Courtland L. Bovée
and John V. Thill

8e

Business Communication Essentials

Fundamental Skills for the Mobile-Digital-Social Workplace

Pearson

Practice, Engage, Apply and Develop Employability Skills with MyLab Business Communication

81%

of students said it helped them earn higher grades on homework, exams, or the course

*Source: 2016 Student Survey, n 138

MyLab™ Business Communication is an online homework, tutorial, and assessment program constructed to work with this text to engage students and improve results. It was designed to help students develop and assess the skills and applicable knowledge that they will need to succeed in their courses and their future careers.

See what more than 25,000 students had to say about MyLab Business Communication:

"MyLab Business Communication's primary benefit was that it helped me to remember the terminology and understand the meaning in chapters read."

— Rita Venditti, Central Arizona College

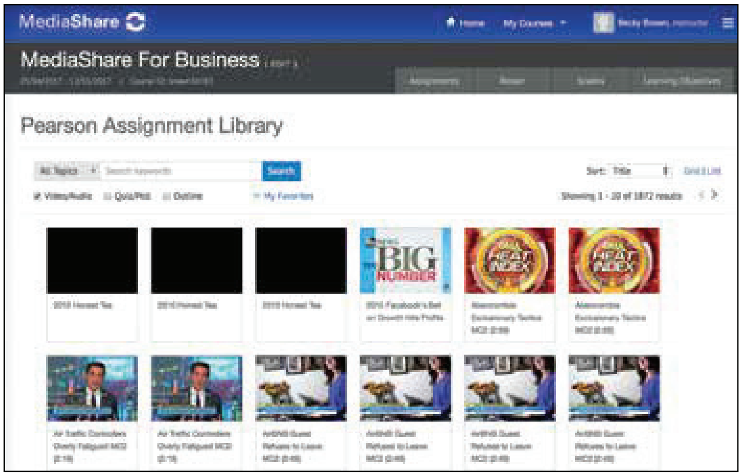
Mini Sims put students in business professional roles and give them the opportunity to apply course concepts as they develop **decision making skills** through real-world business challenges. The simulations adapt based on each student's decisions, creating various scenario paths that help students understand how **critical thinking** can affect their decisions on an organization.

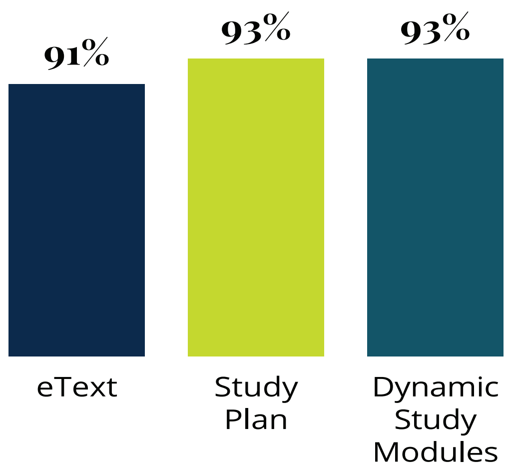
"I like the chapter activities because they really seem to help me understand the material better."

—Samantha Figg, Green River College

Pearson

MediaShare for Business offers a curated collection of business videos that provide customizable, auto-scored assignments. MediaShare for Business helps students understand why they are learning key concepts and how they will **apply** those in their careers.





% of students who found learning tool helpful

Dynamic Study Modules help students study chapter topics effectively on their own by continuously assessing their **knowledge application** and performance in real time. These are available as graded assignments prior to class, and accessible on smartphones, tablets, and computers.

Pearson eText enhances student learning—both in and outside the classroom. Take notes, highlight, and bookmark important content, or engage with interactive lecture and example videos that bring learning to life (available with select titles). Accessible anytime, anywhere via MyLab or the app.

The **MyLab Gradebook** offers an easy way for students and instructors to view course performance. Item Analysis allows instructors to quickly see trends by analyzing details like the number of students who answered correctly/incorrectly, time on task, and median time spend on a question by question basis. And because it's correlated with the AACSB Standards, instructors can track students' progress toward outcomes that the organization has deemed important in preparing students to be **leaders.**

82%

of students would tell their instructor to keep using MyLab Business Communication

For additional details visit: www.pearson.com/mylab/businesscommunication

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EIGHTH EDITION

Business Communication Essentials

Fundamental Skills for the Mobile-Digital-Social Workplace

Courtland L. Bovée

PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
C. ALLEN PAUL DISTINGUISHED CHAIR
GROSSMONT COLLEGE

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CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
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Pearson

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the many thousands of instructors and students who use Bovée and Thill texts to develop career-enhancing skills in business communication. We appreciate the opportunity to play a role in your education, and we wish you the very best with your careers.

Courtland L. Bovée
John V. Thill

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Brief Contents

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Contents

Preface

About the Authors

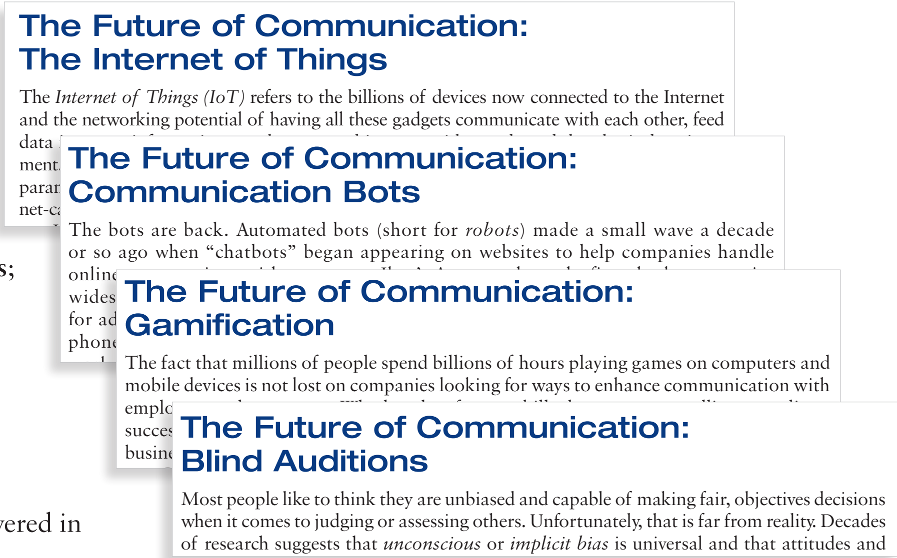
Courtland L. Bovée and John V. Thill have been leading textbook authors for more than two decades, introducing millions of students to the fields of business and business communication. Their award-winning texts are distinguished by proven pedagogical features, extensive selections of contemporary case studies, hundreds of real-life examples, engaging writing, thorough research, and the unique integration of print and digital resources. Each new edition reflects the authors' commitment to continuous refinement and improvement, particularly in terms of modeling the latest practices in business and the use of technology.

Professor Bovée has 22 years of teaching experience at Grossmont College in San Diego, where he has received teaching honors and was accorded that institution's C. Allen Paul Distinguished Chair. Mr. Thill is a prominent communications consultant who has worked with organizations ranging from Fortune 500 multinationals to entrepreneurial start-ups. He formerly held positions with Pacific Bell and Texaco.

Courtland Bovée and John Thill were recently awarded proclamations from the governor of Massachusetts for their lifelong contributions to education and for their commitment to the summer youth baseball program that is sponsored by the Boston Red Sox.

New to This Edition

All new: The Future of Communication gives a glimpse into fascinating technologies that are beginning to reshape business communication, including real-time translation, haptic communication, virtual and augmented reality, gestural computing, and automated emotion recognition.



Nearly 70 new or substantially revised figures; the Eighth Edition has 66 annotated model documents, 27 examples of mobile communication in business communication, and 25 examples of social media.

Half the chapters have new Communication Matters insights from respected business professionals that highlight the principles covered in the chapter.

Revised annotations in model document before/after pairs make it easier for students to see the specific changes made to transform ineffective messages into effective ones.

More than 80 new questions and student activities; one-third of the communication cases are new.

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress has been converted to quick-to-read bulleted lists for easier study and review.

Numerous sections are new or substantially revised, reflecting the latest research and practices in business communication:

- Communicating in an Organizational Context
- Developing Skills for Your Career
- Characteristics of Effective Teams
- Conflict Resolution in Team Settings
- Improving Your Nonverbal Communication Skills
- Workplace Etiquette
- Messaging
- Asking for Recommendations
- Writing Instructions
- Refusing Requests for Recommendations
- Giving Negative Performance Reviews
- Terminating Employment
- Using the Three-Step Writing Process for Persuasive Messages
- Balancing the Three Types of Persuasive Appeals
- Using Presentation Software to Create Visual Reports
- Keys to Being a Valued Networker
- Job-Specific Keywords
- Building an Effective LinkedIn Profile
- Understanding the Interviewing Process
- Common Types of Interview Questions
- Interviewing by Phone
- Interviewing by Video

Solving Teaching and Learning Challenges

Communication is the most valuable skill that graduates can bring into the workforce, but it is one of the most challenging to teach. *Business Communication Essentials* blends the timeless fundamentals of communication with contemporary techniques and an emphasis on business English improvement. To help students succeed from their first day on the job, *Business Communication Essentials* presents the full range of on-the-job skills that today's communicators need, from writing conventional printed reports to using the latest digital, social, mobile, and visual media.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"There's nothing better than a new and enthusiastic team that, on a shoestring budget, tries to do something that's never been done before."[1]
—Tricia Naddaff, president, Management Research Group

Tricia Naddaff's observation about high-performance teams hints at the near-magic that collaboration can bring to business. With the right people in the right circumstances, teams can innovate and produce results far beyond what the individual team members could achieve on their own. At the other extreme, when things go sideways, team projects can be a demoralizing waste of time and money. The difference often comes down to communication. This chapter explores the communication skills you need in order to succeed in team settings, along with several other interpersonal communication topics that will help you on the job: productive meetings, active listening, nonverbal communication, and business etiquette.

Courtesy of Tricia Naddaff, President of Management Research Group

Management consultant Tricia Naddaff recognizes the productivity and innovation that successful teamwork can generate.

Each chapter opens with insights from a successful professional, emphasizing concepts and valuable skills that students will explore in the chapter.

Figure 4.2 Building Credibility
In her profile page on her company's website, financial advisor Joli Fridman builds her credibility with a variety of specific, concrete statements. Notice how every statement packs a punch; there is no filler or "fluff."

Annotated model documents are perhaps the most important feature of a business communication text, and *Business Communication Essentials* is packed with a balance of carefully chosen examples from real companies and original material created to illustrate specific concepts.

COMPOSITIONAL MODES FOR DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

As you practice using digital media in this course, focus on the principles of effective communication and the fundamentals of good writing, rather than on the specific details of any one medium or system.[3] Fortunately, with a few minor adjustments, your skills will transfer from one system to another without much trouble.

You can succeed with written communication in virtually all digital media by using one of nine *compositional modes*, each of which is well-suited to particular communication goals:

- **Conversations.** Although they take place via writing, some forms of digital communication function more like real-time conversations than the sharing of written documents. The section on messaging (see page 151) explores this important and ever-expanding communication format.
- **Comments and critiques.** One of the most powerful aspects of social media is the opportunity for interested parties to express opinions and provide feedback, whether it's leaving comments on a blog post or reviewing products on an e-commerce site. Sharing helpful tips and insightful commentary is also a great way to build your

Going beyond covering the tried-and-true, Bovée and Thill make unique contributions to the pedagogy and practice of business communication, such as the nine compositional modes required to succeed with digital and social media.

Figure 1.3 **Elements of Professionalism**
To be respected as a true professional, develop these six qualities.

Business Communication Essentials helps students develop their skills in the larger context of being a true professional, with all the insights and qualities that embodies.

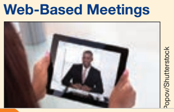
POWERFUL TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

The tools of business communication evolve with every advance in digital technology. The 20 technologies highlighted on the next four pages help businesses redefine the office, collaborate and share information, connect with stakeholders, and build communities of people with shared interests and needs. For more examples of business uses of social media tools in particular, see pages 146–147 in Chapter 6.

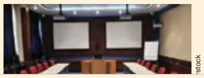
REDEFINING THE OFFICE

Thanks to advances in mobile and distributed communication, the "office" is no longer what it used to be. Technology lets today's professionals work on the move while staying in close contact with colleagues, customers, and suppliers. These technologies are also redefining the very nature of some companies, as they replace traditional hierarchies with highly adaptable, virtual networks.

Web-Based Meetings



Videoconferencing and Telepresence



Shared Online Workspaces

BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS INNOVATING WITH MOBILE

As the third major revolution in business communication in the past two decades (after the World Wide Web and social media), mobile communication has the potential to change nearly every aspect of business communication. Here is a small sample of the ways companies are putting mobile to work.

Training

In the face of changing markets, government regulations, and other forces in the business environment, developing and maintaining employee skill sets is an ongoing challenge for most companies. The challenge is made even more difficult when employees are constantly on the move or geographically dispersed. With training materials developed specifically for mobile devices, companies can deliver train-

Mobile Glossary

In addition to terms defined elsewhere in the book, here are some helpful mobile terms.

3G, 4G, and 5G

Successive generations of mobile phone technology,

BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS INNOVATING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Companies in virtually every industry use social media and continue to experiment with new ways to connect with customers and other stakeholders. From offering helpful tips on using products to helping customers meet each other, these companies show the enormous range of possibilities that new media continue to bring to business communication.

Enterprise Social Networking

The social networking concepts that keep you connected with friends and family are widely used in business today. *Enterprise social networks* are closed digital communities that connect employees within a company (and in some cases, selected external business partners). They often include a variety of communication and collaboration tools as well, including workgroup messaging, online meeting functions, and access to work files and other shared resources.

Tweetups

A powerful capability of online social media is bringing people with similar interests together offline. *Tweetups*, for example, are in-person meetings planned and organized over Twitter.

TABLE 3.1 Medium/Channel Combinations: Advantages and Disadvantages

Medium/Channel	Advantages	Disadvantages
Oral, in-person	• Provide opportunity for immediate feedback • Easily resolve misunderstandings and negotiate meanings • Involve rich nonverbal cues (both physical gestures and vocal inflections) • Allow expression of the emotion behind your message	• Restrict participation to those physically present • Unless recorded, provide no permanent, verifiable record of the communication • Can reduce communicator's control over the message
Oral, digital	• Can provide opportunity for immediate feedback (live phone or online conversations) • Not restricted to participants in the same location • Allow time-shifted consumption (podcasts, for example)	• Lack nonverbal cues other than voice inflections • Can be tedious to listen to if not audience focused (recorded messages)
Written, printed	• Allow writers to plan and control their messages • Can reach geographically dispersed audiences • Offer a permanent, verifiable record • Minimize the distortion that can accompany oral messages • Can be used to avoid immediate interactions • Deemphasize any inappropriate emotional components • Give recipients time to process messages before responding (compared with oral communication)	• Offer limited opportunities for timely feedback • Lack the rich nonverbal cues provided by oral media • Often take more time and more resources to create and distribute • Can require special skills to prepare or produce if document is elaborate
Written, digital	In general, all the advantages of written printed documents plus: • Can be delivered quickly • Offer the flexibility of multiple formats and channels, from microblogs to wikis • Offer the ability to structure messages in creative ways, such as writing a headline on Twitter and linking to the full message on a blog • Can offer links to related and more in-depth information • Can increase accessibility and openness in an organization through broader sharing • Enable audience interaction through social media features • Can be easily integrating with other media types, such as with embedded videos or photos	• Can be limited in terms of reach and capability • Require Internet or mobile phone connectivity • Are vulnerable to security and privacy problems • Are easy to overuse (sending too many messages to too many recipients) • Create privacy risks and concerns (exposing confidential data, employer monitoring, accidental forwarding) • Entail security risks (viruses, spyware; network breaches) • Create productivity concerns (frequent interruptions, nonbusiness usage)
Visual, printed	• Can quickly convey complex ideas and relationships • Are often less intimidating than long blocks of text • Can reduce the burden on the audience to figure out how the pieces of a message or concept fit • Can be easy to create in spreadsheets and other software (simple charts and graphs), then integrate with reports	• Can require artistic skills to design • Require some technical skills to create • Can require more time to create than equivalent amount of text • Can be expensive to print
Visual, digital	In general, all the advantages of visual printed documents and all the advantages of written digital formats plus: • Can personalize and enhance the experience for audience members • Offer the persuasive power of multimedia formats, particularly video	• Need time, cost, and skills to create • Can require large amounts of bandwidth

With multiple quick-reference tables, the text serves as a valuable resource that students can use in other courses and take with them on the job.

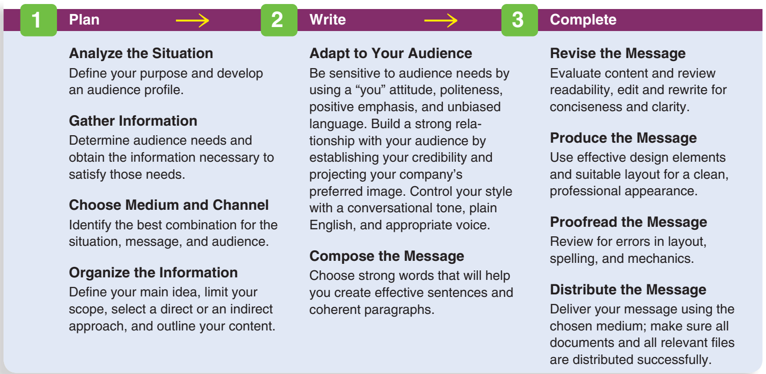
MOBILE DEVICE ETIQUETTE

Your mobile device habits say a lot about how much respect you have for the people around you. Avoid these disrespectful choices:[61]

- Using obnoxious ringtones
- Failing to mute your phone during meetings or other situations where it will interrupt people
- Talking loudly in open offices or public places
- Talking on your phone right next to someone else
- Making or taking unnecessary personal calls at work
- Invading privacy by using your phone's camera without permission
- Taking or making calls in restrooms and other inappropriate places
- Texting during meals or while someone is talking to you
- Allowing incoming calls to interrupt meetings or discussions
- Using voice recognition to the extent that it disrupts others

As the most compact text in the Bovée-Thill series, Business *Communication Essentials* is designed for high-efficiency learning. Students can scan concise bulleted lists to get important insights and writing tips on a wide variety of topics.

Today's companies expect employees to put technology to effective use on human terms. Multiple features and thoroughly integrated coverage of contemporary tools help students hit the ground running.


1 Plan → 2 Write → 3 Complete

Analyze the Situation
Define your purpose and develop an audience profile.

Gather Information
Determine audience needs and obtain the information necessary to satisfy those needs.

Choose Medium and Channel
Identify the best combination for the situation, message, and audience.

Organize the Information
Define your main idea, limit your scope, select a direct or an indirect approach, and outline your content.

Adapt to Your Audience
Be sensitive to audience needs by using a "you" attitude, politeness, positive emphasis, and unbiased language. Build a strong relationship with your audience by establishing your credibility and projecting your company's preferred image. Control your style with a conversational tone, plain English, and appropriate voice.

Compose the Message
Choose strong words that will help you create effective sentences and coherent paragraphs.

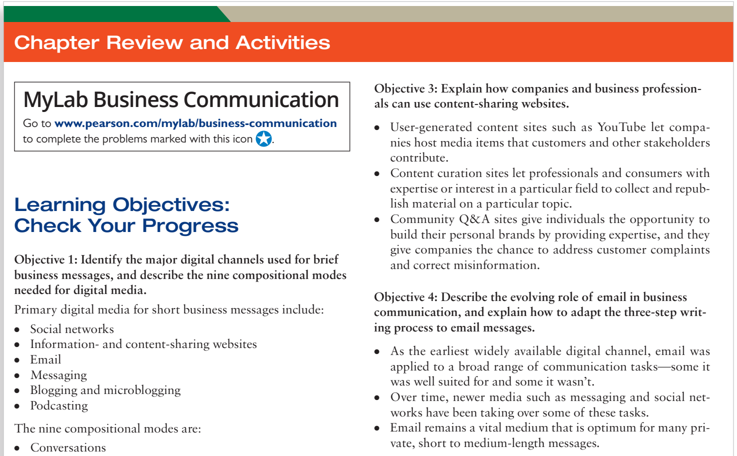
Revise the Message
Evaluate content and review readability, edit and rewrite for conciseness and clarity.

Produce the Message
Use effective design elements and suitable layout for a clean, professional appearance.

Proofread the Message
Review for errors in layout, spelling, and mechanics.

Distribute the Message
Deliver your message using the chosen medium; make sure all documents and all relevant files are distributed successfully.

Students sometimes flounder when faced with unfamiliar or difficult writing challenges because they don't know how to move a project forward. By following the proven three-step process described in *Business Communication Essentials,* they never have to feel lost or waste time figuring out what to do next.


Chapter Review and Activities

MyLab Business Communication
Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** to complete the problems marked with this icon.

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: Identify the major digital channels used for brief business messages, and describe the nine compositional modes needed for digital media.

Primary digital media for short business messages include:

- Social networks
- Information- and content-sharing websites
- Email
- Messaging
- Blogging and microblogging
- Podcasting

The nine compositional modes are:

- Conversations

Objective 3: Explain how companies and business professionals can use content-sharing websites.

- User-generated content sites such as YouTube let companies host media items that customers and other stakeholders contribute.
- Content curation sites let professionals and consumers with expertise or interest in a particular field to collect and republish material on a particular topic.
- Community Q&A sites give individuals the opportunity to build their personal brands by providing expertise, and they give companies the chance to address customer complaints and correct misinformation.

Objective 4: Describe the evolving role of email in business communication, and explain how to adapt the three-step writing process to email messages.

- As the earliest widely available digital channel, email was applied to a broad range of communication tasks—some it was well suited for and some it wasn't.
- Over time, newer media such as messaging and social networks have been taking over some of these tasks.
- Email remains a vital medium that is optimum for many private, short to medium-length messages.

Review and test prep is faster than ever—the Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress feature has been redeveloped as quick-to-read bulleted lists that students can scan and memorize easily.

The unique and free *Real-Time Updates—Learn More* feature connects students with dozens of carefully selected online media items that complement the text's coverage with additional examples and valuable insights. Media items range from interactive websites and online videos to infographics, presentations, and podcasts.

In addition, students can explore thousands of curated media items in the Real-Time Updates system and subscribe to weekly updates.

No other textbook comes close to offering the resources that Bovée and Thill provide free to students and instructors:

- Sponsored instructor communities on LinkedIn and Facebook with nearly two thousand members
- Tips and techniques in *Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Blog* and Twitter feed
- The Bovée & Thill channel on YouTube
- *Business Communication Headline News*
- Videos and PowerPoint presentations on SlideShare
- Hundreds of infographics, videos, articles, podcasts, and PowerPoints on the Business Communication Pictorial Gallery on Pinterest
- The Ultimate Guide to Resources for Teaching Business Communication
- Curated magazines for business communication on Scoop.it

Links to all these services and resources can be found at **blog.businesscommunicationnetwork.com/resources**.

Expand your classroom resources with both curated content and original videos and presentations.

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Blog offers original insights and teaching tips to enhance your lectures.

MYLAB BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Reach every student with MyLab

MyLab is the teaching and learning platform that empowers you to reach *every* student. By combining trusted author content with digital tools and a flexible platform, MyLab personalizes the learning experience and improves results for each student. Learn more at MyLab Business Communication.

Deliver trusted content

You deserve teaching materials that meet your own high standards for your course. That's why we partner with highly respected authors to develop interactive content and course-specific resources that you can trust — and that keep your students engaged.

MyLab Business Communication offers a variety of grammar exercises, flashcards, and audio lessons to test your learning and skills and get instant feedback.

Empower each learner

Each student learns at a different pace. Personalized learning pinpoints the precise areas where each student needs practice, giving all students the support they need — when and where they need it — to be successful.

Teach your course your way

Your course is unique. So whether you'd like to build your own assignments, teach multiple sections, or set prerequisites, MyLab gives you the flexibility to easily create *your* course to fit *your* needs.

Improve student results

When you teach with MyLab, student performance improves. That's why instructors have chosen MyLab for over 15 years, touching the lives of over 50 million students. Learn more.

Developing Employability Skills

In addition to helping students develop a full range of communication skills, *Business Communication Essentials* will enhance a wide range of other skills that experts say are vital for success in the 21st-century workplace:

- **Critical thinking.** In many assignments and activities, students need to define and solve problems and make decisions or form judgments.
- **Collaboration.** Team-skills assignments provide multiple opportunities to work with classmates on reports, presentations, and other projects.
- **Knowledge application and analysis.** From the basic communication process to strategies for specific message types, students will learn a variety of concepts and apply that knowledge to a wide range of challenges.
- **Business ethics and social responsibility.** Ethical choices are stressed from the beginning of the book, and multiple projects encourage students to be mindful of the ethical implications that they could encounter in similar projects on the job.
- **Information technology skills.** Projects and activities in every chapter help students build skills with technology, including document preparation tools, online communication services, presentation software, and messaging systems.
- **Data literacy.** Report projects in particular present opportunities to fine-tune data literacy skills, including the ability to access, assess, interpret, manipulate, summarize, and communicate data.

Hundreds of realistic exercises, activities, and cases offer an array of opportunities for students to practice vital skills and put newfound knowledge to immediate use.

These resources are logically sorted by learning category, from conceptual recall to situational analysis to skill development.

To help instructors zero in on specific learning needs, activities are tagged in multiple ways, from media usage to team skills.

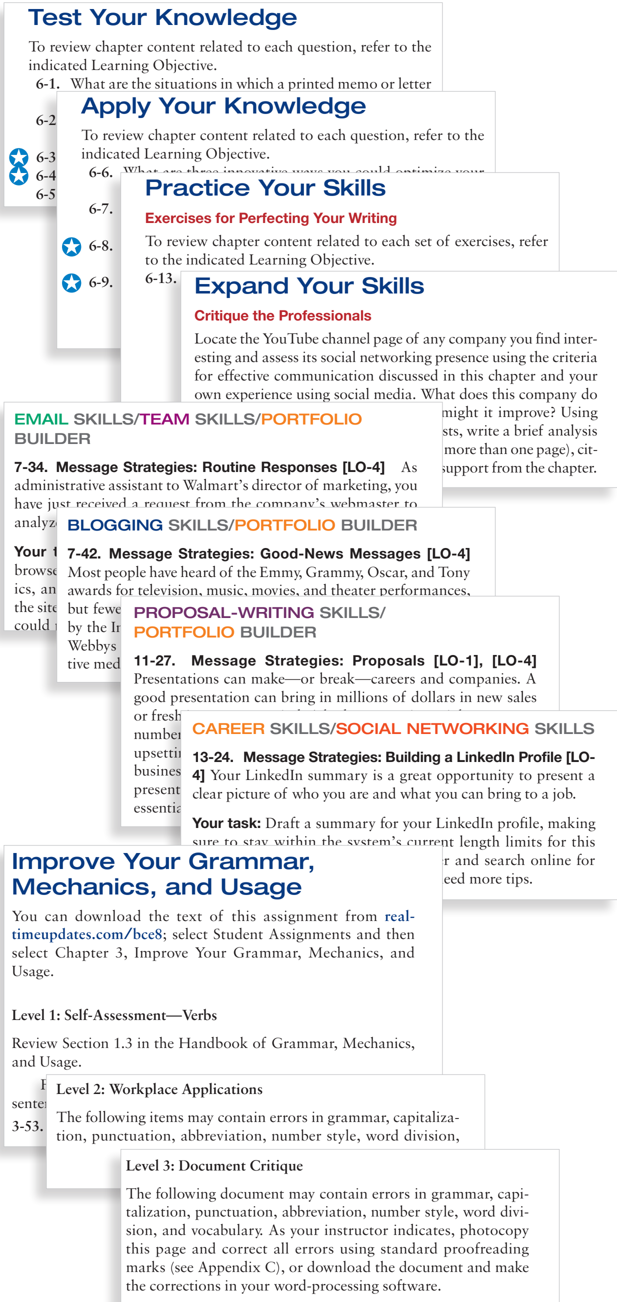


Table of Contents Overview

Instructor Teaching Resources

This program comes with the following teaching resources.

Supplements available to instructors at www.pearsonhighered.com	Features of the Supplement
Instructor's Manual	• Chapter summary • Chapter outline • Teaching notes • Overcoming difficulties students often face • Suggested classroom exercises • Test Your Knowledge answers • Apply Your Knowledge answers • Practice Your Skills answers • Expand Your Skills answers • Case solutions (short message cases) and solution guidelines (report and proposal cases) • Improve your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage answers and solutions: Level 1: Self-Assessment Level 2: Workplace Applications Level 3: Document Critique
Test Bank	• More than 1,700 multiple-choice, true/false, and essay questions • Answer explanations • Keyed by learning objective • Classified according to difficulty level • Classified according to learning modality: conceptual, application, critical thinking, or synthesis • Learning outcomes identified • AACSB learning standard identified (Ethical Understanding and Reasoning; Analytical Thinking Skills; Information Technology; Diverse and Multicultural Work; Reflective Thinking; Application of Knowledge)
Computerized TestGen	TestGen allows instructors to • customize, save, and generate classroom tests. • edit, add, or delete questions from the Test Item Files. • analyze test results. • organize a database of tests and student results.
PowerPoints	Slides include all the graphs, tables, and equations in the textbook PowerPoints meet accessibility standards for students with disabilities. Features include: • Keyboard and screen reader access • Alternative text for images • High contrast between background and foreground colors

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Courtland L. Bovée
John V. Thill

Prologue

BUILDING A CAREER WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Using This Course to Help Launch Your Career

This course will help you develop vital communication skills that you'll use throughout your career—and those skills can help you launch an interesting and rewarding career, too. This brief prologue sets the stage by helping you understand today's dynamic workplace, the steps you can take to adapt to the job market, and the importance of creating an employment portfolio and building your personal brand. Take a few minutes to read it while you think about the career you hope to create for yourself.

GETTING READY TO TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR CAREER

Today's job market offers an exciting range of possibilities, from multinational corporations to small companies to entrepreneurial startups. Or, like many professionals, you might take the leap and invent your own job as an independent contractor.

No matter which path you choose, keep two important points in mind. First, don't wait for your career to just happen: Take charge of your career and stay in charge of it. Explore all your options and have a plan, but be prepared to change course as opportunities and threats appear on the horizon. Second, don't count on employers to take care of you. The era of lifetime employment, in which an employee committed to one company for life with the understanding it would return the loyalty, is long gone. From finding opportunities to developing the skills you need in order to succeed, it's up to you to manage your career and look out for your own best interests.

Peter Bernik/Shutterstock

Are you comfortable working on your own? Independent workers have become an important part of the global workforce.

How Employers View Today's Job Market

From an employer's perspective, the employment process is always a question of balance. Maintaining a stable workforce can improve practically every aspect of business performance, yet many employers want the flexibility to shrink and expand payrolls as business conditions change. Employers obviously want to attract the best talent, but the best talent is more expensive and more vulnerable to offers from competitors, so there are always financial trade-offs to consider.

Employers also struggle with the ups and downs of the economy. When unemployment is low, the balance of power shifts to employees, and employers have to compete in order to attract and keep top talent. When unemployment is high, the power shifts back to employers, who can afford to be more selective and less accommodating. In other words, pay attention to the economy; at times you can be more aggressive in your demands, but at other times you need to be more accommodating.

Companies view employment as a complex business decision with lots of variables to consider. To make the most of your potential, regardless of the career path you pursue, you need to view employment in the same way.

What Employers Look for in Job Applicants

Given the complex forces in the contemporary workplace and the unrelenting pressure of global competition, what are employers looking for in the candidates they hire? The short answer: a lot. Like all "buyers," companies want to get as much as they can for the money they spend. The closer you can present yourself as the ideal candidate, the better your chances of getting a crack at the most exciting opportunities.

Specific expectations vary by profession and position, of course, but virtually all employers look for the following general skills and attributes:[1]

- **Communication skills.** The reason this item is listed first isn't that you're reading a business communication textbook. Communication is listed first because it is far and away the most commonly mentioned skill set when employers are asked about what they look for in employees. Improving your communication skills will help in every aspect of your professional life.
- **Interpersonal and team skills.** You will have many individual responsibilities on the job, but chances are you won't work alone very often. Learn to work with others and help them succeed as you succeed.
- **Intercultural and international awareness and sensitivity.** Successful employers tend to be responsive to diverse workforces, markets, and communities, and they look for employees with the same outlook.

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Communication skills will benefit your career, no matter what path or profession you pursue.

- **Data collection, analysis, and decision-making skills.** Employers want people who know how to identify information needs, find the necessary data, convert the data into useful knowledge, and make sound decisions.
- **Digital, social, and mobile media skills.** Today's workers need to know how to use common office software and to communicate using a wide range of digital media and systems.
- **Time and resource management.** If you've had to juggle multiple priorities during college, consider that great training for the business world. Your ability to plan projects and manage the time and resources available to you will make a big difference on the job.
- **Flexibility and adaptability.** Stuff happens, as they say. Employees who can roll with the punches and adapt to changing business priorities and circumstances will go further (and be happier) than employees who resist change.
- **Professionalism.** Professionalism is the quality of performing at the highest possible level and conducting oneself with confidence, purpose, and pride. True professionals strive to excel, continue to hone their skills and build their knowledge, are dependable and accountable, demonstrate a sense of business etiquette, make ethical decisions, show loyalty and commitment, don't give up when things get tough, and maintain a positive outlook.

Adapting to Today's Job Market

Adapting to the workplace is a lifelo\ng process of seeking the best fit between what you want to do and what employers (or clients, if you work independently) are willing to pay you to do. It's important to think about what you want to do during the many thousands of hours you will spend working, what you have to offer, and how to make yourself more attractive to employers.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

Economic necessities and the vagaries of the marketplace will influence much of what happens in your career, of course, and you may not always have the opportunity to do the kind of work you would really like to do. Even if you can't get the job you want right now, though, start your job search by examining your values and interests. Doing so will give you a better idea of where you want to be eventually, and you can use those insights to learn and grow your way toward that ideal situation. Consider these questions:

- **What would you like to do every day?** Research occupations that interest you. Find out what people really do every day. Ask friends, relatives, alumni from your school, and contacts in your social networks. Read interviews with people in various professions to get a sense of what their careers are like.
- **How would you like to work?** Consider how much independence you want on the job, how much variety you like, and whether you prefer to work with products, technology, people, ideas, numbers, or some combination thereof.
- **How do your financial goals fit with your other priorities?** For instance, many high-paying jobs involve a lot of stress, sacrifices of time with family and friends, and frequent travel or relocation. If location, lifestyle, intriguing work, or other factors are more important to you, you may well have to sacrifice some level of pay to achieve them.
- **Have you established some general career goals?** For example, do you want to pursue a career specialty such as finance or manufacturing, or do you want to gain experience in multiple areas with an eye toward upper management?
- **What sort of corporate culture are you most comfortable with?** Would you be happy in a formal hierarchy with clear reporting relationships? Or do you prefer less structure? Teamwork or individualism? Do you like a competitive environment?

You might need some time in the workforce to figure out what you really want to do or to work your way into the job you really want, but it's never too early to start thinking about where you want to be. Filling out the assessment in Table 1 might help you get a clearer picture of the nature of work you would like to pursue in your career.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER?

Knowing what you want to do is one thing. Knowing what a company is willing to pay you to do is another thing entirely. You may already have a good idea of what you can offer employers. If not, some brainstorming can help you identify your skills, interests, and characteristics. Start by jotting down achievements you're proud of and experiences that were satisfying, and think carefully about what specific skills these achievements demanded of you. For example, leadership skills, speaking ability, and artistic talent may have helped you coordinate a successful class project. As you analyze your achievements, you may begin to recognize a pattern of skills. Which of them might be valuable to potential employers?

Next, consider your educational preparation, work experience, and extracurricular activities. What do your knowledge and experience qualify you to do? What have you learned from volunteer work or class projects that could benefit you on the job? Have you held any offices, won any awards or scholarships, mastered a second language? What skills have you developed in nonbusiness situations that could transfer to a business position?

Take stock of your personal characteristics. Are you aggressive, a born leader? Or would you rather follow? Are you outgoing, articulate, great with people? Or do you prefer working alone? Make a list of what you believe are your four or five most important qualities. Ask a relative or friend to rate your traits as well.

If you're having difficulty figuring out your interests, characteristics, or capabilities, consult your college career center. Many campuses administer a variety of tests that can help you identify interests, aptitudes, and personality traits. These tests won't reveal your "perfect" job, but they'll help you focus on the types of work best suited to your personality.

TABLE 1 Career Self-Assessment

Activity or Situation	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	No Preference
1. I want to work independently.	______	______	______	______
2. I want variety in my work.	______	______	______	______
3. I want to work with people.	______	______	______	______
4. I want to work with technology.	______	______	______	______
5. I want physical work.	______	______	______	______
6. I want mental work.	______	______	______	______
7. I want to work for a large organization.	______	______	______	______
8. I want to work for a nonprofit organization.	______	______	______	______
9. I want to work for a small business.	______	______	______	______
10. I want to work for a service business.	______	______	______	______
11. I want to start or buy a business someday.	______	______	______	______
12. I want regular, predictable work hours.	______	______	______	______
13. I want to work in a city location.	______	______	______	______
14. I want to work in a small town or suburb.	______	______	______	______
15. I want to work in another country.	______	______	______	______
16. I want to work outdoors.	______	______	______	______
17. I want to work in a structured environment.	______	______	______	______
18. I want to avoid risk as much as possible.	______	______	______	______
19. I want to enjoy my work, even if that means making less money.	______	______	______	______
20. I want to become a high-level corporate manager.	______	______	______	______

HOW CAN YOU MAKE YOURSELF MORE VALUABLE?

While you're figuring out what you want from a job and what you can offer an employer, you can take positive steps toward building your career. First, search for job openings in the professions and companies in which you are interested and identify the skills and attributes those employers want. If you lack any key elements, look for opportunities to gain additional experience or training. Consider part-time jobs, temporary positions that let you build important skills to apply in your dream job, and volunteering opportunities. Search the project listings at freelancing sites such as Upwork (**www.upwork.com**) to see whether you can compete for any of the available projects. Also consider applying your talents to *crowdsourcing* projects, in which companies and nonprofit organizations invite the public to contribute solutions to various challenges.

These opportunities help you gain valuable experience and relevant contacts, provide you with important references and work samples for your employment portfolio, and help you establish your personal brand (see the following sections).

Second, learn more about the industry or industries in which you want to work and stay on top of new developments. Join networks of professional colleagues and friends who can help you keep up with trends and events. Many professional societies have student chapters or offer students discounted memberships. Take courses and pursue other educational or life experiences that would be difficult while working full time.

BUILDING AN EMPLOYMENT PORTFOLIO

Employers want proof that you have the skills to succeed on the job, but even if you don't have much relevant work experience, you can use your college classes to assemble that proof. Simply create and maintain an *employment portfolio*, which is a collection of projects that demonstrate your skills and knowledge. This can be a combination of print and digital materials. Your college might offer hosting for *e-portfolios*, which let you display your résumé, work samples, letters of recommendation, relevant videos or podcasts you have recorded, any blog posts or articles you have written, and other information about you and your skills. To see a selection of student e-portfolios from colleges around the United States, go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8**, select Student Assignments, and locate the link to student e-portfolios.

Throughout this course, pay close attention to the assignments marked "Portfolio Builder" (they start in Chapter 6). These items will make particularly good samples of not only your communication skills but also your ability to understand and solve business-related challenges. By combining these projects with samples from your other courses, you can create a compelling portfolio when you're ready to start interviewing. Your portfolio is also a great resource for writing your résumé because it reminds you of all the great work you've done over the years. Moreover, you can continue to refine and expand your portfolio throughout your career; many professionals use e-portfolios to advertise their services.

As you assemble your portfolio, collect anything that shows your ability to perform, whether it's in school, on the job, or in other venues. However, you *must* check with employers before including any items that you created while you were an employee, and check with clients before including any *work products* (anything you wrote, designed, programmed, and so on) they purchased from you. Many business documents contain confidential information that companies don't want distributed to outside audiences.

For each item you add to your portfolio, write a brief description that helps other people understand the meaning and significance of the project. Include such items as these:

- **Background.** Why did you undertake this project? Was it a school project, a work assignment, or something you did on your own initiative?
- **Project objectives.** Explain the project's goals, if relevant.
- **Collaborators.** If you worked with others, be sure to mention that and discuss team dynamics if appropriate. For instance, if you led the team or worked with others long distance as a virtual team, point that out.

- **Constraints.** Sometimes the most impressive thing about a project is the time or budget constraints under which it was created. If such constraints apply to a project, consider mentioning them in a way that doesn't sound like an excuse for poor quality. If you had only one week to create a website, for example, you might say that "One of the intriguing challenges of this project was the deadline; I had only one week to design, compose, test, and publish this material."
- **Outcomes.** If the project's goals were measurable, what was the result? For example, if you wrote a letter soliciting donations for a charitable cause, how much money did you raise?
- **Learning experience.** If appropriate, describe what you learned during the course of the project.

Keep in mind that the portfolio itself is a communication project, so be sure to apply everything you'll learn in this course about effective communication and good design. Assume that potential employers will find your e-portfolio site (even if you don't tell them about it), so don't include anything that could come back to haunt you. Also, if you have anything embarrassing on Facebook, Twitter, or any other social networking site, remove it immediately.

To get started, first check with the career center at your college; many schools offer e-portfolio systems for their students. (Some schools now require e-portfolios, so you may already be building one.) You can also find plenty of advice online; search for "e-portfolio," "student portfolio," or "professional portfolio."

BUILDING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

Products and companies have brands that represent collections of certain attributes, such as the safety emphasis of Volvo cars or the performance emphasis of BMW. Similarly, when people who know you think about you, they have a particular set of qualities in mind based on your professionalism, your priorities, and the various skills and attributes you have developed over the years. Perhaps without even being conscious of it, you have created a *personal brand* for yourself. If you're not comfortable with the notion of presenting yourself as a brand, think instead of your *professional promise*. When people hear your name, what do you want them to think about you and your professional attributes and qualifications?

You will have multiple opportunities to plan and refine your personal brand during this course. For example, Chapter 6 offers tips on business applications of social media, which are key to personal branding, and Chapters 13 and 14 guide you through the process of creating a résumé, building your network, and presenting yourself in interviews. To get you started, here are the basics of a successful personal branding strategy:

- **Figure out the "story of you."** Simply put, where have you been in life, and where are you going? Every good story has dramatic tension that pulls readers in and makes them wonder what will happen next. Where is your story going next? Chapter 13 offers more on this personal brand-building approach.
- **Clarify your professional theme.** Think in terms of a theme you would like to project. What do you want to be known as? Brilliant strategist? Hard-nosed, get-it-done tactician? Technical guru? Problem solver? Creative genius? Inspirational leader?
- **Create a headline.** Distill your professional promise down to a single headline, also known as a *tagline* or *elevator pitch*. The headline should be a statement of compelling value, not a generic job title. Instead of "I'm a social media specialist," you might say "I help small companies get the same reach on social media as giant corporations." If you don't yet have professional experience in your chosen field, express your headline in terms of educational qualifications: "With my degree in computer science and robotics, I am ready to help build the next generation of assistive technologies for people with motor, vision, and cognitive impairments."

- **Reach out and connect.** Major corporations spread the word about their brands with multimillion-dollar advertising campaigns. You can promote your brand at little or no cost. The secret is networking, which you'll learn more about in Chapter 13. You build your brand by connecting with like-minded people, sharing information, demonstrating skills and knowledge, and helping others succeed.
- **Deliver on your brand's promise—every time, all the time.** When you promote a brand, you make a promise—a promise that whoever buys that brand will get the benefits you are promoting. All of this planning and communication is of no value if you fail to deliver on the promises your branding efforts make. Conversely, when you deliver quality results time after time, your talents and professionalism will speak for you.

USING ALL THE JOB-SEARCH TOOLS AT YOUR DISPOSAL

As a final note, be sure to use all the job-search tools and resources available to you. For example, many companies now offer mobile apps that give you a feel for what it's like to work there and let you search for job openings. A variety of apps and websites can help you find jobs, practice interviewing, and build your professional network.

We wish you great success in this course and in your career!

Endnote

1. Courtland L. Bovèe and John V. Thill, *Business in Action*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education, 2017), 19–22; "The Human Factor: The Hard Time Employers Have Finding Soft Skills," Burning Glass Technologies, accessed 8 February 2017, burning-glass.com.

PART 1

Business Communication Foundations

No other skill can help your career in as many ways as communication. Discover what business communication is all about, why communication skills are essential to your career, how social and mobile technologies are revolutionizing business communication, and how to adapt your communication experiences in life and college to the business world. Explore the advantages and the challenges of a diverse workforce and develop the skills that every communicator needs to succeed in today's global, multicultural business environment. Improve your skills in such vital areas as team interaction, etiquette, listening, and nonverbal communication.

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1

Professional Communication in Today's Digital, Social, Mobile World

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Define *communication*, and explain the importance of effective business communication.
2. Explain what it means to communicate as a professional in a business context.
3. Describe the communication process model, and explain how social media are changing the nature of business communication.
4. Outline the challenges and opportunities of mobile communication in business.
5. Define *ethics*, explain the difference between an ethical dilemma and an ethical lapse, and list six guidelines for making ethical communication choices.
6. Explain how cultural diversity affects business communication, and describe the steps you can take to communicate more effectively across cultural boundaries.
7. List four general guidelines for using communication technology effectively.
8. Identify six related skills that you will have the opportunity to develop as you work on your communication skills in this course.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"Writing, communication skills, and organizational skills are scarce everywhere. These skills are in demand across nearly every occupation—and in nearly every occupation they're being requested far more than you'd expect based on standard job profiles. Even fields like IT and engineering want people who can write."
—*The Human Factor: The Hard Time Employers Have Finding Soft Skills*, Burning Glass Technologies

Burning Glass Technologies continually studies the job market, using artificial intelligence to figure out what skills employers are looking for and comparing those with the skills that job seekers have to offer. After analyzing millions of job openings across a wide range of industries, one conclusion jumped out: Today's employers are looking for people who know how to communicate. In every profession except two, communication skills are the most-requested qualification (and in those two professions, they ranked second).[1]

What does this mean to you? It means that no matter what career path you might follow, improving your communication skills will give you a significant competitive edge in the job market. And you've come to the right place: This course is designed to help you develop the skills that will help you get ahead.

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Burning Glass applies artificial intelligence to the challenges of matching employer need with employee skill sets.

Why Communication Is the Most Important Business Skill

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Define *communication*, and explain the importance of effective business communication.

Communication is the process of transferring information and meaning between *senders* and *receivers* using one or more media and communication channels. The essence of communication is sharing—providing data, information, insights, and inspiration in an exchange that benefits both you and the people with whom you are communicating.[2] As Figure 1.1 illustrates, this sharing can happen in a variety of ways, including a simple and successful transfer of information, a negotiation in which the sender and receiver arrive at an agreed-upon meaning, and unsuccessful attempts in which the receiver creates a different message than the one the sender intended.

You will invest a lot of time and energy in this course developing your communication skills, so it's fair to ask whether it will be worthwhile. This section outlines the many ways in which good communication skills are critical for your career and for any company you join or launch.

COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR CAREER

Ambition and great ideas aren't enough; you need to be able to communicate with people in order to succeed in business.

You can have the greatest plans and ideas in the world, but they usually aren't much good to your company or your career if you can't express them clearly and persuasively. Some jobs, such as sales and customer support, are primarily about communicating. In fields such as engineering or finance, you often need to share complex ideas with executives, customers, and colleagues, and your ability to connect with people outside your field can be as important as your technical expertise. If you have the entrepreneurial urge, you will need to communicate with a wide range of audiences, from investors, bankers, and government regulators to employees, customers, and business partners.

If you work as a freelancer or independent contractor, you will need communication skills to "sell yourself" into each new opportunity.

The changing nature of employment is putting new pressure on communication skills, too. Companies such Uber and Lyft are the most visible in the *gig economy*, where independent contractors work without many of the advantages or the disadvantages of regular employment. Many other companies now supplement their permanent workforces with independent contractors in a variety of business and technical fields who are brought on for a short period or even just a single project. Chances are you will spend some of your career as one of these freelancers, working without the support network that an established company environment provides. You may need to "sell yourself" into each new contract, and you will need to communicate successfully in a wide range of work situations and take full responsibility for your career growth and success.

If you launch a company or move into an executive role in an existing organization, you can expect communication to consume the majority of your time. Top executives spend most of their workdays communicating, and businesspeople who can't communicate well don't stand much chance of reaching the top.

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This Pinterest board created by the authors highlights some of the most important changes taking place in the field of business communication. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR COMPANY

Aside from the personal benefits, communication should be important to you because it is important to your company. Effective communication helps businesses in numerous ways, by promoting[3]

Effective communication is critical to virtually every aspect of business.

- A stronger sense of trust between individuals and organizations
- Closer ties with important communities in the marketplace
- Opportunities to influence conversations, perceptions, and trends
- Increased productivity and faster problem solving
- Better financial results and higher return for investors
- Earlier warning of potential problems, from rising business costs to critical safety issues

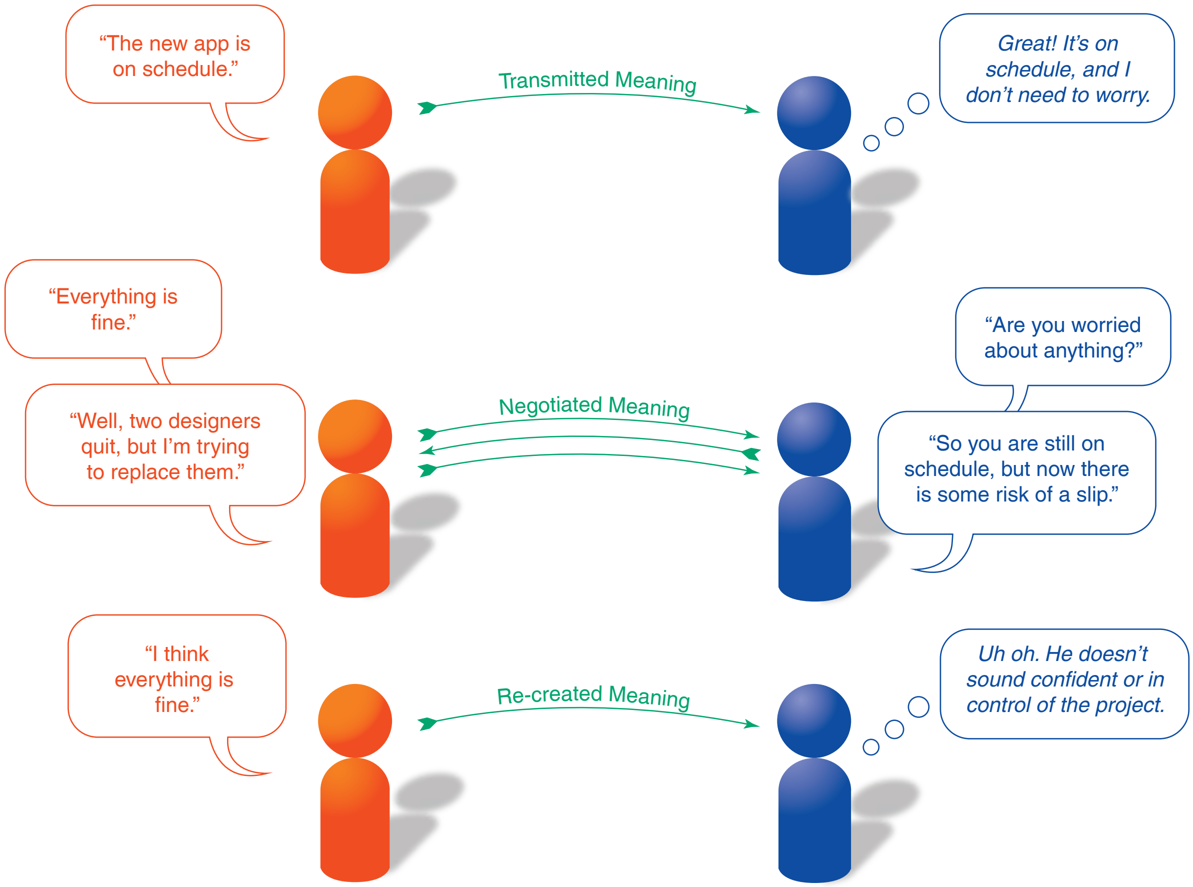


Figure 1.1 Sharing Information
These three exchanges between a software project manager (*left*) and his boss (*right*) illustrate the variety of ways in which information is shared between senders and receivers. In the top exchange, the sender's meaning is transmitted intact to the receiver, who accepts what the sender says at face value. In the middle exchange, the sender and receiver negotiate the meaning by discussing the situation. The negotiated meaning is that everything is fine so far, but the risk of a schedule slip is now higher than it was before. In the bottom exchange, the receiver has a negative emotional reaction to the word *think*, and as a result creates her own meaning—that everything probably is *not* fine, in spite of what the sender says.

