselves aspire to similar achievements. In what has become one of the most often quoted acceptance speeches ever made, William Faulkner dedicated his 1950 Nobel Peace Prize for Literature to:

> the young men and women already dedicated to the same anguish and travail, among whom is already that one who will some day stand here where I am standing.[32]

Acceptance speeches have a reputation for being boring. If you keep your speech brief and behave graciously, your audience will agree that the right person received the award.

13.3.4: Making a Toast

It's not uncommon in a business or professional setting to have an opportunity to propose a toast. It could be at a business lunch or dinner, or at the beginning or ending of an informal or social meeting with a client or customer. A *toast* is a brief salute to the occasion or is dedicated to a particular person, usually accompanied by a round of drinks and immediately followed by the raising or clinking together of glasses or goblets. The purpose of a toast is to enhance relationships, celebrate an accomplishment, or remember a past event. The custom is said to have taken its name from the old custom of tossing a bit of bread or a crouton into a beverage for flavoring.[33] "Drinking the toast" was somewhat like enjoying a dunked doughnut.

The modern toast is usually quite short, only a few sentences at most. Some toasts incorporate a quotation you might remember that seems appropriate to the occasion as, for example, one given at a business dinner by a client:

> I propose a toast. We are a long way from home this evening. But as we have worked together in our meetings today, you and your staff have made us feel very welcome. It was Robert Frost who said, "Home is a place where when you go there they have to take you in." Thank you, colleagues, for taking us in this evening and making us feel so much at home.

If you are asked to make an impromptu toast, let your audience and the occasion dictate what you say. Sincerity is more important than wit. At a dinner one of your authors attended in Moscow a few years ago, all the guests were asked to stand at some point during the meal and offer a toast. Although this Russian custom took all of us by surprise, one of our friends gave a heartfelt and well-received toast that went something like this:

> We have spent the past week enjoying both the natural beauty and the many marvels of your country. We have visited the exquisite palaces of the czars and stood in amazement before some of the world's great art treasures. But we have also discovered that the most important resource of Russia is the warmth of her people. Here's to new and lasting friendships.

Our Russian hosts were most appreciative. The rest of us were impressed. Our friend's toast was a resounding success because she spoke sincerely about her audience and the occasion.

Summary: Informing, Persuading, and Making Special Presentations

13.1: Describe some of the strategies to enhance the effectiveness of a persuasive message.

Principles of informing others, whether in a presentation, brief, or report, include these ideas:

Use simple ideas. Pace the flow of the information. Relate new information to what listeners already know. Use adult learning strategies. Relate to listeners' interests. Build in redundancy. Reinforce ideas verbally and nonverbally.

These are the nine steps of the need-centered training model:

1. Anchor all training processes in analyzing the organizational and trainee needs.

2. Analyze the training task: Break the skill into sequential steps.
3. Develop training objectives: Identify what you want to accomplish.
4. Organize training content: Structure the training information and skills.
5. Determine training methods: Decide how you will present the content.
6. Select training resources: Identify the written and visual materials you need.
7. Complete the training plan: Display all elements of the training lesson.
8. Deliver the training: Bring the training to life.
9. Assess the training: Determine if the trainees liked it, learned it, and can perform it.

13.2: Describe how developing leadership skills are important to developing persuasion skills.

Persuasion is the process of attempting to change or reinforce attitudes, beliefs, values, or behaviors. Several principles explain how persuasion works: Cognitive dissonance is a sense of mental disorganization or imbalance that arises when new information conflicts with previously organized thought patterns; people are persuaded to resolve the dissonance. Maslow's classic hierarchy of needs suggests that people are persuaded when the proposed persuasive goal helps them to meet an unmet need. Both fear appeals and positive motivational appeals motivate listeners to respond to persuasive messages.

The steps of presenting an effective sales talk include the hook, identifying the issues, making a recommendation, identifying and providing evidence for the benefits, making the close, and asking for the sale.

13.3: Describe communication strategies for making special speaking presentations.

Be brief and be accurate when introducing another speaker. When presenting an award, you can use a formula in which you refer to the occasion, talk about the history and significance of the award, and then name the awardee. When accepting an award, thank the person giving you the award, comment on the significance of the award to you, and find meaning in the award for the audience. When making a toast, be brief, sincere, and let your audience and occasion determine what you say.

SHARED WRITING: DESIGNING A SALES MESSAGE

Select a product that you like and use. Based upon the steps of designing an effective sales presentation, design a sales message, imagining that you are selling the product to someone who is similar to you in age, interests, and experiences. Next, select a person who is considerably different from you, and redesign your sales presentation for that person.

▶ **A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.**

Post

0 characters | 140 minimum

Chapter 13 Quiz: Informing, Persuading, and Making Special Presentations

Chapter 14

Writing for Business

Learning Objectives

14.1 Report some of the factors that make good business writing

14.2 Examine how appropriate use of technology and email at the workplace enhances the image of the organization

14.3 Describe how to write effective and appropriate business letters

14.4 Illustrate procedures and formats for different types of business documents

> Put it before them briefly so they will read it, clearly so they will appreciate it, picturesquely so they will remember it, and above all, accurately so they will be guided by its light.

The preceding quote from newspaper legend Joseph Pulitzer, the father of writing's famous Pulitzer Prize, sums up the essence of good and powerful writing in one thirty-four-word statement. It's one of the great writing quotes of all time and focuses on what have often been called the "ABC's of writing" (accuracy, brevity, and clarity). When Pulitzer took over the struggling *New York World* in 1883, the world was a vastly different place.[1] He most likely couldn't have envisioned today's digital media and our ever-increasing reliance on technology to assist us in our writing. However, the value of his statement, and the value of good clear writing, has never changed. In today's world of 140-character Twitter posts and text messages full of abbreviations, it remains extremely important to focus on developing effective writing skills. In our current economy, with more job seekers than positions available, honing writing skills may be the one thing that puts a prospective hire over the top.

Leaders must know how to write in an effective manner. The lack of adequate writing skills among U.S. businesspeople is well-documented.[2] A study published in *Management Review* noted that poor writing skills among business leaders were putting companies at risk.[3] Executives have identified a lack of writing skills among job candidates interviewing for jobs. The study found that employers were beginning to place greater emphasis on writing and that job offers were going to those who can write. To address this concern, many employers have adopted policies requiring job candidates either to submit a brief written report as part of the screening process or to complete a writing exam as a part of the interview process.[4]

Leading Questions

1. Why is the Pultizer quote timeless? Why are writing skills vital to the twenty-first-century leader?
2. What about your own writing skills? Can you write a properly formatted business letter or an accurate and clear email message? Do you know the elements of an office memo?
3. Why are leaders concerned with the lack of writing skills in the new workforce? What does that mean in an increasingly competitive job market?

This chapter introduces you to some of the more important skills for business writing and the preparation of business reports. We examine the general rules and styles used for business documents and stress the benefits of clear and effective writing. We also discuss the customary format of business reports and the tone, content, and purpose of their component parts. Samples of various business documents are provided to give you the opportunity to develop and sharpen your written communication skills.

14.1: Developing Business Writing Skills

14.1 Report some of the factors that make good business writing.

Certain business writing skills apply to a number of different types of business documents. Writers must be able to organize and develop paragraphs. They must be able to write in a style that reflects appropriate tone and use vocabulary that is adapted to the organization.

They must be able to write clearly using appropriate terminology while being concise. Finally, writers must be sure to use correct spelling and grammar. All these skills require planning and preparation before the writing process begins.

14.1.1: Organizing the Document

Appropriately organizing a document is the first step a business writer can take to make sure the reader understands the message. There are several methods for organizing a document, depending on the type of document, its content, and the audience. The following paragraphs discuss some options for organizing a business document:

- *Problem-solution* development begins with a description of a problem and moves on to discuss possible solutions or a proposed solution to the problem. A variation on this method is the *cause-and-effect* style of development, which outlines a cause and its possible effects. For example, if you were writing a report on employee turnover, you would start by describing the problem of turnover and its magnitude, then move on to discuss some possible ways to retain employees and minimize turnover. You would then outline the proposed best solution and offer reasons for selecting this solution.
- The *chronological* or *sequential* organizational pattern begins with the first in a series of events or steps and moves on to the second, third, and so on. This organization pattern allows you to report on events or steps in the order in which they occurred or will occur. Using sequential development is helpful when writing a training manual, for example. When training someone in how to perform a skill, the steps must be enacted in a particular order. A team leader overseeing fifteen service agents at a customer service call center may need to develop a short training program on how to process a call. The training manual would likely include a step-by-step description of each behavior involved in processing a call effectively and successfully.
- *Priority* development focuses on the most urgent or important information first, then moves on to less important or urgent information. This style would work well when developing an agenda for a business meeting. An agenda lists the items to be discussed in the meeting in the order they will be discussed. If, for example, an increase in customer complaints were an important priority item to discuss in a meeting, then that would be listed first on the agenda.
- *General-to-specific* development is a format that allows you to begin with the big picture and move on to specific details. When preparing a sales proposal, for example, you may want to start by discussing the overall goals and move on toward the specifics of the product or service you are offering. Another way to use this method is to go from specific to general.

For example, a restaurant chain marketing agent might describe a recent drop in sales at one store location and move on to outline the larger, global effects of this decline on the entire organization.[5]

14.1.2: Writing with Appropriate Style

When writing for business, consider both style and clarity. *Writing style* refers to the tone, language, voice, and overall viewpoint of the sentences. Compared to other forms of writing, business writing style is generally more precise, brief, and direct. Also, the style of business writing has evolved from a previously formal and elaborate style to one that is more personal, although this may vary depending on the organization. The business writer also needs to take into consideration the tone and bias of the language used.

USE APPROPRIATE TONE AND VOCABULARY Whatever the type of document they are preparing, writers should consider the tone of their message. *Tone* refers to the attitude of the writer toward both the reader and the subject matter. In many ways the tone of a written document has an effect similar to that of the tone of voice in face-to-face communication—the tone of a document (courteous, brusque, demanding, deferential, or friendly) complements the words used in the document. The following questions will help you to determine the appropriate tone for your message:

- Why am I writing this document?
- Who am I writing to, and what do I want them to understand?
- What kind of tone will complement and reinforce my written message?

Fortunately, you can use the same tone for most business messages. Remember that the main goal is to adapt your message to your reader. Using difficult vocabulary or phrases that demonstrate a lack of confidence, such as "I think you will find our product to be useful and beneficial to your organization," may not effectively communicate to your reader that you are convinced of the benefits of your product. Follow these general guidelines when considering what kind of tone to use in your letters and how to present information in that tone:

- Be confident.
- Be courteous and sincere.
- Adapt to the reader by stressing benefits.
- Write at an appropriate level of difficulty.

USE UNBIASED LANGUAGE One of the ways you can make your business writing effective is to avoid biased messages. *Biased messages* include words and expressions that offend because they make inappropriate assumptions or repeat stereotypes about gender, ethnicity, physical or mental disability, age, or sexual orientation. Although some people dismiss the notion that they should use unbiased messages as mere political correctness, in reality it is what most parents have been teaching their children for years—to be considerate of others. Following are several ways to use unbiased verbal messages:

Avoid use of the generic *he.* Generic verbal messages include words that may apply to only one sex, race, or other group, as though that group represents everyone. For example, using the word *he* to include both men and women is no longer appropriate in the diverse professional workplace. Some people argue that the use of *he* automatically includes both men and women. But research does not confirm this widely held belief.[6] The use of *he* is exclusionary; it leaves women out.[7] Using *he/she* is awkward in many situations; it's best to use plural pronouns. Rather than writing "A manager is effective because *he* is a competent communicator," write "Managers are effective because *they* are competent communicators."

Contrary to popular belief, when writers use the generic *man* to refer to both men and women (as in the word *mailman*), women feel excluded.[8] In fact, research suggests that people usually visualize men when they hear that label. In addition, when job titles end in "man," individuals in those positions are assumed to have stereotypically masculine personality traits. Rather than using the generic word *man*, try using the following to make your business writing style more effective and appropriate:

Table 14.1: Avoiding Biased Business Writing

Instead of ...	Use ...
Chairman	Chair
Freshman	First-year student
Fireman	Firefighter
Salesman	Sales representative
Mailman	Mail carrier

Hide All Cells Show All Cells

Parallel verbal phrases use language and phrases that are symmetrical. Nonparallel verbal messages treat groups differently and therefore are perceived negatively, as biased. Here are a few examples to clarify the difference between parallel and nonparallel verbal messages:

Nonparallel Phrases	Parallel Phrases
Ladies and men	Ladies and gentlemen
Men and girls	Men and women
Boys and women	Boys and girls

14.1.3: Writing with Clarity

Have you ever tried to read something, and you couldn't understand it? Maybe the words were all spelled correctly and easy to read, but the message was still unclear? *Clarity* refers to the specificity of a message and how easily the reader can comprehend the information. In this section, we discuss clarity as it relates to the written word.

When writing for business, as opposed to other forms of writing (such as creative writing), clarity of message and thought is very important. Ambiguous messages or unclear sentences can prevent your writing from communicating to the reader. A clear paragraph is coherent; it has a logical sequence and smooth transitions between the sentences.

Another consideration in achieving clarity is the choice of words. Abstract phrases, such as "use a bright color palette," will not communicate as much or as clearly as concrete phrases, such as "use bright oranges, yellows, and reds." The business writer should also be cautious about jargon. *Jargon* is language used by a particular group, profession, or culture that may not be understood or used by other people. Jargon is common in the workplace, and it tends to become overused.[9] If you've ever worked as a restaurant server, for example, you probably recognize the phrase "in the weeds," which you have used anytime you are so overwhelmed with customers that you feel like you can't catch up. For those who haven't worked in the food industry, that statement holds little meaning. Phrases such as "Let's dialogue" (instead of "Let's discuss this") can become clichéd and can seem inappropriate to a reader outside of the organization. Jargon can be effective if readers are familiar with the terms. When writing for an outside audience, however, avoid jargon.

