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Essentials of Business Communication

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Essentials of Business Communication
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Communication Skills as Career Filters



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OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to

- Appreciate how solid communication skills will improve your career prospects and help you succeed in today's changing workplace.
- Understand the process of communication.
- Begin practicing your listening skills and confront barriers to effective listening.
- Explain the importance of nonverbal communication and of improving your nonverbal communication skills.
- Recognize how culture influences communication and explain five common dimensions of culture.
- Discuss strategies that help you overcome negative cultural attitudes and prevent miscommunication in today's diverse workplace.

Communication Skills: Your Ticket to Success

Workplace surveys and studies confirm that recruiters rank communication skills at the top of the list of qualities they most desire in job seekers. Such skills are crucial in a tight employment market when jobs are few and competition is fierce. In a recession, superior communication skills will give you an edge over other job applicants. A powerful career filter, your ability to communicate will make you marketable and continue to be your ticket to success regardless of the economic climate.

Perhaps you are already working or will soon apply for your first job. How do your skills measure up? The good news is that effective communication can be learned. This textbook and this course can immediately improve your communication skills. Because the skills you are learning will make a huge difference in your ability to find a job and to be promoted, this will be one of the most important courses you will ever take.

Why Writing Skills Matter More Than Ever

Today's workplace revolves around communication. Workers communicate more, not less, since information technology and the Internet have transformed the world of work in the last two decades. The modern office is mobile and fast paced. Technology enables us to transmit messages faster, farther, to potentially larger audiences, and more easily than in the past. Many people work together

Small superscript numbers in the text announce information sources. Full citations appear at the end of the chapter. This edition uses a modified American Psychological Association (APA) reference format.

but are physically apart. They stay connected through spoken and written messages. Writing skills, which were always a career advantage, are now a necessity.¹ A survey of American corporations revealed that two thirds of salaried employees have some writing responsibility. About one third of them, however, do not meet the writing requirements for their positions.²

“Businesses are crying out—they need to have people who write better,” said Gaston Caperton, business executive and College Board president.³ The ability to write opens doors to professional employment. People who cannot write and communicate clearly will not be hired. If already working, they are unlikely to last long enough to be considered for promotion. Writing is a marker of high-skill, high-wage, professional work, according to Bob Kerrey, president of The New School university in New York and chair of the National Commission on Writing. If you can’t express yourself clearly, he says, you limit your opportunities for many positions.⁴

Not surprisingly, many job listings explicitly ask for excellent oral and written communication skills. In a poll of recruiters, oral and written communication skills were by a large margin the top skill set sought.⁵ Employers consistently state that communication skills are critical to effective job placement, performance, career advancement, and organizational success.⁶ Among the top choices in two other polls were teamwork, critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and oral and written communication skills.⁷

If you believe that you will not need strong communication skills in a technical field such as accounting or information technology, think again. A recent poll of 1,400 chief financial officers sponsored by Accountemps revealed that 75 percent said that verbal, written, and interpersonal skills are more important today than they were in the past.⁸ Even technical specialists must be able to communicate with others and explain their work clearly. A survey of Web professionals showed that those with writing and copyediting skills were far less likely to have their jobs sent offshore.⁹ Another survey conducted by the Society for Information Management revealed that network professionals ranked written and oral communication skills among the top five most desired skills for new-hires.¹⁰

Businesses today generate a wide range of messages in a variety of media. In addition to traditional letters and memos, expect to communicate with the public and within the company by e-mail*, instant messaging and texting, company blogs, collaboration software such as wikis, and social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. You will learn more about workplace communication technology in Chapter 5.

Regardless of career choice, writing is in your future. You will probably be sending many digital messages, such as the e-mail shown in Figure 1.1. In fact, e-mail is “today’s version of the business letter or interoffice memo.”¹¹ Because electronic mail and other digital media have become important channels of communication in today’s workplace, all digital business messages must be clear, concise, and professional. Notice that the message in Figure 1.1 is more businesslike and more professional than the quick e-mail or text you might dash off to friends. Learning to write professional digital messages will be an important part of this course.

What Employers Want: Professionalism

In addition to technical knowledge in business, your future employer will expect you to show professionalism and possess what are often referred to as “soft skills.” Soft skills are essential career attributes that include the ability to communicate, work well with others, solve problems, make ethical decisions, and appreciate diversity.¹² Sometimes also called employability skills or key competencies, these soft skills are desirable in all business sectors and job positions.¹³

As much as businesses expect employees to act in a businesslike and professional manner, many entry-level workers are not ready or have the wrong attitudes. One employer was surprised that many of her new-hires had no idea that excessive absenteeism or tardiness was grounds for termination. The new employees also didn’t seem to know that they were expected to devote their full energy to duties when on the job.

* The usage standard in this book is *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, Eleventh Edition. Words such as *e-mail* and *Web* are in a state of flux, and a single standard has yet to establish itself. *Merriam-Webster’s* continues to show conventional usage patterns.

OFFICE INSIDER

The founder of a New York public relations firm was shocked at how many college graduates failed the writing test he gives job applicants. He said, “We don’t have the time to teach basic writing skills here.”

Looking and sounding professional gains you credibility on the job.

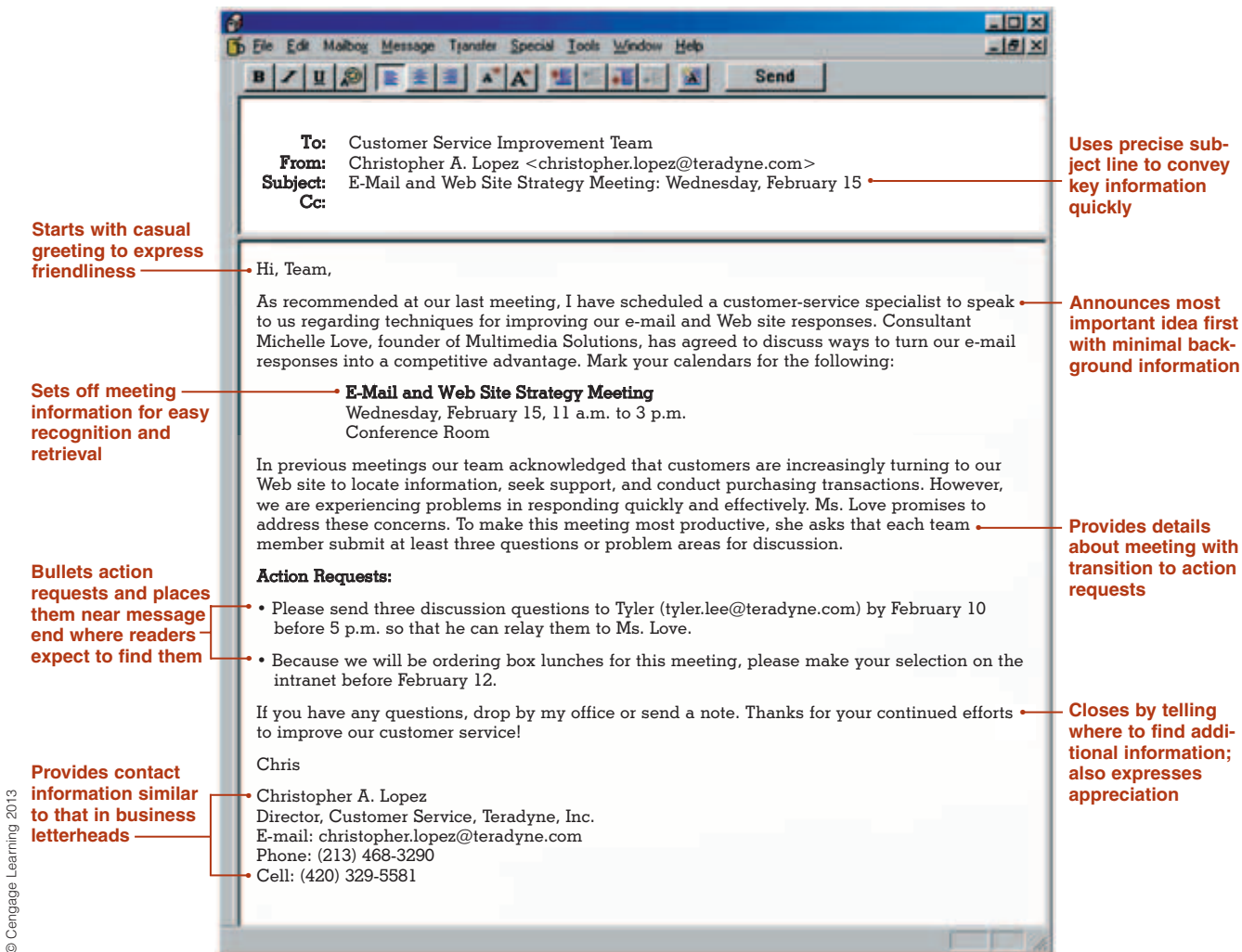
OFFICE INSIDER

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

—Cindy Warkentin, CIO,
Maryland Automobile
Insurance Fund

FIGURE 1.1 Businesslike, Professional E-Mail Message

Because e-mail messages are rapidly replacing business letters and interoffice memos, they must be written carefully, provide complete information, and sound businesslike and professional. Notice that this message is more formal in tone than e-mail messages you might send to friends.



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One young man wanted to read Harry Potter novels when things got slow.¹⁴ Other recent graduates had unrealistic expectations about their salaries and working hours.¹⁵

Projecting and maintaining a professional image can make a real difference in helping you obtain the job of your dreams. Once you get that job, you are more likely to be taken seriously and promoted if you look and sound professional. New-hires can sabotage their careers when they carry poor college habits into the business world. Banish the flip-flops, sloppy clothes, and IM abbreviations. Think twice about sprinkling your conversation with *like*, *you know*, and uptalk (making declarative sentences sound like questions). You don't want to send the wrong message with unwitting and unprofessional behavior. Figure 1.2 reviews areas you will want to check to be sure you are projecting professionalism. You will learn more about soft skills and professionalism in Chapter 11.

How Your Education Drives Your Income

The effort you invest in earning your college degree will most likely pay off. College graduates make more money, suffer less unemployment, and can choose from a wider variety of career options than workers without a college education.

College graduates with bachelor's degrees will earn nearly three times as much as high school dropouts.

FIGURE 1.2 Projecting Professionalism When You Communicate

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

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Moreover, college graduates have access to the highest-paying and fastest-growing careers, many of which require a degree.¹⁶ As Figure 1.3 shows, graduates with bachelor's degrees earn nearly three times as much as high school dropouts and are almost three times less likely to be unemployed.

Writing is one aspect of education that is particularly well rewarded. A *Fortune* magazine article reported this finding: "Among people with a two- or four-year college degree, those in the highest 20 percent in writing ability earn, on average, more than three times what those with the worst writing skills make."¹⁷ One corporate president explained that many people climbing the corporate ladder are good. When he faced a hard choice between candidates, he used writing ability as the deciding factor. He said that sometimes writing is the only skill that separates a candidate from the competition. A recent study confirms that soft skills such

FIGURE 1.3 Income and Unemployment in Relation to Education

Education	Median Weekly Earnings	Unemployment Rate
High school dropout	\$ 440	14.6%
High school diploma	629	9.7%
Some college, no degree	699	8.6%
Associate's degree	761	6.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,138	3.5%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2010). Current population survey: Education pays. Retrieved from http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm; and Crosby, O., & Moncarz, R. (2006, Fall). The 2004-14 job outlook for college graduates. *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, 50(3), 43. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/lopub/ooq/2006/fall/art03.htm>

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as communication ability can tip the scales in favor of one job applicant over another.¹⁸ Your ticket to winning in a tight job market and launching a successful career is good communication skills.