- Stronger decision making based on timely, reliable information
- Clearer and more persuasive marketing messages
- Greater engagement of employees with their work, leading to higher employee satisfaction and lower employee turnover

WHAT MAKES BUSINESS COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVE?

Effective communication strengthens the connections between a company and all of its **stakeholders**, those groups affected in some way by the company's actions: customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, neighbors, the community, the nation, and the world as a whole.[4] To make your communication efforts as effective as possible, focus on making them practical, factual, concise, clear, and persuasive:

Effective messages are practical, factual, concise, clear, and persuasive.

- **Provide practical information.** Give recipients useful information, whether it's to help them perform a desired action or understand a new company policy.
- **Give facts rather than vague impressions.** Use concrete language, specific detail, and information that is clear, convincing, accurate, and ethical. Even when an opinion is called for, present compelling evidence to support your conclusion.

- **Present information in a concise, efficient manner.** Concise messages show respect for people's time, and they increase the chances of a positive response.
- **Clarify expectations and responsibilities.** Craft messages to generate a specific response from a specific audience. When appropriate, clearly state what you expect from readers or listeners or what you can do for them.
- **Offer compelling, persuasive arguments and recommendations.** Show your readers precisely how they will benefit by responding to your message the way you want them to.

Keep these five characteristics in mind as you review the ineffective and effective versions of the message in Figure 1.2.

Communicating as a Professional

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain what it means to communicate as a professional in a business context.

You've been communicating your entire life, of course, but if you don't have a lot of work experience yet, meeting the expectations of a professional environment might require some adjustment. A good place to start is to consider what it means to be a professional. **Professionalism** is the quality of performing at a high level and conducting oneself with purpose and pride. It means doing more than putting in the hours and collecting a paycheck; true professionals go beyond minimum expectations and commit to making meaningful contributions. Professionalism can be broken down into six distinct traits: striving to excel, being dependable and accountable, being a team player, demonstrating a sense of etiquette, making ethical decisions, and maintaining a positive outlook (see Figure 1.3 on page 8).

Communication is an essential part of being a successful professional.

A key message to glean from Figure 1.3 is how much these elements of professionalism depend on effective communication. For example, to be a team player, you have to be able to collaborate, resolve conflicts, and interact with a wide variety of personalities. Without strong communication skills, you won't be able to perform to your potential—and others won't recognize you as the professional you'd like to be.

This section offers a brief look at the skills that employers will expect you to have, the nature of communication in an organizational environment, and the importance of adopting an audience-centered approach.

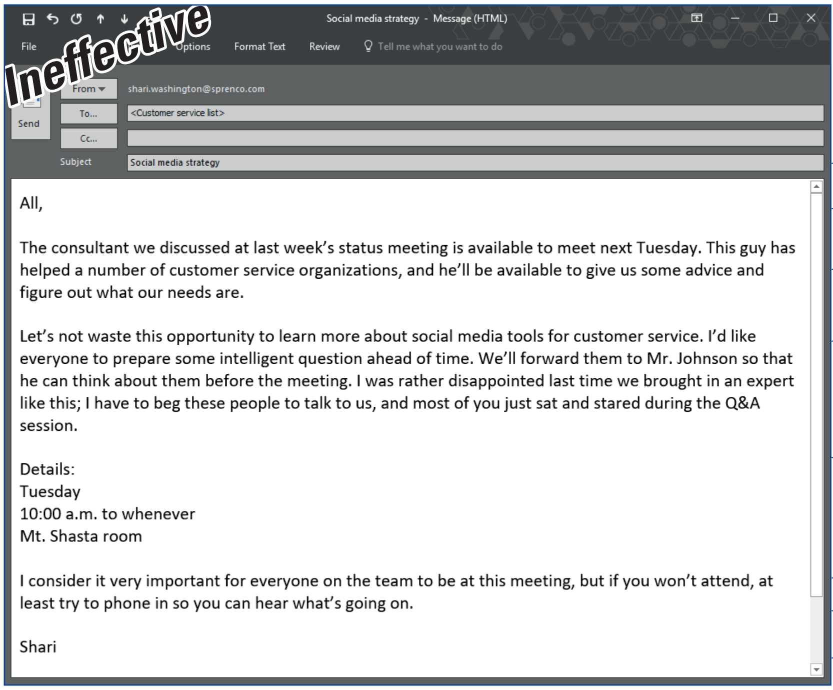
UNDERSTANDING WHAT EMPLOYERS EXPECT FROM YOU

Today's employers expect you to be competent at a wide range of communication tasks. Fortunately, the skills employers expect from you are the same skills that will help you advance in your career:[5]

Employers expect you to have a broad set of communication skills, and you can practice all of these skills in this course.

- Recognizing information needs, using efficient search techniques to locate reliable sources of information, and using gathered information ethically; this collection of skills is often referred to as *digital information fluency*[6]
- Organizing ideas and information logically and completely
- Expressing ideas and information coherently and persuasively
- Actively listening to others
- Communicating effectively with people from diverse backgrounds and experiences
- Using communication technologies effectively and efficiently
- Following accepted standards of grammar, spelling, and other aspects of high-quality writing and speaking
- Communicating in a civilized manner that reflects contemporary expectations of business etiquette, even when dealing with indifferent or hostile audiences
- Communicating ethically, even when choices aren't crystal clear
- Managing your time wisely and using resources efficiently
- Using **critical thinking**, which is the ability to evaluate evidence completely and objectively in order to form logical conclusions and make sound recommendations

You'll have the opportunity to practice these skills throughout this course, but don't stop there. Successful professionals continue to hone communication skills throughout their careers.



Ineffective

Social media strategy - Message (HTML)

From: shari.washington@sprenco.com

To...: <Customer service list>

Cc...:

Subject: Social media strategy

All,

The consultant we discussed at last week's status meeting is available to meet next Tuesday. This guy has helped a number of customer service organizations, and he'll be available to give us some advice and figure out what our needs are.

Let's not waste this opportunity to learn more about social media tools for customer service. I'd like everyone to prepare some intelligent question ahead of time. We'll forward them to Mr. Johnson so that he can think about them before the meeting. I was rather disappointed last time we brought in an expert like this; I have to beg these people to talk to us, and most of you just sat and stared during the Q&A session.

Details:
Tuesday
10:00 a.m. to whenever
Mt. Shasta room

I consider it very important for everyone on the team to be at this meeting, but if you won't attend, at least try to phone in so you can hear what's going on.

Shari

(a) The vague subject line fails to alert people to the upcoming meeting.

(b) The greeting is cold and off-putting.

(c) The opening paragraph fails to provide necessary background information for anyone who missed the meeting.

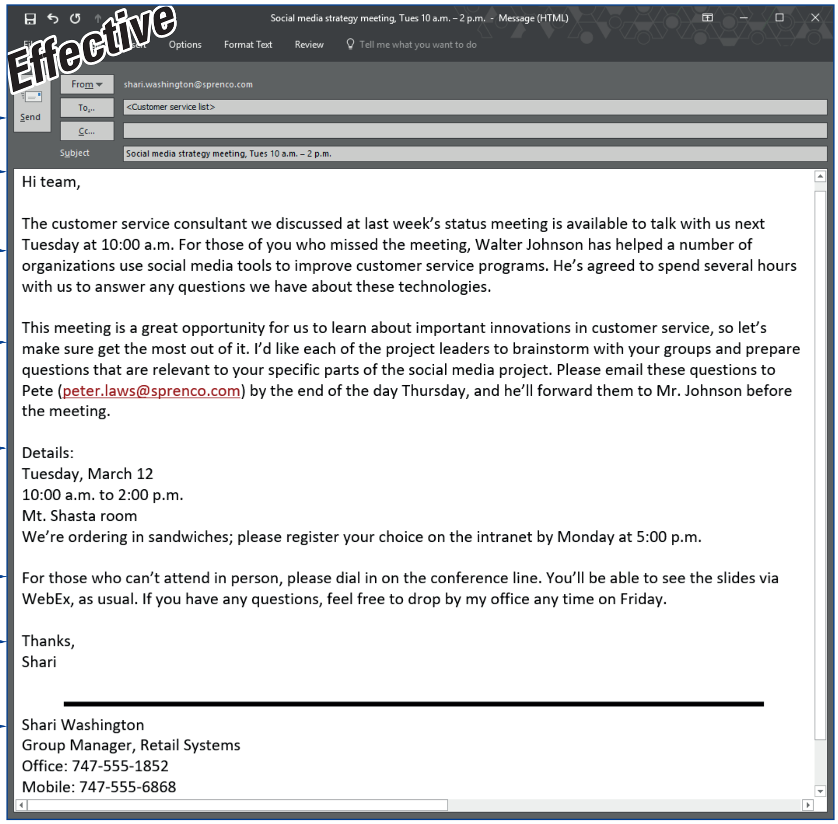
(d) A negative, accusatory tone puts readers on the defensive, and the request for action fails to clarify who needs to do what by when.

(e) The meeting information includes the day, but not the date, which could lead to confusion.

(f) The wording here assumes that people who won't attend don't want to, which might not be true. The writer also fails to invite questions ahead of the meeting.

(g) The lack of a closing (such as "Thank you,") contributes to the harsh, abrupt tone.

(h) The writer fails to provide alternative contact information or invite questions about the meeting.



Effective

Social media strategy meeting, Tues 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. - Message (HTML)

From: shari.washington@sprenco.com

To...: <Customer service list>

Cc...:

Subject: Social media strategy meeting, Tues 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Hi team,

The customer service consultant we discussed at last week's status meeting is available to talk with us next Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. For those of you who missed the meeting, Walter Johnson has helped a number of organizations use social media tools to improve customer service programs. He's agreed to spend several hours with us to answer any questions we have about these technologies.

This meeting is a great opportunity for us to learn about important innovations in customer service, so let's make sure get the most out of it. I'd like each of the project leaders to brainstorm with your groups and prepare questions that are relevant to your specific parts of the social media project. Please email these questions to Pete (peter.laws@sprenco.com) by the end of the day Thursday, and he'll forward them to Mr. Johnson before the meeting.

Details:
Tuesday, March 12
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Mt. Shasta room
We're ordering in sandwiches; please register your choice on the intranet by Monday at 5:00 p.m.

For those who can't attend in person, please dial in on the conference line. You'll be able to see the slides via WebEx, as usual. If you have any questions, feel free to drop by my office any time on Friday.

Thanks,
Shari

Shari Washington
Group Manager, Retail Systems
Office: 747-555-1852
Mobile: 747-555-6868

(a) An informative subject line helps people grasp important details immediately.

(b) The greeting is friendly without being too casual.

(c) The opening paragraph fills in missing information so that everyone can grasp the importance of the message.

(d) This upbeat paragraph emphasizes the positive value of the meeting, and the request provides enough information to enable readers to respond.

(e) The date eliminates scheduling uncertainty.

(f) The writer offers everyone a chance to participate, without making anyone feel guilty about not being able to attend in person. The closing paragraph invites questions ahead of time so they don't derail the meeting.

(g) Like the greeting, the close has a warm and personal tone, without being too casual.

(h) The *email signature* provides additional information and alternative contact options.

Figure 1.2 Effective Professional Communication

At first glance, the top email message here looks like a reasonable attempt at communicating with the members of a project team. However, compare it with the bottom version by referencing the notes lettered (a) through (h) to see just how many problems the original message really has.

Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation

Figure 1.3 Elements of Professionalism
To be respected as a true professional, develop these six qualities.

COMMUNICATING IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Every company has a formal communication network, where messages follow the lines of command in the organization structure.

In addition to having the proper skills, you need to learn how to apply those skills in the business environment, which can be quite different from your social and scholastic environments. Every organization has a *formal* communication network in which ideas and information flow along the lines of command in the company's organization structure. When managers inform their subordinates about new company policies or sales representatives submit travel reports, they are using the formal communication network. This flow of "official" information—downward, upward, and horizontally throughout the organization—keeps all the parts of a company connected and functioning smoothly.

Every company has also has an informal communication network—all the communication that takes place outside the formal network.

Every organization also has an *informal* communication network, often referred to as the *grapevine* or the *rumor mill*, which encompasses all the "unofficial" communication that occurs outside the formal network. Some of this informal communication takes place naturally when employees interact on the job and in social settings, and some of it takes place when the formal network doesn't provide information that employees want. In fact, the limitations of formal communication networks helped spur the growth of social media in the business environment. Communication in the informal network is healthy and important, because the formal network can't always capture and share all the information that helps people do their jobs. However, if a workplace is rife with rumors and company gossip, this could be a sign that the formal network is not functioning effectively.

ADOPTING AN AUDIENCE-CENTERED APPROACH

Focus on the needs of your audiences to make your messages more effective.

An **audience-centered approach** involves understanding and respecting the members of your audience and making every effort to get your message across in a way that is meaningful to them. This approach is also known as adopting the **"you" attitude**, in contrast to messages that are about "me." Learn as much as possible about the biases, education, age, status, style, and personal and professional concerns of your receivers. If you're addressing people you don't know and you're unable to find out more about them, try to envision yourself in their position using common sense and imagination. This ability to relate to the needs of others is a key part of *emotional intelligence*, a combination of emotional and social skills widely considered to be a vital characteristic of successful managers and leaders. The more you know about the people you're communicating with, the easier it will be to concentrate on their needs—which, in turn, will make it easier for them to hear your message, understand it, and respond positively.

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A vital element of audience-centered communication is **etiquette**, the expected norms of behavior in any particular situation. In today's hectic, competitive world, etiquette might seem a quaint and outdated notion. However, the way you conduct yourself and interact with others can have a profound influence on your company's success and your career. When executives hire and promote you, they expect your behavior to protect the company's reputation. The more you understand such expectations, the better chance you have of avoiding career-damaging mistakes. The principles of etiquette discussed in Chapter 2 will help you communicate with an audience-centered approach in a variety of business settings.

Respect, courtesy, and common sense will help you avoid etiquette mistakes.

Exploring the Communication Process

Even with the best intentions, communication efforts can fail. Fortunately, by understanding communication as a process with distinct steps, you can improve the odds that your messages will reach their intended audiences and produce their intended effects. This section explores the communication process in two stages: first by following a message from one sender to one receiver in the basic communication model, and then by expanding on that approach with multiple messages and participants in the social communication model.

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe the communication process model, and explain how social media are changing the nature of business communication.

THE BASIC COMMUNICATION MODEL

Many variations of the communication process model exist, but these eight steps provide a practical overview (see Figure 1.4 on the next page):

1. **The sender has an idea.** Whether a communication effort will ultimately be effective starts right here and depends on the nature of the idea and the motivation for sending it. For example, if your motivation is to offer a solution to a problem, you have a better chance of crafting a successful message than if your motivation is merely to complain about the problem.
2. **The sender encodes the idea as a message.** When someone puts an idea into a **message**, he or she is **encoding** it, or expressing it in words or images. Much of the focus of this course is on developing the skills needed to successfully encode your ideas into effective messages.
3. **The sender produces the message in a transmittable medium.** With the appropriate message to express an idea, the sender now needs a **communication medium** to present that message to the intended receiver. To update your boss on the status of a project, for instance, you might have several media options at your disposal, from a phone call to an instant message to a slideshow presentation. Each medium has its own strengths and weaknesses, which you'll learn more about in Chapter 3.
4. **The sender transmits the message through a channel.** As technology continues to increase the number of media options, it continues to provide new **communication channels** senders can use to transmit their messages. The distinction between medium and channel can get a bit murky, but think of the medium as the *form* a message takes (written versus spoken, for example) and the channel as the

The communication process starts with a sender having an idea and then encoding the idea into a message that can be transferred to a receiver.

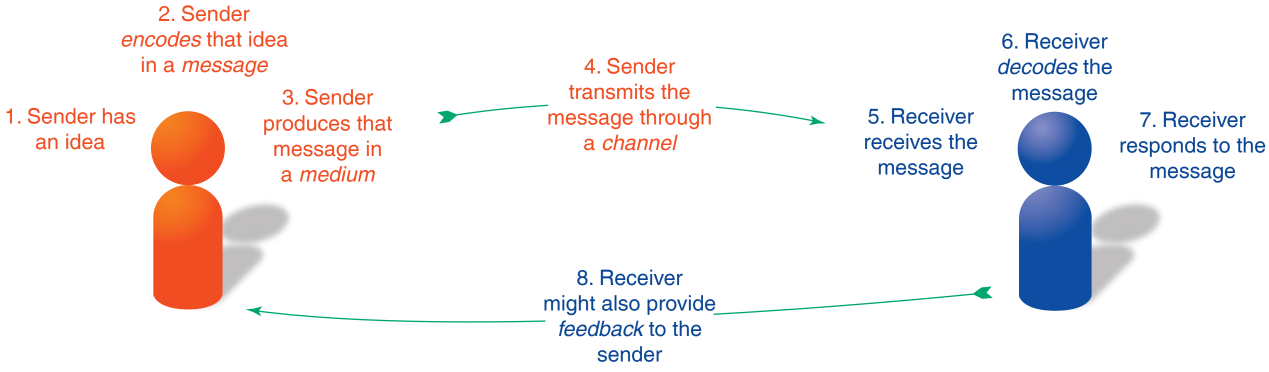


Figure 1.4 The Basic Communication Process
This eight-step model is a simplified view of how communication works in real life; understanding this basic model is vital to improving your communication skills.

system used to *deliver* the message (email versus a printed letter for a written message, for example).

5. **The intended audience receives the message.** If the channel functions properly, the message reaches its intended audience. However, mere arrival is not enough. For a message to truly be received, the recipient has to *sense* the presence of a message, *select* it from all the other messages clamoring for attention, and *perceive* it as an actual message (as opposed to random noise).[7]

Decoding is a complex process; receivers often extract different meanings from messages than the meanings that senders intended.

6. **The receiver decodes the message.** After a message is received, the receiver needs to extract the idea from the message, a step known as **decoding**. Even well-crafted, well-intentioned communication efforts can fail at this stage because extracting meaning is a highly personal process that is influenced by culture, experience, learning and thinking styles, hopes, fears, and even temporary moods. As you saw in Figure 1.1, receivers sometimes decode the same meaning the sender intended, but sometimes they can decode—or re-create—entirely different meanings. Moreover, receivers tend to extract the meaning they *expect* to get from a message, even if it's the opposite of what the sender intended.[8]
7. **The receiver responds to the message.** In most instances, senders want to accomplish more than simply delivering information. They often want receivers to respond in particular ways, whether it's to invest millions of dollars in a new business venture or to accept management's explanation for why the company can't afford to give employee bonuses this year. Whether a receiver responds as the sender hopes depends on the receiver (a) *remembering* the message long enough to act on it, (b) being *able* to act on it, and (c) being *motivated* to respond.
8. **The receiver provides feedback.** If a mechanism is available for them to do so, receivers can "close the loop" in the communication process by giving **feedback** that helps the sender evaluate the effectiveness of the communication effort. Feedback can be verbal (using written or spoken words), nonverbal (using gestures, facial expressions, or other signals), or both. Just like the original message, however, this feedback from the receiver also needs to be decoded carefully. A smile, for example, can have many different meanings.

Considering the complexity of this process—and the barriers and distractions that often stand between sender and receiver—it should come as no surprise that communication efforts frequently fail to achieve the sender's objective. Fortunately, the better you understand the process, the more successful you'll be.

THE SOCIAL COMMUNICATION MODEL

The basic model presented in Figure 1.4 illustrates how a single idea moves from one sender to one receiver. In a larger sense, it also helps represent the traditional model of much business communication, which was primarily defined by a *publishing* or *broadcasting* mindset. A company issued carefully scripted messages to an external mass audience that often had few options for responding to those messages or initiating messages of their own. Customers and other interested parties had few ways to connect with one another to ask questions, share information, or offer support. Internal communication tended to follow the same "we talk, you listen" model, with upper managers issuing directives to lower-level supervisors and employees.

The social communication model is interactive, conversational, and usually open to all who wish to participate.

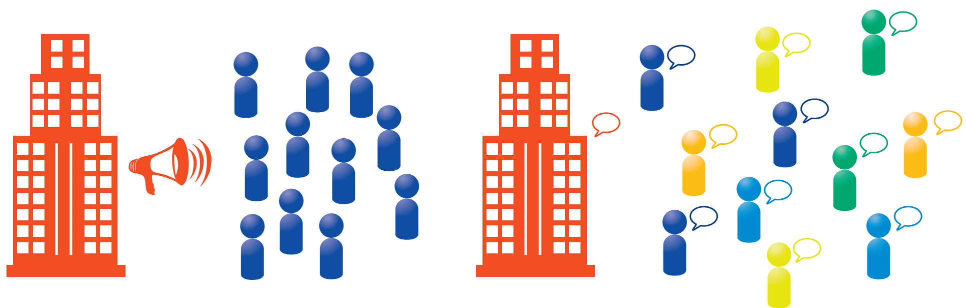
However, a variety of recent innovations have enabled and inspired a new approach to business communication. In contrast to the publishing mindset, this **social communication model** is interactive, conversational, and usually open to all who wish to participate. Audience members are no longer passive recipients of messages but active participants in a conversation. Social media have given customers and other stakeholders a voice they did not have in the past. And businesses are listening to that voice. In fact, one of the most common uses of social media among U.S. businesses is monitoring online discussions about a company and its brands.[9] Inside companies, social media make it easier for employees to voice concerns and frustrations, increasing the chances that managers will address problems that are getting in the way of people doing their jobs.[10]

Instead of transmitting a fixed message, a sender in a social media environment initiates a conversation by sharing valuable information. This information is often revised and reshaped by the web of participants as they share it and comment on it. People can add to it or take pieces from it, depending on their needs and interests. Figure 1.5 lists the significant differences between traditional and social models of business communication.

Social media tools present some potential disadvantages that managers and employees need to consider.

The social communication model offers many advantages, but it has a number of disadvantages as well. Potential problems include information overload, a lower level of engagement with tasks and other people, fragmented attention, information security risks, reduced productivity, and the difficulty of maintaining a healthy boundary between personal and professional lives.[11] All business professionals and managers need to choose and use digital tools wisely to control the flow of information they receive.

Of course, no company, no matter how enthusiastically it embraces the social communication model, is going to be run as a club in which everyone has a say in every business



Conventional Promotion: "We Talk, You Listen"	The Social Model: "Let's Have a Conversation"
Tendencies	**Tendencies**
Publication, broadcast	Converstion
Lecture	Discussion
Intrusion	Permission
Unidirectinal	Bidirectional, multidirectional
One to many; mass audience	One to one; many to many
Control	Influence
Low message frequency	High message frequency
Few channels	Many channels
Information hoarding	Information sharing
Static	Dynamic
Hierarchical	Egalitarian
Structured	Amorphous
Isolated	Collaborative
Planned	Reactive
Resistive	Responsive

Figure 1.5 The Social Communication Model
The social communication model differs from conventional communication strategies and practices in a number of significant ways. You're probably already an accomplished user of many social media tools, and this experience will help you on the job.

matter. Instead, a hybrid approach is emerging in which some communications (such as strategic plans and policy documents) follow the traditional approach, while others (such as project management updates and customer support messages) follow the social model.

You can learn more about business uses of social media in Chapter 6.

The Mobile Revolution

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Outline the challenges and opportunities of mobile communication in business.

As much of a game changer as social media have been, some experts predict that mobile communication will change the nature of business and business communication even more.[12] This section offers a high-level view of the mobile revolution, and you'll see coverage of specific topics integrated throughout the book—everything from collaborative writing and research to presentations and job-search strategies.

THE RISE OF MOBILE AS A BUSINESS COMMUNICATION PLATFORM

With mobile devices everywhere you look these days, it probably comes as no surprise that media consumption on smartphones has skyrocketed in recent years, even as digital media consumption on computers continues to drop.[13] More than half of all Internet access now occurs via mobile devices, primarily smartphones.[14]

Mobile devices are taking over as the primary communication platform for many business professionals.

Moreover, this shift isn't just about consumer usage and entertainment. For a growing number of companies, mobile has become an essential part of the digital workplace. And rather than being an accessory to or an extension of a traditional work computer, in many cases mobile devices serve as the primary "hubs" that connect employees to the various parts of the company's information networks.[15]

Professionals use many of the same mobile communication tools you use now, along with thousands of business-focused mobile apps.

Business mobile communication involves many of the same communication tools that you probably use now for messaging, social networking, researching, and writing. In addition, thousands of business-focused apps assist users with everything from presentations to project management to financial reporting. Many of these apps are either communication focused or have significant communication features, all designed to help employees stay connected no matter where their work takes them. For example, with Rockwell Automation's FactoryTalk TeamONE app, teams can collaborate to diagnose problems on a production line, using the app's measurement capabilities to acquire data from machinery and then using its communication tools to collaborate on the troubleshooting process.[16]

This shift is significant for a number of reasons, one of which is that smartphones have become intensely personal devices in ways that PCs never did. For many users, the connection is so intense they may feel a sense of panic when they don't have frequent access to their phones.[17] When people are closely attached to their phones, day and night, they are more closely connected to all the information sources, conversations, and networks that those phones can connect to. As a result, mobile communication can start to resemble a continuous stream of conversations that never quite end, which influences the way businesses need to interact with their stakeholders. If *wearable technologies* become mainstream devices, they will contribute even more to this shift in behaviors (see Figure 1.6).

Figure 1.6 Wearable Technology
Smartwatches and other wearable mobile devices offer intriguing possibilities for business communication. The Uno Noteband incorporates Spritz speed-reading technology that makes it easier to read message content quickly.
Source: Used by permission of Uno Inc.

The parallels between social media and mobile communication are striking: Both sets of technologies change the nature of communication, alter the relationships between senders and receivers, create opportunities as well as challenges, and force business professionals to hone new skills. In fact, much of the rise in social communication can be attributed to the connectivity made possible by mobile devices. Companies that work to understand and embrace mobile, both internally and externally, stand the best chance of capitalizing on this monumental shift in the way people communicate.

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HOW MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES ARE CHANGING BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

The rise of mobile communication has some obvious implications, starting with the challenges of writing and reading on small screens. Documents that are easy to read on paper or on large screens can become quite difficult to read on a smartphone—and the more difficult the reading experience, the more likely that readers will misinterpret the message or simply stop reading.

MOBILE APP

Pocket collects online content you'd like to read or view later and syncs it across your mobile devices.

However, device size and portability are only the most obvious differences. Just as with social media, the changes brought about by mobile go far deeper than the technology itself. Mobile alters the way people communicate, which has profound implications for virtually every aspect of business communication.

Social media pioneer Nicco Mele coined the term *radical connectivity* to describe "the breathtaking ability to send vast amounts of data instantly, constantly, and globally."[18] Mobile plays a major and ever-expanding role in this phenomenon by keeping people connected 24/7, wherever they may be. People who've grown up with mobile communication technology expect to have immediate access to information and the ability to stay connected to their various social and business networks.[19]

People who've grown up with mobile connectivity expect to have immediate access to the information they need as consumers or employees.

Here are the most significant ways mobile technology is changing the practice of business communication:

- Constant connectivity is a mixed blessing. As with social media, mobile connectivity can blur the boundaries between personal and professional time and space, preventing people from fully disengaging from work during personal and family time. On the other hand, it can give employees more flexibility to meet their personal and professional obligations.[20] In this regard, mobile plays an important role in efforts to reduce operating costs through telecommuting and other nontraditional work models.[21]

Constant connectivity is a mixed blessing: You can work from anywhere at any time, but it's more difficult to disconnect from work and recharge yourself.

- The physical layouts of mobile devices present challenges for creating and consuming content, whether it's typing an email message or watching a training video.
- Mobile users are often multitasking—roughly half of mobile phone usage happens while people are walking, for instance—so they can't give full attention to the information on their screens.[22] Moreover, mobile use often occurs in environments with multiple distractions and other barriers to successful communication.
- Mobile communication, particularly text messaging, has put pressure on traditional standards of grammar, punctuation, and writing in general. Chapter 4 has more on this topic.
- Mobile devices can serve as sensory and cognitive extensions.[23] For example, they can help people experience more of their environment (such as augmented reality apps that superimpose information on a live camera view) and have instant access to information without relying on faulty and limited human memory. The addition of *location-aware content*, such as facility maps and property information, enhances the mobile experience.
- Mobile devices create a host of security and privacy concerns, for end users and corporate technology managers alike.[24] Companies are wrestling with the "bring your own device" or "BYOD" phenomenon, in which employees want to be able to access company networks and files with their personal smartphones and tablets, both in

Mobile devices in the workplace create a variety of security and privacy concerns that companies must address.

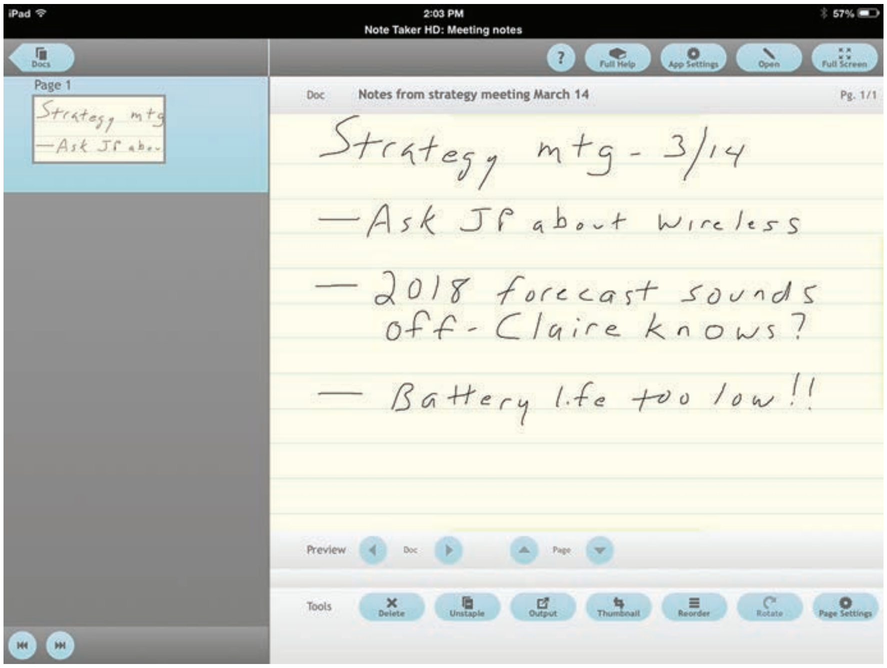


Figure 1.7 Mobile Communication Tools
Mobile technologies offer multiple ways to improve communication and other key business processes. For example, note-taking apps such as Note Taker HD offer an easy and unobtrusive way to take notes during meetings, site visits, and other business functions.
Source: Software Garden, Inc.

the office and away from it. However, these devices don't always have the rigorous security controls that corporate networks need, and employees don't always use the devices in secure ways.

- Mobile tools can enhance productivity and collaboration by making it easier for employees to stay connected and giving them access to information and work tasks during idle time in the workday or while traveling.[25]
- Mobile apps can assist in a wide variety of business tasks, from research to presentations[26] (see Figure 1.7). Companies aren't restricted to commercially available apps, either. With digital publishing tools, companies can create custom apps with content and capabilities geared specifically for their customers or employees.[27]
- Mobile connectivity can accelerate decision making and problem solving by putting the right information in the hands of the right people at the right time. For example, if the participants in a decision-making meeting need more information, they can often do the necessary research on the spot.[28] Mobile communication also makes it easier to quickly tap into pockets of expertise within a company.[29] Customer service can be improved by making sure technicians and other workers always have the information they need right at hand.[30] Companies can also respond and communicate faster during crises.[31]
- With interactivity designed to take advantage of the capabilities of mobile devices (including cameras, accelerometers, compasses, and GPS), companies can create more engaging experiences for customers and other users.[32]

The mobile revolution complicates business communication in some ways, but it can enhance communication in many ways if done thoughtfully. You'll read more about mobile in the chapters ahead.

5 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Define *ethics*, explain the difference between an ethical dilemma and an ethical lapse, and list six guidelines for making ethical communication choices.

Committing to Ethical Communication

Ethics are the accepted principles of conduct that govern behavior within a society. Ethical behavior is a companywide concern, but because communication efforts are the public face of a company, they are subjected to particularly rigorous scrutiny from regulators, legislators, investors, consumer groups, environmental groups, labor organizations, and anyone else affected by business activities. **Ethical communication** includes all relevant information, is true in every sense, and is not deceptive in any way. In contrast, unethical communication can distort the truth or manipulate audiences in a variety of ways. Examples of unethical communication include[33]

Ethical communication avoids deception and provides the information audiences need.

- **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is presenting someone else's words or other creative product as your own. Note that plagiarism can be illegal if it violates a **copyright**, which is a form of legal protection for the expression of creative ideas.[34]
- **Omitting essential information.** Information is essential if your audience needs it to make an intelligent, objective decision.
- **Selective misquoting.** Distorting or hiding the true intent of someone else's words is unethical.
- **Misrepresenting numbers.** Statistics and other data can be unethically manipulated by increasing or decreasing numbers, exaggerating visual differences, altering statistics, or omitting numeric data.
- **Distorting visuals.** Images can be manipulated in unethical ways, such as making a product seem bigger than it really is or changing the scale of graphs and charts to exaggerate or conceal differences.
- **Failing to respect privacy or information security needs.** Failing to respect the privacy of others or failing to adequately protect information entrusted to your care can also be considered unethical (and is sometimes illegal).
- **Coercing people to give positive online reviews.** Deleting negative reviews or telling customers than can post only positive reviews is unethical.
- **Failing to disclose financially beneficial relationships.** For instance, it is unethical for bloggers not to disclose that they have been paid to review or have otherwise benefited from reviewing products on their blogs.

The widespread use of social media has increased the attention given to the issue of **transparency**, which in this context refers to a sense of openness, of giving all participants in a conversation access to the information they need in order to accurately process the messages they are receiving.

Transparency involves giving audiences access to the information they need to make effective decisions.

In addition to the information itself, audiences deserve to know when they are being marketed to and who is behind the messages they read or hear. Two important concerns in this regard are *native advertising* and *stealth marketing*. Native advertising, also known as *sponsored content*, is advertising material that is designed to look like regular news stories, articles, or social media posts. The U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) requires companies to label such material as sponsored content if it is likely to mislead consumers into thinking it is "anything other than an ad."[35] Industry groups such as the Word of Mouth Marketing Association and the Interactive Advertising Bureau give their members specific guidelines to help prevent consumer confusion.[36]

Native advertising and stealth marketing are unethical if the intended targets of these messages are not informed about the true promotional nature of the communication.

Stealth marketing is the practice of promoting companies and products without making it clear to the audience that marketing activity is taking place. For example, "street team" marketing, in which team members promote goods and services to their friends and members of the public in exchange for prizes or other compensation, is unethical if team members don't disclose the fact that they are affiliated with a company and are being rewarded for their efforts. Such practices also violate FTC advertising guidelines.[37]

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Ethical guidelines for word-of-mouth marketing

The Word of Mouth Marketing Association advises its members on how to use social media marketing ethically. Go to **real-time updates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

DISTINGUISHING ETHICAL DILEMMAS FROM ETHICAL LAPSES

Some ethical questions are easy to recognize and resolve, but others are not. Deciding what is ethical in complex business situations is not always easy. An **ethical dilemma** involves choosing among alternatives that aren't clear-cut. Perhaps two conflicting

If you must choose between two ethical alternatives, you are facing an ethical dilemma.

MOBILE APP

The **PRSA Ethics** app is a mobile version of the Public Relations Society of America's code of ethics.

alternatives are both ethical and valid, or perhaps the alternatives lie somewhere in the gray area between clearly right and clearly wrong. Every company has responsibilities to multiple groups of people inside and outside the firm, and those various groups often have competing interests. For instance, employees generally want higher wages and more benefits, but investors who have risked their money in the company want management to keep costs low so that profits are strong enough to drive up the stock price. Both sides have a valid ethical position.

If you choose an alternative that is unethical, you have committed an ethical lapse.

In contrast, an **ethical lapse** is a clearly unethical choice. With both internal and external communication efforts, the pressure to produce results or justify decisions can make unethical communication a tempting choice. Telling a potential customer you can complete a project by a certain date when you know you can't is simply dishonest, even if you need the contract to save your career or your company. There is no ethical dilemma here.

MAKING ETHICAL CHOICES

Responsible employers establish clear ethical guidelines for their employees to follow.

Ensuring ethical business communication requires three elements: ethical individuals, ethical company leadership, and the appropriate policies and structures to support ethical decision making.[38] Many companies establish an explicit ethics policy using a written **code of ethics** to help employees determine what is acceptable. Showing employees that the company is serious about ethical behavior is also vital.

Even the best codes and policies can't address every unique situation, however. If you find yourself in a situation in which the law or a code of ethics can't guide you, answer the following questions:[39]

If company ethics policies don't cover a specific situation, you can ask yourself a number of questions in order to make an ethical choice.

- Have you defined the situation fairly and accurately?
- What is your intention in communicating this message?
- What impact will this message have on the people who receive it or who might be affected by it?
- Will the message achieve the greatest possible good while doing the least possible harm?
- Will the assumptions you've made change over time? That is, will a decision that seems ethical now seem unethical in the future?
- Are you comfortable with your decision? Would you be embarrassed if it were spread across the Internet? Think about a person you admire and ask yourself what he or she would think of your decision.

If you ever have doubts about the legal ramifications of a message you intend to distribute, ask for guidance from your company's legal department.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE
Guidelines for trouble-free blogging
The Electronic Frontier Foundation offers a free *Legal Guide for Bloggers*. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Communicating in a World of Diversity

6 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain how cultural diversity affects business communication, and describe the steps you can take to communicate more effectively across cultural boundaries.

Throughout your career, you will interact with people from a variety of cultures, people who differ in race, age, gender, sexual orientation, national and regional attitudes and beliefs, family structure, religion, native language, physical and cognitive abilities, life experience, and educational background (see Figure 1.8). Although the concept is often narrowly framed in terms of ethnic background, a broader and more useful definition of **diversity** includes "all the characteristics and experiences that define each of us as individuals."[40] Some aspects of diversity, such as race and age, are inherent. Others, such as work history, language, religion, cultural immersion, and education, are acquired through life experience.[41] Together, these characteristics and experiences can have a profound effect on the way businesspeople communicate.

This section looks at the advantages and challenges of a diverse workforce from a communication perspective, examines key differences among cultures, and offers advice for communicating across cultures.

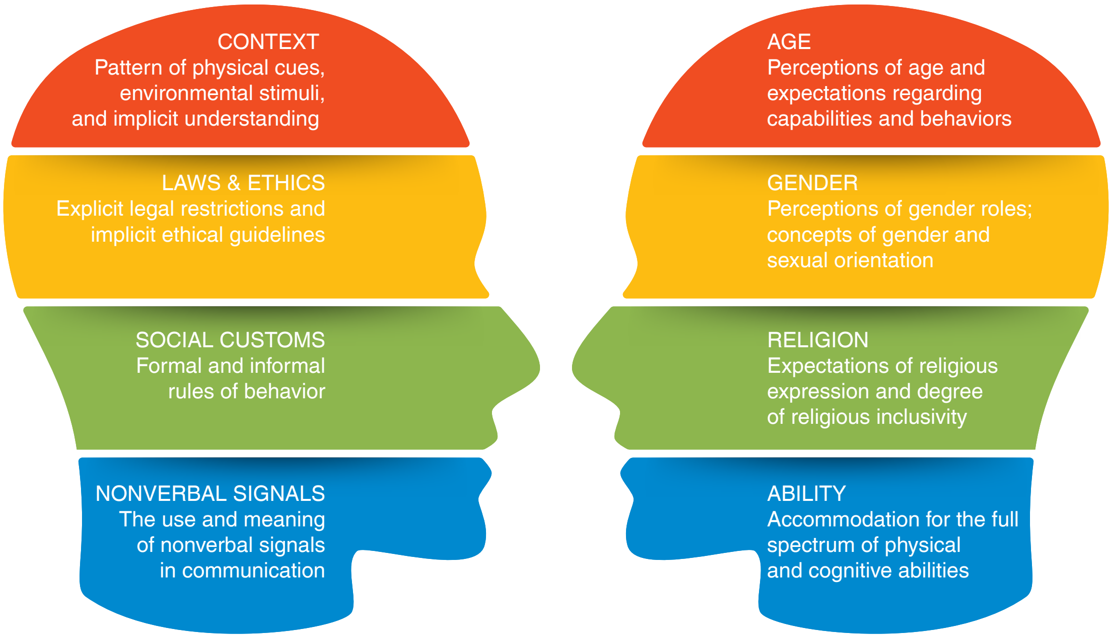


Figure 1.8 **Major Dimensions of Cultural Diversity**
Here are eight of the most significant variables that define any culture and can create differences between cultures.
Source: Seamuss/Shutterstock

THE ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES OF A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Smart business leaders recognize the competitive advantages of a diverse workforce that offers a broader spectrum of viewpoints and ideas, helps companies understand and identify with diverse markets, and enables companies to benefit from a wider range of employee talents. Numerous studies show a correlation between company performance and workforce diversity.[42]

Diverse workforces can improve decision making and innovation by bringing a broader range of viewpoints to the table.

For all their benefits, diverse workforces and markets do present some communication challenges, and understanding the effect of culture on communication is essential. **Culture** is a shared system of symbols, beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations, and norms for behavior. You are a member of several cultures, in fact, based on your national origin, religious beliefs, age, and other factors.

Diverse workforces offer numerous benefits, but they pose some communication challenges as well.

Culture influences the way people perceive the world and respond to others, which naturally affects the way they communicate as both senders and receivers. These influences operate on such a fundamental level that people often don't even recognize the influence of culture on their beliefs and behaviors.[43]

Cultural influences can have a profound effect on communication.

This subconscious effect of culture can create friction because it leads people to assume that everybody thinks and feels the way they do. For example, in a comparison of the 10 most important values in three cultures, people from the United States had no values in common with people from Japanese or Arab cultures.[44]

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Looking for jobs at diversity-minded companies?

DiversityWorking.com connects job searchers with companies that recognize the value of diverse workforces. Go to **real-time updates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

The first step to making sure cultural differences don't impede communication is recognizing key factors that distinguish one culture from another. **Cultural competency** is an appreciation for cultural differences that affect communication and the ability to adjust one's communication style to ensure that efforts to send and receive messages across cultural boundaries are successful. It requires a combination of attitude, knowledge, and skills.[45]

Cultural competency includes an appreciation for cultural differences and the ability to adjust one's communication habits to accommodate these differences.

KEY ASPECTS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

You don't need to become an expert in the details of every culture with which you do business, but you do need to attain a basic level of cultural proficiency to ensure successful communication.[46] You can start by recognizing and accommodating the differences described in the following sections. Be aware that this is an overview only, so some generalizations won't be accurate in every situation. Always consider the unique circumstances of each encounter when making communication decisions.

Cultural Context

Cultural context plays a critical role in the communication process.

Every attempt at communication occurs within a **cultural context**, the pattern of physical cues, environmental stimuli, and implicit understanding that conveys meaning between two members of the same culture. Cultures around the world vary widely in the role that context plays in communication.

In high-context cultures, communication relies less on the explicit content of a message than on the context of nonverbal actions and the environmental setting.

In a **high-context culture**, people rely less on verbal communication and more on the context of nonverbal actions and environmental setting to convey meaning. For instance, a Chinese speaker expects the receiver to discover the essence of a message and uses indirectness and metaphor to provide a web of meaning.[47] The indirect style can be a source of confusion during discussions with people from low-context cultures, who are more accustomed to receiving direct answers. Also, in high-context cultures, the rules of everyday life are rarely explicit; instead, as individuals grow up, they learn how to recognize situational cues (such as gestures and tone of voice) and how to respond as expected.[48] The primary role of communication in high-context cultures is building relationships, not exchanging information.[49]

In low-context cultures, communication relies more on content of the message and less on the environment and nonverbal cues.

In a **low-context culture** such as the predominant business culture in the United States, people rely more on verbal communication and less on circumstances and cues to convey meaning. In such cultures, rules and expectations are usually spelled out through explicit statements such as "Please wait until I'm finished" or "You're welcome to browse."[50] The primary task of communication in low-context cultures is exchanging information.[51]

Contextual differences are apparent in the way businesspeople approach situations such as decision making, problem solving, negotiating, interacting among levels in the organizational hierarchy, and socializing outside the workplace.[52] For instance, in low-context cultures, businesspeople tend to focus on the results of the decisions they face, a reflection of the cultural emphasis on logic and progress. In comparison, higher-context cultures emphasize the means or the method by which a decision will be made. Building or protecting relationships can be as important as the facts and information used in making the decisions.[53] Consequently, negotiators working on business deals in such cultures may spend most of their time together building relationships rather than hammering out contractual details.

The distinctions between high and low context are generalizations, of course, but they are important to keep in mind as guidelines. Communication tactics that work well in a high-context culture may backfire in a low-context culture and vice versa.

Legal and Ethical Differences

Members of different cultures sometimes have different views of what is ethical or even legal.

Cultural context influences legal and ethical behavior, which in turn can affect communication. For example, the meaning of business contracts can vary from culture to culture. While a manager from a U.S. company would tend to view a signed contract as the end of the negotiating process, with all the details hammered out, his or her counterpart in many Asian cultures might view the signed contract as an agreement to do business—and only then begin to negotiate the details of the deal.[54]

As you conduct business with colleagues and customers around the world, you'll find that legal systems and ethical standards differ from culture to culture. Making ethical choices across cultures can seem complicated, but you can keep your messages ethical by applying four principles:[55]

Learn the four principles that will help you keep your intercultural messages ethical.

- Actively seek mutual ground.
- Send and receive messages without judgment.
- Send messages that are honest.
- Show respect for cultural differences.

Social Customs

The formal and informal rules that govern social customs differ from culture to culture.

Social behavior is guided by numerous rules, some of them formal and specifically articulated (table manners are a good example) and others more informal and learned over time (such as the comfortable standing distance between two speakers in an office). The combination of formal and informal rules influences the overall behavior of everyone in a society in areas such as manners, attitudes toward time, individual versus community values, attitudes toward status and wealth, respect for authority, degrees of openness and inclusiveness, and conflict resolution.

These social customs affect how people behave in the workplace, and differences can create communication problems. For instance, the French cosmetics company L'Oreal trains its global workforce in a standardized approach to conflict management that encourages employees to express disagreement and share competing ideas. In the beginning, this style felt unnatural for its Chinese employees, whose culture discouraged open debate, but they grew to appreciate the advantages of the approach.[56]

Understanding the nuances of social customs takes time and effort, but most businesspeople are happy to explain the habits and expectations of their culture. Plus, they will view your curiosity as a sign of respect.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY EXPLORING THIS INTERACTIVE WEBSITE

Take a closer look at how the United States is changing

The U.S. population is aging and becoming more diverse; dive into the details with this interactive presentation. Go to **real-time updates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Nonverbal Communication

The meanings of gestures and other nonverbal signals can vary widely from culture to culture.

Nonverbal communication (communicating without the use of words) is a vital part of the communication process. Factors ranging from facial expressions to style of dress can influence the way receivers decode messages, and the interpretation of nonverbal signals can vary widely from culture to culture. Gestures or clothing choices that you don't think twice about, for example, might seem inappropriate or even offensive to someone from another culture. You'll learn more about nonverbal communication in Chapter 2.

Age Differences

Age is an important aspect of culture, both in the way different age groups are treated in a culture and in the cultural differences between age groups.

The multiple generations within a culture present another dimension of diversity. Today's workplaces can have three, four, or even five generations working side by side.[57] Cultures can have prevailing views about various age groups that influence communication. In some cultures, for example, youth is associated with strength, energy, possibilities, and freedom, whereas age is often associated with declining powers and a loss of respect and authority. In contrast, in cultures that value age and seniority, longevity earns respect and increasing power and freedom.

In addition to cultural values associated with various life stages, each of the generations in the workforce has been shaped by dramatically different world events, social trends, and technological advances. Therefore, it is not surprising that they often have different values, expectations, and communication habits. However, each generation can bring particular strengths to the workplace. For instance, older workers can offer broader experience, the benefits of important business relationships nurtured over many years, and high degrees of "practical intelligence"—the ability to solve complex, poorly defined problems.[58] Gaining the benefits of having multiple generations in a workplace may require some accommodation on everyone's part because of differing habits and perspectives.

Gender Differences

Perceptions of gender roles in business differ among cultures.

Gender influences workplace communication in several important ways. First, the perception of men and women in business varies from culture to culture, and gender bias can range from overt discrimination to subtle and even unconscious beliefs.

Second, although the ratio of men and women in entry-level professional positions is roughly equal, the percentage of management roles held by men increases steadily the further up the corporate ladder one looks. This imbalance can significantly affect communication in such areas as mentoring, which is a vital development opportunity for lower and middle managers who want to move into senior positions. In one recent survey, for example, some men in executive positions expressed reluctance to mentor women, partly because they find it easier to bond with other men and partly out of concerns over developing relationships that might seem inappropriate.[59]

Third, evidence suggests that men and women tend to have somewhat different communication styles. Broadly speaking, men emphasize content and outcomes in their communication efforts, whereas women place a higher premium on relationship maintenance.[60] As one example, men are more likely than women to try to negotiate a pay raise. Moreover, according to research by Linda Babcock of Carnegie Mellon University, both men and women tend to accept this disparity, viewing assertiveness as a positive quality in men but a negative quality in women. Changing these perceptions could go a long way toward improving communication and equity in the workplace.[61]

Fourth, outdated concepts of gender and sexual orientation continue to be a source of confusion, controversy, and discrimination. Many people do not fit or wish to be fit into a simplistic heterosexual, male/female categorization scheme, but discriminatory company policies and the behaviors and attitudes of supervisors and coworkers can deprive these individuals of a fair and satisfying work experience. In response, many companies have taken steps to ensure equal opportunities and fair treatment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) job applicants and employees. Companies can also take steps to make sure their nondiscrimination policies protect employees' right to gender expression based on personal gender identity.[62] Communication plays a critical role in all these efforts, from listening to the needs of diverse employee groups to providing clear policies and educating employees on important issues.