A final consideration when writing for clarity is to be concise. *Concise writing* avoids unnecessary words and phrases but does not sacrifice clarity or necessary detail. A report need not be brief to be concise, and making something shorter is not appropriate if clarity is sacrificed. Following are some suggestions for writing concisely.[10]

USE SUBORDINATION Instead of writing "We received the sales report this afternoon. It was five pages. The report clearly illustrated a drop in sales marketwide," subordinate, using conjunctions to combine the ideas from these sentences to make one coherent, concise sentence: "This afternoon we received the five-page sales report, which clearly illustrates a marketwide drop in sales."

AVOID REDUNDANCY Even if you are not repeating whole phrases and sentences, a report can still be redundant. Eliminate qualifying terms that are not necessary, such as "first and foremost" or "basic and fundamental."

DO NOT OVERUSE INTENSIFIERS Sometimes intensifiers are relevant and help convey the importance of an idea. However, their overuse can become redundant and cause your writing to lose some of its clarity. It is not necessary to write "The report was perfectly clear and completely accurate." Instead, just write "The report was clear and accurate." Although intensifiers are sometimes appropriate, take caution to avoid overusing them because they lose their intensity.

AVOID TELEGRAPHIC LANGUAGE One pitfall in attempting to write concisely is the tendency to oversimplify. *Telegraphic style* condenses a written message by eliminating articles, pronouns, conjunctions, and transitions. Although telegraphic style may make a document brief, the document may not necessarily remain clear. Consider the following examples:

> Telegraphic style: Per May 5 memo, meeting agenda attached. Supervisor wants report by Houston office. Meeting as soon as report received. August almost full, please advise to set date.
>
> Clear message: As I mentioned in my May 5 memo, I have attached the next meeting agenda. The supervisor wants the report to be completed by the Houston office. As soon as we get the report, we can schedule a meeting. Our August calendar is almost full, so please suggest a date soon.

Technology and Communication @ Work

Growing Up in a Digital World

According to a report in the *New York Times*,[11] the effects of growing up in an increasingly digital world can be seen in the new generation of young people, and they are not all good. Researchers have discovered that today's younger leaders have less and less ability to focus on one activity, read longer prose, or even comprehend longer messages that require extended periods of attention.[12]

New graduates may be experts at using new media, but has it harmed their ability to read and write accurate, clear material? With cell phone keyboards that encourage responses such as "ill text u after the mtg," future business professionals need to know when and how to turn off the shorthand. Effective development of basic writing skills is still necessary to present a positive, competent image.

Take stock of your own social media use. Do you find yourself composing more and more shorthand abbreviated messages? Do you read these types of messages more every day? How has that affected your own ability to focus? When was the last time you read a book?

Here are some keys to developing writing skills in an age of informal communication:

Learn Proper Grammar

We often rely on word-processing programs to "tell" us when there is a grammatical problem in our writing. And many writers have grown so accustomed to the "little green squiggly line" under their sentences that they ignore the grammatical problems altogether.

Take Time to Read Longer Prose

Read textbooks, read long-form journalism, read the articles in a magazine, and read works of fiction. Just take the time to read. Our vocabulary increases when we read often, but it must be more than "omg."

Take Care With Your Spelling

Shorthand has become common and can be used effectively in the workplace. But Twitter users, for example, know how misspellings are commonplace because of the need to condense a message to a limited number of characters. Although appropriate for Twitter, remember the accurate spelling of words when crafting a more formal document.

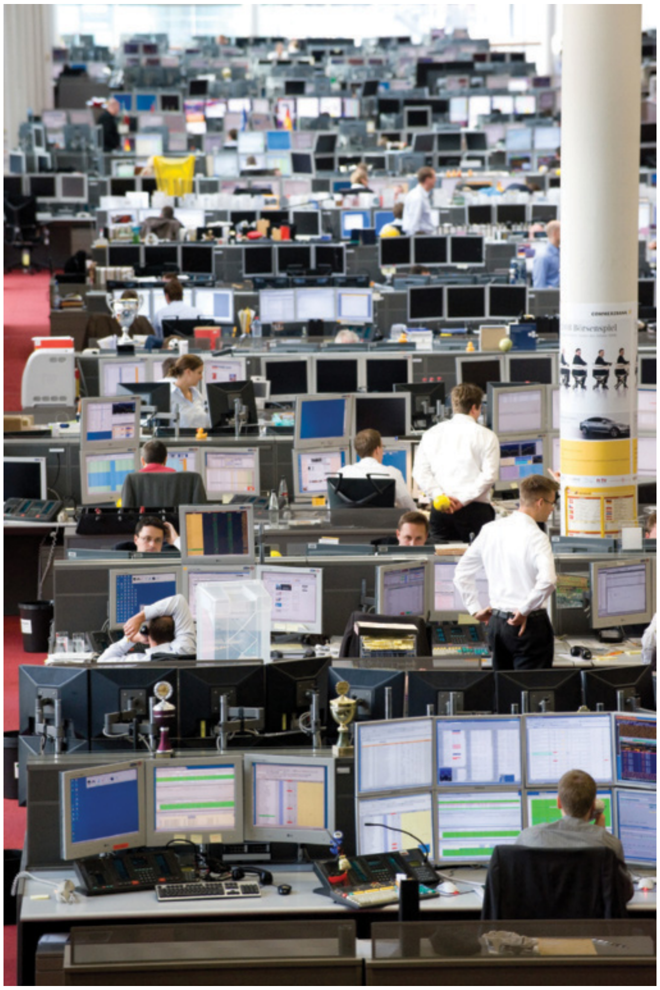
14.2: Using Technology and Email

14.2 Examine how appropriate use of technology and email in the workplace enhances the image of the organization.

As the workplace becomes increasingly media saturated, we cannot ignore the importance of remaining professional and effective in our use of mediated communication. In this section we introduce you to a model that will help you make important decisions about what communication technology is most appropriate for communicating particular types of messages. Also, we introduce you to some tips on using email effectively in the workplace.

14.2.1: Learning to Use Technology Effectively

Although perfecting business writing skills is challenging, what might be more challenging for new leaders is learning when and how to use technology to communicate. Many times the question that confronts a leader is "Should I communicate to others in writing or should I communicate in person?" Leaders need to be aware of when writing a document is more appropriate and when speaking in person is preferable. If a leader decides to communicate through writing, then which format is best? Is an email appropriate, or should a letter be sent? If a leader decides to communicate orally, is a voice-mail message appropriate, or should he or she schedule a face-to-face meeting?

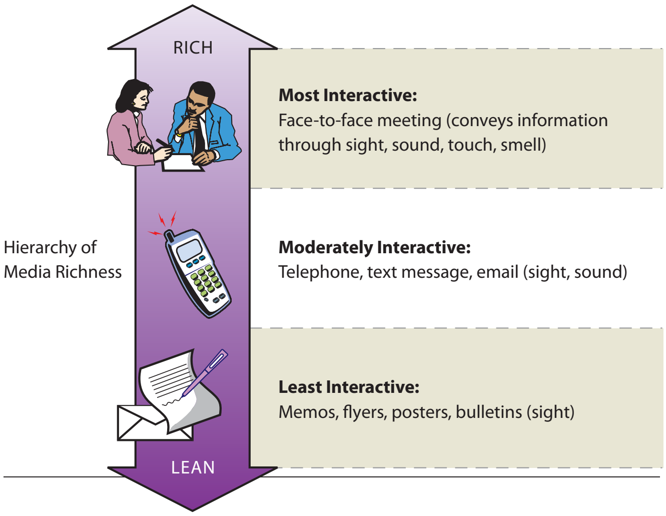


The completely wired and media-saturated workplace increasingly demands effective, professional use of technology as well as the ability to express oneself clearly.

To use technology effectively when writing and speaking, it's important to understand what communication researchers refer to as *media richness*, or how closely a technology simulates face-to-face communication.[13] A method or channel of communication is rich if it offers the possibility of instant feedback; allows both verbal and nonverbal cues to be processed by senders and receivers; allows the use of natural, informal language rather than formal language; and customizes messages to individuals rather than communicating to a mass of people.

Management and marketing researchers Robert Lengel and Richard Daft describe how the channel (face-to-face conversation, email, text message, or whatever it may be) influences how messages are received. Lengel and Daft assert that different media have different degrees of richness; some channels are rich, others are lean. For example, flyers or posters advertising a meeting are considered a lean medium because they convey messages using a single channel (the visual channel) and because readers of a poster have no interaction with the creator of the poster. In contrast, face-to-face meetings are considered a rich medium because they convey messages using multiple channels (sight, sound, smell, touch) and allow people to interact. Figure 14.1 illustrates the media richness continuum.[14]

Figure 14.1: Media Richness Continuum



As you can see from Figure 14.1, as the number of channels through which messages are conveyed increases, communication becomes more interactive and personal. As the number of channels decreases, communication becomes less interactive and more impersonal. The following section offers guidelines to help you become aware of media richness and how to apply this model in business and professional settings.

CONSIDER THE QUALITIES OF THE MESSAGE Messages have certain qualities that will help you decide which channels or media are most appropriate to use to convey them. If your message is routine—meaning that it is simple, straightforward, contains no surprises, and is task related—then lean media such as flyers, letters, and memos are probably most appropriate. If your message is nonroutine—meaning that it is complex, confusing, contains a surprise, or is time sensitive—then rich media such as face-to-face meetings or video or web conferences are probably better.[15] When information is complex and confusing, you want to make sure you receive immediate feedback from your team members so you can clarify and correct any misunderstandings.[16] A rich medium allows such feedback.

CONSIDER THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF THE MESSAGE When a fabricated scandal resulted in the quick termination of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) employee Shirley Sherrod in 2010, she was notified of her expected resignation through text message while she was driving to work.[17] The channel (text message) alone caused an uproar, showing a lack of respect for a longtime employee. As the USDA learned, sometimes text messages are not the most appropriate mode of communication. If you've ever been notified by a text message that you were fired, you know how important it is to match the communication channel to the emotional impact of the message. What hurt was not only the message but also the way the message was delivered. Even less powerful messages can be destructive if communicated through text message alone, such as critical performance reviews. Although sending and receiving emotionally sensitive information are both difficult, the channel—the way the message is transmitted—makes a big difference. For example, if you're laying someone off, the ideal way to do this is face-to-face (a rich medium) rather than with a text message (a lean medium). A face-to-face discussion allows you to effectively interpret and use nonverbal communication while explaining the layoff and to answer any questions. Taking the time to meet face-to-face conveys respect for the person being laid off.

Organizational communication researchers suggest that it may be more effective to use leaner media (e.g., email or text messages) in some emotionally charged situations, such as a conflict between coworkers. Researcher Phil Salem suggests that leaner media may be more effective in some conflict situations when individuals are more likely to say something out of anger that they may later regret.[18] According to Salem, leaner media don't allow for immediate feedback and interaction. This lack of feedback provides a cooling-off period that may be helpful in emotionally charged situations.

Career Corner

Don't Underestimate Your Writing Skills

Because many employees cannot write well and there is an increased amount of writing needed in most positions, make sure you inform potential employers about your writing skills and abilities.[19]

During the interview, make sure you discuss the following:

- Ask about the writing demands of the position. How much writing? What types of writing?
- Express your interest in writing.
- Discuss your specific writing skills: business correspondence, technical writing, copywriting, promotional writing, writing for the web/social media, formal writing, executive writing, reporting.
- Have examples of your writing available in the event the interviewer ask for samples of your work.
- If you have experience in teaching others how to write, make sure you discuss this ability. Many

employers hire writing coaches to help their employees improve their writing. Let the employer know that you may be the solution to their writing education problem.

FOLLOW THE COMMUNICATION NORMS OF THE ORGANIZATION When deciding what channel is best to use to convey your message, it's always important to be aware of the communication norms of the workplace. *Norms* are general standards that determine what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior in an organization. For example, in some offices you would violate a norm if you were to phone someone in the office next to you or even someone on the same floor; the norm is to phone only people who are not in your immediate location. In other organizations, the norm may be sending email rather than using the phone or talking to the person face to face. One study of over 150 senior executives at the nation's 1,000 largest companies found that only 13% of leaders used the telephone as their primary means of communication, which was down from 48% five years previously. Also, just 14% of the leaders reported relying on face-to-face meetings, compared with 24% five years before. Instead, email had become the most common channel for dialogue at work, according to 71% of the leaders surveyed.[20] These research data suggest that communication norms may be changing, moving away from rich communication media and toward more lean communication media. However, with the advent of smartphones and other new technologies, our continued use of lean media can be efficient timesavers. Regardless of the research data, it's important to carefully observe the communication norms in your office and work unit and follow the norms already established.

USE MULTIPLE CHANNELS Organizational communication researcher Keri Stephens recommends that leaders use multiple channels when communicating with employees and team members.[21] Stephens argues that employees are not tied to any one communication technology and that to be effective in one's communication, it's important to communicate using a variety of channels. For example, if you're preparing to facilitate a meeting next week, you might do the following:

- Send out an email, voice mail, and a text message asking for team members' input on what they would like to discuss at the meeting.
- Send out a paper memo outlining the agenda for the meeting in addition to attaching the memo to an email message.
- Send a text message on the day of the meeting reminding team members of the meeting time and location.
- Communicate face-to-face at the meeting.

Stephens mentions that by using multiple channels to communicate with team members, you are more likely to reach more of your audience members than if you relied solely on a single technology.