Building Your Career Communication Skills With This Book

This book focuses on developing basic writing skills. You will also learn to improve your listening, nonverbal, and speaking skills. These basic communication skills include learning how to write an e-mail, letter, or report and how to make a presentation. Anyone can learn these skills with the help of instructional materials and good model documents, all of which you will find in this book. You also need practice—with meaningful feedback. You need someone such as your instructor to tell you how to modify your responses so that you can improve.

We have designed this book, its supplements, and a new companion Web site at www.cengagebrain.com to provide you and your instructor with everything necessary to make you a successful business communicator in today's dynamic but demanding workplace. Given the increasing emphasis on communication, many businesses are paying large amounts to communication coaches and trainers to teach employees the very skills that you are learning in this course. Your instructor is your coach. So, get your money's worth! Pick your instructor's brain.

To get started, this first chapter presents an overview. You will take a quick look at the changing workplace, the communication process, listening, nonverbal communication, the cultural dimensions of communication, and intercultural job skills. The remainder of the book is devoted to developing specific writing and speaking skills.

Advancing in a Challenging World of Work

The world of work is changing dramatically. The kind of work you will do, the tools you will use, the form of management you will work under, the environment in which you will be employed, the people with whom you will interact—all are undergoing a pronounced transformation. Some of the most significant changes include global competition, flattened management hierarchies, and team-based projects. Other trends reflect constantly evolving technology, the “anytime, anywhere” office, and an emphasis on ethics. The following overview of trends reveals how communication skills are closely tied to your success in a demanding, dynamic workplace.

- **Heightened global competition.** Because American companies are moving beyond domestic markets, you may be interacting with people from many cultures. As a successful business communicator, you will want to learn about other cultures. You will also need to develop intercultural skills including sensitivity, flexibility, patience, and tolerance.
- **Flattened management hierarchies.** To better compete and to reduce expenses, businesses have for years been trimming layers of management. This means that as a frontline employee, you will have fewer managers. You will be making decisions and communicating them to customers, to fellow employees, and to executives.
- **Increased emphasis on self-directed work groups and virtual teams.** Businesses today are often run by cross-functional teams of peers. You can expect to work with a team in gathering information, finding and sharing solutions, implementing decisions, and managing conflict. You may even become part of a virtual team whose members are in remote locations and who communicate almost exclusively electronically. Good communication skills are extremely important in working together successfully in all team environments, especially if members do not meet face-to-face.
- **Innovative communication technologies.** New communication technology is dramatically affecting the way workers interact. In our always-connected world, businesses exchange information by using e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, PDAs or smartphones, fax, voice mail, and powerful laptop computers and netbooks. Satellite communications, wireless networking, teleconferencing, and videoconferencing help workers to conduct meetings with associates around the

Developing career-boosting communication skills requires instruction, practice, and feedback from a specialist.

Trends in the new world of work highlight the importance of communication skills.

Today's employees must be able to work on local as well as remote teams.

world. Even social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter as well as blogs, wikis (multiuser weblogs), and peer-to-peer tools help businesspeople collect information, serve customers, and sell products and services. Figure 1.4, on pages 8 and 9, illustrates many new technologies you will encounter in today's workplace.

- **“Anytime, anywhere” and nonterritorial offices.** Thanks largely to advances in high-speed and wireless Internet access, millions of workers no longer report to nine-to-five jobs that confine them to offices. They have flexible working arrangements so that they can work at home or on the road. The “anytime, anywhere” office requires only a mobile phone and a wireless computer.¹⁹ Telecommuting employees now represent 11 percent of the workforce, and this number increases annually.²⁰ To save on office real estate, a growing number of industries provide “nonterritorial” workspaces. The first to arrive gets the best desk and the corner window.²¹
- **Renewed emphasis on ethics.** Ethics is once again a hot topic in business. Following the Enron and WorldCom scandals in the early 2000s, businesses responded with a flurry of programs emphasizing ethical awareness and training. Despite increased awareness, however, much training was haphazard²² and characterized by lip service only. With the passage of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, the government required greater accountability. Nevertheless, a calamitous recession followed, caused largely, some say, by greed and ethical lapses. As a result, businesses are now eager to regain public trust by building ethical environments. Many have written ethical mission statements, installed hotlines, and appointed compliance officers to ensure strict adherence to their high standards and the law.

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

After the corporate scandals in the early years of the new millennium and the steep recession that followed the banking crisis, ethics is again front and center in business.

Understanding the Communication Process

The most successful players in the new world of work will be those with highly developed communication skills. As you have seen, you will be communicating more rapidly, more often, and with greater numbers of people than ever before. Because good communication skills are essential to your success, we need to take a closer look at the communication process.

Just what is communication? For our purposes *communication* is “the transmission of information and meaning from one individual or group to another.” The crucial element in this definition is *meaning*. Communication has as its central objective the transmission of meaning. The process of communication is successful only when the receiver understands an idea as the sender intended it. This process generally involves five steps, discussed here and shown in Figure 1.5, on page 10.

1. **Sender has an idea.** The form of the idea may be influenced by the sender's mood, frame of reference, background, culture, and physical makeup, as well as the context of the situation.
2. **Sender encodes the idea in a message.** *Encoding* means converting the idea into words or gestures that will convey meaning. A major problem in communicating any message verbally is that words have different meanings for different people. That's why skilled communicators try to choose familiar words with concrete meanings on which both senders and receivers agree.
3. **Message travels over a channel.** The medium over which the message is transmitted is the *channel*. Messages may be sent by computer, telephone, letter, or memorandum. They may also be sent by means of a report, announcement, picture, video, spoken word, fax, or other channel. Because messages carry verbal and nonverbal meanings, senders must choose channels carefully. Anything that disrupts the transmission of a message in the communication process is called *noise*. Channel noise ranges from static that disrupts

Communication is the transmission of information and meaning from one individual or group to another.

The communication process has five steps: idea formation, message encoding, message transmission, message decoding, and feedback.

FIGURE 1.4 Communication and Collaboration Technologies



◀ **Communication Technology Reshaping the World of Work**

Today's workplace is changing dramatically as a result of innovative software, superfast wireless networks, and numerous technologies that allow workers to share information, work from remote locations, and be more productive in or away from the office. We are seeing a gradual progression from basic capabilities, such as e-mail and calendaring, to deeper functionality, such as remote database access, multifunctional devices, and Web-based collaborative applications.

Telephony: VoIP ▶

Savvy businesses are switching from traditional phone service to voice over Internet protocol (VoIP).

This technology allows callers to communicate using a broadband Internet connection, thus eliminating long-distance and local telephone charges. Higher-end VoIP systems now support unified voice mail, e-mail, click-to-call capabilities, and softphones (phones using computer networking). Free or low-cost Internet telephony sites, such as the popular Skype, are also increasingly used by businesses.



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Open Offices ▲

The widespread use of laptops, netbooks, wireless technology, and VoIP have led to more fluid, flexible, and open workspaces. Smaller computers and flat-screen monitors enable designers to save space with boomerang-shaped workstations and cockpit-style work surfaces rather than space-hogging corner work areas. Smaller breakout areas for impromptu meetings are taking over some cubicle space, and digital databases are replacing file cabinets.



◀ **Multifunctional Printers**

Stand-alone copiers, fax machines, scanners, and printers have been replaced with multifunctional devices. Offices are transitioning from a "print and distribute" environment to a "distribute and print" environment. Security measures include pass codes and even biometric thumbprint scanning to make sure data streams are not captured, interrupted, or edited.

Handheld Wireless Devices ▶

A new generation of lightweight, handheld smartphones provide phone, e-mail, Web browsing, and calendar options anywhere there is cell phone coverage or a Wi-Fi network. Devices such as the BlackBerry, the iPhone, and the Android phones now allow you to tap into corporate databases and intranets from remote locations. You can check customers' files, complete orders, and send out receipts without returning to the office.



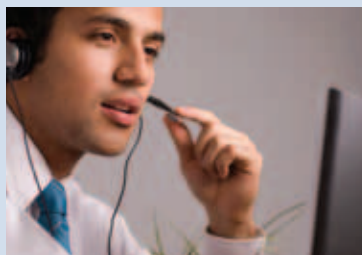
◀ **Company Intranets**

To share insider information, many companies provide their own protected Web sites called intranets. An intranet may handle company

e-mail, announcements, an employee directory, a policy handbook, frequently asked questions, personnel forms and data, employee discussion forums, shared documents, and other employee information.

▼ **Voice Recognition**

Computers equipped with voice recognition software enable users to dictate up to 160 words a minute with accurate transcription. Voice recognition is particularly helpful to disabled workers and to professionals with heavy dictation loads, such as physicians and attorneys. Users can create documents, enter data, compose and send e-mails, browse the Web, and control the desktop—all by voice.



◀ **Electronic Presentations**

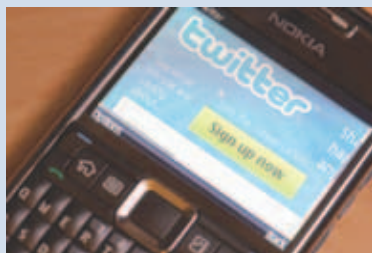
Business presentations in PowerPoint can be projected from a laptop or PDA or posted online. Sophisticated presentations may include animations, sound effects, digital photos, video clips, or hyperlinks to Internet sites. In some industries, PowerPoint slides ("decks") are replacing or supplementing traditional hard-copy reports.

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Collaboration Technology: Rethinking the Way We Work Together ▶

New tools make it possible to work together without being together. Your colleagues may be down the hall, across the country, or across the world. With today's tools, you can exchange ideas, solve problems, develop products, forecast future performance, and complete team projects any time of the day or night and anywhere in the world. Blogs and wikis, also part of Web 2.0, are social tools that create multidirectional conversations among customers and employees. Web 2.0 moves Web applications from "read only" to "read-write," thus enabling greater participation and collaboration.



◀ Blogs, Podcasts, Wikis, and Tweets

A *blog* is a Web site with journal entries usually written by one person and comments by others. Businesses use blogs to keep customers and employees informed and to receive feedback. Company developments can be posted, updated, and categorized for easy cross-referencing. Blogs and other Web sites may feature audio and video files, *podcasts*, for listening and viewing or

for downloading onto the computer and smartphone. A *wiki* is a Web site that allows multiple users to collaboratively create and edit pages. Information gets lost in e-mails, but blogs and wikis provide an easy way to communicate and keep track of what is said. Most companies are still trying to figure out how to harness Twitter for business. However, tech-savvy individuals already send *tweets*, short messages of up to 140 characters, to other users to issue up-to-date news about their products, to link to their blogs and Web sites, or to announce events and promotions.