As workforce diversity broadens, more companies find themselves forced to address the issue of religion in the workplace.

Religious Differences

As one of the most personal and influential aspects of life, religion brings potential for controversy and conflict in the workplace setting—as evidenced by a significant rise in the number of religious discrimination lawsuits in recent years.[63] Many employees believe they should be able to follow and express the tenets of their faith in the workplace. However, companies may need to accommodate employee behaviors that may conflict with each other and with the demands of operating the business. The situation is complicated, with no simple answers that apply to every situation. As more companies work to establish inclusive workplaces, you can expect to see this issue being discussed more often in the coming years.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

Legal aspects of religion in the workplace

Get an overview of the laws that govern religious expression in the workplace. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

Assistive technologies and other adaptations can help companies support the contribution of people with varying levels of physical and cognitive impairment.

Ability Differences

People whose hearing, vision, cognitive ability, or physical ability to operate computers or other tools is impaired can be at a significant disadvantage in today's workplace. As with other elements of diversity, success starts with respect for individuals and sensitivity to differences. Employers can also invest in a variety of *assistive technologies* that help create a vital link for thousands of employees with disabilities, giving them opportunities to pursue a greater range of career paths and giving employers access to a broader base of talent.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

In any cross-cultural situation, you can communicate more effectively if you heed the following tips:[64]

Effective intercultural communication starts with efforts to avoid ethnocentrism and stereotyping.

- Avoid **ethnocentrism**, the tendency to judge all other groups according to the standards, behaviors, and customs of one's own group. When making such comparisons, people too often decide that their own group is superior.[65]
- Similarly, avoid **stereotyping**, or assigning a wide range of generalized—and often inaccurate—attributes to an individual on the basis of membership in a particular group, without considering the individual's unique characteristics.
- Don't automatically assume that others think, believe, or behave as you do.

- Accept differences in others without judging them.
- Learn how to communicate respect in various cultures.
- Tolerate ambiguity.
- Don't be distracted by superficial factors such as personal appearance.
- Recognize your own cultural biases.
- Be flexible and be prepared to change your habits and attitudes.
- Observe and learn; the more you know, the more effective you'll be.

MOBILE APP

Culture Compass offers insights into cultures from more than 100 countries around the world.

Even a small amount of research and practice will help you get through many business situations. In addition, most people respond positively to honest effort and good intentions, and many business associates will help you along if you show an interest in learning more about their cultures. Don't be afraid to ask questions. People will respect your concern and curiosity.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

Study the seven habits of effective intercultural communicators

The willingness to take risks is a key habit; see what the other six are. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

WRITING FOR MULTILINGUAL AUDIENCES

Ideally, businesses can communicate with employees, customers, and other stakeholders in their native languages, and many companies invest a lot of time and money in translating print and online communication to achieve this. However, translation isn't always cost-effective or possible. To write effectively for people who may not be comfortable using your language, remember these tips (see Figure 1.9 on the next page):[66]

Tips for improving your intercultural writing include using plain language, avoiding slang, and using short sentences and short paragraphs.

- **Use plain language.** Use short, precise words that say exactly what you mean.
- **Avoid words with multiple meanings.** As much as possible, choose words that have only one obvious meaning in the context in which you're using them. For example, "right" has more than 30 distinct meanings and can function as a noun, an adjective, a verb, and an adverb.[67] Whenever it is appropriate, use a synonym that conveys the specific meaning you intend, such as *correct*, *appropriate*, *desirable*, *moral*, *authentic*, or *privilege*.[68]
- **Be clear.** Rely on specific terms and concrete examples to explain your points.
- **Cite numbers carefully.** Use numerals (such as "27") instead of spelling them out ("twenty-seven").
- **Avoid slang and be careful with technical jargon and abbreviations.** Slang and other nonstandard usages can be difficult or impossible for your audience to translate.
- **Be brief.** Construct sentences that are short and simple.
- **Use short paragraphs.** Each paragraph should stick to one topic.
- **Use transitions generously.** Help readers follow your train of thought; you'll learn more about transitions in Chapter 4.

SPEAKING WITH MULTILINGUAL AUDIENCES

When speaking to people whose native language is not your own, you will find these tips helpful:

Tips for speaking with multilingual audiences include speaking clearly and slowly, looking for feedback, and listening carefully.

- **Speak clearly, simply, and relatively slowly.** Pronounce words clearly, stop at distinct punctuation points, and make one point at a time.
- **Look for feedback, but interpret it carefully.** Nods and smiles don't necessarily indicate understanding.
- **Rephrase if necessary.** If someone doesn't seem to understand you, rephrase using simpler words.
- **Clarify your meaning with repetition and examples.** Use concrete and specific examples to illustrate difficult or vague ideas.
- **Don't talk down to the other person.** Don't blame the listener for not understanding. Say, "Am I going too fast?" rather than "Is this too difficult for you?"

Ineffective

Assessing the office merger: bad, bad, and not good - Message (HTML)

File Message Insert Options Format Text Review Tell me what you want to do

From: cynthia.martin@derbyfield.com
To... <company_full>
Cc...
Subject: Assessing the office merger: bad, bad, and not good

Sigh...

When we folded the Broken Arrow office into the Tulsa headquarters last year, we anticipated some significant challenges during and after the consolidation. Closing a facility and combining two teams into one is never easy, but as I explained at the time, economic pressures—primarily the need to improve our all-important average-profit-per-client metric—forced us to make a difficult decision.

I wish I could say that we hit this one out of the park. If one were to judge from the three most important indicators, we have not yet accomplished our goals. Our performance has actually declined in two of the three.

- The latest customer satisfaction survey shows a fifteen-percent increase in the number of customers who say they will consider other service providers when their current contracts expire.
- Employee satisfaction scores have also dropped since the offices were merged. Only seventy-two percent of employees rate their job satisfaction as "high" or "very high," compared to eighty-seven percent before the merger.
- The only measure of the three that has stayed steady is our average profit per client. While this might sound like good news in comparison to the other two, astute readers will recall that improving this variable was the primary reason for combining the offices in the first place.

I'll be blunt: This ain't gonna cut it, folks.

(a) The subject line tries to be clever regarding the three factors discussed in the message, but the message is not clear.

(b) *Folded* is an example of an English word with multiple meanings, which complicate translation and can lead to confusion.

(c) The second sentence is complicated and forces readers to follow multiple ideas at once, making it difficult to translate.

(d) The idiomatic phrase "hit one out of the park" might not make sense to readers who aren't familiar with baseball.

(e) Spelling out numbers instead of using numerals creates more work for readers. Also, the three indicators referred to in paragraph above are buried in various places in the bullet points, making it harder for readers to find the key ideas.

(f) Nonstandard language ("ain't" and "gonna") and the idiomatic phrase "cut it" may confuse some readers.

Effective

We have not met our goals for the office merger - Message (HTML)

File Message Insert Options Format Text Review Tell me what you want to do

From: cynthia.martin@derbyfield.com
To... <company_full>
Cc...
Subject: We have not met our goals for the office merger

Hello everyone,

When we merged the Broken Arrow office with the Tulsa headquarters last year, we knew the move would be challenging. Closing a facility and combining two teams is never easy, but economic pressures forced us to make a difficult decision.

Unfortunately, we have not met the three goals we had for the merger: improving customer satisfaction, improving employee satisfaction, and increasing our average profit per client. In fact, our performance has actually *declined* in two of the three areas:

- Customer satisfaction has declined by 15% (as measured by the number of customers who say they will consider other service providers when their current contracts expire).
- Employee satisfaction has declined from 87% to 72% (as measured by the number of employees who rate their job satisfaction as "high" or "very high").
- Average profit per client has remained steady. While this might sound like good news in comparison to the other two, improving this variable was the primary reason for combining the offices.

Clearly, we need to take a closer look at this situation to see where we went wrong and where we can make improvements.

(a) The subject line is simple and easy to understand.

(b) *Merged* is easier to translate because it has fewer meanings and doesn't need the preposition *into*.

(c) The simplified structure of the second sentence is easier to translate and doesn't force the reader to process so many ideas at once.

(d) The idiomatic phrase "hit one out of the park" is replaced with clear, straightforward language.

(e) Using numerals (and the % symbol rather than *percent*) makes quantities and values easier to read. Also, the first bullet is reworded in order to use *declined* to match the term used in the introductory sentence immediately above, which simplifies interpretation. In the bullet points the three areas referred to in the introductory sentence now appear at the beginning of each statement.

(f) This sentence is clear to anyone who can read standard English, plus it avoids the accusatory tone of the original.

Pointers for Writing for Multilingual Audiences

- Use plain language.
- Be clear.
- Cite numbers carefully.
- Avoid slang and be careful with technical jargon and abbreviations.
- Be brief.
- Use short paragraphs.
- Use transitions generously.

Figure 1.9 Writing for Multilingual Audiences

In today's global and diversified work environment, chances are that many of your messages will be read by people whose native language is not English. Notice how specific wording changes and modifications to sentence structure make the effective version easier for non–native speakers to read.

Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation

- **Learn important phrases in your audience's language.** Learning common greetings and a few simple phrases simplifies initial contact and shows respect.
- **Listen carefully and respectfully.** If you do not understand a comment, ask the person to repeat it.
- **Adapt your conversation style to the other person's.** For instance, if the other person seems to be direct and straightforward, follow suit.
- **Check frequently for comprehension.** After you make each point, pause to gauge the other person's comprehension before moving on.
- **Clarify what will happen next.** At the end of a conversation, be sure that you and the other person agree on what has been said and decided.

Finally, remember that oral communication can be more difficult for audiences because it happens in real time and in the presence of other people. In some situations, written communication will be more successful because it gives the recipient the opportunity to translate in private and at his or her own pace.

MOBILE APP
iTranslate translates more than 80 languages and features voice input and output.

Using Technology to Improve Business Communication

7 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
List four general guidelines for using communication technology effectively.

Today's businesses rely heavily on technology to facilitate the communication process. In fact, many of the technologies you might use in your personal life, from Facebook to Twitter to video games, are also used in business. The four-page photo essay "Powerful Tools for Communicating Effectively" (pages 24–27) offers an overview of technologies that connect people in offices, factories, and other business settings.

The benefits of technology are not automatic, of course. To communicate effectively, you need to keep technology in perspective, use technological tools productively, guard against information overload, and disengage from devices frequently to communicate in person.

KEEPING TECHNOLOGY IN PERSPECTIVE

Don't let technology overwhelm the communication process.

Remember that technology is an aid to communication, not a replacement for it. Technology can't think for you, make up for a lack of essential skills, or ensure that communication really happens. For example, you might have a presence on every new social media platform that comes along, but if the messages you are sending are confusing or self-serving, none of that technology will help.

USING TOOLS PRODUCTIVELY

You don't have to become an expert to use most communication technologies effectively, but to work efficiently you do need to be familiar with basic features and functions. Conversely, don't worry about learning advanced features unless you really need to use them. Many software packages contain dozens of obscure features that typical business communicators rarely need.

GUARDING AGAINST INFORMATION OVERLOAD

The overuse or misuse of communication technology can lead to **information overload**, in which people receive more information than they can effectively process. Information overload makes it difficult to discriminate between useful and useless information, inhibits the ability to think deeply about complex situations, reduces productivity, and amplifies employee stress both on the job and at home—even to the point of causing health and relationship problems.[69]

To minimize information overload, make sure the messages you send are meaningful and important to your readers.

As a sender, make sure every message you send is meaningful and important to your receivers. In addition, when you send messages that aren't urgent or crucial, let people know so they can prioritize. Also, many communication systems let you mark messages

(continued on page 28)

POWERFUL TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

The tools of business communication evolve with every advance in digital technology. The 20 technologies highlighted on the next four pages help businesses redefine the office, collaborate and share information, connect with stakeholders, and build communities of people with shared interests and needs. For more examples of business uses of social media tools in particular, see pages 144–145 in Chapter 6.

REDEFINING THE OFFICE

Thanks to advances in mobile and distributed communication, the "office" is no longer what it used to be. Technology lets today's professionals work on the move while staying in close contact with colleagues, customers, and suppliers. These technologies are also redefining the very nature of some companies, as they replace traditional hierarchies with highly adaptable, virtual networks.

Web-Based Meetings

Andrey Popov/Shutterstock

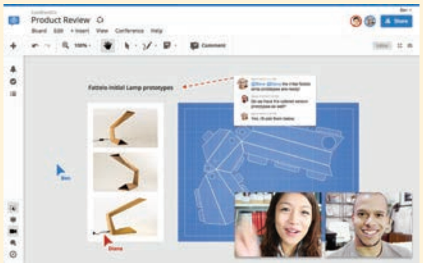
Web-based meetings allow team members from all over the world to interact in real time. Meetings can also be recorded for later playback and review. Various systems support instant messaging, video, collaborative editing tools, and more.

Videoconferencing and Telepresence

Dotshock/Shutterstock

Videoconferencing provides many of the beneits of in-person meetings at a fraction of the cost. Advanced systems feature *telepresence,* in which the video images of meeting participants are life-sized and extremely realistic.

Shared Online Workspaces



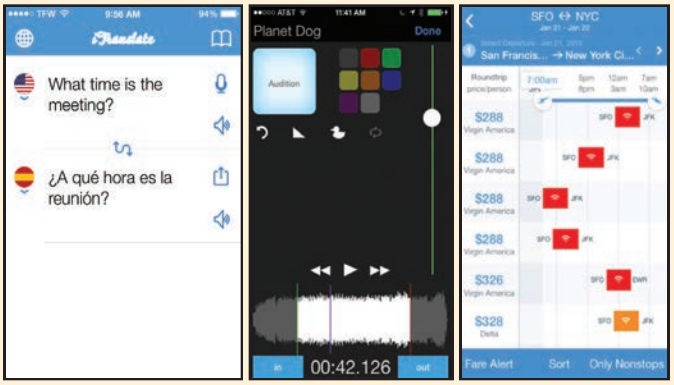
Courtesy of Conceptboard

Online workspaces help teams work productively, even if they are on the move or spread out around the world. In addition to providing controlled access to shared files and other digital resources, various systems include project management functions, real-time document editing, group messaging, and other collaboration tools.

Voice Technologies

Speech recognition (converting human speech to computer commands) and *speech synthesis* (converting computer commands to human speech) can enhance communication in many ways, including simplifying mobile computing, assisting workers who are unwilling or unable to use keyboards, and allowing "one-sided" conversations with information systems. *Speech analytics software* can evaluate conversations to improve customer service and other interactions. *Mobile VoIP* lets people make voice calls on WiFi networks to save connection and roaming charges.

Fancy Collection/Superstock

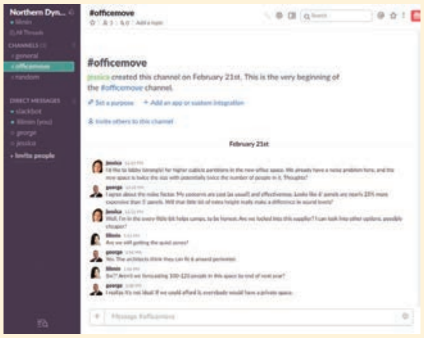


Courtesy of Sonico GmbH, www.itranslate.com/; Courtesy of bossjock studio, www.bossjockstudio.com; Courtesy of Hipmunk, http://www.hipmunk.com

Mobile Business Apps

As the range of business software applications on smartphones and tablet computers continues to expand, almost anything that can be accomplished on a regular computer can be done on a mobile device (although not always as efficiently or with the same feature sets).

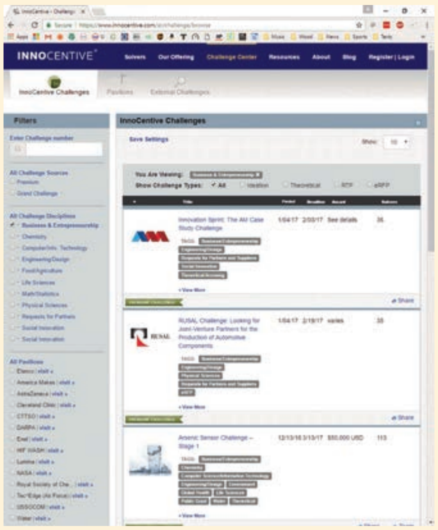
Workgroup Messaging



Courtesy of Slack Technologies, Inc. (Headshots: Flashon Studio/123RF; Charles Knox/Shutterstock; Alexandre Zveiger/Shutterstock)

With workgroup messaging systems, teams can set up a variety of channels to manage communication on specific topics, and individuals can configure alerts to make sure they get the messages they need without being flooded by messages they don't. All communication is automatically archived and available to search, so vital conversational threads and other resources are easy to find.

Crowdsourcing and Collaboration Platforms



Courtesy of Innocentive, Inc

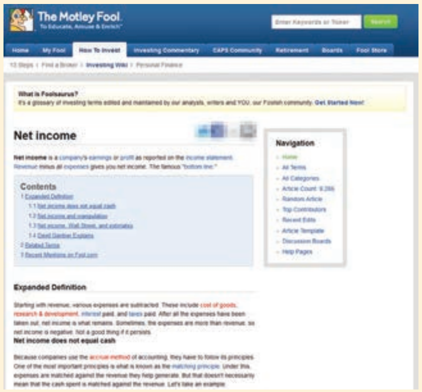
Crowdsourcing, inviting input from groups of people inside or outside the organization, can give companies access to a much wider range of ideas, solutions to problems, and insights into market trends.

COLLABORATING AND SHARING INFORMATION

The need to work with and share information quickly and easily is a constant in business. A wide variety of tools have been developed to facilitate collaboration and sharing, from general purpose systems such as instant messaging to more specialized capabilities such as data visualization.

Wikis

Wikis promote collaboration by simplifying the process of creating and editing online content. Anyone with access (some wikis are private; some are public) can add and modify pages as new information becomes available.



"The Motley Fool" from The Motley Fool website. Copyright © by Erik Stadnik. Used by permission of Erik Stadnik

Data Visualization

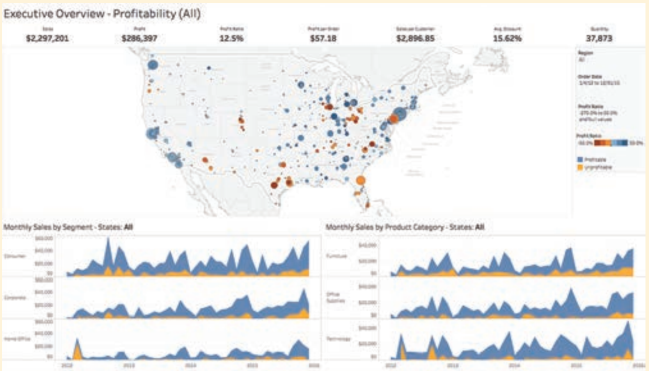


Tableau Software, Inc

Data visualization is a powerful tool for presenting and exploring sets of data that are very large, complex, or dynamic. As more companies rely on "big data" to identify and capitalize on market opportunities, the ability to extract insights from these large data sets can be an important competitive advantage.

Internet of Things

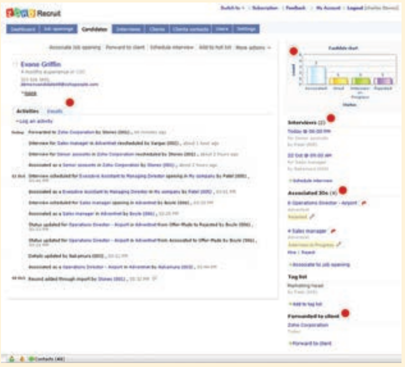
Courtesy of Advantech B+B SmartWorx

The *Internet of Things (IoT)* refers to the billions of smart, autonomous devices that are now connected via the Internet. These "things" are sensors, controllers, and other devices that send, receive, or process data. This machine-based communication can support or even replace conventional methods of business communication.

CONNECTING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Electronic media and social media in particular have redefined the relationships businesses have with internal and external stakeholders. Any groups affected by a company's decisions now have tools to give voice to their opinions and needs, and companies have many more conversational threads that need to be monitored and managed.

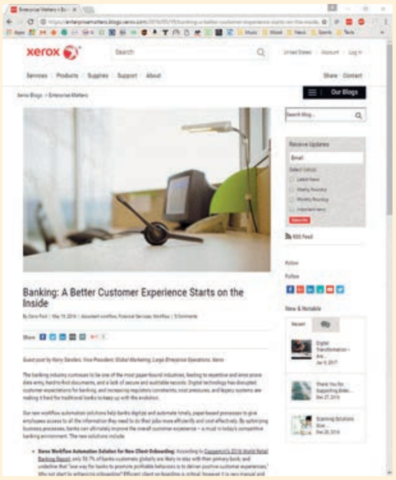
Applicant Tracking Systems



Screenshot from Recruit by ZOHO Corporation. Copyright © by Mason Hering. Used by permission of Mason Hering

Applicant tracking systems now play a huge role in employment-related communications. At virtually all large companies and many medium and small companies, your resume and application information will be entered into one of these systems. Recruiters use various tools to identify promising candidates and manage the interview and selection process. After hiring, some firms use *talent management systems* to track employee development through workers' entire careers at the company.

Blogging



Fuse/Corbis/Getty Images; Courtesy of Xerox Corporation

Blogs let companies connect with customers and other audiences in a fast and informal way. Commenting features let readers participate in the conversation, too.

Online Video

Courtesy of Lie-Nielsen Toolworks

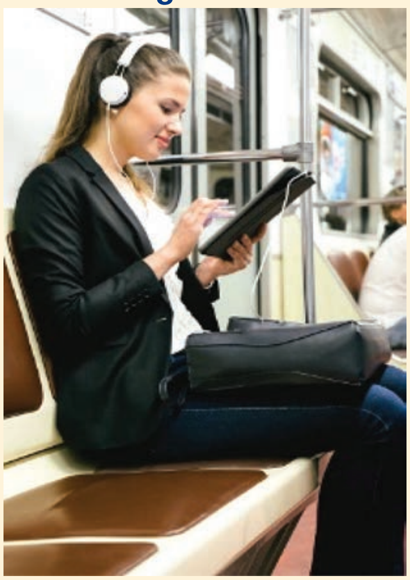
The combination of low-cost digital video cameras and video-sharing websites such as YouTube has spurred a revolution in business video. Product demonstrations, company overviews, promotional presentations, and training seminars are among the most popular applications of business video. *Branded channels* allow companies to present their videos as an integrated collection in a customized user interface.

Content Curation

Bovee and Thill, LLC

Content curation, selecting videos and other items of interest to followers of a website or blog, has become one of the most popular ways to connect with stakeholders. Pinterest and Scoop.it are among the leading technologies in this area.

Podcasting



RoBeDeRo/E+/Getty Images

With the portability and convenience of downloadable audio and video recordings, podcasts have become a popular means of delivering everything from college lectures to marketing messages. Podcasts are also used for internal communication, replacing conference calls, newsletters, and other media.

User-Generated Content

Courtesy of Chobani

User-generated content (UGC) is a great way to foster a sense of community among customers and enthusiasts. UGC can be hosted permanently on websites such as YouTube or Flickr, or generated as part of a one-time program, such as this Twitter campaign by the yogurt company Chobani.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

One of the most significant benefits of new communication technologies is the ease with which companies can foster a sense of community among customers, enthusiasts, and other groups. In some instances, the company establishes and manages the online community, while in others the community is driven by product champions or other enthusiasts.

Gaming Technologies

Monkey Business/Fotolia

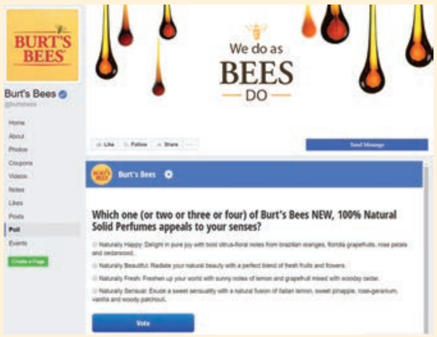
Adding game-playing elements to business processes (such as competitions for sales or service teams) can increase engagement from employees and customers alike.

Microblogging

Courtesy of farms.com

Twitter and other microblogging services are a great way to share ideas, solicit feedback, monitor market trends, and announce special deals and events.

Social Networking



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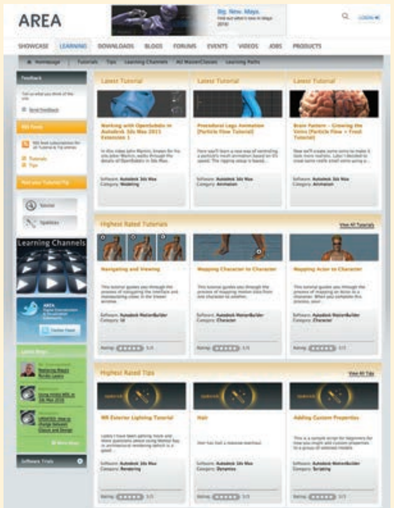
Facebook and other social networks have become important business communication tools for interacting with customers and other stakeholders.

Community Q&A Sites



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Many companies now rely heavily on communities of customers to help each other with product questions and other routine matters.

as urgent; however, use this feature only when it is truly necessary. Its overuse leads to annoyance and anxiety, not action.

Help protect yourself from information overload by carefully managing the flow of information you receive.

As a recipient, take steps to control the number and types of messages you receive. Use the filtering features of your communication systems to isolate high-priority messages that deserve your attention. Workgroup messaging systems such as Slack let you subscribe to channels on specific topics or conversational threads. Periodically fine-tune your social media feeds and email newsletters to make sure you are getting the information you truly need in order to do your job.

RECONNECTING WITH PEOPLE FREQUENTLY

No matter how much technology is involved, communication will always be about people connecting with people.

Even the best technologies can hinder communication if they are overused. For instance, a common complaint among employees is that managers rely too heavily on digital messages and don't communicate face-to-face often enough.[70] Speaking with people over the phone or in person can take more time and effort, and can sometimes force you to confront unpleasant situations directly, but it is often essential for solving tough problems and maintaining productive relationships.[71]

Moreover, even the best communication technologies can't show people who you really are. Remember to step out from behind the technology frequently to learn more about the people you work with—and to let them learn more about you.

For the latest information on business communication technologies, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Chapter 1, Professional Communication in Today's Digital, Social, Mobile World.

Developing Skills for Your Career

8 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Identify six related skills that you will have the opportunity to develop as you work on your communication skills in this course.

As page 4 emphasizes, communication skills are probably the single most important asset you can polish as you launch and manage your career. In addition to helping you develop these skills, this course gives you the opportunity to enhance a wide range of other skills that experts say are vital for success in the 21st-century workplace:

- **Critical thinking.** In many of the assignments and activities, you will need to define and solve problems and make decisions or form judgments about a particular situation or set of circumstances.
- **Collaboration.** Depending on the configuration of your course, you will have various opportunities to work with classmates on reports, presentations, and other projects.
- **Knowledge application and analysis.** The ability to learn a concept and then apply that knowledge to other challenges is a skill that employers value highly.
- **Business ethics and social responsibility.** As you work on projects throughout the course, be mindful of the ethical implications that you could encounter in similar projects on the job.
- **Information technology skills.** Use projects and activities to build your skills with technology, including word-processing apps, spreadsheets, presentation software, and messaging systems.
- **Data literacy.** You'll have multiple opportunities to fine-tune your data literacy skills, which include the ability to access, assess, interpret, manipulate, summarize, and communicate data.

The Future of Communication: Real-Time Translation

At the end of each chapter, you'll read about an emerging technology that has the potential to reshape business communication. Your instructor may assign the research task as a writing or discussion activity.

If you've ever tried to converse in a language other than you native tongue, you know what a challenge it can be. As a listener, you have to convert the incoming sounds to discrete words and assemble those words into coherent phrases and sentences in order to extract the meaning. And unlike reading a written document, you have to do all this processing almost instantaneously, without the luxury of going back over something you didn't get. As a speaker, you have to find the right words, assemble them into phrases and sentences using the second language's grammar rules, and then pronounce them all correctly enough so they make sense to the other party. Reaching this level of proficiency can take years of study and practice.

Translating speech in real time is a challenging technical proposition, but a number of companies are making progress. Perhaps most notable so far is Skype Translator, which can translate voice and video calls and instant messages in multiple languages. A variety of smartphone and smartwatch apps offer translation, where speakers take turns talking to the device, then listen as it outputs the translated speech. The technology promises to keep evolving, becoming more versatile and more accurate, but it has already reached the point of being a useful business communication tool.[72]

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Research several apps and other solutions that offer real-time translation. Are they being used successfully in business communication? Do you think they will ever make it unnecessary to learn other languages in order to communicate effectively with diverse, global audiences?

Chapter Review and Activities

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: Define *communication*, and explain the importance of effective business communication.

- Communication is the process of transferring information and meaning between senders and receivers using one or more written, oral, visual, or digital media.
- Communication is essential to every function in business, and poor communication skills will limit your career prospects, no matter how ambitious or skilled you are in other areas. Communication skills also give you an important competitive advantage in the job market.

Good communication skills helps companies in a variety of ways:

- A stronger sense of trust
- Closer ties with important communities
- Opportunities to influence conversations, perceptions, and trends
- Increased productivity and faster problem solving
- Better financial results and higher return for investors
- Earlier warning of potential problems
- Stronger decision making
- Clearer and more persuasive marketing messages
- Greater employee engagement

Objective 2: Explain what it means to communicate as a professional in a business context.

Communicating as a professional starts with being a professional:

- Striving to excel
- Being dependable and accountable
- Being a team player
- Demonstrating a sense of etiquette
- Making ethical decisions
- Maintaining a positive outlook

Employers will expect you to have or develop a variety of skills:

- Demonstrating digital information fluency
- Organizing ideas and information
- Expressing yourself coherently and persuasively
- Listening actively
- Communicating effectively with diverse audiences
- Using communication technologies
- Following accepted standards of grammar, spelling, and style
- Communicating ethically
- Thinking critically

Objective 3: Describe the communication process model, and explain how social media are changing the nature of business communication.

Communication can be modeled as an eight-step process:

- The sender (1) has an idea, (2) encodes that idea in a message, (3) produces the message in a transmittable medium, and (4) transmits the message through a channel.
- The audience (5) receives the message, (6) decodes it, (7) responds to it, and (8) optionally provides feedback.

Two major effects of social media are

- Giving stakeholders a powerful way to initiate and participate in conversations in the marketplace
- Changing the nature of messages; a message initiated by one party is often revised and reshaped by the web of participants as they share it and comment on it

Objective 4: Outline the challenges and opportunities of mobile communication in business.

Mobile communication creates challenges and opportunities:

- The mixed blessing of constant connectivity
- Challenge of creating and consuming content on small screens and keyboards
- Multitasking behavior of mobile users in chaotic environments
- Pressure put on traditional expectations of grammar and spelling
- Ability to serve as sensory and cognitive extensions
- Security and privacy concerns
- Ability to use business-focused apps
- Improvements to productivity and collaboration
- More engaging experiences for audiences

Objective 5: Define *ethics*, explain the difference between an ethical dilemma and an ethical lapse, and list six guidelines for making ethical communication choices.

- Ethics are the accepted principles of conduct that govern behavior within a society.
- An ethical dilemma involves choosing among alternatives that aren't clear-cut, whereas an ethical lapse is a clearly unethical (and frequently illegal) choice.

Here are six guidelines for making ethical decisions:

- Define the situation fairly and accurately.
- Make sure your intentions are honest and fair.
- Understand the impact your messages will have on others.
- Aim to achieve the greatest possible good while doing the least possible harm.
- Make sure your underlying assumptions won't change over time.
- Make sure you are comfortable with your choices.

Objective 6: Explain how cultural diversity affects business communication, and describe the steps you can take to communicate more effectively across cultural boundaries.

Cultural diversity affects business communication in multiple ways:

- It influences the way people create, send, and interpret messages.
- The influences of culture can be profound, and they are often unrecognized by the people involved.

Here are eight major aspects of culture that affect communication:

- Cultural context
- Legal and ethical differences
- Social customs
- Nonverbal communication
- Age
- Gender
- Religion
- Ability

Take these steps to communicate effectively across cultures:

- Avoid ethnocentrism and stereotyping.
- Don't make assumptions.
- Avoid judgment.
- Learn to communicate respect.
- Tolerate ambiguity.
- Don't be distracted by superficial elements.
- Recognize your own cultural biases.
- Be flexible.
- Observe and learn.

Objective 7: List four general guidelines for using communication technology effectively.

Follow these guidelines to use technology effectively:

- Keep technology in perspective.
- Learn your tools so you can use them productively.
- Guard against information overload.
- Reconnect with people frequently.

Objective 8: Identify six related skills that you will have the opportunity to develop as you work on your communication skills in this course.

The course will help you develop these skills, in addition to communication:

- Critical thinking
- Collaboration
- Knowledge application and analysis
- Business ethics and social responsibility
- Information technology skills
- Data literacy

Note: As this book went to press, Twitter was testing a change in its length limit from 140 to 280 characters. Your instructor may choose to modify the Twitter writing assignments accordingly.

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

1-1. Why is communication important to your career? [LO-1]

1-2. What are the six traits of professionalism? [LO-2]

★ **1-3.** How does the social media communication change the basic communication process? [LO-3]

1-4. What does *BYOD* refer to and what are the implications of this phenomenon? [LO-4]

1-5. What is an ethical dilemma? [LO-5]

1-6. What is an ethical lapse? [LO-5]

★ **1-7.** What are the potential advantages of a diverse workforce? [LO-6]

1-8. What is cultural competence? [LO-6]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

★ **1-9.** Why can it be argued that communication is the most important business skill? [LO-1]

★ **1-10.** How does a company's use of social media reflect audience-centered communication? [LO-2]

1-11. How does your understanding of the communication process help you conduct business more effectively? [LO-3]

1-12. What changes would you make to your email messages if you know your recipients typically read them while walking or riding on mass transit? [LO-4]

1-13. You're the CEO of a company whose sales are declining, and there is a 50–50 chance you will need to lay off some of your employees sometime in the next two to three months. You have to decide whether to tell them now so they can look for new jobs as soon as possible, even though you're not yet sure layoffs will be necessary, or wait until you are sure layoffs will occur. Explain why this is an ethical dilemma. Be sure to consider the effect a sudden exodus of valuable employees could have on the company's prospects. [LO-5]

1-14. Why is it important to understand your own culture when attempting to communicate with people from other cultures? [LO-6]

Practice Your Skills

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information can be found in another chapter, as indicated.

1-15. Writing: Compositional Modes: Summaries [LO-1], Chapter 3 Write a paragraph introducing yourself to your instructor and your class. Address such areas as your background, interests, achievements, and goals. Submit your paragraph using email, a blog, or a social network, as indicated by your instructor.

1-16. Media Skills: Microblogging [LO-1], Chapter 6 Write four messages of no more than 140 characters each (short enough to work as Twitter tweets, in other words) to persuade other college students to take the business communication course. Think of the first message as the "headline" of an advertisement that makes a bold promise regarding the value this course offers every aspiring business professional. The next three messages should be support points that provide evidence to back up the promise made in the first message.[73]

1-17. Fundamentals: Analyzing Communication Effectiveness [LO-1] Identify a video clip (on YouTube or another online source) that you believe represents an example of effective communication. It can be in any context, business or otherwise, but make sure it is something appropriate to discuss in class. Post a link to the video on your class blog, along with a brief written summary of why you think this example shows effective communication in action.

1-18. Planning: Assessing Audience Needs [LO-2], Chapter 3 Choose a business career that sounds interesting to you and imagine you are getting ready to apply for jobs in that field. Naturally, you want to create a compelling, audience-focused résumé that answers the key questions a hiring manager is most likely to have. Identify three personal or professional qualities you have that would be important for someone in this career field. Write a brief statement (one or two sentences) regarding each quality, describing in audience-focused terms how you can contribute to a company in this respect. Submit your statements via email or class blog.

1-19. Communication Etiquette: Communicating with Sensitivity and Tact [LO-2] Potential customers often visit your production facility before making purchase decisions. You and the people who report to you in the sales department have received extensive training in etiquette issues because you frequently deal with high-profile clients. However, the rest of the workforce has not received such training, and you worry that someone might inadvertently say or do something that would offend one of these potential customers. In a two-paragraph email message, explain to the general manager why you think anyone who might come in contact with customers should receive basic etiquette training.

1-20. Collaboration: Team Projects; Planning: Assessing Audience Needs [LO-2], Chapter 2, Chapter 3 Your boss has asked your work group to research and report on corporate child-care facilities. Of course, you'll want to know who (besides your boss) will be reading your report. Working with two team members, list four or five other things you'll want to know about the situation and about your audience before starting your research. Briefly explain why each of the items on your list is important.

1-21. Fundamentals: Evaluating Communication Effectiveness [LO-3] Use the eight phases of the communication process to analyze a miscommunication you've recently had with a coworker, supervisor, classmate, instructor, friend, or family member. What idea were you trying to share? How did you encode and transmit it? Did the receiver get the message? Did the receiver decode the message as you had intended? How do you know? Based on your analysis, what do you think prevented your successful communication in this instance? Summarize your conclusions in an email message to your instructor.

1-22. Writing: Compositional Modes: Persuasion [LO-3], Chapter 9 Social media use varies widely from company to company. Some firms enthusiastically embrace these new tools and new approaches. Others have taken a more cautious approach, either delaying the adoption of social media or restricting their use. You work for an "old school" manufacturing firm that prohibits employees from using social media during work hours. Company management believes that social media offer little or no business value and distract employees from more important duties. In a brief email message to your boss, identify the ways that social media are changing the communication process and relationships between companies and their employees, customers, and communities. Provide at least one example of a real manufacturing company that uses social media.

1-23. Fundamentals: Analyzing Communication Effectiveness [LO-4] Using a mobile device, visit the websites of five companies that make products or provide services you buy or might buy in the future. Which of the websites is the most user-friendly? How does it differ from the other sites? Do any of the companies offer a mobile shopping app for your device?

1-24. **Communication Ethics: Distinguishing Ethical Dilemmas and Ethical Lapses** [**LO-5**] Explain why you think each of the following is or is not ethical:

a. Keeping quiet about a possible environmental hazard you've just discovered in your company's processing plant
b. Overselling the benefits of work group messaging to your company's managers; they never seem to understand the benefits of technology, so you believe it's the only way to convince them to make the right choice
c. Telling a colleague that you overheard the company's owners talking about the possibility of closing the plant and laying off the entire workforce
d. Submitting a budget request for new equipment without telling your manager that the cost is only an estimate; you haven't had time to research the true cost yet, but you're worried that if you don't get your request in now you won't get funding until next year

1-25. **Communication Ethics: Protecting Company Resources** [**LO-5**] Blogging is a popular way for employees to communicate with customers and other parties outside the company. In some cases, employee blogs have been quite beneficial for both companies and their customers, providing helpful information and "putting a human face" on otherwise formal and imposing corporations. In other cases, however, employees have been fired for posting information their employers said was inappropriate. One particular area of concern is criticism of the company or individual managers. Should employees be allowed to criticize their employers in a public forum such as a blog? In a brief email message, argue for or against company policies that prohibit any critical information in employee blogs.

1-26. **Communication Ethics: Providing Ethical Leadership** [**LO-5**] Visit Cisco's website at **www.cisco.com** and find the company's *code of conduct*. In a brief email message or post to a class blog, describe three specific examples of things you could do that would violate these provisions; then list at least three opportunities that Cisco provides its employees to report ethics violations or ask questions regarding ethical dilemmas.

1-27. **Communication Ethics: Resolving Ethical Dilemmas** [**LO-5**] Knowing that you have numerous friends throughout the company, your boss relies on you for feedback concerning employee morale and other issues affecting the staff. She recently approached you and asked you to start reporting any behavior that might violate company polices, from taking office supplies home to making personal long-distance calls. List the issues you'd like to discuss with her before you respond to her request.

1-28. **Intercultural Communication: Writing for Multiple-Language Audiences** [**LO-6**] Your boss wants to send a brief email message to welcome employees recently transferred to your department from your Hong Kong branch. They all speak English to some degree, but your boss asks you to review her message for clarity. What would you suggest your boss change in the following email message—and why? Would you consider this message to be audience-centered? Why or why not?

> I wanted to welcome you ASAP to our little family here in the states. It's high time we shook hands in person and not just across the sea. I'm pleased as punch about getting to know you all, and I for one will do my level best to sell you on America.

1-29. **Intercultural Communication: Recognizing Cultural Variations; Collaboration: Solving Problems** [**LO-6**], **Chapter 2** Working with two other students, prepare a list of 10 examples of slang (in your own language) that would probably be misinterpreted or misunderstood during a business conversation with someone from another culture. Next to each example, suggest other words you might use to convey the same message. Do the alternatives mean exactly the same as the original slang or idiom? Summarize your findings in an email message or post for a class blog.

1-30. **Intercultural Communication: Recognizing Cultural Variations** [**LO-6**] Choose a country with which you are not familiar. Research the culture and write a one-page report outlining what a U.S. businessperson would need to know about concepts of personal space and rules of social behavior in order to conduct business successfully in that country.

1-31. **Intercultural Communication: Recognizing Cultural Variations** [**LO-6**] Differences in gender, age, and physical and cognitive abilities contribute to the diversity of today's workforce. Working with a classmate, role-play a conversation in which

a. A woman is being interviewed for a job by a male human resources manager
b. An older person is being interviewed for a job by a younger human resources manager
c. A person using a wheelchair is being interviewed for a job by a person who can walk

How did differences between the applicant and the interviewer shape the communication? What can you do to improve communication in such situations? Summarize your findings in an email message or post for a class blog.

1-32. **Technology: Using Communication Tools** [**LO-7**] Find a free online communication service that you have no experience using as a content creator or contributor. Services to consider include blogging (such as Blogger), microblogging (such as Twitter), and user-generated content sites (such as YouTube). Perform a basic task such as opening an account or setting up a blog. Was the task easy to perform? Were the instructions clear? Could you find help online if you needed it? Is there anything about the experience that could be improved? Summarize your conclusions in a brief email message to your instructor.

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Locate an example of professional communication from a reputable online source. It can reflect any aspect of business communication, from an advertisement or a press release to a company blog or website. Evaluate this communication effort in light of any aspect of this chapter that is relevant to the sample and interesting to you. For example, is the piece effective? Audience-centered? Ethical? Using whatever medium your instructor requests, write a brief analysis of the piece (no more than one page), citing specific elements from the piece and support from the chapter.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at **websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that explains at least one essential business communication skill. Write a brief email message to your instructor or a post for your class blog describing the item you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from **real-timeupdates.com/bce8**; select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 1, Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Nouns

Use the following self-assessment exercises to improve your knowledge of and power over English grammar, mechanics, and usage. Review all of Section 1.1 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage that appears at the end of this book. Answers to these exercises appear on page 489.

For the following items, indicate which words are common nouns and which are proper nouns.

1-33. Give the balance sheet to Melissa.

1-34. After three years of declining sales, the board fired the CEO and hired a replacement from Google.

1-35. Tarnower Corporation donates a portion of its profits to charity every year.

1-36. Which aluminum bolts are packaged?

1-37. Please send the Joneses a dozen of each of the following: stopwatches, canteens, headbands, and wristbands.

For the following items, underline the subjects and circle the objects.

1-38. The technician has already repaired the machine for the client.

1-39. An attorney will talk to the group about incorporation.

1-40. After her vacation, the buyer prepared a third-quarter budget.

1-41. More than 90 percent of the research staff has contributed to the new wiki.

1-42. Accuracy overrides speed in importance.

For the following items, indicate any inappropriate noun plurals and possessives and provide the correct form.

1-43. Make sure that all copys include the new addresses.

1-44. Ask Jennings to collect all employee's donations for the Red Cross drive.

1-45. Charlie now has two son-in-laws to help him with his two online business's.

1-46. Avoid using too many parenthesises when writing your reports.

1-47. Follow President Nesses rules about what constitutes a weeks work.

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

1-48. If a broken down unproductive guy like Carl can get a raise; why can't a take charge guy like me get one?

1-49. Visit our website and sign up for "On Your Toes", our free newsletter that keeps you informed of promotions, discounts and about Internet-only specials.

1-50. As of March, 2018, the Board of Directors have 9 members including: three women, one African-American, and one American of Hispanic descent.

1-51. As one of the nearly 3,000,000 New York Life policyholders eligible to vote, we urge you to approve the new investment advisory agreement.

1-52. Gerrald Higgins, vice president for marketing, told us reporters that Capital One provides financial services to one-fourth of homes in the United States.

1-53. Our Customer Relations associates work with people everyday to answer questions, provide assistance, and helping solve problems.

1-54. If anyone breaches the lease, its likely that the landlord will file legal action against them to collect on the remainder of they're lease.

1-55. A IRA is one of the most common plans for the self-employed because of it's ease of setting up and administering.

1-56. My advise to you is, to put you're mission statement on your web cite.

1-57. According to Karen Smiths' report small-business owners do'nt recognize the full effect that layoffs and terminations are liable to have on the motivation of surviving employees'.

1-58. To exacerbate the processing of your US tax return, use the mailing label and bar coded envelope that comes with your tax package.

1-59. The NASE have implemented a exciting array of programs that make it more easy for legislative opinions and concerns to be voiced by you.

1-60. Keep in mind the old saying "When we laugh the world laugh with us, when you cry you cry alone."

1-61. Albert Edmunds and me are Owners of the real estate firm of Edmunds & Cale, which have recently opened a new office in San Diego co.

1-62. The memo inferred that the economic downturn will have a greater affect on the company's bottom line then we previously assumed, this was the worse news we could of gotten.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C) or download the document and make the corrections in your word-processing software.

Memo

TO: All Employees

FROM: Roberta Smith, Personnel Director

DATE: December 28, 2018

SUBJECT: time Cards

After reviewing our Current Method of keeping track of employee hours; we have concluded that time cards leave a lot to be desired. So starting Monday, we have a new system, a time clock. You just have to punch in and punch out; whenever you will come and go from your work area's.

The new system may take a little while to get used to, but should be helpful to those of us who are making a new years resolution to be more punctual.

Happy New Year to all!

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

1-63. What benefits does effective communication give you and your organization? [LO-1]

1-64. Why is it important to also connect in person when using technology to communicate? [LO-7]

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2 Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, and Business Etiquette

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. List the advantages and disadvantages of working in teams, and describe the characteristics of effective teams.
2. Offer guidelines for collaborative communication, identify major collaboration technologies, and explain how to give constructive feedback.
3. List the key steps needed to ensure productive team meetings, and identify the most common meeting technologies.
4. Identify the major types of listening, describe the listening process, and explain how good listeners overcome barriers at each stage of the process.
5. Explain the importance of nonverbal communication, and identify six major categories of nonverbal expression.
6. Explain the importance of business etiquette, and identify five key areas in which good etiquette is essential.

MyLab Business Communication

If your instructor is using MyLab Business Communication, visit **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for videos, simulations, and writing exercises.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"There's nothing better than a new and enthusiastic team that, on a shoestring budget, tries to do something that's never been done before."[1]

—Tricia Naddaff, president, Management Research Group

Tricia Naddaff's observation about high-performance teams hints at the near-magic that collaboration can bring to business. With the right people in the right circumstances, teams can innovate and produce results far beyond what the individual team members could achieve on their own. At the other extreme, when things go sideways, team projects can be a demoralizing waste of time and money. The difference often comes down to communication. This chapter explores the communication skills you need in order to succeed in team settings, along with several other interpersonal communication topics that will help you on the job: productive meetings, active listening, nonverbal communication, and business etiquette.

Courtesy of Tricia Naddaff, President of Management Research Group

Management consultant Tricia Naddaff recognizes the productivity and innovation that successful teamwork can generate.

Communicating Effectively in Teams

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
List the advantages and disadvantages of working in teams, and describe the characteristics of effective teams.

Collaboration is a prime business skill expected in most professions.

Self-managed teams rely on themselves for guidance, without direction from a traditional manager.

Collaboration—working together to meet complex challenges—is a prime skill expected in a wide range of professions. A **team** is a unit of two or more people who share a mission and the responsibility for working to achieve their goal.[2] Some teams meet and work together in person; others are *virtual teams*, whose members work in different locations and interact through one or more digital channels.

Teams are often at the core of **participative management**, the effort to involve employees in the company's decision making. Some companies feature *self-managed* teams that have no managers, and others are even experimenting with no traditional managers at all.[3] As you can imagine, when the formal communication network diminishes, the burden on employees to find and share vital information can increase.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF TEAMS

Teams can provide businesses and individuals with a variety of benefits:[4]

Successful teamwork can provide a wide range of benefits, from increased knowledge to giving people a sense of community.

- **More information and knowledge.** By pooling the experience of several individuals, a team has access to more information during the decision-making process.
- **Learning opportunities.** Teams that bring together people with various work specialties give people the chance to learn from each other.
- **Boldness.** People who might hesitate to take calculated risks on their own may be more willing to make bold moves as part of a team.
- **Accountability.** Most people want to avoid letting others down, and participating in teams creates a built-in sense of accountability to others.
- **Trust building.** Working closely in teams lets people develop trust in their colleagues, which can be beneficial outside the confines of the team activities as well.
- **A broader range of viewpoints.** Diverse teams in particular can bring a variety of perspectives that improve decision making.
- **Buy-in for solutions the team creates.** Those who participate in making a decision are more likely to support it and encourage others to accept it.
- **Improved performance.** Effective teams can be better than top-performing individuals at solving complex problems.
- **A sense of community in good times and bad.** Being on a team helps individuals share in the celebration of successes and provides emotional support during challenging periods.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE
Three factors that distinguish smart teams
Common sense might tell you that smarter individuals make for a smarter team, but these researchers discovered otherwise. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Although teamwork has many advantages, teams need to be aware of and work to counter the following potential disadvantages:

Potential disadvantages of team efforts include groupthink, hidden agendas, cost, and employee overload.

- **Groupthink.** Like other social structures, business teams can generate tremendous pressure to conform. **Groupthink** occurs when peer pressure causes individual team members to withhold contrary opinions and to go along with decisions they don't really believe in. The consequences of groupthink can range from bland, unimaginative work to outright disasters.
- **Hidden agendas.** Some team members may have a **hidden agenda**—a private, counterproductive motive, such as a desire to take control of the group, to undermine someone else on the team, or to pursue an incompatible goal.
- **Cost.** Aligning schedules, arranging meetings, and coordinating individual parts of a project can consume a lot of time and money.
- **Overload.** Some companies have embraced collaborative work approaches to such an extent that they're overloading employees with team assignments.[5]

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEAMS

A wide variety of factors can account for team success, but here are the most significant that researchers have identified:[6]

The attributes of effective teams include a shared sense of purpose, the right mix of talents and personalities, and open and honest communication.

- A shared sense of purpose and compatible values
- A clear and challenging goal
- A belief in the value of the team's efforts
- A well-balanced mix of people who can provide the insights and skills needed to achieve the goal
- Positive behavioral norms that promote *psychological safety*, encouraging people to share information, propose unproven ideas, and express vulnerability without fear of repercussion
- A willingness to put the team's needs ahead of individual needs
- Open and honest communication

Notice how all of these traits rely on communication, both in the information that is shared and the way people interact with one another.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

Google's research into effective teamwork

Google used its world-class data analysis capabilities to identify five factors that most effective teams consistently exhibit. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN TEAM SETTINGS

Some conflict in team settings is natural and isn't necessarily bad. Conflict can be helpful if it forces important issues into the open, increases the involvement of team members, or generates creative ideas for solving problems. Diverse points of view and a mix of work and life experiences can help teams be more creative and avoid the damaging effects of groupthink.[7]

Conflict in team settings isn't necessarily bad; diverse points of view can boost creativity and help avoid groupthink.