14.2.2: Using Email

Email messaging now exceeds telephoning as the dominant form of business communication.[22] Many people claim that handling their emails can consume half of their day. One *Wall Street Journal* report predicted that employees would soon spend three to four hours a day on email.[23] With the increased use of email as an accepted form of business communication, some basic etiquette rules are being established to keep email usage both effective and professional. Here are some tips for composing professional email messages, either in the workplace or in an academic context:[24]

- **BE CONCISE.** Keep messages brief and to the point. Correct writing doesn't have to be lengthy. Make your writing as concise as possible; it can be frustrating for a reader to have to wade through an email twice as long as needed.
- **USE PROPER LETTER CASE.** Letter case indicates whether words are written using capital (uppercase) letters or lowercase letters. Using all capital letters gives the impression you're shouting; using all lowercase letters gives the impression you're either whispering or lazy.
- **USE BLIND COPY (BCC) AND COURTESY COPY (CC) APPROPRIATELY.** Use courtesy copy to keep others informed. Use blind copy only when you prefer to keep recipients from seeing who else received a copy of your email message. You would do this if your email involved issues of confidentiality or if the information in it might damage a relationship. For example, suppose you want to let your district manager know how you're handling an employee problem. You email the employee himself to notify him of your plan, and you send a blind copy of the email to the district manager. This way, the district manager knows the problem is being managed, but the employee doesn't know the district manager has been informed. If the problem employee was to know this, his relationship with the district manager might be compromised. Also use BCC when sending to a large distribution list, so recipients won't have to scroll through a long list of names to get to the message.
- **USE THE SUBJECT LINE.** When sending a new email, always include the important and pertinent information in the subject line. The subject line can be anything relevant—an ID number, a claim number, a meeting date, a project name—or it can be a

descriptive subject line that reveals to the reader the nature of your email. Sometimes to get an email out quickly, we ignore the subject line. This can be ineffective because it fails to let the recipient know the topic of your email. Also, a subject line assists in later filing or searching for your message.

- **USE CORRECT GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION.** The advent of smartphones and other text-messaging devices has led to a decline in the formality of electronic communication. When sending email, use proper grammar and punctuation. Just because the channel is less formal does not mean the writing can be sloppy.
- **CONSIDER THE APPROPRIATENESS OF YOUR CONTENT.** Employees have been fired for using email inappropriately (e.g., forwarding items with sexual or off-color content) or for personal use. Never put in an email message anything you wouldn't put on a postcard. Remember that email can be forwarded, so unintended audiences may see what you've written.
- **DON'T USE EMAIL AS AN EXCUSE FOR NOT COMMUNICATING THROUGH MORE APPROPRIATE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION.** Don't forget the value of face-to-face or voice-to-voice communication. Email communication isn't appropriate for sending confusing or emotional messages. Don't use email to avoid an uncomfortable situation or to cover up a mistake.

Communication Ethics @ Work

Social Media and the Blurring of Personal/Professional Boundaries

Smartphones, laptops, iPads, and other electronic devices all increase Internet access for many business professionals. If we bring these items to work, and use them to manage our online presence on social networks, we may be violating a workplace policy. Many companies discourage or even ban social media use at work, fearing that it can quickly become a distraction. In addition, more and more organizations are developing rules, guidelines, and policies regarding employee social media use, regardless of whether or not they are used in the workplace.[25]

For example, in 2009 the *Los Angeles Times* released its newly developed social media guidelines for employees.[26] The guidelines include a warning that although employees may try to keep their personal and professional identities separate online, they often merge. Employees are warned not to post anything online that might embarrass the *LA Times* or appear to compromise workers' ability to do their job. In addition, employees' choices of who to "friend" in social media forums are being regulated by their employer, to help maintain an impression of objectivity. For example, "friending" someone on one side of the debate means "friending" someone on the other side, to appear impartial.

WRITING PROMPT

Do you use a social media site, such as Twitter, LinkedIn, or Facebook? You might expect a level of privacy related to these accounts, so how would you respond to an employer's request to limit or regulate your online identity? Do you think these organizations have a right to manage their employees' social network sites? Does an employee's presence on social networks reflect an image of the employer as well?

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

14.3: Writing Business Letters

14.3 Describe how to write effective and appropriate business letters.

Business letters are standard communication formats that are important and common in the workplace. As a leader, you will likely need to communicate with those outside of your organization—for example, with clients or those in other organizations. Being able to apply the skills discussed previously to business letters is important and valuable.

14.3.1: Correspondence

Correspondence refers to business letters sent to customers, coworkers, superiors, and subordinates. Because business correspondence often is more personal than formal proposals and reports, it should generally be written in a conversational style.

DEVELOP GOODWILL *Goodwill* is a positive perception of the author on the part of the audience. A good way to build goodwill is to keep your correspondence-audience focus. Put simply, adapt to your reader. Rather than saying "*We* need to see a receipt before *we* can process a return or exchange of the merchandise," say "*You* may receive a full refund or exchange of the merchandise if *you* mail or fax a receipt." The two sentences say essentially the same thing, but the focus in the second sentence is on the needs of the customer. In this case you could build even more goodwill by sending an acknowledgment letter letting the person know that the receipt arrived and thanking the person for being prompt.

INCLUDE STANDARD ELEMENTS OF CORRESPONDENCE Although the general appearance and format of correspondence may vary, following is a list of elements present in most business correspondence. Use this list as a guideline when deciding what to include in your business letter. Table 14.2 illustrates a sample business letter.

Table 14.2: Features of a Business Letter

Business Letter Feature	Description
Return address	The return address contains the sender's address and the date the letter was written. If the letter appears on letterhead that includes an address, a date is enough for the return address.
Inside address	Include the name and address of the recipient of the letter before a salutation.
Salutation	A salutation should address the recipient of the letter directly and appropriately. A letter intended to be social and friendly can have a comma after the salutation; a more formal letter should include a colon. Avoid "Dear Sir" unless you are certain the recipient is male. The overused "To Whom It May Concern" is too impersonal. Take the time to determine exactly to whom the letter should be addressed.
Body	The body contains the content of the letter. It should be written in paragraph form. Including a non–task-related message at the beginning of the letter can help to build rapport, for example, "Thank you for expressing interest in exploring the employment options offered at our institution." Then enter into the main message.
Closing	The end of the letter should include a closing expression before your signature. This can be the common and effective "Sincerely," "Cordially," or something more personal such as "Best," or "Respectfully yours." The letter should include both a handwritten signature and a typed signature block. The block usually contains your name, as well as your title and the name of your organization (unless your letter appears on letterhead).

Hide All Cells Show All Cells

DELIVER BAD NEWS TACTFULLY Occasionally correspondence must contain bad news. This must be handled tactfully. A general rule for handling bad news is to deliver it gently and courteously. When presenting bad news through correspondence, consider the following:

- **OPENING WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTEXT, TO PROVIDE A BUFFER.** For example, you might begin a letter with "Thank you for applying for the position of service manager at TRH, Inc."
- **EXPLAINING THE BAD NEWS RATHER THAN SIMPLY STATING IT.** For example, an explanation of a hiring decision might be, "Because of the extensive pool of applicants, we have chosen to place someone in the position with ten years of experience who will need minimum training to begin."
- **CLOSING WITH A GOODWILL MESSAGE THAT REINFORCES A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RECIPIENT.** For example, you might close with a statement such as "With your excellent academic record and ability to put others at ease, we have no doubt you will be successful in finding a position with another organization."

USE A STANDARD FORMAT When developing a business letter, you also need to consider the format. A common format for correspondence is the full-block, or standard letter style shown in Figure 14.2. Although organizations may have their own preferred correspondence format, this format is standard for any letter. Many word-processing programs contain templates for correspondence. If you are using letterhead paper, consider the bottom of the letterhead to be the top of the page when creating margins. Although the length of the letter may vary, it is a good idea to center the letter on the page. A short one- or two-sentence correspondence may be better sent by email. The main consideration with format is that once an organization has developed a standard for outside correspondence, you should be consistent in following the standard in all your correspondence.

14.3.2: Complaint Letters

There will be times when you are not satisfied with a product or service and believe some restitution is in order. A *complaint letter* expresses dissatisfaction with a product or service. A letter of complaint can be an effective method for resolving a dispute, if it is written with the appropriate tone and does not sound as though you are being accusatory or whining. You might even get more than you expected. Many businesses appreciate knowing when something is going wrong, and they will do what they can to create goodwill with a dissatisfied customer.

The following suggestions will help you write a letter of complaint that's likely to be read and acted on.[27]

- **COMPLAIN ONLY WHEN YOU FEEL IT IS JUSTIFIED.** Write letters of complaint only after exhausting all other options. In other words, if you're unhappy with a product or service you purchased, give the salesperson an opportunity to fix the problem before forwarding a letter of complaint to the corporate office.
- **ADDRESS THE LETTER TO THE PERSON WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO FIX THE PROBLEM.** If your complaint is with a local business, address the letter to the owner or manager. If you're dealing with a local branch of a large corporation, you'll need to find out whether your complaint should be sent to the local branch or if the problem was created by

Figure 14.2: Sample Business Letter

1532 1st Lane
Edinburg, Texas 78541
July 5, 20XX

Mr. Joseph Castillo
InnoTech Associates
817 Freddy Gonzalez Drive
Edinburg, TX 78539

Dear Mr. Castillo:

We appreciated the customer service training program you provided to our company last month. This letter is intended as a follow-up to that training and to thank you for your time and attention to detail.

The training was effective and productive. Our customer service agents have greatly increased morale and motivation when interacting with customers. We have seen great results from your training just in the last month.

We are considering a telephone etiquette course as a follow-up to the customer service training you provided. We were impressed with your demeanor, training style, and attention to detail, and would like InnoTech Associates to conduct the training program. If you are interested in providing us with a training program in customer service telephone etiquette, please contact me.

Once again, thank you for your interest in helping our employees work to improve their customer service skills. You have taught us some invaluable lessons and our company and workers are grateful.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Rodriguez

Sylvia Rodriguez
Training Department Supervisor
PemCo Inc., West Call Center
Phone: (956) 989-3347
Fax: (956) 989-3300
srodriguez@pemcowest.org

policies set by a corporate office. Searching company websites, annual reports, or online business directories are ways of locating the appropriate person.

- **BE COURTEOUS AND PROFESSIONAL.** Being sarcastic, rude, or discourteous may feel like the right thing to do but will probably not get you the results you desire.
- **KEEP IT SHORT.** One page is all you need. A person is more likely to read and act on your letter if you keep it brief and to the point.
- **BE FACTUAL.** Describe the problem and detail the efforts you have made to correct the problem. You are more likely to see results if you can answer the following: Who? What? When? Where? How?
- **IDENTIFY WHAT YOU WANT.** Clearly indicate what it is you are seeking. In some situations, it may simply be an apology. In other situations you want to exchange the product or service. In others, you may want a full refund.
- **REMEMBER TO DATE YOUR LETTER.** Include full contact information, including an email address and account numbers or any other information that the recipient might need to trace your problem.
- **STATE CONSEQUENCES ONLY IF PREVIOUS LETTERS HAVE FAILED TO GET THE PROBLEM CORRECTED.** When previous attempts to solve a problem have been unsuccessful, inform the company

of your next set of actions without offer a threat. When previous attempts have failed, state what you are prepared to do, and when.

Leaders regularly communicate through written correspondence to those outside of the organization. Equally as important as writing letters to those outside the organization or team is learning effective strategies for writing other types of business documents, especially interoffice documents.

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Write for Insight[28]

Sheila Lirio Marcelo, founder and chief executive of Care.com, gained valuable advice on how to become more mindful and skilled by doing something simple: write. As part of her own executive development program, Sheila hired an executive coach to enhance her leadership and communication skills.

When asked what was the most valuable pieces of advice she received from her executive coach, she indicated that it was journaling her thoughts and ideas immediately following her coming out of a meeting, completing an interview, or facilitating a work session. Sheila mentions that she gets personal insight and enhanced self-awareness from writing about how people react to her ideas and the questions they ask during a meeting. From journaling, Sheila learns more about how others perceive her style of management.[29]

To use this simple technique you don't need expensive equipment or the latest technological tools. Although you could record your observations on a blog, Facebook, or Twitter, you could be low tech and just keep a notebook and pen handy to record thoughts and observations. Keeping a journal of your ideas and impressions can help you be more observant and thoughtful. It can also enhance your awareness of yourself and others.

When starting a journal, your entries need not be lengthy or overly detailed. Just jot down observations about yourself, your feelings, moods, and ideas as well as your reflections about others. Making a conscious effort to write down your thoughts and observations can be an effective way not only to increase your self-awareness (Principle One); it also can enhance your writing skills as you practice describing what you observe and experience. Your writing skills improve as you continually work to develop your ability to write what you see, hear, and do.

In this chapter we've emphasized the importance of how you write messages to others. Also consider the value of writing to yourself to sharpen your communication and leadership talents.

14.4: Writing Business Documents

14.4 Illustrate procedures and formats for different types of business documents.

As a leader, you will be responsible for organizing and developing a number of business documents, including memorandums (more commonly known as memos), progress and activity reports, sales proposals, and formal reports. This section outlines the basic components of each type of document as well as considerations for their appropriate use. The sample documents provided are only guidelines; organizations may have their own procedures and formats for the various types of business documents.

14.4.1: Memos

A *memo* is a short and usually informal written communication to others within an organization. Memos are used as reminders or to pass along information. Memos can be as simple as a sentence written on a sticky note, but they are usually printed on company letterhead. An example of a memo appears in Figure 14.3. Although there is no standard format for memos, they should generally contain at least some form of each of the following elements:[30]

HEADING The heading should note the sender and the recipient, the date, and the subject. Ensure that all names of individuals who need to receive the memo are included following the word *TO*. If the subject of the memo is relevant to only one person, do not send the memo to the entire office. Also, be certain that material is not too sensitive to put in a memo; sometimes a face-to-face conversation or a phone call is preferable. For example, a memo is an inappropriate way to notify employees of a layoff. Memos are most effective when they communicate company or job objectives, such as a change in a standard procedure or a department reorganization.

BODY Although a memo's length can vary, depending on the content, a good rule is to keep it under one page. Many organizations have standard memo formats, so it's best to check with your organization first and follow established standards.

CLOSING Most memos don't require the standard signature you would find in a letter or other correspondence. It is helpful, however, to include notation of any attachments and a list of people who received copies of the memo. When considering who within the organization should receive copies of your memo, keep in mind that in most companies this can be a highly political issue. Send copies only to those who need the information.

Figure 14.3: Sample Memo

TRH Incorporated

TO: Kay Marquez, Service Manager
FROM: Stephanie Ramos, Local Store Marketer
DATE: May 17, 20XX
SUBJECT: Opportunity for local ad campaign

TRH has been offered an opportunity to participate in a local advertising campaign in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce's "Local Tastes" program.