Web Conferencing ▶

With services such as GoToMeeting, WebEx, and Microsoft LiveMeeting, all you need are a PC and an Internet connection to hold a meeting (*webinar*) with customers or colleagues in real time. Although the functions are constantly evolving, Web conferencing currently incorporates screen sharing, chats, slide presentations, text messaging, and application sharing.



▲ Voice Conferencing

Telephone "bridges" join two or more callers from any location to share the same call. *Voice conferencing* (also called *audioconferencing*, *teleconferencing*, or just plain *conference calling*) enables people to collaborate by telephone. Communicators at both ends use enhanced speakerphones to talk and be heard simultaneously.

Videoconferencing ▶

Videoconferencing allows participants to meet in special conference rooms equipped with cameras and television screens. Groups see each other and interact in real time although they may be continents apart. Faster computers, rapid Internet connections, and better cameras now enable 2 to 200 participants to sit at their own PCs and share applications, spreadsheets, presentations, and photos.



▲ Video Phones

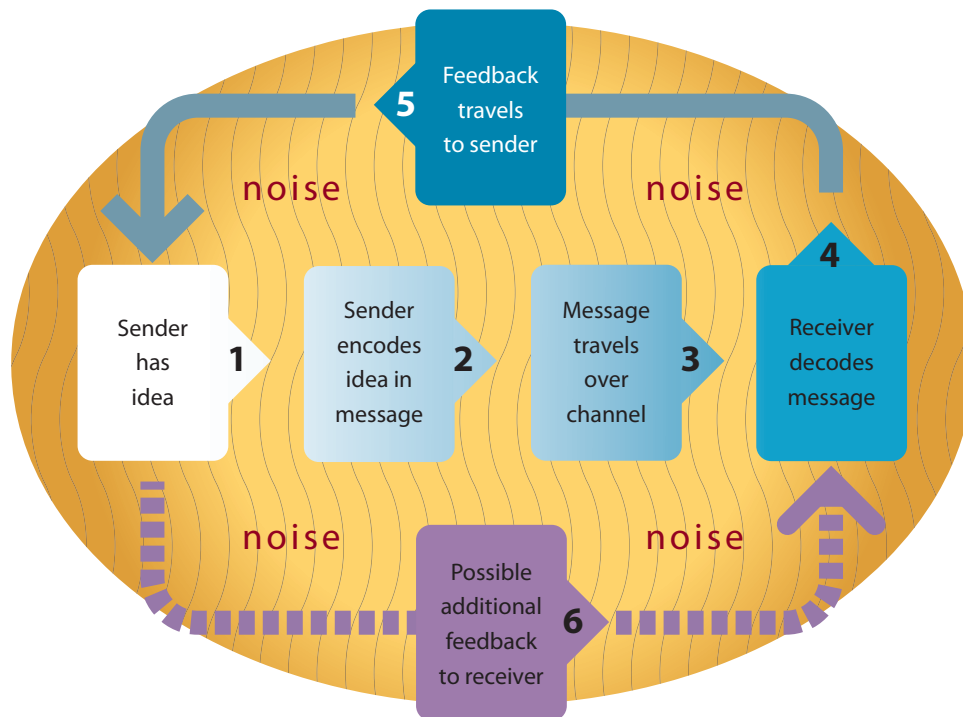
Using advanced video compression technology, video phones transmit real-time audio and video so that communicators can see each other as they collaborate. With a video phone, people can videoconference anywhere in the world over a broadband IP (Internet protocol) connection without a computer or a television screen.



◀ Presence Technology

Presence technology makes it possible to locate and identify a computing device as soon as users connect to the network. This technology is an integral part of communication devices including cell phones, laptop computers, PDAs, smartphones, and GPS devices. Collaboration is possible wherever and whenever users are online.

FIGURE 1.5 The Communication Process



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Note: A more comprehensive model of the communication process is available in the instructor's PowerPoint program.

OFFICE INSIDER

Did you know?
It is estimated that more than 50 percent of our work time is spent listening.
* Immediately following a 10-minute presentation, average people retain about half of what they hear and only one quarter after 48 hours.
* Sixty percent of all management problems are related to listening.
* We misinterpret, misunderstand, or change 70 to 90 percent of what we hear.

—Valarie Washington, CEO, Think 6 Results

a telephone conversation to spelling errors in an e-mail or blog post. Such errors damage the credibility of the sender.

- 4. Receiver decodes the message.** The person for whom a message is intended is the *receiver*. Translating the message from its symbol form into meaning involves *decoding*. Successful communication takes place only when a receiver understands the meaning intended by the sender. Such success is often hard to achieve because no two people share the same background. Success is further limited because barriers and noise may disrupt the process.
- 5. Feedback travels to the sender.** The verbal and nonverbal responses of the receiver create *feedback*, a vital part of the entire communication process. Feedback helps the sender know that the message was received and understood. Senders can encourage feedback by asking questions such as, “Am I making myself clear?” and, “Is there anything you don’t understand?” Senders can further improve feedback by delivering the message at a time when receivers can respond. Senders should provide only as much information as a receiver can handle. Receivers can improve the process by paraphrasing the sender’s message. They might say, “Let me try to explain that in my own words,” or, “My understanding of your comment is. . . .”

Improving Listening Skills

An important part of the communication process is listening. By all accounts, however, most of us are not very good listeners. Do you ever pretend to be listening when you are not? Do you know how to look attentive in class when your mind wanders far away? How about “tuning out” people when their ideas are

boring or complex? Do you find it hard to focus on ideas when a speaker's clothing or mannerisms are unusual?

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

To improve listening skills, we must first recognize barriers that prevent effective listening. Then we need to focus on specific techniques that are effective in improving listening skills.

Overcoming Barriers to Effective Listening

As you learned earlier, barriers and noise can interfere with the communication process. Have any of the following barriers and distractions prevented you from hearing what has been said?

- **Physical barriers.** You cannot listen if you cannot hear what is being said. Physical impediments include hearing disabilities, poor acoustics, and noisy surroundings. It is also difficult to listen if you are ill, tired, or uncomfortable.
- **Psychological barriers.** Everyone brings to the communication process a unique set of cultural, ethical, and personal values. Each of us has an idea of what is right and what is important. If other ideas run counter to our preconceived thoughts, we tend to “tune out” the speaker and thus fail to receive them.
- **Language problems.** Unfamiliar words can destroy the communication process because they lack meaning for the receiver. In addition, emotion-laden or “charged” words can adversely affect listening. If the mention of words such as *bankruptcy* or *real estate meltdown* has an intense emotional impact, a listener may be unable to think about the words that follow.
- **Nonverbal distractions.** Many of us find it hard to listen if a speaker is different from what we view as normal. Unusual clothing or speech mannerisms, body twitches, or a radical hairstyle can cause enough distraction to prevent us from hearing what the speaker has to say.
- **Thought speed.** Because we can process thoughts at least three times faster than speakers can say them, we can become bored and allow our minds to wander.
- **Faking attention.** Most of us have learned to look as if we are listening even when we are not. Such behavior was perhaps necessary as part of our socialization. Faked attention, however, seriously threatens effective listening because it encourages the mind to engage in flights of unchecked fancy. Those who fake attention often find it hard to concentrate even when they want to.
- **Grandstanding.** Would you rather talk or listen? Naturally, most of us would rather talk. Because our own experiences and thoughts are most important to us, we grab the limelight in conversations. We sometimes fail to listen carefully because we are just waiting politely for the next pause so that we can have our turn to speak.

Barriers to listening may be physical, psychological, verbal, or nonverbal.

Most North Americans speak at about 125 words per minute. The human brain can process information at least three times as fast.

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“Listening is hard work. Unlike hearing, it demands total concentration. It is an active search for meaning, while hearing is passive.”

—Alfonso Bucero, consultant and author

Building Powerful Listening Skills

You can reverse the harmful effects of poor habits by making a conscious effort to become an active listener. This means becoming involved. You can't sit back and hear whatever a lazy mind happens to receive. The following keys will help you become an active and effective listener:

- **Stop talking.** The first step to becoming a good listener is to stop talking. Let others explain their views. Learn to concentrate on what the speaker is saying, not on what your next comment will be.
- **Control your surroundings.** Whenever possible, remove competing sounds. Close windows or doors, turn off TVs and iPods, and move away from loud people, noisy appliances, or engines. Choose a quiet time and place for listening.



- **Establish a receptive mind-set.** Expect to learn something by listening. Strive for a positive and receptive frame of mind. If the message is complex, think of it as mental gymnastics. It is hard work but good exercise to stretch and expand the limits of your mind.
- **Keep an open mind.** We all sift through and filter information based on our own biases and values. For improved listening, discipline yourself to listen objectively. Be fair to the speaker. Hear what is really being said, not what you want to hear.
- **Listen for main points.** Heighten your concentration and satisfaction by looking for the speaker's central themes. Congratulate yourself when you find them!
- **Capitalize on lag time.** Make use of the quickness of your mind by reviewing the speaker's points.

Anticipate what is coming next. Evaluate evidence the speaker has presented. Don't allow yourself to daydream. Try to guess what the speaker's next point will be.

- **Listen between the lines.** Focus both on what is spoken and what is unspoken. Listen for feelings as well as for facts.
- **Judge ideas, not appearances.** Concentrate on the content of the message, not on its delivery. Avoid being distracted by the speaker's looks, voice, or mannerisms.
- **Hold your fire.** Force yourself to listen to the speaker's entire argument or message before reacting. Such restraint may enable you to understand the speaker's reasons and logic before you jump to false conclusions.
- **Take selective notes.** In some situations thoughtful notetaking may be necessary to record important facts that must be recalled later. Select only the most important points so that the notetaking process does not interfere with your concentration on the speaker's total message.
- **Provide feedback.** Let the speaker know that you are listening. Nod your head and maintain eye contact. Ask relevant questions at appropriate times. Getting involved improves the communication process for both the speaker and the listener.

Mastering Nonverbal Communication Skills

Understanding messages often involves more than merely listening to spoken words. Nonverbal cues, in fact, can speak louder than words. These cues include eye contact, facial expressions, body movements, space, time, territory, and appearance. All these nonverbal cues affect how a message is interpreted, or decoded, by the receiver.

Just what is nonverbal communication? It includes all unwritten and unspoken messages, whether intended or not. These silent signals have a strong effect on receivers. But understanding them is not simple. Does a downward glance indicate modesty? Fatigue? Does a constant stare reflect coldness? Dullness? Aggression? Do crossed arms mean defensiveness? Withdrawal? Or just that the person is shivering?

Messages are even harder to decipher when the verbal and nonverbal cues do not agree. What will you think if Scott says he is not angry, but he slams the door when he leaves? What if Alicia assures the hostess that the meal is excellent, but she eats very little? The nonverbal messages in these situations speak more loudly than the words. In fact, researchers believe that over 90 percent of a message that we receive is nonverbal.

When verbal and nonverbal messages conflict, receivers put more faith in nonverbal cues. In one study speakers sent a positive message but averted their eyes as they spoke. Listeners perceived the total message to be negative. Moreover, they

Nonverbal communication includes all unwritten and unspoken messages, intended or not.