In fact, teams can make creative conflict a part of their problem-solving method, such as assigning one member to take a cautious approach, one to take a daring approach, one to take a logical approach, and one to take a creative approach.[8] By looking at challenges from different angles, teams can often reach a deeper understanding of situations and design more effective responses.

Conflict becomes destructive if it diverts energy from important issues, destroys morale, or divides the team.[9] Destructive conflict is often the result of disagreement over the team's goals, an unwillingness to put the team's needs ahead of individual needs, personal animosity between members, prejudices, wildly different viewpoints, or other deep-seated issues.

Conflict becomes destructive when it begins to derail the team's efforts.

Team leaders and members need to take steps to prevent this sort of conflict and to resolve it quickly if it does appear. Before teams even start work on their assigned projects, they can take a proactive approach and explore possible areas of disagreement that could derail their efforts later. By having an open, sincere discussion about the best ways to work together, team members can devise rules and expectations that help ensure smooth collaboration.[10]

Teams should take proactive steps to avoid conflicts and move quickly if conflict does arise.

If conflicts do surface after the team starts its work, the best advice is to deal with them quickly, before they escalate and drag the team down. Get those who are directly involved in the conflict to participate in resolving it. These team members should choose their words and nonverbal gestures carefully in order to maintain focus on the problem at hand and to avoid further inflaming an already uncomfortable situation.[11] Getting emotions out in the open can help people separate facts from feelings, thereby letting the team shift the focus away from the personal aspects of the conflict and toward various possibilities for solving it.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

Ten tips to help resolve workplace conflict

Use these techniques to defuse conflict and help people focus on solving problems. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

Collaborating on Communication Efforts

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Offer guidelines for collaborative communication, identify major collaboration technologies, and explain how to give constructive feedback.

When a team collaborates on reports, websites, presentations, and other communication projects, the collective energy and expertise of the various members can produce results that transcend what each individual could do alone.[12] However, collaborating on team messages requires special effort and planning.

GUIDELINES FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING

MOBILE APP
The **Basecamp** app provides mobile access to this popular collaboration and project management system.

In any collaborative effort, team members coming from different backgrounds may have different work habits or priorities: A technical expert may focus on accuracy and scientific standards; an editor may be more concerned about organization and coherence; and a manager may focus on schedules, cost, and corporate goals. In addition, team members differ in writing styles, work habits, and personality traits.

To collaborate effectively, everyone involved must be flexible and open to other opinions, focusing on team objectives rather than on individual priorities.[13] Most ideas can be expressed in many ways, so avoid the "my way is best" attitude when working with others. The following guidelines will help you collaborate more successfully:[14]

Successful collaborative writing requires a number of steps, from selecting the right partners and agreeing on project goals to establishing clear processes.

- **Select collaborators carefully.** Whenever possible, choose a combination of people who together have the experience, information, and talent needed for each project.
- **Agree on project goals before you start.** Starting without a clear idea of what the team hopes to accomplish inevitably leads to frustration and wasted time.
- **Give your team time to bond before diving in.** If people haven't had the opportunity to work together before, try to arrange time so that they can get to know each other before being asked to collaborate.
- **Clarify individual responsibilities.** Because members will be depending on each other, make sure individual responsibilities are clear.
- **Establish clear processes.** Make sure everyone knows how the work will be managed from start to finish. A vital question here is *version control*, which prevents two or more people from changing a document at the same time without each other's knowledge. In some cases, the app or system you use will manage this for you.
- **Think carefully about composing as a group.** In contrast to the other tasks in collaborative projects, attempting to do the actual composing as a group isn't always a productive approach. Crafting sentences is a highly individualized activity that requires lots of thought and reflection, and most ideas can be expressed effectively in more than one way. Two (or more) people could have equally valid ways to express something and spend time trying to convince the group to use their versions. The result could be a slower process that doesn't produce meaningfully better results. You may find times when it is helpful to involve multiple writers, such as when you're struggling to express a particular idea clearly. However, chances are you'll find it more efficient to plan, research, and outline together but assign the task of writing to one person or divide larger projects among multiple writers. If you divide the writing, try to have one person do a final revision to ensure a consistent style.
- **Make sure tools are ready and compatible across the team.** Even minor details such as different versions of software can delay projects.
- **Check to see how things are going along the way.** Don't assume that everything is working just because you don't hear anything negative.

Think carefully before trying to compose as a group; the clash of competing styles can make the process slow and unproductive.

TECHNOLOGIES FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING

Collaboration tools range from comment and review features in apps to dedicated collaboration platforms.

A variety of tools are available to help writers collaborate on everything from short documents to entire websites. The simplest tools are features in Google Docs, Microsoft Word, and similar products that support *commenting* (which lets colleagues write comments in a document without modifying the document text) and *revision tracking* or *reviewing* (which lets one or more writers propose changes to the text while keeping everyone's edits separate and reversible). The widely used Adobe Acrobat digital document system (PDF files) also has extensive group review and comment features. Some of these tools support live collaboration, so two or more people can work on a document at the same time and see each other's changes as they are made. Most of the major writing tools offer *cloud-based collaboration*, which means the content is stored in a server somewhere on the Internet, and each user accesses it through an app or web browser.

Collaboration Systems

When companies have a large volume of content that needs to be created and updated by multiple writers, they can use a more comprehensive approach that supports collaboration while storing, controlling, and distributing the content. Collaborating on websites often involves the use of a **content management system**, which organizes and controls digital content and can include features that help team members work together on webpages and other documents. These range from simple blogging systems to powerful *enterprise* systems that manage web content across an entire corporation. Many systems include *work flow* features that control how pages or documents can be created, edited, and published.

A *content management system* organizes and controls digital content, such as the pages on a corporate website.

In contrast to the formal controls of a content management system, a **wiki**, from the Hawaiian word for *quick*, is a website that allows anyone with access to add new material and edit existing material. Public wikis (Wikipedia is the best known of these) allow any registered user to edit pages; private wikis are accessible only with permission. A key benefit of wikis is the freedom to post new or revised material without prior approval. Chapter 11 offers guidelines for effective wiki collaboration.

A *wiki* is an open, collaborative website that lets all registered users add and modify content.

Teams and other work groups can also take advantage of a set of broader technologies often referred to as *groupware*, *collaboration platforms*, or *shared online workspaces* (see Figure 2.1). These technologies let people communicate, share files, review previous message threads, work on documents simultaneously, and connect using social networking tools. These systems help companies capture and share knowledge from multiple experts, bringing greater insights to tough challenges.[15] You may see some of these workspaces referred to as *intranets* (restricted-access websites that are open to employees only) or *extranets* (restricted sites that are available to employees and to outside parties by invitation only).

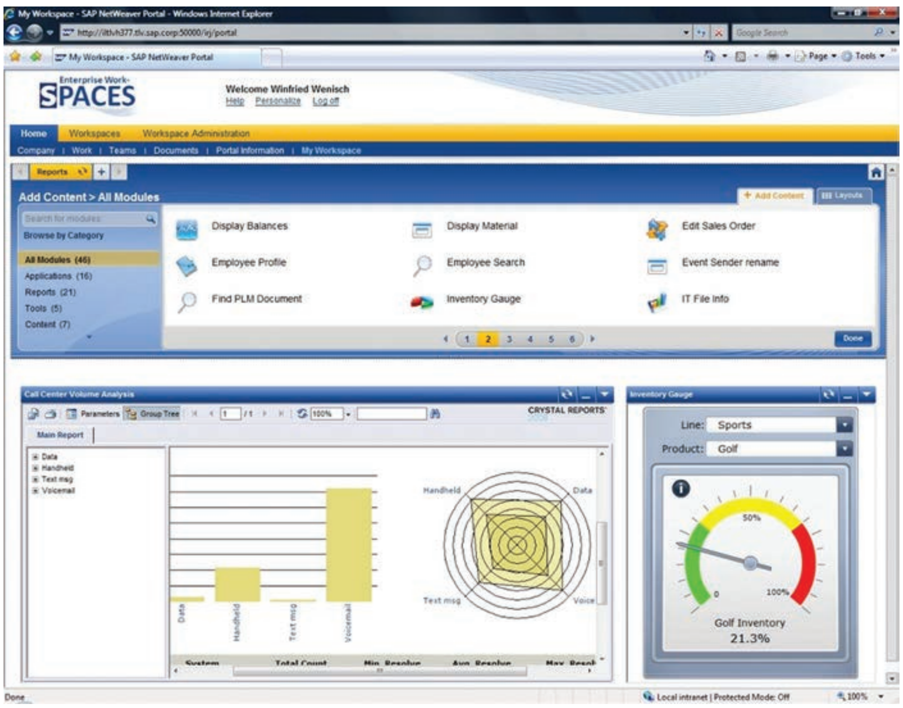

Figure 2.1 Shared Online Workspaces
Today's employees have a variety of ways to collaborate online, from workgroup messaging systems to shared online workspaces that function as virtual offices.
Source: © 2014 SAP SE or an SAP affiliated company. All rights reserved. Used with permission of SAP SE or an SAP affiliated company.

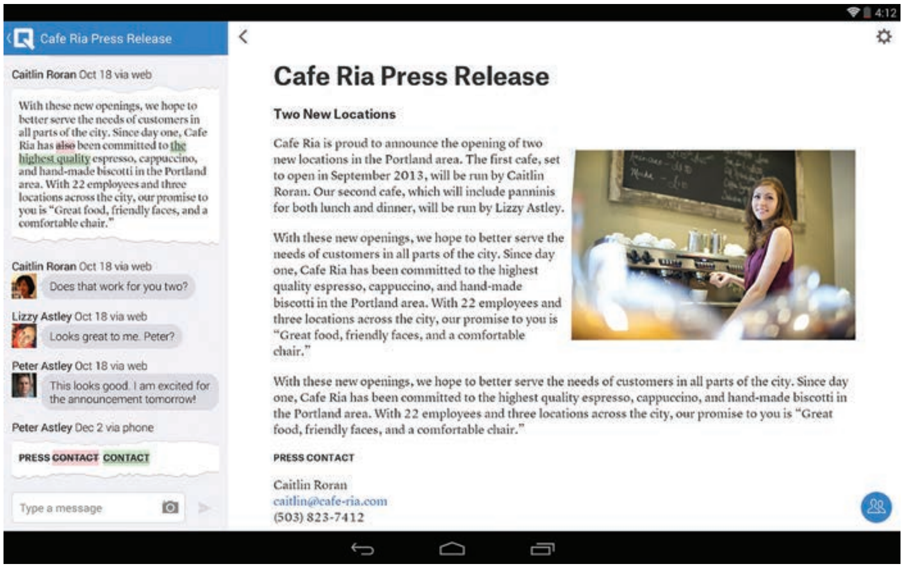

Figure 2.2 Collaboration on Mobile Devices
Mobile connectivity has transformed collaborative writing with smartphone and tablet apps that help colleagues stay connected no matter where their work takes them.
Source: Courtesy of Quip Inc.

Collaboration via Mobile Devices

Mobile collaboration systems can now do virtually everything that fixed-web systems can do.

Mobile devices add another layer of options for collaborative writing and other communication projects, particularly when used with cloud computing. Today's mobile systems can do virtually everything that fixed-web collaboration systems can do, from writing on virtual whiteboards to sharing photos, videos, and other multimedia files.[16] Mobility lets workers participate in online brainstorming sessions, seminars, and other formal or informal events from wherever they happen to be at the time. This flexibility can be particularly helpful during the review and production stages of major projects, when deadlines are looming and decisions and revisions need to be made quickly (see Figure 2.2).

An important aspect of mobile collaboration and mobile communication in general is **unified communication**, which integrates such capabilities as voice and video calling, voice and video conferencing, instant messaging, and real-time collaboration software into a single system. By minimizing or eliminating the need to manage multiple communication systems and devices, unified communication promises to improve response times, productivity, and collaboration efforts.[17]

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GIVING—AND RESPONDING TO—CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

When you give writing feedback, make it constructive by focusing on how the material can be improved.

Aside from processes and tools, collaborative communication often involves giving and receiving feedback about writing efforts. **Constructive feedback**, sometimes called *constructive criticism*, focuses on the process and outcomes of communication, not on the people involved (see Table 2.1). In contrast, **destructive feedback** delivers criticism with no effort to stimulate improvement.[18] For example, "This proposal is a confusing mess, and you failed to convince me of anything" is destructive feedback. Your goal is to be more constructive: "Your proposal could be more effective with a clearer description of the manufacturing process and a well-organized explanation of why the positives outweigh the negatives." When giving feedback, avoid personal attacks and give the person clear guidelines for improvement.

When you receive constructive feedback on your writing, keep your emotions in check and view it as an opportunity to improve.

When you receive constructive feedback, resist the urge to defend your work or deny the validity of the feedback. Remaining open to criticism isn't easy when you've worked long and hard on a project, but good feedback provides a valuable opportunity to learn and to improve the quality of your work.

TABLE 2.1 Giving Constructive Feedback

How to Be Constructive	Explanation
Think through the implications of your suggested changes.	In documents that discuss complex relationships between ideas, isolated and superficial edits can do more harm than good.
Discuss improvements rather than flaws.	Instead of saying “This is confusing,” for instance, explain how the writing can be improved to make it clearer.
Focus on controllable behavior.	The writer may not have control over every variable that affected the quality of the message, so focus on those aspects the writer can control.
Be specific.	Comments such as “I don’t get this” or “Make this clearer” don’t give the writer much direction.
Keep feedback impersonal.	Focus comments on the message, not on the person who created it.
Verify understanding.	If in doubt, ask for confirmation from the recipient to make sure that the person understood your feedback.
Time your feedback carefully.	Respond in a timely fashion so that the writer will have sufficient time to implement the changes you suggest.
Highlight any limitations your feedback may have.	If you didn’t have time to give the document a thorough edit, or if you’re not an expert in some aspect of the content, let the writer know so that he or she can handle your comments appropriately.

Making Your Meetings More Productive

Well-run meetings can help companies solve problems, develop ideas, and identify opportunities. Meetings can also be a great way to promote team building through the experience of social interaction.[19] To a large degree, your ability to contribute to the company—and to be recognized for your contributions—will depend on your meeting skills.

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
List the key steps needed to ensure productive team meetings, and identify the most common meeting technologies.

PREPARING FOR MEETINGS

The first step in preparing for a meeting is to make sure the meeting is really necessary. Meetings can consume hundreds or thousands of dollars’ worth of productive time and take people away from other work, so don’t hold a meeting if some other form of communication can serve the purpose as effectively or if you can’t clearly articulate what the meeting is supposed to achieve.[20] If a meeting is truly necessary, proceed with these four planning tasks:

A single poorly planned or poorly run meeting can waste hundreds or thousands of dollars, so make sure every meeting is necessary and well managed.

To ensure a successful meeting, clarify your purpose, select the right mix of participants, choose the venue and time carefully, and set a clear agenda.

- **Clarify your purpose.** Most meetings are one of two types: *Informational meetings* involve sharing information and perhaps coordinating action. *Decision-making meetings* involve analysis, problem solving, and in many cases, persuasive communication. Whatever your purpose, make sure it is clear and specific—and clearly communicated to all participants.
- **Select participants for the meeting.** The rule here is simple: Invite everyone who really needs to be involved, and don’t invite anyone who doesn’t. For decision-making meetings, for example, invite only those people who are in a direct position to help the meeting reach its objective.
- **Choose the venue and the time.** Online meetings are often the best way (and sometimes the only way) to connect people in multiple locations or to reach large audiences. For on-site meetings, review the facility and the seating arrangements. Are rows of chairs suitable, or do you need a conference table or some other arrangement? Pay attention to room temperature, lighting, ventilation, acoustics, and refreshments. These details can determine the success or failure of a meeting. If you have control over the timing, morning meetings are often more productive because people are generally more alert and not yet engaged with the work of the day.
- **Set and share the agenda.** People who will be presenting information need to know what is expected of them, nonpresenters need to know what will be presented so they can prepare questions, and everyone needs to know how long the meeting will last. In addition, the agenda is an important tool for guiding the progress of the meeting (see Figure 2.3 on the next page).

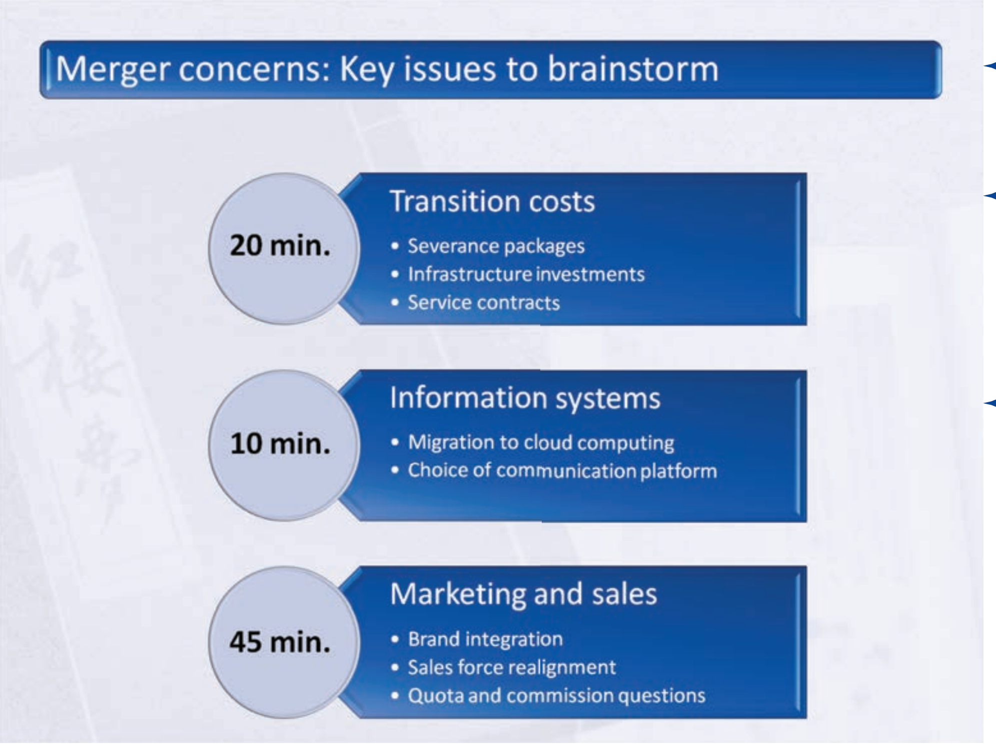

Figure 2.3 Typical Meeting Agenda
Agenda formats vary widely, depending on the complexity of the meeting and the presentation technologies that will be used. One good approach is to first distribute a detailed planning agenda so that presenters know what they need to prepare, then create a simpler display agenda, such as this PowerPoint slide, to guide the progress of the meeting. Note how the agenda includes the time limit for each topic.

CONDUCTING AND CONTRIBUTING TO EFFICIENT MEETINGS

Everyone shares the responsibility for successful meetings.

Everyone in a meeting shares the responsibility for keeping the meeting productive and making it successful. If you are the designated leader of a meeting, however, you have an extra degree of responsibility and accountability. To ensure productive meetings, be sure to do the following:

- **Keep the meeting on track.** A good meeting draws out the best ideas and information the group has to offer. Good leaders occasionally need to guide, mediate, probe, stimulate, summarize, and redirect discussions that have gotten off track. Don't leave it all in the leader's hands, however; everyone should help keep the meeting focused and moving forward.[21]
- **Follow agreed-upon rules.** The larger the meeting, the more formal you'll need to be to maintain order. Formal meetings often use *parliamentary procedure*, a time-tested method for planning and running effective meetings. The best-known guide to this procedure is *Robert's Rules of Order* (**www.rulesonline.com**).
- **Encourage and moderate participation.** Some people like to think out loud, using discussion to help clarify their own thoughts. Others prefer to finalize their thoughts before speaking. Effective meeting leaders need to accommodate both styles, in addition to making sure that people who may not feel comfortable speaking up or who have been interrupted by more assertive participants have the chance to be heard.[22]
- **Participate actively.** Try to contribute to the progress of the meeting and the smooth interaction of the participants. Use your listening skills and powers of observation to judge the interpersonal dynamics of the group, then adapt your behavior to help the group achieve its goals. Speak up if you have something useful to say, but don't talk or ask questions just to demonstrate how much you know about the subject at hand.
- **Don't interrupt.** Even if you're an expert in the subject matter or the discussion is getting heated, respect everyone's right to participate. Meetings can be dominated

by the most aggressive participants, but the loudest people don't necessarily have the best ideas.

- **Use mobile devices respectfully.** Tweeting key points from a convention speech or using your phone to jot down essential ideas and follow-up questions can be productive and respectful ways to use a device during a meeting. Checking Facebook or working on unrelated tasks is not. If you intend to use your device to take notes during a meeting, consider letting the meeting leader know that's what you're doing.[23]
- **Close effectively.** At the conclusion of a meeting, verify that the objectives have been met. If they have not, arrange for follow-up work as needed. Either summarize the decisions reached or list the actions to be taken. Make sure all participants understand and agree on the outcome.

Expectations for mobile device etiquette vary from company to company, but whatever you do, make sure not to distract others.

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PUTTING MEETING RESULTS TO PRODUCTIVE USE

In most cases, the value of a meeting doesn't end when the meeting ends. For example, problems or opportunities brought up during a meeting need to be addressed, any action items assigned during the meeting need to be acted on, and key decisions and announcements should be distributed to anyone who is affected but was unable to attend. Having a written, audio, or video record of a meeting also gives the participants a chance to verify their impressions and conclusions.

The conventional method of recording meetings is through written **minutes**, a summary of the important information presented and the decisions made (see Figure 2.4). One person is usually assigned to keep notes as the meeting progresses and then to share them afterward. The specific format of the minutes is less important than making sure you record all the key information, particularly regarding responsibilities that were assigned during the meeting. Typical elements include a list of those present and a list of those who

Minutes are a written summary of the key discussion points and decisions made during a meeting.

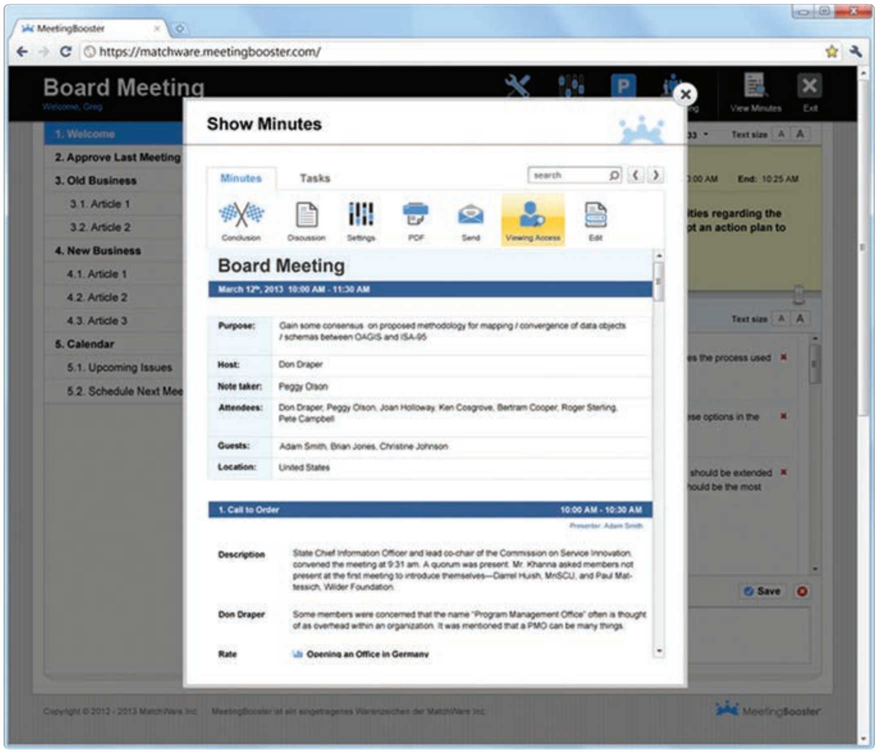

Figure 2.4 Capturing Key Decisions and Discoveries from a Meeting
Meeting technologies such as the MeetingBooster system help teams and other groups capture decisions and discoveries from meetings and put this information to productive use.
Source: Courtesy of MeetingBooster

were invited but didn't attend, followed by the times the meeting started and ended, all major decisions reached at the meeting, all assignments of tasks to meeting participants, and all subjects that were deferred to a later meeting. In addition, the minutes objectively summarize important discussions, noting the names of those who contributed major points. Any handouts, slides, or supporting documents can be attached to the minutes when they are distributed.

Depending on the meeting technologies at your disposal (see the next section), you may have software specifically designed to record, distribute, and store meeting minutes. Some systems automatically forward action items to each employee, record audio discussions for future playback, and make all the relevant documents and files available in one convenient place.[24]

USING MEETING TECHNOLOGIES

Expect to participate in many virtual meetings using a variety of online meeting technologies.

Today's companies use a number of technologies to enhance or replace traditional in-person meetings. Replacing in-person meetings with **virtual meetings** (see Figure 2.5) can dramatically lower costs and resource usage, reduce demands on employees, and give teams access to a wider pool of expertise.

Workgroup messaging and teleconferencing are the simplest forms of virtual meetings. Videoconferencing lets participants see and hear each other, demonstrate products, and transmit other visual information. *Telepresence* enables realistic conferences in which participants thousands of miles apart almost seem to be in the same room.[25] The ability to convey nonverbal subtleties such as facial expressions and hand gestures makes these systems particularly good for negotiations, collaborative problem solving, and other complex discussions.[26]

MOBILE APP

The **Zoom** online meeting app is free for small groups.

More sophisticated web-based meeting systems combine the best of real-time communication, shared workspaces, and videoconferencing with other tools, such as *virtual whiteboards* that let teams collaborate in real time and instant polling that lets audiences respond to questions from the meeting leader.[27] Such systems are used for everything from spontaneous discussions among small groups to carefully planned formal events such as press conferences, training sessions, sales presentations, online braining storming sessions, and *webinars* (web-based seminars).[28] A great feature of these systems is the ability to record the meetings so that anyone who missed a meeting can replay it later.

Online meetings can save a lot of time and money, but they require extra planning and management steps.

Conducting successful virtual meetings requires extra planning before the meeting and more diligence during the meeting.[29] Because virtual meetings offer less visual contact and nonverbal communication than in-person meetings, leaders need to make sure

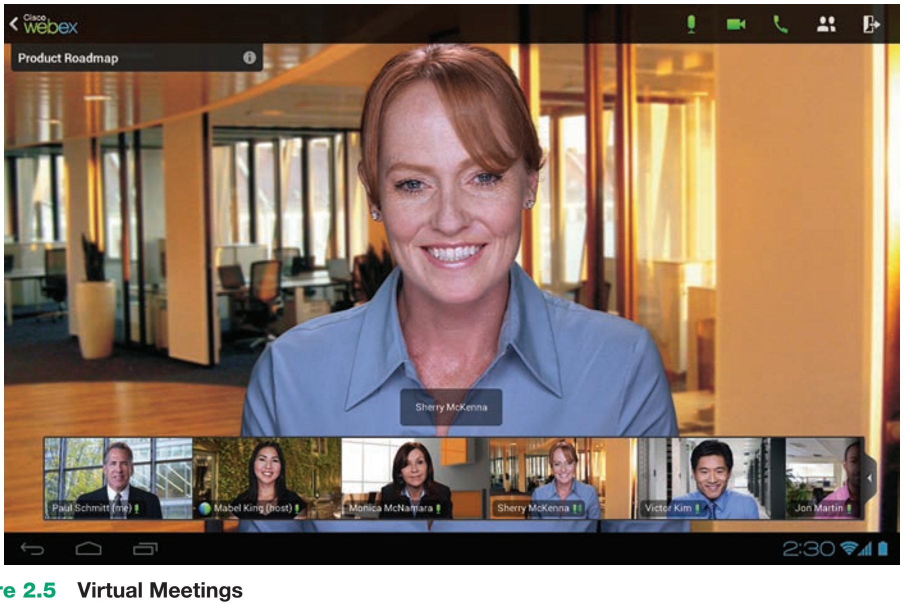

Figure 2.5 Virtual Meetings
With broadband wireless connections, virtual meetings are easy to conduct using smartphones or tablets.
Source: Courtesy of Cisco Systems, Inc. Unauthorized use not permitted.

everyone stays engaged and has the opportunity to contribute. With the limitations of the virtual format, meeting leaders may need to take a more active role than they would during in-person meetings.[30] Participants have a responsibility to pay attention and avoid the temptation to work on other tasks. To ensure a productive meeting, distribute background information beforehand so participants can join the meeting ready to collaborate.[31]

For the latest information on meeting technologies, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Chapter 2.

Improving Your Listening Skills

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Identify the major types of listening, describe the listening process, and explain how good listeners overcome barriers at each stage of the process.

You've been listening all your life, so it's natural to assume it's something you do well without even thinking about it. However, listening is a far more complex process than most people think—and most of us aren't very good at it. People typically listen at no better than a 25 percent efficiency rate, remember only about half of what's said during a 10-minute conversation, and forget half of that within 48 hours.[32] Furthermore, when questioned about material they've just heard, they are likely to get the facts mixed up.[33]

The good news is that everyone can improve their listening skills, and doing so will help you at every step of your career. This section explains three ways you can improve: recognizing the various types of listening, understanding the listening process, and overcoming barriers to effective listening. (Even if your physical ability to hear is impaired, these techniques can help.)

Listening is one of the most important skills in the workplace, but most people don't do it as well as they assume they do.

RECOGNIZING VARIOUS TYPES OF LISTENING

Effective listeners adapt their listening approaches to different situations and can use two or more types of listening in a single conversation. The primary goal of **content listening** is to understand and retain the information in the speaker's message. With this type of listening, you ask questions to clarify the material but don't argue or judge. Try to overlook the speaker's style and any limitations in the presentation; just focus on the information.[34]

To be a good listener, adapt the way you listen to suit the situation.

The goal of content listening is to grasp the information in the speaker's message.

The goal of **critical listening** is to understand and evaluate the meaning of the speaker's message on several levels: the logic of the argument, the strength of the evidence, the validity of the conclusions, the implications of the message, the speaker's intentions and motives, and the omission of any important or relevant points. Be on the lookout for personal biases that might influence how the information is presented, and be careful to separate opinions from facts.[35] (Note that "critical listening" does not mean you are listening with the intent to criticize, but rather to understand the full meaning and implications of the speaker's message.)

The goal of critical listening is to understand and evaluate the meaning of the speaker's message.

The goal of **empathic listening** is to understand the speaker's feelings, needs, and wants so that you can appreciate his or her point of view, regardless of whether you share that perspective. Nonverbal signals such as facial expressions and body language (see "Improving Your Nonverbal Communication Skills" on page 49) can help you understand the other person's emotional state as well. Importantly, this style of listening gives the other person the freedom to share without fear of being judged or evaluated.[36] In this sense, empathic listening is a complementary skill to content listening, because you need to silence those critical faculties and focus your attention on the other person. In fact, the information exchanged in an empathic conversation is sometimes less important than simply giving someone the opportunity to be heard. Empathic listening can be a difficult habit to get into, particularly for people who are used to solving problems and taking charge of situations.[37]

The goal of empathic listening is to understand the speaker's feelings, needs, and wants so that you can appreciate his or her point of view.

No matter what mode they are using at any given time, effective listeners try to engage in **active listening**, making a conscious effort to turn off their own filters and biases to truly hear and understand what the other party is saying. They ask questions or summarize the speaker's message to verify key points and encourage the speaker through positive body language and supportive feedback.[38] Active listening can be a challenge for extroverted and assertive people, who may need to learn to switch off their impulses to lead the conversation so they can be more receptive to what others are really trying to

All modes of successful listening are *active*, in which listeners make a conscious effort to turn off their own filters and biases to truly hear and understand what the other party is saying.

say.[39] You've probably been in conversations where you could tell that other people weren't really listening and instead were impatiently waiting for you stop talking so they could talk—that's the very opposite of active listening.

UNDERSTANDING THE LISTENING PROCESS

Listening is not a simple process that happens automatically; truly hearing what other people say requires effort and attention. Listening follows the same sequence as the basic communication process model you explored in Chapter 1 (page 9), with the added difficulty that it happens in real time. To listen effectively, you need to successfully complete five steps:[40]

Listening involves five steps: receiving, decoding, remembering, evaluating, and responding.

1. **Receiving.** Physically hear the message and recognize it as incoming information.
2. **Decoding.** Assign meaning to sounds, according to your own values, beliefs, ideas, expectations, roles, needs, and personal history.
3. **Remembering.** Store the information for future processing.
4. **Evaluating.** Analyze the quality of the information.
5. **Responding.** React based on the situation and the nature of the information.

If any one of these steps breaks down, the listening process becomes less effective or even fails entirely. As both a sender and a receiver, you can reduce the failure rate by recognizing and overcoming a variety of physical and mental barriers to effective listening.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Good listeners actively try to overcome the barriers to successful listening.

Good listeners look for ways to overcome the many potential barriers to successful listening (see Table 2.2). Some factors you may not be able to control, such as ambient noise or poor phone reception. However, you can control other factors, such as not interrupting speakers, not multitasking when someone is talking to you, and not creating distractions that make it difficult for others to pay attention. And don't think that you're not interrupting just because

TABLE 2.2 What Makes an Effective Listener?

Effective Listeners	Ineffective Listeners
Listen actively	Listen passively
Stay focused on the speaker and the conversation	Allow their minds to wander, are easily distracted, work on unrelated tasks
Take careful notes, when applicable	Take no notes or ineffective notes
Make frequent eye contact with the speaker (depends on culture to some extent)	Make little or no eye contact, or inappropriate eye contact
Keep their emotions under control and don't let their own anxieties hinder the conversation	Allow their emotions to negatively influence the conversation
Mentally paraphrase key points to maintain attention level and ensure comprehension	Fail to paraphrase
Adjust listening style to the situation	Listen with the same style, regardless of the situation
Give the speaker nonverbal feedback (such as nodding to show agreement or raising eyebrows to show surprise or skepticism)	Fail to give the speaker nonverbal feedback
Save questions or points of disagreement until an appropriate time	Interrupt whenever they disagree or don't understand
Engage the other person with questions or encouragement; validate the other person's feelings	Fail to engage; offer no encouragement or expression of understanding
Overlook stylistic differences and focus on the speaker's message	Are distracted by or unduly influenced by stylistic differences; are judgmental
Make distinctions between main points and supporting details	Are unable to distinguish main points from details
Look for opportunities to learn	Assume they already know everything that's important to know

Sources: Based on Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman, "What Great Listeners Actually Do," *Harvard Business Review*, 14 July 2016, hbr.org; Amy Jen Su and Muriel Maignan Wilkins, "What Gets in the Way of Listening," *Harvard Business Review*, 14 April 2016, hbr.org; Madelyn Burley-Allen, *Listening: The Forgotten Skill*, (New York: Wiley, 1995), 70–71, 119–120; Judi Brownell, *Listening: Attitudes, Principles, and Skills* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2002); 3, 9, 83, 89, 125; Larry Barker and Kittie Watson, *Listen Up* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000), 8, 9, 64.

you're not talking. Such actions as sighing or checking your watch can interrupt a speaker and lead to communication breakdowns.

Selective listening is one of the most common barriers to effective listening. If you don't pay attention the entire time someone is speaking, you will be unable to recall what the speaker *actually* said. Instead, you'll remember what you think the speaker *probably* said.[41]

Overcoming interpretation barriers can be difficult because you may not even be aware of them. **Selective perception** leads listeners to mold messages to fit their own conceptual frameworks. Listeners sometimes make up their minds before fully hearing the speaker's message, or they engage in *defensive listening*—protecting their egos by rejecting anything that doesn't confirm their beliefs or their view of themselves.

Even when your intentions are good, you can still misinterpret incoming messages if you and the speaker don't share enough language or experience. When listening to a speaker whose native language or life experience is different from yours, try to paraphrase that person's ideas. Give the speaker a chance to confirm what you think you heard or to correct any misinterpretation.

Improving Your Nonverbal Communication Skills

5 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain the importance of nonverbal communication, and identify six major categories of nonverbal expression.

Nonverbal communication is the process of sending and receiving information, both intentionally and unintentionally, without using language. Nonverbal signals play a vital role in communication because they can strengthen or repeat a verbal message (when the nonverbal signals match the spoken words), weaken or contradict a verbal message (when nonverbal signals don't match the words), or replace words entirely.[42]

Nonverbal signals are a factor in virtually every instance of communication, and they convey a significant portion of the information and emotions shared in interpersonal communication.

Nonverbal signals are a factor in virtually every instance of communication, and they convey a significant portion of the information and emotions shared in interpersonal communication.[43] In a face-to-face conversation, everything from your body language to your clothing to your eye movements can influence the messages and meanings the other party takes away from the exchange. During a phone call, the pitch, rate, and other qualities of your voice can send nonverbal signals. Even with written messages (both printed and digital), design and formatting choices send nonverbal signals.

Nonverbal communication is complex: Not all signals are controllable, and signals don't always mean what people think they mean.

Nonverbal communication is an intriguing part of business communication because it is complex and often not as straightforward as verbal communication. On the sending side, some nonverbal signals are controllable (such as choosing what to wear), some are habits you may not even think about (tapping your fingers when you're impatient, for instance), some are trainable (using specific hand gestures during a presentation), and some are involuntary (such as blushing).[44] On the receiving side, while you might think you can "read someone like a book," nonverbal signals are not always reliable (a person who avoids eye contact isn't necessarily trying to hide something, for example), and people vary widely in their ability to interpret them correctly.[45]

In interpersonal communication, six categories of nonverbal signals are particularly important:

Nonverbal signals include facial expressions; gestures, posture, and gait; vocal characteristics; personal appearance; touch; and use of time and space.

- **Facial expressions.** Your face is the primary site for expressing your emotions; it reveals both the type and the intensity of your feelings.[46] Your eyes are especially effective for indicating attention and interest, influencing others, regulating interaction, and establishing dominance.[47] As with other areas of nonverbal expressions, facial signals can vary widely from culture to culture. For instance, maintaining eye contact is usually viewed as a sign of sincerity and openness in the United States, but sustained eye contact is considered disrespectful in many other cultures.[48]
- **Gestures, posture, and gait.** The way you use your hands, your posture when standing and sitting, and the way you walk send nonverbal signals. Bounding on stage with your head held high sends quite a different message than shuffling up there with your chin down and your hands in your pockets. Leaning forward in your chair is a way to let someone know you're paying attention. Adapting a "power posture," such as standing with your chin up, your hands on your hips, and your feet spread or leaning forward with your hands on a table or desk can make you feel more confident and

convey a message of confidence.[49] However, these shows of strength can also intimidate other people and discourage them from opening up.[50]

The way somebody says something can mean as much as the words he or she uses.

- **Vocal characteristics.** Voice carries both intentional and unintentional messages. A speaker can intentionally control pitch, pace, and stress to convey a specific message. For instance, compare "*What* are you doing?" and "What are *you* doing?" Unintentional vocal characteristics can convey happiness, surprise, fear, and other emotions. For example, fear often increases the pitch and the pace of your voice. Most listeners are acutely sensitive to the way others speak, so make sure the tone of your voice matches the messages you mean to send.[51]
- **Personal appearance.** People respond to others on the basis of their physical appearance, sometimes fairly and other times unfairly. Although an individual's body type and facial features impose limitations, most people are able to control their appearance to some degree. Grooming, clothing, accessories, piercings, tattoos, hairstyle—you can control all of these. Many employers also have guidelines concerning attire, body art, and other issues, so make sure you understand and follow them.[52]
- **Touch.** Touch is an important way to convey warmth, comfort, and reassurance—as well as control. Touch is so powerful, in fact, that it is governed by cultural customs that establish who can touch whom and how in various circumstances. In the United States and Great Britain, for instance, people usually touch less frequently than people in France or Costa Rica do. Even within each culture's norms, however, individual attitudes toward touch vary widely. A manager might be comfortable using hugs to express support or congratulations, but his or her subordinates could interpret those hugs as a show of dominance or sexual interest.[53] Touch is a complex subject. The best advice: When in doubt, don't touch.
- **Time and space.** Like touch, time and space can be used to assert authority, show respect, imply intimacy, and send other nonverbal messages. For instance, the distance at which people are comfortable conversing with others varies widely based on their relationships with them (and their culture, to a degree). You might be fine with family members standing a foot or two away, but you probably prefer work colleagues to stand or sit several feet away whenever possible and strangers to keep even farther away.[54]

When you listen to others, be sure to pay attention to nonverbal clues. Do these signals seem to support the spoken words or contradict them? And remember that nonverbal signals are powerful, but they aren't infallible. For example, contrary to popular belief, avoiding eye contact and covering one's face while talking are not reliable clues that someone is lying. These behaviors may be influenced by culture or might just be ways of coping with stressful situations.[55]

Make sure the nonverbal signals you send don't undermine your efforts to succeed on the job.

Think carefully about the entire package of nonverbal signals you send to those around you. If your goal is to make a good impression, adopt the style of the people you want to impress. Whether or not you think it is fair to be judged on superficial matters, the truth is that you *are* judged this way. Don't let careless choices or disrespectful habits undermine all the great work you're doing on the job.

Developing Your Business Etiquette

6 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain the importance of business etiquette, and identify five key areas in which good etiquette is essential.

You may have noticed a common thread running through the topics of successful teamwork, productive meetings, effective listening, and nonverbal communication: They all depend on mutual respect and consideration. Nobody wants to work with someone who is rude to colleagues or an embarrassment to the company. Moreover, shabby treatment of others can be a huge drain on morale and productivity.[56] Poor etiquette can drive away customers, investors, and other critical audiences—and it can limit your career potential. Unfortunately, rude behavior seems to be on the rise, so the issue is more important than ever.[57]

Poor business etiquette is a drain on workplace morale and productivity.

Long lists of etiquette rules can be difficult to remember, but you can get by in most situations by being aware of your effect on others, treating everyone with respect, and keeping in mind that the impressions you leave behind can have a lasting effect on you and your company. As etiquette expert Cindy Post Senning points out, "The principles of respect, consideration, and honesty are universal and timeless."[58]

Figure 2.6 Showing Respect for Organizational Culture
Being aware of expectations for personal appearance in a business setting is not only a sign of respect, it will help keep you from making career-limiting mistakes.
Source: Paul Bradbury/OJO Images Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

WORKPLACE ETIQUETTE

Follow these tips to help ensure a pleasant and productive workplace:[59]

Most of the rules of good business etiquette are based on showing respect for other people.

- Respect other people's time, such as showing up for work and meetings on time and not taking up a colleague's time with gossip or personal chit-chat.
- Don't interrupt people in conversations or in meetings.
- Watch your language. You might be comfortable with profanity in casual conversation, but it has no place in a professional environment.
- Dress appropriately for the situation. This isn't a question of mindlessly conforming or surrendering your individuality; it's a question of showing respect for an organizational culture that is bigger than you (see Figure 2.6). If you're not sure, dress modestly and simply—earn a reputation for what you *do*, not for what you wear.
- Pay close attention to cleanliness, and avoid using products with powerful scents. Many people are bothered by these products, and some are allergic to them.
- Avoid eating at your desk, particularly in open-plan offices. Many foods have strong smells, and no one wants to listen to you eat.
- Respect other people's personal space. Knock before entering offices, and don't barge into someone's cubicle without being invited.
- Don't gossip. Not only is gossip a waste of time, it's often disrespectful to others.
- Don't come to work when you're sick.
- Keep the noise level down. This is a huge concern in open-plan workspaces, where people are separated only by short cubicle walls and sometimes not even that. Keep your voice down, avoid having meetings in your cubicle, and don't play music at a level that disrupts others (even if you're wearing earbuds or headphones).
- Don't discuss religion, politics, or other potentially emotional issues.

TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

Here are some important tips for using phones at work (for etiquette points specifically about mobile devices, see the next section):[60]

Courtesy on the phone makes communication more efficient and more pleasant for everyone involved.

- **Be conscious of how your voice sounds.** Don't speak in a monotone; vary your pitch and inflections so people know you're interested. Slow down when conversing with people whose native language isn't the same as yours.
- **Be courteous when you call someone.** Identify yourself and your organization, briefly describe why you're calling, and ask whether you've called at a good time.

- **Convey a positive, professional attitude when you answer the phone.** Answer promptly and with a smile so that you sound welcoming. Identify yourself and your company (some companies have specific instructions for what to say when you answer). If you need to forward a call, put the caller on hold first and call the next person yourself to verify that he or she is available.
- **End calls with courtesy and clarity.** Close in a friendly, positive manner and double-check all vital information such as meeting times and dates.
- **Use your own voicemail features to help callers.** Record a brief, professional-sounding outgoing message for regular use. When you will be away or unable to answer the phone for an extended period, record a temporary greeting that tells callers when you will respond to their messages. If you don't check your messages regularly or at all, disable your voicemail or use your outgoing message to tell callers you don't check it. Letting voicemail messages pile up without answering them is extremely thoughtless.
- **Be considerate when leaving voicemail messages.** Unless voicemail is the best or only choice, consider leaving a message through other means, such as text messaging or email. If you do leave a voicemail message, make it as brief as possible. Leave your name, number, reason for calling, and times you can be reached.

If you never or rarely check your voicemail, disable it or record an outgoing message advising callers to reach you another way.

MOBILE DEVICE ETIQUETTE

Your mobile device habits say a lot about how much respect you have for the people around you. Avoid these disrespectful choices: [61]

- Using obnoxious ringtones
- Failing to mute your phone during meetings or other situations where it will interrupt people
- Talking loudly in open offices or public places
- Talking on your phone right next to someone else
- Making or taking unnecessary personal calls at work
- Invading privacy by using your phone's camera without permission
- Taking or making calls in restrooms and other inappropriate places
- Texting during meals or while someone is talking to you
- Allowing incoming calls to interrupt meetings or discussions
- Using voice recognition to the extent that it disrupts others

In general, older employees, managers, and customers are less tolerant of mobile device use than younger people are, so don't assume that your habits will be universally acceptable.[62] At one extreme, venture capitalist Ben Horowitz fines his employees if they even look at a mobile device while an entrepreneur is making a business plan pitch, because he considers it disrespectful to the people making presentations.[63] Not all bosses are quite so strict, but make sure you understand the situation in your workplace.

MOBILE APP
The **Locale** Android app can "geo-fence" your smartphone, automatically changing settings based on your location—such as activating silent mode when you arrive at your office.

Your mobile phone habits send a signal about the degree of respect you have for those around you.

Don't assume your mobile habits are universally acceptable.

ONLINE ETIQUETTE

Digital media seem to be a breeding ground for poor etiquette. Follow these guidelines to avoid mistakes that could hurt your company or your career:[64]

- **Avoid personal attacks.** The anonymous and instantaneous nature of online communication can cause even level-headed people to lose their tempers.
- **Stay focused on the original topic.** If you want to change the subject of an online conversation, start with a new message or thread.
- **Don't present opinions as facts; support facts with evidence.** This guideline applies to all communication, of course, but online venues in particular seem to tempt people into presenting their beliefs and opinions as unassailable truths.
- **Follow basic expectations of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.** Sending careless, acronym-filled messages that look like you're texting your high school buddies creates an unprofessional impression.
- **Use virus protection and keep it up to date.** Sending or posting a file that contains a computer virus puts others at risk.

When you represent your company online, you must adhere to a high standard of etiquette and respect for others.

- **Watch your language and keep your emotions under control.** A single indiscretion could haunt you forever.
- **Avoid multitasking while using instant messaging or other tools.** You might think you're saving time by doing a dozen things at once, but you're probably making the other person wait while you bounce back and forth between tasks.
- **Never assume you have privacy.** Assume that anything you type will be stored forever, could be forwarded to other people, and might be read by your boss or the company's security staff.
- **Don't waste others' time with sloppy, confusing, or incomplete messages.** Doing so is disrespectful.
- **Respect boundaries of time and virtual space.** For instance, don't use colleagues' or employees' personal social media accounts as a venue for business discussions, and don't assume people are available to discuss work matters around the clock, even if you do find them online in the middle of the night.
- **Be careful of online commenting mechanisms.** For example, many blogs and websites now use your Facebook login to let you comment on articles. If your Facebook profile includes your job title and company name, those could show up along with your comment.

Respect personal and professional boundaries when using social networking tools.

BUSINESS ETIQUETTE IN SOCIAL SETTINGS

From business lunches to industry conferences, you may be asked to represent your company when you're out in public. Make sure your appearance and actions are appropriate to the situation. Get to know the customs of the culture when you meet new people. For example, in North America, a firm handshake is expected when two people meet, whereas a respectful bow is more appropriate in Japan. If you are expected to shake hands, be aware that the passive "dead fish" handshake creates an extremely negative impression with most people. If you are physically able, always stand when shaking someone's hand.

You represent your company when you're out in public—or communicating online under your own name—so etiquette continues to be important even after you leave the office.

When introducing yourself, include a brief description of your role in the company. When introducing two other people, speak their first and last names clearly and then try to offer some information (perhaps a shared professional interest) to help the two people ease into a conversation.[65] In general, the lower-ranking person is introduced to the senior-ranking person, without regard to gender.[66]

MOBILE APP

Good Manners helps you make appropriate choices in a variety of social situations.

Business is often conducted over meals, and knowing the basics of dining etiquette will make you more effective and comfortable in these situations.[67] Start by choosing foods that are easy to eat. Avoid alcoholic beverages in most instances, but if drinking one is appropriate, save it for the end of the meal. Leave business documents under your chair until entrée plates have been removed; the business aspect of the meal doesn't usually begin until then.

Remember that business meals are a forum for business, period. Don't discuss politics, religion, or any other topic that's likely to generate strong emotions. Don't complain about work, don't ask deeply personal questions, avoid profanity, and be careful with humor—a joke that entertains some people could easily offend others.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY WATCHING THIS VIDEO

Dining etiquette simplified

Etiquette expert Barbara Pachter offers tips to help you get comfortable at business lunches and dinners. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and click Learn More in the Students section.

The Future of Communication: The Internet of Things

The *Internet of Things (IoT)* refers to the billions of devices now connected to the Internet and the networking potential of having all these gadgets communicate with each other, feed data into vast information warehouses, and interact with people and the physical environment. These "things" range from simple sensors that measure temperature, location, and other parameters all the way up to robots and other complex systems. People and animals with Internet-capable sensors (such as implanted chips) or devices also qualify as things in this model.

Imagine you walk into a department store and your mobile phone automatically gives you directions to the aisle where you could find the clothing styles you have recently been browsing online or discussing in social media. When you reach that aisle, a coupon pops up on your phone with a discount on the specific items you're considering. When you pull a garment off the rack, the store's customer database checks other purchases you've made and suggests which items you already own that coordinate with this piece. If you could use an accessory to complete the outfit, the store's computers can tell your phone just where to take you. And if you need more advice, you can text or talk—and possibly not know whether you're conversing with a store employee or an automated chat algorithm on a computer somewhere.

Now imagine this simple concept expanded and applied in various ways to industrial facilities, agriculture, transportation, buildings, health care, and other systems. By relying on networked IoT devices for such communication functions as observing, measuring, and reporting, these enhanced systems can supplement or replace communication flows that were previously carried out by human participants.

IoT is poised to reshape many business processes on a scale that some experts compare to the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century. It also seems likely to influence business communication as it takes over some routine tasks and brings the power of smart networking and computing to others. Basic communication skills will remain as essential as ever, but don't be surprised if some of the conversations you have in the future aren't with your fellow humans.[68]

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Research the current state of IoT innovation to identify one way in which the technology has the potential to change business communication practices, such as automated report writing or conversational bots that mimic human speech or writing. Do you agree with the predictions the experts make? Why or why not?