"Local Tastes" is an annual program featuring community restaurants and other businesses, including a two-week mailer campaign and events at local stores. This campaign culminates in a well-attended day-long event at the convention center featuring products from each participating business.

Participating businesses will be featured on a front page of the mailer, get a 30-second spot with a local news outlet, and be given a booth with banner at the "Local Tastes" event on July 3.

I think this would be an excellent opportunity to get the company recognized in the community and interact with the Chamber of Commerce as well as work with other businesses in the area.

Please respond by May 25 with a decision regarding participating in this event. I need to respond to the Chamber of Commerce and turn in a deposit by June 1.

cc: Juan Brown, Managing Partner

14.4.2: Progress and Activity Reports

A *progress report* gives updates on the status of a project. Most project reports are generated by a company that has been contracted to do a particular job or provide a service. In such cases, it is appropriate to submit project reports at regular intervals to communicate the project's status and keep all personnel on task.[31] Although the format for project reports varies depending on the project, the policies of the organization providing the report, and the requirements of the client or customer, all reports should maintain the same format for any particular project. Progress reports may contain information about whether a project is within budget. If you anticipate going over budget, mention that and discuss some possible reasons and solutions. A progress report should also include information about how the work is progressing—what has been completed as well as what is anticipated. If you expect you may not complete the work on schedule, discuss this in the progress report and explain what arrangements need to be made to complete the project. Figure 14.4 shows an example of a progress report.

When communicating the status of a project within an organization, an activity report is most appropriate. An *activity report* is a document that communicates progress and achievements to others within an organization or on a team. Most activity reports give information on the status of one or several ongoing projects. If several departments are working on the same project, a manager may combine all the activity reports; the combined reports could be the basis for a progress report to send to a client. Activity reports are typically issued regularly (biweekly or monthly in most organizations) and normally do not require a formal structure because the material is familiar to the readers. Although progress reports and activity reports contain similar content, they differ in audience and often in tone. Progress reports are most often written to clients or an audience outside the organization, and they are more formal; an activity report is commonly an internal document, with a less formal structure and tone.

14.4.3: Sales Proposals

A *sales proposal* is a document intended to persuade possible clients of their need for your product or service. An effective sales proposal demonstrates to prospective clients that they have a problem and your product or service will

Figure 14.4: Sample Progress Report

Date: August 17, 20XX
To: Juan Brown, Managing Partner, TRH Inc.
From: Mike Caro, NuSheen Services
Subject: Progress Report for July 1–29, 20XX

Dear Mr. Brown,

I am happy to say the parking lot and building refinishing project is on schedule. At this point we are somewhat over budget in terms of materials, but I am confident we will finish early enough to save you money in labor costs.

Costs: The truck rental went over cost by approximately $1700 because of two extra days' rental. The other materials are costing out at the price originally quoted to you.

Work Completed: The building has now been completely refinished. Work on the outside work area and parking lot still needs to be completed.

Work Schedule: With the addition of two crew members, we should be able to complete the work by August 30.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

help to solve that problem. The writer of a sales proposal must first determine the selling points, or the most attractive features of the product or service, and then construct a document that clearly illustrates these points. The proposal should highlight the specific benefits that customers will receive from the use of the product or service. For example, the owner of a landscaping business might notice that a local restaurant is surrounded by dry dead grass and overgrown shrubbery. In a proposal offering landscaping services, the business owner would try to persuade the restaurant manager of the appeal of a well-kept, lush, green exterior and convince him that landscaping could increase his bottom line.

Keep in mind that in many states, sales proposals are *legally binding documents*, which means that any incentives or benefits offered in the sales proposal must be reasonable and must be delivered as promised.[32] It is not uncommon for organizations to be sued over failing to deliver on the promises offered in a persuasive sales proposal.[33]

If you choose to use a former client's testimony or image in a sales proposal, make sure you have permission to do so and that you have not fabricated the testimony. For example, if the landscaping business owner wanted to include comments from current or former customers about the quality of her company's landscaping work in her sales proposal, she would first need to get the customers' permission in writing to use the testimony or pictures of the work in the proposal. Following are some guidelines for creating an effective sales proposal that is adapted to the needs of the client.

OUTLINE THE PROBLEM Although you may have already discussed the problem with the client, a good sales proposal reminds the potential client of the problem and a need for some solution. Include any requirements the client has mentioned, such as for cost or procedure. Keep your message client focused, aligning yourself with the client's needs.

DISCUSS YOUR APPROACH Your sales proposal should discuss exactly what you suggest as an effective solution to the problem. Discuss what particularly needs to be done and how those actions will address the problem. Discuss as well why you and your organization are the best choice for implementing this solution. Mention any support and training you will provide (if necessary) and guarantees you offer on your work or products. The landscaping company owner, for example, could discuss what type of vegetation she proposes to plant around the restaurant, how the plants might be combined and arranged, and possibly a contract for continuing maintenance to keep the outside looking well tended.

DESCRIBE THE BENEFITS Although they may seem obvious, it is a good idea to identify for the client the biggest benefits of your proposal. Indirect outcomes such as an increase in customer base or employee morale should be outlined. The landscaping business owner could describe what a well-maintained exterior communicates to customers and other business owners about the restaurant. Keep in mind, however, that this section should not promise anything that may not be within your power to fulfill. You can expose yourself and your organization to legal consequences if promised benefits are not realized.

MENTION SCHEDULE AND COSTS A sales proposal should outline a proposed schedule and cost estimate. These things will later be detailed more formally in a contract but should be discussed in a sales proposal so there will be no surprises later. The restaurant manager may expect the job to start tomorrow and be completed in two days; the landscaping company owner needs to communicate clearly about whether that timeline fits with her schedule. Most clients will not be willing to move on to the contract stage of the process without a clear outline of proposed costs and schedule.

14.4.4: Formal Reports

A *formal report* is a highly detailed and comprehensive report on an ongoing project or a completed project that is often coauthored by several writers. For example, if you were implementing new procedures in your organization over a 12-month period, you might send out a status report midway through the implementation process to those affected by the changes. Once the implementation process was completed, you would send out a final report detailing the process and the effectiveness of the implementation. Reports are more strictly formatted than most other forms of business correspondence, and the format varies according to company policies. Reports are divided into three main parts: the front matter, the body, and the back matter. Each part contains several elements whose order and length vary according to company recommendations. Following are basic descriptions of the components of a formal report.[34]

FRONT MATTER Front matter consists of those aspects of a report that come at the beginning and serve to prepare the reader for the main information. The report title, the authors' names, lists of the report's contents, and a brief summary should all be a part of the front matter.

- **TITLE PAGE.** A title page contains the full title of the report, a list of the writers' or researchers' names, date(s) of the report, the organizational affiliations of the writers, and the organization to which the report is being submitted.
- **ABSTRACT.** An abstract is a summary (two or three paragraphs) that highlights the major points of the report.
- **TABLE OF CONTENTS.** This should list all the major sections of the report along with page numbers.
- **LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES.**
- **FOREWORD OR PREFACE.** A foreword is an optional introductory statement about the report written by someone other than the authors; a preface is an introduction written by an author.

BODY The body of a formal report contains the main information in the report, including the reasons for researching the topic, how it was researched, and what was discovered.

- **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.** This summary provides a more complete overview than the abstract.
- **INTRODUCTION.** The introduction provides readers with the report's purpose and scope.
- **TEXT.** The text presents details on how the topic was researched.
- **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.** This section discusses the findings of the research and consequent recommendations that are offered. Conclusions may be discussed in a separate section from recommendations.

BACK MATTER *Back matter* refers to those components of a report that traditionally come at the end of the report, after the main body, and that provide further detail and references.

- **APPENDIXES.** Any appendixes clarify or supplement information in the body of the report with information that is detailed or lengthy and is not necessarily relevant to all audiences.
- **BIBLIOGRAPHY.** This is an alphabetical list of all the sources that were cited and consulted in researching the report.
- **GLOSSARY.** This is an alphabetical list of terms and their definitions.
- **INDEX.** An index is an alphabetical list of all the major topics and subtopics discussed in a report, citing page numbers in the report where the reader can find those discussions.

If you work for an organization that requires you to write regular formal reports, it is a good idea to use a word-processing program style sheet to create a format for the report. You can then save it as a template and create future reports with the same format. You won't have to refigure font styles and sizes, margins, and the like.

Leaders have many opportunities to write various kinds of business documents. Letters are generally more formal and addressed to those outside the organization. Memos and activity reports are common interoffice communication forms. Progress reports, sales proposals, and formal reports are common business documents that most leaders will frequently compose or help to compose.

Summary: Writing for Business

14.1: Report some of the factors that make good business writing.

Problem-solution development begins with a description of a problem and moves on to discuss possible solutions or a proposed solution to the problem.

Chronological or sequential organizational pattern begins with the first in a series of events or steps and moves on to the second, third, and so on. This organization pattern allows you to report on events or steps in the order in which they occurred or will occur.

Priority development focuses on the most urgent or important information first, then moves on to less important or urgent information.

General-to-specific development is a format that allows you to begin with the big picture and move on to specific details. When preparing a sales proposal, for example, you may want to start by discussing the overall goals and move on toward the specifics of the product or service you are offering.

14.2: Examine how appropriate use of technology and email at the workplace enhances the image of the organization.

Be concise by keeping messages brief and to the point. Correct writing doesn't have to be lengthy. It's also important to use proper letter case. Using all capital letters gives the impression you're shouting; using all lowercase letters gives the impression you're either whispering or lazy.

Use courtesy copy (CC) to keep others informed. Use blind copy (BCC) only when you prefer to keep recipients from seeing who else received a copy of your email message.

When sending a new email, always include the important and pertinent information in the subject line.

When sending email, use proper grammar and punctuation. Just because the channel is less formal does not mean the writing can be sloppy.

Employees have been fired for using email inappropriately (e.g., forwarding items with sexual or off-color content) or for personal use, so consider the appropriateness of your content.

Don't use email as an excuse for not communicating through more appropriate channels of communication.

14.3: Describe how to write effective and appropriate business letters.

Business correspondence refers to business letters sent to customers, coworkers, superiors, and subordinates. Effective business correspondence includes developing goodwill. A good way to build goodwill is to keep correspondence audience focused. Put simply, adapt to your reader. Rather than saying "We need to see a receipt before we can process a return or exchange of the merchandise," say "You may receive a full refund or exchange of the merchandise if you mail or fax a receipt." Always include standard elements, return address, inside address, salutation, body, and closing in business correspondence. Deliver bad news gently and courteously, and structure all correspondence in a standard format. A common format for correspondence is the full-block, or standard letter style.

14.4: Illustrate procedures and formats for different types of business documents.

Progress reports outlines the status of a project for a customer or a client. Activity reports communicate progress on a project or achievement to others in an organization or team. Formal reports are highly detailed and comprehensive and document ongoing projects or completed projects, and they are often coauthored by several writers.

SHARED WRITING: WRITING EFFECTIVE COMPLAINT LETTERS

Think of a time when you were dissatisfied with either a service or a product. Draft a complaint letter, focusing on the suggestions for complaint letters mentioned in this chapter. Exchange letters with a classmate and critique each other's letters.

▶ A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post   0 characters | 140 minimum

Chapter 14 Quiz: Writing for Business

Appendix

Managing Time: Managing Communication

Learning Objectives

A.1 Define time management and conduct a personal time audit.

A.2 Recognize the importance of developing clear and well-written goals and objectives as the first step toward efficient communication.

A.3 Identify the need to develop a master list to perform the tasks at hand.

A.4 Analyze the two basic questions to effectively prioritize work.

A.5 Review the importance of planning for potential work interruptions.

A.6 Recognize the power of reflection to be an important strategy for taking action.

A.7 Apply strategies to increase work efficiency.

It was Mark Twain who wrote, "Never put off until tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow." Based on the number of projects that many of us postpone and the piles of work that sometimes accumulate on our desks, many of us seem to agree with Mr. Twain. Few people in business and organizational settings claim to be underworked or to have too much time on their hands. Just the opposite is true. There never seems to be enough time to accomplish all of the tasks on our to do lists—that is, assuming we make to do lists. This chapter is about not only techniques for managing our to do lists but also some broad principles to help us manage our time.

A.1: Understand Time Management

A.1 Define time management and conduct a personal time audit.

Some people appear to accomplish more work than others. What do they know that helps them enhance their efficiency and effectiveness? They understand how to manage time—or so it would appear. But is time really something that can be managed? We all have the same number of seconds, minutes, and hours in a day. Time is a fixed commodity. We believe that it's not *time* that needs to be managed but something else. It probably won't surprise you that the something else is *communication*. As we noted in the early parts of this book, you spend more time communicating with others each day than you do in any other activity. We believe that the best way to enhance your work productivity is through a careful examination of how you communicate with others.

Time management is the use of techniques for analyzing and prioritizing goals and objectives in order to increase efficiency and productivity. By efficiently managing what you spend most of your time doing (communicating), you'll increase your productivity. By increasing your productivity, you will enhance your ability to lead others. Leaders who manage their time well are also better able to manage their communication with others. It takes time to manage the myriad messages that leaders manage, and how you manage incoming and outgoing messages is central to increasing work efficiency.

Although this appendix draws on principles and practices of time management experts, it emphasizes the role of communication in overall work efficiency. Here is a summary of the essential time management/communication management strategies:

- First, it's vital to identify your goals and objectives. Without a clear sense of what you wish to accomplish, it will be harder to manage your time and communication to attain those goals.
- Second, it's important to make a master list of the tasks you need to accomplish to achieve your goals.

- Third, it's not enough to compile a comprehensive list of your tasks; you need to develop priorities. Determining what you need to do first, second, third, and so on is a key element in effectively managing your time and your communication.
- Fourth, life is punctuated with interruptions. Someone who effectively manages time anticipates potential interruptions and has developed a strategy for working through or around them.
- Finally, you can have goals, make lists, prioritize, and even anticipate interruptions, but unless you take action—turn your plans into behavior—you'll likely see little benefit. So the final task in effectively managing your time is to turn plans into action.