When verbal and nonverbal messages clash, listeners tend to believe the nonverbal message.

thought that averted eyes suggested lack of affection, superficiality, lack of trust, and nonreceptivity.²³

Successful communicators recognize the power of nonverbal messages. Cues broadcast by body language might be helpful in understanding the feelings and attitudes of senders. It is unwise, however, to attach specific meanings to gestures or actions because behavior and its interpretations strongly depend on one's cultural background, as you will see.

Your Body Sends Silent Messages

Psychologist and philosopher Paul Watzlawick held that we cannot not communicate.²⁴ In other words, it's impossible to not communicate. This means that every behavior is sending a message even if we don't use words. The eyes, face, and body can convey a world of meaning without a single syllable being spoken.

Eye Contact. The eyes have been called the windows to the soul. Even if they don't reveal the soul, the eyes are often the best predictor of a speaker's true feelings. Most of us cannot look another person straight in the eyes and lie. As a result, in American culture we tend to believe people who look directly at us. Sustained eye contact suggests trust and admiration; brief eye contact signals fear or stress. Good eye contact enables the message sender to see whether a receiver is paying attention, showing respect, responding favorably, or feeling distress. From the receiver's viewpoint, good eye contact, in North American culture, reveals the speaker's sincerity, confidence, and truthfulness.

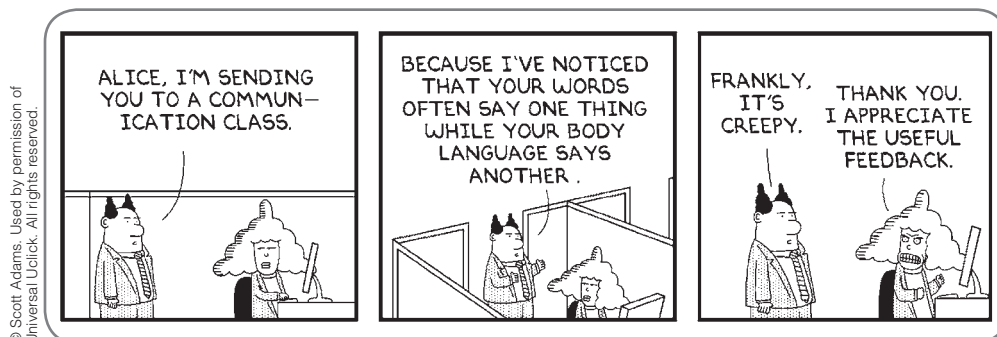
The eyes are thought to be the best predictor of a speaker's true feelings.

Facial Expression. The expression on a person's face can be almost as revealing of emotion as the eyes. Experts estimate that the human face can display over 250,000 expressions.²⁵ To hide their feelings, some people can control these expressions and maintain "poker faces." Most of us, however, display our emotions openly. Raising or lowering the eyebrows, squinting the eyes, swallowing nervously, clenching the jaw, smiling broadly—these voluntary and involuntary facial expressions can add to or entirely replace verbal messages.

Posture and Gestures. A person's posture can convey anything from high status and self-confidence to shyness and submissiveness. Leaning in toward a speaker suggests attraction and interest; pulling away or shrinking back denotes fear, distrust, anxiety, or disgust. Similarly, gestures can communicate entire thoughts via simple movements. However, the meanings of some of these movements differ in other cultures. Unless you know local customs, they can get you into trouble. In the United States and Canada, for example, forming the thumb and forefinger in a circle means everything is OK. But in parts of South America, the OK sign is obscene.

What does your own body language say about you? To take stock of the kinds of messages being sent by your body, ask a classmate to critique your use of eye contact, facial expression, and body movements. Another way to analyze your nonverbal style is to record yourself making a presentation. Then study your performance. This way you can make sure your nonverbal cues send the same message as your words.

Nonverbal messages often have different meanings in different cultures.





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Time, Space, and Territory Send Silent Messages

In addition to nonverbal messages transmitted by your body, three external elements convey information in the communication process: time, space, and territory.

Time. How we structure and use time tells observers about our personalities and attitudes. For example, when Warren Buffett, industrialist, investor, and philanthropist, gives a visitor a prolonged interview, he signals his respect for, interest in, and approval of the visitor or the topic to be discussed.

Space. How we order the space around us tells something about ourselves and our objectives. Whether the space is a bedroom, a dorm room, an office, or a department, people reveal themselves in the design and grouping of their furniture. Generally, the more formal the arrangement, the more formal and closed the communication style. The way office furniture is arranged sends cues about how communication is to take place. Israeli diplomat Danny Ayalon caused an international incident after humiliating the Turkish ambassador by making him sit in a chair lower than his own. He also deliberately failed to put the Turkish flag on display.²⁶ Although Ayalon later apologized, his message was clear: He did not want his visitor to feel equal to him.

The distance required for comfortable social interaction is controlled by culture.

Territory. Each of us has a certain area that we feel is our own territory, whether it is a specific spot or just the space around us. Your father may have a favorite chair in which he is most comfortable, a cook might not tolerate intruders in the kitchen, and veteran employees may feel that certain work areas and tools belong to them. We all maintain zones of privacy in which we feel comfortable. Figure 1.6 illustrates the four zones of social interaction among Americans, as formulated by anthropologist Edward T. Hall.²⁷ Notice that Americans are a bit standoffish; only intimate friends and family may stand closer than about 1.5 feet. If someone violates that territory, Americans feel uncomfortable and may step back to reestablish their space.

FIGURE 1.6 Four Space Zones for Social Interaction



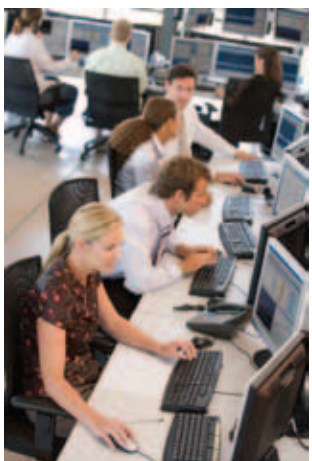
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Intimate Zone
(1 to 1.5 feet)



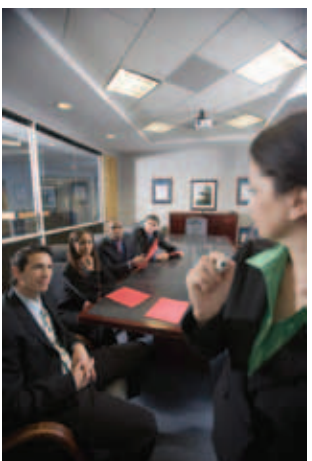
© iStockphoto.com/Dean Mitchell

Personal Zone
(1.5 to 4 feet)



© iStockphoto.com/Catherine Yaulet

Social Zone
(4 to 12 feet)



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Public Zone
(12 or more feet)

Appearance Sends Silent Messages

Much like the personal appearance of an individual, the physical appearance of a business document transmits immediate and important nonverbal messages. Ideally, these messages should be pleasing to the eye.

Eye Appeal of Business Documents. The way an e-mail, letter, memo, or report looks can have either a positive or a negative effect on the receiver. Sloppy e-mails send a nonverbal message that you are in a terrific hurry or that you do not care about the receiver. Envelopes—through their postage, stationery, and printing—can suggest routine, important, or junk mail. Letters and reports can look neat, professional, well organized, and attractive—or just the opposite. In succeeding chapters you will learn how to create business documents that send positive nonverbal messages through their appearance, format, organization, readability, and correctness.

Personal Appearance. The way you look—your clothing, grooming, and posture—telegraphs an instant nonverbal message about you. Based on what they see, viewers make quick judgments about your status, credibility, personality, and potential. If you want to be considered professional, think about how you present yourself. One marketing manager said, “I’m young and pretty. It’s hard enough to be taken seriously, and if I show up in jeans and a teeshirt, I don’t stand a chance.”²⁸ As a businessperson, you will want to think about what your appearance says about you. Although the rules of business attire have loosened up, some workers show poor judgment. You will learn more about professional attire and behavior in later chapters.

Building Strong Nonverbal Skills

Nonverbal communication can outweigh words in the way it influences how others perceive us. You can harness the power of silent messages by reviewing the following tips for improving nonverbal communication skills:

- **Establish and maintain eye contact.** Remember that in the United States and Canada appropriate eye contact signals interest, attentiveness, strength, and credibility.
- **Use posture to show interest.** Encourage interaction by leaning forward, sitting or standing erect, and looking alert.
- **Improve your decoding skills.** Watch facial expressions and body language to understand the complete verbal and nonverbal messages being communicated.
- **Probe for more information.** When you perceive nonverbal cues that contradict verbal meanings, politely seek additional cues (“I’m not sure I understand,” “Please tell me more about . . .,” or “Do you mean that . . .”).
- **Avoid assigning nonverbal meanings out of context.** Don’t interpret nonverbal behavior unless you understand a situation or a culture.
- **Associate with people from diverse cultures.** Learn about other cultures to widen your knowledge and tolerance of intercultural nonverbal messages.
- **Appreciate the power of appearance.** Keep in mind that the appearance of your business documents, your business space, and yourself sends immediate positive or negative messages to receivers.
- **Observe yourself on video.** Ensure that your verbal and nonverbal messages are in sync by recording and evaluating yourself making a presentation.
- **Enlist friends and family.** Ask friends and family to monitor your conscious and unconscious body movements and gestures to help you become an effective communicator.



The appearance of a message and of an individual can convey positive or negative nonverbal messages.

Because nonverbal cues can mean more than spoken words, learn to use nonverbal communication positively.

Understanding How Culture Affects Communication

Verbal and nonverbal meanings are even more difficult to interpret when people come from different cultures.

Comprehending the verbal and nonverbal meanings of a message is difficult even when communicators are from the same culture. When they come from different cultures, special sensitivity and skills are necessary.

Negotiators for a North American company learned this lesson when they were in Japan looking for a trading partner. The North Americans were pleased after their first meeting with representatives of a major Japanese firm. The Japanese had nodded assent throughout the meeting and had not objected to a single proposal. The next day, however, the North Americans were stunned to learn that the Japanese had rejected the entire plan. In interpreting the nonverbal behavioral messages, the North Americans made a typical mistake. They assumed the Japanese were nodding in agreement as fellow North Americans would. In this case, however, the nods of assent indicated comprehension—not approval.

Every country has a unique culture or common heritage, joint experience, and shared learning that produce its culture. Their common experience gives members of that culture a complex system of shared values and customs. It teaches them how to behave; it conditions their reactions. Global business, new communication technologies, the Internet, and even Hollywood are spreading Western values throughout the world. However, cultural differences can still cause significant misunderstandings.

The more you know about culture in general and your own culture in particular, the better able you will be to adopt an intercultural perspective. In this book it is impossible to cover fully the infinite facets of culture. However, we can outline some key dimensions of culture and look at them from various points of view.

So that you will better understand your culture and how it contrasts with other cultures, we will describe five key dimensions of culture: context, individualism, formality, communication style, and time orientation.

Context

Low-context cultures (such as those in North America and Western Europe) depend less on the environment of a situation to convey meaning than do high-context cultures (such as those in China, Japan, and Arab countries).