Chapter Review and Activities

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: List the advantages and disadvantages of working in teams, and describe the characteristics of effective teams.

The advantages of successful teamwork include

- More information and knowledge
- Learning opportunities
- Boldness
- Accountability
- Trust building
- A broader range of viewpoints
- Buy-in for solutions the team creates
- Improved performance
- A sense of community in good times and bad

Potential disadvantages of teamwork include

- Groupthink (the tendency to let peer pressure overcome one's better judgment)
- Hidden agendas
- Cost
- Employee overload

Characteristics of effective teams include

- A shared sense of purpose and compatible values
- A clear and challenging goal
- A belief in the value of the team's efforts
- A well-balanced mix of people who can provide the insights and skills needed to achieve the goal
- Positive behavioral norms that promote *psychological safety*, encouraging people to share information, propose unproven ideas, and express vulnerability without fear of repercussion
- A willingness to put the team's needs ahead of individual needs
- Open and honest communication

Objective 2: Offer guidelines for collaborative communication, identify major collaboration technologies, and explain how to give constructive feedback.

Here are tips to succeed with collaborative writing:

- Select team members carefully
- Agree on project goals
- Make sure team members have time to bond
- Clarify individual responsibilities
- Establish clear processes

- Think carefully about composing as a group
- Make sure tools are ready and compatible across the team
- Check to see how things are going along the way

Major collaboration technologies include

- Commenting and revision tracking or reviewing features
- Content management systems
- Wikis
- Groupware, collaboration platforms, and shared online workspaces

Here are tips for giving constructive feedback:

- Think through the implications of your suggested changes.
- Discuss improvements rather than flaws.
- Focus on controllable behavior.
- Be specific.
- Keep feedback impersonal.
- Verify understanding.
- Time your feedback carefully.
- Highlight any limitations your feedback may have.

Objective 3: List the key steps needed to ensure productive team meetings, and identify the most common meeting technologies.

Key steps for productive meetings include

- Planning:
  - Clarify your purpose.
  - Select participants carefully.
  - Choose the best venue and the time.
  - Set and share a clear agenda.
- Leading and participating:
  - Keep the meeting on track.
  - Follow agreed-upon rules.
  - Encourage and moderate participation.
  - Participate actively.
  - Don't interrupt.
  - Use mobile devices respectfully.
  - Close effectively.

Common meeting technologies include

- Workgroup messaging
- Teleconferencing
- Videoconferencing
- Web-based meetings

Objective 4: Identify the major types of listening, describe the listening process, and explain how good listeners overcome barriers at each stage of the process.

Major types of positive, active listening include

- Content listening
- Empathic listening
- Critical listening

The listening process involves five steps:

1. Receiving
2. Decoding
3. Remembering
4. Evaluating
5. Responding

Tips to overcome barriers include

- Practice active listening.
- Avoid disrupting.
- Look past superficial differences and distractions.
- Pay attention in order to avoid selective listening.
- Resist selective perception.

Objective 5: Explain the importance of nonverbal communication, and identify six major categories of nonverbal expression.

Nonverbal signals play a vital role in communication:

- They can strengthen or repeat a verbal message.
- They can weaken or contradict a verbal message.
- They can replace words entirely.

Six major categories of nonverbal expression are

- Facial expressions
- Gestures, posture, and gait
- Vocal characteristics
- Personal appearance
- Touch
- Use of time and personal space

Objective 6: Explain the importance of business etiquette, and identify five key areas in which good etiquette is essential.

Etiquette is an essential business skill:

- The impression you make on others and your ability to help others feel comfortable will be major contributors to your career success.
- Poor etiquette can hinder team efforts, drain morale and productivity, and drive away customers and investors.

Five key areas that require good business etiquette are

- In the workplace
- On the telephone
- While using mobile devices
- While online
- In social settings in which you represent your company

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

2-1. What are six characteristics of effective teams? [LO-1]

2-2. What is groupthink, and how can it affect an organization? [LO-1]

2-3. How does an agenda help make a meeting more successful? [LO-3]

2-4. Why should you adapt your listening techniques for various business situations? [LO-4]

2-5. What are the three main types of active listening? [LO-4]

2-6. What are the six main categories of nonverbal signals? [LO-5]

2-7. How do your mobile phone habits demonstrate your sensitivity to business etiquette? [LO-6]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

2-8. You head up the interdepartmental design review team for a manufacturer of high-performance motorcycles, and things are not going well at the moment. The design engineers and marketing strategists keep arguing about which should be a higher priority, performance or aesthetics, and the accountants say both groups are driving up the cost of the new model by adding too many new features. Everyone has valid points to make, but the team is getting bogged down in conflict. Explain how you could go about resolving the stalemate. [LO-1]

2-9. How can nonverbal communication help you run a meeting? How can it help you call a meeting to order, emphasize important topics, show approval, express reservations, regulate the flow of conversation, and invite a colleague to continue with a comment? [LO-3], [LO-5]

2-10. Several members of your sales team are protesting the company's "business casual" dress code, claiming that dressing nicely makes them feel awkward and overly formal in front of customers. You have to admit that most of the company's customers dress like they've just walked in from a picnic or a bike ride, but that doesn't change the fact that you want your company to be seen as conscientious and professional. How will you explain the policy to these employees in a way that will help them understand and accept it? [LO-5]

2-11. Why do you think people are more likely to engage in rude behaviors during online communication than during in-person communication? [LO-6]

2-12. You're giving your first major presentation at your new job and you notice at least half the people in the small conference room are looking at their mobile devices more than they are looking at you. How should you handle the situation? [LO-6]

Practice Your Skills

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information will be found in another chapter, as indicated.

2-13. Collaboration: Working in Teams [LO-1] In teams assigned by your instructor, prepare a 10-minute presentation on the potential disadvantages of using social media for business communication. When the presentation is ready, discuss how effective the team was in using the criteria of (1) having a clear objective and a shared sense of purpose, (2) communicating openly and honestly, (3) reaching decisions by consensus, (4) thinking creatively, and (5) knowing how to resolve conflict. Be prepared to discuss your findings with the rest of the class.

2-14. Negotiation and Conflict Resolution: Resolving Conflicts; Communication Ethics: Providing Ethical Leadership [LO-1], **Chapter 1** During team meetings, one member constantly calls for votes or decisions before all the members have voiced their views. As the leader, you asked this member privately about his behavior. He replied that he is trying to move the team toward its goals, but you are concerned that he is really trying to take control. How can you deal with this situation without removing the member from the group?

2-15. Collaboration: Using Collaboration Technologies [LO-2] In a team assigned by your instructor, use Zoho (free for personal use) or a comparable system to collaborate on a set of directions that out-of-town visitors could use to reach a specific point on your campus, such as a stadium or dorm. The team should choose the location and the mode(s) of transportation involved. Be creative—brainstorm the best ways to guide first-time visitors to the selected location using all the media at your disposal.

2-16. Collaboration: Collaborating on Writing Projects; Media Skills: Blogging [LO-2] In this project, you will conduct research on your own and then merge your results with those of the rest of your team. Search Twitter for messages on the subject of workplace safety. Compile at least five general safety tips that apply to any office setting, and then meet with your team to select the five best tips from all those the team has collected. Collaborate on a blog post that lists the team's top five tips.

2-17. Collaboration: Planning Meetings; Media Skills: Presentations [LO-3] A project leader has made notes about covering the following items at the quarterly budget meeting. Prepare an agenda by putting these items into a logical order and rewriting them, where necessary, to give phrases a more consistent sound. Create a presentation slide (or a blog post, as your instructor indicates).

Budget Committee meeting to be held on December 12, 2018, at 9:30 a.m.

- I will call the meeting to order.
- Site director's report: A closer look at cost overruns on Greentree site.
- The group will review and approve the minutes from last quarter's meeting.
- I will ask the finance director to report on actual vs. projected quarterly revenues and expenses.
- I will distribute copies of the overall divisional budget and announce the date of the next budget meeting.
- Discussion: How can we do a better job of anticipating and preventing cost overruns?
- Meeting will take place in Conference Room 3.
- What additional budget issues must be considered during this quarter?

2-18. Collaboration: Participating in Meetings [LO-3] With a classmate, attend a local community or campus meeting where you can observe group discussion. Take notes individually during the meeting and then work together to answer the following questions. Submit your conclusions in an email message to your instructor.

a. What is your evaluation of this meeting? In your answer, consider (1) the leader's ability to clearly state the meeting's goals, (2) the leader's ability to engage members in a meaningful discussion, and (3) the group's listening skills.

b. How well did the individual participants listen? How could you tell?

c. Compare the notes you took during the meeting with those of your classmate. What differences do you notice? How do you account for these differences?

2-19. Collaboration: Leading Meetings [**LO-3**], **Chapter 1** Every month, each employee in your department is expected to give a brief oral presentation on the status of his or her ongoing projects. However, your department has recently hired an employee who has a severe speech impediment that prevents people from understanding most of what he has to say. As assistant department manager, how will you resolve this dilemma? Explain your plan in an email message to your instructor.

2-20. Interpersonal Communication: Listening Actively [**LO-4**] For the next several days, take notes on your listening performance during at least six situations in class, during social activities, and at work, if applicable. Referring to the traits of effective listeners in Table 2.2, rate yourself using *always*, *frequently*, *occasionally*, or *never* for these positive listening habits. In a report no longer than one page, summarize your analysis and identify specific areas in which you can improve your listening skills.

2-21. Interpersonal Communication: Listening to Empathize [**LO-4**] Think back over conversations you have had with friends, family members, coworkers, or classmates in the past week. Select a conversation in which the other person wanted to talk about something that was troubling him or her—a bad situation at work, a scary exam on the horizon, difficulties with a professor, a health problem, financial concerns, or the like. As you replay this conversation in your mind, think about how well you did in terms of empathic listening (see page 47). For example, did you find yourself being critical when the person really just needed someone to listen? Did you let the person know, by your words or actions, that you cared about his or her dilemma, even if you were not able to help in any other way? Analyze your listening performance in a brief email to your instructor. Be sure not to disclose any private information; you can change the names of the people involved or the circumstances as needed to maintain privacy.

2-22. Nonverbal Communication: Analyzing Nonverbal Signals [**LO-5**] Select a piece of commercial mail that you received at work or at home. Analyze its appearance. What nonverbal messages does this piece send? Are these messages consistent with the content of the mailing? If not, what could the sender have done to make the nonverbal communication consistent with the verbal communication? Summarize your findings in a post on your class blog or in an email message to your instructor.

2-23. Communication Etiquette: Telephone Skills [**LO-6**] Late on a Friday afternoon, you learn that the facilities department is going to move you—and your computer, your desk, and all your files—to another office first thing Monday morning. However, you have an important client meeting scheduled in your office for Monday afternoon, and you need to finalize some contract details on Monday morning. You simply can't lose access to your office at that point, and you're more than a little annoyed that your boss didn't ask you before approving the move. He has already left for the day, but you know he usually checks his voicemail over the weekend, so you decide to leave a voicemail message, asking him to cancel the move or at least call you at home as soon as possible. Plan your message (use an imaginary phone number as your contact number and make up any other details you need for the call). As directed by your instructor, submit either a written script of the message or a recording of the actual message.

2-24. Communication Etiquette: Etiquette in the Workplace [**LO-6**] As the regional manager of an international accounting firm, you place high priority on professional etiquette. Not only does it communicate respect to your clients, it also instills confidence in your firm by showing that you and your staff are aware of and able to meet the expectations of almost any audience. Earlier today, you took four recently hired college graduates to lunch with an important client. You've done this for years, and it's usually an upbeat experience for everyone, but today's lunch was a disaster. One of the new employees made not one, not two, but *three* calls on his mobile phone during lunch without leaving the table. Another interrupted the client several times and even got into a mild argument. The third employee kept cracking sarcastic jokes about politics, making everyone at the table uncomfortable. And the fourth showed up dressed like she was expecting to bale hay or work in a coal mine, not have a business lunch in a posh restaurant. You've already called the client to apologize, but now you need to coach these employees on proper business etiquette. Draft a brief memo to these employees, explaining why etiquette is so important to the company's success—and to their individual careers.

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Celebrities can learn from successful businesses when it comes to managing their careers, but businesses can learn from successful celebrities, too—particularly when it comes to building communities online using social media. Locate three celebrities (musicians, actors, authors, or athletes) who have sizable fan bases on Facebook and analyze how they use the social network. Using whatever medium your instructor requests, write a brief analysis (no more than one page) of the lessons, positive or negative, that a business could learn from these celebrities. Be sure to cite specific elements from the Facebook pages you've chosen, and if you think any of the celebrities have made mistakes in their use of Facebook, describe those as well.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at **websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that explains at least one essential skill related to teamwork, collaborative writing, listening, nonverbal communication, or business etiquette. Write a brief email message to your instructor, describing the item you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from **real-time updates.com/bce8**; select Student Assignments, and then select Chapter 2, Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Pronouns

Review Section 1.2 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage. Answers to these exercises appear on page 489.

For the following items, replace the underlined nouns with the correct pronouns.

2-25. To which retailer will you send your merchandise?
2-26. Have you given Javier and Nancy a list of parts?
2-27. The main office sent the invoice to Mr. and Mrs. Litvak on December 5.
2-28. The company settled the company's accounts before the end of the year.
2-29. Which person's umbrella is this?

For the following items, identify which of the pronoun forms provided in parentheses is correct.

2-30. The sales staff is preparing guidelines for (their, its) clients.
2-31. Few of the sales representatives turn in (their, its) reports on time.
2-32. The board of directors has chosen (their, its) officers.
2-33. Johnstone and Koseff have told (his, their) clients about the new program.
2-34. Each manager plans to expand (his, their, his or her) sphere of control next year.
2-35. Has everyone supplied (his, their, his or her) Social Security number?
2-36. After giving every employee (his, their, a) raise, George told (them, they, all) about the increased workload.
2-37. Cherise and Tim have opposite ideas about how to achieve company goals. (Who, Whom) do you think will win the debate?
2-38. City Securities has just announced (who, whom) it will hire as CEO.
2-39. Either of the new products would readily find (their, its) niche in the marketplace.

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

2-40. Anita Doig from Data Providers will outline their data interpretations as it relates to industry trends, additionally Miss Doig will be asked to comment on how their data should be utilized.
2-41. You're order for 2000 mylar bags has been received by us; please be advised that orders of less than 5000 bags only get a 20 percent discount.
2-42. Just between you and I, the new 'customer centric' philosophy seems pretty confusing.
2-43. Podcasting can be an effective way to distribute messages to a widespread audience, but you need to pay close attention to the demands of an audio medium.
2-44. Among the specialties of Product Marketers International is promotional efforts for clients, including presence on the Internet, radio, and on television.
2-45. An overview of a typical marketing plan will be covered in the introduction to this report, to give you an idea of what's in it.
2-46. Subsidiary rights sales can be a discreet source of income and compliment your overall sales.
2-47. Special events ranging from author breakfasts and luncheons to awards programs and reception's offers a great way to make industry contacts.
2-48. We will show you how not only to meet the challenges of information rich material but also the challenges of electronic distance learning.
2-49. To site just one problem, the reason that the market is in such a state of confusion is the appalling lack of standards whether for hardware, software or for metadata.
2-50. Two leading business consultants Tadashi Son and Carla McNeil will share their insights on how specialty stores can effectively compete in a world of Corporate Superstores.
2-51. One of the big questions we need to address are "How does buying effect inventory levels"?
2-52. The closing of many industry digital entities have greatly affected the perception of e-books as a viable platform.
2-53. A competent, motivated, and enthusiastic staff can be a managers' most important asset in a competitive marketplace.
2-54. Come by the Technology Lounge where you can log on to computers and plugin laptops and check out demos of sponsor's websites.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C) or download the document and make the corrections in your word-processing software.

Marketing Pro's: Are You're Messages Truthful and Non-Deceptive?!

In the United States, the FTC (federal Trade Commission) has the authority to impose penalty against advertisers whom violate Federal Standards for truthful advertising. The FTC considers a message to be deceptive, if they include statements that are likely to mislead reasonable customers and the statements are an important part of the purchasing decision. A failures to include important information are also considered deceptive. Also, the FTC also looks at so-called *"implied claims,?"* Claims you don't explicitly make but that can be inferred from what you do or don't say.

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

2-55. What is the difference between constructive and destructive feedback? [LO-2]

2-56. Considering what you've learned about nonverbal communication, what are some of the ways in which communication might break down during an online meeting in which the participants can see video images of only the person presenting at any given time—and then only his or her face? [LO-5]

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PART 2

The Three-Step Writing Process

Every professional can learn to write more effectively while spending less time and energy in creating effective messages. Discover a proven writing process that divides the challenge of communicating into three simple steps: planning, writing, and completing messages. The process works for everything from blog posts to formal reports to your résumé. With a bit of practice, you'll be using the process to write more effectively without even thinking about it.

Photobee/Fotolia

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3 Planning Business Messages

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Describe the three-step writing process, and explain why it will help you create better messages in less time.
2. Explain what it means to analyze the situation when planning a message.
3. Describe the techniques for gathering information for simple messages, and identify three attributes of quality information.
4. Identify the six basic combinations of media and channels, and highlight the unique challenges of communication on mobile devices.
5. Explain why good organization is important to both you and your audience, and explain how to organize any business message.

MyLab Business Communication

If your instructor is using MyLab Business Communication, visit **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for videos, simulations, and writing exercises.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"Stories are fundamental to how we think about the world."
—Mohsin Hamid, Chief Storytelling Officer, Wolff Olins

Storytelling might seem like an odd topic for a business communication course, but storytelling is at the heart of some of the most effective communication efforts, from heart-tugging TV commercials to engaging training materials to rousing motivational speeches. With more and more professionals and companies recognizing the power of storytelling, narrative techniques have become a hot topic in the business communication field.

The Pakistani writer Mohsin Hamid is one of the most respected novelists and essayists of his generation, but he maintains a parallel career as the chief storytelling officer (CSO) for Wolff Olins, an international creativity consultancy based in London. In this role, he helps business professionals and executives use the art of storytelling as a means to engage with both internal and external audiences. For example, he advises company leaders to use strategic storytelling at three key stages of a company's evolution: when it is first launched, so that everyone knows where and how the company intends to grow; whenever major changes occur, so that everyone understands how the narrative has changed; and whenever the company's growth trajectory

D Legakis/Alamy Stock Photo

Novelist and essayist Mohsin Hamid has a second career as the chief storytelling officer at the London-based creative consultancy Wolff Olins.

stalls, to reiterate what the company stands for and how it can overcome the odds.[1]

This chapter is the first of three that explore the three-step writing process, a time-tested method for creating more-effective messages in less time. The techniques you'll learn in this chapter, including using storytelling in business communication, will help you plan and organize messages that capture and keep your audience's attention.

Understanding the Three-Step Writing Process

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Describe the three-step writing process, and explain why it will help you create better messages in less time.

The three-step writing process consists of *planning*, *writing*, and *completing* your messages.

No matter what kind of information you need to convey, your goal is to craft a message that is *effective* (it meets your audience's needs and gets your points across) and *efficient* (it makes the best use of your time and your audience's time). Following a clear and proven three-step process (see Figure 3.1) will help you meet both goals:

- **Planning business messages.** To plan any message, first *analyze* the situation by defining your purpose and developing a profile of your audience. When you're sure about what you need to accomplish with your message, *gather the information* that will meet your audience's needs. Next, *select the right combination of media and channels* for producing and delivering your message. Then *organize the information* by defining your main idea, limiting your scope, selecting the direct or indirect approach, and outlining your content. Planning messages is the focus of this chapter.
- **Writing business messages.** After you've planned your message, *adapt your approach* to your audience with sensitivity, relationship skills, and style. Then you're ready to *compose your message* by choosing strong words, creating effective sentences, and developing coherent paragraphs. Writing business messages is discussed in Chapter 4.

1 Plan →

Analyze the Situation
Define your purpose and develop an audience profile.

Gather Information
Determine audience needs and obtain the information necessary to satisfy those needs.

Choose Medium and Channel
Identify the best combination for the situation, message, and audience.

Organize the Information
Define your main idea, limit your scope, select a direct or an indirect approach, and outline your content.

2 Write →

Adapt to Your Audience
Be sensitive to audience needs by using a "you" attitude, politeness, positive emphasis, and unbiased language. Build a strong relationship with your audience by establishing your credibility and projecting your company's preferred image. Control your style with a conversational tone, plain English, and appropriate voice.

Compose the Message
Choose strong words that will help you create effective sentences and coherent paragraphs.

3 Complete

Revise the Message
Evaluate content and review readability, edit and rewrite for conciseness and clarity.

Produce the Message
Use effective design elements and suitable layout for a clean, professional appearance.

Proofread the Message
Review for errors in layout, spelling, and mechanics.

Distribute the Message
Deliver your message using the chosen medium; make sure all documents and all relevant files are distributed successfully.

Figure 3.1 The Three-Step Writing Process
This three-step process will help you create more effective messages in any medium. As you get more practice with the process, it will become easier and more automatic.

Sources: Based in part on Kevin J. Harty and John Keenan, *Writing for Business and Industry: Process and Product* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 3–4; Richard Hatch, *Business Writing* (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1983), 88–89; Richard Hatch, *Business Communication Theory and Technique* (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1983), 74–75; Center for Humanities, *Writing as a Process: A Step-by-Step Guide* (Mount Kisco, N.Y.: Center for Humanities, 1987); Michael L. Keene, *Effective Professional Writing* (New York: D. C. Heath, 1987), 28–34.

- **Completing business messages.** After writing your first draft, *revise* your message to make sure it is clear, concise, and correct. Next, *produce your message*, giving it an attractive, professional appearance. *Proofread* the final product to ensure high quality, and then *distribute your message*. Completing business messages is discussed in Chapter 5.

Throughout this book, you'll see the three steps in this process applied to a wide variety of business messages. The more you use the process, the easier and faster writing will become for you. As a general rule, for anything beyond short and simple messages, set aside roughly 50 percent of your available time for planning, 25 percent for writing, and 25 percent for completing. Using half your time for planning might seem excessive, but careful planning—particularly for big projects—can save you lots of time and trouble and produce better results.

As a starting point, allot roughly half your available time for planning, one quarter for writing, and one quarter for completing a message.

Analyzing the Situation

Every communication effort takes place in a particular situation, meaning that you have a specific message to share with a specific audience under a specific set of circumstances. Analyzing the situation gives you the insights necessary to meet your own needs as a communicator while also meeting the information needs of your recipients.

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain what it means to analyze the situation when planning a message.

DEFINING YOUR PURPOSE

A successful message starts with a clear purpose that connects the sender's needs with the audience's needs. All business messages have a **general purpose**: to inform, to persuade, to collaborate, or to initiate a conversation. This purpose helps define the overall approach you'll need to take. Within the scope of that general purpose, each message also has a **specific purpose**, which identifies what you hope to accomplish with your message. The more precisely you can define your specific purpose, the better you'll be able to fine-tune your message to achieve your desired outcome. For example, "get approval to hire three programmers by June 1 in order to meet our November 15 deadline" is more helpful as a planning device than "get approval to hire more staff."

Business messages have both a general purpose and a specific purpose.

After you have defined your specific purpose, make sure it merits the time and effort required for you to prepare and send the message. Ask these four questions:

After defining your purpose, verify that the message will be worth the time and effort required to create, send, and receive it.

- **Will anything change as a result of your message?** Make sure you don't contribute to information overload by sending messages that won't change anything. For instance, if you don't like your company's latest advertising campaign but you're not in a position to influence it, sending a critical message to your colleagues won't change anything and won't benefit anyone.
- **Is your purpose realistic?** Recognizing whether a goal is realistic is an important part of having good business sense. For example, if you request a raise while the company is struggling, you might send the message that you're not tuned into the situation around you.
- **Is the time right?** People who are busy or distracted when they receive your message are less likely to pay attention to it. Many professions and departments have recurring cycles in their workloads, for instance, and messages sent during peak times may be ignored.
- **Is your purpose acceptable to your organization?** Your company's business objectives and policies, and even laws that apply to your industry, may dictate whether a given purpose is acceptable. For example, if you work for a discount stock brokerage, one that doesn't offer investing advice, it would be inappropriate to write a newsletter article on the pros and cons of investing in a particular company.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY WATCHING THIS VIDEO

Loosen up your writing with these free-writing tips

Free writing can be a great way to come up with material for a writing project and to get more comfortable with the process of writing. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

When you are satisfied that you have a clear and meaningful purpose and that now is a smart time to proceed, your next step is to understand the members of your audience and their needs.

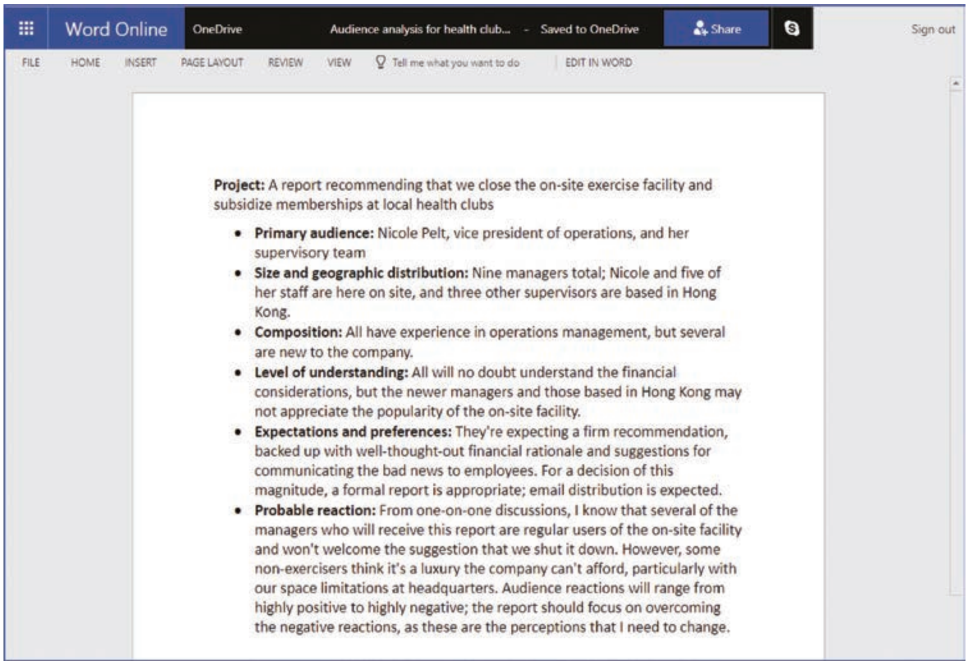
DEVELOPING AN AUDIENCE PROFILE

Before audience members will take the time to read or listen to your messages, they have to be interested in what you're saying. They need to know the message is relevant to their needs—even if they don't necessarily want to read or see it. The more you know about your audience members, their needs, and their expectations, the more effectively you'll be able to communicate with them. Figure 3.2 provides an example of the kind of information you need to compile in an audience analysis. Conducting an audience analysis involves the following steps:

Ask yourself some key questions about your audience:
- Who are they?
- How many people do you need to reach?
- How much do they already know about the subject?
- What is their probable reaction to your message?

- **Identify your primary audience.** For some messages, certain audience members might be more important than others. Don't ignore the needs of less influential members, but make sure you address the concerns of the key decision makers.
- **Determine audience size and geographic distribution.** A message aimed at 10,000 people spread around the globe will likely require a different approach than one aimed at a dozen people down the hall.
- **Determine audience composition.** Look for similarities and differences in culture, language, age, education, organizational rank and status, attitudes, experience, motivations, biases, beliefs, and any other factors that might affect the success of your message (see Figure 3.3).
- **Gauge audience members' level of understanding.** If audience members share your general background, they'll probably understand your material without difficulty. If not, your message may need an element of education to help people understand it.
- **Understand audience expectations and preferences.** For example, will members of your audience expect complete details or just a summary of the main points?

If audience members have different levels of understanding of the topic, aim your message at the most influential decision makers.



Project: A report recommending that we close the on-site exercise facility and subsidize memberships at local health clubs

- **Primary audience:** Nicole Pelt, vice president of operations, and her supervisory team
- **Size and geographic distribution:** Nine managers total; Nicole and five of her staff are here on site, and three other supervisors are based in Hong Kong.
- **Composition:** All have experience in operations management, but several are new to the company.
- **Level of understanding:** All will no doubt understand the financial considerations, but the newer managers and those based in Hong Kong may not appreciate the popularity of the on-site facility.
- **Expectations and preferences:** They're expecting a firm recommendation, backed up with well-thought-out financial rationale and suggestions for communicating the bad news to employees. For a decision of this magnitude, a formal report is appropriate; email distribution is expected.
- **Probable reaction:** From one-on-one discussions, I know that several of the managers who will receive this report are regular users of the on-site facility and won't welcome the suggestion that we shut it down. However, some non-exercisers think it's a luxury the company can't afford, particularly with our space limitations at headquarters. Audience reactions will range from highly positive to highly negative; the report should focus on overcoming the negative reactions, as these are the perceptions that I need to change.

Figure 3.2 Using Audience Analysis to Plan a Message
For simple, routine messages, you usually don't need to analyze your audience in depth. However, for complex messages or messages for indifferent or hostile audiences, take the time to study their information needs and potential reactions to your message.
Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation

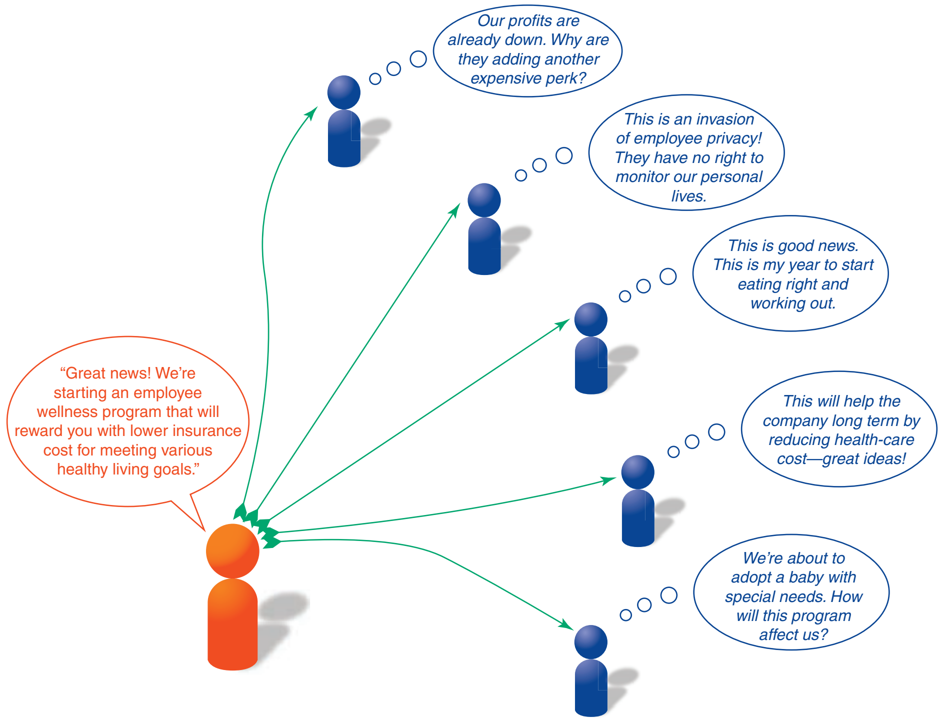


Figure 3.3 Predicting the Effects of Audience Composition
As just one example of why it's important to analyze the composition of your audience, the attitudes and beliefs of individual audience members can have a significant impact on the success of a message. In this scenario, for instance, a seemingly positive message about employee benefits can generate a wide range of responses from employees with different beliefs and concerns.

- **Forecast the audience's likely reaction.** As you'll learn later in this chapter, the reaction you expect to get from your audience can help determine the best way to organize a message.

A gradual approach and solid evidence are required to win over a skeptical audience.

Gathering Information

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe the techniques for gathering information for simple messages, and identify three attributes of quality information.

When you have a clear picture of your audience, your next step is to assemble the information you will include in your message. For simple messages, you may already have all the information at hand, but for more complex messages, you may need to do considerable research and analysis before you're ready to begin writing. Chapter 10 explores formal techniques for finding, evaluating, and processing information, but you can often use a variety of informal techniques to gather insights and guide your research efforts:

- **Consider the audience's perspective.** Put yourself in the audience's position. What are these people thinking, feeling, or planning? What information do they need in order to move forward? If you are initiating a conversation in a social media context, what information will stimulate discussion in your target communities?
- **Listen to the community.** For almost any subject related to business these days, chances are there is a community of customers, product enthusiasts, or other people linked through social media who engage in online discussions. Find them and listen to what they have to say.
- **Read reports and other company documents.** Annual reports, financial statements, news releases, blogs and microblogs by industry experts, marketing reports, and customer surveys are just a few of the many potential information sources. Find out whether your company

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has a *knowledge management system*, a database that collects the experiences and insights of employees throughout the organization.

- **Talk with supervisors, colleagues, or customers.** Fellow workers and customers may have information you need, or they may have good insights into the needs of your target audience.
- **Ask your audience for input.** If you're unsure what audience members need from your message, ask them, if possible. Admitting you don't know but want to meet their needs will impress an audience more than guessing and getting it wrong.

MOBILE APP
The note-taking app **Evernote** helps you collect, organize, and retrieve information for planning writing projects.

UNCOVERING AUDIENCE NEEDS

In many situations, your audience's information needs will be obvious. In other situations, audience members might be unable to articulate exactly what they want, or you won't have the opportunity to communicate with them before you need to create a message.

Audience members might not be able to describe all the information they need, or you might not have the opportunity to ask them, so you may need to engage in some detective work.

In some cases, you may need to do some detective work to find out what information is needed. If you're asked to suggest steps a company can take to improve employee morale, for example, you'll need to investigate the underlying reasons for low morale. By including this information in your report—even if it wasn't specifically requested—you demonstrate to your readers that you've thoroughly investigated the problem.

PROVIDING REQUIRED INFORMATION

After you have defined your audience's information needs, your next step is to satisfy those needs completely. In addition to delivering the right *quantity* of information, you are responsible for verifying the *quality* of that information. Ask yourself these three questions:

You have a responsibility to make sure the information you provide is accurate, ethical, and pertinent.

- **Is the information accurate?** Inaccuracies can cause a host of problems, from embarrassment and lost productivity to serious safety and legal issues. Be sure to review any calculations and check all dates and schedules. Examine your own assumptions and conclusions to be sure they are valid.
- **Is the information ethical?** By working hard to ensure the accuracy of the information you gather, you'll also avoid many ethical problems in your messages. However, messages can also be unethical if important information is omitted or obscured.
- **Is the information pertinent?** Some points will be more important to your audience than others. By focusing on the information that concerns your audience the most, you increase your chances of sending an effective message.

Selecting the Best Combination of Media and Channels

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Identify the six basic combinations of media and channels, and highlight the unique challenges of communication on mobile devices.

With the necessary information in hand, your next decision involves the best combination of media and channels to reach your target audience. As you recall from Chapter 1, the medium is the *form* a message takes and the channel is the *system* used to deliver the message. The distinction between the two isn't always crystal clear, and some people use the terms differently, but these definitions are a good way to think about the possibilities for business communication.

Most media can be distributed through more than one channel, so whenever you have a choice, think through your options to select the optimum combination. For example, a brief written message could be distributed as a printed letter or memo, or it could be distributed through a variety of digital channels, from workgroup messaging to blogging to social networking.

Media can be divided into *oral*, *written*, and *visual* forms, and all three can be distributed through *digital* and *nondigital* channels.

THE MOST COMMON MEDIA AND CHANNEL OPTIONS

The simplest way to categorize media choices is to divide them into *oral* (spoken), *written*, and *visual*. Each of these media can be delivered through *digital* and *nondigital channels*, which creates six basic combinations that are discussed in the following sections. Table 3.1 summarizes the general advantages and disadvantages of the six medium/channel combinations. Specific options within these categories have their own strengths and weaknesses to consider as well. (For simplicity's sake, subsequent chapters occasionally use "digital media" to indicate any of the three media types delivered through digital channels.)

Oral Medium, In-Person Channel

The oral medium, in-person channel combo involves talking with people who are in the same location, whether it's a one-on-one conversation over lunch or a more formal speech or presentation. Being in the same physical space is a key distinction because it enables the nuances of nonverbal communication more than any other medium/channel combination. As Chapter 2 points out, these nonverbal signals can carry as much weight in the conversation as the words being spoken.

The nonverbal and interactive aspects of in-person communication are difficult to replicate in most other medium/channel combinations.

TABLE 3.1 Medium/Channel Combinations: Advantages and Disadvantages

Medium/Channel	Advantages	Disadvantages
Oral, in-person	• Provide opportunity for immediate feedback • Easily resolve misunderstandings and negotiate meanings • Involve rich nonverbal cues (both physical gestures and vocal inflections) • Allow expression of the emotion behind your message	• Restrict participation to those physically present • Unless recorded, provide no permanent, verifiable record of the communication • Can reduce communicator's control over the message
Oral, digital	• Can provide opportunity for immediate feedback (live phone or online conversations) • Not restricted to participants in the same location • Allow time-shifted consumption (podcasts, for example)	• Lack nonverbal cues other than voice inflections • Can be tedious to listen to if not audience focused (recorded messages)
Written, printed	• Allow writers to plan and control their messages • Can reach geographically dispersed audiences • Offer a permanent, verifiable record • Minimize the distortion that can accompany oral messages • Can be used to avoid immediate interactions • Deemphasize any inappropriate emotional components • Give recipients time to process messages before responding (compared with oral communication)	• Offer limited opportunities for timely feedback • Lack the rich nonverbal cues provided by oral media • Often take more time and more resources to create and distribute • Can require special skills to prepare or produce if document is elaborate
Written, digital	In general, all the advantages of written printed documents plus: • Can be delivered quickly • Offer the flexibility of multiple formats and channels, from microblogs to wikis • Offer the ability to structure messages in creative ways, such as writing a headline on Twitter and linking to the full message on a blog • Can offer links to related and more in-depth information • Can increase accessibility and openness in an organization through broader sharing • Enable audience interaction through social media features • Can be easily integrating with other media types, such as with embedded videos or photos	• Can be limited in terms of reach and capability • Require Internet or mobile phone connectivity • Are vulnerable to security and privacy problems • Are easy to overuse (sending too many messages to too many recipients) • Create privacy risks and concerns (exposing confidential data, employer monitoring, accidental forwarding) • Entail security risks (viruses, spyware; network breaches) • Create productivity concerns (frequent interruptions, nonbusiness usage)
Visual, printed	• Can quickly convey complex ideas and relationships • Are often less intimidating than long blocks of text • Can reduce the burden on the audience to figure out how the pieces of a message or concept fit • Can be easy to create in spreadsheets and other software (simple charts and graphs), then integrate with reports	• Can require artistic skills to design • Require some technical skills to create • Can require more time to create than equivalent amount of text • Can be expensive to print
Visual, digital	In general, all the advantages of visual printed documents and all the advantages of written digital formats plus: • Can personalize and enhance the experience for audience members • Offer the persuasive power of multimedia formats, particularly video	• Need time, cost, and skills to create • Can require large amounts of bandwidth

By giving people the ability to see, hear, and react to each other, in-person communication is useful for encouraging people to ask questions, make comments, and work together to reach a consensus or decision. Face-to-face interaction is particularly helpful in complex, emotionally charged situations in which establishing or fostering a business relationship is important.[2] Managers who engage in frequent "walk-arounds," chatting with employees face-to-face, can get input, answer questions, and interpret important business events and trends.[3]

Oral Medium, Digital Channel

Oral media via digital channels include any transmission of voice via electronic means, both live and recorded. Examples include telephone calls, podcasts, and voice-mail messages. Live phone conversations offer the give-and-take of in-person conversations and can be the best alternative to talking in person. Without a video component, however, they can't provide most of the nuances of nonverbal communication. Podcasts (see Chapter 6) can be a good way to share lectures, commentary, interviews, and other spoken content.

Written Medium, Print Channel

Written, printed documents are the classic format of business communication. **Memos** are brief printed documents traditionally used for the routine, day-to-day exchange of information within an organization. **Letters** are brief written messages sent to customers and other recipients outside the organization. Reports and proposals are usually longer than memos and letters, although both can be created in memo or letter format. These documents come in a variety of lengths, ranging from a few pages to several hundred, and usually have a fairly formal tone.

While printed documents are still a useful format, they have been replaced by digital alternatives in many instances. However, here are several situations in which you should consider a printed message over electronic alternatives:

Digital media/channel formats have replaced printed documents in many instances, but print is still the best choice for some messages and situations.

- When you want to make a formal impression
- When you are legally required to provide information in printed form
- When you want to stand out from the flood of electronic messages
- When you need a permanent, unchangeable, or secure record

Obviously, if you can't reach a particular audience via electronic means, you'll need to use a printed message. Appendix A offers guidelines on formatting printed memos and letters.

Written Medium, Digital Channel

Most of your business communication efforts will involve the combination of written medium and digital channel.

Most of your business communication efforts will involve written digital messages, with everything from 140-character tweets to website content to book-length reports distributed as portable document format (PDF) files. Business uses of written, digital messages keep evolving as companies look for ways to communicate more effectively (see Figure 3.4). For example, email has been a primary business medium for several decades, but it is being replaced in many cases by a variety of other digital formats.[4] Chapter 6 takes a closer look at email, messaging, blogs, and social networks; Chapter 11 discusses wikis in more detail.

Visual Medium, Print Channel

Photographs and diagrams can be effective communication tools for conveying emotions, spatial relationships, technical processes, and other content that can be difficult to describe using words alone. You may occasionally create visual printed messages as standalone items, but most will be used as supporting material in printed documents.

Visual Medium, Digital Channel

The combination of the visual medium and a digital channel can be the most compelling and engaging choice for many messages, although it is not always the easiest or cheapest format.

Business messages can come alive when conveyed by visual media through digital channels. Infographics, interactive diagrams, animation, and digital video have the potential to engage audiences in ways that other formats can't, which is why the use of visual elements in business communication continues to grow.

Figure 3.4 Media and Channel Choices: Written + Digital
Harley-Davidson could've chosen a variety of medium/channel combinations to share this information about Harley fans taking a cross-country ride on vintage motorcycles. Facebook was an appealing choice because of the company's huge fan base (more than 7 million people) and the ease of sharing the message on the social network.
Source: Courtesy of Harley-Davidson on Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/harley-davidson

Traditional business messages rely primarily on text, with occasional support from graphics such as charts, graphs, or diagrams to help illustrate points discussed in the text. However, many business communicators are discovering the power of messages in which the visual element is dominant and supported by small amounts of text. For the purposes of this discussion, think of visual media as formats in which one or more visual elements play a central role in conveying the message content.

Messages that combine powerful visuals with supporting text can be effective for a number of reasons. Today's audiences are pressed for time and bombarded with messages, so anything that communicates quickly is welcome. Visuals are also effective at describing complex ideas and processes because they can reduce the work required for an audience to identify the parts and relationships that make up the whole. Also, in a multilingual business world, diagrams, symbols, and other images can lower communication barriers by requiring less language processing. Finally, visual images can be easier to remember than purely textual descriptions or explanations.

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The Unique Challenges of Communication on Mobile Devices

Mobile devices can be used to create and consume virtually every digital form of oral, written, and visual media. Thanks to the combination of portability and the flexibility enabled by a wide array of business-focused apps, mobile devices have become a primary tool in business communication. In addition to the factors discussed on pages 13–14 in Chapter 1, consider these issues whenever your messages are likely to be viewed on mobile devices:

The mobile digital channel has become significant in business communication of all types, but it presents some challenges that must be considered.

- **Screen size and resolution.** The screen resolution of mobile devices has improved considerably in recent years, but the limited size of these screens still presents a challenge simply because many messages are significantly larger than the screens they will be viewed on. The result is a dilemma that pits clarity against context. Readers can zoom in to make text readable and visuals understandable, but the inability to see an entire document page or visual at once can limit a reader's ability to grasp its full meaning. This can be particularly troublesome if you are collaborating on writing or presentation projects and team members need to review documents or slides.
- **Input technologies.** Even for accomplished texters, typing on mobile keyboards can be a challenge. Voice recognition is one way around the keyboard limitation, but anyone using it in public areas or shared offices runs the risk of sharing private message content and annoying anyone within earshot. Moreover, voice recognition software can make mistakes that require manual editing, particularly for users who don't enunciate clearly or when there is a lot of competing background noise. Using a stylus is an option for many devices, but this can be a slow and laborious process. If your website content or other messages and materials require a significant amount of input activity from recipients, make it as easy as possible for them. Even simple steps such as increasing the size of buttons and text-entry fields can help.
- **Bandwidth, speed, and connectivity limitations.** The speed and quality of mobile connectivity varies widely by device, carrier, service plan, and geographic location. Moreover, mobile users can lose connectivity while traveling, passing through network "dead spots," or during peak-demand hours or events (trade shows and conventions are notorious for this). Don't assume that your mobile recipients will be able to satisfactorily consume the content that you might be creating on a fast, reliable, in-office network.
- **Data usage and operational costs.** As the amount of video traffic in particular increases (video requires much higher bandwidth than text or audio), data consumption is becoming a key concern for mobile carriers and customers alike. Many mobile users do not have unlimited data-usage plans and have to manage their data consumption carefully to avoid excess fees. Some carriers offer unlimited data plans, but even those can come with restrictions such as bandwidth throttling that reduces the speed of a user's connection.[5] Given these factors, be careful about expecting or requiring mobile users to consume a lot of video or other data-intensive content.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING MEDIA AND CHANNELS

You don't always have the option of choosing which medium or channel to use for a particular message, but when you do have a choice, consider these factors:

Media vary widely in terms of *richness*, which encompasses the number of information cues, feedback mechanisms, and opportunities for personalization.

- **Richness.** *Richness* is a medium's ability to (1) convey a message through more than one informational cue (visual, verbal, vocal), (2) facilitate feedback, and (3) establish personal focus.[6] Face-to-face communication is a rich medium because it delivers information both verbally and nonverbally, it allows immediate feedback through both verbal and nonverbal responses, and it has the potential to be intimate and personal. In contrast, lean media are limited in one or more of these three aspects. For example, texting and messaging usually deliver information through only one informational cue (words), which can lead to misinterpretation. (As explained on page 157, emoticons are a response to the one-dimensional leanness of text-only messages.) In general, use richer media to send nonroutine or complex messages, to humanize your presence throughout the organization, to communicate caring to employees, and to gain employee commitment to company goals. Use leaner media to send routine messages or to transfer information that doesn't require significant explanation.[7]

- **Formality.** Your media choice is a nonverbal signal that affects the style and tone of your message. For example, a printed letter is likely to be perceived as a more formal gesture than an email message.
- **Media and channel limitations.** Every medium and channel has limitations. Texting is often perfect for communicating simple messages between two people, for instance, but it is less effective for complex messages or conversations that involve three or more people.
- **Urgency.** Some media establish a connection with the audience faster than others, so choose wisely if your message is urgent. However, be sure to respect audience members' time and workloads. If a message isn't urgent and doesn't require immediate feedback, choose a medium such as email or a blog that allows people to respond at their convenience.
- **Cost.** Cost is both a real financial factor and a perceived nonverbal signal. For example, depending on the context, extravagant (and expensive) video or multimedia presentations can send a nonverbal signal of sophistication and professionalism—or careless disregard for company budgets.
- **Audience preferences.** If you know that your audience prefers a particular medium/channel combination, use that format if it works well for the message and the situation. Otherwise you risk annoying the audience or having your message missed or ignored.
- **Security and privacy.** Your company may have restrictions on the media and channels that can be used for certain types of messages, but even if it doesn't, think carefully whenever your messages include sensitive information. Never assume that your digital communications are private. Many companies monitor these channels, and there is always the risk that networks could get hacked or that messages will be forwarded beyond their original recipients.

Many types of media offer instantaneous delivery, but take care not to interrupt people if you don't need an immediate answer.

Remember that media choices can also send a nonverbal signal regarding costs; make sure your choices are financially appropriate.

When choosing media, don't forget to consider your audience's preferences.

Organizing Your Message

5 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain why good organization is important to both you and your audience, and explain how to organize any business message.

The ability to organize messages effectively is a skill that helps readers and writers alike. Good organization helps your readers in at least three ways:

- **It helps your audience understand your message.** By making your main idea clear and supporting it with logically presented evidence, you help audiences grasp the essential elements of your message.
- **It helps your audience accept your message.** Careful organization also helps you select and arrange your points in a diplomatic way that can soften the blow of unwelcome news or persuade skeptical readers to see your point of view. In contrast, a poorly organized message can trigger negative emotions that prevent people from seeing the value of what you have to say.
- **It saves your audience time.** Good organization saves readers time because they don't have to wade through irrelevant information, seek out other sources to fill in missing information, or struggle to follow your train of thought.

Good organization benefits your audiences by helping them understand and accept your message in less time.

In addition to saving time and energy for your readers, good organization saves *you* time and consumes less of your creative energy. Writing moves more quickly because you don't waste time putting ideas in the wrong places or composing material you don't need. You spend far less time rewriting, trying to extract sensible meaning from disorganized rambling. Last but far from least, organizational skills are good for your career because they help you develop a reputation as a clear thinker who cares about your readers.

Good organization helps you by reducing the time and creative energy needed to create effective messages.

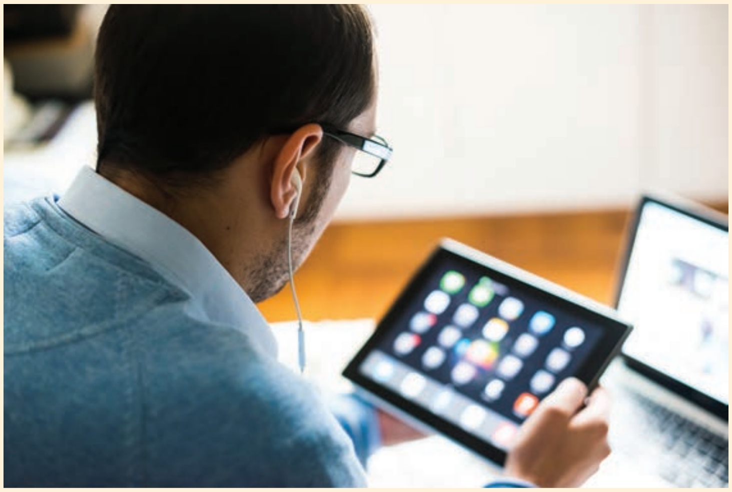
(continued on page 76)

BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS INNOVATING WITH MOBILE

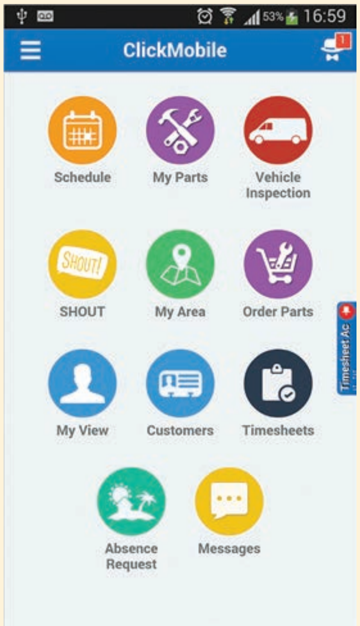
As the third major revolution in business communication in the past two decades (after the World Wide Web and social media), mobile communication has the potential to change nearly every aspect of business communication. Here is a small sample of the ways companies are putting mobile to work.

