2

Managing the Communication Process: Analyzing, Composing, Evaluating

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

LO 2.1 **Why should you spend time analyzing?** *pages xx–xx*

Analyzing the purpose focuses the message
Analyzing the audience helps you meet their needs
Analyzing the content ensures a complete message
Analyzing the medium helps you choose the best
   delivery option

LO 2.2 **What is involved in composing?** *pages xx–xx*

Practise strategic time management
Organizing the message
Drafting the content
Designing a professional format and delivery

LO 2.3 **How does evaluating improve your communication?** *pages xx–xx*

Revise content: Improve effectiveness
Edit for style and tone: Project a professional image
Proofread to increase your credibility
Review feedback to improve your communication
   strategy

Farzana Mawani
Marketing and Communications Manager
Altima Healthcare Canada Inc.

Photo courtesy of Farzana Mawani and JPB Photography.

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Does your audience *really* matter?

One of the most important aspects of communicating, particularly in healthcare, is knowing your audience. Each communication piece needs to be customized to anticipate the audience's frame of reference and unique perspective. Sending a letter to a healthcare provider (e.g., a dentist) requires a different approach than sending an email reminder to your internal sales team. A public document that is published on the web needs to incorporate a different tone than a document intended for company stakeholders. Every time you send a message, giving careful thought to the intended audience is one of the most important pieces of the puzzle.

For example, I prepare one-page "info sheets" that describe medical or dental procedures to market those services to the public. Sometimes these one-pagers are used to simply raise awareness, such as to increase the uptake of oral cancer screenings to help decrease mortality rates. Other times they are distributed to promote limited-time offers.

The challenge lies in ensuring that these one-pagers focus on the needs of average Canadians. The composition of the message needs to answer questions from their perspective. How will this healthcare information have a positive impact? Why is this service important? How can this benefit the individual or family in question?

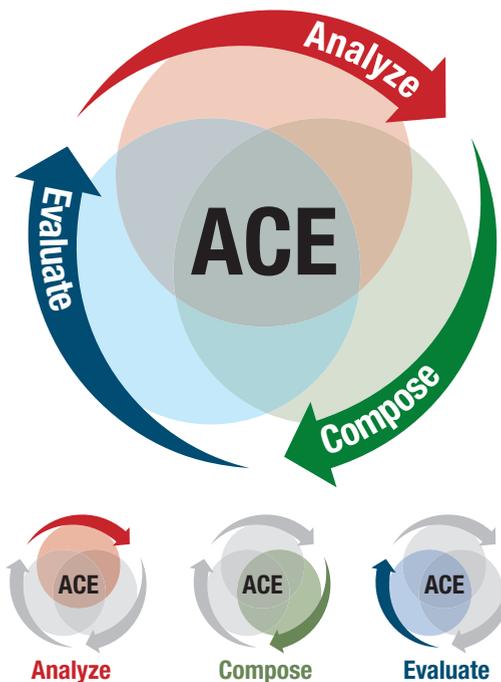Find out at the end of this chapter how Farzana uses ACE to solve these communication dilemmas.

Introduction

Communicating in today's workplace is complex. You could face communication tasks that range from preparing simple emails to planning critical presentations to participating in online meetings involving people from around the globe. To help you adapt and thrive in these situations, you will learn a flexible communication process called ACE: Analyzing, Composing, and Evaluating. You can apply ACE in any situation, no matter how simple or complex. As **FIGURE 2.1** shows, each ACE step plays a unique role in successfully communicating a message.

Analyzing helps you make effective and professional decisions about each message you prepare and send. Before creating your message, you prepare by analyzing the following four important steps.

1. Determine your **purpose**. What is the reason for your communication? What is the outcome you want to achieve?

2. Analyze your **audience**. Who are the recipients of your communication? What are their concerns and interests?

3. Assess the **content**. What should be included? What is the substance of this message? Do you have all the content your audience needs? Have you included too much?

4. Choose the best **medium**. How will you deliver your message? What are your options? Should you communicate face to face, by phone, email, text message, Facebook, Twitter, or some other medium?

FIGURE 2.1 The ACE Communication Process

Analyzing The process of looking critically at four elements of your message: purpose, audience, content, and medium.

Purpose The reason for communicating.

Audience Anyone who receives a message and for whom a message is intended. The audience can be one person or many, depending on the number of recipients.

Content The substance of your message.

Medium The method you use to deliver your message (e.g., telephone, face-to-face meeting, email, text message, website, or other).

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When you take the time to analyze the purpose, audience, content, and medium, your next step, composing, will be much easier.

Composing involves much more than putting words on a page or speaking them aloud. Use what you learned while analyzing to plan your message so it has the highest chance of effectively achieving your purpose. Determine the content you need and pay special attention to how you organize it. Your message must flow logically and make sense from your audience's perspective. Once you have this plan in place, you are better able to draft your message skillfully. If it is a written message, you will be able to format it appropriately so that your audience will easily understand it.

Evaluating is the process of reviewing your message with care and attention to detail. First, determine whether you have included all the content necessary to achieve your goal. If you have all the content you need, ask yourself if you have organized it well. Next, evaluate whether the word usage and style are professional and

appropriate to the task. Finally, consider whether the document format or planned delivery approach will make the message easy to understand and communicate a professional image. As part of the evaluating process, share your draft or practise your oral communication with others to get feedback. Reviewing your message and considering feedback may lead you to return to the first step of the process (analyzing) to reconsider the decisions you made about purpose, audience, content, and medium. This circular approach helps ensure effective communication.

This process may, at first, seem awkward and time consuming. However, once you are familiar with these steps you will get more consistent results with far less effort and in far less time.

Composing The process of drafting content, organizing it so that it is understandable from the audience's perspective, putting it into coherent sentences and logical paragraphs, and then designing a format or delivery approach that is professional and makes the communication easy to follow.

Evaluating The process of reviewing your communication to ensure it is complete, accurate, clear, concise, easy to understand, and error-free.

LO 2.1 Why should you spend time analyzing?

ACE
Analyze

Many attempts to communicate fail. Usually these failures happen because the message senders did not think carefully about what they wanted the message to accomplish and how they wanted their audience to respond. Instead, in a rush to communicate, many people instinctively jump into composing their messages without adequate preparation. This section describes four important elements you should analyze before you start to compose: *purpose, audience, content,* and *medium.* Analyzing each element serves a distinct purpose.

Analyzing the purpose focuses the message

Before thinking about *what* you are communicating, analyze *why* you are communicating. Think about "why" from two points of view:

1. What is your purpose for communicating?
2. What is the outcome you would like to achieve?

What is your purpose?

Every business message should have at least one purpose. Here are some common purposes that business communications serve:

- *Inform* a client about a problem
- *Persuade* a supervisor to implement something new
- *Request* permission to extend a deadline
- *Report* financial information to a client
- *Propose* a solution to a problem
- *Create* **goodwill** with a co-worker or business partner

What outcome do you want to achieve?

Goodwill The positive relationship between you (or your company) and your audience.

Outcome The result of your communication. What you want the recipients of your message to know, do, or feel about the subject of your message.

Purpose statements alone are not enough to help you think clearly about the best content to use. As part of your analysis, identify your desired **outcome**. What do you want your audience to know or do as a result of the communication? **FIGURE 2.2** compares three purpose statements and related outcome statements.

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2.1 Why should you spend time analyzing?   **29**

PURPOSE	DESIRED OUTCOME
• To inform my client that I cannot take on a new project right now.	• My client will postpone the project rather than hire someone else to do it.
• To persuade my supervisor to approve a summer-hours work schedule.	• My supervisor will present the plan to upper management.
• To ask my supervisor for an extension on a project deadline.	• My supervisor will let me submit the project next Friday so I can finish it during the week.

FIGURE 2.2   Examples of Purpose and Outcome Statements

Why do you need to be able to clearly state the purpose and outcome, even if only to yourself? Clarifying both your purpose and desired outcome will help you make the best choices when it comes time to craft an effective message. For example, consider how you would address the first item in Figure 2.2. If you think only about your purpose, which is to inform your client that you cannot take on the project, you might draft a message that could cause your company to lose this project.

Consider the revision in **FIGURE 2.3**, which is designed to achieve both the purpose and the desired outcome.

Will the outcome require persuasion?

Persuasion is the ability to influence an audience to agree with your point of view, accept your recommendation, or grant your request. You will find it useful to consider whether achieving your outcome will require simply providing information or if it will also require some persuasion.

If your message is purely informative, no persuasion is necessary. For example, an email to all department employees about a room change for a meeting simply needs to provide clear and complete information, as shown in **FIGURE 2.4**.

However, many business messages require a persuasive approach. They need to influence a recipient either to agree with an idea or to take some action. For example, assume you want to convince your supervisor, Cherilyn Martins, to implement a summer-hours work schedule for your department. Your standard workday hours begin at 9 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. A flexible summer-hours schedule would allow employees to begin and end an hour earlier so that they can take advantage of the increased daylight and warmer weather during the summer. You propose that your department's workday

Persuasion The process of influencing your audience to agree with your point of view, recommendation, or request.

Where do I start?
Purpose!

Purpose:
To inform my client that I cannot take on a new project right now.

First Draft:
Thank you for contacting us. We are fully booked right now and cannot meet your schedule. We are grateful that you thought of us and look forward to working with you in the future.

Revised Draft:
Thank you for contacting us about your new project. We are confident we can do an outstanding job because we have worked with you so closely in the past. However, we are fully booked until June.

If you are able to postpone your project for six weeks, we can provide you with our top marketing team. We will be glad to extend a 10% discount on this project to acknowledge your patience.

Desired Outcome:
My client will postpone the project rather than hire someone else to do it.

What would improve this?
Desired Outcome!

FIGURE 2.3   Achieving a Desired Outcome

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FIGURE 2.4   Informational Message: No Persuasion Needed
Photo courtesy of L_amica/Fotolia.

PURPOSE	DESIRED OUTCOME
To persuade my supervisor to approve a summer-hours work schedule.	My supervisor will support the proposal and believe it is in the best interests of the department to adopt the plan. She will forward the proposal to upper management and request a meeting to discuss it, with the goal of having the proposal accepted in time to implement it for June 1.

FIGURE 2.5   Sample Purpose and Outcome Statements

hours begin at 8 a.m. between June 1 and August 31. Because you want to motivate action, this message clearly needs to be persuasive. **FIGURE 2.5** shows your purpose statement and desired outcome statement. With this desired outcome in mind, you can begin to analyze your audience to get a clearer idea of how you can influence her and achieve the outcome.

Analyzing the audience helps you meet their needs

Audience analysis may seem counterintuitive to you. After all, if you have something to communicate, shouldn't the message itself be the main focus? In fact, until you have carefully considered your audience, you cannot be certain that your message will be appropriate in terms of content, format, medium, or **tone**.

Here are three main elements to consider with regard to your audience:

- The **primary audience** is the direct recipient of your message, or in other words the person or people to whom your message is addressed. In our example, the primary audience is Cherilyn Martins.
- The **secondary audience** is anyone else who may receive a copy of your message or be influenced by it, usually from the primary audience. In our example, if Cherilyn Martins likes the idea of a summer schedule, she may forward your message to the vice-president of operations. Although you planned your message to be read by your supervisor (the primary audience), the vice-president became the secondary audience. **Audience benefits** are the advantages that message recipients (either within the primary or secondary audiences) could receive from agreeing with or acting on your message. People are more likely to go along with what you propose if they understand the advantages they or their business will gain from granting your request. In the case of the summer schedule, the audience can potentially benefit by improving employee morale, which usually leads to overall increases in productivity.

FIGURE 2.6 shows the relationship between the primary and secondary audience. Once you have identified your audience, consider the questions listed in **FIGURE 2.7** to determine what content to include as well as how and when to deliver the message. The answers in the figure relate to our example of the summer-hours work schedule.

Unfortunately, people who are trying to persuade others often make an error in judgment by emphasizing how their proposal or suggestion benefits them. *This is a serious mistake.* Focusing on the benefits to you is easy but is less likely to lead to your desired outcome. For example, by implementing a summer-hours schedule, you get to leave work an hour earlier each day and you have more time to enjoy outdoor activities and time with family and friends. These outcomes do not suggest any benefits for your supervisor or company. Therefore, those benefits are not persuasive to your audience.

The challenge is to identify audience-focused benefits, like those listed in Figure 2.7, item 6, and then *select the ones that will be most effective.* You would certainly want to stress that a flexible summer schedule may improve morale, reduce turnover rates, and increase productivity. However, you may choose to leave out the other potential benefits. It will be difficult to prove that quarterly sales figures will increase, and it

Tone The image your language projects about you based on how the message "sounds" to the audience. Tone in writing is similar to your tone of voice (e.g., friendly, angry, positive, negative, formal, casual, professional, unprofessional, courteous, rude).

Primary audience The person or people to whom your message is directly addressed.

Secondary audience People whom the primary audience may communicate with or influence, based on the content, format, or tone of your message. The secondary audience may receive a copy or hear about your message without you knowing.

Audience benefits Advantages the recipient gains from agreeing with or acting on your message.

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2.1 Why should you spend time analyzing? **31**

would be unwise to suggest that summer hours will improve employees' perceptions of your supervisor. Your supervisor (the primary audience) may find this a valid reason to change the work schedule, but the vice-president (your secondary audience) may not.

Analyzing the content ensures a complete message

In addition to analyzing your purpose, desired outcome, and audience, you also need to analyze your content requirements. Do you know enough about the situation to compose your message? Do you have convincing and credible evidence to support your main ideas? Do you need to do additional research?

For example, assume you have identified a list of potential benefits for the summer-hours plan illustrated in Figure 2.7, as well as a list of questions your supervisor may ask. Before composing, you will need to gather additional information. You may be able to get information from *internal sources* such as company reports, databases, and experts. Or you may have to consult *external sources* such as industry journals, web-based search tools, or experts outside your company. For
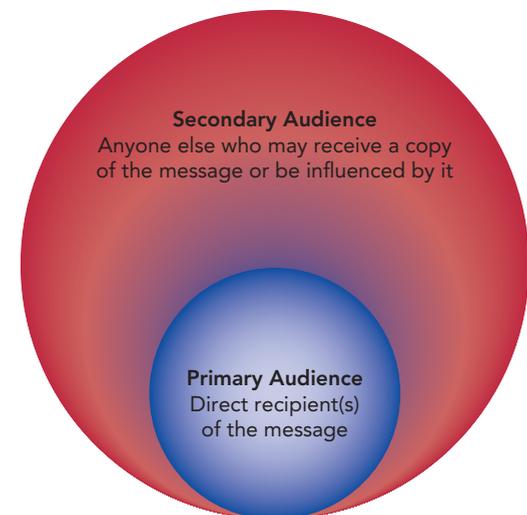
FIGURE 2.6   Primary and Secondary Audiences

1. **What does the primary and secondary audience already know?**

    My supervisor and upper management already know about the structure of our current workday, so I do not need to explain that.

2. **What information does the audience need to know—and why?**

    Both audiences need to know what I mean by "summer hours," how summer hours will work in our department, and how the change will affect the productivity of the department during the summer months.

3. **When does the audience need this information?**

    My supervisor needs the information soon so we can gain support from upper management in time to implement the change for June 1.

4. **How will the audience react to this information?**

    I don't know how my supervisor or upper management will react, so I will try to anticipate potential problems and provide solutions.

    If the purpose is primarily persuasive, also consider these questions:

5. **What questions or objections will my audience have?**

    My audience may ask these questions:

    • How will we ensure that someone is available to answer phone calls after 4 p.m. if all employees ask to start and end their day earlier?

    • When workdays begin and end earlier, will we have to rearrange lunch hours and breaks? How will we handle that?

    • Will there be additional costs?

    • Has this plan worked well in other departments or companies?

    • Will anyone think this schedule is unfair?

    • Is there any evidence to support the benefits?

6. **How will my audience benefit from my idea or proposal?**

    • Providing flexible summer hours may improve employee morale, which may lead to the following additional benefits:

        a. reduced employee turnover rates

        b. increased employee productivity

        c. Increased quarterly sales figures

    • Providing flexible summer hours may improve employees' perceptions of my supervisor.

FIGURE 2.7   Audience Analysis Questions

the purposes of our example, the following types of research would provide you with strong content:

- **Investigate existing company information.** Learn whether other departments in the company have implemented summer hours. You may call or email other managers, contact your human resources office, or research the company's employee handbook.
- **Survey employee opinions or perceptions.** Learn the degree to which employees will support the summer schedule by conducting a survey.
- **Research external sources of information.** Learn whether other companies offer a summer-hours schedule and if it provides tangible benefits. You can conduct **primary research**, which involves collecting your own original data. For example, you might call the human resources departments of other local companies. A more efficient method might be to look in libraries or online sources for **secondary research**, which is information other people have collected. For example, the *Canadian HR Reporter* (www.hrreporter.com) offers many recent articles and surveys on flex hours as adopted in the Canadian workplace (Hunter, 2012).

While it may be tempting to postpone some of this time-consuming research, your initial communication with your supervisor will be stronger if you can show that you have done some preliminary research and have evidence to support your proposal. More detailed information about finding and evaluating sources is available in Chapter 10.

Analyzing the medium helps you choose the best delivery option

You can use several methods to communicate a message. For example, you can send an email, write a text message, have a face-to-face conversation, or publish your message through a social media site. **FIGURE 2.8** lists many common methods of communication and identifies the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Making a smart and effective choice about the best medium to use is challenging. For example, if you need to send detailed financial data to your supervisor, you might choose to present that information in a spreadsheet and attach it to an email that summarizes the data. However, if the spreadsheet requires a more detailed explanation, a face-to-face meeting will be more effective. In many cases, selecting the medium actually means choosing more than one medium and then deciding how to proceed. In the case of sending detailed financial information to a supervisor, you may decide to meet face to face and follow up by sending a meeting summary and spreadsheet attachment via email.