Context is one of the most important cultural dimensions, yet it is among the most difficult to define. In a model developed by cultural anthropologist Edward T. Hall, context refers to the stimuli, environment, or ambience surrounding an event. Hall arranged cultures on a continuum, shown in Figure 1.7, from low to high in relation to context. Our figure also summarizes key comparisons for today's business communicators.

Communicators in low-context cultures (such as those in North America, Scandinavia, and Germany) depend little on the context of a situation to convey their meaning. They assume that listeners need to be briefed exactly and specifically to avoid misunderstandings. Low-context cultures tend to be logical, analytical, and action oriented. Business communicators stress clearly articulated messages that they consider to be objective, professional, and efficient. Words are taken literally.

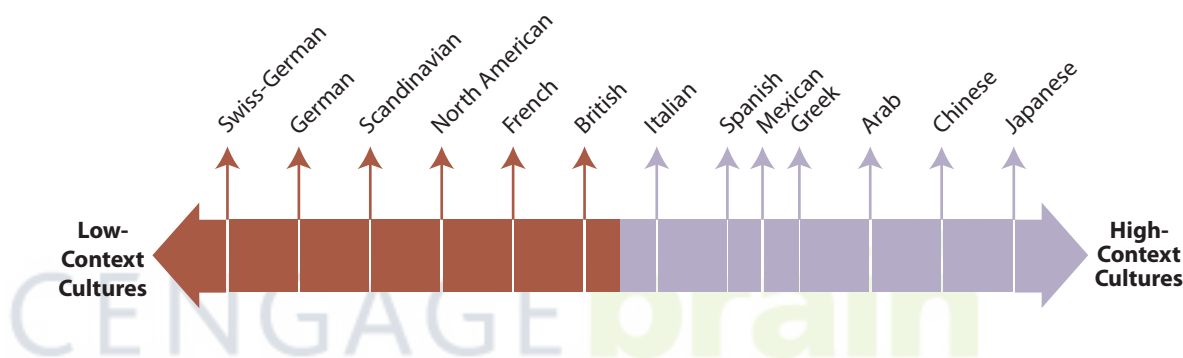
Communicators in high-context cultures (such as those in China, Japan, and Arab countries) assume that the listener is already “contexted” and does not need much background information.²⁹ Communicators in high-context cultures are more likely to be intuitive and contemplative. They may not take words literally. Instead, the meaning of a message may be implied from the social or physical setting, the relationship of the communicators, or nonverbal cues. For example, a Japanese communicator might say *yes* when he really means *no*. From the context of the situation, the Japanese speaker would indicate whether *yes* really meant *yes* or whether it meant *no*. The context, tone, time taken to answer, facial expression, and body cues would convey the meaning of *yes*.³⁰ Communication cues are transmitted by posture, voice inflection, gestures, and facial expression.

FIGURE 1.7 Comparing High- and Low-Context Communicators

Culture has a powerful effect on business communicators. The following observations point out selected differences. Remember, however, that these are simplifications and that practices within a given culture vary considerably. Moreover, as globalization expands, low- and high-context cultures are experiencing change and differences may be less pronounced.

Business Communicators in Low-Context Cultures	Business Communicators in High-Context Cultures
Assume listeners know little and must be told everything directly.	Assume listeners are highly “contexted” and require little background.
Value independence, initiative, self-assertion.	Value consensus and group decisions.
Rely on facts, data, and logic.	Rely on relationships rather than objective data.
Value getting down to business and achieving results.	Value relationships, harmony, status, and saving face.
Keep business and social relationships separate.	Intermix business and social relationships.
Expect negotiated decisions to be final and ironclad.	Expect to reopen discussions of decisions previously negotiated.
Hold relaxed view toward wealth and power.	Defer to others based on wealth, position, seniority, and age.
Value competence regardless of position or status.	May value position and status over competence.
Have little problem confronting, showing anger, or making demands.	Avoid confrontation, anger, and emotion in business transactions.
Analyze meanings and attach face value to words.	May not take words literally; may infer meanings.

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Individualism

An attitude of independence and freedom from control characterizes individualism. Members of low-context cultures, particularly Americans, tend to value individualism. They believe that initiative, self-assertion, and competence result in personal achievement. They believe in individual action and personal responsibility, and they desire a large degree of freedom in their personal lives.

Members of many low-context cultures value independence and freedom from control.

Members of high-context cultures are more collectivist. They emphasize membership in organizations, groups, and teams; they encourage acceptance of group values, duties, and decisions. They typically resist independence because it fosters competition and confrontation instead of consensus. In group-oriented cultures such as those in many Asian societies, for example, self-assertion and individual decision making are discouraged. “The nail that sticks up gets pounded down” is a common Japanese saying.³¹ Business decisions are often made by all who have competence in the matter under discussion. Similarly, in China managers also focus on the group rather than on the individual, preferring a consultative management style over an autocratic style.³²

Many cultures, of course, are quite complex and cannot be characterized as totally individualistic or group oriented. For example, European Americans are generally quite individualistic, whereas African Americans are less so, and Latin Americans are closer to the group-centered dimension.³³

Tradition, ceremony, and social rules are more important in some cultures than in others.

Formality

People in some cultures place less emphasis on tradition, ceremony, and social rules than do members of other cultures. Americans, for example, dress casually and are soon on a first-name basis with others. Their lack of formality is often characterized by directness. In business dealings Americans come to the point immediately; indirectness, they feel, wastes time, a valuable commodity in American culture.

This informality and directness may be confusing abroad. In Mexico, for instance, a typical business meeting begins with handshakes, coffee, and an expansive conversation about the weather, sports, and other light topics. An invitation to “get down to business” might offend a Mexican executive.³⁴ In Japan signing documents and exchanging business cards are important rituals. In Europe first names are used only after long acquaintance and by invitation. In Arab, South American, and Asian cultures, a feeling of friendship and kinship must be established before business can proceed.

In Western cultures people are more relaxed about social status and the appearance of power.³⁵ Deference is not generally paid to individuals merely because of their wealth, position, seniority, or age. In many Asian cultures, however, these characteristics are important and must be respected. Deference and respect are paid to authority and power. Recognizing this cultural pattern, Marriott Hotel managers learned to avoid placing a lower-level Japanese employee on a floor above a higher-level executive from the same company.

Communication Style

Words are used differently by people in low- and high-context cultures.

People in low- and high-context cultures tend to communicate differently with words. To Americans and Germans, words are very important, especially in contracts and negotiations. People in high-context cultures, on the other hand, place more emphasis on the surrounding context than on the words describing a negotiation. A Greek may see a contract as a formal statement announcing the intention to build a business for the future. The Japanese may treat contracts as statements of intention, and they assume changes will be made as a project develops. Mexicans may treat contracts as artistic exercises of what might be accomplished in an ideal world. They do not necessarily expect contracts to apply consistently in the real world. An Arab may be insulted by merely mentioning a contract; a person’s word is more binding.³⁶

In communication style North Americans value straightforwardness, are suspicious of evasiveness, and distrust people who might have a “hidden agenda” or who “play their cards too close to the chest.”³⁷ North Americans also tend to be uncomfortable with silence and impatient with delays. Some Asian businesspeople have learned that the longer they drag out negotiations, the more concessions impatient North Americans are likely to make.

North Americans value a direct, straightforward communication style.

Time Orientation

North Americans tend to correlate time with productivity, efficiency, and money.

North Americans consider time a precious commodity. They correlate time with productivity, efficiency, and money. Keeping people waiting for business appointments wastes time and is also rude.

In other cultures time may be perceived as an unlimited and never-ending resource to be enjoyed. A North American businessperson, for example, was kept waiting two hours past a scheduled appointment time in South America. She wasn’t offended, though, because she was familiar with Hispanics’ more relaxed concept of time.

The perception of time and how it is used are culturally learned. In some cultures time is perceived analytically. People account for every minute of the day. In other cultures, time is holistic and viewed in larger chunks. Western cultures tend to be more analytical, scheduling appointments at 15- to 30-minute intervals. Eastern cultures tend to be more holistic, planning fewer but longer meetings. People in one culture may look at time as formal and task oriented. In another culture, time is seen as an opportunity to develop an interpersonal relationship. In the announcements of some international meetings, a qualifier may be inserted after the meeting time. For example, “The meeting starts at 10 a.m. Malaysian time.” This tells participants whether to expect fixed or fluid scheduling.

Learning Intercultural Workplace Skills

The global economy needs workers who not only master their technical skills but also can thrive on diverse teams and interact effectively with customers and clients at home and abroad. Even if you never seek an overseas work assignment, you will need to be able to collaborate with diverse coworkers right here at home. We will discuss how to overcome barriers to productive intercultural communication, develop strong intercultural skills, and capitalize on workplace diversity.

Conquering Ethnocentrism and Stereotyping

The process of understanding and interacting successfully with people from other cultures is often hampered by two barriers: ethnocentrism and stereotyping. These two barriers, however, can be overcome by developing tolerance, a powerful and effective aid to communication.

Ethnocentrism. The belief in the superiority of one's own culture is known as *ethnocentrism*. This natural attitude is found in all cultures. Ethnocentrism causes us to judge others by our own values. If you were raised in North America, the values described in the preceding sections probably seem “right” to you, and you may wonder why the rest of the world doesn't function in the same sensible fashion. A North American businessperson in an Arab or Asian country might be upset at time spent over coffee or other social rituals before any “real” business is transacted. In these cultures, however, personal relationships must be established and nurtured before earnest talks may proceed.

Stereotypes. Our perceptions of other cultures sometimes cause us to form stereotypes about groups of people. A *stereotype* is an oversimplified perception of a behavioral pattern or characteristic applied to entire groups. For example, the Swiss are hardworking, efficient, and neat; Germans are formal, reserved, and blunt; Americans are loud, friendly, and impatient; Canadians are polite, trusting, and tolerant; Asians are gracious, humble, and inscrutable. These attitudes may or may not accurately describe cultural norms. But when applied to individual business communicators, such stereotypes may create misconceptions and misunderstandings. Look beneath surface stereotypes and labels to discover individual personal qualities.

Tolerance. Working with people from other cultures demands tolerance and flexible attitudes. As global markets expand and as our society becomes increasingly multiethnic, tolerance becomes critical. *Tolerance*, here, does not mean “putting up with” or “enduring,” which is one part of its definition. Instead, we use *tolerance* in a broader sense. It means learning about beliefs and practices different from our own and appreciating them. One of the best ways to develop tolerance is to practice *empathy*. This means trying to see the world through another's eyes. It means being nonjudgmental, recognizing things as they are rather than as they “should be.”

For example, in China, the American snack foods manufacturer Frito-Lay had to accommodate yin and yang, the Chinese philosophy that nature and life must balance opposing elements. Chinese consider fried foods to be hot and avoid them in summer because two “hots” don't balance. They prefer “cool” snacks in summer; therefore, Frito-Lay created “cool lemon” potato chips dotted with lime specks and mint. The yellow, lemon-scented chips are delivered in a package showing breezy blue skies and rolling green grass.³⁸ Instead of imposing the American view that potato chips are fine as a summer snack, Frito-Lay looked at its product through the eyes of its Chinese consumers and adjusted accordingly.