Even without reading this appendix, you probably have a good sense of what a good time manager does, as well as what people do who are less skilled in efficiently managing their time. Table A.1 lists the results of a survey that identified the top-ten time wasters. To help you get a sense of the time management issues that confront you, make a note of the behaviors on the list that you have found yourself doing. Note how many of the time wasters relate to how we communicate with others. Whether it's the phone, email, text messages, visitors, meetings, socializing, or explicitly poor communication, most of those factors recognized as time wasters are linked directly or indirectly to how we communicate with others. A first step to improving your response to those obstacles is being aware of those behaviors that decrease productivity.

Table A.1: The Ten Biggest Time Wasters[1]

1.	Management by crisis
2.	Telephone/email interruptions
3.	Inadequate planning
4.	Attempting too much
5.	Drop-in visitors
6.	Ineffective delegation
7.	Personal disorganization
8.	Lack of self-discipline
9.	Inability to say no
10.	Procrastination

Besides noting time wasters that you may be guilty of from time to time, another way to increase your awareness of your time-management competence is to conduct a time audit. Take a moment to complete the time audit in Rating Scale A.1. The scale lists common activities and indicates a target amount of time for each. You may or may not agree with the targets, but they give you something with which to compare your own time estimates. Estimate how much time you spend in a 24-hour period doing each activity listed. (Round your estimates to quarter or half hours.) Then review your estimates to determine if you're comfortable with the time you currently spend on these tasks. If you'd like to spend more time doing an activity, such as sleeping or pursuing a hobby, draw an arrow pointing up next to that activity. If you want to spend less time performing an activity, such as commuting or watching TV, draw an arrow pointing down. Your time management audit can begin to reveal how you'd like to spend your time on a typical day.

Rating Scale A.1: Where Your Time Goes[2]

Daily Activity (Monday–Friday)	Number of Hours Target	Actual
Utility Time		
Sleeping	8	
Bathing, Dressing	½	
Eating	1½	
Traveling/Commuting	1½	
Total Utility Time	11½	
Employment/Academic Time		
Working/Studying/Attending Classes/Teaching	8	
Breaks	½	
Waiting	¼	
Socializing	¼	
Total Employment Time	9	
Discretionary (Leisure) Time		
Watching TV	1	
Athletic and Health Activities	½	
Hobbies, Housework	1	
Family and Social Activities	1	
Total Discretionary Time	3½	
Total	**24**	**24**

A.2: Develop Written Goals and Objectives

A.2 Recognize the importance of developing clear and well-written goals and objectives as the first step toward efficient communication.

Just as you need a map or a GPS to help you get where you're going when you travel, you also need a map of your work destinations. You need to establish goals and objectives to clearly identify where you want to go. Being able to develop clear and well-written goals and objectives is the first step in working and communicating more efficiently.[3]

Develop Goals

A *goal* is a clear statement that identifies what you'd like to accomplish in the future. Achieving a goal typically involves accomplishing several short-term tasks. Some time-management experts recommend that you develop a personal goal statement of your mission in life.[4] A personal goal statement prescribes outcomes you'd like to accomplish, such as earning a college degree, becoming more philanthropic, or becoming the chief executive officer of your company. Although it can be a challenge to clearly identify your long-term goals, it's worth the effort and thought. Taking time to become aware of your goals is one of your most important time/communication management tools. Here are some examples of goal statements:

- Within the next two years I would like to complete my MBA degree.
- Within the next four years I would like to have a major leadership position at a Fortune 500 company on the West Coast.
- By the end of the year, our department should have completed transferring our records from the old electronic filing system to the new cloud-based filing system.

Each of these goals articulates long-term outcomes that involve multiple steps and processes. To complete these steps, you are likely to need objectives.

Develop Objectives

An *objective,* like a goal, identifies what you'd like to achieve, but an objective is more immediate than a goal. Completing a specific task by the end of the day or week, making a purchase, and writing a report for your boss are examples of objectives.

A well-worded objective meets four criteria: it is specific, measurable, attainable, and observable—you can remember these criteria using the acronym SOMA.[5]

- **SPECIFIC.** An objective should precisely and clearly identify what you'd like to achieve.
- **MEASURABLE.** Your objective should be able to be assessed or measured; you need to be able to determine whether the objective has been accomplished.
- **ATTAINABLE.** Appropriate objectives are realistic; they can be accomplished given the resources that you have or can obtain.
- **OBSERVABLE.** A well-written objective should be stated in terms of an observable behavior, such as completing a report or project.

A key to developing well-worded objectives is to ensure that you use action verbs, such as *write*, *read*, or *complete*, that clearly indicate what you must *do* to accomplish your objective. Also, it helps to specify a time when you'd like to have the objective completed. Note the following examples:

- By the end of the week, I will finish writing the report about the proposed merger project.
- By the end of the month, I will make fifteen cold sales calls and follow up on each call with a letter to each potential customer.
- By the end of the year, I will complete sixty hours of required training to maintain my general education equivalent requirements.

Each of these objectives meets our four criteria (each is specific, measurable, attainable, and observable) and includes verbs that specify action steps (*write* a report, *make* sales calls, *complete* training).

Time management expert David Allen believes that the best way to begin accomplishing goals and objectives is to identify the next specific action step that you could take to implement the outcome you'd like to achieve.[6] For example, if you want to complete a report by the end of the week, what is the next precise action step you should take? Perhaps that action step is as simple as going to your computer, turning it on, and beginning to write. Or perhaps you need to make a phone call to a colleague to get data that you will include in the report. Whatever it is, identifying the precise task and making a written note of that next step may be just the prompt you need to take action.

A.3: Make a Master List

A.3 Identify the need to develop a master list to perform the tasks at hand.

Once you have identified what you need to accomplish, combine all of your objectives into a comprehensive master list. If you only had one goal or objective to achieve, you wouldn't need to make a list. But most of us have many tasks and projects to juggle. A written list helps you remain aware of what needs to be done.

Time management experts suggest a variety of ways to make and keep lists. Your list can be as simple as a handwritten list on a piece of notebook paper. Some time management experts suggest using a day calendar that incorporates space to make lists as you keep your daily appointments.[7] Most cell phones permit you to make notes and lists and remind you of the projects and tasks on your to do list. We believe there is no single best system for making a list that works for everyone. Whether you make your list on sticky notes, store it on your computer or phone, or write it on notebook paper, the key is to develop a system that you will use. *Have some system* *of tracking your various tasks and projects in an easy-to-use, easy-to-read format that you regularly review*. Here are other suggestions to help you make a master list of your tasks and projects:

- **WRITE IT DOWN.** All time management experts seem to agree that your list of objectives and tasks should be a written list. It's not enough just to think about what you need to do. As we've mentioned, the format doesn't matter, as long as you have some system of tracking the various tasks on your list.
- **CROSS IT OFF.** Whatever system you use for listing your tasks, it's important to be able to cross a task off the list once you've completed it.
- **CONSOLIDATE ITEMS WHEN APPROPRIATE.** If you can bundle several related tasks, you're more likely to tackle them. The goal is not to make your master list lengthy but to make it manageable.
- **REVIEW YOUR LIST.** It does no good to have a master list of your projects and tasks unless you look at it. One good habit is to look at your list at least twice daily: as you begin your workday and at the conclusion of your day. You are more likely to use your list if you keep it someplace where you can look at it frequently throughout the day.
- **SCHEDULE TASKS ON YOUR LIST AT YOUR BEST TIMES.** Are you a morning person? A morning person views the first half of the day as the best half and is at his or her best then. Maybe you work best late at night. Regardless of when your peak working hours are, schedule your work to correspond to those times to the extent possible.

A.4: Prioritize Your Work

A.4 Analyze the two basic questions to effectively prioritize work.

Now that you have identified both your larger goals and your immediate objectives and you have a system for keeping track of your tasks by making a master list, determine your work priorities. Several time management experts suggest that one of the best ways to establish your priorities is to analyze the tasks on your list by asking yourself two questions:

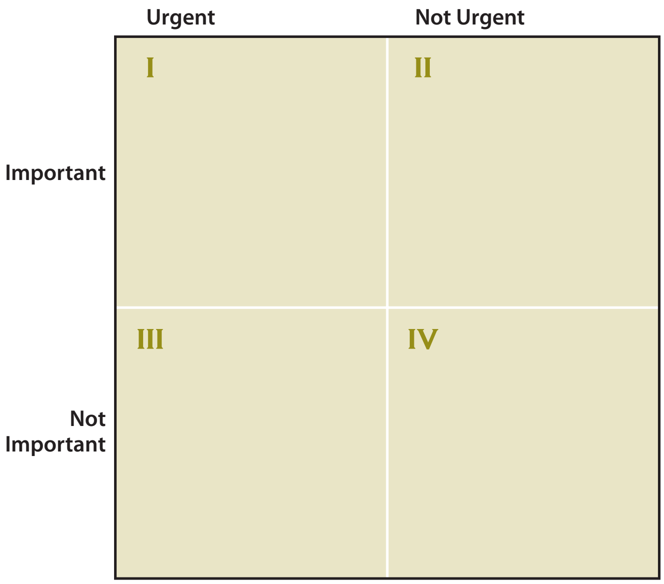
1. How urgent is this task?
2. How important is this task?[8]

IS IT URGENT? Urgency is about time. Something is urgent if it is time sensitive. Urgent messages or urgent tasks are things that someone believes must be accomplished sooner rather than later. One problem is that what other people may perceive as urgent may actually not be urgent to you. So your challenge as you review the many ways you could spend your time is to decide how urgent a task is. Similarly, some things others may ask you to do are urgent but not important to you. That leads to the next key question.

IS IT IMPORTANT? A task is important if it helps you accomplish your goals and objectives. If you have not thought about your goals and objectives, then it will be difficult to determine what is important and what is not.

As shown in Figure A.1, you can sort any work task according to its urgency and importance. Increasing your awareness of the tasks on your list as important or urgent can help you determine your work and communication priorities.

Figure A.1: Identifying What Is Urgent and Important



The use of technology to increase the speed at which we receive and send messages can create "unimportant urgency." This is not to say that technology can't help us increase our productivity—of course it can. But modern technology—email, cell phones, iPads,—can increase the speed and thus the *perceived* urgency of some messages that may not be urgent at all. Another factor that increases a sense of urgency is being overbooked and making too many commitments to others that we can't keep. That one more thing may not be all that time consuming, but it may induce greater stress and perceived urgency because we just can't fit it in.

URGENT AND IMPORTANT You probably don't have to worry about whether you will accomplish something that is both urgent and important. If you get an emergency call from your boss who asks you to help with an important project, you don't need to check a master list to determine if this task is something that you'll do. Given that the task is both time sensitive and important (because it comes from your immediate supervisor), you'll no doubt give it immediate attention.

IMPORTANT AND NOT URGENT One of the ways to increase your performance and work quality is to make a conscious effort to spend time on the important but not urgent tasks. Most of us have a tendency to avoid these tasks because there is no immediate need to complete them. What effective, productive leaders and managers know that unproductive people don't know is that you *must* spend time on important but nonurgent work. For example, developing your goals and objectives and making a master list of your projects and tasks are examples of important yet not urgent tasks. Some important but nonurgent tasks not only affect your work—they also affect your health. Getting exercise, for example, is an example of an important but nonurgent task. One way to have time for these tasks is to schedule it; make an appointment to spend time doing important things, even though they are not urgent.

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Take Time to Think

One well-known insurance company used the advertising slogan "Life comes at you fast." Life does indeed come at us at a fast clip—sometimes so fast that there is little time just to think and reflect. *Reflection is one of your most powerful leadership tools.* To help slow down the pace of life, Cristobal Conde, president and CEO of SunGard, the world's leading software and technology services company, makes sure he has ample time just to think. Here's his advice:

> I need an hour and a half once a day where I can go somewhere that doesn't have a PC or a phone, unless I choose to spend that hour and a half writing. But it's not just managing e-mails and stuff like that. I need an hour and a half to think. And it could be anything.
>
> Sometimes it gets cut short. But many topics or issues can only be dealt with in an uninterrupted format. I worry about our entry-level people—they're bombarded with information, and they never get to think.[9]

You don't have to be a company president and CEO to take time to think. It's one of those important but not urgent tasks that can make the difference between living life at a hurried, scatterbrained pace or being able to tackle projects in a thoughtful, systematic, mindful manner. The best way to have time to think and reflect about your work (and your life) is to schedule time for this important activity. Make a conscious effort to block out time just to think, prioritize your work, and make life plans for both your immediate and long-term future. Work smarter, not harder.

URGENT AND NOT IMPORTANT The tricky part of managing your time and your communication comes when someone who is not your immediate supervisor views a task as urgent but it's not important to you. Having a sense of what is important (based on your own goals and objectives rather than someone else's) will help you sort through whether you should take action on the task or not. You'll no doubt receive phone calls and email messages relating to tasks that someone else views as urgent and that must be accomplished soon, but that may not be all that important to you. A key in setting priorities is to sort through what is really important and what is really urgent, given all of the tasks on your master list.

NOT URGENT AND NOT IMPORTANT Finally, there are some things you do that are neither urgent nor important. These time wasters can include things like watching YouTube, mindlessly surfing the Internet, or playing computer solitaire. We're not suggesting that you eliminate these activities—if they truly help you relax and recharge your mental and physical batteries then by all means enjoy them. The problem comes when we find ourselves engaging in activities that aren't, in the long run, edifying or helpful—they just waste time; those are the activities to remove from our daily routines.

A.5: Manage Interruptions

A.5 Review the importance of planning for the potential work interruptions.

Stuff happens. Interruptions can range from a phone call, to a text message that you feel you need to check, to someone poking her head in your door to ask if you've got "a minute" to talk. In the daily course of doing your work, these are normal and expected. The problem comes when you have not developed a plan to manage these interruptions. Unless your job is to answer the phone, you may not need to immediately take every phone call you receive. Unless your job is to serve as a receptionist, you may not need to accommodate everyone who stops by for information. Even the paperwork that streams across your desk can interrupt your work productivity.