Social media has expanded the number of medium options available, and companies are finding creative ways to use them. For example, when the software company Red Hat debates a company decision, managers invite employees to voice their opinions and make suggestions on an internal social media site called Memo List. Roughly 100 employees post opinions each day, and Red Hat's president, Jim Whitehurst, reads every post to gain insight from his employees' perspectives. Although Whitehurst typically makes the final decision, he values the role of social media in promoting deeper understanding: "Once you make a decision, you get flawless execution because everybody's engaged. They know what you're doing and they know why you're doing it" (Bryant, 2012). You might use social media in a similar way to begin a departmental discussion about summer hours to give employees an opportunity to express their point of view and contribute critical information to the decision-making process.

Making a decision about which media to use to communicate and exchange ideas also has an ethical component. What if the ideas under discussion could violate an employee's privacy or inappropriately distribute unauthorized intellectual property? Check out the **ETHICS BOX** for an introduction to these concepts as they apply to business communications.

Primary research Collecting your own original data.

Secondary research Searching published reports, articles, and books for information other people have collected.

MEDIUM	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Face to Face *(one-to-one conversation)*	• Allows personal explanation targeted to an individual • Provides for immediate feedback in the form of nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, gestures, and posture	• Is not efficient for disseminating information to many people • Is not usually permanently documented (recorded)
Meeting *(several people)*	• Disseminates information to many people • Provides for immediate feedback • Is documented by minutes	• Can be difficult to schedule • Is time consuming—takes employees away from assigned duties
Telephone	• Allows personal explanation targeted to an individual • Allows short messages to be delivered via voice mail if individuals are not at their desks • Can provide for immediate feedback if the person answers the phone	• Is time consuming if individual calls need to be made to several people • Is not usually permanently documented (recorded)
Text Message, Instant Message	• Allows quick communication • Creates a permanent record (if saved)	• Is not efficient if message is long, complex, or sensitive • Does not ensure immediate feedback
Email	• Allows quick communication • Disseminates information to one or many people • Creates a permanent record if saved or printed	• May not be a private and secure medium for sending sensitive content • Does not ensure immediate feedback because not everyone checks email regularly
Memo *(printed hardcopy to audiences within the organization)*	• Can accompany original documents or forms that need signatures • Can be used for employees who have no access to email • Creates a permanent record	• Incurs costs to copy to many people • Is delivered more slowly than email • Does not provide for immediate feedback
Letter *(formatted on letterhead and either mailed or emailed to audiences outside the organization)*	• Projects a more "official" or formal image than email • Can accompany original documents, such as forms with signatures • Can be emailed as an attachment for fast delivery • Creates a permanent record	• Incurs cost of letterhead and postage • Takes at least a day to deliver unless emailed as an attachment • Does not provide for immediate feedback unless emailed as an attachment
Newsletter *(printed hardcopy, html-designed email, or attachment)*	• Disseminates a lot of information to many people simultaneously • Creates a permanent record	• Incurs cost to copy and distribute by mail • Does not provide for immediate feedback
Website	• Makes information available to anyone with access • Can be password protected to limit access • Enables combinations of text, video, and audio through podcasts, MP3 files, webcasts, webinars, and web-conferencing tools • Is easy to keep up to date • May provide for feedback (wikis)	• Is not effective with audiences who have limited Internet access • Requires the audience to access the site • May not reach the audience • Does not provide for immediate feedback • May not provide a permanent record, unless web files are archived
Social Media: Networking Websites (e.g., *Facebook, LinkedIn*)	• Allows you to communicate to a community of people who have linked with you and expressed an interest • Allows interactive communication • Is easy to keep up to date	• Requires the audience to access the site • May not reach the audience • May reach unintended audiences
Social Media: Wikis, Blogs, and Microblogs (e.g., *Twitter*)	• Disseminates information to many people simultaneously • Encourages discussion • Is easy to keep up to date • Allows interactive communication • Provides a complete record	• Is not effective with audiences who have limited Internet access • Requires the audience to access the site or actively request messages be sent to them • May not reach the audience

FIGURE 2.8   Selecting the Best Medium to Communicate Your Message

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ETHICS

Ethics are a set of values or beliefs we use to govern ourselves. Our ethics are based on moral ideals of what is believed to be "right" and "wrong" and informs and influences the way we interpret information, think, and act. A culture can follow a set of understood ethics. Therefore, living or working in a "multicultural" society means that we are also in a "multiethical" world. Ethics are not always governed by law, nor are they always explicitly stated. Yet ethics strongly influence relationships and business practices. Effective business communications can become complex because you need to consider what is "ethical" by legal, business, and sociocultural standards.

Therefore, considering ethics in your communications is extremely important. What may seem appropriate in one situation may not be appropriate in another situation. In business, recognizing when events, actions, or behaviours are potentially unethical is a critical skill to have.

When is it an ethical issue?
Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Could an email potentially cause harm to a group, community, or individual?
- Could a private meeting create uncertainty regarding influence, morality, or respect?
- Is this communication that I am preparing based on my beliefs or on actual facts?
- If I hit "send" on this email, will my employer face potential legal considerations, such as an action under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, provincial human rights legislation, or the Criminal Code?
- Am I using any information in this report that violates another person's privacy, uses their intellectual property, or violates a signed competition clause?

How do you begin to adopt appropriate ethical behaviours when doing business with so many different people in different situations?

Many experienced business professionals will tell you that learning to navigate through complex ethical issues is an ongoing task. Think of this as a lifelong learning project.

However, to simplify this process as you begin your career, consider observing, asking, and researching (O-A-R). Soon you will develop a keen internal sense of when you need to find out more before proceeding.

- **Observe:** Observing is the practice of "looking to learn." From our childhood through to adulthood, we look to others to gain insight into how we relate and communicate. Now apply this more specifically to ethics. How do the people around you, whom you respect, handle certain situations?
- **Ask:** Whether you are in the middle of a workday in your organization or in a grocery store, be willing to ask questions: "Should I include this attachment with this email if I am not sure of the source of the data?" "Is it appropriate to blind copy my boss on this response?" Even when you feel the action is harmless, there may be a business practice that is observed in your organization that may not be the normal procedure elsewhere. There may also be other ethical expectations that you may not have considered or "observed" in this situation before.
- **Research:** Use trusted Internet sources and social media to research common business, cultural, and ethical practices. Many such resources will be able to alert you to expected behaviours and language. This can help frame the context of your meeting, team discussion, or conversation more professionally.

For an ETHICS exercise, go to Critical Thinking Question 6 on page xxx.

This section has served as an introduction to the decisions involved in selecting a communications channel. This topic is covered in greater depth in Chapter 5 and in Appendix B.

LO 2.2 What is involved in composing?

ACE

Compose

Composing involves more than just putting your thoughts into words. Composing includes organizing the content so that it is understandable from the audience's perspective, putting the content into coherent sentences and logical paragraphs, selecting a medium that is professional, and then formatting your content in a way that makes the communication easy to follow.

Composing is certainly easier if you have effectively analyzed your communication situation before sitting down to write. However, even a simple and well-planned message benefits from *at least two drafts*. The first draft allows you to get your thoughts on paper. The second draft allows you to refine your thoughts and pay more attention

to evaluating the language and grammar. More complex messages may require more drafts to make the message complete, clear, and persuasive. This section will help you think through some key elements of the composing process: deciding where and when to compose, organizing the message, drafting the message, and designing a professional format.

Practise strategic time management

When you write a short email or plan a quick instant message exchange with a colleague, you may not need to pay much attention to your environment. However, when you are preparing a complex report or presentation, or planning an important phone call, you must allow enough time to prepare and compose your message effectively. For example, if you will be making a brief presentation to a new client, you might decide to allocate four hours to prepare for the meeting. While you may be tempted to leave the task to the morning of the meeting, you could also divide the four hours differently. You could spend two hours preparing your presentation on one day and then one hour to rehearse the presentation in front of a friend or colleague the next day. Based on the feedback you receive, you could then spend the final hour developing your ideas and refining your approach.

Planning your composing time is most important when you prepare long documents or presentations. Although estimating how much time you need may be difficult at first, you may find it useful to estimate at least two hours per page of actual composing time. Work backwards from the due date. For example, assume that you have a five-page report due in 10 days. During the analyzing phase, you have collected the data you need. **FIGURE 2.9** is an example of how you could manage this challenge. This expanded process takes the pressure off cramming multiple types of tasks into several hours the day before the deadline and ensures that you have a fresh perspective every day.

One of the biggest enemies to managing time effectively is multitasking. Many people allow their mobile devices to interrupt them and control how they use their time. For example, if you have set aside 1.5 hours for editing and proofreading, yet you answer 12 text messages, post two status updates, and write three tweets during that time, your focus and concentration will be seriously affected. For more information on the impact of multitasking on your work, see the **TECHNOLOGY BOX**.
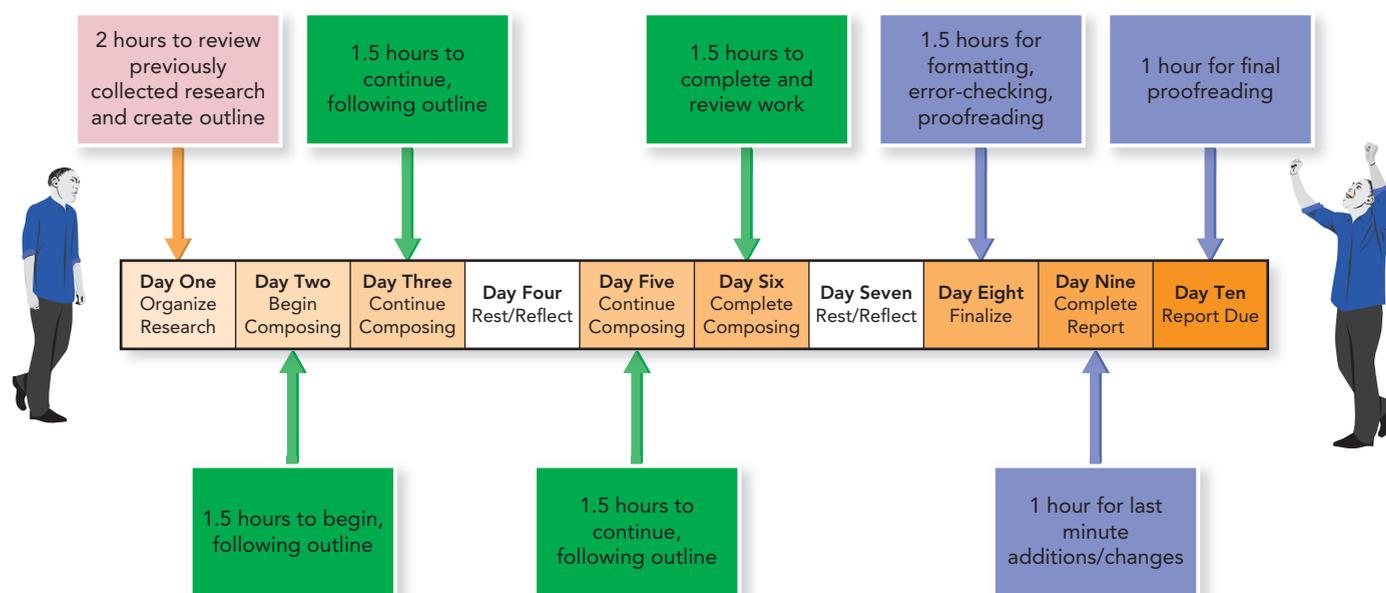
FIGURE 2.9   Managing Time (Analyzing – Composing – Evaluating)

TECHNOLOGY
BOOST YOUR BRAINPOWER: BECOME A SINGLE TASKER

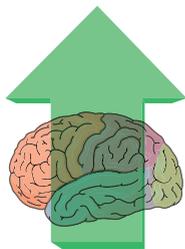| How to Gain Time and Optimize Your IQ!		
Focus on one thing at a time and gain up to a 40% increase in productivity		
Optimize your IQ Studies show that "single tasking" can allow you to make optimal use of your IQ. Multitasking can lower your IQ by as much as 10 points.		Multitasking can cause a drop in cognitive function, similar to the effects of missing a night's sleep.
Gain time While your co-workers will lose as much as 2.1 hours per day by multitasking (the equivalent of 546 working hours annually), single tasking can give you an employment edge: more time!		Effective analyzing, composing, and evaluating takes time, patience, and focus. Give yourself this extra time by single tasking your way through your work day.

Two employees, Hayley and Jayme, are working on a report that is due tomorrow at noon. Hayley has turned off all her notifications (phone, voice mail, email, Twitter, Facebook, instant messaging). Jayme has not. Consequently, Jayme is being interrupted about once every 90 seconds with information that *is not relevant* to her current task. Hayley is not being interrupted.

- Who do you predict will finish the report on time, without working late or coming in early tomorrow?
- Who do you predict will create a well-organized, readable report that will reflect well on her professional reputation in the workplace?

If you think Hayley will do a better job, in a timely manner, on her report, you are probably correct. The late Clifford Nass (2012), one of the leading researchers in chronic media multitasking, found that heavy media multi-taskers (people who engage with three or more media at once) experience dramatically reduced cognitive processes, including executive (decision-making) function. A parallel study found that a person's IQ drops by 10 points when he or she attempts to multitask. This means that people who trye to write an email while checking Facebook and text messaging have too many demands on their cognitive resources to perform optimally.

The psychologist who carried out the second study, Dr. Glenn Wilson of the University of London, notes that "unchecked infomania reduces workers' mental sharpness. Multi-tasking can be incredibly stressful on the brain [because] it impairs short-term memory and concentration. Those who are constantly breaking away from tasks to react to email or text messages suffer similar effects on the mind as losing a night's sleep" (G. Wilson, 2013).

What does this mean to the business communicator? The ACE model requires that you maintain sustained focus on specific tasks. It is hard to define your purpose, analyze your audience, do your research, organize your ideas, compose your message, revise for completeness/clarity/conciseness, edit, and proofread while being constantly interrupted or distracted.

Is it possible to become a "single tasker" in this age of interruptions? Yes. In fact, it is essential for maintaining productivity and quality. Here are a few basic guidelines:

1. **Prioritize.** One of the downsides of multitasking behaviour is that it programs us to believe we can achieve more in a day than is actually possible (Taylor, 2011). Select fewer daily objectives and prioritize them in order of importance and urgency. Following this process will allow you to be more productive, not less productive, as you will have fewer unfinished tasks at the end of the working period.

2. **Use the timer function on your mobile device.** Nass suggests creating 20-minute windows of working time, switching between two prioritized tasks (Lapowsky, 2013). For example, you can work for 20 minutes on a focused activity (like analyzing, composing, or evaluating) and then take a five-minute "connection" break to return texts, check your email, or look at Facebook. Be sure to remember to set the timer to alert you at the end of your five-minute break so you can return to your next working period.

3. **Turn "it" off.** Researchers have found that employees who turn off their media notifications (email, Facebook, Twitter, instant messaging, text messaging, and all other interruptions) have less measurable stress, a stronger ability to focus on one task at a time, and do less screen switching (Taylor, 2010). If you find this hard to accomplish, consider that an entirely new realm of software (Internet blocking productivity software) has been developed that will allow you to manage your connectivity in sync with your working priorities (*Economist*, 2010).

Here is the good news: Research shows that people who "are focused on a task indicate that they are happier than when their mind wanders" (Taylor, 2010). As an added bonus, producing high-quality work will add positively to your workplace reputation. If you consistently produce work of high quality, learning to be a single tasker could be one of the most powerful career management skills you acquire.

M02_SHWO7660_01_SE_C02.indd Page 37 11/3/15 5:54 PM s-w-149 /205/PHC00204/9780133427660_SHWOM/SHWOM_BUSINESS_COMMUNICATION_POLISHING_YOUR_PR

2.2 What is involved in composing? **37**

FIGURE 2.10 Traditional Outline

Outline

Proposal for Summer-Hours Work Schedule

PURPOSE: To propose that ABC Communication's Sales Department adopt a summer-hours work schedule between June 1 and August 31.

Introduction
- Statement of problem
- Proposed solution

Detailed Description of Proposed Summer-Hours Work Schedule
- Flextime options emphasizing core workday hours
- Suggested policies to ensure balanced staffing

Benefits (documented by primary and secondary research)
- Increased employee morale
- Reduced employee turnover rates
- Increased employee productivity

Implementation Plan
- Survey employees to assess flextime preferences
- Develop policies and procedures
- Create an assessment plan

Organizing the message

Composing is much faster and more effective if you make two decisions at the outset:

1. How will you organize the content of the message?
2. Where will you state your main point?

How will you organize the content of the message?

Whether you compose a short email or create a detailed presentation, every message you prepare needs an organizational structure that is logical and easy for your audience to follow. *Outlining* is a versatile and powerful tool that can help you get organized. An outline allows you to break a topic into major ideas and supporting details and then list that content in the order in which you will present it. For example, assume you researched information about summer-hour schedules and need to put together a report for your supervisor. **FIGURE 2.10** illustrates a traditional outline format for a long document, such as a report or proposal. Outlines like these may require several heading levels with multiple points under each topic.