Training

In the face of changing markets, government regulations, and other forces in the business environment, developing and maintaining employee skill sets is an ongoing challenge for most companies. The challenge is made even more difficult when employees are constantly on the move or geographically dispersed. With training materials developed specifically for mobile devices, companies can deliver training content when and where it helps employees the most.



Eugenio Marongiu/Shutterstock



Distributed Decision Making

A complementary aspect to managing remote workers via mobile apps is giving employees the authority to make decisions in the field, rather than relying on managers back in the office. In the oil and gas industry, for instance, specialized mobile apps include tools for data visualization, collaboration, and data collection to help on-site employees and supervisors communicate and coordinate their efforts. This capability can be particularly vital after accidents or other crisis events, because it lets employees who are on the scene choose the best course of action without delay.

Mobile Glossary

In addition to terms defined elsewhere in the book, here are some helpful mobile terms.

3G, 4G, and 5G

Successive generations of mobile phone technology, although the generational boundaries are loosely defined and each generation includes a number of competing technologies; roughly speaking, we're in a transition from 3G to 4G now, and 5G (whatever it ends up being) won't arrive for at least several more years.

Android and iOS

The two major operating systems/platforms for mobile devices. Android devices are made by a wide variety of manufacturers, but iOS devices are made only by Apple.

Bandwidth

A measure of the data-carrying capacity of a mobile, Wi-Fi, or other network connection; streaming video and other demanding applications require a *broadband* connection, but there's no general agreement on exactly what constitutes broadband.

Cellular Versus Mobile

Two terms for the same concept; *cellular* (derived from the way phone networks are configured) is used mainly in the United States, whereas *mobile* is used more generally around the world and is also more descriptive, so that's the term used in this book.

Context Awareness

A mobile device's ability to modify its operation based on knowledge of where it is; silencing the ringer when you arrive at your office is a simple example.

Geofencing

Using the location-sensing capabilities of mobile devices to remotely monitor and control the device and its user; delivery companies, for example, can monitor where their drivers are and make sure they stay within designated areas.

Over-the-Top (OTT) Application

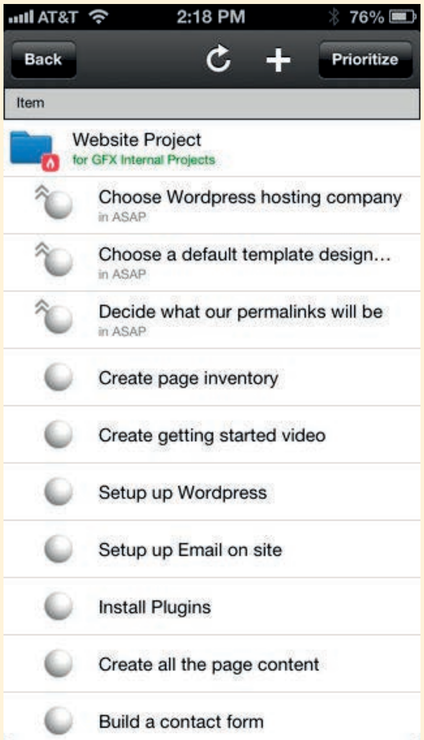
A digital service that bypasses a traditional distribution network to provide similar capability, often by using cloud capabilities; an example is WhatsApp using Internet connections to create services traditionally provided by mobile phone carriers.

Phablet

A rather ungainly name for mobile devices that are larger than phones but smaller than tablets.

Quick Response (QR) Codes and Near-Field Communication (NFC)

Two ways for a mobile device to access additional information; QR codes are square, phone-scannable barcodes that connect the phone to a website; NFC is a short-distance radio technology that enables a data link between a phone and tags that can be attached to products or other locations.



Courtesy of LiquidPlanner, Inc.

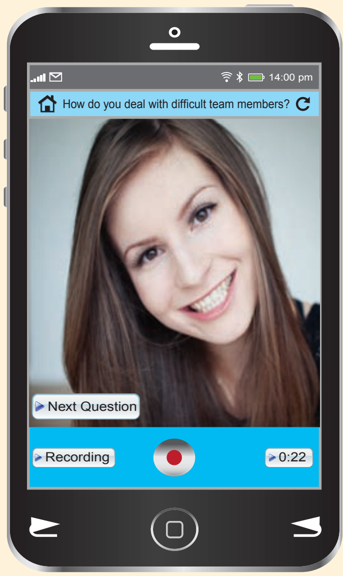
Project Management

Work teams are often dispersed over wide geographic ranges and frequently on the move, so mobile communication is an essential element of contemporary project management. Instant access to task status and other vital information helps project managers stay on top of rapidly moving projects and helps team members communicate efficiently.

Ndoeljindoel/Shutterstock

Remote Workforce Management

Dispersed workforces also present a variety of supervision and management difficulties. Mobile workforce management apps can address many of these problems, from basic functions such as ensuring that workers show up on time at remote job sites to rescheduling customer appointments on the fly to collecting information to share with technical support staff. Sales managers can give just-in-time coaching and encouragement to representatives who are about to call on potential customers. Some systems can even embed information on best practices from experienced workers and deliver virtual coaching to less-experienced workers in the field.



Miroslava Levina/Shutterstock

Recruiting

With a target population that is often on the move, companies are responding by integrating mobile into their recruiting processes. These efforts include mobile-friendly job postings, mobile application and recruiting apps, and interviewing systems that let candidates and recruiters connect using their mobile devices.

DEFINING YOUR MAIN IDEA

The topic is the broad subject; the main idea makes a statement about the topic.

The **topic** of your message is the overall subject, and your **main idea** is a specific statement about that topic. For example, if you believe that the current system of using paper forms for filing employee insurance claims is expensive and slow, you might craft a message in which the topic is employee insurance claims and the main idea is that a new web-based claim-filing system would reduce costs for the company and reduce reimbursement delays for employees.

In some instances, you'll need to do some work up front to figure out what the main idea of a message really should be.

In longer documents and presentations, you may need to unify a mass of material with a main idea that encompasses all the individual points you want to make. Sometimes you won't even be sure what your main idea is until you sort through the information. For tough assignments like these, consider a variety of techniques to generate creative ideas:

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- **Brainstorming.** Working alone or with others, generate as many ideas and questions as you can, without stopping to criticize or organize. After you capture all these pieces, look for patterns and connections to help identify the main idea and the groups of supporting ideas.
- **Journalistic approach.** The journalistic approach asks *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how* questions to distill major thoughts from unorganized information.
- **Question-and-answer chain.** Start with a key question the audience is likely to have, and work back toward your message. You'll often find that each answer generates new questions until you identify the information that needs to be in your message.
- **Storyteller's tour.** Some writers find it helpful to talk through a communication challenge before trying to write. Record yourself as you describe what you intend to write. Then listen to the playback, identify ways to tighten and clarify the message, and repeat the process until you distill the main idea down to a single, concise message.
- **Mind mapping.** You can generate and organize ideas by using a graphic method called mind mapping (see Figure 3.5). Start with a main idea and then branch out to connect every other related idea that comes to mind. A number of mind-mapping tools are available online.

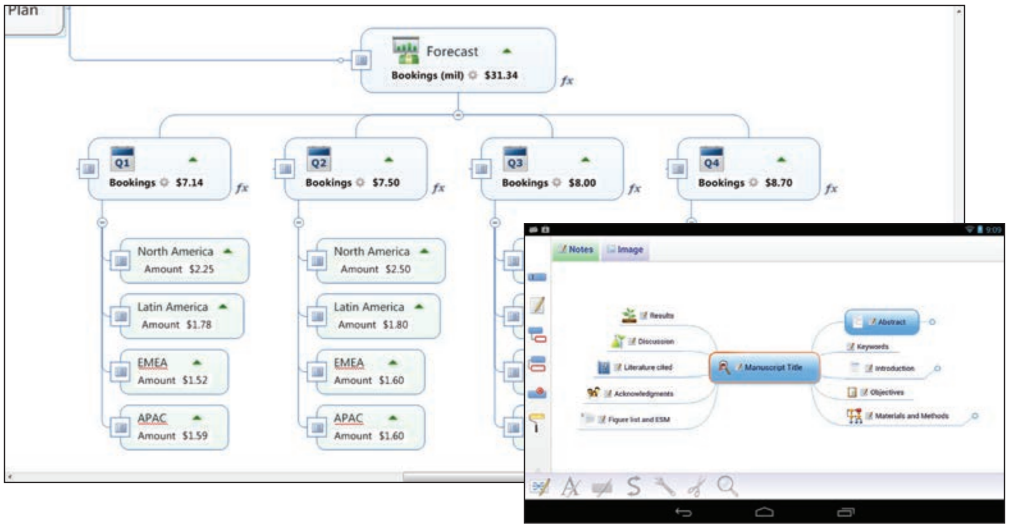

Figure 3.5 Mind Mapping
Mind-mapping tools such as Mindjet Maps make it easy to explore the organization of your material, and mobile apps (see inset) bring this capability to tablets and other mobile devices.
Source: Mindjet® is a registered trademark of Mindjet in the US and other countries. Reprinted with permission.

LIMITING YOUR SCOPE

The **scope** of your message is the range of information you present, the overall length, and the level of detail—all of which need to correspond to your main idea. The length of some business messages has a preset limit, whether from a boss's instructions, the technology you're using, or a time frame (such as individual speaker slots during a seminar). However, even if you don't have a preset length, limit your scope to the minimum amount of information needed to convey your main idea.

Limit the scope of your message so that you can convey your main idea as briefly as possible.

Whatever the length of your message, limit the number of major supporting points to the most compelling and important ideas. Offering a long list of supporting points might feel as though you're being thorough, but your audience is likely to view such detail as rambling and mind-numbing. Instead, group your supporting points under major headings, such as finance, customers, competitors, employees, or whatever is appropriate for your subject. Look for ways to distill your supporting points so that you have a smaller number with greater impact.

The ideal length of a message depends on your topic, your audience members' familiarity with the material, their receptivity to your conclusions, and your credibility. You'll need fewer words to present routine information to a knowledgeable audience that already knows and respects you. You'll need more words to build a consensus about a complex and controversial subject, especially if the members of your audience are skeptical or hostile strangers.

CHOOSING BETWEEN DIRECT AND INDIRECT APPROACHES

After you've defined your main idea and supporting points, you're ready to decide on the sequence you will use to present your information. You have two basic options. When you know your audience will be receptive to your message, use the **direct approach**: Start with the main idea (such as a recommendation, conclusion, or request) and follow that with your supporting evidence.

With the direct approach, you open with the main idea of your message and support it with reasoning, evidence, and examples.

When your audience will be skeptical about or even resistant to your message, you generally want to use the **indirect approach**: Start with the evidence first and build your case before presenting the main idea. Note that taking the indirect approach does not mean avoiding tough issues or talking around in circles. It simply means building up to your main idea in a logical or sensitive way.

With the indirect approach, you withhold the main idea until you have built up to it logically and persuasively with reasoning, evidence, and examples.

To choose between these two alternatives, analyze your audience's likely reaction to your purpose and message, as shown in Figure 3.6 on the next page. Bear in mind, however, that Figure 3.6 presents only general guidelines; always consider the unique circumstances of each message and audience situation. The type of message also influences the choice of the direct or indirect approach. In the coming chapters, you'll get specific advice on choosing the best approach for a variety of communication challenges.

OUTLINING YOUR CONTENT

After you have chosen the direct or indirect approach, the next task is to determine the most logical and effective way to present your major points and supporting details. Get into the habit of creating outlines when you're preparing business messages. Even if you're just jotting down three or four key points, making an outline will help you organize your thoughts for faster writing. When you're preparing a longer, more complex message, an outline is indispensable because it helps you visualize the relationships among the various parts.

Outlining can save you considerable time and effort in the composing and revising stages.

You're no doubt familiar with the basic outline formats that identify each point with a number or letter and that indent certain points to show which ones are of equal status. A good outline divides a topic into at least two parts, restricts each subdivision to one category, and ensures that each subdivision is separate and distinct (see Figure 3.7 on the next page).

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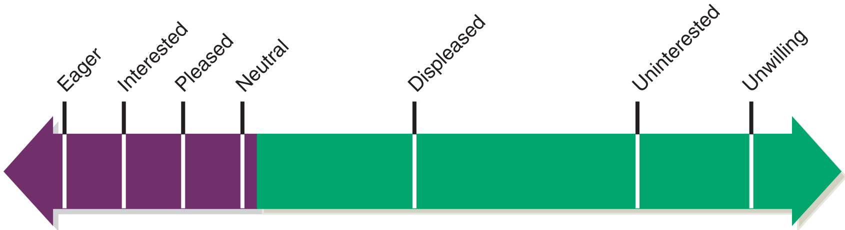


	Direct Approach	Indirect Approach	
Audience Reaction	Eager/interested/ pleased/neutral	Displeased	Uninterested/unwilling
Message Opening	Start with the main idea, the request, or the good news.	Start with a neutral statement that acts as a transition to the reasons for the bad news.	Start with a statement or question that captures attention.
Message Body	Provide necessary details.	Give reasons to build up to the negative answer or announcement. State or imply the bad news, and make a positive suggestion.	Arouse the audience's interest in the subject. Build the audience's desire to comply.
Message Close	Close with a cordial comment, a reference to the good news, or a statement about the specific action desired.	Close cordially.	Request action.

Figure 3.6 Choosing Between the Direct and Indirect Approaches
Think about the way your audience is likely to respond before choosing your approach.

I. First major point
  A. First subpoint
  B. Second subpoint
    1. Examples and evidence
    2. Examples and evidence
      a. Detail
      b. Detail
    3. Examples and evidence
  C. Third subpoint
II. Second major point
  A. First subpoint
    1. Examples and evidence
    2. Examples and evidence
  B. Second subpoint

The particular message is divided into two major points (I and II).

Subpoint B is supported with three sets of examples and evidence (1, 2, and 3), the second of which is further subdivided with two detail sections.

The first major point is divided into three subpoints (A, B, and C).

Figure 3.7 Organizing Your Thoughts with a Clear Outline
No matter what outlining format you use, think through your major supporting points and the examples and evidence that can support each point.

MOBILE APP
Outliner is one of several apps that make it easy to create and modify writing outlines.

Whichever outlining or organizing scheme you use, start by stating your main idea, then list your major supporting points and follow with examples and evidence:

- **Define the main idea.** The main idea helps you establish the goals and general strategy of the message, and it summarizes (1) *what* you want your audience members to do, think, or feel after receiving the message and (2) *why* it makes sense for them to do so. Everything in your message should either support the main idea or explain its implications. (Remember that if you choose the indirect approach, the main idea will appear toward the end of your message, after you've presented your major supporting points.)

- **Identify major supporting points.** Support your main idea with the major points that clarify and explain your ideas in more concrete terms. If your purpose is to inform and the material is factual, your major points may be based on something physical or financial—for example, something you can visualize or measure, such as activities to be performed, functional units, spatial or chronological relationships, or parts of a whole. When you're describing a process, the major points are usually steps in the process. When you're describing an object, the major points often correspond to the parts of the object. When you're giving a historical account, major points represent events in a chronological chain. If your purpose is to persuade or to collaborate, select major points that develop a line of reasoning or a logical argument that proves your central message and motivates your audience to act.
- **Provide examples and evidence.** After you've defined the main idea and identified major supporting points, you're ready to back up those points with examples and evidence that help audience members understand, accept, and remember your message. Choose your examples and evidence carefully. One strong example or piece of evidence can be more effective than three or four weaker items.

Choose supporting points, evidence, and examples carefully; a few strong points will make your case better than a large collection of weaker points.

Figure 3.8 on the next page illustrates several of the key themes about organizing a message: helping readers get the information they need quickly, defining and conveying the main idea, limiting the scope of the message, choosing the approach, and outlining your information.

BUILDING READER INTEREST WITH STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES

As the beginning of the chapter points out, storytelling techniques can be an effective way to organize messages in a surprising number of business situations, from recruiting and training employees to enticing investors and customers. Storytelling is such a vital means of communicating that, in the words of the management consultant Steve Tobak, "It's hard to imagine your career going anywhere if you can't tell a story."[8] Fortunately, you've been telling stories all your life, so narrative techniques already come naturally to you; now it's just a matter of adapting those techniques to business situations.

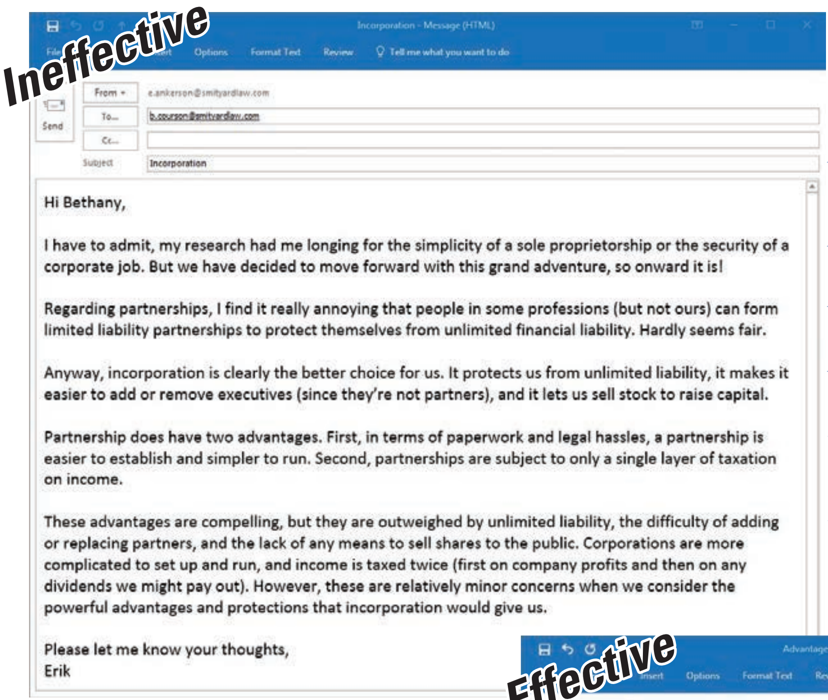
You've already been on the receiving end of thousands of business stories. Storytelling is one of the most common structures used in television commercials and other advertisements. People love to share stories about themselves and others, too, which makes social media ideal for storytelling.[9]

Career-related stories, such as how someone sought and found the opportunity to work on projects he or she is passionate about, can entice skilled employees to consider joining a firm. Established companies often tell the stories of their early days to highlight their depth of experience or core values. Entrepreneurs use stories to help investors see how their new ideas have the potential to affect people's lives (and therefore generate lots of sales). Stories can be cautionary tales as well, dramatizing the consequences of career blunders, ethical mistakes, and strategic missteps.

A key reason storytelling can be so effective is that stories help readers and listeners imagine themselves living through the experience of the person in the story.[10] As a result, people tend to remember and respond to the message in ways that can be difficult to achieve with other forms of communication.

Storytelling is an effective way to organize many business messages because it helps readers personalize the message and understand causes and consequences.

In addition, stories can demonstrate cause-and-effect relationships in a compelling fashion.[11] Imagine attending an employee orientation and listening to the trainer read off a list of ethics rules and guidelines. Now imagine the trainer telling the real-life story of an ambitious new employee who bent the rules and wound up paying dearly. As an ambitious new employee yourself, that story is likely to stick in your mind more permanently than a list of rules. This ability to share organizational values is one of the major benefits of using storytelling in business communication, particularly across diverse workforces.[12]



Ineffective

From: e.ankerson@smityardlaw.com
To: b.courson@smityardlaw.com
Cc:
Subject: Incorporation

Hi Bethany,

I have to admit, my research had me longing for the simplicity of a sole proprietorship or the security of a corporate job. But we have decided to move forward with this grand adventure, so onward it is!

Regarding partnerships, I find it really annoying that people in some professions (but not ours) can form limited liability partnerships to protect themselves from unlimited financial liability. Hardly seems fair.

Anyway, incorporation is clearly the better choice for us. It protects us from unlimited liability, it makes it easier to add or remove executives (since they're not partners), and it lets us sell stock to raise capital.

Partnership does have two advantages. First, in terms of paperwork and legal hassles, a partnership is easier to establish and simpler to run. Second, partnerships are subject to only a single layer of taxation on income.

These advantages are compelling, but they are outweighed by unlimited liability, the difficulty of adding or replacing partners, and the lack of any means to sell shares to the public. Corporations are more complicated to set up and run, and income is taxed twice (first on company profits and then on any dividends we might pay out). However, these are relatively minor concerns when we consider the powerful advantages and protections that incorporation would give us.

Please let me know your thoughts,
Erik

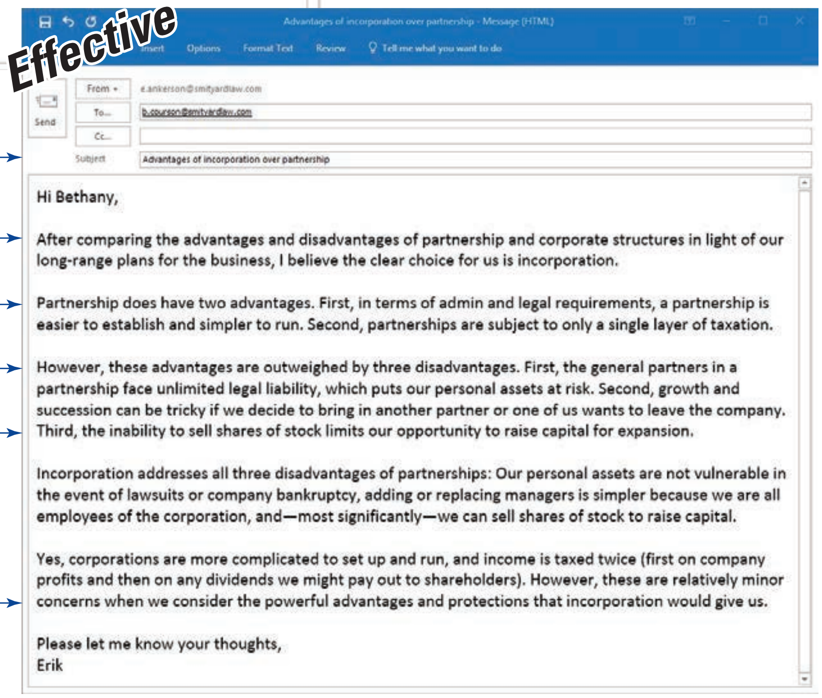
(a) The vague subject line wastes an opportunity to begin building the message.

(b) The opening has an irrelevant discussion, doesn't explain what research this refers to, and fails to introduce the topic of the message.

(c) The beginning of this paragraph suggests it will discuss partnerships, but instead then digresses with another personal observation.

(d) The main idea, that the pair should incorporate, is delayed until the middle of the message.

(e) Support for the main idea is poorly organized, with the pros of partnerships in one paragraph and the cons of partnership, cons of incorporation, then pros of incorporation in the next paragraph.



Effective

From: e.ankerson@smityardlaw.com
To: b.courson@smityardlaw.com
Cc:
Subject: Advantages of incorporation over partnership

Hi Bethany,

After comparing the advantages and disadvantages of partnership and corporate structures in light of our long-range plans for the business, I believe the clear choice for us is incorporation.

Partnership does have two advantages. First, in terms of admin and legal requirements, a partnership is easier to establish and simpler to run. Second, partnerships are subject to only a single layer of taxation.

However, these advantages are outweighed by three disadvantages. First, the general partners in a partnership face unlimited legal liability, which puts our personal assets at risk. Second, growth and succession can be tricky if we decide to bring in another partner or one of us wants to leave the company. Third, the inability to sell shares of stock limits our opportunity to raise capital for expansion.

Incorporation addresses all three disadvantages of partnerships: Our personal assets are not vulnerable in the event of lawsuits or company bankruptcy, adding or replacing managers is simpler because we are all employees of the corporation, and—most significantly—we can sell shares of stock to raise capital.

Yes, corporations are more complicated to set up and run, and income is taxed twice (first on company profits and then on any dividends we might pay out to shareholders). However, these are relatively minor concerns when we consider the powerful advantages and protections that incorporation would give us.

Please let me know your thoughts,
Erik

(a) The subject line conveys the topic (incorporation vs. partnership) and the main idea (incorporation is the better choice).

(b) The opening provides some brief context by referencing their previous conversation, then immediately shares the main idea.

(c) Avoiding any digressions, the message moves right into key support points.

(d) With the main idea already expressed, the writer can devote the bulk of the message to supporting information.

(e) The support points are clearly organized: pros and cons of partnerships, then pros and cons of corporations.

This organization makes it easy for him to explain how incorporation overcomes all three key disadvantages of partnerships.

He completes the comparison by identifying two disadvantages of incorporation but states that these are outweighed by the advantages.

Figure 3.8 Improving the Organization of a Message

This writer is following up on a conversation from the previous day, in which he and the recipient discussed which of two forms of ownership, a partnership or a corporation, they should use for their new company. (*Partnership* has a specific legal meaning in this context.) That question is the topic of the message; the main idea is the recommendation that they incorporate, rather than form a partnership. Notice how the *Effective* version uses the direct approach to quickly get to the main idea and then supports that by comparing the advantages and disadvantages of both forms of ownership. In contrast, the *Ineffective* version contains irrelevant information, makes the comparison difficult to follow, and buries the main idea in the middle of the message.

Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation

A classic story has three basic parts. The beginning of the story presents someone the audience can identify with in some way, and this person has a dream to pursue or a problem to solve. (Think of how movies and novels often start by introducing a likable character who immediately gets into danger, for example.) The middle of the story shows this character taking action and making decisions as he or she pursues the goal or tries to solve the problem. The storyteller's objective here is to build the audience's interest by increasing the tension: Will the "hero" overcome the obstacles and defeat whatever adversary is keeping him or her from the goal?[13] The end of the story answers that question and usually offers a lesson to be learned about the outcome as well.

By the way, even though these are "stories," they must not be made-up tales. Telling stories that didn't happen about people who don't exist while presenting them as real-life events is a serious breach of ethics that can damage a company's credibility.[14]

Consider adding an element of storytelling whenever your main idea involves the opportunity to inspire, persuade, teach, or warn readers or listeners about the potential outcomes of a particular course of action. You can even map out your career using storytelling (see "The Story of You" on page 362), and when you're interviewing for jobs you should be prepared in case an interviewer pops the classic question, "So, what's your story?" By visualizing a satisfying ending to your own career story, you'll have a better idea of what it takes to get there.

For fresh ideas and media materials on planning messages, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Chapter 3.

Organize stories in three parts:
- A beginning that introduces a sympathetic person with a dream or a challenge
- A middle that shows the complications to be overcome
- An ending that resolves the situation and shows the moral or message of the story

The Future of Communication: Haptic Technologies

As the most intimate form of communication, touch can convey shades of emotion and meaning in ways that other forms can't match. Think of the range of messages you can send by the way you greet someone, for example. A firm handshake, a light kiss on the cheek, an awkward embrace, and a fist bump all send different nonverbal signals. *Haptic communication*, or *haptics*, is the study of touch in a communication context.

Touch is a vital aspect of human-to-human and human-to-machine interaction, but it is missing from most forms of digital communication. You can't give someone a hearty handshake over email or feel the vibration patterns of a machine while viewing it over a video link.

However, the field of *haptic technology* is enabling touch and tactile sensations in a growing number of ways. Many arcade video games and video game controllers use *haptic feedback* to give players some sense of the feel of driving a racecar, for example. Moving beyond simple vibration, some controllers can now simulate the sensation of holding and using specific weapons or other physical elements in a game.

Mobile devices and wearables such as smartwatches are incorporating haptic input and output in ways that simulate the nuances of human touch. For instance, you can use a smartwatch to send specific, personalized "touch messages" to other smartwatch wearers with complete privacy. The ability to remotely manipulate objects and machines through simulated touch control (rather than abstracted devices such as joysticks) is another intriguing promise of haptics.

The technology has exciting potential in such diverse areas as training, online retailing, and increasing the number of devices that are usable by people with limited vision. Imagine being able to feel the texture of fabric from halfway around the world or letting an expert's hands remotely guide yours as you learn a new procedure. Now that display technologies have more or less reached the resolution capacity of human eyesight, the next wave of user interface advances is likely to come in the form of touch.[15]

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Research the current state of haptic technology to identify one way in which the technology has the potential to change business communication practices, such as replacing detailed verbal descriptions of products with touch-enabled virtual interaction. Do you agree with the predictions the experts make? Why or why not?

Chapter Review and Activities

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** to complete the problems marked with this icon ✪.

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: Describe the three-step writing process, and explain why it will help you create better messages in less time.

Here are the major steps in the three-step writing process:

- Planning—involves analyzing the situation, gathering the information required to meet audience needs, selecting the right medium or combination of media, and organizing your information
- Writing—involves adapting to your audience and composing your message
- Completing—involves the four tasks of revising, proofreading, producing, and distributing the message

The process offers important benefits:

- Helps you create more effective messages because it keeps you focused on what your audience needs to get from a message
- Saves you time by reducing the amount of reworking that can happen when you start writing without clear goals or organization in mind

Objective 2: Explain what it means to analyze the situation when planning a message.

- Analyzing the situation gives you the insights necessary to meet your own needs as a communicator while also meeting the information needs of your recipients.
- The general purpose of a message identifies your overall intent—to inform, to persuade, to collaborate, or to initiate a conversation.
- The specific purpose identifies what you hope to accomplish with the message.

An audience profile should include a number of key elements:

- Identification of the primary audience and any secondary audiences
- Audience size and geographic distribution
- Audience composition (language, education, experience, and other factors that could influence how the message is received)
- Level of understanding
- Expectations and preferences
- Probable reaction to your message

Objective 3: Describe the techniques for gathering information for simple messages, and identify three attributes of quality information.

You can use these informal information-gathering methods:

- Consider the audience's perspective
- Find and listen to online communities
- Read reports and other company documents
- Talk with supervisors, colleagues, or customers
- Ask your audience for input, if possible

Quality information possesses three important attributes:

- It is accurate.
- It is ethical.
- It is pertinent to audience needs.

Objective 4: Identify the six basic combinations of media and channels, and highlight the unique challenges of communication on mobile devices.

You can choose from six basic media/channel combinations:

- Oral, in-person
- Oral, digital
- Written, printed
- Written, digital
- Visual, printed
- Visual, digital

Business communication on mobile devices presents unique challenges:

- Screen size and resolution
- Input technologies
- Bandwidth, speed, and connectivity limitations
- Data usage and operational costs

Objective 5: Explain why good organization is important to both you and your audience, and explain how to organize any business message.

Good organization offers a number of benefits:

- Helps your audience understand your message
- Helps your audience accept your message
- Saves your audience time
- Saves you time when preparing messages

Follow these steps to organize any message:

- Define your main idea
- Limit the scope for maximum impact
- Choose the direct or indirect approach
- Outline your information in a logical sequence

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

3-1. What are the three major steps in the writing process? [LO-1]

✪ **3-2.** What are the benefits of planning your messages carefully, particularly longer and more complex messages? [LO-1]

3-3. What do you need to know to develop an audience profile? [LO-2]

3-4. What are the three attributes of quality information in a business message? [LO-3]

3-5. Why are in-person conversations considered a rich medium? [LO-4]

3-6. In what circumstances would it be better to send a printed letter rather than a digital message? [LO-4]

3-7. What is the difference between the topic of a message and its main idea? [LO-5]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

3-8. A day after sending an email to all 1,800 employees in your company regarding income tax implications of the company's retirement plan, you discover that one of the sources you relied on for your information plagiarized from other sources. You quickly double-check all the information in your message and confirm that it is accurate. However, you are concerned about using plagiarized information, even though you did nothing wrong. How you would handle this situation? [LO-3]

3-9. You are organizing an exploratory in-person meeting with engineering representatives from a dozen manufacturers around the world to discuss updates to a technical standard that all the companies' products must adhere to. The representatives have a wide range of firmly held opinions on the subject, because the changes could help some companies and hurt others. They can't even agree on what should be addressed in the first meeting, so you need to develop a minimum level of consensus on what should be on the agenda. Which combination of media and channels would you use to move the conversation forward and finalize the agenda? Each company has one representative, and any discussions need to be kept confidential. [LO-4]

3-10. How might the inability to view an entire document at once on a mobile screen hinder a reader's ability to grasp the full meaning of the message? [LO-4]

3-11. You have been invited to speak at an annual industry conference. After preparing the outline for your presentation, you see that you've identified 14 separate points to support your main idea. Should you move ahead with creating the slides for your presentation or move back and rethink your outline? Why? [LO-5]

Practice Your Skills

Exercises for Perfecting Your Writing

To review chapter content related to each set of exercises, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

Specific Purpose [LO-2] For each of the following communication tasks, state a specific purpose (if you have trouble, try beginning with "I want to . . .").

3-12. A report to your boss, the store manager, about the outdated items in the warehouse

3-13. A blog post to customers and the news media about your company's plans to acquire a competitor

3-14. An email message to employees about the office's high water bills

3-15. A phone call to a supplier to check on an overdue parts shipment

3-16. A wiki entry for your office colleagues about the best ways to find information in the company's knowledge management system

Audience Profile [LO-2] For each communication task below, write brief answers to three questions: (1) Who is my audience? (2) What is my audience's general attitude toward my subject? (3) What does my audience need to know?

3-17. A final-notice collection letter from an appliance manufacturer to an appliance dealer, sent 10 days before initiation of legal collection procedures

3-18. An advertisement for peanut butter

3-19. A letter to the property management company responsible for maintaining your office building, complaining about persistent problems with the heating and air conditioning

3-20. A cover letter sent along with your résumé to a potential employer

3-21. A request (to the seller) for a price adjustment on a piano that incurred $150 in damage during delivery to a banquet room in the hotel you manage

Media and Purpose [LO-2], [LO-4] List three messages you have read, viewed, or listened to lately (such as direct-mail promotions, letters, email or instant messages, phone solicitations, blog posts, social network updates, podcasts, or lectures). For each message, determine the general and the specific purpose, then answer the questions listed.

Message 1:

3-22. What is the general purpose?

3-23. What is the specific purpose?

3-24. Was the message well timed?

3-25. Did the sender choose an appropriate medium and channel for the message?

3-26. Was the sender's purpose realistic?

Message 2:

3-27. What is the general purpose?

3-28. What is the specific purpose?

3-29. Was the message well timed?

3-30. Did the sender choose an appropriate medium and channel for the message?

3-31. Was the sender's purpose realistic?

Message 3:

3-32. What is the general purpose?

3-33. What is the specific purpose?

3-34. Was the message well timed?

3-35. Did the sender choose an appropriate medium and channel for the message?

3-36. Was the sender's purpose realistic?

Message Organization: Choosing the Approach [LO-5] Indicate whether the direct or the indirect approach would be best in each of the following situations.

3-37. An email message to a car dealer, asking about the availability of a specific make and model of car

3-38. An email message from a recent college graduate, requesting a letter of recommendation from a former instructor

3-39. An email message turning down a job applicant

3-40. An internal blog post explaining that because of high air-conditioning costs, the plant temperature will be held at 78 degrees during the summer

3-41. A letter with a final request to settle a delinquent debt

Message Organization: Drafting Persuasive Messages [LO-5] If you were trying to persuade people to take the following actions, would you choose the direct or indirect approach?

3-42. You want your boss to approve your plan for hiring two new people.

3-43. You want to be hired for a job.

3-44. You want to be granted a business loan.

3-45. You want to collect a small amount from a regular customer whose account is slightly past due.

3-46. You want to collect a large amount from a customer whose account is seriously past due.

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information will be found in another chapter, as indicated.

3-47. **Analyzing the Situation; Media Skills: Presentations** [LO-2] Visit the PepsiCo website at **www.pepsico.com** and locate the latest annual report. Read the CEO's letter to shareholders. Who is the audience for this message? What is the general purpose of the message? What information do you think this audience wants from PepsiCo? Summarize your answers in a one-page report or five-slide presentation, as your instructor directs.

3-48. **Planning: Creating an Audience Profile; Collaboration: Team Projects** [LO-2], [LO-3], **Chapter 2** With a team assigned by your instructor, compare the Facebook pages of three companies in the same industry. Analyze the content on all the available tabs. What can you surmise about the intended audience for each company? Which of the three does the best job of presenting the information its target audience is likely to need? Prepare a brief presentation, including slides that show samples of the Facebook content from each company.

3-49. **Planning: Assessing Audience Needs; Media Skills: Mobile** [LO-4], **Chapter 1** Using a computer or full-sized tablet, visit the website of any well-known company and review its About or About Us page. Identify three ways you would modify this page to meet the needs of readers accessing it with smartphones.

3-50. **Planning: Analyzing the Situation, Selecting Media; Media Skills: Email** [LO-4], **Chapter 8** You are the head of public relations for a cruise line that operates out of Miami. You are shocked to read a letter in a local newspaper from a disgruntled passenger, complaining about the service and entertainment on a recent cruise. You need to respond to these publicized criticisms in some way. What audiences will you need to consider in your response? What medium or media and channels should you choose? If the letter had been published in a travel publication widely read by travel agents and cruise travelers, how might your course of action have differed? In an email message to your instructor, explain how you will respond.

3-51. **Planning: Limiting Your Scope** [LO-5] Suppose you are preparing to recommend that top management install a new heating system that uses the cogeneration process. The following information is in your files. Eliminate topics that aren't essential and then arrange the other topics so that your report will give top managers a clear understanding of the heating system and a balanced, concise justification for installing it. Submit a clear and concise outline to your instructor.

- History of the development of the cogeneration heating process
- Scientific credentials of the developers of the process
- Risks assumed in using this process
- Your plan for installing the equipment in the headquarters building
- Stories about the successful use of cogeneration technology in comparable facilities
- Specifications of the equipment that would be installed
- Plans for disposing of the old heating equipment
- Costs of installing and running the new equipment
- Advantages and disadvantages of using the new process
- Detailed 10-year cost projections
- Estimates of the time needed to phase in the new system
- Alternative systems that management might want to consider

3-52. **Planning: Using Storytelling Techniques; Communication Ethics: Providing Ethical Leadership; Media Skills: Podcasting** [LO-5], **Chapter 1** Research recent episodes of ethical lapses by a business professional or executive in any industry. Choose one example that has a clear story "arc" from beginning to end. Outline a cautionary tale that explains the context of the ethical lapse, the choice the person made, and the consequences of the ethical lapse. Script a podcast (aim for roughly three to five minutes) that tells the story. If your instructor directs, record your podcast and post to your class blog.

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Locate an example of professional communication in any medium/channel combo that you think would work equally well—or perhaps better—in another combination. Using the media and channel selection guidelines in this chapter and your understanding of the communication process, write a brief analysis (no more than one page) of the company's choice and explain why your choice would be at least as effective. Be sure to cite specific elements from the piece and support from the chapter.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at **websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that that offers advice on analyzing audiences, selecting media, outlining, storytelling (in a business context), or any aspect of the writing process (including models other than the three-step process covered in this text). Write a brief email message to your instructor or a post for your class blog, describing the item that you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from **real-timeupdates.com/bce8**; select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 3, Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Verbs

Review Section 1.3 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage. Answers to these exercises appear on page 490.

For these items, indicate the verb form called for in each sentence.

3-53. I (present perfect, become) the resident expert on repairing the copy machine.

3-54. She (past, know) how to conduct an audit when she came to work for us.

3-55. Since Joan was promoted, she (past perfect, move) all the files to her office.

3-56. Next week, call John to tell him what you (future, do) to help him set up the seminar.

3-57. By the time you finish the analysis, he (future perfect, return) from his vacation.

For these items, rewrite the sentences so that they use active voice instead of passive.

3-58. The report will be written by Leslie Cartwright.

3-59. The failure to record the transaction was mine.

3-60. Have you been notified by the claims department of your rights?

3-61. We are dependent on their services for our operation.

3-62. The damaged equipment was returned by the customer before we even located a repair facility.

In these items, indicate the correct verb form provided in parentheses.

3-63. Everyone upstairs (receive, receives) mail before we do.

3-64. Neither the main office nor the branches (is, are) blameless.

3-65. C&B Sales (is, are) listed in the directory.

3-66. When measuring shelves, 7 inches (is, are) significant.

3-67. About 90 percent of the employees (plan, plans) to come to the company picnic.

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

3-68. Cut two inches off trunk and place in a water stand, and fill with water.

3-69. The newly-elected officers of the Board are: John Rogers, president, Robin Doig, vice-president, and Mary Sturhann, secretary.

3-70. Employees were stunned when they are notified that the trainee got promoted to Manager only after her 4th week with the company.

3-71. Seeking reliable data on U.S. publishers, Literary Marketplace is by far the best source.

3-72. Who did you wish to speak to?

3-73. The keynote address will be delivered by Seth Goodwin, who is the author of six popular books on marketing, has written two novels, and writes a column for "Fortune" magazine.

3-74. Often the reputation of an entire company depend on one employee that officially represents that company to the public.

3-75. The executive director, along with his staff, are working quickly to determine who should receive the Award.

3-76. Him and his co-workers, the top bowling team in the tournament, will represent our Company in the league finals on saturday.

3-77. Listening on the extension, details of the embezzlement plot were overheard by the Security Chief.

3-78. The acceptance of visa cards are in response to our customer's demand for a more efficient and convenient way of paying for parking here at San Diego International airport.

3-79. The human resources dept. interviewed dozens of people, they are seeking the better candidate for the opening.

3-80. Libraries' can be a challenging; yet lucrative market if you learn how to work the "system" to gain maximum visibility for you're products and services.

3-81. Either a supermarket or a discount art gallery are scheduled to open in the Mall.

3-82. I have told my supervisor that whomever shares my office with me cannot wear perfume, use spray deodorant, or other scented products.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C), or download the document and make the corrections in your word-processing software.

> [Subject line]: Recent Cash Flow and consumer response—Survey
>
> All ---
>
> Now that our stores have been re-organized with your hard work and cooperation, we hope revenues will rise to new heights; if we reemphasize equipment sales as Stereo City core business and reduce the visibility of our sideline retail products. Just in case though, we

want to be certain that these changes are having the postive affect on our cash flow that we all except and look forward to.

To help us make that determination, respond to the following survey questions and fax them back. Answer concisely; but use extra paper if necessary—for details and explanations.

When you finish the survey it will help headquarters improve service to you; but also, help us all improve service to our customers. Return your survey before May 15 to my attention. Then Stereo city hopefully can thrive in a marketplace, that critics say we cannot conquer. Stereo City must choose wisely and serve it's customers well in a difficult retail business environment.

Times are very tough but if we work hard at it its possible we might make Stereo City's 'the man on the streets' favorite 'place to go to purchase audio equipment!

Cheers,

Tom Dooley, vice pres. real estate

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

3-83. As a member of your firm's public relations department, which medium/channel combination(s) would you recommend using to inform the local community that your toxic-waste cleanup program has been successful? Justify your recommendation. [LO-4]

3-84. Would you use the direct or indirect approach to ask employees to work overtime to meet an important deadline? Please explain. [LO-5]

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4 Writing Business Messages

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Identify the four aspects of being sensitive to audience needs when writing business messages.
2. Identify seven characteristics that build and maintain a communicator's credibility.
3. Explain how to achieve a tone that is conversational but businesslike, explain the value of using plain language, and define active and passive voice.
4. Describe how to select words that are not only correct but also effective.
5. Define the four types of sentences, and explain how sentence style affects emphasis within a message.
6. Define the three key elements of a paragraph, and list five ways to develop coherent paragraphs.
7. List five techniques for writing effective messages for mobile readers.

MyLab Business Communication

If your instructor is using MyLab Business Communication, visit **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for videos, simulations, and writing exercises.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"From now on, write all your email messages as though you're writing for a mobile reader and save all your readers time and effort."[1]
—Verne Ordman, business writing skills trainer, Verne Ordman and Associates

As an experienced business trainer with an advanced degree in industrial psychology, Verne Ordman has a keen sense of how people process information. Her advice regarding email messages not only suggests how pervasive mobile devices have become in business today but also highlights the importance of keeping readers' needs in mind for every message you create. This chapter addresses the writing phase of the three-step writing process, with practical advice for adapting to your audiences and composing messages that get results.

Courtesy of Verne Ordman and Associates Pty Limited; www.businesswriting.biz

Writing coach Verne Ordman advises business professionals to write all messages with the assumption that they will be read on mobile devices, because the techniques that promote easy reading on small screens make messages easier to read on any device or system.

Adapting to Your Audience: Being Sensitive to Your Audience's Needs

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Identify the four aspects of being sensitive to audience needs when writing business messages.

Readers and listeners are more likely to respond positively when they believe messages address their concerns.

Verne Ordman and other successful communicators will tell you that audiences tend to greet incoming messages with a selfish question: "What's in this for me?" If your target readers or listeners don't think a message applies to them, or if they don't think you are being sensitive to their needs, they won't pay attention. You can improve your audience sensitivity by adopting the "you" attitude, maintaining good standards of etiquette, emphasizing the positive, and using bias-free language.

ADOPTING THE "YOU" ATTITUDE

Adopting the "you" attitude means speaking and writing in terms of your audience's wishes, interests, hopes, and preferences.

Chapter 1 defines the "you" attitude as speaking and writing in terms of your audience's wishes, interests, hopes, and preferences. On a simple level, you can adopt the "you" attitude by replacing terms that refer to yourself and your company with terms that refer to your audience. In other words, use *you* and *your* instead of *I*, *me*, *mine*, *we*, *us*, and *ours*:

Instead of This	Write This
Tuesday is the only day that we can promise quick response to purchase order requests. We are swamped the rest of the week.	If you need a quick response, please submit your purchase order requests on Tuesday.
At Construction Resources, we are proud to supply the highest-rated engineered wood in the entire Midwest.	Ensure the integrity of your building projects with the highest-rated engineered wood in the entire Midwest.

Of course, you will have occasions when it is entirely appropriate to write or speak from your perspective, such as when you are offering your opinions or reporting on something you have seen. However, even in those instances, make sure you focus on your readers' needs.

Also, be aware that the "you" attitude involves a lot more than just using particular pronouns. It's a matter of demonstrating genuine interest in your readers and concern for their needs (see Figure 4.1). You can use *you* 25 times in a single page and still offend your audience or ignore readers' true concerns. If you're writing to a retailer, try to think like a retailer; if you're dealing with a production supervisor, put yourself in that position; if you're writing to a dissatisfied customer, imagine how you would feel at the other end of the transaction.

Avoid using *you* and *your* when doing so

- Makes you sound dictatorial
- Makes someone else feel guilty

Keep in mind that on some occasions it's better to avoid using *you*, particularly if doing so will sound overly authoritative or accusing. For instance, instead of saying, "You failed to deliver the customer's order on time," you could avoid the confrontational tone by saying, "The customer didn't receive the order on time."

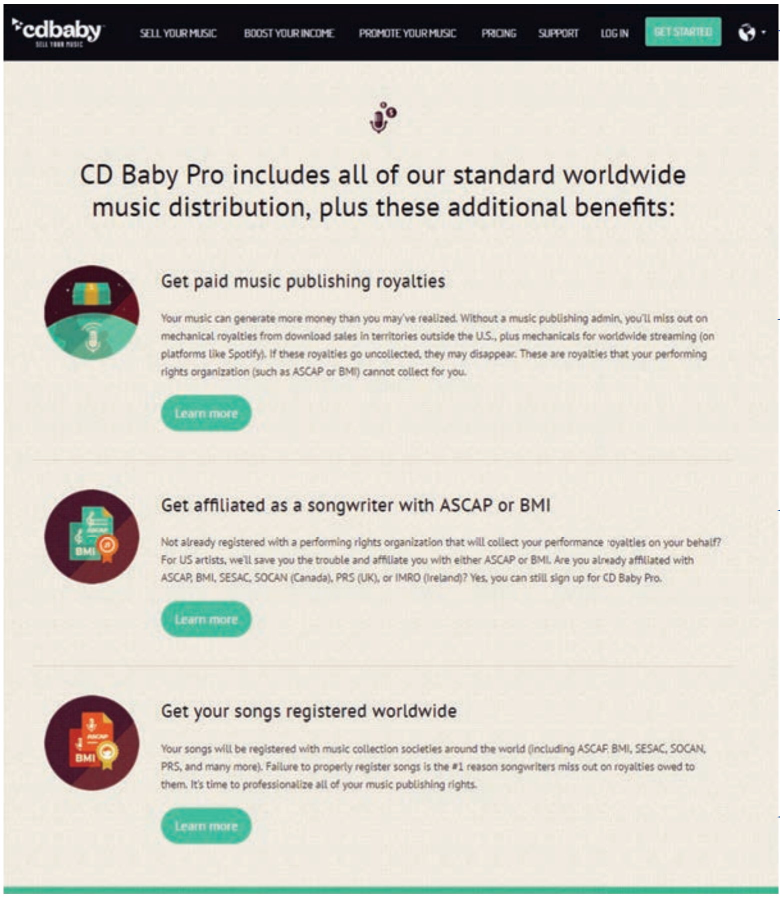
MAINTAINING STANDARDS OF ETIQUETTE

Even if a situation calls for you to be brutally honest, express the facts of the matter in a kind and thoughtful manner.

Good etiquette shows respect for your audience and helps foster a more successful environment for communication by minimizing negative emotional reaction:

Instead of This	Write This
Once again, you've managed to bring down the website through your incompetent programming.	Let's review the last website update to explore ways to improve the process.
You've been sitting on our order for two weeks, and we need it now!	Our production schedules depend on timely delivery of parts and supplies, but we have not yet received the order scheduled for delivery two weeks ago. Please respond today with a firm delivery commitment.

Some situations naturally require more diplomacy than others. If you know your audience well, a less formal approach might be more appropriate. However, when you are



The titles of the major sections of the website demonstrate a focus on the audience: Sell *Your* Music, Boost *Your* Income, and Promote *Your* Music.

Sentences such as "Your music can generate more money than you may've realized" speak directly to the concerns shared by all professional musicians.

Headings and subheadings are clear, concise, and focused on reader concerns.

Each of the important topics on this page is introduced with a brief overview that helps readers get oriented. Anyone who wants more information can easily find it via the Learn More links.

Figure 4.1 Fostering a Positive Relationship with an Audience
CD Baby, the world's largest retailer of independent music, uses clear, positive language to help musicians understand the process of selling their music through the company and its affiliates. By making the effort to communicate clearly and succinctly, the company encourages a positive response from its target readers.
Source: Courtesy of CD Baby.

communicating with people who outrank you or with people outside your organization, an added measure of courtesy is usually needed.

Use extra tact when communicating with people higher up the organization chart or outside the company.

Written messages and most forms of digital communication generally require more tact than oral communication. When you're speaking to someone live, you can soften your words by your tone of voice and facial expressions. Plus, you can adjust your approach according to the feedback you get. However, if you inadvertently offend someone in writing or in a podcast, for example, you often won't get the immediate feedback you would need in order to resolve the situation. In fact, you may never know that you offended your audience.

EMPHASIZING THE POSITIVE

You will encounter situations throughout your career in which you need to convey unwanted news. However, sensitive communicators understand the difference between delivering negative news and being negative. Never try to hide negative news, but look for positive points that will foster a good relationship with your audience:[2]

You can communicate negative news without being negative.

Instead of This	Write This
It is impossible to repair your laptop today.	Your computer can be ready by Tuesday. Would you like a loaner until then?
We wasted $300,000 advertising in that magazine.	Our $300,000 advertising investment did not pay off; let's analyze the experience and apply the insights to future campaigns.

Show readers how they will benefit by responding to your message.