People who are less productive have not developed a plan for managing the data, information, and messages that come their way. As noted previously, it's not time that we manage but communication. Developing a system for managing the routine interruptions and distractions you encounter can help boost your productivity.

Manage Messages: Time Management Principles

Before we suggest tips for managing specific distractions and interruptions, let's discuss some general time management principles that can help you process the volume of verbal and nonverbal messages that will come to your attention.

BATCH YOUR WORK To batch your work is to group your tasks so that you budget time to do one kind of thing at a time. For example, it's more efficient to respond to several email messages at a time—in one batch—than to respond to each email message as it arrives. Similarly, schedule a period in your workday to return phone calls rather than hopping from one task to another. Of course, if a phone call or email is both urgent and important (a call from your boss, for example), you should respond immediately. But many routine messages can wait until they can be batched to be managed more efficiently.

DO YOUR WORK ONCE There are really only three options for handling any given task:

- **DO IT.** Respond to the request for action or information.
- **DELEGATE IT.** If you are a supervisor or have staff support, you could assign the task to others.
- **DELETE IT.** Some messages, such as some junk email messages, do not need a response.[10]

The most common but least efficient response to incoming work is to just stack it in a pile and assume that you'll get to it someday. Before you know it, you'll have a stack of "stuff" that can clutter up your work life. "Stuff," according to time management expert David Allen, is anything that is not related to any specific goal or action step.[11] It's best to make a decision about each work chore when it hits your in basket: do it, delegate it, or delete it.

ORGANIZE YOUR WORKSPACE Another way to increase your efficiency is to have everything at hand that you need to do your work. The tools, supplies, sources of information, and anything else you need to do your work should be within easy grasp. If you have to hunt for paper clips, tape, notepads, a pen, or other resources that you typically use, you lose time.

USE A REMINDER FILE Instead of missing deadlines and being surprised by due dates, develop a reminder file or a system for tracking project due dates. Most computers, cell phones, iPads, and other electronic tools can be programmed to remind you of deadlines. If a project is large and complex, you may want to provide update reminders several days or weeks before the project is due, to remind yourself of what you should have accomplished by those dates in order to remain on schedule.

Manage Electronic Messages

Email and text messages can dramatically increase your efficiency because it makes it so easy to send information, documents, or files to people who need them. But many people can find themselves buried by the avalanche of text messages and email messages that pour into their electronic in-boxes each day. If you miss a day of work, the next day you may find yourself overwhelmed by the email to which you need to respond. The ever-present nature of text messages often makes it hard to escape from them. Messages we receive on social media such as Twitter and Facebook can also intrude on our time if not mindfully managed.

SET ASIDE A SPECIFIC TIME OF DAY TO CHECK MESSAGES Unless it's part of your job to immediately respond to email messages, use the principle of batching tasks (previously described). We don't recommend setting your email program to notify you every time you receive an email; you may be tempted to see who just sent you a message rather than more efficiently processing your email in batches. Just as you shouldn't text and drive, you may also want to designate text-free time when you are not behind the wheel. Unless you are waiting on a specific or urgent message from someone, resist the temptation to look at every text message when it arrives on your phone. Do the same with Facebook: Consider designating certain times when you check your Facebook wall rather than reading every message when it arrives.

USE THE TWO-MINUTE RULE The email two-minute rule is this: If you can't respond to an email message in two minutes or less, wait to respond to it when you're responding to several email messages at the same time.[12] You can work more efficiently if you are working on the same kind of task (such as responding to email) than if you're checking email, deleting some messages, and then spending more than two minutes responding to others.

CREATE ACTION FILES If it takes more than two minutes to respond to or make a decision about what to do with an email message, create action files—files in your email system where you store messages to review later. At first it may seem as though we're encouraging procrastination, but we're actually encouraging more efficient management of your responses to messages.

A.5.1: Manage Paperwork

Email and electronic files were supposed to eliminate paper and paperwork, and some organizations have succeeded in stemming the rising tide of paper, but most workers still shuffle an ample amount of it.

Some of the most common paperwork problems include indecision about what to do with incoming paperwork (so it gets handled more than once), procrastination, failure to delegate work to others, keeping or filing documents that you really don't need, or the complete lack of a system for managing the paper parade. Here are several strategies that can help overcome these problems.

READ SOMETHING ONCE AND HANDLE IT ONCE After you read a document, decide what you want to do with it. Keeping it on your desk or carrying it around in your briefcase only means you'll eventually have to figure out what to do with the document. Make the decision to file it, throw it away, or delegate it to someone else the first time you read it.

DISPOSE OF WHAT YOU DON'T NEED AGAIN AFTER YOU READ IT One time-management expert estimates that 80 percent of the daily flow of paperwork can be read and thrown away, yet the typical reader disposes of about 20 percent.[13] Decide whether you really need to keep what hits your in-basket; it may improve your productivity if more of your paperwork hits your wastebasket.

DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR FILING WHAT YOU NEED A reason some people are clogged with paperwork is that they file things they really don't need. Don't over-file—avoid placing things in a permanent, long-term file that don't need to be there. If you do develop a short-term holding file, make sure documents don't stack up there. Purge the file of outdated and unneeded documents periodically.

DON'T PAPER HOP Not only should you read something just once; you also should avoid starting to read one document, then stopping and switching to a different document so that you're hopping from one document to the other. You may be praised for multi-tasking, but you'll waste time. You work more efficiently if you stay focused and stick to one task until you finish it.

#Technology and Communication @ Work

How Technology Can Help You Manage Time

You don't manage time—you manage what you do with your time: You manage your communication. The following are several apps and software programs that time management experts recommend to help you manage information and messages that you send and receive each day.[14]

- **XOBNI <XOBNI.COM>:** This free program helps you manage email messages and attachments.
- **MINDMANAGER <MINDJET.COM>:** This low-cost software program is based on the mind-mapping technique of making links between the ideas you develop. It provides tools to help you take notes and capture ideas while simultaneously helping you keep major projects in mind.
- **EVERNOTE <EVERNOTE.COM>:** If you currently use sticky notes or other methods to record ideas and information, this free software program can help you consolidate all of you scribbles in one place and also help you find what you've written.
- **RESCUETIME <RESCUETIME.COM>:** This free program help you keep track of what you do with your time while on the computer.
- **DROPBOX <GETDROPBOX.COM>:** This free software has app versions and lets you sync files among several computers so you don't have to hunt for a file on your desktop computer that may be on your laptop or tablet.
- **GOOGLE DOCS <GOOGLEDOCS.com>:** Similar to Dropbox, this software lets you manage documents so that you can access them on any computer, tablet, or phone.
- **FILECENTER <LUCION.COM>:** This program is a document management system that permits you to scan large amounts of paperwork so you can easily track where you've electronically filed it.

Manage the Telephone

A phone call is a classic example of an urgent but not important interruption. Obviously, some phone calls *are* important; and if your job requires you to answer the phone whenever you get a call, you should do so. But if your responsibilities give you some flexibility and freedom in responding to phone calls, you'll need to give careful thought to how you will manage incoming telephone calls. You often have a choice of when you return phone calls; some return calls can be made at your convenience. Here are several strategies to help you manage telephone calls.[15]

RETURN NONURGENT CALLS IN BATCHES Rather than intermittently returning calls throughout the day, you'll work more efficiently if you set aside a time of the day to return phone calls.

COMMUNICATE YOUR PHONE AVAILABILITY TO OTHERS When you've called someone and the person you want to speak with is not available, leave your name and phone number and indicate when it would be best for the person to call you. If someone takes phone messages for you, have that person find out the best time for you to return the call.

KNOW HOW TO END A PHONE CALL TACTFULLY It may seem to happen when you're at your busiest: Callers want to chat or prolong a phone call. You don't want to be rude, so you listen, and listening is both a virtue and a vital communication skill that we've emphasized throughout this book. But an equally important skill is to know how to politely and tactfully end a phone call that's neither important nor urgent. We can suggest three termination strategies:

- Identify your time limits when you begin the call. For example, say "Frank, it's good to hear from you. I have about ten minutes right now. Is that enough time for our conversation?" If the time frame you suggest isn't enough, you may need to schedule the call at another time.
- Signal that you'd like to end the call soon. You might say "Roberta, before we end our visit, I have one more thing to say" or "Before we conclude, do you have any more suggestions?"
- Be honest about your need to end the call. "Steve, I'm sorry, but I have a meeting in a few minutes that I need to attend."

DEVELOP A PHONE CALL SCREENING SYSTEM This advice won't apply to you if your job is to be the phone screener (if you're a receptionist, for example), but if you don't have a way of screening your calls, develop one; you need some way of knowing who is calling so that you can make it your choice whether or not to answer the phone. If you have a receptionist, tell him or her when you're available for calls and when you're not. Many, if not most, phone systems and nearly all mobile phones include caller ID; use this information to decide whether to take a call or let your voice-message system take it for you. You may find it helpful to designate a "quiet hour" during part of each day, during which you don't take calls (unless they are from your boss or customers). Of course, you'll have to customize these suggestions to fit your job and workplace culture, but the key to managing incoming calls is to be aware of the need to do so and then develop a system that works for you and your situation.

A.5.2: Manage Unscheduled Visitors

"Do you have a minute?" The person who pokes his head in your office or cubicle probably needs more than a minute. These "minute" conversations can sap your time and energy and reduce your work productivity. Rather than emails or phone calls, it may be people who interrupt your work rhythm most frequently. Yet most jobs involve being available to respond to people who need your help. People stop by because they need to see you in person. But if you always have an open door, you may find that it's difficult to balance responding to the immediate presence of someone who needs to speak with you and attending to the volume of work that needs your attention.

For many of us, one of the primary reasons drop-by visitors erode work efficiency is because we have no system for managing when or how to respond to visitors. Here are some communication management strategies to help you balance the need for separateness and the need for connection that are integral to most jobs.

FIND A QUIET PLACE TO WORK ON TASKS THAT NEED YOUR FULL CONCENTRATION Rather than doing all of your work at your desk, consider finding a place where you can work independently, even if it's only for a half hour or an hour. Taking your laptop to a quiet corner in the company cafeteria, or finding an empty conference room where you can work undisturbed, may let you reclaim the solitude that you need to accomplish a task that needs your uninterrupted concentration.

VERBALLY COMMUNICATE YOUR AVAILABILITY TO OTHERS Set aside specific blocks of times for communicating in person. Let your colleagues and customers know the best times for you to meet with them.

USE NONVERBAL CUES TO SIGNAL YOUR AVAILABILITY TO OTHERS The more readily colleagues can establish eye contact with you, the more likely it is they will stop to visit. If your office has a door, you may need to close it from time to time to express your desire not to be interrupted. If you work in a cubicle and have no door, face away from the opening to your workspace, if possible. Some people without doors have posted signs to indicate when they are available and when they may not be available even though they are present in their workspace. (However, before implementing this strategy, consider the organizational culture of your workplace: whether it is formal or informal and how others may react to such signs.) The key is to make sure that you are in control of communication regulatory cues. Since it's often nonverbal cues that indicate whether or not we are available to communicate, monitor the nonverbal messages you and your office arrangement signal to others.

POLITELY BUT ASSERTIVELY END CONVERSATIONS OR LET OTHERS KNOW THAT YOU ARE BUSY When someone wants to see you, it can be hard not to be seen. A person's physical presence is a nonverbal cue of immediacy or urgency. But there are times when you may need to politely end a conversation or redirect your visitor to someone else. Here are some strategies to help limit or end conversations:

- When someone comes into your workspace, stand to greet the person. Remain standing to signal that you're not inviting the person in for a long chat. Not everyone will pick up on this subtle cue, but by standing rather than sitting, you are indicating nonverbally that you expect the conversation to be short.
- Meet people in their office or workspace rather than yours. If you are in someone else's office, you are less likely to get involved in a long conversation from which you can't escape. When the meeting is in your office, you have nowhere else to go.
- Verbally communicate how much time you have for a visit. Let others know what your time limits are. You might say "Janice, I'm due at a meeting in ten minutes. Can we discuss this issue in that time?" We're not suggesting that you lie about meetings or other appointments to avoid conversations, but do honestly let others know of your time parameters.
- If you have an administrative assistant, ask him or her to announce when your next appointment is, which will help you signal the need to end a meeting.
- Verbally signal that your time is up. You can use many of the same verbal signals you use to end phone calls. By saying "Do you have any final observations before we conclude our visit?" you send a clear message that your time is limited. For some people, you may need to be even more explicit: "Ken, I'm sorry, but I have to conclude our meeting."

A.6: Take Action

A.6 Recognize the power of reflection to be an important strategy for taking action.

Having goals and objectives, making a master list, prioritizing your work, and managing interruptions won't be enough to achieve increased productivity unless you act. The final element in managing your time and managing communication in order to increase your efficiency is to turn your plans into action.

One strategy that can help you take appropriate action to accomplish your goals and objectives is to use the power of reflection. Reflection is one of your most powerful time management/communication management tools. When you reflect, you take time for an important but not urgent task: to review what you need to do next.

The worksheet in Rating Scale A.2 can guide your reflection as you think about how to improve your time management. It lists common time- and communication-management problems. As emphasized at the beginning of this appendix, becoming aware of what keeps you from achieving your work goals is the starting place for taking concrete steps to working more efficiently. Review the list and identify the problems you need to address immediately. Once you have distilled what you perceive as the biggest obstacles to your success, review the material in this appendix and identify specific action steps that you can take to address these problems.

Rating Scale A.2: Classifying Time Problems[16]

Study the list of time problems carefully. Place a check mark in the blank beside each one that is applicable to you.