Outlines for smaller efforts can be less elaborate. You do not need a detailed traditional outline format for brief messages, such as emails or short presentations at meetings. **FIGURE 2.11** illustrates two short outlines for brief communications situations. A

(A) NOTES FOR PLANNING AN EMAIL	(B) OUTLINE FOR DISCUSSION AT A MEETING
Notes for Email to Cherilyn SUBJECT: Update on Summer-Hours Schedule Proposal - Ask for feedback on attached rough draft - Briefly explain research gathered to date - Outline information to be included - Thank her for taking time to provide input	**Overview of Summer-Hours Schedule Proposal** 1. What is a flexible summer-hours schedule? 2. How will the company benefit from the schedule? 3. How will we avoid/overcome potential problems? 4. When/how will we implement the schedule? 5. How will we assess the schedule's effectiveness?

FIGURE 2.11 Short Outlines

FIGURE 2.12 Tree Chart Outline
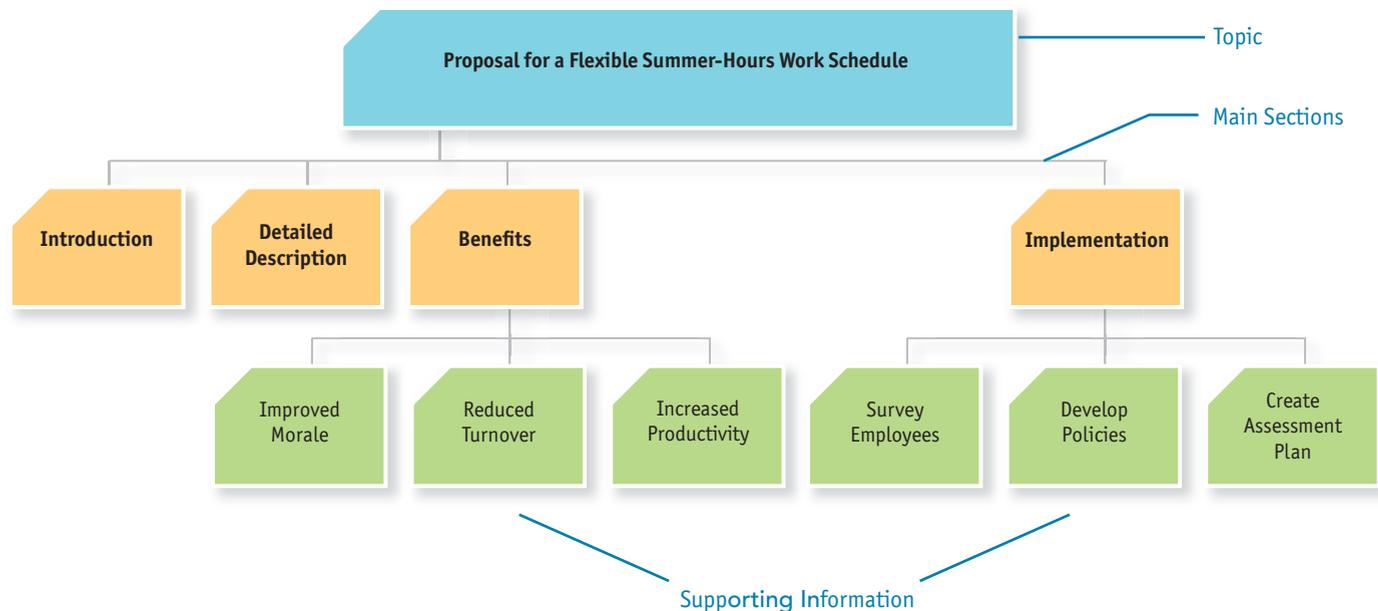
short informative email message may require only a few bullet points. Each bullet point will become a short paragraph in the email. Outlining the content for a short discussion during a meeting may require just a list of questions you will cover.

If you are a visual thinker, you might organize your communication using a *tree chart*, like that in **FIGURE 2.12**, which lets you see the hierarchical structure and connections between your ideas. This method is especially effective if multiple writers are collaborating on a single outline.

Where will you state your main point: At the beginning or the end?

Consider where you want to place the main idea. In basic informational messages (such as the message in Figure 2.4 on page xx), no persuasion is required. The main point may be the only content you include. However, in more complex, persuasive messages, you need to determine whether you want to state the main point directly at the beginning of the message or if you want to be indirect by building up to the point and placing it near the end of the message.

In many situations, being direct is a better choice. Audiences will become impatient if they do not know why you are communicating with them. To avoid this problem and help your audience understand your message quickly, use **direct organization** by stating the purpose and main idea of the message before the supporting details. Direct organization follows this sequence:

1. Present the main idea of the message in the first paragraph, or in the beginning of a long document.
2. Provide supporting information and related details in the middle paragraph(s).
3. Conclude the message with a call to action, any applicable deadlines, and contact information.

However, in certain circumstances, you may want to use **indirect organization**. This structure states the main idea *after* supporting information and related details. The indirect approach may be effective when you are communicating negative news to people who will not expect it, when you anticipate that your audience will be resistant, or when you need to provide an explanation before your main point makes sense. To organize the content indirectly, follow this sequence:

1. Open with a general or neutral statement about the topic that usually indicates the purpose.
2. Provide supporting information and related details in the middle paragraph(s).

Direct organization Stating the main idea of the message before the supporting details.

Indirect organization Building up to the main idea of the message after the supporting details.

FIGURE 2.13 Direct and Indirect Organization

BEGINNING
State the main idea

MIDDLE
Provide details to support

END
Conclude with call to action, deadlines, or contact info

DIRECT ORGANIZATION

BEGINNING
General or neutral statement

MIDDLE
Provide details to support

MIDDLE
State the main idea

END
Conclude with call to action, deadlines, or contact info

INDIRECT ORGANIZATION
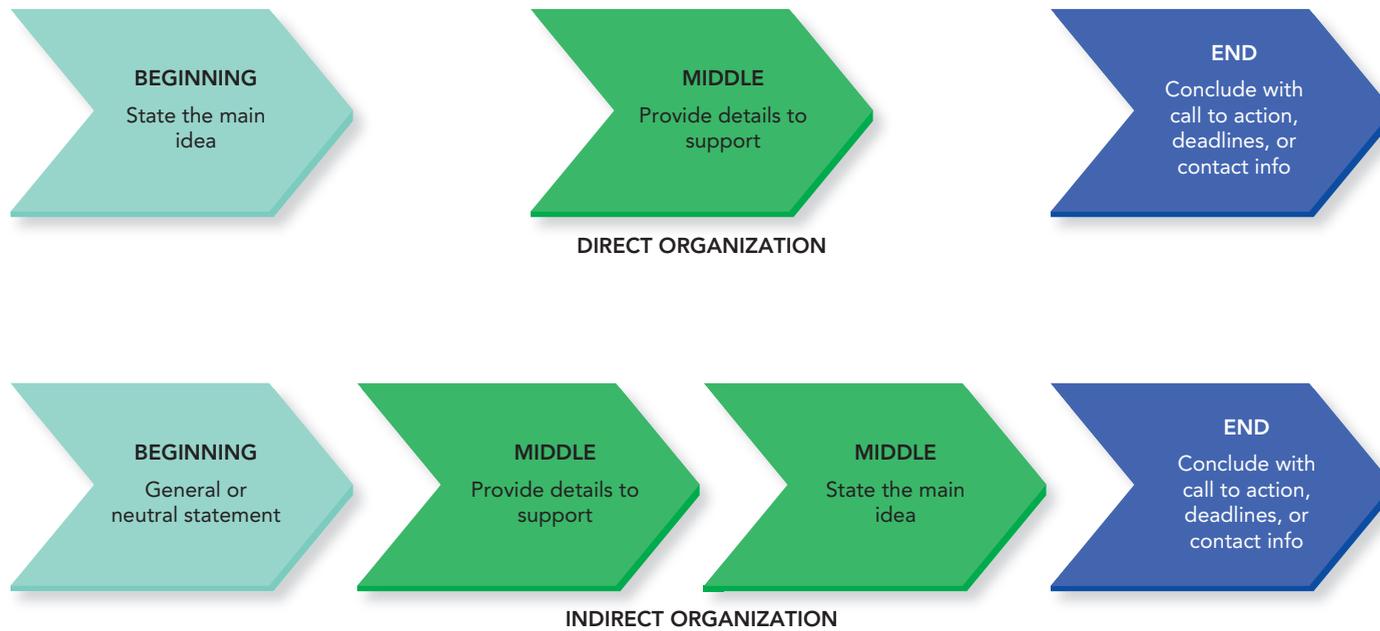
3. Present the main idea of the message after the supporting details.
4. Conclude the message with a call to action, any applicable deadlines, and contact information.

FIGURE 2.13 illustrates this concept.

FIGURE 2.14 demonstrates the differences between the direct and indirect approaches to communicate research on flexible summer hours. Imagine that you presented the

Use a DIRECT organization to emphasize the main idea if the audience will have a positive or neutral reaction.

(A) DIRECT ORGANIZATION

To... Cherilyn Martins
Cc...
Subject: Research Supports Benefits of Flexible Schedule

According to a number of highly respected sources, implementing a flexible work schedule can be an effective method of attracting and retaining employees. It also may improve productivity.

A Scripps news article about the future of the workplace (Erickson, 20XX) offers evidence that creative work schedules are successful tools for attracting and retaining top talent. The article further suggests that, given today's telecommuting capabilities, "face time is irrelevant … and … balancing work and family is the priority among today's workers."

The Center for Services Leadership (20XX) also supports flexible work schedules (throughout the year) to "simultaneously achieve the seemingly conflicting goals of becoming more flexible in employee work arrangements [while] controlling costs and enhancing service."

Finally, the Society for Human Resource Management argues that employees who have the option of flexible schedules have fewer sickness-related absences, thus improving productivity and profits.

None of the research revealed negative consequences of offering a flexible work schedule. Please let me know if you need additional information to support your presentation of our recommendation to upper management.

SUBJECT LINE:
Preview main message

FIRST PARAGRAPH:
State main idea

MIDDLE PARAGRAPHS:
Provide support

LAST PARAGRAPH:
Close

Use an INDIRECT organization to explain the reasons before the main idea if the audience will need to be persuaded to agree with you.

(B) INDIRECT ORGANIZATION

To... Cherilyn Martins
Cc...
Subject: Industry Perspectives on Flexible Schedules

As you requested, I researched several external resources about industry perspectives of flexible work hours.

A Scripps news article about the future of the workplace (Erickson, 20XX) offers evidence that creative work schedules are successful tools for attracting and retaining top talent. The article further suggests that, given today's telecommuting capabilities, "face time is irrelevant … and … balancing work and family is the priority among today's workers."

The Center for Services Leadership (20XX) also supports flexible work schedules (throughout the year) to "simultaneously achieve the seemingly conflicting goals of becoming more flexible in employee work arrangements [while] controlling costs and enhancing service."

Finally, the Society for Human Resource Management argues that employees who have the option of flexible schedules have fewer sickness-related absences, thus improving productivity and profits. None of the research revealed negative consequences of offering a flexible work schedule.

All this research suggests that implementing a flexible work schedule offers substantial benefits at very low or no additional cost. Please let me know if you need additional information to support your presentation of our recommendation to upper management.

SUBJECT LINE:
Introduce the topic

FIRST PARAGRAPH:
State the purpose

MIDDLE PARAGRAPHS:
Provide details

LAST PARAGRAPH:
State main idea and close

FIGURE 2.14 Examples of Direct and Indirect Messages

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summer-hours proposal to your supervisor in a meeting. She may request that you email her some follow-up research to provide an industry perspective of the advantages and disadvantages of summer hours. If your supervisor appeared to favour your proposal, you might organize your email directly, with the main idea at the beginning of the document. However, if your supervisor was unsure about your proposal, you might organize your email indirectly, with the main idea appearing after the supporting details.

Note the difference in the **subject line** of these two emails. In the direct approach, the subject line previews the main message of the email. In the indirect approach, the subject line matches specifically the audience's request for industry context and does not reference the main message.

Drafting the content

Once you have an outline and a decision on where to place your main message, you are now ready to begin drafting your message. If you are writing, **drafting** involves getting the information on paper (or the computer screen). If you are speaking, it means saying your message aloud or in your head so that you can hear it and evaluate it. Drafting is a creative process. Using your outline as a guide, you can begin to draft with a degree of freedom knowing that your first draft will not be your final product.

Inexperienced writers often stop frequently to evaluate what they have written. If you feel a sentence has to be 100% perfect before you begin the next sentence, you are allowing your internal editor to take control. Writing and **revising** are different processes, and switching between them is inefficient and slow. These two activities require different mental processes. In contrast to the creative process of drafting, revising is a logical process that involves evaluating the effectiveness of your message in relation to your audience and purpose. Remember that by using the ACE system you have created ample time to evaluate and edit later. Ultimately, this will produce a higher-quality output in a shorter period of time.

Another barrier that many writers face at the drafting stage is **writer's block**: an inability to begin or continue writing. Symptoms include staring at a blank page or a blank computer monitor without a clue how to begin. Although using the ACE process will help reduce the problem, you may still experience moments when you cannot think of what to say. When this happens, you can try several techniques to unblock your thoughts, including the ones below:

1. **Free writing.** One technique that you can use to overcome writer's block is free writing. This means writing down anything that comes to mind regardless of whether it is appropriate or even meaningful. As a result, you will create some content that is usable for your message, even if you do not use all of it. See **FIGURE 2.15** for an example of free writing. Review your free-writing results to determine which points you want to include, and then highlight or copy those points into a second

Subject line The line in the header of an email that communicates what the message is about and influences whether the audience will read the message.

Drafting A creative process that involves getting information on the paper or computer screen before revising and editing it.

Revising A logical process that involves evaluating the effectiveness of your message in relation to your audience and purpose and then making changes in content, organization, or wording, as necessary.

Writer's block An inability to begin or continue writing, often as a result of procrastination. The stress of shortened deadlines can block creative writing skills.

Okay . . . It is really hard to start writing this report as I can't think of how to start. I know I need to start the introduction of this report with a statement of the problem and the purpose of the report. There really wasn't a serious problem, but the summer-hours plan sounded like a good idea to me. A friend told me about it at his company, I mentioned it to some colleagues here, and they thought I should recommend it. So what's the problem? How do I describe it? I don't know. Maybe I should get some coffee. Oh well, low morale could be contributing to our typical third-quarter sales slump. The summer numbers are always the lowest each year. I can document this with the data I collected from the last 10 years. But since I found that data after I started the research, it shouldn't really be the problem we're trying to solve, just a possible benefit of the schedule. So the summer flex hours could be a solution that boosts morale and productivity, thereby potentially increasing third-quarter sales. If I start with that in the introduction and then support the idea with findings from sources in the middle, I could close with a recommendation to try summer hours and assess its effect on both morale and sales. I should get more coffee.

FIGURE 2.15 Example of Free Writing

document. Save all your original free-writing samples in a separate document in case you need to refer to them again.

Thinking aloud is similar to free writing except that you speak rather than write. Thinking aloud helps get your ideas "out in the air." Some writers find it useful to record their thoughts, play back the recording, and then type the most important points they hear. In fact, writers who struggle with awkward wording often find recording their thoughts to be an effective way to ensure that their business writing has a conversational, welcoming tone.

2. **Point form first.** If you feel challenged by grammar, try writing your thoughts in partial sentences or point form. You can structure entire sections of work this way, ensuring that your best and most important ideas are at least on paper. Once you have your most important ideas in point form, you can start a different kind of task: expressing your thoughts using effective and clear sentence structure and grammar. Completing the work in two stages (ideas first, then grammar) will help you ensure your best ideas do not get lost while you address the challenge of expressing them properly.

3. **Use an outline.** Writers who prepare an effective outline prior to composing find that their struggles with writer's block are significantly reduced. For example, you can begin by creating a word processing document with headings that match the outline you have created. Perhaps it is easier to start writing in the middle, with your research evidence. The magic of word processing allows you to start in a place that you find easier and work your way toward the more challenging parts. Many writers find openings and conclusions difficult. However, using a content outline within a word processing program gives you the option of completing these elements after you have built your confidence in the rest of the document.

Designing a professional format and delivery

After you have composed your message, arrange it into a professional format that is easy to read and understand. A document's format plays a role similar to your dress and behaviour in face-to-face communication. If the style looks professional, then it communicates to an audience that you are professional. If the format is difficult to read or confusing, then it undermines your credibility.

Although the specific techniques you use for designing your message will depend on the medium you choose, some consistent design principles apply to all medium options. For example, effective and experienced business communicators do the following:

- Start with a purpose-driven introduction
- Break their message into short chunks (paragraphs)
- Begin each paragraph with a strong **topic sentence** that identifies the main point or overall idea of the paragraph
- Use bullet lists for easy comprehension and skimming
- End with a specific conclusion, recommendation, or action item

The following sections provide examples of professional formats for email messages, letters, voice mail messages, and social media postings. Other chapters discuss methods of creating professional formats for longer, more complex documents, such as reports and presentations. For a comprehensive formatting guide, see Appendix C: Formats for Business Documents and online at mybcommlab.com.

Email messages

Business email messages should focus on only one topic that is clearly identified in the subject line. However, devoting a message to one topic does not mean that the message should contain only one paragraph. Consider the two versions of the email message in **FIGURE 2.16**. Both versions contain the same information: The subject line and sentences are identical. However, the design is very different. Examine the layout. Which one looks more readable? Which one looks better organized? Which one looks more professional?

Topic sentence A sentence that identifies the main point or overall idea of the paragraph. It is usually the first sentence in a paragraph.