The following suggestions can help you prevent miscommunication in oral and written transactions across cultures.

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“Not everyone can travel, but since we live and work in a global economy, we should expect undergraduate programs to prepare students with a fundamental understanding of the cultural differences, historical perspectives and common business practices employed by all the major countries within it.”

—Craig Cuyar, CIO,
Cushman & Wakefield Inc.

Ethnocentrism is the belief in the superiority of one's own culture and group.

A stereotype is an oversimplified behavioral pattern applied to entire groups.

Developing intercultural tolerance means practicing empathy, being nonjudgmental, and being patient.

Successful Oral Communication With Intercultural Audiences

When you have a conversation with someone from another culture, you can reduce misunderstandings by following these tips:

To improve communication with nonnative speakers of English, speak slowly, enunciate clearly, observe eye messages, encourage feedback, check for comprehension, accept blame, don't interrupt, remember to smile, and follow up important conversations in writing.

- **Use simple English.** Speak in short sentences (under 20 words) with familiar, short words. Eliminate puns, sport and military references, slang, and jargon (special business terms). Be especially alert to idiomatic expressions that can't be translated, such as *burn the midnight oil* and *under the weather*.
- **Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.** Avoid fast speech, but don't raise your voice. Overpunctuate with pauses and full stops. Always write numbers for all to see.
- **Encourage accurate feedback.** Ask probing questions, and encourage the listener to paraphrase what you say. Don't assume that a *yes*, a nod, or a smile indicates comprehension or assent.
- **Check frequently for comprehension.** Avoid waiting until you finish a long explanation to request feedback. Instead, make one point at a time, pausing to check for comprehension. Don't proceed to B until A has been grasped.
- **Observe eye messages.** Be alert to a glazed expression or wandering eyes. These tell you the listener is lost.
- **Accept blame.** If a misunderstanding results, graciously accept the responsibility for not making your meaning clear.
- **Listen without interrupting.** Curb your desire to finish sentences or to fill out ideas for the speaker. Keep in mind that North Americans abroad are often accused of listening too little and talking too much.
- **Smile when appropriate.** Roger Axtell, international behavior expert, calls the smile the single most understood and most useful form of communication in either personal or business transactions. In some cultures, however, excessive smiling may seem insincere.³⁹
- **Follow up in writing.** After conversations or oral negotiations, confirm the results and agreements with follow-up letters. For proposals and contracts, engage a qualified translator to prepare copies in the local language.

You can improve intercultural written communication by adopting local styles, using short sentences and short paragraphs, avoiding ambiguous wording, and citing numbers carefully.

Successful Written Communication With Intercultural Audiences

When you write to someone from a different culture, you can improve your chances of being understood by following these suggestions:

- **Consider local styles.** Learn how documents are formatted and how letters are addressed and developed in the intended reader's country. Decide whether to use your organization's preferred format or adjust to local styles.
- **Consider hiring a translator.** Engage a professional translator if (a) your document is important, (b) your document will be distributed to many readers, or (c) you must be persuasive.
- **Use short sentences and short paragraphs.** Sentences with fewer than 20 words and paragraphs with fewer than 8 lines are most readable.
- **Avoid ambiguous wording.** Include relative pronouns (*that*, *which*, *who*) for clarity in introducing clauses. Stay away from contractions (especially ones such as *Here's the problem*). Avoid idioms (*once in a blue moon*), slang (*my presentation really bombed*), acronyms (*ASAP* for *as soon as possible*), abbreviations (*DBA* for *doing business as*), and jargon (*input*, *output*, *clickstream*). Use action-specific verbs (*purchase a printer* rather than *get a printer*).



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- **Cite numbers carefully.** For international trade it is a good idea to learn and use the metric system. In citing numbers, use figures (*15*) instead of spelling them out (*fifteen*). Always convert dollar figures into local currency. Avoid using figures to express the month of the year. In North America, for example, *March 5, 2012*, might be written as *3/5/12*, while in Europe the same date might appear as *5.3.12*. For clarity, always spell out the month.

Globalization and Workplace Diversity

As global competition opens world markets, North American businesspeople will increasingly interact with customers and colleagues from around the world. At the same time, the North American workforce is also becoming more diverse—in race, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, physical ability, and countless other characteristics.

No longer, say the experts, will the workplace be predominantly male or Anglo-oriented. The white non-Hispanic population of the United States is expected to drop from 79 percent in 1980 to 64 percent in 2020. The Hispanic population will climb from 6 percent to 17 percent, the African American population will increase from 12 percent to 13 percent, and the Asian population will rise from 2 percent to 6 percent.⁴⁰ In addition to increasing numbers of minorities, the workforce will see a big jump in older workers. By 2020, the number of workers aged fifty-five and older will grow to 20 percent.⁴¹

What do all these changes mean for you as a future business communicator? Simply put, your job may require you to interact with colleagues and customers from around the world. Your work environment will probably demand that you cooperate effectively with small groups of coworkers. What's more, these coworkers may differ from you in race, ethnicity, gender, age, and other ways.

Benefits of a Diverse Workforce

A diverse work environment offers many benefits and makes good business sense. Customers want to deal with companies that respect their values. They are more likely to say, “If you are a company whose ads do not include me, or whose workforce does not include me, I will not buy from you.” A diverse staff is better able to read trends and respond to the increasingly diverse customer base in local and world markets.

At PepsiCo, work teams created new products inspired by diversity efforts. Those products included Gatorade Xtremo aimed at Hispanics as well as Mountain Dew Code Red, which appeals to African Americans. One Pepsi executive said that companies that “figure out the diversity challenge first will clearly have a competitive advantage.”⁴²

In addition, organizations that set aside time and resources to cultivate and capitalize on diversity will suffer fewer discrimination lawsuits, fewer union clashes, and less government regulatory action. Most important, though, is the growing realization among organizations that diversity is a critical bottom-line business strategy to improve employee relationships and to increase productivity. Developing a diverse staff that can work together cooperatively is one of the biggest challenges facing business organizations today.

Tips for Communicating With Diverse Audiences on the Job

Integrating all this diversity into one seamless workforce is a formidable but vital task. Harnessed effectively, diversity can enhance productivity and propel a company to success well into the twenty-first century. Mismanaged, it can become a tremendous drain on a company's time and resources. How companies deal

You can expect to be interacting with customers and colleagues who may differ from you in race, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, physical ability, and many other characteristics.

OFFICE INSIDER

“I need to find the best set of skills to do the assignment rather than someone who looks like me, acts like me, or went to the same school or fits into the old mold.”

—Ken Henderson,
managing director
of IMCOR, a national
executive search firm





www.Cartoonstock.com

with diversity will make all the difference in how they compete in an increasingly global environment. This means that organizations must do more than just pay lip service to these issues. Harmony and acceptance do not happen automatically when people who are dissimilar work together. The following suggestions can help you and your organization find ways to improve communication and interaction:

- **Understand the value of differences.** Diversity makes an organization innovative and creative. Sameness fosters an absence of critical thinking called *groupthink*. Case studies, for example, of the *Challenger* shuttle disaster suggest that groupthink prevented alternatives from being considered. Even smart people

working collectively can make dumb decisions if they do not see different perspectives.⁴³ Diversity in problem-solving groups encourages independent and creative thinking.

- **Seek training.** Especially if an organization is experiencing diversity problems, awareness-raising sessions may be helpful. Spend time reading and learning about workforce diversity and how it can benefit organizations. Look upon diversity as an opportunity, not a threat. Intercultural communication, team building, and conflict resolution are skills that can be learned in diversity training programs.
- **Learn about your cultural self.** Begin to think of yourself as a product of your culture, and understand that your culture is just one among many. Try to stand outside and look at yourself. Do you see any reflex reactions and automatic thought patterns that are a result of your upbringing? These may be invisible to you until challenged by people who are different from you. Remember, your culture was designed to help you succeed and survive in a certain environment. Be sure to keep what works and yet be ready to adapt as your environment changes.
- **Make fewer assumptions.** Be careful of seemingly insignificant, innocent workplace assumptions. For example, don't assume that everyone wants to observe the holidays with a Christmas party and a decorated tree. Celebrating only Christian holidays in December and January excludes those who honor Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and the Lunar New Year. Moreover, in workplace discussions don't assume that everyone is married or wants to be or is even heterosexual, for that matter. For invitations, avoid phrases such as *managers and their wives*. *Spouses* or *partners* is more inclusive. Valuing diversity means making fewer assumptions that everyone is like you or wants to be like you.
- **Build on similarities.** Look for areas in which you and others not like you can agree or at least share opinions. Be prepared to consider issues from many perspectives, all of which may be valid. Accept that there is room for various points of view to coexist peacefully. Although you can always find differences, it is much harder to find similarities. Look for common ground in shared experiences, mutual goals, and similar values. Concentrate on your objective even when you may disagree on how to reach it.⁴⁴

Successful communicators understand the value of differences, seek training, learn about their own cultures, make fewer assumptions, and build on similarities.

In times of conflict, look for areas of agreement and build on similarities.



www.cengagebrain.com

Available with an access code, these eResources will help you prepare for exams:

- Chapter Review Quizzes
- PowerPoint Slides
- Personal Language Trainer
- Flash Cards

Summing Up and Looking Forward

This chapter described the importance of communication skills in today's fast-paced, mobile workplace and challenging economy. Writing skills are particularly important because businesspeople produce more written messages than ever before. Heightened global competition, flattened management hierarchies, team-based projects, constantly evolving technology, the "anytime, anywhere" office, and an emphasis on ethics are all trends that increase the need for good communication skills. To improve your skills, you should understand the communication process. Communication doesn't take place unless senders encode meaningful messages that can be decoded and understood by receivers.

One important part of the communication process is listening. You can become a more active listener by keeping an open mind, listening for main points, capitalizing on lag time, judging ideas and not appearances, taking selective notes, and providing

feedback. The chapter also described ways to help you improve your nonverbal communication skills.

You learned about the powerful effect that culture has on communication, and you became more aware of the cultural dimensions of context, individualism, formality, communication style, and time orientation. Finally, the chapter discussed ways that individuals can learn intercultural skills and businesses can benefit from workforce diversity.

The following chapters present the writing process. You will learn specific techniques to help you improve your written and oral expression. Remember, communication skills are not inherited. They are learned, and anyone can learn to be a good communicator. Writing skills are critical because they function as a gatekeeper. Poor skills keep you in low-wage, dead-end work. Good skills open the door to high wages and career advancement.⁴⁵

Critical Thinking

1. How is the writing that you and your peers are practicing every day by texting, e-mailing, or instant messaging different from the writing business professionals expect in the workplace? Will your employer benefit from your informal writing?
2. Name examples that illustrate the nonverbal cues we send by our use of time, space, or territory. How does our need for personal space or territory, for example, play out in the new, flexible "anytime, anywhere" workplace?
3. How are listening skills important to employees, supervisors, and executives? Who should have the best listening skills?
4. What arguments could you give for or against the idea that body language is a science with principles that can be interpreted accurately by specialists?
5. It is quite natural to favor one's own country over a foreign one. To what extent can ethnocentrism and stereotypes be considered normal reactions, and when do they become destructive and unproductive in the workplace?