Personal Habits and Attitudes	General Organizational Environment
_____ Personal disorganization	_____ Too many meetings
_____ Lack of personal goals	_____ Too many classes
_____ Lack of personal priorities	_____ Long meetings
_____ Lack of personal deadlines	_____ Lack of organizational goals
_____ Inability to delegate	_____ Lack of organizational priorities
_____ Over-commitment	_____ Lack of organizational deadlines
_____ Procrastination	_____ Unclear lines of responsibility or authority
_____ Indecision	_____ Poor information
_____ Inability to say no	_____ Lack of clear standards or expectations
_____ Fatigue	_____ Poor records or filing system
_____ Lack of planning	_____ Red tape
_____ Perfectionism	_____ Poor communication
_____ Other_______________	_____ Too much email
_______________	_____ Management by crisis
_______________	_____ Unwieldy paper flow

Types of Interruptions

_____ Phone/texting
_____ Social drop-ins, clients, and other outsiders
_____ Responding to immediate problems or issues
_____ Questions from colleagues
_____ Questions from superiors
_____ Other _______________

Look over the items that you checked and circle each check mark that indicates a problem you could remedy—or at least markedly improve—by a change in your personal attitudes or behavior, given necessary knowledge and adequate motivation.

Now list below, in rank order, several of your most pressing time-management problems. Then devise one action you can take this week that will contribute to the solution of these problems. Remember that time management is a continuing activity; one action will not magically change your whole environment, but one action makes a start.

My Biggest Problems	Action Needed
1. ________________	1. ________________
2. ________________	2. ________________
3. ________________	3. ________________
4. ________________	4. ________________
5. ________________	5. ________________

A.7: Applying Time and Communication Management Principles

A.7 Apply strategies to increase work efficiency.

	How to Improve Individual Performance	How to Improve Team Performance
1. Set goals.	Write clear, measurable, attainable, and specific goals.	As a team, identify and discuss the team goals.
2. Make a master list.	Make a master list of all that you have to do.	As a team, list and describe the steps that need to be accomplished to achieve the team or project goals.
3. Prioritize.	Identify your high-priority tasks. Determine what should be done first, second, and so on.	As a team, determine the priority of the steps or tasks and decide who should take responsibility for each task.
4. Manage distractions.	Identify what may keep you from accomplishing your goal, and develop strategies to manage or eliminate the distractions (phone calls, interruptions, and the like).	As a team, identify the obstacles that may keep the team from achieving its goals. Identify strategies to overcome the obstacles.
5. Take action.	Identify what you need to do and then do it.	As a team, take action to achieve the goals of the project. Periodically meet to evaluate the plan and assess whether you are meeting your objectives.

Appendix Quiz: Managing Time: Managing Communication

Glossary

Accommodator someone who manages conflict by giving in rather than engaging in the conflict.

Activity report a document that communicates progress on a project or achievements to others in an organization or on a team.

Adaptive skills self-management skills that allow you to adjust to a variety of social situations.

Adult learners people who prefer to be given information they can use immediately, to be actively involved in the learning process, to connect their life experiences with the new information they learn, to know how the new information is relevant to their busy lives, to know how the information will solve a problem, and to receive information that is relevant to their needs.

Agenda a written list of issues, questions, information, or topics to be discussed or tasks to be completed in a meeting.

Amiable a social style characterized by high responsiveness and low assertiveness. People with this style are considered relationship specialists; they enjoy working in supportive and helpful roles.

Analogy a comparison between an unfamiliar idea, thing, or situation and something the audience already understands.

Analytical a social style characterized by low responsiveness and assertiveness. Individuals with this social style are considered technical specialists; they enjoy working in technical positions.

Appraisal interview an interview in which a supervisor shares information with an employee about his or her job performance; also known as a *performance review*.

Articulation the enunciation of speech sounds.

Artifact a personal object used to communicate some part of one's identity.

Assertiveness an individual's capacity to make requests, actively disagree, express positive and negative personal feelings, and stand up for himself or herself without attacking another.

Asynchronous communication in which there is a time delay between when a message is sent and when it is received.

Attend to focus on a specific message.

Attention the first step of the motivated sequence involves capturing the audience's attention so that they will listen to the message.

Authoritarian leaders leaders who influence by giving orders and seeking to control others.

Avoider someone who manages conflict by steering clear of it.

Back channel cues nonverbal cues that signal to the other person that we are listening and wish for them to continue talking.

Back matter the components of a report that traditionally come at the end, after the main body, and provide further detail and references.

Bar graph A graph that uses bars of different lengths to represent statistical data.

Biased messages messages that include words or expressions that offend because they make inappropriate assumptions or repeat stereotypes about gender, ethnicity, physical or mental disability, age, or sexual orientation.

Boolean search an advanced web-searching technique that allows a user to narrow a key word search by specifying certain parameters.

Briefing a short talk that provides information to an audience.

Career-search information interview an interview in which you gather information about careers, jobs, and organizations and network with others so that you will have a job when you are ready for one.

Causal reasoning reasoning that relates two or more events in such a way as to conclude that one or more of the events caused the others.

Cause-and-effect organization identifying a situation and then discussing its effects (cause–effect) or presenting a situation and then exploring its causes (effect–cause).

Central idea a one-sentence summary of your presentation; sometimes called a thesis sentence.

Centralized power cultures cultures that value a more concentrated or narrow distribution of power; power is held by one person or a select few.

Channel the means by which a message is expressed to the receiver.

Charisma a form of dynamism; a charismatic speaker possesses charm, talent, magnetism, and other qualities that make the person attractive.

Chronemics the study of how people use and structure time.

Chronological organization organization by sequential order, according to when each step or event occurred or should occur.

Clarity the specificity of a message and how easily the reader can comprehend the information.

Classical approach to motivation assumes that workers are motivated to work hard when they are rewarded for good work, and not rewarded for poor work.

Classification defining something by placing it in a group or category based on its qualities or characteristics.

Clique a smaller group of people within a larger group who form a common bond among themselves.

Closed question an interview question that limits the range of possible responses and requires a simple, direct, and brief answer.

Closure a sense of being complete or "sounding finished," provided in the conclusion of a speech by finishing a story, answering a rhetorical question, or reminding the audience of a statistic presented in the introduction.

Coercive power power stemming from the ability to punish others.

Cognitive dissonance psychological discomfort experienced when a person is presented with information that is inconsistent with his or her current thinking or feelings.

Cohesiveness the degree of attraction that members of a group feel toward one another and the group.

Collaborator someone who manages conflict by being willing to work with others to solve problems and make decisions.

Collectivistic cultures cultures whose members value group or community interests over individual interests.

Communication interaction patterns communication patterns that emerge based on who talks to whom.

Communication the process of acting on information.

Competence the perception that a person is skilled, knowledgeable, and informed about the subject he or she is discussing.

Competitor someone who manages conflict by being competitive and pushing ideas and solutions on others.

Complaint letter a letter that expresses dissatisfaction with a product or service.

Complexity arrangement of speech ideas from simple to complex.

Compromiser someone who manages conflict by giving up part of what he or she wants in exchange for the other person's giving up part of what of he or she wants.

Concise writing writing that avoids unnecessary words and phrases.

Conclusion the closing sentences of a speech, intended to summarize the speech, to reemphasize the main idea in a memorable way, to motivate the audience to respond, and to provide closure.

Concrete referring to something you can experience with your senses.

Conditional statements statements that qualify what is being said; they leave room for interpretation.

Confidentiality the ethical principle that requires interviewers to keep information disclosed during an interview private.

Conflict phase the second phase of group interaction, in which group members experience some disagreement about social issues and group tasks.

Conflict styles the way people are perceived to express and manage conflict.

Connotative meaning the interpretation of a word based on personal experiences.

Consensus group agreement that occurs when all group members support and are committed to a collective decision.

Content dimension the communication dimension that focuses on what is said; the verbal message.

Content the new information, ideas, or suggested actions that a speaker wishes to express.

Context the physical, historical, and psychological environment in which communication

Conversational rituals learned, routine scripts that people use when talking and responding to others.

Corrective feedback communication feedback whose goal is to alter negative or inappropriate behavior.

Correspondence business letters sent to customers, coworkers, superiors, and subordinates.

Cover letter a document that accompanies a resume; a sales pitch that argues why you are the best candidate for a position.

Credibility a listener's perception of a speaker as competent, trustworthy, and dynamic.

Cultural context the nonverbal cues related to culture that surround and give meaning to messages.

Culture a learned system of knowledge, behavior, attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms that is shared by a group of people.

Decentralized power cultures cultures in which people value a broad distribution of power; the power belongs to the people, or the many, not to one person or group.

Declarative statements statements expressed as truths that leave no room for interpretation.

Decoding the process of interpreting ideas, feelings, and thoughts that have been translated into a code.

Decorative font a font designed to convey a feeling or tone.

Deductive reasoning reasoning from a general statement or principle to reach a specific conclusion.

Definition a brief explanation that identifies and clarifies what something is by classifying it or describing how it works.

Delegation a manager's assignment of a specific task or project to an employee.

Delivery cues notes a speaker uses to remind himself or herself of nonverbal behaviors to use while making a presentation.

Democratic leaders leaders who consult with the group before issuing edicts.

Demographic information statistics about audience characteristics such as age, gender, and cultural background.

Denotative meaning the literal or dictionary definition of a word.

Description a word picture; a detailed image that allows an audience to mentally see, hear, smell, touch, or taste whatever a speaker is describing.

Descriptive approach an approach to team development that seeks to identify the typical ways teams behave in solving problems.

Dialect a consistent style of pronunciation and articulation that is common to an ethnic group or a geographic region.

Door-in-the-face technique making a sales request that will be rejected, followed up with a more modest requested that is more likely to be accepted.

Downward communication communication that flows from superiors to subordinates.

Driver a social style characterized by high assertiveness and low responsiveness. Persons with this social style are considered control specialists; they often enjoy working in leadership and management positions.

Dynamism an aspect of a speaker's credibility that reflects whether the speaker is perceived as energetic.

Elaboration strategies mental processing strategies that give information new meaning by organizing the information.

Emblem a gesture that has a direct verbal translation and may substitute for a word or phrase.

Emergence phase the third phase of group interaction, in which conflict or disagreement is managed and decisions are made.

Empathy the emotion experienced by someone who feels what another is feeling.

Encoding the process of translating ideas, feelings, and thoughts into a code.

Ethics are the beliefs, values, and moral principles by which we determine what is right and wrong.

Ethos the credibility or ethical character of a speaker.

Evidence the illustrations, definitions, statistics, and opinions presented as supporting material in persuasive speaking.

Exit interview an interview in which an employer gathers information from an employee who is leaving the organization about his or her work experiences.

Expert power power derived from having knowledge and expertise.

Expert testimony an opinion offered by someone who is an authority on the subject under discussion.

Explanation a statement of how something is done or why it exists in its present form or existed in its past form.

Expressive a social style characterized by high assertiveness and responsiveness. Individuals with this social style are considered social specialists; they are able to use their communication skills to gain recognition and attention, and enjoy being noticed by others.

Extemporaneous speaking speaking from a written or memorized speech outline without having memorized the exact wording of the speech.

Feedback the response to a message.

Feminine cultures cultures in which people have more of a social orientation and tend to value caring, sensitivity, and enhancing quality of life.

Figurative analogy a comparison between two essentially unlike things or events that nevertheless share some feature.

Final summary the final part of a speech, which restates a speaker's most important ideas.

Formal report a highly detailed and comprehensive report on an ongoing project or a completed project, often coauthored by several writers.

Front matter the components of a report that come at the beginning and prepare the reader for the main information.

Functional approach an approach to team development that suggests that in order for a team to be effective, certain communication functions must occur.

Funnel sequence a questioning sequence that begins with broad, open questions and proceeds toward more closed questions.

Gaps analysis an analysis conducted by a supervisor of an identified gap between a performance standard and an employee's actual performance.

Gender the cultural and psychological characteristics that are associated with biological sex.

Goal a clear statement identifying something to be accomplished in the long term.

Goodwill a positive perception of an author on the part of the audience.

Group deviate a team member who holds an opinion different from the rest of the group; group members may spend considerable talk time trying to change this person's opinion.

Grouphate the loathing many people have for collaborating with others in groups and teams.

Groupthink a faulty sense of agreement that occurs when team members seemingly agree, but they primarily want to avoid conflict.

Haptics the study of how we communicate through touch.

Hearing the physiological process of decoding sounds.

Hierarchy of needs Abraham Maslow's classic theory that humans have five levels of needs and that lower-level needs must be met before people can be concerned about higher-level needs.

High-contact culture a culture in which touching is seen as commonplace and appropriate.

High-context cultures cultures in which nonverbal cues are extremely important in interpreting messages.

Horizontal communication communication between peers.

Hostile environment sexual harassment unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with a person's ability to perform a job or gain an education and that creates a hostile or intimidating environment at the workplace.

Human communication the process of making sense out of the world and sharing that sense with others by creating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages.

Human resources approach to motivation views employees as resources who can be full partners in enhancing a team or organization.

Hypothetical illustration a description of something that has not actually occurred but that could happen.

Hypothetical question a question that asks for an interviewee's reaction to an imaginary emotion-arousing or value-laden situation to gauge the person's likely response in a real situation.

Illustration a story or anecdote about an idea, issue, or problem a speaker is discussing.

Illustrator a gesture that illustrates or complements a verbal message.

Impromptu speaking delivering a speech without advance preparation.

Individual roles behaviors that focus attention on an individual rather than the group.

Individualistic cultures cultures whose members value individual interests over group interests.

Inductive reasoning reasoning that arrives at a general conclusion from specific instances or examples.

Inflection variation in vocal pitch.

Inform to share information with others to enhance their knowledge or understanding of the information, concepts, or ideas presented.

Information-gathering interview a focused, structured conversation in which the goal is to seek out information from another person.

Initial preview the first statement of the main ideas of a presentation, usually presented in conjunction with or as part of the central idea.

Interaction the give-and-take conversation that occurs when people collaborate.

Internal previews previews that introduce and outline ideas that will be developed as a speech progresses.

Internal summaries summaries that occur within and throughout a speech to help listeners keep ideas in mind as the speech progresses.

Interview schedule a guide that lists all of the questions and follow-up probes to be used in an interview so that the interviewer can sequence questions.

Interview topic a standard theme that is explored with a particular category of questions that are asked during an interview.

Interview a form of oral interaction structured to achieve a goal; it often includes just two people (but can include more) who take turns speaking and listening.