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FIGURE 2.16   Poorly Designed versus Professionally Designed Email Messages
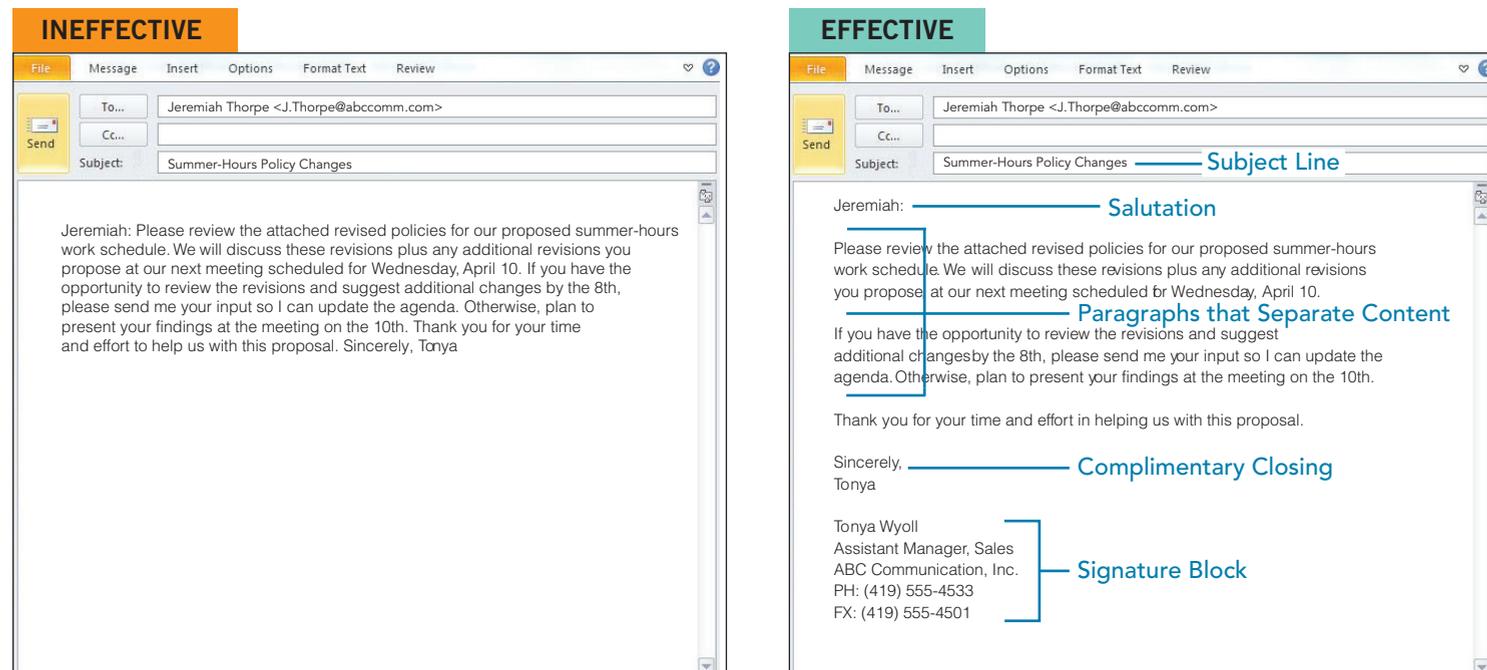
When you write longer emails, you can enhance the organization and design even further by using three important techniques:

- **Begin with a focused first paragraph** that identifies your purpose and previews your content. Strong first paragraphs are increasingly important as more people read emails on mobile devices with small screens. Those readers appreciate getting the core of the message without having to scroll down.
- **Use topic-specific headings** or paragraph titles that are short but include a key idea. For example, instead of using a generic heading like "Benefits," compose a **topic-specific heading** such as "Benefits of a Flexible Summer Schedule" that helps the audience understand the content of the paragraph.
- **Format important lists as bullet point lists**, with each item preceded by a dot or other simple shape. The content you are reading now is part of a **bullet point list**. Notice that the listed items have a **parallel structure**, which means that each bullet has the same grammatical structure. In this list, each item begins with a verb.

The email in **FIGURE 2.17** illustrates all three techniques.

Letters

Letters are generally intended for **external audiences**. A letter is considered more formal than an email. As a result, letters are sometimes used for **internal audiences** when the situation calls for formality. For example, you might receive a letter offering you a promotion, or you might write a formal letter of resignation if you were leaving a job.

When letters are sent in hardcopy on behalf of an organization, they are usually printed on the organization's letterhead. Letters can also be sent electronically (i.e., in softcopy) as email attachments. In fact, many companies use electronic letterhead templates so that letters attached to emails will look the same as printed letters. An attached letter maintains the formality of the message, while the email transmission takes advantage of the quick delivery and electronic documentation.

Several letter formats exist, such as block style, modified block, and simplified. However, block style, as shown in Appendix C: Formats for Business Documents and throughout this text, is the most efficient letter style and the one most commonly used in business. Block-style letters use no indentions or centring. Instead, all elements begin at the left margin, and paragraphs are separated with a double space. For guidelines

Topic-specific headings Section or paragraph titles that are short but include key ideas. They are often in the form of a short sentence and include a verb.

Bullet point list A vertically formatted list with each item preceded by a dot or other simple shape.

Parallel structure Writing that features a series of ideas in identical grammatical structure, making it easier to read and understand.

Letters Formal correspondence, generally intended for external audiences. Letters can be sent through postal mail or by email attachment for quicker delivery.

External audiences People outside your organization (clients, suppliers, partners).

Internal audiences People with whom you communicate inside your organization.

2.2 What is involved in composing? **43**
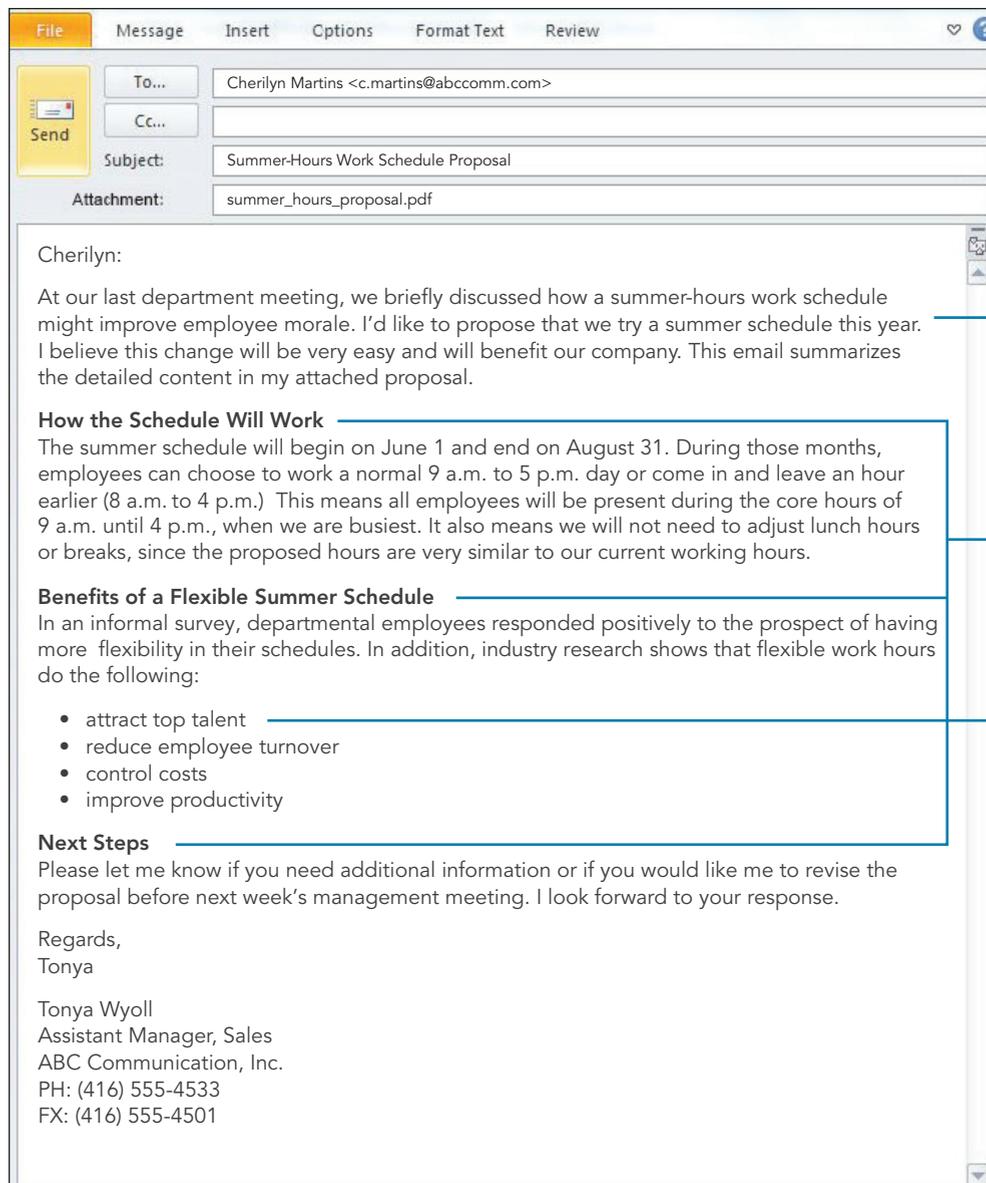
FIGURE 2.17 Email with Focused Opening, Topic-Specific Headings, and Bullet Points

---

File | Message | Insert | Options | Format Text | Review

Send

To... | Cherilyn Martins <c.martins@abccomm.com>

Cc...

Subject: | Summer-Hours Work Schedule Proposal

Attachment: | summer_hours_proposal.pdf

Cherilyn:

At our last department meeting, we briefly discussed how a summer-hours work schedule might improve employee morale. I'd like to propose that we try a summer schedule this year. I believe this change will be very easy and will benefit our company. This email summarizes the detailed content in my attached proposal.

How the Schedule Will Work
The summer schedule will begin on June 1 and end on August 31. During those months, employees can choose to work a normal 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. day or come in and leave an hour earlier (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) This means all employees will be present during the core hours of 9 a.m. until 4 p.m., when we are busiest. It also means we will not need to adjust lunch hours or breaks, since the proposed hours are very similar to our current working hours.

Benefits of a Flexible Summer Schedule
In an informal survey, departmental employees responded positively to the prospect of having more flexibility in their schedules. In addition, industry research shows that flexible work hours do the following:

- attract top talent
- reduce employee turnover
- control costs
- improve productivity

Next Steps
Please let me know if you need additional information or if you would like me to revise the proposal before next week's management meeting. I look forward to your response.

Regards,
Tonya

Tonya Wyoll
Assistant Manager, Sales
ABC Communication, Inc.
PH: (416) 555-4533
FX: (416) 555-4501

The first paragraph of this long email contains the purpose of the message, the main point, and a preview of the content.

Notice how the three topic-specific headings help the audience grasp the organization and meaning of the document at a glance.

Bullet points make important lists easy to skim.

If the audience needs to refer to the document again, they will know exactly where to find the information they need.

---

about formatting letters and examples of modified block style, see Appendix C and refer to mybcommlab.com.

Voice mail messages

You may think it is odd to consider the design of oral communication since design is a visual concept. Nonetheless, a savvy communicator designs voice mail messages with the same principles used in designing direct emails:

- Focus on one topic
- Keep the message short
- State the main point early
- Provide contact information

Take a few minutes to plan your message before dialing the recipient's number. Use the following advice to design a professional voice mail message. See **FIGURE 2.18** for a sample.

- **Greet the recipient** by name to personalize the message.
- **Identify yourself** and include your organization name and/or your position if the recipient is not familiar with you. Leave a callback number if you want the recipient to return your call. Concentrate on speaking slowly and clearly.

FIGURE 2.18 Sample Voice Mail Message

SAMPLE VOICE MAIL

Hello, Ms. Nelson. This is Tonya Wyoll from ABC Communication. My number is (416) 555-4533. — Greeting and identification

I am calling in response to the proposal for professional development that you sent recently. I have discussed this with my supervisor and would like to arrange a date for the workshop. — Purpose and main point

Please call me at (416) 555-4533. I look forward to talking with you soon. Goodbye. — Action, contact information, and sign-off

- **State your main point.** Let the recipient know why you are calling.
- **Provide details (optional).** Consider carefully whether you should leave many details in your message or if you should send the details in an email. If you need to leave additional details, do so after the main point and before the action items. Keep details brief.
- **Identify actions.** Do you want the recipient to return your call, send you something, or do something else? If you are requesting an action, be both polite and specific.
- **Provide contact information.** Even if you state your contact information at the beginning, repeat it slowly at the end. When leaving your phone number, speak especially slowly. The recipient should not have to listen to your message twice to be able to write down the complete number to call.
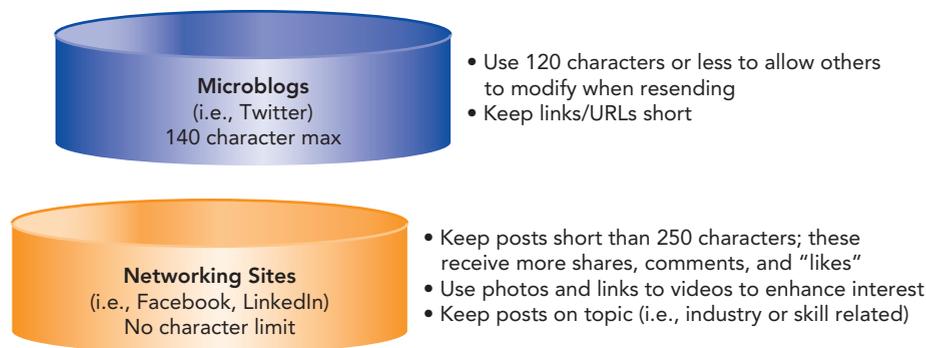- **Sign off** by saying goodbye.

Emerging media: Social, mobile, and instant media messages

The topic of communications technologies will be more thoroughly explored in Chapter 5. Here are some introductory concepts to assist you in understanding message construction across a variety of technology channels.

Although different forms of emerging media require slightly different approaches to formatting and design, there are two key questions to consider:

1. **Is the message for a business purpose?** Many people use social media, mobile devices, and instant messaging for personal as well as business use. Develop the discipline to know which audience (business or personal) you are communicating with. If you are sending a business message, audience expectations may be quite different than if you were sending a personal message. Most social or personal messages do not require much planning. Any business message of any length, even 140 characters, requires planning and formatting.
2. **Who is your audience?** Many social media formats feature easy sharing and redistribution. Therefore, you need to keep both your primary audience (the direct recipients) and potential secondary audiences in mind as you craft your message. When you hear that a message, photo, or video has "gone viral," what this means in business language is that the primary recipients of a message shared their information with their own audiences, which is a vast and unpredictable secondary audience. Be sure that everything you send or post is constructed in a way that will, at best, reflect a positive image of you and your organization and, at least, not damage your personal image or your company's reputation.

Microblogs are short entries or updates on a blog or social media website, typically posted via a mobile phone ("Microblogging," n.d.). For example, a tweet is only 140 characters long (roughly two lines of text). How can you "design" a tweet? Twitter experts recommend making your tweets even shorter, less than 120 characters if possible. This will leave room for your followers to reply and quote you while remaining within the 140-character limit (TurkReno, Inc., 2011). If needed, use a link-shortening site, such as goo.gl or bitly.com, to cut down the character length of long URLs. Your tweets could,

• Use 120 characters or less to allow others to modify when resending
• Keep links/URLs short

Microblogs
(i.e., Twitter)
140 character max

FIGURE 2.19 Composing for Microblogs

• Keep posts short than 250 characters; these receive more shares, comments, and "likes"
• Use photos and links to videos to enhance interest
• Keep posts on topic (i.e., industry or skill related)

Networking Sites
(i.e., Facebook, LinkedIn)
No character limit

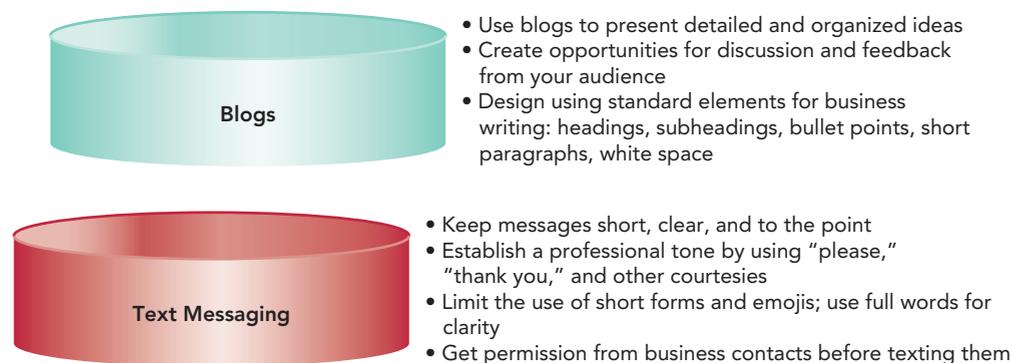**FIGURE 2.20** Composing for Networking Sites

potentially, reach a much wider secondary audience. **FIGURE 2.19** summarizes key tactics that will maximize the effectiveness of your microblog posts.

Networking sites, such as Facebook or LinkedIn, allow you to communicate with a wide audience, often based on individuals you have added or connected with as well as their networks. Therefore, over time these sites form groups or communities of people based on either your personal or business interests. Although there are few restrictions on the length of posts you can add to these types of sites, experts recommend that you keep your posts under 80 characters to maximize your readership (Geddes-Soltess, 2012). Facebook's own research shows that short postings (between 100 and 250 characters) receive 60% more shares, comments, and "likes." **FIGURE 2.20** summarizes the key tactics that will maximize the effectiveness of your networking site entries.