Chapter Review

6. In what ways do communication skills act as a career filter?
7. Do business professionals think that college graduates today are well prepared for the communication and writing tasks in the workplace?
8. What are soft skills?
9. Will the time and money spent on your college education and writing training most likely pay off?

Activities and Cases

WEB

1.1 Online Communication Skills Assessment: How Do You Rate?

This course can help you dramatically improve your business communication skills. How much do you need to improve? This assessment exercise enables you to evaluate your skills with specific standards in four critical communication skill areas: writing, reading, speaking, and listening. How well you communicate will be an important factor in your future career—particularly if you are promoted into management, as many college graduates are.

Your Task. Either here or at www.cengagebrain.com, select a number from 1 (indicating low ability) to 5 (indicating high ability) that best reflects your perception of yourself. Be honest in rating yourself. Think about how others would rate you. When you finish, see a rating of your skills. Complete this assessment online to see your results automatically!

Writing Skills

	Low				High
1. Possess basic spelling, grammar, and punctuation skills	1	2	3	4	5
2. Am familiar with proper e-mail, memo, letter, and report formats for business documents	1	2	3	4	5
3. Can analyze a writing problem and quickly outline a plan for solving the problem	1	2	3	4	5
4. Am able to organize data coherently and logically	1	2	3	4	5
5. Can evaluate a document to determine its probable success	1	2	3	4	5

Reading Skills

	Low				High
1. Am familiar with specialized vocabulary in my field as well as general vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
2. Can concentrate despite distractions	1	2	3	4	5
3. Am willing to look up definitions whenever necessary	1	2	3	4	5
4. Am able to move from recreational to serious reading	1	2	3	4	5
5. Can read and comprehend college-level material	1	2	3	4	5

Speaking Skills

	Low				High
1. Feel at ease in speaking with friends	1	2	3	4	5
2. Feel at ease in speaking before a group of people	1	2	3	4	5
3. Can adapt my presentation to the audience	1	2	3	4	5
4. Am confident in pronouncing and using words correctly	1	2	3	4	5
5. Sense that I have credibility when I make a presentation	1	2	3	4	5

Listening Skills

	Low				High
1. Spend at least half the time listening during conversations	1	2	3	4	5
2. Am able to concentrate on a speaker's words despite distractions	1	2	3	4	5
3. Can summarize a speaker's ideas and anticipate what's coming during pauses	1	2	3	4	5
4. Provide proper feedback such as nodding, paraphrasing, and asking questions	1	2	3	4	5
5. Listen with the expectation of gaining new ideas and information	1	2	3	4	5

Total your score in each section. How do you rate?

22–24 Excellent! You have indicated that you have exceptional communication skills.

18–21 Your score is above average, but you could improve your skills.

14–17 Your score suggests that you have much room for improvement.

10–13 You need serious study, practice, and follow-up reinforcement.

Where are you strongest and weakest? Are you satisfied with your present skills? The first step to improvement is recognition of a need. The second step is making a commitment to improve. The third step is following through, and this course will help you do that.

W WEB**1.2 Pumping Up Your Basic Language Muscles**

You can enlist the aid of your author to help you pump up your basic language skills. As your personal trainer, Dr. Guffey provides a three-step workout plan and hundreds of interactive questions to help you brush up on your grammar and mechanics skills. You receive immediate feedback in the warm-up sessions, and when you finish a complete workout, you can take a short test to assess what you learned. These workouts are completely self-taught, which means you can review at your own pace and repeat as often as you need. *Your Personal Language Trainer* is available at your premium Web site, www.cengagebrain.com. In addition to pumping up your basic language muscles, you can also use *Spell Right!* and *Speak Right!* to improve your spelling and pronunciation skills.

Your Task. Begin using *Your Personal Language Trainer* to brush up on your basic grammar and mechanics skills by completing one to three workouts per week or as many as your instructor advises. Be prepared to submit a printout of your “fitness” (completion) certificate when you finish a workout module. If your instructor directs, complete the spelling exercises in *Spell Right!* and submit a certificate of completion for the spelling final exam.

E E-MAIL**1.3 Getting to Know You**

Your instructor wants to know more about you, your motivation for taking this course, your career goals, and your writing skills.

Your Task. Send an e-mail or write a memo of introduction to your instructor. See Chapter 5 for formats and tips on preparing e-mails. In your message include the following:

- a. Your reasons for taking this class
- b. Your career goals (both temporary and long-term)
- c. A brief description of your employment, if any, and your favorite activities
- d. An assessment and discussion of your current communication skills, including your strengths and weaknesses

For online classes, write a letter of introduction about yourself with the preceding information. Post your letter to your discussion board. Read and comment on the letters of other students. Think about how people in virtual teams must learn about each other through online messages.

Alternatively, your instructors may assign this task as a concise individual voice mail message to establish your telephone etiquette and skills.

T TEAM**1.4 Small-Group Presentation: Getting to Know Each Other**

Many business organizations today use teams to accomplish their goals. To help you develop speaking, listening, and teamwork skills, your instructor may assign team projects. One of the first jobs in any team is selecting members and becoming acquainted.

Your Task. Your instructor will divide your class into small groups or teams. At your instructor’s direction, either (a) interview another group member and introduce that person to the group or (b) introduce yourself to the group. Think of this as an informal interview for a team assignment or for a job. You will want to make notes from which to speak. Your introduction should include information such as the following:

- a. Where did you grow up?
- b. What work and extracurricular activities have you engaged in?
- c. What are your interests and talents? What are you good at doing?
- d. What have you achieved?
- e. How familiar are you with various computer technologies?
- f. What are your professional and personal goals? Where do you expect to be five years from now?

To develop listening skills, team members should practice the good listening techniques discussed in this chapter and take notes. They should be prepared to discuss three important facts as well as remember details about each speaker.

E E-MAIL**1.5 Class Listening**

Have you ever consciously observed the listening habits of others?

Your Task. In one of your classes, study student listening habits for a week. What barriers to effective listening did you observe? How many of the suggestions described in this chapter are being implemented by listeners in the class? Write a memo or an e-mail to your instructor briefly describing your observations. (See Chapter 5 to learn more about e-mails and memos.)

1.6 How Good Are Your Listening Skills? Self-Checked Rating Quiz

You can learn whether your listening skills are excellent or deficient by completing a brief quiz.

Your Task. Take Dr. Guffey’s Listening Quiz at www.cengagebrain.com. What two listening behaviors do you think you need to work on the most?

1.7 Body Language

Can body language be accurately interpreted?

Your Task. What attitudes do the following body movements suggest to you? Do these movements always mean the same thing? What part does context play in your interpretations?

- Wringing hands, tugging ears
- Bowed posture, twiddling thumbs
- Steepled hands, sprawling sitting position
- Rubbing hand through hair
- Open hands, unbuttoned coat

E-MAIL

1.8 Silent Messages

Becoming more aware of the silent messages you send helps you make them more accurate.

Your Task. Analyze the kinds of silent messages you send your instructor, your classmates, and your employer. How do you send these messages? Group them into categories, as suggested by what you learned in this chapter. What do these messages mean? Be prepared to discuss them in small groups or in an e-mail or memo to your instructor.

1.9 Universal Sign for “I Goofed”

In an effort to promote peace and tranquility on the highways, motorists submitted the following suggestions to a newspaper columnist.⁴⁶

Your Task. In small groups consider the pros and cons of each of the following gestures intended as an apology when a driver makes a mistake. Why would some fail?

- Lower your head slightly and bonk yourself on the forehead with the side of your closed fist. The message is clear: “I’m stupid. I shouldn’t have done that.”
- Make a temple with your hands, as if you were praying.
- Move the index finger of your right hand back and forth across your neck—as if you were cutting your throat.
- Flash the well-known peace sign. Hold up the index and middle fingers of one hand, making a V, as in Victory.
- Place the flat of your hands against your cheeks, as children do when they have made a mistake.
- Clasp your hand over your mouth, raise your brows, and shrug your shoulders.
- Use your knuckles to knock on the side of your head. Translation: “Oops! Engage brain.”
- Cover your eyes with one hand for a few seconds and then smile.
- Place your right fist over the middle of your chest and move it in a circular motion. This is universal sign language for “I’m sorry.”
- Open your window and tap the top of your car roof with your hand.
- Smile and raise both arms, palms outward, which is a universal gesture for surrender or forgiveness.
- Use the military salute, which is simple and shows respect.
- Flash your biggest smile, point at yourself with your right thumb and move your head from left to right, as if to say, “I can’t believe I did that.”

TEAM

E-MAIL

1.10 The Silent Language of Tattoos: How Much Self-Expression on the Job?

Tattoos and piercings have gained in popularity among young Americans over the last two decades. Current findings by Pew Research Center suggest that nearly 40 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds and about one third of 30- to 45-year-olds sport a tattoo.⁴⁷ Employment services firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas reports that job candidates among the Millennials, also called Generation Y, do not particularly try to hide their body art. About 25 percent of this generation also show off piercings in places other than their earlobes.

CEO John Challenger suggests that a generational shift accounts for the changing mores: “Those making hiring decisions are younger and not as adherent to traditions about workplace appearance.” Career expert Andrea Kay agrees, but she warns that acceptance among hiring managers varies by industry: Recruiters in the technology and retail fields may be more forgiving than those in banking and law. Tattoos and piercings send a strong message, and Kay cautions that if they make people at work uncomfortable, such decorations are detrimental. She has the following advice for job seekers: “People have adjusted their thinking in what is acceptable, but it still comes down to the impression you want to make on the people you’re dealing with in your business.” Many workplaces today have policies covering body adornment, some requiring employees with customer contact to conceal such decorations.

Your Task. In teams or in class, discuss tattoos as a form of self-expression in the workplace. Gauge the attitudes toward tattoos and piercings in your class. Consider the limits to self-expression on the job. Think about casual clothing or blogging and tweeting about your employer. What is different? What are some of the similarities between these various forms of self-expression? What types of nonverbal cues do body adornments send? Summarize your discussion orally or in an e-mail to your instructor. Alternatively, your instructor may ask you to post your responses to a Blackboard discussion board or some other forum that allows individual postings.

T TEAM

1.11 Workplace Writing: Separating Myths From Facts

Today's knowledge workers are doing more writing on the job than ever before. Flattened management hierarchies, heightened global competition, expanded team-based management, and heavy reliance on e-mail have all contributed to more written messages.

Your Task. In teams or in class, discuss the following statements. Are they myths or facts?

- Because I'm in a technical field, I will work with numbers, not words.
- Secretaries will clean up my writing problems.
- Technical writers do most of the real writing on the job.
- Computers can fix any of my writing mistakes.
- I can use form letters for most messages.

1.12 Translating Idioms

Many languages have idiomatic expressions that do not always make sense to outsiders.

Your Task. Explain in simple English what the following idiomatic expressions mean. Assume that you are explaining them to nonnative speakers of English.