Introduction the opening sentences of a speech, intended to get the audience's attention, introduce the topic, give the audience a reason to listen, establish the speaker's credibility, and preview the main ideas.

Inverted funnel sequence a questioning sequence that begins with closed questions and proceeds to more open questions.

Jargon language used by a particular group, profession, or culture that may not be understood or used by other people.

Job description a document outlining the specific skills required for and basic duties of a particular position.

Job interview a structured interview in which an interviewer assesses an interviewee's qualifications and skills for employment.

Job-related skills skills that are specific to a particular occupation.

Kinesics the study of gestures, posture, and body movement.

Laissez-faire leaders leaders who take a hands-off, laid-back approach to influencing others.

Language a system of symbols and rules for their use that make it possible for people to understand and communicate with one another.

Lay testimony an opinion or a description offered by a nonexpert who has firsthand experience.

Leadership the process of influencing others to achieve goals through verbal and nonverbal messages.

Leading question a question that suggests either explicitly or implicitly the answer expected.

Legally binding documents documents that record an exchange of promises and are enforceable by law.

Legitimate power power that stems from being elected or appointed to a specific position or office.

Line graph a graph that shows trends over time and relationships among variables.

Listening the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to verbal and nonverbal messages.

Literal analogy a comparison between two similar things.

Literary quotations opinions or descriptions by writers used to illustrate or clarify a point.

Logical fallacy false reasoning that occurs when someone attempts to persuade without adequate evidence or with arguments that are irrelevant or inappropriate.

Logos the use of logical arguments.

Low-contact culture a culture in which touching is uncommon.

Low-context cultures cultures in which people rely more on explicit language and words and use fewer contextual cues to send and interpret information.

Manager someone who has been appointed to coordinate and facilitate, to keep things organized and accomplish a task.

Manuscript speaking reading a speech from a written text.

Masculine cultures cultures in which people have a task orientation and tend to value achievement, heroism, material wealth, and more traditional roles for men and women.

Media Richness Theory theory that a communication mediu, is rich if it has (1) the potential for instant feedback, (2) verbal and nonverbal cues that can be processed by senders and receivers, (3) natural language, and (4) a focus on individuals.

Media richness the degree to which a channel of communication offers the possibility of immediate feedback; provides both verbal and nonverbal cues; allows the use of natural, informal language; and customizes messages to recipients.

Meeting a structured conversation among a small group of people who interact to accomplish a specific task.

Memo a short, informal written communication

Memorized speaking delivering a speech word-for-word from memory without using notes.

Message written, spoken, and unspoken elements of communication to which people assign meaning.

Metadiscussion discussion about discussion; comments that describe the discussion process rather than the topic under consideration.

Motivated sequence a five-step plan for organizing a persuasive message: attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, and action.

Need the second step of the motivated sequence, establishing the rationale, problem, or need for a listener to make a change so that the listener will agree with the action requested by the speaker.

Negative visualization a bleak picture of how terrible the future will be if nothing is done; a fear appeal used to motivate listeners to adopt a particular solution to a problem.

Noise interference, either literal or psychological, that hinders the accurate encoding or decoding of a message.

Nominal-group technique a brainstorming method in which members work individually on ideas, rank suggested solutions, and then report their findings in a group discussion.

Nonverbal communication any communication, other than written or spoken language, that creates meaning for someone.

Nonverbal messages visual and audible symbols that do not rely on words but create meaning for the receiver.

Nonverbal transitions nonverbal behaviors (facial expressions, pauses, changes in vocal pitch or speaking rate, or movement) that are used either alone or in combination with verbal transitions to show relationships among ideas in a speech.

Norms standards that determine what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior in a group.

Objective a statement of something specific, measurable, attainable, and observable to be achieved in the short term.

Office romances romances that develop between people who work for the same employer.

Open question an interview question that is broad and unstructured and allows the respondent considerable freedom to determine the amount and kind of information she or he will provide.

Operational definition an explanation of how an item being defined works or what it does.

Oral citation an oral statement of the source of information used in a speech.

Organizational culture the learned pattern of beliefs, values, assumptions, rules, and norms that are shared by the people in an organization.

Orientation phase the first phase of group interaction, in which members become adjusted to one another and to the group's task.

Other-oriented focused on the needs, motives, d4esires, and goals of others in one's communication.

Paraphrasing restating in your own words what you think another person is saying.

Parliamentary procedure a comprehensive set of rules that prescribe how to take action on specific issues that come before a group.

Part-whole learning style the style of a learner who prefers learning details first, before the big picture.

Pathos the use of emotional appeals to move an audience.

Person-focused leader a leader who values and makes a priority of getting to know people on a personal level.

Persuade to change or reinforce a person's attitudes, beliefs, values, or behavior.

Persuasive interview a structured conversation intended to influence a person's attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors.

Physical attraction the attraction we have toward others because of their appearance.

Pie graph a circular graph that shows the distribution of data as a proportion of a total

Pitch how high or low a speaker's voice is.

Positive visualization a rosy word picture of how wonderful the future will be if your solution is implemented.

Power the ability to influence others' behavior.

Preparation outline a detailed outline of the central idea, main ideas, and supporting material for a speech; may also include the specific purpose, introduction, and conclusion.

Prescriptive approach an approach to team development that assumes that team members need a specific sequence of steps and techniques in order to stay on task and be productive.

Presentation aid any tangible item or image used to help communicate ideas to an audience.

Preview a statement of what is to come in a speech.

Primacy arrangement of ideas from most important or convincing to least important.

Primary tension the tension that results from the uncertainty and discomfort people experience when they meet in a group for the first time.

Probing question an interview question that encourages the interviewee to clarify or elaborate on partial or superficial responses and that usually directs the discussion in a particular direction.

Problem solving a process of overcoming obstacles to achieve a goal brainstorming A problem-solving technique that helps a group generate creative options.

Problem-and-solution organization organization that describes a problem and then offers one or more solutions to it.

Process functions actions performed by leaders that help maintain harmonious relationships by managing conflict and rewarding people.

Progress report a report that outlines for a customer or a client the status of a project.

Proof evidence and the conclusions you draw from it.

Proximity the physical space and distance that we maintain in our communication with others.

Psychological information listener attributes such as attitudes, beliefs, and values.

Public relations presentation a presentation in which the speaker is specifically providing information to promote a positive public image for the person or organization the speaker is representing.

Qualify to identify whether a customer can afford a product or service and to learn how to best approach the customer.

Quid pro quo sexual harassment actual or threatened use of rewards or punishments to gain sexual compliance from a subordinate.

Rapport talk talk focused on sharing information about relationships.

Reasoning by analogy a special kind of inductive reasoning that draws a comparison between two ideas, things, or situations that share some essential common feature.

Reasoning the process of drawing conclusions from evidence.

Receiver the person who interprets a message.

Recency arrangement of ideas from least to most important, based on the principle that audiences remember best what they hear last.

References people who can speak positively about your skills and abilities to an employer.

Referent power power that stems from being liked.

Refutation an organizational strategy by which you identify objections to your proposition and then refute those objections with arguments and evidence.

Regulator a nonverbal cue that helps control the interaction and flow of communication between two people.

Reinforcement phase the fourth phase of group interaction, in which group members express positive feelings toward each other and toward the group.

Relational dimension the dimension of communication that offers cues about the emotions, attitudes, and amount of power and control a speaker feels in relation to listeners.

Relational goals in an interview, using interpersonal skills so as to be perceived as attractive and credible.

Relational messages messages that build rapport and are aimed at establishing relationships.

Relationship an ongoing connection made with another person through interpersonal communication.

Remember to recall information from memory.

Report talk talk focused on sharing practical or statistical information.

Report a summary of what has been accomplished in the past or an update on a project.

Respond to let another person know whether you understood a message or to validate the other person.

Responsiveness an individual's capacity to be sensitive to the communication of others, be seen as a good listener, and to make others comfortable in communicating.

Resume a concise, well-organized written description of your background, training, and qualifications for a job.

Reward power power arising from the ability to grant favors, money, or other rewards.

Role the consistent way someone communicates with others in a team, based on the person's own expectations and what others on the team expect of the person.

Sales proposal a document intended to persuade a possible client of his or her need for your product or service.

Sans serif font a font without lines (serifs) at the tops and bottoms of letters and with letters of uniform thickness.

Satisfaction the third step of the motivated sequence, which includes telling the listener of a persuasive message how the proposed solution will meet or satisfy the need.

Script font a font that imitates handwriting but is precise and uniform.

Select to focus on one sound among all the sounds competing for attention.

Serif font a font that has lines (serifs) at the tops and bottoms of the letters.

Sex biological characteristics present from birth that identify an individual as male or female.

Sexual harassment deliberate and/or repeated sexual or sex-based behavior that is not welcome, not asked for, and not returned.

Signpost a verbal or nonverbal signal that a speaker is moving from one idea to another.

Situational leadership an approach that views leadership as an interactive process that links a particular style of leadership with such factors as culture, time limitations, group member personalities, and the work the group needs to do.

Small group communication the transactive process of creating meaning among from three to fifteen people who share a common purpose, feel a sense of belonging to the group, and exert influence on each other.

Social decentering the process of stepping away from your own thoughts and attempting to experience the feelings of another person.

Social roles behaviors that manage relationships and affect group climate; these roles help resolve conflict and enhance the flow of communication.

Social style a pattern of communication behaviors that others observe when you interact with them.

Source the originator of a thought or emotion, who puts it into a code that can be understood by a receiver.

Spatial organization organization based on location, position, or direction.

Speaking notes a condensed, abbreviated outline that a speaker uses when presenting a speech.

Specific purpose a concise statement of precisely what you want your listeners to be able to do, remember, or feel when you finish your speech. Your specific purpose statement indicates the *audience respo*nse you seek.

Standard outline format numbered and lettered headings and subheadings arranged hierarchically to indicate relationships among main ideas, subpoints, and supporting material in a speech.

Statistics numerical data that summarize several examples.

Status an individual's importance and prestige.

Structure the way discussion is organized; using an agenda and other techniques that help a group stay focused on the task at hand.

Style flexing the process of adapting your communication to how others communicate.

Supporting material illustrations, explanations, descriptions, definitions, analogies, statistics, and opinions that clarify, amplify, and provide evidence to support the main ideas and the thesis of a presentation.

Supportive feedback communication feedback whose goal is to encourage desirable behavior.

Syllogism a three-part argument that has a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion.

Symbol a word, sound, visual image, gesture, or object that represents a thought, a concept, another object, or an experience.

Synchronous communication which is received and responded to in real time.

Target audience a specific segment of your audience that you most want to influence.

Task analysis a detailed, step-by-step description of precisely what a trainee should do and know in order to perform a particular skill.

Task dimension a form of content dimension in the workplace; leaders, including managers, supervisors, or those who take charge, communicate content messages to accomplish certain tasks.

Task functions behaviors that help a team or organization get work done.

Task goals in an interview, asking and answering questions in a clear, concise, and thoughtful manner to convey appropriate information.

Task messages messages that focus on the content of an interview.

Task roles behaviors that help a group achieve its goal and accomplish its work.

Task-focused leader a leader who believes that work takes priority over personal relationships.

Team a coordinated group of people organized to work together to achieve a specific, common goal.

Team ground rules explicit, agreed-on prescriptions for acceptable and appropriate behavior, which help the team organize routines.

Team mission statement a concise description of a team's goals or desired outcomes.

Team structure The way a team is organized, individual roles are clarified, and specific responsibilities are defined to help the team achieve its goal.

Team-based organization an organization that has a flat structure rather than a hierarchical structure (one with many layers and levels of supervisors).

Telegraphic style a writing style that condenses the message by eliminating articles, pronouns, conjunctions, and transitions.

The Human relations approach to motivation assumes an approach to motivation based on the idea that people are influenced not just by power and position, but by how they are treated at work.

Toast a brief speech saluting a momentous occasion.

Time management the use of techniques for analyzing and prioritizing goals and objectives in order to increase efficiency and productivity.

Tone the attitude of the writer toward both the reader and the subject matter that is communicated in a written document.

Topical organization organization by natural divisions of a central idea presented according to primacy, recency, or complexity; or arbitrary arrangement of ideas that are equal in importance.

Touch avoidant the tendency to avoid touch in interpersonal interactions.

Training a type of informative speaking, in which a trainer seeks to develop specific skills in listeners to help them perform a specific job or task more effectively.

Trait approach an approach to leadership that focuses on the psychological and communication traits as well as physical attributes of the leader.

Transactional occurring simultaneously.

Transferable skills skills that are useful in a variety of jobs and positions.

Transformational leadership the process of influencing people to see the future in new ways.

Trustworthiness the aspect of credibility that reflects whether a speaker is perceived as believable and honest.

Tunnel sequence a questioning sequence that uses a combination of open and closed questions to gather a large amount of information in a short amount of time.

Uncertainty avoidance a measure of how accepting a culture is of a lack of predictability.

Understand to assign meaning to the verbal and nonverbal messages received.

Upward communication communication that flows from subordinate to superior.

Verbal messages messages that use words to create meaning.

Verbal transitions words or phrases that show relationships between ideas in a speech.

Vigilant thinkers people who pay attention to the process of how work is done in teams rather than focusing only on techniques used to achieve a goal.

Virtual team a team that interacts via a channel other than face-to-face communication but rather uses email, video conferences, or other technological tools.

Visualization using words to create an image in audience members' minds.

Vocalics the nonverbal aspects of the voice, including pitch, rate, and volume.

Web 2.0 the second generation of presenting and gathering information on the Internet using "read-write" technology.

Whole-part learning style the style of a learner who prefers learning the big picture first, then the details.

Wiki a web-based site that permits collaboration and access to edit and revise information.

Wikis collaborative web-based sites that permit numerous people to share information with one another.

Workplace bullying an extreme, negative, and persistent form of emotional workplace abuse achieved primarily through verbal and nonverbal communication.

Writing style the tone, language, voice, and overall viewpoint of the sentences in a piece of writing.

Notes

Chapter 1

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Chapter 3

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