A blog posting offers the most social media space for you to develop and explore ideas. This could be a positive or a negative attribute. A disorganized, free-form blog post will not receive the same attention as a well-organized blog post. Therefore, make the extra space work for you and not against you. Take the same care as you would in designing an email, letter, or report: short paragraphs, white space, informative headings and subheadings, lists, and bold text all make posts more visually appealing and easier to read (Vandelay Design, 2008). **FIGURE 2.21** summarizes key tactics that will maximize the effectiveness of your blog posts.

Text messaging is ideal for sending extremely short, time-sensitive, information-based bursts of information. For example, if you need to clarify the location or time of a meeting that is about to take place, sending a text can be the perfect option. The **asynchronous** nature of texts allows recipients to answer when it is convenient for them to do so. However, texts are not the best media for transmitting complex or ambiguous information that requires deep discussion or debate. "It's in the area of customer relations, engagement, and interaction that text messaging holds the greatest potential to solve a range of critical business issues," says Naveen Gupta, chief product officer at RingCentral. "Yet, many businesses don't have a defined text messaging strategy" (Gupta, 2013) Until text messaging is more widely adopted for business use, it is best to use text messaging with clients and colleagues with whom you have an established working relationship. Meaning can be easily misinterpreted in this truncated medium. Therefore, it is inadvisable to use text messaging as the first point of contact with a potential business associate or client. **FIGURE 2.22** summarizes key tactics that will maximize the effectiveness of your text messages.

Asynchronous Refers to communication that takes place with a time gap between the sending of the message, the receiving of the message, and the response (e.g., email, regular mail, or text messaging).

• Use blogs to present detailed and organized ideas
• Create opportunities for discussion and feedback from your audience
• Design using standard elements for business writing: headings, subheadings, bullet points, short paragraphs, white space

Blogs

FIGURE 2.21 Composing for Blogs

• Keep messages short, clear, and to the point
• Establish a professional tone by using "please," "thank you," and other courtesies
• Limit the use of short forms and emojis; use full words for clarity
• Get permission from business contacts before texting them

Text Messaging

FIGURE 2.22 Composing Text Messages

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FIGURE 2.23 Composing Instant Messages

Instant Messaging
(i.e., Skype)

• Keep conversations short, clear, and to the point
• Establish a professional tone by using "please," "thank you," and other courtesies
• Limit use of short forms and emojis; use full words for clarity
• Respect the other person's time management; ask first if they have time at that moment; respect the answer; book a better time to correspond online

With our workforce becoming more global and mobile, the use of instant, **synchronous**, screen-to-screen communication is becoming more widespread. It is an ideal way for teams or groups of people to "meet" and communicate across vast distances simultaneously. One of the key factors in planning a synchronous communication, such as instant messaging, is an awareness of the recipient's availability. While you may be motivated to have an instant messaging exchange with a business partner in another time zone or country, that person may not be available to chat at that moment. Therefore, plan to ask first if the person has time to have a conversation and, if he or she does not, plan to book an appropriate time to continue. **FIGURE 2.23** summarizes key tactics that will maximize the effectiveness of your instant messages.

LO 2.3 How does evaluating improve your communication?

ACE

Evaluate

The final step in the ACE process is evaluating your communication to ensure it is complete, clear, concise, easy to understand, and error-free. This section describes four ways to evaluate your communication:

• Revise the content
• Edit for style and tone
• Proofread for errors
• Review feedback to improve your future communications

When preparing written communications, you need to plan to reread, revise, and edit before sending. Inexperienced business writers often skip the evaluating stage of writing because they believe it is more time efficient to treat their first draft as a final draft. Experienced business writers know that a first draft is rarely good enough. If you write your first draft quickly to get your ideas on the page, you may include incomplete thoughts, awkward sentences, and grammatical errors that computer editing tools such as spelling and grammar checkers may miss. In addition, by the time you get to the end of your first draft, you may have altered or reprioritized your original ideas. The evaluating phase gives you the opportunity to make those changes before you send the message.

By contrast, oral communication allows you to evaluate *while* you are delivering the message based on immediate feedback you receive from your audience. For example, imagine that you are making a point in a meeting. As you look around the room, you can gauge your audience's reaction and begin to adjust or revise your explanation on the spot.
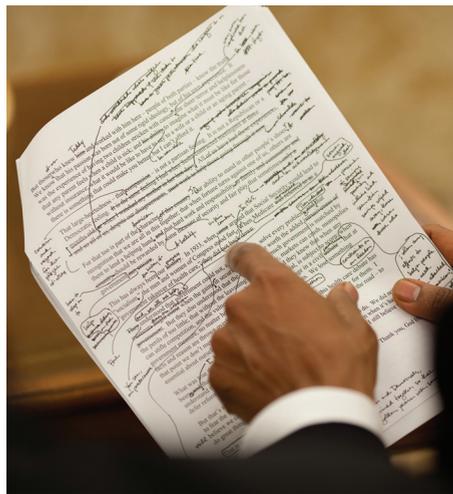
The White House published this photo of President Barack Obama editing a speech.

Official White House photo by Pete Souza. Courtesy of Flickr.

Revise content: Improve effectiveness

Even the best writers need to review and revise the content of a first draft. First drafts are opportunities for you to examine and think through your ideas. As you review the draft, you may see that you have left out an idea, changed your logic, or written a lengthy explanation because you did not understand your material well enough to be concise. As you reread your content, ask yourself these questions:

• Is it complete and well organized?
• Is it clear?
• Is it concise?

Synchronous Refers to communication that takes place in "real time," such as a phone conversation, meeting, or instant messaging exchange.

M02_SHWO7660_01_SE_C02.indd Page 47 11/3/15 5:55 PM s-w-149 /205/PHC00204/9780133427660_SHWOM/SHWOM_BUSINESS_COMMUNICATION_POLISHING_YOUR_PR

2.3 How does evaluating improve your communication? **47**

Completeness

As a first step in the revising process, reread the entire document from the audience's perspective. Think about the analysis stage of the ACE process (i.e., the purpose and outcome you identified for the communication) and the audience you defined. Ask yourself if the document has the right information and the right approach to achieve your goal. Here is a list of questions you can ask yourself:

- **Is your main point clear?** Underline your main point. Does it appear in the appropriate place in your document? If not, consider reorganizing so that the main point appears where it should. If you cannot find an explicit statement of your main point, add it to the draft document.
- **Have you provided all the information your audience needs?** Consider all the information you believe your audience will need to know. Then review your draft document, putting a mark next to each of these items. If any information is missing, revise. If you cannot imagine what your audience will need to know, ask friends or colleagues to provide feedback. Do they have any unanswered questions after reading your draft? If so, revise.
- **Are the benefits to the audience clear?** Your audience needs to know how to benefit from the information you provide. If you have not stressed this, revise.
- **Is the information well organized?** Read the topic sentences of each paragraph. Does each topic sentence identify the main idea of the paragraph? If not, revise. Does each sentence within the paragraph relate to the topic sentence? If not, revise. Does the progression from one topic sentence to the next seem logical? If not, reorganize and revise.

You will find it easier to revise if you spend some time away from your draft. Put it away overnight or for a few hours and then read it with fresh eyes.

Clarity

Clarity refers to using clear wording that an audience can easily understand. One of the first mistakes many new employees make is to try to impress colleagues, managers, and customers by using big words in long sentences. People are rarely impressed by writing that is long and difficult to understand, like the poorly worded sentences in **FIGURE 2.24**. The best business writing communicates its meaning as quickly and as simply as possible and does not attempt to impress people with vocabulary. The clearly worded sentences in Figure 2.24 intend the same meaning, but use natural-sounding language that is easy to understand.

Experienced business communicators also avoid **abstract wording**. Any language that refers to broad concepts with multiple meanings should be avoided. Consider the sentence "We need to examine the transportation situation ASAP." In this sentence, the terms "transportation," "situation," and "ASAP" (as soon as possible) are abstract.

What do they mean? A dictionary defines *transportation* as conveyance (carrying, moving, shipping, or hauling). Therefore, not everyone thinks of the same kind of transportation when they visualize the word. Similarly, the word "situation" is open to interpretation based on the reader's perspective or role. It could have a positive or a negative connotation. Does it mean that the transportation is delayed, has improved, or is too expensive? Does "ASAP" mean by today, by the end of the week, or whenever you have the time to do it? Using ambiguous wording results in miscommunication if your audience infers a different meaning than you intend. **Concrete wording** is specific. The more concrete the language is, the more likely it is that you and your audience will interpret the same message in the same way: "By tomorrow morning, we need to determine why shipments are leaving the warehouse two days late."

Clarity The quality of being unambiguous and easy to understand. Clear communication uses relatively simple words in well-constructed sentences and well-organized paragraphs.

Abstract wording Language that refers to broad concepts that an audience can interpret in multiple ways.

Concrete wording Language that is specific, making it likely that everyone will interpret it the same way.

POORLY WORDED	CLEARLY WORDED
• Please affix the appropriate amount of postage to the mailing package. • I sincerely appreciate your exertion on this critically important endeavor.	• Please put a stamp on the envelope. • Thank you for your work on this important project.

FIGURE 2.24 Using Clear Wording

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FIGURE 2.25   Using Concise Wording

WORDY	CONCISE
• This email is in reference to our approval of your prior request.	• Your request has been approved.

• Attached herein are the agenda for this month's meeting, the minutes from last month's meeting, and the report we discussed last month and will review this month.	• Attached are the documents you will need for this month's meeting:
	  • the agenda
	  • the minutes from last month's meeting
	  • the report we will discuss

• If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me.	• Please contact me if you have any questions.

Conciseness

In business communication, shorter is usually better. **Conciseness** refers to communication that is short and to the point, expressing ideas clearly in the fewest possible words. Whether your message is oral or written, a well-constructed, concise message saves the audience time. As entrepreneur Guy Kawasaki, managing director of Garage Technology Ventures, explains, schools "should teach students how to communicate in five-sentence emails and with 10-slide PowerPoint presentations. If they just taught every student that, American business would be much better off. . . . No one wants to read 'War and Peace' emails. Who has the time? Ditto with 60 PowerPoint slides for a one-hour meeting" (Kawasaki, 2010).

FIGURE 2.25 provides examples of how you can edit wordy phrases to be more clear and concise.

You can also make writing more concise by eliminating obvious fillers and any information that is not necessary or helpful to achieve your purpose. When you include extra words and unnecessary information, you waste your time as well as the audience's time. Consider the examples in **FIGURE 2.26**.

Concise wording also eliminates **redundancies**. Consider the examples in **FIGURE 2.27** (redundant phrases appear in red in the left column).

Conciseness Using no more words than necessary for a message to accomplish its purpose.

Redundancy Unnecessary repetition of an idea.

FIGURE 2.26   Eliminating Unnecessary Words

WORDY	CONCISE
• As you know, we met yesterday to discuss next year's budget. Based on the auditor's review, we recommended the following actions.	• Based on the auditor's review of our budget, we recommended the following actions.
• As your assistant manager, I am suggesting that we review our departmental procedures.	• I suggest we review our departmental procedures.
• There are three people who will attend the meeting.	• Three people will attend the meeting.

REDUNDANT	CONCISE
• Please refer back to the minutes from our last department meeting.	• Please refer to the minutes from our last department meeting.
• Advance planning on your project will allow our departments to combine together our resources and divide up the work to be done.	• Advanced project planning will allow our departments to combine resources and divide the work.
• The first issue we need to address is travel reimbursement. Travel reimbursement is an important issue to address because nearly 70% of our employees have expense accounts.	• First, we need to address travel reimbursement because nearly 70% of our employees have expense accounts.

FIGURE 2.27   Avoiding Redundancies

Edit for style and tone: Project a professional image

Effective business communicators evaluate their documents to ensure a professional style and tone. **Style** refers to *how* you express yourself rather than *what* you say. Do you use positive or negative language, big words or small words, long sentences or short sentences, strong active verbs or weak passive voice?

The style you choose will affect the tone of your communication. *Tone* is the image your language projects *about you* based on how the message sounds to the audience. Tone in writing is similar to your tone of voice when you speak. Your tone can be friendly or angry, positive or negative, formal or casual, professional or unprofessional, courteous or rude.

Many beginning business writers have trouble identifying tone in the passages they read and in establishing appropriate tone in their own work. This makes editing for tone quite challenging. As a rule, in all business messages keep your tone professional and courteous at all times. This is especially important when you are frustrated and angry. For example, when replying to an angry customer about a problem with a recent purchase, ensure that the tone of your message is polite and reassuring, even if this particular customer often complains or does not understand how to use the product correctly. If you choose to respond in an irritated or angry tone, that customer can, in this age of email, social media, text and instant messaging, choose to damage your reputation and your company's reputation. To ensure a professional style and tone, follow the guidelines below:

- Use positive wording
- Establish a conversational style
- Maintain the active voice as much as possible
- Avoid slang and clichés

Use positive wording

Effective business writers choose positive wording to communicate their messages, even in negative situations. *Positive wording* creates an optimistic, encouraging, and often more informative message. For example, consider the sentences in **FIGURE 2.28**. The sentences on the left are expressed as negative ideas. Note how, in each example, subtle changes in wording focus on the positive expression of the same ideas.

Use a conversational style

Business writing also should be *conversational* rather than academic. Academic writing often sounds too formal for everyday communication. A conversational writing style uses relatively short sentences and familiar words. When read aloud, the text should sound like the writer is talking with the audience. This style is especially important in social media messages where the goal is to create interaction and build a positive image for your corporate brand. Because they are so short, tweets are naturally conversational. To make blog posts conversational, experts suggest being personal in your writing, asking questions to promote a sense of dialogue, splitting up paragraphs for better flow, and proofreading out loud to hear how the words sound (Peters, 2012). To test the power of reading out loud, see the examples in **FIGURE 2.29**. Read the sentences on the left aloud. It is unlikely that you would speak this way in conversation with someone. The sentences on the right convey the same meaning but with a better conversational style.

Style How you express yourself.

NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
• We will not be able to approve a new budget until the analysis is complete.	• We will be able to approve a new budget when the analysis is complete.
• The board has not yet voted on the salary increases.	• The board will vote on the salary increases at the next meeting.
• If you do not sign the form before 5 p.m., we will not be able to fund your travel request.	• If you sign the form before 5 p.m., we will be able to fund your travel request.

FIGURE 2.28 Using Positive Wording

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FIGURE 2.29 Using Conversational Style

TOO FORMAL	CONVERSATIONAL
• Henceforth all documentation is to be completed within two business days.	• Please complete all forms within two business days.
• As per your instructions, I have initiated discussions with the previously identified employees.	• I opened discussions with the employees you mentioned last week.
• This new policy will facilitate the implementation of more beneficial scheduling decisions.	• This new policy will let us schedule shipments more efficiently.

Use active voice

Voice refers to the relationship between the subject and verb in a sentence. In **active voice** sentences, the subject performs the action of the verb:

$$\overbrace{\text{subject}} \quad \overbrace{\text{verb}}$$

ACTIVE VOICE: The employees completed the project early.

In business writing and speaking, choose active voice for a clear and precise style of writing. Not only does the active voice enliven your writing, it allows you to give credit to individuals or groups who have achieved positive outcomes. See the examples below:

• Sandrine designed and implemented our department's winning strategy.
• The Eastern sales team set a new record for revenues last quarter.

In **passive voice** sentences, the subject does not act. Instead, the subject receives the action expressed by the verb:

$$\overbrace{\text{subject}} \quad \overbrace{\text{verb phrase}}$$

PASSIVE VOICE: The project was completed early.

Passive voice may be a better choice in a few special circumstances:

• **To avoid assigning blame.** To maintain a positive tone in your writing, avoid the appearance of assigning blame by using the passive voice:
  • Camilla misfiled the contract. (active voice, sounds like blame)
  • The contract was misfiled. (passive voice, sounds like a statement of fact)
• **To emphasize the most important word.** Use passive voice to highlight the most important word in a sentence. In the example below, the meeting scheduler's name is not as important as the meeting itself:
  • Roger scheduled the meeting for Friday at 2 p.m. (active voice)
  • The meeting is scheduled for Friday at 2 p.m. (passive voice)

The passive voice presents information diplomatically, and this can be appropriate in some circumstances. However, inexperienced business writers tend to overuse the passive voice in an effort to "sound businesslike." When possible, use the active voice to express your ideas more directly. One way to achieve this is to write your first drafts entirely in the active voice and then to reread and identify any areas where you need to be more cautious in your expression. Then you can rewrite only the ideas that require diplomacy in the passive voice. **FIGURE 2.30** provides an example of this technique. Active voice passages are shown in red, and passive voice is shown in green.

Eliminate slang and clichés

To communicate effectively in business, you need to use words that your audience will understand. **Slang** is nonstandard, informal language that may work well within a certain group but often excludes people from different countries, cultures, and social groups. Examples of slang include *cool, my bad, off the chain, plugged in*, and *go missing*. As you edit, eliminate all slang and clichés.

Clichés are commonplace and often overused phrases that have lost their force and meaning. Like slang, clichés are also very specific to cultures and languages, and they

Active voice A sentence structure in which the subject performs the action of the verb.

Passive voice A sentence structure in which the subject is passive and receives the action expressed by the verb.

Slang Nonstandard, informal language that may communicate well within a certain group but often excludes people from different countries, cultures, and social groups. This type of casual and colourful language tends to confuse others when translated.

Clichés Commonplace and often overused phrases that have lost their force and meaning.