- have an axe to grind
- class act
- ballpark figure
- cold shoulder
- loose cannon
- get your act together
- go overboard
- keep on trucking
- the bottom of the barrel

E E-MAIL

1.13 Analyzing Diversity at Pharma Giant Pfizer

Recently, pharmaceutical powerhouse Pfizer stepped up its diversity program. Its chief diversity officer, Karen Boykin-Towns, explained: "We asked ourselves, is it really all that it could be and are we capitalizing on diversity? We said, 'We can do more.'"

The company has created 53 Colleague Resource Groups (CRGs), whose focus is to foster an inclusive culture and contribute value to the business. These groups are open to everyone and are supported by senior executives who act as sponsors, including those who are ethnically or racially different from the groups they counsel. Some CRGs act as focus panels for corporate advertisements. Others serve on the Business Maximization Subcommittee, providing input on business issues that might affect diverse customers.

Moreover, Pfizer conducts an annual pay-equity analysis to ensure that women and people of color are not discriminated against in compensation—which is often a thorny issue in the battle for true inclusion. Recently, Pfizer India conducted focus groups of leading women in sales and high-profile female physicians to discuss career goals, challenges, and opportunities.⁴⁸

Your Task. In what ways might Pfizer benefit by diversifying its staff? What competitive advantages might it gain? Outline your reasoning in an e-mail to your instructor. Alternatively, your instructor may want you to post your responses to a Blackboard discussion board or some other forum that allows individual postings by your class.

1.14 Capitalizing on Diversity: What to Do With Difference in Job Interviews?

Today's workforce benefits from diversity, and most businesses have embraced explicit nondiscrimination policies. The federal government and many state governments have passed legislation that makes it illegal to discriminate based on race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, disability, sex, age, and other factors such as sexual orientation and gender identity. Some public institutions have the most far-reaching nondiscrimination policies on their books—for example, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT): "The Institute does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin."⁴⁹

Your Task: Consider how such differences could affect the communication, for instance, between an interviewer and a job candidate. If negatively, how could the differences and barriers be overcome? Role-play or discuss a potential job interview conversation between the following individuals. After a while summarize your findings, either orally or in writing:

- A female top executive is interviewing a prospective future assistant, who is male.
- A candidate with a strong but not disruptive foreign accent is being interviewed by a native-born human resources manager.
- A manager dressed in a conventional business suit is interviewing a person wearing a turban.
- A person over fifty is being interviewed by a hiring manager in his early thirties.
- A recruiter who can walk is interviewing a job seeker using a wheelchair.

Video Resources

Two video libraries accompany Guffey's *Essentials of Business Communication*, 9e. These videos take you beyond the classroom to build the communication skills you will need to succeed in today's rapidly changing workplace.

Video Library 1, *Building Workplace Skills*, includes seven videos that introduce and reinforce concepts in selected chapters. These excellent tools ease the learning load by demonstrating chapter-specific material to strengthen your comprehension and retention of key ideas.

Video Library 2, *Bridging the Gap*, presents six videos transporting you inside high-profile companies such as Cold Stone Creamery, The Little Guys, and Hard Rock Cafe. You will be able to apply your new skills in structured applications aimed at bridging the gap between the classroom and the real world of work.

We recommend three videos for this chapter:

Video Library 1: *Career Success Starts With Communication Foundations*. Made especially for Guffey books, this film illustrates the changing business world, flattened management hierarchies, the communication process, communication flow, ethics,

listening, nonverbal communication, and other topics to prepare you for today's workplace. The film is unique in that many concepts are demonstrated through role-playing. Be prepared to discuss critical-thinking questions at the film's conclusion.

Video Library 1: *Intercultural Communication at Work*. This film illustrates intercultural misunderstandings when a Japanese businessman visits an American advertising agency that seeks his business. The agency owners, Rob and Ella, as well as the receptionist, Stephanie, make numerous cultural blunders because they are unaware of the differences between high- and low-context cultures. At the film's conclusion, you will have an opportunity to make suggestions for improving Rob and Ella's cultural competence.

Video Library 2: *Understanding Teamwork: Cold Stone Creamery*. This video highlights teamwork at Cold Stone Creamery, a fast-growing ice cream specialty chain. It shows team members behind the counter but also provides the inside scoop through the insights of Kevin Myers, vice president, marketing. You will see how teamwork permeates every facet of Cold Stone's corporate culture. Look for a definition of *team*, as well as six kinds of teams and the characteristics of successful teams.

Grammar/Mechanics Checkup

These checkups are designed to improve your control of grammar and mechanics, which includes punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and number use. The checkups systematically review all sections of the Grammar/Mechanics Handbook. Answers are provided near the end of the book. You will find a set of alternate Bonus Grammar/Mechanics Checkups with immediate feedback at your premium Web site, www.cengagebrain.com. These bonus checkups use different exercises but parallel the items that appear in the textbook. Use the bonus checkups to reinforce your learning.

Nouns

Review Sections 1.02–1.06 in the Grammar/Mechanics Handbook. Then study each of the following statements. Underscore any inappropriate form, and write a correction in the space provided. Also record the appropriate G/M section and letter to illustrate the principle involved. If a sentence is correct, write C. When you finish, compare your responses with those provided at the end of the book. If your answers differ, study carefully the principles shown in parentheses.

_____ (1.05d)

Example Although one exciting trip ended, several new journeys awaited the travelers.

- Setting healthy workplace boundaries is an important task for new supervisors.
- Be sure to read the FAQs before using that Web site.
- Because world markets are expanding, many companys are going global.
- Surprisingly, business is better on Sunday's than on weekdays.
- She said that attornies are the primary benefactors of class action suits.
- Only the Welches and the Sanchez's brought their entire families.
- During the late 2000's, home values dropped precipitously.
- Both editor in chiefs followed strict copyediting policies.
- That financial organization employs two secretaries for four CPA's.
- Voters in three countys refused to approve any new taxes.
- Prizes were awarded to both runner ups in the essay contest.
- Both cities are located in valleys that lie between mountains.
- Our accountants insist that we list all income, expenses, and liabilities.
- Some typeface fonts make it difficult to distinguish between t's and /s.
- Both of the homes of her brother-in-laws had many chimneys.

Editing Challenge — 1

As the employee with the best communication skills, you are frequently asked to edit messages. The following memo has faults in proofreading, grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, word use, and number form. You may (a) use standard proofreading marks (see Appendix B) to correct the errors here or (b) download the document from www.cengagebrain.com and revise at your computer.

Your instructor may ask you to use the **Track Changes** feature in Microsoft Word to show your editing comments. In Word 2010, turn on **Track Changes** on the **Review** tab. Click **Show Markup**. Place your cursor at an error, click **New Comment**, and key your correction in the bubble box provided. **Hint:** In this memo you will have about 40 edits that you might combine in 30 **Track Changes** comments. Study the guidelines in the Grammar/Mechanics Handbook as well as the lists of Confusing Words and Frequently Misspelled Words at the end of the book to sharpen your skills.

MEMORANDUM

To: Jessica Wu-Santana
From: Martin Fitzgerald, Manager
Date: November 4, 201x
Subject: Suggestion for Telecommuting Successfully

To help you become an effective telecommuter Jessica, we have a few suggestion to share with you. I understand you will be working at home for the next nine months. The following guidelines should help you stay in touch with us and complete your work satisfactory.

- Be sure to check your message bored daily, and respond immediate to those who are trying to reach you.
- Check your e-mail at least 3 times a day, answer all messages promptly. Make sure that you sent copys of relevant messages to the appropriate office staff.
- Transmit all spread sheet work to Scott Florio in our computer services department. He will analyze each week's activitsy, and update all inventorys.
- Provide me with end of week reports' indicating the major accounts you serviced.

In preparing your work area you should make sure you have adequate space for your computer printer fax and storage. For security reasons you're working area should be off limits to your family and friends.

We will continue to hold once a week staff meetings on Friday's at 10 a.m. in the morning. Do you think it would be possible for you to attend 1 or 2 of these meeting. The next one is Friday November 17th.

I know you will enjoy working at home Jesica. Following these basic guidelines should help you accomplish your work, and provide the office with adequate contact with you.

Communication Workshop

Using Job Boards to Learn About Employment Possibilities in Your Field

Nearly everyone looking for a job today starts with the Web. This communication workshop will help you use the Web to study job openings in your field. Looking for jobs or internships on the Web has distinct advantages. For a few job seekers, the Web leads to bigger salaries, wider opportunities, and faster hiring. The Web, however, can devour huge chunks of time and produce slim results.

In terms of actually finding a job, the Web does not always result in success. Web searching seems to work best for professionals looking for similar work in their current fields and for those who are totally flexible about location. However, the Web is an excellent place for any job seeker to learn what is available, what qualifications are necessary, and what salaries are being offered. Thousands of job boards with many job listings from employers across the United States and abroad are available on the Web.

Career Application. Assume that you are about to finish your degree or certification program and you are now looking for a job. At the direction of your instructor, conduct a survey of electronic job advertisements in your field. What's available? How much is the salary? What are the requirements?

Your Task

- **Visit Monster.com** (<http://www.monster.com>), one of the most popular job boards.
- **Study the opening page.** Ignore the clutter and banner ads or pop-ups. Close any pop-up boxes.
- **Select keyword, category, city, and state.** Decide whether you want to search by a job title (such as *nurse, accountant, project manager*) or a category (such as *Accounting/Finance, Administrative/Clerical, Advertising/Marketing*). Enter your keyword job title or select a category—or do both. Enter a city, state, or region. Click **Search**.
- **Study the job listings.** Click **Expand** to read more about a job opening. Click **More** to see a full description of the job.
- **Read job-search tips.** For many helpful hints on precise searching, click **Job search tips**. Browsing this information may take a few minutes, but it is well worth the effort to learn how to refine your search. Close the box by clicking the **X** in the upper right corner.
- **Select best ads.** In your career and geographical area, select the three best ads and print them. If you cannot print, make notes on what you find.
- **Visit another site.** Try <http://www.collegerecruiter.com>, which claims to be the highest-traffic entry-level job site for students and graduates, or <http://www.careerbuilder.com>, which says it is the nation's largest employment network. Become familiar with the site's searching tools, and look for jobs in your field. Select and print three ads.
- **Analyze the skills required.** How often do the ads you printed mention communication, teamwork, computer skills, or professionalism? What tasks do the ads mention? What is the salary range identified in these ads for the positions they feature? Your instructor may ask you to submit your findings and/or report to the class.



Communication Workshops (such as the one on this page) provide insight into special business communication topics and skills not discussed in the chapters. Topics include ethics, technology, career skills, and collaboration. Each workshop includes a career application to extend your learning and help you develop skills relevant to the workshop topic.

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KEY TO GRAMMAR/MECHANICS CHECKUPS

Chapter 1

- 1.** boundaries (1.05e) **2.** C (1.05g) **3.** companies (1.05e)
4. Sundays (1.05a) **5.** attorneys (1.05d) **6.** Sanchezes
(1.05b) **7.** 2000s (1.05g) **8.** editors in chief (1.05f)
9. CPAs (1.05g) **10.** counties (1.05e) **11.** runners up
(1.05f) **12.** C (1.05d) **13.** liabilities (1.05e) **14.** C (1.05h)
15. brothers-in-law (1.05.f)

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