If you're trying to persuade people to perform a particular action, point out how doing so will benefit them:

Instead of This	Write This
We will notify all three credit reporting agencies if you do not pay your overdue bill within 10 days.	Paying your overdue bill within 10 days will prevent a negative entry on your credit record.
I am tired of seeing so many errors in the customer service blog.	Proofreading your blog posts will help avoid embarrassing mistakes that erode confidence in our ability to help customers.

Euphemisms are milder synonyms that can express an idea while triggering fewer negative connotations, but they should never be used to obscure the truth.

Look for appropriate opportunities to use **euphemisms**, or milder synonyms, that convey your meaning without carrying negative connotations. For example, when referring to people beyond a certain age, use "senior citizens" rather than "old people." *Senior* conveys respect in a way that *old* doesn't.

Euphemisms can bring a tone of civility to unpleasant communication, but they must be used with great care. They can be annoying if they force readers to "read between the lines" to get the message, and they can be unethical if they obscure the truth. For instance, one of the toughest messages a manager ever has to share with employees is news of a layoff. This is a difficult situation for everyone involved, and managers can be tempted to resort to euphemisms such as *streamlining*, *restructuring*, *improving efficiency*, *reducing layers*, or *eliminating redundancies* to avoid using the word *layoff*.[3] Doing so might ease the emotional burden on the writer and promote the illusion that the message isn't as negative as it really is. However, these euphemisms can fail the "you" attitude test, as well as the standards of ethical information, by failing to answer the question every reader in these situations has, which is simply: *Am I going to lose my job?*

If you are considering using a euphemism, ask yourself this question: Are you trying to protect the reader's feelings or your own feelings? Even if it is unpleasant, people generally respond better to an honest message delivered with integrity than they do to a sugar-coated message that obscures the truth.

USING BIAS-FREE LANGUAGE

Bias-free language avoids words and phrases that unfairly and even unethically categorize or stigmatize people.

Bias-free language avoids words and phrases that unfairly and even unethically categorize or stigmatize people in ways related to gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, or other personal characteristics. Contrary to what some might think, biased language is not simply about "labels." To a significant degree, language reflects the way people think and what they believe, and biased language may well perpetuate the underlying stereotypes and prejudices that it represents.[4]

Moreover, because communication is largely about perception, being fair and objective isn't enough: To establish a good relationship with your audience, you must also *appear* to be fair.[5] Good communicators make every effort to change biased language (see Table 4.1). Bias can take a variety of forms:

- **Gender bias.** Avoid sexist language by using the same labels for everyone, regardless of gender. Don't refer to a woman as *chairperson* and then to a man as *chairman*. Use *chair*, *chairperson*, or *chairman* consistently. Reword sentences to use *they* or to use no pronoun at all rather than refer to all individuals as *he*. Note that the preferred title for women in business is *Ms*. unless the individual asks to be addressed as *Miss* or *Mrs*. or has some other title, such as *Dr*.
- **Racial and ethnic bias.** Avoid identifying people by race or ethnic origin unless such identification is relevant to the matter at hand—and it rarely is.

TABLE 4.1 Overcoming Bias in Language

Examples	Biased Wording	Preferable
Gender Bias		
Using words containing *man*	Man-made	Artificial, synthetic, manufactured, constructed, human-made
	Mankind	Humanity, human beings, human race, people
	Manpower	Workers, workforce
	Businessman	Executive, manager, businessperson, professional
	Salesman	Sales representative, salesperson
	Foreman	Supervisor
Using female-gender words	Actress, stewardess	Actor, flight attendant
Using special designations	Woman doctor, male nurse	Doctor, nurse
Using *he* to refer to "everyone"	The average worker . . . he	The average worker . . . he or she *OR* Average workers . . . they
Identifying roles with gender	The typical executive spends four hours of his day in meetings.	Most executives spend four hours a day in meetings.
	the consumer . . . she	consumers . . . they
	the nurse/teacher . . . she	nurses/teachers . . . they
Identifying women by marital status	Mrs. Norm Lindstrom	Maria Lindstrom *OR* Ms. Maria Lindstrom
	Norm Lindstrom and Ms. Drake	Norm Lindstrom and Maria Drake *OR* Mr. Lindstrom and Ms. Drake
Racial and Ethnic Bias		
Assigning stereotypes	Not surprisingly, Shing-Tung Yau excels in mathematics.	Shing-Tung Yau excels in mathematics.
Identifying people by race or ethnicity	Mario M. Cuomo, Italian American politician and ex-governor of New York	Mario M. Cuomo, politician and ex-governor of New York
Age Bias		
Including age when irrelevant	Mary Kirazy, 58, has just joined our trust department.	Mary Kirazy has just joined our trust department.
Disability Bias		
Putting the disability before the person	Disabled workers face many barriers on the job.	Workers with physical disabilities face many barriers on the job.
	An epileptic, Tracy has no trouble doing her job.	Tracy's epilepsy has no effect on her job performance.

- **Age bias.** Mention the age of a person only when it is relevant. Moreover, be careful of the context in which you use words that refer to age; such words carry a variety of positive and negative connotations. For example, *young* can imply youthfulness, inexperience, or immaturity, depending on how it's used.
- **Disability bias.** Physical, cognitive, sensory, or emotional impairments should never be mentioned in business messages unless those conditions are directly relevant to the subject. If you must refer to someone's disability, put the person first and the disability second.[6] For example, by saying "employees with physical disabilities," not "handicapped employees," you focus on the whole person, not the disability. Finally, never use offensive terminology such as *crippled* or *retarded*.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

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Get detailed advice on using bias-free language

This in-depth guide from the University of California Davis offers practical tips for avoiding many types of cultural bias in your writing and speaking. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Adapting to Your Audience: Building Strong Relationships

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Identify seven characteristics that build and maintain a communicator's credibility.

Successful communication relies on a positive relationship between sender and receiver. Establishing your credibility and projecting your company's image are two vital steps in building and fostering positive business relationships.

ESTABLISHING YOUR CREDIBILITY

People are more likely to react positively to your message when they have confidence in you.

Audience responses to your messages depend heavily on your **credibility**, which is a measure of your believability and is based on how reliable you are and how much trust you evoke in others. With audiences who don't know you and trust you already, you need to establish credibility before they'll accept your messages (see Figure 4.2). On the other hand, when you do establish credibility, communication becomes much easier because you no longer have to spend time and energy convincing people that you are a trustworthy source of information and ideas. To build, maintain, or repair your credibility, emphasize the following characteristics:

To enhance your credibility, emphasize such factors as honesty, objectivity, and awareness of audience needs.

- **Honesty.** Demonstrating honesty and integrity will earn you the respect of your audiences, even if they don't always agree with or welcome your messages.
- **Objectivity.** Show that you can distance yourself from emotional situations and look at all sides of an issue.
- **Awareness of audience needs.** Directly or indirectly, let your audience members know that you understand what's important to them.
- **Credentials, knowledge, and expertise.** Audiences need to know that you have whatever it takes to back up your message, whether it's education, professional certification, special training, past successes, or simply the fact that you've done your research.
- **Endorsements.** An *endorsement* is a statement on your behalf by someone who is accepted by your audience as an expert.

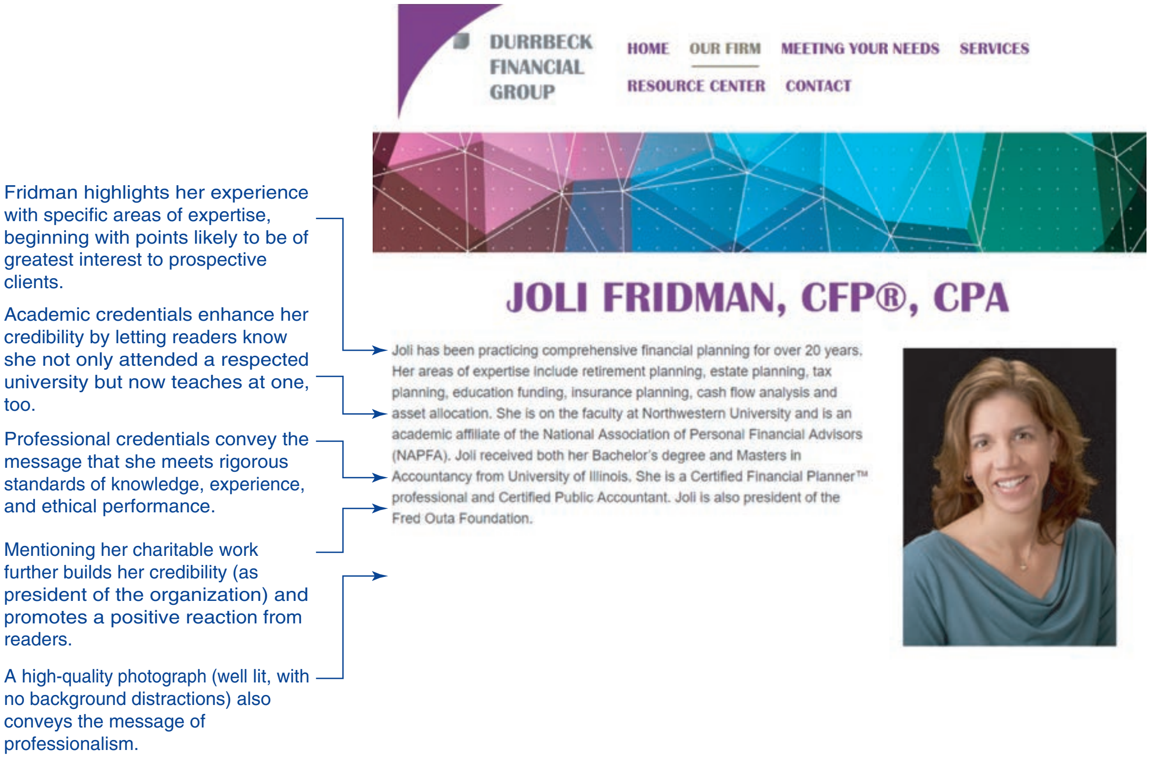

Figure 4.2 Building Credibility
In her profile page on her company's website, financial advisor Joli Fridman builds her credibility with a variety of specific, concrete statements. Notice how every statement packs a punch; there is no filler or "fluff."
Source: Courtesy of Joli Fridman, Durrbeck Financial Group.

- **Performance.** Demonstrating impressive communication skills is not enough; people need to know they can count on you to get the job done.
- **Sincerity.** When you offer praise, don't use *hyperbole*, such as "You are the most fantastic employee I could ever imagine." Instead, point out specific qualities that warrant praise.

In addition, audiences need to know that you believe in yourself and your message. If you lack faith in yourself, you're likely to communicate an uncertain attitude that undermines your credibility. Look out for phrases containing words such as *hope* and *trust*, which can drain the audience's confidence in your message.

Finally, keep in mind that credibility can take a long time to establish—and it can be wiped out in an instant. An occasional mistake or letdown may be forgiven, but major lapses in honesty or integrity can destroy your reputation.

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Boost your professional credibility with these LinkedIn tips

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PROJECTING YOUR COMPANY'S IMAGE

When you communicate with anyone outside your organization, it is more than a conversation between two individuals. You represent your company and therefore play a vital role in helping the company build and maintain positive relationships with all of its stakeholders. Most successful companies work hard to foster a specific public image, and your external communication efforts need to project that image. As part of this responsibility, the interests and preferred communication style of your company must take precedence over your own views and personal communication style.

Your company's interests and reputation take precedence over your personal views and communication style.

Many organizations have specific communication guidelines that show everything from the correct use of the company name to preferred abbreviations and other grammatical details. Specifying a desired style of communication is more difficult, however. Observe more experienced colleagues to see how they communicate, and never hesitate to ask for editorial help to make sure you're conveying the appropriate tone. For instance, with clients entrusting thousands or millions of dollars to it, an investment firm communicates in a style quite different from that of a clothing retailer. And a clothing retailer specializing in high-quality business attire communicates in a different style than a store catering to the latest trends in casual wear.

Adapting to Your Audience: Controlling Your Style and Tone

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain how to achieve a tone that is conversational but businesslike, explain the value of using plain language, and define active and passive voice.

Your communication **style** involves the choices you make to express yourself: the words you select, the manner in which you use those words in sentences, and the way you build paragraphs from individual sentences. Your style creates a certain **tone**, or overall impression, in your messages. The right tone depends on the nature of your message and your relationship with the reader.

CREATING A CONVERSATIONAL TONE

The tone of your business messages can range from informal to conversational to formal. If you're in a large organization and you're communicating with your superiors or with customers, the right tone will usually be more formal and respectful.[7] However, that same tone might sound distant and cold in a small organization or if used with close colleagues. Part of the challenge of communicating on the job is to read each situation and figure out the appropriate tone to use.

Most business messages aim for a conversational tone that is warm but businesslike.

Compare the three versions of the message in Table 4.2 on the next page. The first is too formal and stuffy for today's audiences, whereas the third is too casual for any audience other than close associates or friends. The second message demonstrates the **conversational tone** used in most business communication—plain language that sounds

TABLE 4.2 Finding the Right Tone

Tone	Example
Stuffy: too formal for today's audiences	Dear Ms. Navarro: Enclosed please find the information that was requested during our telephone communication of May 14. As was mentioned at that time, Midville Hospital has significantly more doctors of exceptional quality than any other health facility in the state. As you were also informed, our organization has quite an impressive network of doctors and other health-care professionals with offices located throughout the state. In the event that you should need a specialist, our professionals will be able to make an appropriate recommendation. In the event that you have questions or would like additional information, you may certainly contact me during regular business hours. Most sincerely yours, Samuel G. Berenz
Conversational: just right for most business communication	Dear Ms. Navarro: Here's the information you requested during our phone conversation on Friday. As I mentioned, Midville Hospital has the highest-rated doctors and more of them than any other hospital in the state. In addition, we have a vast network of doctors and other health professionals with offices throughout the state. If you need a specialist, they can refer you to the right one. If you would like more information, please call any time between 9:00 and 5:00, Monday through Friday. Sincerely, Samuel G. Berenz
Unprofessional: too casual for business communication	Here's the 411 you requested. IMHO, we have more and better doctors than any other hospital in the state. FYI, we also have a large group of doctors and other health professionals w/offices close to U at work/home. If U need a specialist, they'll refer U to the right one. Any ? just ring or msg. L8R, S

businesslike without being stuffy at one extreme or too laid-back and informal at the other extreme. You can achieve a tone that is conversational but still businesslike by following these guidelines:

- **Avoid obsolete and pompous language.** Phrases as "we are in receipt of" and "please be advised that" feel outdated and stuffy to many readers today. Similarly, avoid using obscure words, stale or clichéd expressions, and complicated sentences whose only intent is to impress others.
- **Avoid preaching and bragging.** Readers tend to get irritated by know-it-alls who like to preach or brag. However, if you need to remind your audience of something that should be obvious, try to work in the information casually, perhaps in the middle of a paragraph, where it will sound like a secondary comment rather than a major revelation.
- **Be careful with intimacy.** Business messages should generally avoid intimacy, such as sharing personal details or adopting a casual, unprofessional tone or careless texting-style writing. However, when you have a close relationship with audience members, such as among the members of a close-knit team, a more intimate tone is sometimes appropriate and even expected.
- **Be careful with humor.** Humor can easily backfire and divert attention from your message. If you don't know your audience well or you're not skilled at using humor

REAL-TIME UPDATES

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Ten tips for conversational writing

These easy-to-use ideas will help you achieve a business-friendly conversational tone. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

The notion of three layers is carried through the text and reinforced with the diagram.

Three "Layers" Of Licenses

Our public copyright licenses incorporate a unique and innovative "three-layer" design. Each license begins as a traditional legal tool, in the kind of language and text formats that most lawyers know and love. We call this the Legal Code layer of each license.

But since most creators, educators, and scientists are not in fact lawyers, we also make the licenses available in a format that normal people can read — the Commons Deed (also known as the "human readable" version of the license). The Commons Deed is a handy reference for licensors and licensees, summarizing and expressing some of the most important terms and conditions. Think of the Commons Deed as a user-friendly interface to the Legal Code beneath, although the Deed itself is not a license, and its contents are not part of the Legal Code itself.

The final layer of the license design recognizes that software, from search engines to office productivity to music editing, plays an enormous role in the creation, copying, discovery, and distribution of works. In order to make it easy for the Web to know when a work is available under a Creative Commons license, we provide a "machine readable" version of the license — a summary of the key freedoms and obligations written into a format that software systems, search engines, and other kinds of technology can understand. We developed a standardized way to describe licenses that software can understand called CC Rights Expression Language (CC REL) to accomplish this.

Searching for open content is an important function enabled by our approach. You can use Google to search for Creative Commons content, look for pictures at Flickr, albums at Jamendo, and general media at spinxpress. The Wikimedia Commons, the multimedia repository of Wikipedia, is a core user of our licenses as well.

Taken together, these three layers of licenses ensure that the spectrum of rights isn't just a legal concept. It's something that the creators of works can understand, their users can understand, and even the Web itself can understand.

The introductory sentence expresses the main idea, that the licenses are built in three layers (note that "use" would be a simpler alternative to "incorporate").

The paragraph on the "human readable" version explains why it exists and whom it benefits.

The purpose and function of the "machine readable" version are less obvious than in the other two versions, so this paragraph offers a more extensive explanation.

Figure 4.3 Plain Language at Creative Commons

Creative Commons uses this diagram and text to explain the differences among its three versions of content licenses. Each version meets the needs of a specific audience.

Source: Creative Commons A4.0 IPL.

in a business setting, don't use it at all. Avoid humor in formal messages and when you're communicating across cultural boundaries.

USING PLAIN LANGUAGE

An important aspect of creating a conversational tone is using *plain language* (or *plain English* specifically when English is involved). Plain language presents information in a simple, unadorned style that lets audiences grasp your meaning quickly and easily. It is language that recipients "can read, understand and act upon the first time they read it."[8] You can see how this definition supports using the "you" attitude and shows respect for your audience (see Figure 4.3). In addition, plain language can make companies more productive and more profitable because people spend less time trying to figure out messages that are confusing or aren't written to meet their needs.[9]

Audiences can understand and act on plain language without reading it over and over to get the meaning.

SELECTING ACTIVE OR PASSIVE VOICE

The choice of active or passive voice also affects the tone of your message. In a sentence written in the **active voice**, the subject performs the action and the object receives the action: "Jodi sent the email message." In a sentence written in the **passive voice**, the subject receives the action: "The email message was sent by Jodi." The passive voice combines the helping verb *to be* with a form of the verb that is usually similar to the past tense.

Using the active voice often makes your writing more direct, livelier, and easier to read (see Table 4.3 on the next page). Passive voice is not wrong grammatically, but it can be cumbersome, lengthy, and vague. In most cases, the active voice is the better choice.[10] Nevertheless, using the passive voice can help you demonstrate the "you" attitude in some situations:

Active sentences are usually stronger than passive ones.

- When you want to be diplomatic about pointing out a problem or an error (the passive version seems less like an accusation)
- When you want to point out what's being done without taking or attributing either the credit or the blame (the passive version shifts the spotlight away from the person or persons involved)
- When you want to avoid personal pronouns in order to create an objective tone (the passive version may be used in a formal report, for example)

Use passive sentences to soften bad news, to put yourself in the background, or to create an impersonal tone when needed.

The second half of Table 4.3 illustrates several situations in which the passive voice helps you focus your message on your audience.

TABLE 4.3 Choosing Active or Passive Voice

In general, avoid passive voice in order to make your writing lively and direct.

Dull and Indirect in Passive Voice	Lively and Direct in Active Voice
The new procedure was developed by the operations team.	The operations team developed the new procedure.
Legal problems are created by this contract.	This contract creates legal problems.
Reception preparations have been undertaken by our PR people for the new CEO's arrival.	Our PR people have begun planning a reception for the new CEO.
However, passive voice is helpful when you need to be diplomatic or want to focus attention on problems or solutions rather than on people.	
Accusatory or Self-Congratulatory in Active Voice	**More Diplomatic in Passive Voice**
You lost the shipment.	The shipment was lost.
I recruited seven engineers last month.	Seven engineers were recruited last month.
We are investigating the high rate of failures on the final assembly line.	The high rate of failures on the final assembly line is being investigated.

Composing Your Message: Choosing Powerful Words

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe how to select words that are not only correct but also effective.

After you have decided how to adapt to your audience, you're ready to begin composing your message. As you write your first draft, let your creativity flow. Don't try to draft and edit at the same time, and don't worry about getting everything perfect. Make up words if you can't think of the right ones, draw pictures, or talk out loud—do whatever it takes to get the ideas out of your head and onto your computer screen or a piece of paper. If you've planned carefully, you'll have time to revise and refine the material later. In fact, many writers find it helpful to establish a personal rule of never showing a first draft to anyone. By working in this "safe zone," away from the critical eyes of others, your mind will stay free to think clearly and creatively.

Correctness is the first consideration when choosing words.

You may find it helpful to hone your craft by viewing your writing at three levels: strong words, effective sentences, and coherent paragraphs. Starting at the word level, successful writers pay close attention to the correct use of words.[11] If you make errors of grammar or usage, you lose credibility with your audience—even if your message is otherwise correct. Poor grammar suggests to readers that you lack professionalism, and they may choose not to trust you as an unprofessional source. Moreover, poor grammar may imply that you don't respect your audience enough to get things right.

The rules of grammar and usage can be a source of worry for writers because some of these rules are complex and some evolve over time. Even professional editors and grammarians occasionally have questions about correct usage, and they may disagree about the answers. For example, the word *data* is the plural form of *datum*, yet some experts now prefer to treat *data* as a singular noun when it's used in nonscientific material to refer to a body of facts or figures.

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Quick and easy tips on grammar, punctuation, and usage

Mignon Fogarty, also known as Grammar Girl, offers a wide selection of easy-to-use advice on getting things right. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

With practice, you'll become more skilled in making correct choices over time. If you have doubts about what is correct, you have many ways to find the answer. Check the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage at the end of this book, or consult the many reference books, apps, and websites now available.

Effectiveness is the second consideration when choosing words.

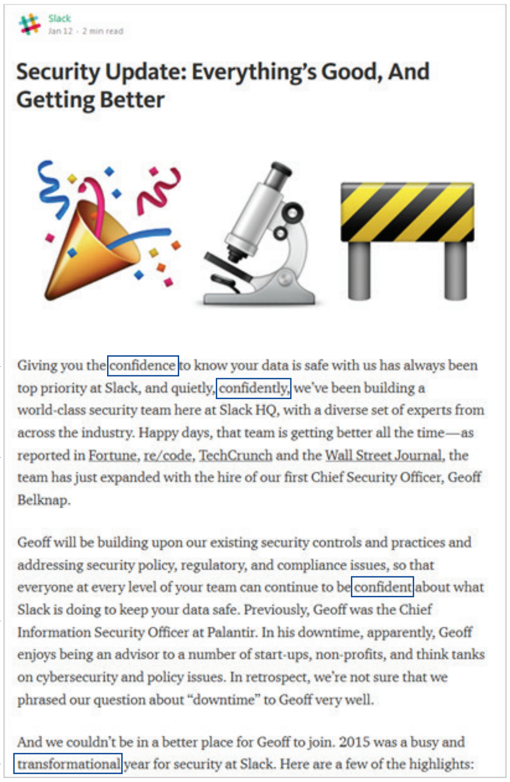
In addition to using words correctly, successful writers and speakers take care to use the most effective words and phrases. Selecting and using words effectively is often more challenging than using words correctly because doing so is a matter of judgment and experience. Careful writers continue to work at their craft to find words that communicate with power (see Figure 4.4).

Instilling confidence that Slack can keep customer data safe is the specific purpose (see page 65) of this message. To help build this perception, the post uses variations on the word *confidence* three times in the first two paragraphs.

Happy days is a casual alternative to *Fortunately* or similar wording. Note that this is at the casual extreme of conversational business style, and some companies would consider it too casual for a message such as this.

This paragraph is devoted to the new executive's qualifications, which lend support to the "getting better" message conveyed in the headline and help bolster the confidence message that is the underlying purpose of the entire post.

Transformational suggests a fundamental shift in the way the company approaches security, so it's stronger than something like "we made numerous changes to improve security."



Slack
Jan 12 · 2 min read

Security Update: Everything's Good, And Getting Better

Giving you the confidence to know your data is safe with us has always been top priority at Slack, and quietly, confidently, we've been building a world-class security team here at Slack HQ, with a diverse set of experts from across the industry. Happy days, that team is getting better all the time—as reported in Fortune, re/code, TechCrunch and the Wall Street Journal, the team has just expanded with the hire of our first Chief Security Officer, Geoff Belknap.

Geoff will be building upon our existing security controls and practices and addressing security policy, regulatory, and compliance issues, so that everyone at every level of your team can continue to be confident about what Slack is doing to keep your data safe. Previously, Geoff was the Chief Information Security Officer at Palantir. In his downtime, apparently, Geoff enjoys being an advisor to a number of start-ups, non-profits, and think tanks on cybersecurity and policy issues. In retrospect, we're not sure that we phrased our question about "downtime" to Geoff very well.

And we couldn't be in a better place for Geoff to join. 2015 was a busy and transformational year for security at Slack. Here are a few of the highlights:

Even though this is an announcement about company matters (the executive hire), the message starts with a strong *you* orientation. The opening uses *you* and *your* and addresses an important reader concern (data security).

The writer uses third-party endorsements to help build the credibility of the message.

The last two sentences in this paragraph have a whimsical tone but they convey an important message, which is that this person eats, sleeps, and breathes data security—which in turn supports the specific purpose of the blog post.

The article continues with a list of security-related accomplishments the company made in the previous year, which supports the claim of "busy and transformational."

Figure 4.4 Choosing Powerful Words
The opening paragraphs of this blog post from Slack, the maker of a popular group messaging service, illustrate a number of effective word and phrase choices. Slack's usual communication tone is upbeat and casual, even a little bit playful, but data and network security is a critically important issue that had already affected the young company by this point in time, so this post strikes a balance between conversational and serious.
Source: Courtesy of Slack Technologies, Inc.

BALANCING ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE WORDS

The nouns in your business messages can vary dramatically in their degree of abstraction or concreteness. An **abstract word** expresses a concept, quality, or characteristic. Abstractions are usually broad, encompassing a category of ideas, and are often intellectual, academic, or philosophical. *Love*, *honor*, *progress*, *tradition*, and *beauty* are abstractions, as are such important business concepts as *productivity*, *quality*, and *motivation*. In contrast, a **concrete word** stands for something you can touch, see, or visualize. Most concrete terms are anchored in the tangible, material world. *Chair*, *green*, *two*, and *horse* are concrete words; they are direct, clear, and exact. Things don't need to have a physical presence to be considered concrete, by the way; *app*, *database*, and *website* are all concrete terms as well.

Abstract words express a concept, quality, or characteristic; concrete words stand for something you can touch, see, or visualize.

Abstract words tend to cause more trouble than concrete words because they are often "fuzzy" and can be interpreted differently, depending on the audience and the circumstances. The best way to minimize such problems is to balance abstract terms with concrete ones. State the concept, then pin it down with details expressed in more concrete terms. Save the abstractions for ideas that cannot be expressed any other way.

MOBILE APP

Dragon Dictation uses voice recognition to convert speech to text up to five times faster than typing.

FINDING WORDS THAT COMMUNICATE WELL

When you compose business messages, look for the most powerful words for each situation (see Table 4.4 on the next page):

Find words that are powerful and familiar.

- **Choose strong, precise words.** Choose words that express your thoughts clearly, specifically, and strongly. If you find yourself using many adjectives and adverbs, chances

TABLE 4.4 Selected Examples of Finding Powerful Words

Potentially Weak Words and Phrases	Stronger Alternatives (Effective Usage Depends on the Situation)
Increase (as a verb)	Accelerate, amplify, augment, enlarge, escalate, expand, extend, magnify, multiply, soar, swell
Decrease (as a verb)	Curb, cut back, depreciate, dwindle, shrink, slacken
Large, small	Use a specific number, such as $100 million
Good	Admirable, beneficial, desirable, flawless, pleasant, sound, superior, worthy
Bad	Abysmal, corrupt, deficient, flawed, inadequate, inferior, poor, substandard, worthless
We are committed to providing . . .	We provide . . .
It is in our best interest to . . .	We should . . .
Unfamiliar Words	**Familiar Words**
Ascertain	Find out, learn
Consummate	Close, bring about
Peruse	Read, study
Circumvent	Avoid
Unequivocal	Certain
Clichés and Buzzwords	**Plain Language**
An uphill battle	A challenge
Writing on the wall	Prediction
Call the shots	Lead
Take by storm	Attack
Costs an arm and a leg	Expensive
A new ball game	Fresh start
Fall through the cracks	Be overlooked
Think outside the box	Be creative
Run it up the flagpole	Find out what people think about it
Eat our own dog food	Use our own products
Mission-critical	Vital
Disintermediate	Simplify the supply chain
Green light (as a verb)	Approve
Architect (as a verb)	Design
Space (as in, "we compete in the XYZ space")	Market or industry
Blocking and tackling	Basic skills
Trying to boil the ocean	Working frantically but without focus
Human capital	People, employees, workforce
Low-hanging fruit	Tasks that are easy to complete or sales that are easy to close
Pushback	Resistance

are you're trying to compensate for weak nouns and verbs. Saying that *sales plummeted* is stronger and more efficient than saying *sales dropped dramatically* or *sales experienced a dramatic drop*.

- **Choose familiar words.** You'll communicate best with words that are familiar to both you and your readers. Moreover, trying to use unfamiliar words can lead to embarrassing mistakes.

Avoid clichés, be extremely careful with trendy buzzwords, and use jargon only when your audience is completely familiar with it.

- **Avoid clichés, and use buzzwords carefully.** Although familiar words are generally the best choice, avoid *clichés*—terms and phrases so common that they have lost some of their power to communicate. *Buzzwords*, newly coined terms often associated with technology, business, or cultural changes, are more difficult to handle than clichés because in small doses and in the right situations, buzzwords can be useful. The careful use of a buzzword can signal that you're an insider, someone in the know.[12] However, buzzwords quickly become clichés, and using them too late in their "life cycle" can mark you as an outsider desperately trying to look like an insider.

- **Use jargon carefully.** *Jargon*, the specialized language of a particular profession or industry, has a bad reputation, but it's not always bad. Using jargon can be an efficient way to communicate within the specific groups that understand these terms. After all, that's how jargon develops in the first place, as people with similar interests develop ways to communicate complex ideas quickly.

MOBILE APP
The **Merriam-Webster** dictionary app offers the full Collegiate Dictionary and fun vocabulary games.

Composing Your Message: Creating Effective Sentences

Arranging your carefully chosen words in effective sentences is the next step in creating successful messages. Start by selecting the best type of sentence to communicate each point you want to make.

5 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Define the four types of sentences, and explain how sentence style affects emphasis within a message.

CHOOSING FROM THE FOUR TYPES OF SENTENCES

Sentences come in four basic varieties: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. A **simple sentence** has one main clause (a single subject and a single predicate), although it may be expanded by nouns and pronouns serving as objects of the action and by modifying phrases. Consider this example (with the subject underlined once and the predicate verb underlined twice):

A simple sentence has one main clause.

> <u>Profits</u> <u>increased</u> 35 percent in the past year.

A **compound sentence** has two main clauses that express two or more independent but related thoughts of equal importance, usually joined by a conjunction (*and*, *but*, or *or*). In effect, a compound sentence is a merger of two or more simple sentences (independent clauses) that are related. For example:

A compound sentence has two main clauses.

> <u>Wages</u> <u>declined</u> by 5 percent, and employee <u>turnover</u> <u>has been</u> high.

The independent clauses in a compound sentence are always separated by a comma or by a semicolon (in which case the conjunction is dropped).

A **complex sentence** expresses one main thought (the independent clause) and one or more subordinate thoughts (dependent clauses) related to it, often separated by a comma. The subordinate thought, which comes first in the following sentence, could not stand alone:

A complex sentence has one main clause and one subordinate clause.

> Although you may question Gerald's conclusions, <u>you</u> <u>must admit</u> that his research is thorough.

A **compound-complex sentence** has two main clauses, at least one of which contains a subordinate clause:

A compound-complex sentence has two main clauses and at least one dependent clause.

> <u>Profits</u> <u>increased</u> 35 percent in the past year, so although the company faces long-term challenges, <u>I</u> <u>agree</u> that its short-term prospects look quite positive.

Strive for variety and balance using all four sentence types. If you use too many simple sentences, you won't be able to properly express the relationships among your ideas, and your writing will sound choppy and abrupt. At the other extreme, a long series of compound, complex, or compound-complex sentences can be tiring to read.

Maintain some variety among the four sentence types to keep your writing from getting choppy (from too many short, simple sentences) or exhausting (from too many long sentences).

USING SENTENCE STYLE TO EMPHASIZE KEY THOUGHTS

Emphasize specific ideas in a sentence by
- Devoting more words to them
- Making them the subject of the sentence
- Putting them at the beginning or at the end of the sentence

In every message of any length, some ideas are more important than others. You can emphasize key ideas through your sentence style. One obvious technique is to give important points the most space. When you want to call attention to a thought, use extra words to describe it. Consider this sentence:

> The chairperson called for a vote of the shareholders.

To emphasize the importance of the chairperson, you might describe her more fully:

> Having considerable experience in corporate takeover battles, the chairperson called for a vote of the shareholders.

You can increase the emphasis even more by adding a separate, short sentence to augment the first:

> The chairperson called for a vote of the shareholders. She has considerable experience in corporate takeover battles.

You can also call attention to a thought by making it the subject of the sentence. In the following example, the emphasis is on the person:

> I can write much more quickly using my laptop.

However, when you change the subject, the computer takes center stage:

> The laptop enables me to write much more quickly.

Another way to emphasize an idea is to place it either at the beginning or at the end of a sentence:

> **Less emphatic:** We are cutting the price to stimulate demand.
> **More emphatic:** To stimulate demand, we are cutting the price.

The best placement of the dependent clause depends on the relationship between the ideas in the sentence.

In complex sentences, the ideal placement of the dependent clause depends on the relationship between the ideas expressed. If you want to emphasize the idea expressed in the dependent clause, put that clause at the end of the sentence (the most emphatic position) or at the beginning (the second most emphatic position). If you want to downplay the idea, position the dependent clause within the sentence.

> **Most emphatic:** The electronic parts are manufactured in Mexico, which has lower wages than the United States.
> **Emphatic:** Because wages are lower in Mexico than in the United States, the electronic parts are manufactured there.
> **Least emphatic:** Mexico, which has lower wages than the United States, was selected as the production site for the electronic parts.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
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Practical tips for more effective sentences

The Writer's Handbook from the University of Wisconsin offers tips on writing clear, concise sentences. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Techniques such as these give you a great deal of control over the way your audience interprets what you have to say.

Composing Your Message: Crafting Coherent Paragraphs

Paragraphs organize sentences related to the same general topic. Readers expect every paragraph to be *unified*—focusing on a single topic—and *coherent*—presenting ideas in a logically connected way. By carefully arranging the elements of each paragraph, you help your readers grasp the main idea of your document and understand how the specific pieces of support material back up that idea.

6 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Define the three key elements of a paragraph, and list five ways to develop coherent paragraphs.

CREATING THE ELEMENTS OF A PARAGRAPH

Paragraphs vary widely in length and form, but most contain three basic elements: a topic sentence, support sentences that develop the topic, and transitional words and phrases.

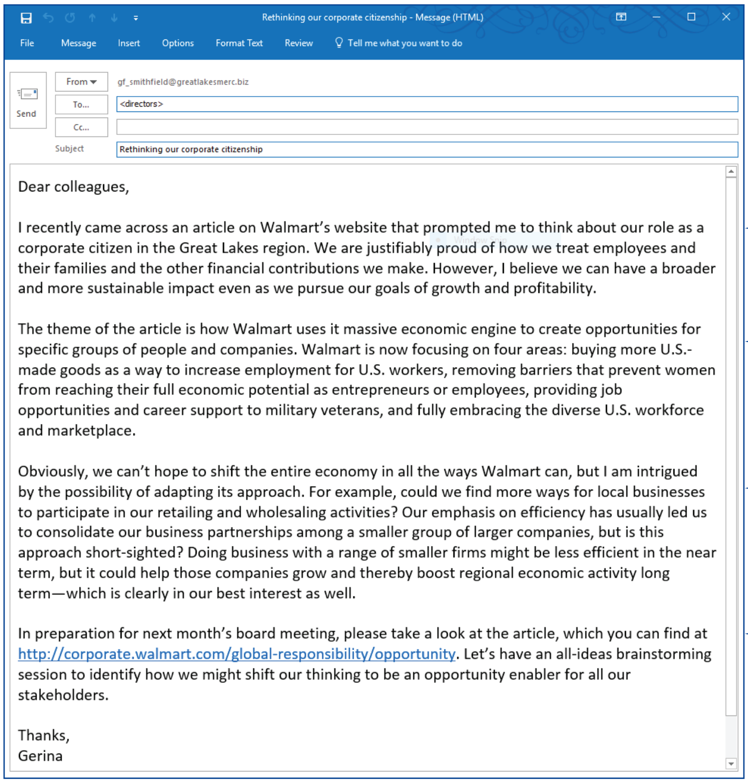
Most paragraphs consist of
- A topic sentence that reveals the subject of the paragraph
- Related sentences that support and expand the topic
- Transitions that help readers move between sentences and paragraphs

Topic Sentence

Most effective paragraphs deal with a single topic, and the sentence that introduces that topic is called the **topic sentence** (see Figure 4.5). This sentence, usually the first one in the paragraph, gives readers a summary of the general idea that will be covered in the rest of the paragraph. The following examples show how a topic sentence can introduce the subject and suggest the way the subject will be developed:

> The medical products division has been troubled for many years by public relations problems. [In the rest of the paragraph, readers will learn the details of the problems.]

> To get a refund, please supply us with the following information. [The details of the necessary information will be described in the rest of the paragraph.]


Rethinking our corporate citizenship - Message (HTML)
File Message Insert Options Format Text Review Tell me what you want to do
Send From gf_smithfield@greatlakesmerc.biz
To... <directors>
Cc...
Subject Rethinking our corporate citizenship

Dear colleagues,

I recently came across an article on Walmart's website that prompted me to think about our role as a corporate citizen in the Great Lakes region. We are justifiably proud of how we treat employees and their families and the other financial contributions we make. However, I believe we can have a broader and more sustainable impact even as we pursue our goals of growth and profitability.

The theme of the article is how Walmart uses it massive economic engine to create opportunities for specific groups of people and companies. Walmart is now focusing on four areas: buying more U.S.-made goods as a way to increase employment for U.S. workers, removing barriers that prevent women from reaching their full economic potential as entrepreneurs or employees, providing job opportunities and career support to military veterans, and fully embracing the diverse U.S. workforce and marketplace.

Obviously, we can't hope to shift the entire economy in all the ways Walmart can, but I am intrigued by the possibility of adapting its approach. For example, could we find more ways for local businesses to participate in our retailing and wholesaling activities? Our emphasis on efficiency has usually led us to consolidate our business partnerships among a smaller group of larger companies, but is this approach short-sighted? Doing business with a range of smaller firms might be less efficient in the near term, but it could help those companies grow and thereby boost regional economic activity long term—which is clearly in our best interest as well.

In preparation for next month's board meeting, please take a look at the article, which you can find at http://corporate.walmart.com/global-responsibility/opportunity. Let's have an all-ideas brainstorming session to identify how we might shift our thinking to be an opportunity enabler for all our stakeholders.

Thanks,
Gerina

This sentence serves as both a topic sentence for this paragraph and as a statement about the main idea of the entire message. Note that because she is inviting her colleagues to have a brainstorming session, she doesn't try to impose a solution in this message.

This sentence is an introduction to the Walmart web article that she would like her readers to review.

This sentence functions as a transition from the discussion about Walmart and as a topic sentence for the paragraph.

The request for action here is the topic sentence of this paragraph.

Figure 4.5 Topic Sentences
This email message establishes the scope of each paragraph with a clear topic sentence.
Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation.

Support Sentences

In most paragraphs, the topic sentence needs to be explained, justified, or extended with one or more support sentences. These sentences must be related to the topic and provide examples, evidence, and clarification:

> The medical products division has been troubled for many years by public relations problems. The media and bloggers have published 15 articles in the past year that portray the division in a negative light. We have been accused of everything from mistreating laboratory animals to polluting the local groundwater. Our facility has been described as a health hazard. Our scientists are referred to as "Frankensteins," and our profits are considered "obscene."

Notice how these support sentences are all more specific than the topic sentence. Each one provides another piece of evidence to demonstrate the general truth of the main thought. Also, each sentence is clearly related to the general idea being developed, which gives the paragraph its unity. A paragraph is well developed when it contains enough information to make the topic sentence convincing and interesting and doesn't contain any unnecessary or unrelated sentences.

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Transitions

Transitions connect ideas by showing how one thought is related to another. They also help alert the reader to what lies ahead so that shifts and changes don't cause confusion. In addition to helping readers understand the connections you're trying to make, transitions give your writing a smooth, even flow.

Depending on the specific need within a document, transitional elements can range in length from a single word to an entire paragraph or more. You can establish transitions in a variety of ways:

Transitional elements include
- Connecting words (conjunctions)
- Repeated words or phrases
- Pronouns
- Words that are frequently paired

- **Use connecting words (conjunctions).** Use words such as *and*, *but*, *or*, *nevertheless*, *however*, and *in addition*.
- **Echo a word or phrase from a previous paragraph or sentence.** "A system should be established for monitoring inventory levels. This system will provide . . ."
- **Use a pronoun that refers to a noun used previously.** "Ms. Arthur is the leading candidate for the president's position. She has excellent qualifications."
- **Use words that are frequently paired.** "The machine has a *minimum* output of . . . Its *maximum* output is . . ."

Some transitions serve as mood changers, alerting the reader to a change in mood from the previous material. Some announce a total contrast with what's come before, some announce a cause-and-effect relationship, and some signal a change in time. Here is a list of common transitions:

Additional detail: moreover, furthermore, in addition, besides, first, second, third, finally
Cause-and-effect relationship: therefore, because, accordingly, thus, consequently, hence, as a result, so
Comparison: similarly, here again, likewise, in comparison, still
Contrast: yet, conversely, whereas, nevertheless, on the other hand, however, but, nonetheless
Condition: although, if
Illustration: for example, in particular, in this case, for instance
Time sequence: formerly, after, when, meanwhile, sometimes
Intensification: indeed, in fact, in any event
Summary: in brief, in short, to sum up
Repetition: that is, in other words, as I mentioned earlier

MOBILE APP
Pages is a full-featured word-processing app for iOS devices.

TABLE 4.5 Five Techniques for Developing Paragraphs

Technique	Description	Example
Illustration	Giving examples that demonstrate the general idea	Some of our most popular products are available through local distributors. For example, Everett . . . Lemmings carries our frozen soups and entrees. The J. B. Green Company carries our complete line of seasonings, as well as the frozen soups. Wilmont Foods, also a major distributor, now carries our new line of frozen desserts.
Comparison or contrast	Using similarities or differences to develop the topic	When the company was small, the recruiting function could be handled informally. The need for new employees was limited, and each manager could comfortably screen and hire her or his own staff. However, our successful bid on the Owens contract means that we will be doubling our labor force over the next six months. To hire that many people without disrupting our ongoing activities, we will create a separate recruiting group within the human resources department.
Cause and effect	Focusing on the reasons for something	The heavy-duty fabric of your Wanderer tent probably broke down for one of two reasons: (1) a sharp object punctured the fabric, and without reinforcement, the hole was enlarged by the stress of pitching the tent daily for a week, or (2) the fibers gradually rotted because the tent was folded and stored while still wet.
Classification	Showing how a general idea is broken into specific categories	Successful candidates for our supervisor trainee program generally come from one of several groups. The largest group by far consists of recent graduates of accredited business management programs. The next largest group comes from within our own company, as we try to promote promising staff workers to positions of greater responsibility. Finally, we occasionally accept candidates with outstanding supervisory experience in related industries.
Problem and solution	Presenting a problem and then discussing the solution	Shoppers are clearly not happy with our in-store shopping app—it currently has an average rating of under two stars in both the Apple and Android stores. After studying dozens of reviews, I've identified three improvements that should make the app much friendlier. First, the user interface is too cluttered. We need to simplify it by presenting only the information the user needs at any given point in time. Second, the app is too slow at guiding shoppers to products of interest. We need to speed up the GPS and near-field algorithms. Third, we need to add a shopping list tracking feature so that customers don't need to type in their desired products every time they go shopping.

Consider using a transition whenever it might help the reader understand your ideas and follow you from point to point. You can use transitions within paragraphs to tie together related points and between paragraphs to ease the shift from one distinct thought to another. In longer reports, a transition that links major sections may be a complete paragraph that serves as a summary of the ideas presented in the section just ending or as a mini-introduction to the next section.

DEVELOPING PARAGRAPHS

You have a variety of options for developing paragraphs, each of which can convey a specific type of idea. Five of the most common approaches are illustration, comparison or contrast, cause and effect, classification, and problem and solution (see Table 4.5).

Five ways to develop paragraphs:
- Illustration
- Comparison or contrast
- Cause and effect
- Classification
- Problem and solution

Writing Messages for Mobile Devices

7 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
List five techniques for writing effective messages for mobile readers.

One obvious adaptation to make for audiences using mobile devices is to modify the design and layout of your messages to fit smaller screen sizes and different user interface features (see Chapter 5). However, modifying your approach to writing is also important. Reading is more difficult on small screens, and consequently users' ability to comprehend what they read on mobile devices is lower than it is on larger screens.[13] Use these five techniques to make your mobile messages more effective:

To write effectively for mobile devices
- Use a linear organization
- Prioritize information
- Write short, focused messages
- Use short subject lines and headings
- Use short paragraphs

- **Use a linear organization.** In a printed document or on a larger screen, readers can easily take in multiple elements on a page, such as preview or summary boxes, tables and other supporting visuals, and sidebars with related information. All these elements are in view at the same time, so readers can jump around the page to read various parts without feeling lost. However, with small mobile screens, a complicated organization requires readers to zoom in and out and pan around to see all these elements at readable text sizes. This makes reading slower and raises the odds that readers will get disoriented and lose the thread of the message because they can't see the big picture. To simplify reading, organize with a linear flow from the top to the bottom of the message or article.

- **Prioritize information.** Small screens make it difficult for readers to scan the page to find the information they want most. Prioritize the information based on what you know about their needs and put that information first.[14] Use the *inverted pyramid* style favored by journalists, in which you reveal the most important information briefly at first and then provide successive layers of detail that readers can consume if they want. Note that you may need to avoid using the indirect approach (see page 77) if your message is complicated, because it will be more difficult for readers to follow your chain of reasoning.
- **Write shorter and more focused messages and documents.** Mobile users often lack the patience or opportunity to read lengthy messages or documents, so keep it short.[15] In some cases, this could require you to write two documents, a shorter *executive summary* (see page 298) for mobile use and a longer supporting document that readers can access with their PCs if they want more details.
- **Use shorter subject lines and headings.** Mobile devices, particularly phones, can't display as many characters in a single line of text as the typical computer screen can. Depending on the app or website, email subject lines and page headings will be truncated or will wrap around to take up multiple lines. Both formats make reading more difficult. A good rule of thumb is to keep subject lines and headlines to around 25 characters.[16] This doesn't give you much text to work with, so make every word count, and make sure you start with the key words so readers can instantly see what the subject line or heading is about.[17]
- **Use shorter paragraphs.** In addition to structuring a message according to discrete blocks of information, paragraphs have a visual role in written communication as well. Shorter paragraphs are less intimidating and let readers take frequent "micro rests" as they move through a document. Because far less text is displayed at once on a mobile screen, keep paragraphs as short as possible so readers don't have to swipe through screen after screen before getting to paragraph breaks.

Compare the two messages in Figure 4.6 to get a sense of how to write reader-friendly mobile content.

The Future of Communication: Machine Learning

Machine learning is the capability of intelligent systems to learn on their own, without being fed explicit instructions. Although it sounds futuristic, you already take advantage of machine learning in your daily life, and it could become a mainstream communication tool in the future.

For example, a machine-learning algorithm called RankBrain is now one of the core technologies in Google's search engine. Roughly 85 percent of the searches performed on Google are queries the engine has seen before, so it can easily match the terms and phrases that people use with web content that it already knows about. For the other 15 percent, the unique questions it has never seen before, RankBrain essentially teaches itself what people are looking for so the search engine can find the most relevant results.

This ability to "read" and understand textual content is at the heart of *text mining*, a form of machine learning designed to extract insights and patterns from documents and other materials. Imagine that you've used Google successfully to find a few dozen articles for a big report your boss just assigned you. Getting all these resources is fine and dandy, but now you have to read them. What if you could feed them into a machine that did the reading for you and handed you a list of bullet-point highlights?

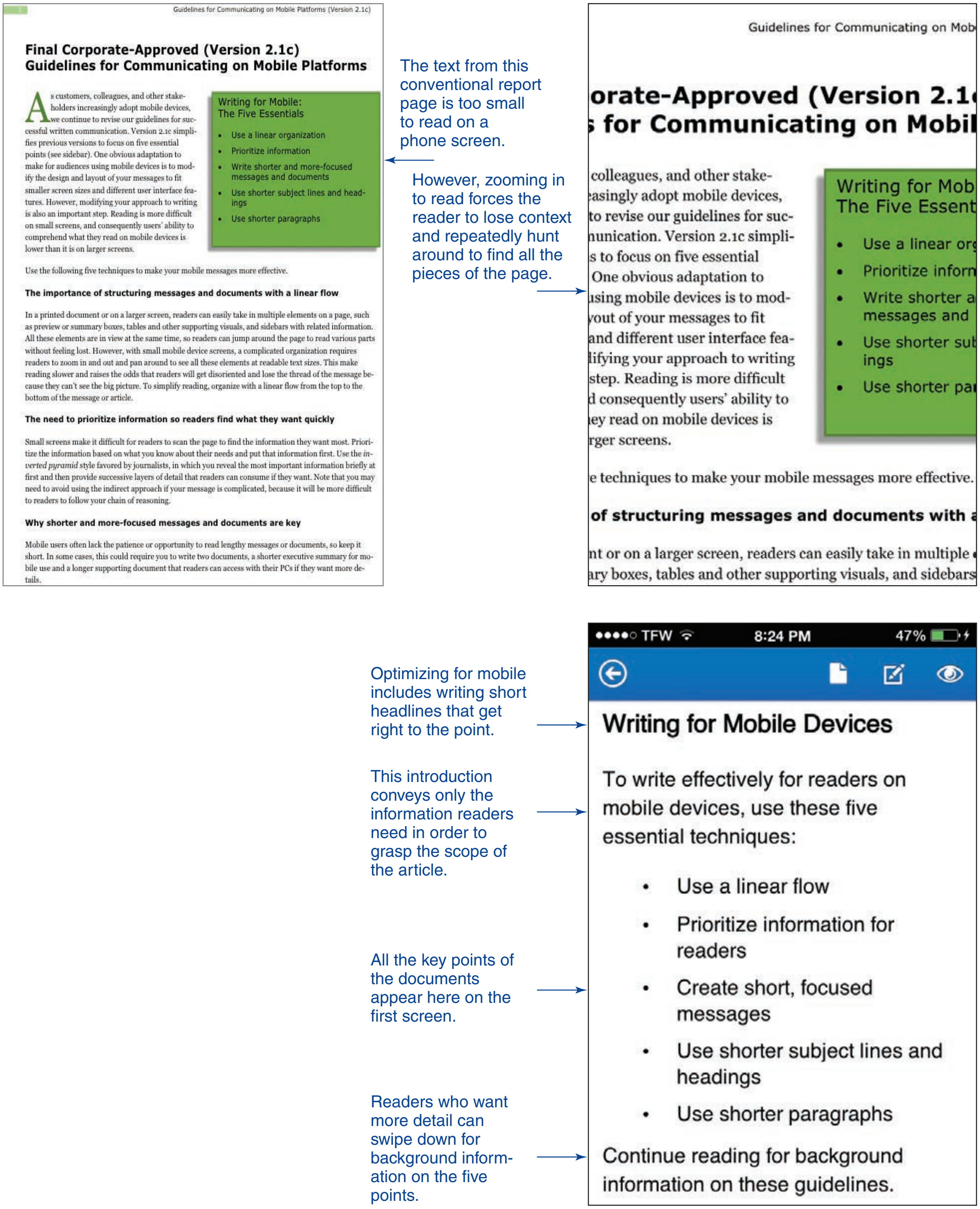

Figure 4.6 Writing for Mobile Devices
Messages and documents created for printed pages and full-sized screens can be difficult and frustrating on mobile devices. For mobile audiences, rewrite with short headlines and concise, linear content—notice how much easier Figure 4.6b is to read.