FIRST DRAFT: ALL ACTIVE VOICE	SECOND DRAFT: REVISED (BLEND OF ACTIVE AND PASSIVE)
I am writing to apologize for the delay in presenting our report. John couldn't get the printer to work and, when it did work, the printer did not render Kumar's charts properly. So, Mona had to redo all the charts to that you could understand the data. We want to ensure that you have the clearest possible understanding of our research.	Please accept the delay in presenting this report. Technical issues prevented our original report from rendering properly. We are confident that this version is the clearest possible expression of our research. Thank you for your patience.

FIGURE 2.30 Using Active and Passive Voice

CLICHÉ	MEANING
Her proposal is all over the map.	Her proposal is disorganized.
The bottom fell out of that investment.	The investment lost money.
Hiring him was a bad call.	Hiring him was a bad decision.

FIGURE 2.31 Eliminating Clichés

may exclude international audiences. Would a businessperson who learned English in India or China understand the clichés in **FIGURE 2.31**?

If you speak to your classmates about their perceptions of "style" and "tone," you may soon discover that many people have a slightly different opinion on what is formal or informal, or professional or unprofessional. What you may be experiencing is a variation based on "culture." Your experience in future workplaces, either in Canada or abroad, will be similar. You will be around people with different cultural perceptions than your own and, often, you will need to adopt communications habits that are based on cultures dissimilar to your own. For an introduction to this idea, see the **CULTURE BOX**.

🌐 CULTURE

Skylar is excited and a bit nervous as she starts her first week as an intern at the swanky uptown marketing firm Couture Ads. She arrives early on Tuesday morning and receives a voice mail message from the managing partner instructing her to receive their newest client, Simon Wu, who is arriving from Hong Kong today at noon. Skylar needs to arrange for a limo to pick Mr. Wu up from the airport upon his arrival. Skylar is anxious to impress her employer and hopes to be offered employment after her internship. She asks the interns' assistant to announce the client when he or she arrives. Skylar then begins to arrange a meeting back at the office for the marketing team to brief the client on his important project.

All Skylar's preparations are complete by 11:30 a.m., and she departs for the airport. However, Mr. Wu seems confused by being whisked back to the office and being placed immediately into a meeting. While he is too gracious to state that anything is wrong, Skylar senses that something is amiss.

Things to Note: In some business organizations, it is common practice (the business "culture") to greet clients at the airport. Expectations about working upon arrival may be the practice in Canada, but in other cultures a more informal welcome, like a lunch with partners or team managers,

may be more appropriate and culturally sound. "As a leader, you need to recognize the culture of the people you're working with" (McCarthy, 2009). In our diverse global network, considering the culture of both the profession as well as the person is an important skill to have in business communications:

Culture is socially constructed. It is a set of implicit and explicit social expectations, values, and norms, shared between members of the same group. The characteristics of a culture include, but are not limited to: music, religion, traditions, etiquette, moral values, rules, gender roles, language, art, and history. Although cultural expectations, values and norms remain clearly identifiable, they evolve to varying degrees over time. Culture often connects to a strong value system, and governs how people relate, trust and exchange ideas. Therefore, because culture is a strong component of each individual's and group's identity, it is an extremely important consideration in business communications. (Satov, 2013)

For CULTURE exercises, go to Critical Thinking Question 7 on page xx and Exercise 16 on page xx.

Proofread to increase your credibility

Proofreading is a critical step in the evaluation process. When you have analyzed, researched, and composed your written work, much remains to be done. If your work is full of misplaced pieces, your audience will focus more on those mistakes than on your intended message. Furthermore, your audience may assume that you lack attention to detail. Your communication efforts should enhance your reputation with your audience, but presenting work with errors will achieve the opposite effect.

Proofreading is like solving a puzzle. You need to find the errors that exist, rearrange or revise them, and put them in their proper place. To fully understand the importance of this, assume that your audience will find any misplaced puzzle pieces faster and more accurately than you will. When this happens, your credibility with your audience decreases. Here are some techniques that will help you present error-free work to your business audience. Check out **FIGURE 2.32** for a summary of the kinds of errors you will need to watch for.

Learn to recognize the five most common errors

Most writing errors fall into one of five categories: content errors, typographical and spelling errors, usage errors, grammatical errors, and format errors.

- *Content errors* **are mistakes in the substance of a message.** Content errors include incorrect or missing information. Pay special attention to
  - dates and days of the week,
  - locations and times stated,

Proofreading A systematic process of reviewing writing for errors.
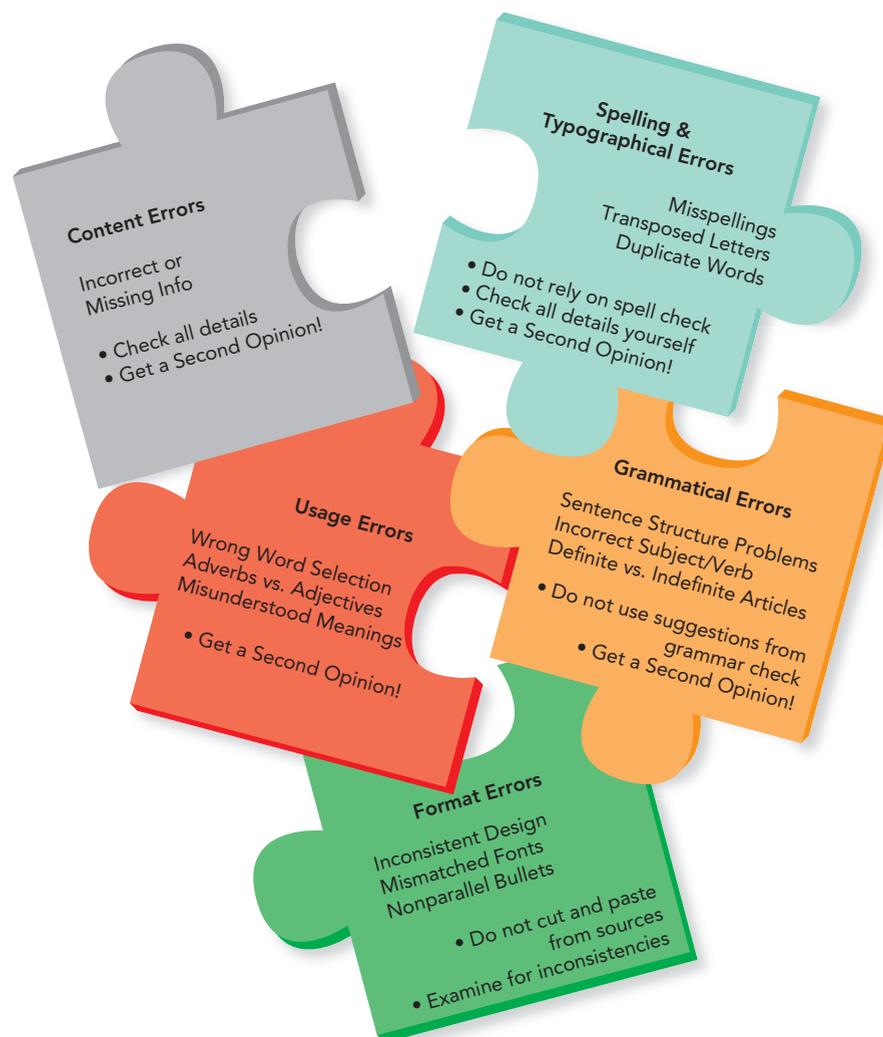
FIGURE 2.32 Identifying Five Common Error Types

- lists of details,
- numerical data (look for misplaced decimals and commas),
- the spelling of names (both of people and organizations), and
- the accuracy of titles (e.g., president or CEO or both?).

You may be too familiar with the material to determine if content is missing. Get a second opinion! Ask a colleague to help you proofread and ask for specific feedback about information you should include.

- *Spelling errors* **result from a lack of knowledge about how to spell a word.** *Typographical errors* **are mistakes made in typing.** Typing too quickly often results in misspellings, transposed letters, and duplications. Spell checkers within word processing programs may help you proofread for spelling and typographical errors, but they will not find all your mistakes. For example, if you type the word "saw" instead of "was," the spell checker will not identify the word as incorrectly spelled. To catch these errors, look up the spelling of all words that you are not confident you have spelled correctly. Pay special attention to any information expressed in numbers, including addresses and phone numbers. Spell check will not be able to identify if numbers are incorrect.

- *Usage errors* **are errors in the way language is used.** For example, if you use the word "imply" when you mean "infer" or use the word "economical" when you mean "economic," you have committed a usage error. It is difficult to catch these errors when you proofread on your own because you chose the wrong words originally. Get a second opinion! Ask colleagues to help you proofread since they may be able to identify these types of errors.

- *Grammatical errors* **are violations of grammar rules.** These errors include sentence fragments, run-on sentences, shifts in tense, incorrect pronouns, and incorrect subject–verb agreement, to name but a few. Grammar checkers can help you identify some problems, but the automated tools will miss many critical errors. Furthermore, grammar checkers are known to offer weak corrections as alternatives. When errors are not properly corrected, they will reflect poorly on you. You need to identify and correct grammatical errors on your own and validate all suggestions offered by the automated tools.

- *Format errors* **are inconsistencies in design techniques within a document,** such as including both indented and block-style paragraphs, bullets that do not align correctly, and differences in font sizes or styles. These errors often occur when you cut and paste text from other sources such as documents or webpages. Correctly using word processing formatting techniques improves the professional design of your documents.

Check systematically for errors

To check systematically for all of these types of errors, follow these guidelines:

- **Read your work multiple times.** The errors listed in the previous section are different from each other and difficult to catch in one reading. If you proofread just once for all errors, you most likely will not find them all. Instead, focus on one type of error in each proofreading scan. You will be more successful in finding your mistakes.

- **Identify your own common errors.** Over time, you will come to recognize a pattern of common errors you make. Make a list of these errors and look for them in your drafts. For example, if you often misuse commas, proofread your draft once only for commas. If you also notice that you often use the word "there" instead of "their," proofread a second time just for those words. See **FIGURE 2.33**.

- **Read your work later.** If possible, put some time between your composing and evaluating stages. Too often, writers quickly compose a first draft and immediately try to proofread their work. Taking even a five-minute activity break can clear your thoughts and let you proofread with a fresh perspective.

- **Read your draft out loud.** Generally, people speak more slowly than they read. Reading your draft aloud slows your reading pace and helps you focus on the text and find more errors. Also, when you hear what you have written, you are more likely to identify a missing word or notice awkward phrasing and punctuation.

- **Read from the bottom up.** Some writers find it helpful to read from the bottom up. They start with the last sentence and read up the page sentence by sentence. This

Your
Most Common Errors?

What are they?
How can you find them?
How can you fix them?

FIGURE 2.33 What Are Your Most Common Errors?

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FIGURE 2.34   Examples of Reading Levels

INAPPROPRIATE	APPROPRIATE
Grade Level 12.3: Henceforth, all documentation is to be completed within two business days.	**Grade Level 5.2:** Please complete all forms within two business days.
Grade Level 14.8: As per your instructions, I have initiated discussions with the previously identified employees.	**Grade Level 16.6:** I began talking with the employees you mentioned last week.
Grade Level 6.0: This new policy will facilitate the implementation of more beneficial scheduling decisions.	**Grade Level 8.3:** This new policy will let us schedule shipments more efficiently.

backward approach slows your reading pace and lets you examine the information out of context to help you find typos and missing words.

- **Change it up.** Another effective technique for nonformatting mistakes is to temporarily change the font style and size before proofreading. This tricks your brain into thinking it is reading an entirely new document not written by you. Once you have found and corrected errors, you can revert to the original font size and type and examine for formatting problems.
- **Get a Second Opinion.** For a more objective perspective, ask a colleague to proofread your draft. Even the most experienced writers miss some of their own writing errors. Because you wrote the content and you know exactly what you meant when you composed the draft, your brain will fill in missing words or information as if it is actually there. An objective reader can often find errors that you have overlooked.

Take advantage of technology tools

Many word processors contain additional tools to help you evaluate, revise, and edit. For example, Microsoft Word includes a readability tool that assesses your writing based on sentence length and average word length. The analysis then assigns your writing a grade-level rating. Business writing should be short and simple, therefore most messages should be written at the Grade 8 level or less. The grade-level rating will increase when your style includes long sentences and **polysyllabic** words. See **FIGURE 2.34** for examples.

A **thesaurus** is a reference tool that provides synonyms and antonyms. **Synonyms** are words that have the same or similar meaning, such as "quickly" and "rapidly." **Antonyms** are words that are opposites, such as "clear" and "confusing." When you have trouble looking for the right word to express the meaning of your message, your word processing software's thesaurus can identify options. However, choose carefully among the words that you see in the thesaurus, and look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary before using them. Even when a thesaurus lists two words as synonyms, they may not have the exact same meaning. For example, a thesaurus could list the word "privilege" as a synonym for "benefit" (Princeton Language Institute, n.d.). However, if you were writing about "employee benefits," you could not simply swap the word "privileges" for "benefits." "Employee benefits" has a different meaning than "employee privileges."

Review feedback to improve your communication strategy

As discussed in Chapter 1, business communication is a two-way transaction. In its simplest form, you send a message and, whether you ask for it or not, you often get feedback that indicates how effectively you have communicated. This feedback may take the form of a smile, a puzzled look, a phone call asking for clarification, or compliance with your request. Even a lack of response is a type of feedback.

Polysyllabic Having more than one syllable.

Thesaurus A reference tool that offers alternative words, specifically synonyms and antonyms.
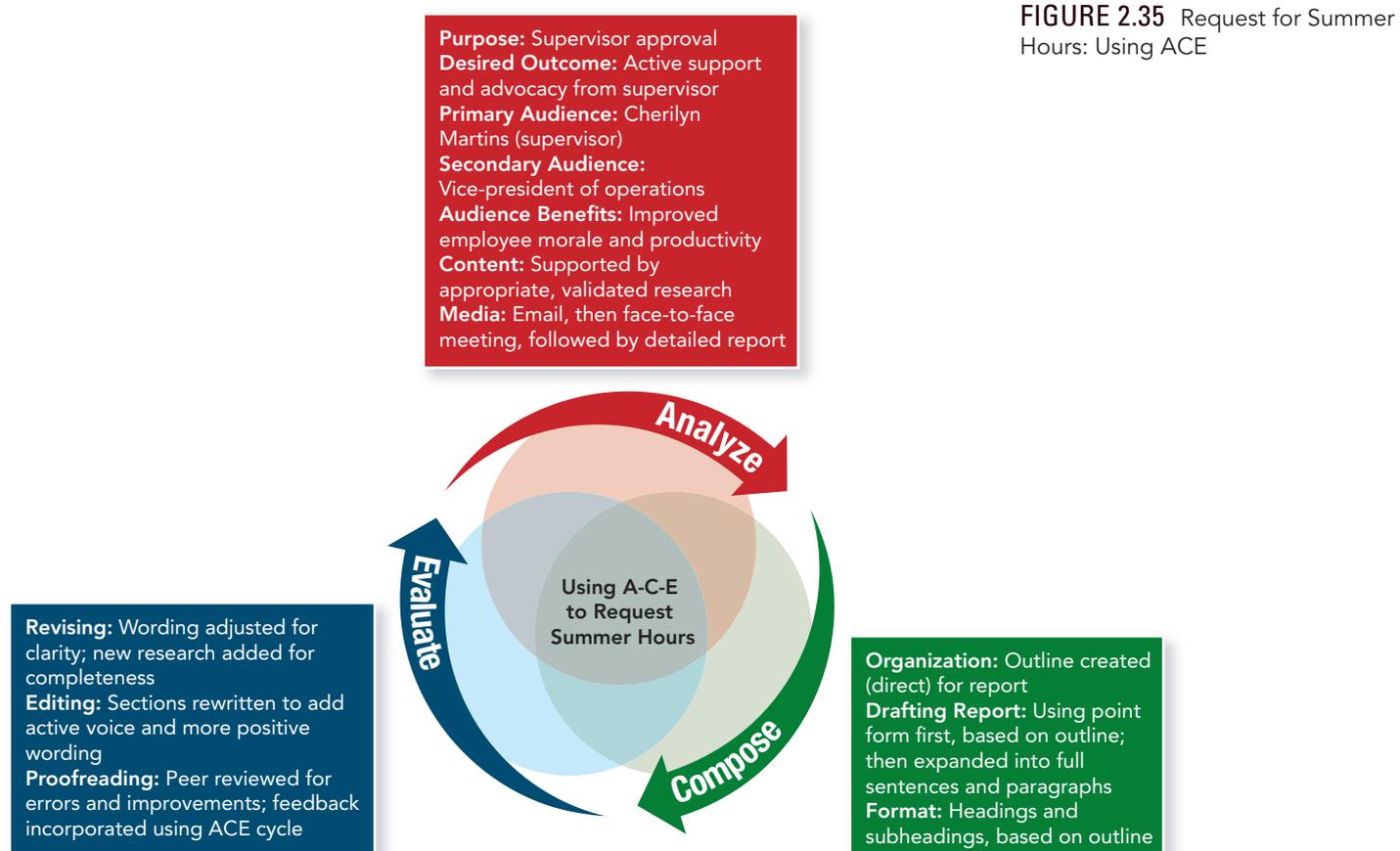
Synonyms Words that have the same or similar meaning.

Antonyms Words that have opposite meaning.

M02_SHWO7660_01_SE_C02.indd Page 55 11/3/15 5:55 PM s-w-149 /205/PHC00204/9780133427660_SHWOM/SHWOM_BUSINESS_COMMUNICATION_POLISHING_YOUR_PR

2.3 How does evaluating improve your communication? **55**

You may receive more subtle feedback. Pay special attention to these cues. For example, if you receive no response to an email message, does that mean the audience did not believe a response was important? Did the subject line fail to capture the audience's attention? If you write a set of directions and your audience gets lost, does that mean they are poor readers, or that you included ambiguous information, or that you missed a step? What you learn from this feedback will help you make better decisions the next time you communicate.

To take full advantage of feedback, ask for it early in the communication process and use it to evaluate and revise your communication strategy. For example, when you share your summer-hours proposal with your supervisor, she may suggest that you reorganize your content, include additional possible disadvantages, or develop an assessment plan as part of the proposal. This feedback will require you to spend more time analyzing, composing, and evaluating, which may be disappointing if you thought the writing process was complete. However, it will lead to a more successful proposal. Ultimately, professional communicators develop the ability to seek out and take in feedback as part of their skills development and growth.

In summary, the ACE process will help you communicate more effectively by ensuring that you analyze, compose, and evaluate in a systematic way. In the following chapters, you will have an opportunity to apply this process to a range of business communications, from short, routine messages through complex reports and presentations. Short email messages may take only a few minutes to analyze, compose, and evaluate, while more complex communications will require more time. However, as you become a more experienced communicator, you will increasingly be able to go through each step of the process more quickly and effectively, regardless of the length or purpose of your communication. If you follow the process well, your messages will more likely achieve your purpose and project a professional image. **FIGURE 2.35** offers a summary of how ACE was used in this chapter to create the request for summer hours.

FIGURE 2.35 Request for Summer Hours: Using ACE

Purpose: Supervisor approval
Desired Outcome: Active support and advocacy from supervisor
Primary Audience: Cherilyn Martins (supervisor)
Secondary Audience: Vice-president of operations
Audience Benefits: Improved employee morale and productivity
Content: Supported by appropriate, validated research
Media: Email, then face-to-face meeting, followed by detailed report

Analyze

Using A-C-E to Request Summer Hours

Evaluate

Compose

Revising: Wording adjusted for clarity; new research added for completeness
Editing: Sections rewritten to add active voice and more positive wording
Proofreading: Peer reviewed for errors and improvements; feedback incorporated using ACE cycle

Organization: Outline created (direct) for report
Drafting Report: Using point form first, based on outline; then expanded into full sentences and paragraphs
Format: Headings and subheadings, based on outline

56 **Chapter 2** Managing the Communication Process: Analyzing, Composing, Evaluating

Farzana Mawani
Marketing and Communications Manager
Altima Healthcare Canada Inc.

@ WORK

Photo courtesy of Farzana Mawani and JPB Photography.

Using ACE to craft my message!

At the opening of this chapter, Farzana Mawani described the critical need to define both the purpose and the audience for each marketing message her company issues. Let's see how she uses ACE to help her!

The key to getting communication right is to ensure you are proceeding through the ACE process (analyze – compose – evaluate) with care.

- **Analyze.** To produce the one-page documents I mentioned at the outset, I need to make sure I fully understand my audience and their needs. Then, I need to research to find recent data in health or medical journals, the latest publications by experts in the field, or current industry best practices.
- **Compose.** The one-pagers need to be concise, accurate, eye-catching, and persuasive. They also need to

be appealing to the general public as well as to healthcare professionals. The average person looking for health and dental information will not relate to a technical document filled with medical terminology and complex charts. My understanding of my audience tells me that the wording must be clear for the average reader, the tone must be as positive as possible, and the overall message must be organized in a logical, compelling way.

- **Evaluate.** I spend quite a bit of time in the evaluation process. All wording, data, and formatting must be error-free prior to publishing. A best practice is to have more than one person review and edit the final document to ensure any text or layout errors are caught and corrected. Even the most experienced writers can miss small errors in their work. As for design, I double check to ensure each one-pager is graphically intuitive and aesthetically compelling. Visual components, including photos, objects, text layout, colours, typeface, logos, icons, and other elements, are carefully evaluated for best placement, size, formatting, and flow.

Ultimately, measuring audience response is the primary way to determine the success or failure of your message. If my audience has acted upon the message the way I intended, then I know my communication efforts have been successful. If not, then it's time to reevaluate each step along the process and adjust as required for better results next time. Every setback is an opportunity and a challenge to improve and refine the process. The most fulfilling moment is when all of the pieces of the puzzle come together, and everyone can see the picture.

End of Chapter

Learning Outcomes in Review

LO 2.1 **Why should you spend time analyzing?**
(pages xx–xx)

- **Clarify your purpose and desired outcome.** Be able to state both your purpose and your desired outcome before you continue. Consider how you will maintain goodwill and determine whether your message will need to be persuasive.
- **Meet your audience's needs.** Think about what the audience needs to know. How will the recipients benefit from your message? What objections might they raise? Imagine receiving your message from the audience's point of view. Consider both the primary audience and secondary audiences.
- **Ensure your message is complete.** This step helps you determine whether you have enough information or need to conduct additional primary or secondary research.
- **Choose the most effective medium for delivery.** Understanding your purpose and your audience will help you determine which medium (email, letter, face to face, social media) will ensure that your message reaches your audience effectively.

LO 2.2 **What is involved in composing?** *(pages xx–xx)*

- **Manage your time strategically.** Allow time for each stage of the composition. Avoid multitasking.
- **Organize the message.** This requires that you determine the overall structure of the communication. Long documents may benefit from using a multilevel outline. Short documents can start with a more informal outline. Decide where to state the main point. Messages can be organized either directly (main idea first) or indirectly (supporting details before main idea).
- **Draft the content.** This is a *creative* process. Save revising (a *logical* process) for later. Use strategies like free writing to avoid writer's block.

- **Design a professional format and delivery.** This requires that you consider formatting emails, letters, voice mail messages, and social media postings in a professional manner. When appropriate, use topic-specific headings to signal the structure of the document.

LO 2.3 **How does evaluating improve your communication?** *(pages xx–xx)*

When you evaluate, you assess whether your communication will be effective and then make changes to improve it. You can evaluate in four ways:

- **Revising the content improves effectiveness.** Revising ensures your communication has the right information and approach to meet its goals. As you revise, look to see that your document is complete, clear, and concise.
- **Editing style and tone helps you project a professional image.** Use positive wording, a conversational style, and active voice. Eliminate slang, clichés, and unnecessary passive voice.
- **Proofreading increases your credibility.** To improve your proofreading skills, familiarize yourself with the different kinds of errors: content, spelling and typographical, usage, grammatical, and format. Systematically check for these errors, and take advantage of technology tools.
- **Reviewing feedback helps you improve your communication strategy.** You can ask for feedback that helps you revise a document, and pay attention to feedback you get in response to your finished communication. Using social media allows you to get continuous feedback both on your communication strategy and on your organization's brands and business.

KEY TERMS

abstract wording p. xx
active voice p. xx
analyzing p. xx
antonyms p. xx
asynchronous p. xx
audience p. xx
audience benefits p. xx
bullet point list p. xx
clarity p. xx
clichés p. xx
composing p. xx
conciseness p. xx

concrete wording p. xx
content p. xx
direct organization p. xx
drafting p. xx
evaluating p. xx
external audiences p. xx
goodwill p. xx
indirect organization p. xx
internal audiences p. xx
letters p. xx
medium p. xx
outcome p. xx

parallel structure p. xx
passive voice p. xx
persuasion p. xx
polysyllabic p. xx
primary audience p. xx
primary research p. xx
proofreading p. xx
purpose p. xx
redundancy p. xx
revising p. xx
secondary audience p. xx
secondary research p. xx

slang p. xx
style p. xx
subject line p. xx
synchronous p. xx
synonyms p. xx
thesaurus p. xx
tone p. xx
topic sentence p. xx
topic-specific headings p. xx
writer's block p. xx

CHAPTER 2

CASE STUDY

Using ACE to Improve Communication Results

This case study will help you review the chapter material by applying it to a specific business situation.

Suppose your employer asks you to inform everyone in the customer relations department about an upcoming workshop on communication skills. You quickly create the flyer below and post copies on the breakroom bulletin board and in the cafeteria. You send a copy in a document as a file attachment to all employees by email.

Although your department includes 60 people, only four people attend. How could using ACE help improve the communication results?

> Communication Skills
> Workshop
> **Wednesday, November 2 @ 2:30 p.m.**
> Training Room A

What Is the Desired Outcome?

Although your supervisor may have simply instructed you to tell the employees about the workshop, a desired outcome was implied. Your supervisor wants most employees to attend. Merely informing employees that the workshop exists will not make them attend. You need to persuade them.

What Content Does the Audience Need?

What will the audience need to hear to make them want to attend? To answer this question, you need to analyze the audience and anticipate their questions and objections.

All 60 employees from customer relations are busy. They also believe they are already good communicators. They are, after all, in customer relations. They will attend a workshop only if they are required to do so, if they believe they will benefit, or if they believe it will be fun. Here are some questions that will be on their minds when they hear about the workshop and some possible objections they may have to attending.

Possible Questions the Audience May Have:

- Is this workshop required?
- How long will the workshop last?
- How will I benefit from attending?
- Will my manager be upset if I don't attend?

Possible Objections the Audience May Have:

- I have too much work to do.
- I don't need to attend. I studied communication in school.
- A workshop won't help me get promoted.

QUESTION 1: *What other questions and objections can you anticipate? If you were going to* revise the communication, which questions and objections would you answer directly? How?

Which Medium Is Best?

You realize now that a flyer was not the most effective way to communicate about the workshop because some people simply walk past flyers without reading them. Furthermore, many people do not open email attachments without a compelling reason to do so.

QUESTION 2: *What are the advantages and disadvantages of the following other options: sending an email with an attachment to each employee, making an announcement in a department meeting, sending a tweet to an employee list, calling each employee, posting a notice to the internal community Facebook page, sending an email with the information in the message rather than as an attachment. Would a combination of these options be optimal? If so, which combination?*

How Can I Structure My Content?

You realize your audience may respond best to more than one exposure to the message in more than one medium. You decide to send an email with the information in the message, make an announcement at a department meeting, and post a note (based on the email) to the internal community Facebook page. Now you have the challenge of structuring the content. The next page shows a draft of the proposed email message.

QUESTION 3: *Review how the ACE process led to this improved message by answering the following questions.*

email

File	Message	Insert	Options	Format Text	Review

To...	Customer Relations Distribution
Cc...	
Subject:	Communication Workshop – November 2

To All Customer Relations Employees:

Please mark your calendars for 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday , November 2, and plan to attend a two-hour workshop on Effective Communication Skills, facilitated by Fiona Barnes of MSA Consulting. The workshop will be held in Training Room A.

Those of you who attended Fiona's session on CyberEthics know how engaging her presentations are. Wednesday's session will cover the basics of the communication process. It will also offer effective communication strategies that you can use on the telephone, in writing, and in meetings.

Because communication is so important in our work every day, management is expecting everyone in the department to attend. Employees from other departments are welcome, too. Please respond before 5 p.m. on November 1 by replying to this email.

Thanks,

Dale Levitz, Office Manager
ABC Communication
dlevitz@abccomm.com
(416) 555-4525

Accompanies Question 3

M02_SHWO7660_01_SE_C02.indd Page 59 11/3/15 5:55 PM s-w-149 /205/PHC00204/9780133427660_SHWOM/SHWOM_BUSINESS_COMMUNICATION_POLISHING_YOUR_PR

Critical Thinking **59**

CHAPTER 2

Analyzing:

1. What information in the revised version addresses the need for persuasion?
2. How does the email message emphasize reader benefits?
3. What content appears in the email that was not included in the original flyer? Why is that content useful?

Composing:

4. Is the information in the email organized effectively? Explain.
5. What determines which information goes in which paragraph?
6. Is this email organized as a direct or indirect message? Why? Is this the correct choice? Why?

Evaluating:

7. In evaluating content, are there additional persuasive points you could add?
8. Does this email message use clear and concise wording as well as professional tone and style?
9. Which elements promote a conversational style?
10. When proofreading this email, which content elements would you proofread for accuracy?
11. Is the message designed well? Explain.
12. Would you keep the current subject line or would you revise it? Explain.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why is analyzing your purpose important to composing an effective message? Is the purpose always the same as the desired outcome?
2. Explain the difference between the primary audience and the secondary audience, and provide an example of a message that would have audience benefits for both.
3. What is the difference between primary research and secondary research? Describe a business communication situation in which you would want to research both sources of information to support your message.

4. Why is it important to consider your audience when deciding the medium for delivery?
5. What is the difference between direct and indirect message organization? When would you use each?
6. Explain how reviewing feedback helps you improve your communication strategy.

CRITICAL THINKING

1. Think about the last written assignment you completed. What percentage of your overall time did you spend on each element of the ACE process (analyzing, composing, and evaluating)? Will you change your approach in the future? Explain why or why not.
2. Analyzing your audience helps you compose effective messages. However, sometimes you may need to communicate with people you do not know. How do you learn about and analyze an unfamiliar audience?
3. Assume you work for a supervisor who generally prefers to receive email messages rather than have face-to-face meetings. Identify at least two circumstances in which you believe it would be better to request a meeting to discuss an issue rather than send an email. Explain your rationale.
4. Retrieve a recent email message that you wrote to someone other than your family and friends. Do you believe that the email portrays a professional image? If so, what elements of the email create that image? If not, what elements undermine that image?
5. Read three recent pieces of your writing (either emails or assignments). Begin to create your custom list of common errors. To help you develop your list, ask a friend to help you assess your messages, or seek assistance from your school's writing centre. How can you ensure you do not continue to make these errors in the future?

6. *(Work with a partner or in a small group.)* Take a look at the business scenarios given here. For each one:

   a. Decide with your partner or group whether or not this situation is ethically challenging.
   b. If yes, see if your group can define, in writing, why or how the situation poses an ethical challenge.
   c. Finally, write down the most appropriate response or behaviour that you would recommend in the situation.

   • I am considering giving a small gift to a potential client of our company.
   • When I called to ask for the manager or project lead, I asked if "he" was available.
   • Last night I showed the meeting agenda for today's strategy session to my friend who also works in this industry.
   • I was told I could pick anyone I wanted for this project, so I picked my favourite people.
   • Our company created a service that can't be used by people with a visual impairment.
   • Our new website launched last night in English only.

7. **"Convince Me" Tic-Tac-Toe!** A game to play with a partner. On a blank piece of paper, create the following Tic-Tac-Toe grid:

Greeting	Networking	Texting
Informal conversation	Colour Choices	Emails
Use of words	Body language	Phone Etiquette

CHAPTER 2

a. One player chooses to be "X" and the other chooses "O."
b. Take turns with your partner.
c. You are allowed to place your mark over a square once you have convinced your opponent, *with an example,* that "culture" affects the concept in the box. For example, does culture have an impact on the colours people chose for designing documents or messages? If so, how? Give an example.
d. The first person to get three Xs or Os in a row (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal) wins!

DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

LO 2.1 **Why should you spend time analyzing?** *(pages x–x)*

EXERCISE 1 Improved Communication: Knowing the purpose and the audience

You are part of a five-person team at work. The team's goal is to redesign the way in which customers apply for refunds. The team meets twice per week, on Mondays and Thursdays. The Monday meeting occurs online using appropriate meeting software, and the Thursday meeting is face to face. Typically, four out of five people show up for each meeting. In the four weeks you have been working together, you have not yet had 100% attendance, and this has hampered the team's progress. Your supervisor has asked you to reassess how your team communicates and to find a solution that will result in 100% attendance at each meeting. What do you need to know about your audience (i.e., the team) to proceed? Make a list of questions that you would need to have answered before you can propose a viable solution.

EXERCISE 2 Do you have everything you need for a complete message?

Your supervisor asks you to give a brief presentation at your company's annual sales meeting that analyzes sales trends for each of the company's three regions over four years. You collect the data about gross sales and then create the following exhibit:
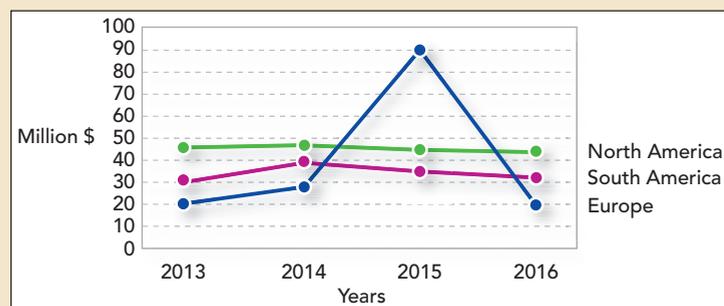
Accompanies Exercise 2

As you look at the graph, you realize it will raise questions during the presentation and that you should prepare answers. What questions and observations about sales do you think your graph will raise? What additional research would you do to answer those questions?

EXERCISE 3 Finding the most effective medium of delivery [Related to the Technology feature on page xxx]

For each of the following scenarios, identify which medium would be the best choice to communicate your message. Select your choice from the list of medium options in Figure 2.8 on page xx or other options you deem appropriate. Explain your reasoning.

a. Your employer leaves a message on your voice mail asking you to work overtime this weekend, but you plan to attend your cousin's out-of-town wedding. What medium would you use to explain why you cannot work overtime?

b. You are developing a new procedure manual for the sales associates in your department and need input on several issues from your department manager and training staff. What medium would you use to gather the input you need?

c. You ordered 14 boxes of 8 1/2″ × 11″ copy paper from a local office supply store, but you received 11 boxes of 8 1/2″ × 14″ legal paper. You call and speak with Karamjeet, an associate manager of the store. Within an hour of your call, he personally delivers the 14 boxes of standard copy paper to your office, carries the boxes into your supply room, and retrieves the boxes of legal paper. You are so impressed with Karamjeet's personal attention and quick service that you want to inform his supervisor. How do you contact Karamjeet's supervisor to praise his efforts?

LO 2.2 **What is involved in composing?** *(pages x–x)*

EXERCISE 4 Using your time effectively

Assume you are interning part time for a marketing company this semester while taking classes. Your supervisor's project team is working on an ad campaign for a new client that produces nutritional yogourt drinks. In preparation for the team's initial brainstorming session next week, you have been asked to gather preliminary information about the client's leading competitors. You have researched the three companies that currently dominate the market and have gathered sample TV ads, website screenshots, and print media sources. You need to create a five-page report that summarizes your research. The report is due in seven days. How much time do you estimate you will need to compose and evaluate this report? How would you spread that work over the seven days, considering that you also have school assignments and other commitments to manage? Create a timeline similar to that shown in Figure 2.9 to plan how you could use your time.

EXERCISE 5 Getting Organized!

Compare the following email messages. Email A is organized directly, and Email B is organized indirectly. Note that the only difference between these two messages is the placement of the main idea: "My analysis determined that Adaptive Solutions' website is more effective based on its ease of use, comprehensive content, and general appearance."

a. Under what circumstances would Nichole choose to write a direct message to Susan? Explain at least two circumstances.

b. Under what circumstances would Nichole write this same message indirectly? Explain at least two circumstances.

c. How would you revise each message to emphasize audience benefits?

M02_SHWO7660_01_SE_C02.indd Page 61 11/3/15 5:55 PM s-w-149 /205/PHC00204/9780133427660_SHWOM/SHWOM_BUSINESS_COMMUNICATION_POLISHING_YOUR_PR

Developing Your Communication Skills   **61**

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EMAIL A - DIRECT

| File | Message | Insert | Options | Format Text | Review |

To...   s.mcewen@fieldspatterson.com
Cc...   Competitors' Website Comparison
Subject:

Send

Susan:

As you requested, I compared the websites of our two main competitors: Creative Communications (CC) and Adaptive Solutions (AS). My analysis determined that Adaptive Solutions' website is more effective based on its ease of use, comprehensive content, and general appearance.

The AS website uses a consistent navigation format throughout. By contrast, the CC menus differ on several pages, which make finding specific information very difficult. Additionally, the AS website describes workshop topics, provides sample PowerPoint demonstrations, and links their handout examples. The CC site lists their workshop topics with a brief description of each, but does not provide additional materials. Finally, the overall appearance of the AS website is more professional. The content is well organized and the text is easy to read. I found it difficult to find information on the CC site and had a hard time reading the 10-point text.

Let me know if you need a more detailed analysis of these two sites. I look forward to working on our own company's web design team.

Best,
Nichole

Nichole Perkins, Consultant
The Fields-Patterson Group
50 Robson Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 1B0
www.fieldspatterson.com
PH: 604-633-2646
FX: 604-633-2601

Accompanies Exercise 5

EMAIL B - INDIRECT

| File | Message | Insert | Options | Format Text | Review |

To...   s.mcewen@fieldspatterson.com
Cc...   Competitors' Website Comparison
Subject:

Send

Susan:

As you requested, I compared the websites of our two main competitors: Creative Communications (CC) and Adaptive Solutions (AS).

The AS website uses a consistent navigation format throughout its site. The CC menus differ on several pages, which make finding specific information very difficult. Additionally, the AS website describes workshop topics, provides sample PowerPoint demonstrations, and links their handout examples. The CC site lists their workshop topics with a brief description of each, but does not provide additional materials. Finally, the overall appearance of the AS website is more professional. The content is well organized and the text is easy to read. I found it difficult to find information on the CC site and had a hard time reading the 10-point text.

My analysis determined that Adaptive Solutions' website is more effective based on its ease of use, comprehensive content, and general appearance. Let me know if you need a more detailed analysis of these two sites. I look forward to working on our own company's web design team.

Best,
Nichole

Nichole Perkins, Consultant
The Fields-Patterson Group
50 Robson Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 1B0
www.fieldspatterson.com
PH: 604-633-2646
FX: 604-633-2601

EXERCISE 6 Moving past the first draft

Select a topic you are researching for a class or group project or use a topic assigned by your instructor. Use the free-writing technique to fill at least a page (typed and single spaced). Save this work, noting that it is a first draft. Save another copy of this work titled "second draft." Revise the "second draft" version into something more presentable to your instructor. Print both versions and compare. How did the freedom of the first draft influence the quality of the second draft? In what ways is the second draft improved? Do you need a third draft?

LO 2.3   **How does evaluating improve your communication? (pages x–x)**

EXERCISE 7 Sifting for meaning: Improving clarity and conciseness

Edit the following sentences to improve their clarity and conciseness:
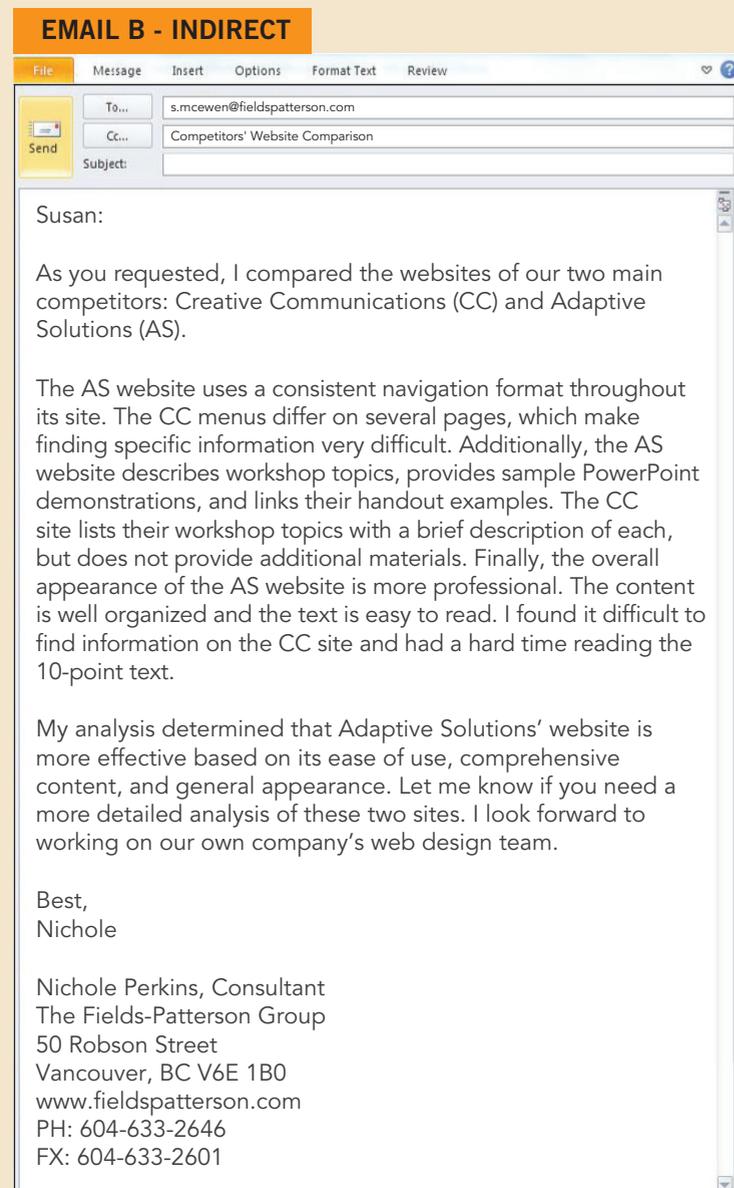
a. Computer technology and its associated software applications in conjunction with the widespread usage of the World Wide Web have had the most profound and visible effects of any invention in modern history.

b. Technologies have dramatically impacted and modified our complex communication systems, exchanges of information, and our commercial endeavours.

c. As technology permeates nearly every facet of business entities, the question is whether today's college students receive adequate information and assistance as they prepare for the high-tech world of business.

d. A multitude of employers are now testing prospective employees prior to employment to determine if their information technology knowledge and skill levels will meet or exceed their technology expectations in terms of meeting their workplace needs.

CHAPTER 2

EXERCISE 8 Trimming the excess: Removing unnecessary wording and redundancies

Edit the following sentences to eliminate unnecessary wording and redundancies:

a. You asked me to provide you with my recommendation for the new sales position, and I believe that Sarah Miller is the best candidate.

b. We combined together the proposals, and after close scrutiny of the results have come to the consensus of opinion that this project will be our first priority.

c. Foreign imports are an essential necessity in our business.

d. We respectfully and humbly extend our grateful thanks that your future plans have secured our company's good success.

EXERCISE 9 Project professionalism: Positive wording

Edit the following sentences to give them a more positive tone:

a. She will not do well on the employment exam if she does not review the company's procedures.

b. The committee will not make their decision until next week.

c. The employees will receive no bonus if they do not submit their performance evaluations on time.

d. I cannot attend the meeting if this report is not finished on time.

e. Because the construction plans were not delivered, we could not determine a timeline for completion.

EXERCISE 10 Project professionalism: Active voice

Edit the following sentences to change passive voice to active voice: (Note: You will need to supply a subject for the active verbs in some sentences.)

a. The proposal was written by the marketing team based on in-depth research.

b. The decision was made to extend overtime allowances by 10%.

c. Because two proposals were submitted, a meeting was scheduled to discuss the differences.

d. Positive feedback about the presentation was received from the clients.

e. The salary increase will be seen on your next paycheque.

EXERCISE 11 Project professionalism: Eliminating slang and clichés

Edit the following sentences by removing the slang and clichés (in italics) to clarify the meaning. If you are unfamiliar with the cliché, look it up online before editing.

a. Everyone in the department knows that the *buck stops here*.

b. She needs to *dangle some carrots* in front of her team to get anything done.

c. She has really been *a good soldier* about the change in leadership.

d. The union representative said that management needs to *sweeten the pot* if we want to end the labour strike.

e. He will be *swimming with the sharks* if he tries to present that proposal to the management team.

EXERCISE 12 Project professionalism: Improving reading level

Using Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.ca), find a paragraph that you find complicated and difficult to read. Copy and paste the paragraph into your word processing program. Using the software's assessment tools, or using an online tool you find through a web search, determine the grade level of the paragraph.

Rewrite the paragraph in a conversational style using simple words and short sentences. Determine the new version's grade level. Identify which version you believe is most effective and explain why.

EXERCISE 13 Project professionalism: Proofread for error reduction [Related to the Technology feature on page xxx]

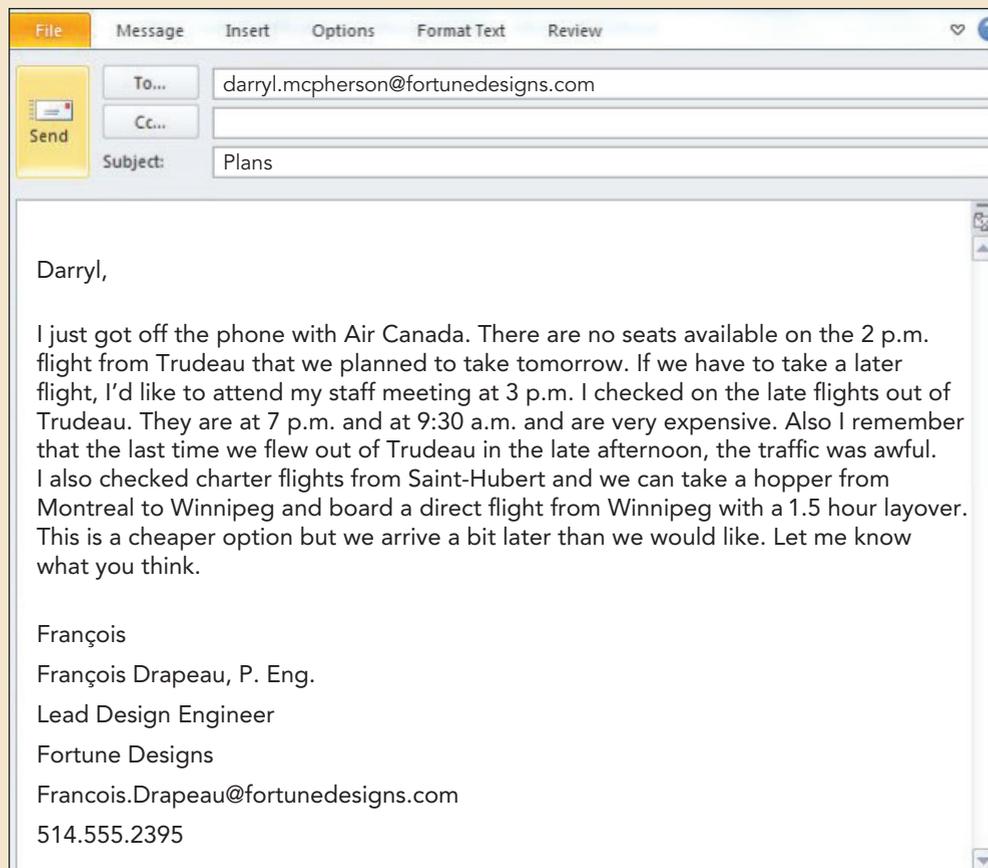Type the following paragraph into any word processing program:

Do to recent security events, are technology upgrades our scheduled to be implemented at the beginning of next months. This change requires you to ask yourself what applications you current use and predicted those you may knee during the next fiscal year. How will you now what you what you might need in the future? That is a difficult question to answers. However, you're in put is necessary to assure that hour resources our used correct. Thank in advance for you're effort too improve this process.

Accompanies Exercise 13

Enter the words and punctuation exactly as shown. Highlight any errors that you see. Then run the application's spelling and grammar tools. Make a list of any (a) spelling errors that the spelling checker did *not* find and (b) changes the grammar checker suggested that would create an error. Do the results of this exercise change the methods you will use for proofreading in the future? Summarize your findings in an email message to your instructor.

EXERCISE 14 Revising and designing an email message

François and Darryl work for a product design firm in Montreal. This morning, François received a call from a client asking if he and Darryl could fly to Edmonton to consult on a new project. François and Darryl agreed, checked their calendars, and chose a 2 **P.M.** flight from Trudeau Airport the next day. However, when François called Air Canada to book two seats for the flight, he learned that no seats were available. He did a little research and decided that he would prefer to take a charter flight leaving from a Saint-Hubert airport, switching planes in Winnipeg. See the following draft of François' email to Darryl on the next page. Revise this email to (1) use a direct organization, (2) arrange the material into effective paragraphs, (3) ensure all information is complete and clear, and (4) improve the subject line.

File	Message	Insert	Options	Format Text	Review

Send	To...	darryl.mcpherson@fortunedesigns.com
	Cc...	
	Subject:	Plans

Darryl,

I just got off the phone with Air Canada. There are no seats available on the 2 p.m. flight from Trudeau that we planned to take tomorrow. If we have to take a later flight, I'd like to attend my staff meeting at 3 p.m. I checked on the late flights out of Trudeau. They are at 7 p.m. and at 9:30 a.m. and are very expensive. Also I remember that the last time we flew out of Trudeau in the late afternoon, the traffic was awful. I also checked charter flights from Saint-Hubert and we can take a hopper from Montreal to Winnipeg and board a direct flight from Winnipeg with a 1.5 hour layover. This is a cheaper option but we arrive a bit later than we would like. Let me know what you think.

François

François Drapeau, P. Eng.

Lead Design Engineer

Fortune Designs

Francois.Drapeau@fortunedesigns.com

514.555.2395

Accompanies Exercise 14

EXERCISE 15 Revising and designing a voice mail message

Alex and Marika are planning to attend an 8 **a.m.** meeting with their boss to discuss a report they completed the night before. On the way to work, Alex gets into a car accident. The paragraph on the right is the voice message Alex leaves Marika to tell her that he will not be able to get to work in time for the meeting. He also needs to tell Marika where to find the photocopies of the report he made last night. Before Alex gets to the end of his message, the electronic "operator" interrupts and says: "If you are satisfied with this message, press 1. If you would like to record the message again, press 2." Alex realizes he should revise the message, and he presses 2. Revise this message for Alex.

Marika, this is Alex. You won't believe what happened on the way to work today. I was driving down Sherman Avenue when a car ran a red light and hit me. I'm okay, but I'm at least 30 minutes from work and my car is undrivable. I can't leave anyway because the police officer is writing up the report really slowly, and I need to wait to get my licence back and to make sure the tow truck comes for my car. Then I'll need to get a taxi. I'm really glad I have my cellphone with me. Otherwise, I'd be in big trouble. I don't know when I'll get to work, so can you present our report at the meeting this morning? The photocopies are on Lucy's desk because . . ."

Accompanies Exercise 15

EXERCISE 16 Exploring cultural communication [Related to the Culture feature on page xxx]

Review the Culture box on page xx. To answer the following questions, you may need to conduct some additional research. This could include searching for "intercultural business communications" online, interviewing classmates or professors from the relevant cultures, or reading materials available in your campus library.

a. Identify the specific cultural mistake or mistakes that Skylar made in her attempt to efficiently meet and transport Mr. Wu to the downtown office. How could Skylar have improved the outcome of this task?

b. Consider the exact same scenario, except that the incoming executive is Ms. Alejandra de Vieira from Spain. Should Skylar's response to this situation change? How?

EXERCISE 17 Impromptu presentations

Select one of the following topics and plan a brief one- to two-minute presentation that you organize directly. Begin with the main idea followed by supporting information and conclude with a short summary or wrap-up. Then select a second topic and plan a brief presentation that you organize indirectly. For this presentation, begin with supporting information, followed by the main point, with a brief summary or wrap-up at the end.

a. Describe your last experience travelling.

b. Describe your dream job.

c. Where do you see yourself in five years?

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