Chances are your company may have a system like this in the not-too-distant future. Textual analysis is already being done in such areas as sentiment analysis (see page 141), risk assessment, research, and customer service, where systems read social media feeds and other information sources to assess people's attitudes toward a company and provide other useful insights.[18]

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Research some of the current developments in text mining or other forms of machine learning, particularly those that have potential in business communication. Do you think these systems will have the ability to simplify work for business professionals by handling some routine communication tasks?

Chapter Review and Activities

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** to complete the problems marked with this icon ✪.

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: Identify the four aspects of being sensitive to audience needs when writing business messages.

- The "you" attitude refers to speaking and writing in terms of your audience's wishes, interests, hopes, and preferences rather than your own.
- Good etiquette indicates respect for your audience and helps foster a more successful environment for communication by minimizing negative emotional reaction.
- Sensitive communicators understand the difference between delivering negative news and being negative.
- Being sensitive includes taking care to avoid biased language that unfairly and even unethically categorizes or stigmatizes people in ways related to gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, or other personal characteristics.

Objective 2: Identify seven characteristics that build and maintain a communicator's credibility.

Build your professional credibility with these seven characteristics:

- Honesty
- Objectivity
- Awareness of audience needs
- Credentials, knowledge, and expertise
- Endorsements
- Performance
- Sincerity

Objective 3: Explain how to achieve a tone that is conversational but businesslike, explain the value of using plain language, and define active and passive voice.

Follow these tips to achieve a tone that is conversational but still businesslike:

- Avoid obsolete and pompous language.
- Avoid preaching and bragging.
- Be careful with intimacy.
- Be careful with humor.

Plain language is the preferred approach for all business communication:

- It is a way of presenting information in a simple, unadorned style so that your audience can easily grasp your meaning.
- It demonstrates the "you" attitude and shows respect for your audience.

Active voice usually makes your writing more concise and more direct:

- In the active voice, the subject performs the action and the object receives the action.
- In the passive voice, the subject receives the action.

Objective 4: Describe how to select words that are not only correct but also effective.

Careful word choices make your writing correct and more effective:

- Balance abstract and concrete words.
- Choose powerful and familiar words.
- Avoid clichés.
- Use buzzwords carefully.
- Use jargon carefully.

Objective 5: Define the four types of sentences, and explain how sentence style affects emphasis within a message.

Choose the best sentence type for each idea you want to express:

- A simple sentence has one main clause.
- A compound sentence has two main clauses.
- A complex sentence has one main clause and one subordinate clause.
- A compound-complex sentence has two main clauses and at least one dependent clause.

You have several options for emphasizing a particular point:

- Devote more words to it, relative to other points.
- Make it the subject of the sentence.
- Place it at the beginning or the end of the sentence.

Objective 6: Define the three key elements of a paragraph, and list five ways to develop coherent paragraphs.

Most paragraphs contain three key elements:

- Topic sentence that identifies the subject of the paragraph
- Support sentences that develop the topic and provide examples and evidence
- Transitional words and phrases that help readers connect one thought to the next

Here are five ways to develop coherent paragraphs:

- Illustration
- Comparison or contrast
- Cause and effect
- Classification
- Problem and solution

Objective 7: List five techniques for writing effective messages for mobile readers.

Here are five techniques for writing effective messages for mobile readers:

- Use a linear organization so readers don't have to jump around the screen to find important elements of the message.
- Prioritize information and deliver the most important information first.
- Write short, focused messages.
- Use short subject lines and headings.
- Use short paragraphs.

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

4-1. What is meant by the "you" attitude? [LO-1]
4-2. In what three situations should you consider using passive voice? [LO-3]
4-3. How does an abstract word differ from a concrete word? [LO-4]
4-4. How can you use sentence style to emphasize key thoughts? [LO-5]
4-5. What functions do transitions serve? [LO-6]
4-6. How does reading comprehension on small, mobile devices compare with comprehension on full-size screens? [LO-7]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

4-7. When composing business messages, how can you communicate with an authentic voice and project your company's image at the same time? [LO-2]
4-8. Does using plain language make you come across as less of an expert? Explain your answer. [LO-3]
4-9. Should you bother using transitions if the logical sequence of your message is already obvious? Why or why not? [LO-6]
4-10. Why can it be difficult to use the indirect approach for a complex message that will be read on mobile devices? [LO-7]

Practice Your Skills

Exercises for Perfecting Your Writing

To review chapter content related to each set of exercises, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

The "You" Attitude [LO-1] Rewrite the following sentences to reflect your audience's viewpoint.

4-11. We request that you include the order number with your inquiry.
4-12. We insist that you always bring your credit card to the store.
4-13. I can't get my reports in on time if you won't finalize the sales data.
4-14. As a measure of our goodwill, we are sending the refund for $25.

Emphasizing the Positive [LO-1] Revise these sentences to be positive rather than negative.

4-15. To avoid damage to your credit rating, please remit payment within 10 days.
4-16. We don't give refunds for returned merchandise that is soiled.
4-17. You should have realized that waterbeds will freeze in unheated houses during winter. Therefore, our guarantee does not cover the valve damage and you must pay the $9.50 valve-replacement fee (plus postage).

Emphasizing the Positive [LO-1] Revise the following sentences to replace unflattering terms (in italics) with euphemisms.

4-18. The new boss is ____________ (*stubborn*) when it comes to doing things by the book.
4-19. When you say we've doubled our profit level, you are ____________ (*wrong*).
4-20. Just be careful not to make any ____________ (*stupid*) choices this week.
4-21. Jim Riley is ____________ (*incompetent*) for that kind of promotion.

Courteous Communication [LO-1] Revise the following sentences to make them more courteous.

4-22. You claim that you mailed your check last Thursday, but we have not received it.
4-23. It is not our policy to exchange sale items, especially after they have been worn.
4-24. You neglected to sign the enclosed contract.
4-25. You failed to enclose your instructions for your new will.

Bias-Free Language [LO-1] Rewrite each of the following sentences to eliminate bias.

4-26. A pilot must have the ability to stay calm under pressure, and then he must be trained to cope with any problem that arises.
4-27. Candidate Renata Parsons, married and the mother of a teenager, will attend the debate.
4-28. For as old as he is, Sam Nugent is still one of our most active sales reps.

Message Composition: Selecting Words [LO-4] In the following sentences, replace vague phrases (underlined) with concrete phrases. Make up any details you might need.

4-29. We will be opening our new facility <u>sometime this spring</u>.
4-30. After the reception, we were surprised that <u>such a large number attended</u>.
4-31. The new production line has been operating with <u>increased efficiency</u> on every run.
4-32. Over the holiday, we hired a crew to <u>expand the work area</u>.

Message Composition: Selecting Words [LO-4] In the following sentences, replace weak terms (in italics) with stronger words.

4-33. The two reporters ____________ (*ran after*) every lead enthusiastically.

4-34. The ____________ (*bright*) colors in that ad are keeping customers from seeing what we have to sell.

4-35. Health costs ____________ (*suddenly rise*) when management forgets to emphasize safety issues.

4-36. Once we solved the zoning issue, new business construction ____________ (*moved forward*), and the district has been flourishing ever since.

Message Composition: Selecting Words [LO-4] Rewrite these sentences to replace the clichés with fresh, personal expressions.

4-37. Being a jack-of-all-trades, Dave worked well in his new sales job.

4-38. Moving Leslie into the accounting department, where she was literally a fish out of water, was like putting a square peg into a round hole, if you get my drift.

4-39. It's a dog-eat-dog world out there in the rat race of the asphalt jungle.

Message Composition: Selecting Words [LO-4] In the following sentences, replace long, complicated words with short, simple ones.

4-40. Management ____________ (*inaugurated*) the recycling policy six months ago.

4-41. You can convey the same meaning without ____________ (*utilizing*) the same words.

4-42. You'll never be promoted unless you ____________ (*endeavor*) to be more patient.

4-43. I have to wait until payday to ____________ (*ascertain*) whether I got the raise.

4-44. John will send you a copy once he's inserted all the ____________ (*alterations*) you've requested.

Message Composition: Selecting Words [LO-4] Rewrite the following sentences, replacing obsolete phrases with up-to-date versions. Write *none* if you think there is no appropriate substitute.

4-45. I have completed the form and returned it to my insurance company, as per your instructions.

4-46. Attached herewith is a copy of our new contract for your records.

4-47. Please be advised that your account with National Bank has been compromised, and we advise you to close it as soon as possible.

Message Composition: Creating Sentences [LO-5] Rewrite the following sentences so that they are active rather than passive.

4-48. Mistakes were made when the team merged the documents.

4-49. High profits are publicized by management.

4-50. The policies announced in the directive were implemented by the staff.

4-51. The employees were represented by Janet Hogan.

Message Organization: Transitions [LO-6] Add transitions to the following sentences to improve the flow of ideas. (Note that you may need to eliminate or add some words to smooth out the sentences.)

4-52. Facing some of the toughest competitors in the world, Harley-Davidson had to make some changes. The company introduced new products. Harley's management team set out to rebuild the company's production process. New products were coming to market and the company was turning a profit. Harley's quality standards were not on par with those of its foreign competitors. Harley's costs were still among the highest in the industry. Harley made a U-turn and restructured the company's organizational structure. Harley's efforts have paid off.

4-53. Whether you're indulging in a doughnut in New York or California, Krispy Kreme wants you to enjoy the same delicious taste with every bite. The company maintains consistent product quality by carefully controlling every step of the production process. Krispy Kreme tests all raw ingredients against established quality standards. Every delivery of wheat flour is sampled and its moisture content and protein levels measured. Krispy Kreme blends the ingredients. Krispy Kreme tests the doughnut mix for quality. Krispy Kreme delivers the mix to its stores. Krispy Kreme knows that it takes more than a quality mix to produce perfect doughnuts all the time. The company supplies its stores with everything they need to produce premium doughnuts—mix, icings, fillings, equipment—you name it.

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information will be found in another chapter, as indicated.

4-54. Writing: Establishing Your Credibility; Microblogging Skills [LO-2], Chapter 6 Search LinkedIn for the profile of an expert in any industry or profession. Now imagine that you are going to introduce this person as a speaker at a convention. You will make an in-person introduction at the time of the speech, but you decide to introduce him or her the day before on Twitter. Write four tweets: one that introduces the expert and three that cover three key supporting points that will enhance the speaker's credibility in the minds of potential listeners. Make up any information you need to complete this assignment, then email the text of your proposed tweets to your instructor.

4-55. Writing: Creating a Businesslike Tone; Media Skills: Email [LO-3] Read the following email message, then (1) analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each sentence and (2) revise the message so that it follows this chapter's guidelines. The message was written by the marketing manager of an online retailer of baby-related products in the hope of becoming a retail outlet for Inglesina strollers and high chairs. As a manufacturer of stylish, top-quality products, Inglesina (based in Italy) is extremely selective about the retail outlets through which it allows its products to be sold.[19]

Our e-tailing company, Best Baby Gear, specializes in only the very best products for parents of newborns, infants, and toddlers.

We constantly scour the world looking for products that are good enough and well-built enough and classy enough—good enough that is to take their place alongside the hundreds of other carefully selected products that adorn the pages of our award-winning website, www.bestbabygear.com. We aim for the fences every time we select a product to join this portfolio; we don't want to waste our time with onesey-twosey products that might sell a half dozen units per annum—no, we want every product to be a top-drawer success, selling at least one hundred units per specific model per year in order to justify our expense and hassle factor in adding it to the abovementioned portfolio. After careful consideration, we thusly concluded that your Inglesina lines meet our needs and would therefore like to add it.

4-56. Writing: Using Plain Language; Media Skills: Blogging [LO-3] Visit the Securities and Exchange Commission's website at **www.sec.gov** and locate *A Plain English Handbook*. In one or two sentences, summarize what the SEC means by the phrase *plain English*. Next, download the document "Mutual Funds and ETFs: A Guide for Investors" (also from the SEC website). Does this information follow the SEC's plain English guidelines? Cite several examples that support your assessment. Post your analysis on your class blog.

4-57. Writing: Creating Effective Sentences; Media Skills: Social Networking [LO-4] If you are interested in business, chances are you've had an idea or two for starting a company. If you haven't yet, go ahead and dream up an idea now. Make it something you are passionate about, something you could really throw yourself into. Now write a four-sentence summary that could appear on a Facebook profile. Make sure the first sentence is a solid topic sentence, and make sure the next three sentences offer relevant evidence and examples. Feel free to make up any details you need. Email your summary to your instructor or post it on your class blog.

4-58. Writing: Crafting Unified, Coherent Paragraphs; Media Skills: Email [LO-5] Suppose that end-of-term frustrations have produced this email message to Professor Anne Brewer from a student who believes he should have received a B in his accounting class. If this message were recast into three or four clear sentences, the teacher might be more receptive to the student's argument. Rewrite the message to show how you would improve it:

I think that I was unfairly awarded a C in your accounting class this term, and I am asking you to change the grade to a B. It was a difficult term. I don't get any money from home, and I have to work mornings at the Pancake House (as a cook), so I had to rush to make your class, and those two times that I missed class were because they wouldn't let me off work because of special events at the Pancake House (unlike some other students who just take off when they choose). On the midterm examination, I originally got a 75 percent, but you said in class that there were two different ways to answer the third question and that you would change the grades of students who used the "optimal cost" method and had been counted off 6 points for doing this. I don't think that you took this into account, because I got 80 percent on the final, which is clearly a B. Anyway, whatever you decide, I just want to tell you that I really enjoyed this class, and I thank you for making accounting so interesting.

4-59. Media Skills: Writing for Mobile Devices [LO-7] Find an interesting website article on any business topic. Write a three-paragraph summary that would be easy to read on a phone screen.

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Locate an example of professional communication from a reputable online source. Choose a paragraph that has at least three sentences. Evaluate the effectiveness of this paragraph at three levels, starting with the paragraph structure. Is the paragraph unified and cohesive? Does it have a clear topic sentence and sufficient support to clarify and expand that topic? Second, evaluate each sentence. Are the sentences easy to read and easy to understand? Did the writer vary the types and lengths of sentences used to produce a smooth flow and rhythm? Is the most important idea presented prominently in each sentence? Third, evaluate at least six word choices. Did the writer use these words correctly and effectively? Using whatever medium your instructor requests, write a brief analysis of the piece (no more than one page), citing specific elements from the piece and support from the chapter.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at **websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that offers advice on adapting to your audience or composing business messages. Write a brief email message to your instructor or a post for your class blog, describing the item that you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from **real-timeupdates.com/bce8**; select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 4, Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Adjectives

Review Section 1.4 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage and then complete the exercises below. Answers to these exercises appear on page 490.

For the following items, indicate the appropriate form of the adjective that appears in parentheses.

4-60. Of the two products, this one has the ____________ (great) potential.

4-61. The ____________ (perfect) solution is d.

4-62. Here is the ____________ (interesting) of all the ideas I have heard so far.

4-63. Our service is ____________ (good) than theirs.

4-64. The ____________ (hard) part of my job is firing people.

For the following items, insert hyphens where required.

4-65. A highly placed source revealed Dotson's last ditch efforts to cover up the mistake.

4-66. Please send an extra large dust cover for my photocopier.

4-67. A top secret document was taken from the president's office last night.

4-68. A 30 year old person should know better.

4-69. If I write a large scale report, I want to know that it will be read by upper level management.

For the following items, insert commas between adjectives where necessary.

4-70. The two companies are engaged in an all-out no-holds-barred struggle for dominance.

4-71. A tiny metal shaving is responsible for the problem.

4-72. She came to the office with a bruised swollen knee.

4-73. A chipped cracked sheet of glass is useless to us.

4-74. You'll receive our usual cheerful prompt service.

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

4-75. Its time that you learned the skills one needs to work with suppliers and vendors to get what you want and need.

4-76. Easy flexible wireless calling plans start for as little as $19 dollars a month.

4-77. There's several criteria used to select customer's to receive this offer.

4-78. After PetFood Warehouse officially became PETsMART, Jim left the co. due to health reasons.

4-79. First quarter sales gains are evident in both the grocery store sector (up 1.03%) and the restaurant sector (up 3.17 per cent) according to Food Institute estimates.

4-80. Whatever your challenge, learning stronger "negotiating" tactics and strategies will improve the way people work and the results that comes from their efforts.

4-81. To meet the increasing demand for Penta bottled-drinking-water, production capacity is being expanded by Bio Hydration Research Lab by 80 percent.

4-82. Seminars begin at 9 A.M. and wrap up at 4:00 P.M.

4-83. Temple, Texas-based McLane Co. a subsidiary of Walmart has bought a facility in Northfield, Minn that it will use to distribute products to customers such as convenience stores, stores that sell items at a discount, and mass merchants.

4-84. The British Retail Consortium are releasing the 3rd edition of its Technical Standards on Apr. 22, reported the *New York Times*.

4-85. The reason SkillPath is the fastest growing training company in the world is because of our commitment to providing clients with the highest-quality learning experiences possible.

4-86. According to professor Charles Noussair of the economics department of Purdue University, opinion surveys "Capture the respondent in the role of a voter, not in the role of a consumer".

4-87. The Study found that people, exposed to Purina banner ads, were almost 50 percent more likely to volunteer Purina as the first Dog Food brand that came to mind.

4-88. In a consent decree with the food and drug administration, E'Ola International a dietary supplement maker agreed not to sell any more products containing the drug, ephedrine.

4-89. Dennis Dickson is looking for a company both to make and distribute plaidberries under an exclusive license, plaidberries is blackberries that are mixed with extracts and they are used as a filling.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. You will also find errors related to topics in this chapter. Concentrate on using the "you" attitude, emphasizing the positive, being polite, and using bias-free language as you improve this message. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C), or download the document and make the corrections in your word-processing software.[20]

Welcome! Here is your new card for your Health Savings Account (HSA)

Using your prepaid card makes HSAs: Fast + Easy + Automatic!!

Step 1 Activate and Sign Your Card(s)

- You CANNOT use your card until you perfom these following steps: to activate, go to the websight listed on the back of your Card(s). You can also just following the instructions written on the sticker which should be attached to the front of your card.
- Your member ID No. could be one of two things: your Social Security Number or the ID number assigned by your Health Plan
- Sign the back of your card and have the other person on the account, if any, sign the other card (you should've received two cards with this letter, by the way)

Step 2 Use Your Card as You Need

However, DO NOT ATTEMPT to use your card for anything expenses other than current year medical expenses—qualified only!—for you or your dependents if you have any

The things your Card can be used for include but are not limited to such as:

- Prescriptions, but only those covered by your health plan—obviously
- Dental
- Vision and eyewear
- OTC items if covered

Step 3 Save All Receiptw!! So you can use them when you do your taxes

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

4-90. How can you demonstrate the "you" attitude if you don't know your audience personally? [LO-1]

4-91. What steps can you take to make abstract concepts such as *opportunity* feel more concrete in your messages? [LO-4]

Endnotes

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5 Completing Business Messages

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Discuss the value of careful revision, and describe the tasks involved in evaluating your first drafts and the work of other writers.
2. List four techniques you can use to improve the readability of your messages.
3. Describe the steps you can take to improve the clarity of your writing, and give four tips for making your writing more concise.
4. List four principles of effective design, and explain the role of major design elements in document readability.
5. Explain the importance of proofreading, and give six tips for successful proofreading.
6. Discuss the most important issues to consider when distributing your messages.

MyLab Business Communication

If your instructor is using MyLab Business Communication, visit **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for videos, simulations, and writing exercises.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"The message from recruitment agencies, employer surveys, and the like is familiar, loud, and clear: You must be an outstanding communicator if you want to get to the top of your profession."
—Martin Shovel, writer, speech writer, illustrator, and co-founder of CreativityWorks

As a multitalented communication specialist who has succeeded at everything from advertising to professional illustration to scriptwriting, Martin Shovel has had numerous opportunities to see effective communication in action. He knows that the top professionals in every field have worked hard to hone their communication skills, and his years of experience have taught him what it takes to communicate in an engaging and persuasive manner. His number one rule: Keep it simple.[1] The secret to simplicity is careful revision—transforming a rambling, unfocused message into a tight, lively message that gets attention and spurs action.

Martin Shovel/CreativityWorks Ltd.

The multitalented communication specialist Martin Shovel knows that careful revision is key to the simplicity and clarity that are the hallmarks of effective messages.

Revising Your Message: Evaluating the First Draft

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Discuss the value of careful revision, and describe the tasks involved in evaluating your first drafts and the work of other writers.

This chapter covers the tasks in the third step of the three-step writing process: revising your message to achieve optimum quality, then producing, proofreading, and distributing it. After you complete your first draft, you may be tempted to breathe a sigh of relief, send the message on its way, and move on to the next project. Resist that temptation. Successful communicators recognize that the first draft is rarely as tight, clear, and compelling as it needs to be. Careful revision improves the effectiveness of your messages and sends a strong signal to your readers that you respect their time and care about their opinions.[2]

The scope of the revision task can vary somewhat, depending on the medium and the nature of your message. For informal messages to internal audiences, particularly when using short-message tools such as workgroup messaging and email, the revision process is often as simple as quickly looking over your message to correct any mistakes before sending or posting it.

However, don't fall into the trap of thinking you don't need to worry about grammar, spelling, clarity, and other fundamentals of good writing when you use digital formats. These qualities can be *especially* important with digital communication, particularly if these messages are the only contact your audience has with you. First, poor-quality messages create an impression of poor-quality thinking, and even minor errors can cause confusion, frustration, and costly delays. Second, assume that anything you write for digital channels will be stored forever and could be distributed far beyond your original audience. Don't join the business professionals who have seen their ill-considered or poorly written messages wind up in the news media or as evidence in lawsuits or criminal cases.

For important messages, schedule time to put your draft aside for a day or two before you begin the revision process.

Particularly with important messages, try to plan your work schedule so that you can put your first draft aside for a day or two before you begin the revision process. Doing so will allow you to approach the material with a fresh eye. Then start with the "big picture," making sure that the document accomplishes your overall goals, before moving to finer points such as readability, clarity, and conciseness. Compare the before and after versions of the letter in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 on the following pages for examples of how careful revision makes a message more effective and easier to read.

EVALUATING YOUR CONTENT, ORGANIZATION, AND TONE

When you begin the revision process, focus on content, organization, and tone. Today's time-pressed readers want messages that are quick and efficient.[3] To evaluate the content of your message, make sure it is accurate, relevant to the audience's needs, and complete.

When you are satisfied with the basic content of your message, review its organization by asking yourself these questions:

- Are all your points covered in the most logical and convincing order?
- Do the most important ideas receive the most space and greatest emphasis?
- Are any points repeated unnecessarily?
- Are details grouped together logically, or are some still scattered throughout the document?

Next, consider whether you have achieved the right tone for your audience. Is your writing formal enough to meet the audience's expectations without being too formal or academic? Is it too casual for a serious subject? Finally, spend a few extra moments on the beginning and end of your message; these sections usually have the greatest impact on the audience.

EVALUATING, EDITING, AND REVISING THE WORK OF OTHER WRITERS

When you evaluate, edit, or revise someone else's work, remember that your job is to help that person succeed, not to impose your own style.

At many points in your career, you will be asked to evaluate, edit, or revise the work of others. Before you dive into someone else's work, recognize the dual responsibility that you have. First, unless you've specifically been asked to rewrite something in your own style, keep in

The two circled sentences say essentially the same thing, so this edit combines them into one sentence.

Changing *adjusting* to *adjustment* makes it parallel with *evaluation*.

Replacing *its* with *your piano's* avoids any confusion about which noun that *it* is supposed to replace.

The simple complimentary close replaces a close that was stylistically over the top.

Delauny Music
56 Commerce Circle • Davenport, IA 52806
(563) 555-4001 • delaunymusic.net

June 21, 2019

Ms. Claudia Banks
122 River Heights Drive
Bettendorf, IA 52722

Dear Ms. Banks:

On behalf of everyone at Delauny Music, it is my pleasure to thank you for your recent purchase of a Yamaha CG1 grand piano. The Cg1 carries more than a century of Yamaha's heritage in design and production of world-class musical instruments and ~~you can bet it~~ will give you many years of playing and listening pleasure. Our commitment to your satisfaction doesn't stop with your purchase, however. ~~Much to the contrary, it continues for as long as you own your piano, which we hope, of course, is for as long as you live.~~ As a vital first step, please remember to call us ~~your local Yamaha dealer~~.

Sometime within three to eight months after your piano was delivered to take advantage of the ~~free~~ Yamaha Servicebond℠ Assurance Program. This free service program includes a thorough evaluation and adjustment ~~adjusting~~ of the instrument after you've had some time to play your piano and your piano has had time to adapt to its environment.

In addition to this important ~~vital~~ service appointment, a regular program of tuning is ~~absolutely~~ essential to ensure your piano's ~~its~~ impeccable performance. Our piano specialists recommend four tunings during the first year and two tunings every year thereafter ~~that~~. As your local Yamaha dealer, we are ideally positioned to provide you ~~with optimum~~ service for both regular tuning and any maintenance or repair needs you may have ~~over the years~~.

~~All of us at Delauny Music~~ thank you for your recent purchase. We ~~and~~ wish you many, many, years of satisfaction with your new Yamaha CG1 grand piano.

Sincerely,
~~Respectfully yours in beautiful music,~~

Madeline Delauny
Owner

The phrase *you can bet* is too informal for this message.

The sentence beginning with "Much to the contrary . . . " is awkward and unnecessary.

This edit inserts a missing word (*dealer*).

This group of edits removes unnecessary words in several places.

Common Proofreading Symbols (see page 451 for more)

~~strikethrough~~	Delete text
	Delete individual character or a circled block of text
^	Insert text (text to insert is written above)
⊙	Insert period
	Insert comma
	Start new line
¶	Start new paragraph
≡	Capitalize

Figure 5.1 Improving a Customer Letter Through Careful Revision
Careful revision makes this draft shorter, clearer, and more focused. The proofreading symbols you see here are still widely used whenever printed documents are edited and revised; you can find a complete list of symbols in Appendix C. Note that many business documents are now "marked up" using such technological tools as revision marks in Microsoft Word and comments in Adobe Acrobat. No matter what the medium, however, careful revision is key to more effective messages.

Delauny Music
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June 21, 2019

Ms. Claudia Banks
122 River Heights Drive
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Dear Ms. Banks:

Thank you for your recent purchase. We wish you many years of satisfaction with your new Yamaha CG1 grand piano. The CG1 carries more than a century of Yamaha's heritage in design and production of world-class musical instruments and will give you many years of playing and listening pleasure.

Our commitment to your satisfaction doesn't stop with your purchase, however. As a vital first step, please remember to call us sometime within three to eight months after your piano is delivered to take advantage of the Yamaha Servicebond℠ Assurance Program. This free service program includes a thorough evaluation and adjustment of the instrument after you've had some time to play it and it has had time to adapt to its environment.

In addition to this important service appointment, a regular program of tuning is essential to ensure your piano's impeccable performance. Our piano specialists recommend four tunings during the first year and two tunings every year thereafter. As your local Yamaha dealer, we are ideally positioned to provide you with optimum service for both regular tuning and any maintenance or repair needs you may have.

Sincerely,

Madeline Delauny

Madeline Delauny
Owner

The content is now organized in three coherent paragraphs, each with a distinct message.

The tone is friendly and engaging without being flowery.

Figure 5.2 Professional Business Letter
Here is the revised and finished version of the edited letter from Figure 5.1. Note that the *block format* used here is just one of several layout options; Appendix A also describes the *modified block format* and the *simplified format*.

mind that your job is to help the other writer succeed at his or her task, not to impose your writing style. Second, make sure you understand the writer's intent before you begin suggesting or making changes. With those thoughts in mind, ask yourself the following questions as you evaluate someone else's writing:

- What is the purpose of this document or message?
- Who is the target audience?
- What information does the audience need?
- Are there any special circumstances or sensitive issues that the writer had to consider (or should have considered)?
- Does the document provide this information in a well-organized way?
- Does the writing demonstrate the "you" attitude toward the audience?
- Is the tone of the writing appropriate for the audience and the situation?
- Can the readability be improved?

- Is the writing clear? If not, how can it be improved?
- Is the writing as concise as it could be?
- Does the page or screen design support the intended message?

You can read more about using these skills in the context of wiki writing in Chapter 11.

Revising to Improve Readability

After checking the content, organization, and tone of your message, make a second pass to improve readability. Most professionals are inundated with more reading material than they can ever hope to consume, and they'll appreciate your efforts to make your documents easier to read—and easier to skim for the highlights when they don't have time to read in depth. You'll benefit from this effort, too: If you earn a reputation for creating well-crafted documents that respect the audience's time, people will pay more attention to your work.

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
List four techniques you can use to improve the readability of your messages.

Four powerful techniques for improving readability are varying sentence length, using shorter paragraphs, replacing narrative with lists, and adding effective headings and subheadings.

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Editing and proofreading tips, with an error treasure hunt

This guide from the Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill offers advice on editing and proofreading—and a chance to find errors strategically embedded in the advice itself. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

VARYING SENTENCE LENGTH

Using a variety of sentence lengths is a good way to maintain reader interest and control the emphasis given to major and minor points. Look for ways to combine a mixture of sentences that are short (up to 15 words or so), medium (15–25 words), and long (more than 25 words). Each sentence length has advantages. Short sentences can be processed quickly and are easier for nonnative speakers and translators to interpret. Medium-length sentences are useful for showing the relationships among ideas. Long sentences are often the best way to convey complex ideas, to list a number of related points, or to summarize or preview information.

To keep readers' interest, look for ways to combine a variety of short, medium, and long sentences.

Each sentence length has disadvantages as well. Too many short sentences in a row can make your writing feel choppy and disconnected. Medium sentences can lack the punch of short sentences and the informative power of longer sentences. Long sentences are usually harder to understand than short sentences because they are packed with more information; they are also harder to skim when readers are looking for key points in a hurry.

KEEPING YOUR PARAGRAPHS SHORT

Large blocks of text can be visually daunting, particularly on screen, so keep your paragraphs as short as possible. Short paragraphs, roughly 100 words or fewer (this paragraph has 57 words), are easier to read than long ones, and they make your writing look inviting. You can also emphasize ideas by isolating them in short, forceful paragraphs.

Short paragraphs are more inviting and tend to be easier to read.

However, don't go overboard with short paragraphs at the expense of maintaining a smooth and clear flow of information. In particular, use one-sentence paragraphs only occasionally and only for emphasis. Also, if you need to divide a subject into several pieces in order to keep paragraphs short, use transitions to help your readers keep the ideas connected.

USING LISTS AND BULLETS TO CLARIFY AND EMPHASIZE

In some instances, a list can be more effective than conventional sentences and paragraphs. Lists can show the sequence of your ideas, heighten their visual impact, and increase the likelihood that readers will find your key points. In addition, lists help simplify complex

Lists are effective tools for highlighting and simplifying material.

subjects, highlight the main points, enable skimming, and give readers a visual break. Compare these two approaches to the same information:

Narrative	List
Owning your own business has many potential advantages. One is the opportunity to pursue your own personal passion. Another advantage is the satisfaction of working for yourself. As a sole proprietor, you also have the advantage of privacy because you do not have to reveal your financial information or plans to anyone.	Owning your own business has three advantages: • Opportunity to pursue personal passion • Satisfaction of working for yourself • Financial privacy

When creating a list, you can separate items with numbers, letters, or *bullets* (any kind of graphical element that precedes each item). Bullets are generally preferred over numbers, unless the list is in some logical sequence or ranking, or if specific list items will be referred to later. Make your lists easy to read by making all the items parallel (see "Impose parallelism" on page 119) and keeping individual items as short as possible.[4] Also, be sure to introduce your lists clearly so people know what they're about to read.

ADDING HEADINGS AND SUBHEADINGS

Use headings to grab the reader's attention and organize material into sections.

A **heading** is a brief title that tells readers about the content of the section that follows. **Subheadings** indicate subsections within a major section; complex documents may have several levels of subheadings. Headings and subheadings help in three important ways: They show readers at a glance how the material is organized, they call attention to important points, and they highlight connections and transitions between ideas.

Informative headings are generally more helpful than simple descriptive ones.

Descriptive headings, such as "Cost Considerations," simply identify a topic without suggesting anything more. **Informative headings**, such as "Redesigning Material Flow to Cut Production Costs," give the reader some context and may point toward any conclusions or recommendations that you offer in the section. Well-written informative headings are self-contained, which means readers can skim just the headings and subheadings and understand them without reading the rest of the document. Whatever types of headings you choose, keep them brief and grammatically parallel.

Editing for Clarity and Conciseness

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe the steps you can take to improve the clarity of your writing, and give four tips for making your writing more concise.

After you've reviewed your message and revised it for readability, your next task is to make sure your message is as clear and as concise as possible.

EDITING FOR CLARITY

Clarity is essential to getting your message across accurately and efficiently.

Make sure that every sentence conveys the meaning you intend and that readers can extract your intended meaning without needing to read the sentence more than once (review Chapter 4 if you need to). To ensure clarity, look closely at your paragraph organization, sentence structure, and word choices. Can readers make sense of the related sentences in a paragraph? Is the meaning of each sentence easy to grasp? Is every word clear and unambiguous (meaning it doesn't have any risk of being interpreted in more than one way)? See Table 5.1 for examples of the following tips:

- **Break up overly long sentences.** If you find yourself stuck in a long sentence, you're probably trying to make the sentence do more than it reasonably can, such as expressing two dissimilar thoughts or peppering the reader with too many pieces of supporting evidence at once. (Did you notice how difficult this long sentence was to read?)

Hedging is appropriate when you can't be absolutely sure of a statement, but excessive hedging undermines your authority.

- **Rewrite hedging sentences.** *Hedging* means pulling back from making an absolutely certain, definitive statement about a topic. Granted, sometimes you have to write *may*

TABLE 5.1 Revising for Clarity

Issues to Review	Ineffective	Effective
Overly Long Sentences (taking compound sentences too far)	The magazine will be published January 1, and I'd better meet the deadline if I want my article included because we want the article to appear before the trade show.	The magazine will be published January 1. I'd better meet the deadline because we want the article to appear before the trade show.
Hedging Sentences (overqualifying sentences)	I believe that Mr. Johnson's employment record seems to show that he may be capable of handling the position.	Mr. Johnson's employment record shows that he is capable of handling the position.
Unparallel Sentences (using dissimilar construction for similar ideas)	Mr. Simms had been drenched with rain, bombarded with telephone calls, and his boss shouted at him. To waste time and missing deadlines are bad habits.	Mr. Sims had been drenched with rain, bombarded with telephone calls, and shouted at by his boss. Wasting time and missing deadlines are bad habits.
Dangling Modifiers (placing modifiers close to the wrong nouns and verbs)	Walking to the office, a red sports car passed her. [suggests that the car was walking to the office] Reduced by 25 percent, Europe had its lowest semiconductor output in a decade. [suggests that Europe shrank by 25 percent]	A red sports car passed her while she was walking to the office. Europe reduced semiconductor output by 25 percent, its lowest output in a decade.
Long Noun Sequences (stringing too many nouns together)	The window sash installation company will give us an estimate on Friday.	The company that installs window sashes will give us an estimate on Friday.
Camouflaged Verbs (changing verbs into nouns)	The manager undertook implementation of the rules. Verification of the shipments occurs weekly. reach a conclusion about give consideration to	The manager implemented the rules. We verify shipments weekly. conclude consider
Subject-Predicate Separation (putting the predicate too far from the subject)	A 10% decline in market share, which resulted from quality problems and an aggressive sales campaign by Armitage, the market leader in the Northeast, was the major problem in 2018.	The major problem in 2018 was a 10% loss of market share, which resulted from quality problems and an aggressive sales campaign by Armitage, the market leader in the Northeast.
Modifier Separation (putting adjectives, adverbs, or prepositional phrases too far from the words they modify)	Our antique desk lends an air of strength and substance with thick legs and large drawers.	With its thick legs and large drawers, our antique desk lends an air of strength and substance.
Awkward References (linking ideas in ways that cause more work for the reader)	The Law Office and the Accounting Office distribute computer supplies for paralegals and accountants, respectively.	The Law Office distributes computer supplies for paralegals; the Accounting Office distributes them for accountants.

or *seems* to avoid stating a judgment as a fact. When you hedge too often or without good reason, however, you come across as being unsure of what you're saying.

- **Impose parallelism.** Making your writing *parallel* means expressing two or more similar ideas using the same grammatical structure. For example, if one list item begins with a verb (as the boldface entries in this list do), every item should begin with a verb. Doing so helps your audience understand that the ideas are related, are of similar importance, and are on the same level of generality. Parallel patterns are also easier to read. You can impose parallelism by repeating a pattern in words, phrases, clauses, or entire sentences.

When you use parallel grammatical patterns to express two or more ideas, you show that they are comparable thoughts.

- **Correct dangling modifiers.** Sometimes a modifier is not just an adjective or an adverb but an entire phrase modifying a noun or a verb. Be careful not to leave this type of modifier *dangling*, with no connection to the subject of the sentence.
- **Reword long noun sequences.** When multiple nouns are strung together as modifiers, the resulting sentence can be hard to read. See whether a single, well-chosen word will do the job. If the nouns are all necessary, consider moving one or more to a modifying phrase, as shown in Table 5.1.
- **Replace camouflaged verbs.** Watch for words that end in *ion*, *tion*, *ing*, *ment*, *ant*, *ent*, *ence*, *ance*, and *ency*. These endings often change verbs into nouns and adjectives, requiring you to add a verb to get your point across.
- **Clarify sentence structure.** Keep the subject and predicate of a sentence as close together as possible. Similarly, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases usually

Subject and predicate should be placed as close together as possible, as should modifiers and the words they modify.

make the most sense when they're placed as close as possible to the words they modify.

- **Clarify awkward references.** Try to avoid vague references such as *the above-mentioned*, *as mentioned above*, *the aforementioned*, *the former*, *the latter*, and *respectively*. Use a specific pointer such as "as described in the second paragraph on page 22."

EDITING FOR CONCISENESS

Make your documents tighter by removing unnecessary words, phrases, and sentences.

Many of the changes you make to improve clarity also shorten your message by removing unnecessary words. The next step is to examine the text with the specific goal of reducing the number of words. Readers appreciate conciseness and are more likely to read your documents if you have a reputation for efficient writing. See Table 5.2 for examples of the following tips:

- **Delete unnecessary words and phrases.** To test whether a word or phrase is essential, try the sentence without it. If the meaning doesn't change, leave it out.
- **Replace long words and phrases.** Short words and phrases are generally more vivid and easier to read than long ones.
- **Eliminate redundancies.** In some word combinations, the words say the same thing. For instance, "visible to the eye" is redundant because *visible* is enough without further clarification; "to the eye" adds nothing.
- **Recast "It is/There are" starters.** If you start a sentence with an indefinite pronoun such as *it* or *there*, odds are the sentence could be shorter and more active. For instance, "We believe . . . " is a stronger opening than "It is believed that . . . "

As you make all these improvements, concentrate on how each word contributes to an effective sentence and on how each sentence helps develop a coherent paragraph.

Producing Your Message

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
List four principles of effective design, and explain the role of major design elements in document readability.

Now it's time to put your hard work on display. The *production quality* of your message—the total effect of page or screen design, graphical elements, typography, and so on—plays an important role in its effectiveness. A polished, inviting design not only makes your document easier to read but also conveys a sense of professionalism and importance.[5]

DESIGNING FOR READABILITY

Good design improves the readability of your material.

Design affects readability in two important ways. First, carefully chosen design elements can improve the effectiveness of your message by making it easier to read and by guiding readers through the content. In contrast, poor design decisions—such as using distracting background images behind text, pointless animations, or tiny typefaces—act as barriers to communication. Second, the visual design sends a nonverbal message to your readers, establishing the tone and influencing their perceptions of the communication before they read a single word (see Figure 5.3 on page 122).

You will have varying degrees of control over the design of your messages and documents. Some of the digital systems you use will control the look of messages on the receiver's end, and your firm may have standardized style sheets for reports and other documents. Whenever you are making your own design decisions, pay careful attention to these elements:

For effective design, pay attention to
- Consistency
- Balance
- Restraint
- Detail

- **Consistency.** Throughout each message, be consistent in your use of margins, typeface, type size, spacing, color, lines, and position. Being consistent from message to message is beneficial as well. This helps audiences recognize your documents and know what to expect.
- **Balance.** Balance is an important but sometimes subjective design issue. One document may have a formal, rigid design in which the various elements are placed in a

TABLE 5.2 Revising for Conciseness

Issues to Review	Less Effective	More Effective
Unnecessary Words and Phrases		
Using wordy phrases	for the sum of	for
	in the event that	if
	prior to the start of	before
	in the near future	soon
	at this point in time	now
	due to the fact that	because
	in view of the fact that	because
	until such time as	when
	with reference to	about
Using too many relative pronouns (such as *that* or *who*)	Cars that are sold after January will not have a six-month warranty.	Cars sold after January will not have a six-month warranty.
	Employees who are driving to work should park in the underground garage.	Employees driving to work should park in the underground garage. OR Employees should park in the underground garage.
Using too few relative pronouns	The project manager told the engineers last week the specifications were changed.	The project manager told the engineers last week that the specifications were changed. OR The project manager told the engineers that the specifications were changed last week.
Long Words and Phrases		
Using overly long words	During the preceding year, the company accelerated operations.	Last year the company sped up operations.
	The action was predicated on the assumption that the company was operating at a financial deficit.	The action was based on the belief that the company was losing money.
Using wordy phrases rather than infinitives	If you want success as a writer, you must work hard.	To succeed as a writer, you must work hard.
	He went to the library for the purpose of studying.	He went to the library to study.
	The employer increased salaries so that she could improve morale.	The employer increased salaries to improve morale.
Redundancies		
Repeating meanings	absolutely complete	complete
	basic fundamentals	fundamentals
	follows after	follows
	free and clear	free
	refer back	refer
	repeat again	repeat
	collect together	collect
	future plans	plans
	return back	return
	important essentials	essentials
	end result	result
	actual truth	truth
	final outcome	outcome
	uniquely unusual	unique
	surrounded on all sides	surrounded
Using double modifiers	modern, up-to-date equipment	modern equipment
***It Is* and *There Are* Starters**		
Starting sentences with *It* or *There*	It would be appreciated if you would sign the lease today.	Please sign the lease today.
	There are five employees in this division who were late to work today.	Five employees in this division were late to work today.

Thanks to the concise and clear navigation labels, headings, and subheadings, readers can skim down the screen and get all the key points in a matter of seconds.

Notice how generous use of white space, simple but compelling illustrations, and a limited amount of text make this webpage less intimidating than a screen packed with visually "heavy" blocks of text.

Font size changes and the shift from a single, centered column to two columns immediately signal the hierarchy of information, leading the reader's eye from major points down to supporting details.

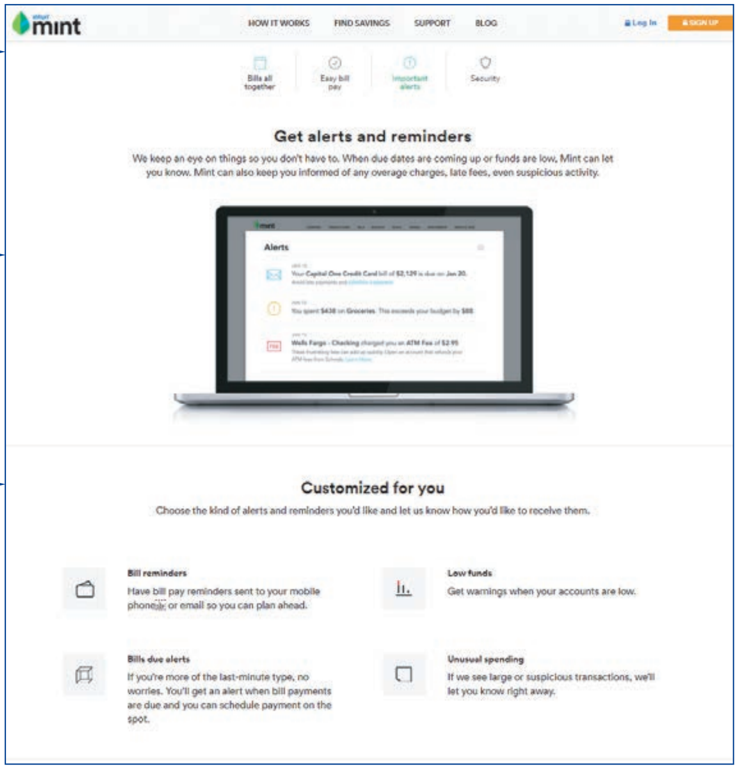

Figure 5.3 Readability Decisions for Digital Communication
This page from Mint's website demonstrates effective design choices for online readability.
Source: Courtesy of Mint.

grid pattern, whereas another may have a less formal design in which elements flow more freely across the page—and both could be in balance. Like the tone of your language, visual balance can be too formal, just right, or too informal for a given message.

- **Restraint.** Strive for simplicity. Don't clutter your message with too many design elements, too many colors, or too many decorative touches. Anything that doesn't support your message should be removed, if possible.
- **Detail.** Pay attention to all the details that affect readability. For instance, extremely wide columns of text can be difficult to read, so it may be better to split the text into two narrower columns.

Even without special training in graphic design, you can make your printed messages more effective by understanding the use of some key design elements: white space, margins and line justification, typefaces, and type styles.

White Space

White space separates elements in a design and helps guide the reader's eye.

Any space free of text or artwork is considered **white space**. (Note that "white space" isn't necessarily white.) These unused areas provide visual contrast and important resting points for your readers.[6] White space includes the open area surrounding headings, margins, paragraph indents, space around images, vertical space between columns, and horizontal space between paragraphs or lines of text. These text-free zones makes pages and screens feel less intimidating and therefore increase the chance that people will read them.

Margins and Justification

Most business documents use a flush left margin and a ragged right margin.

Margins define the space around text and between text columns. In addition to their width, the look and feel of margins are influenced by the way lines of text are arranged. They can be set (1) *justified* (which means they are *flush*, or aligned vertically, on both the left and the right), (2) flush left with a *ragged right* margin, (3) flush right with a *ragged left* margin, or

(4) centered. This paragraph is justified, whereas the paragraphs in the letter in Figure 5.2 on page 116 are flush left with a ragged right margin.

Magazines, newspapers, and books often use justified type because it can accommodate more text in a given space. However, justified type needs to be used with care and is not a good choice for most routine business documents. First, it creates a denser look because the uniform line lengths decrease the amount of white space along the right margin. Second, it produces a more formal look that isn't appropriate for all situations. Third, unless it is formatted with skill and attention, justified type can be more difficult to read because it can produce large gaps between words and excessive hyphenation at the ends of lines. Publishing specialists have the time and skill needed to carefully adjust character and word spacing in order to eliminate these problems. Even if you have the skill, it's not usually worth the time it takes to properly justify most business documents.

In contrast to justified type, flush-left, ragged-right type creates a more open appearance on the page, producing a less formal and more contemporary look. Spacing between words is consistent, and only long words that fall at the ends of lines are hyphenated.

Centered type is rarely used for text paragraphs but is commonly used for headings and subheadings. Flush-right, ragged-left type is rarely used.

MOBILE APP

Genius Scan lets you scan documents with your phone and create PDFs on the go.

Typefaces

Typeface refers to the physical design of letters, numbers, and other text characters. (*Font* and *typeface* are often used interchangeably, although strictly speaking, a font is a set of characters in a given typeface.) Typeface influences the tone of your message, making it look authoritative or friendly, businesslike or casual, classic or modern, and so on (see Table 5.3). Be sure to choose fonts that are appropriate for your message; many of the fonts on your computer are not appropriate for business use.

The classic style of document design uses a sans serif typeface for headings and a serif typeface for regular paragraph text; however, many contemporary documents and webpages now use all sans serif.

Serif typefaces have small crosslines (called serifs) at the ends of each letter stroke. **Sans serif typefaces**, in contrast, lack these serifs. For years, the conventional wisdom in typography was that serif faces were easier to read in long blocks of text, because the serifs made it easier for the eye to pick out individual letters. Accordingly, the standard advice was to use serif faces for the body of a document and sans serif faces for headings and subheadings.

However, the research behind the conventional wisdom is not as conclusive as once thought.[7] In fact, for body text many sans serif typefaces work as well as or better than some serif typefaces. This seems to be particularly true on screens, which often have lower resolution than printed text. Many contemporary documents and webpages now use sans serif for body text.

For most documents, you shouldn't need more than two typefaces, although if you want to make captions or other text elements stand out, you can use another font.[8] Using more typefaces can clutter a document and produce an amateurish look.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

Improve your document designs by learning the fundamentals of typography

Knowing the basics of type usage will help you create more effective page and screen layouts. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

TABLE 5.3 Typeface Personalities: Serious to Casual to Playful

Serif Typefaces	Sans Serif Typefaces	Specialty Typefaces (rarely used for routine business communication)
Bookman Old Style	Arial	Bauhaus
Century Schoolbook	Calibri	Broadway
Courier	Eras Bold	Forte
Garamond	Franklin Gothic Book	Citadel Script
Georgia	Gill Sans	MadZine
Times New Roman	Verdana	STENCIL

Type Styles

Type style refers to any modification that lends contrast or emphasis to type, including boldface, italic, underlining, and color. For example, you can set individual words or phrases as bold to draw more attention to them (as key terms are in this book). Italic type has specific uses as well, such as highlighting quotations and indicating foreign words, irony, humor, book and movie titles, and unconventional usage. Underlining is another effective way to emphasize specific parts of the text.

Use type styles (boldface, italics, and underlining) sparingly to preserve their ability to emphasize key words and phrases.

Be sure to use any of these type styles sparingly, however. Overusing a style reduces its effectiveness and can make the text harder to read. In particular, avoid long passages that are underlined, in italics, or in all-capital letters.

For most printed business messages, use a type size of 10 to 12 points for regular text and 12 to 18 points for headings and subheadings. (A point is approximately 1/72 inch.) Resist the temptation to reduce the type size to squeeze in text or to enlarge it to fill up space. Type that is too small is hard to read, whereas extra-large type can look unprofessional.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

See the newest designs from some of the brightest minds in typography

Type design is a fascinating and dynamic field; this portfolio shows dozens of innovative new typefaces. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

DESIGNING MESSAGES FOR MOBILE DEVICES

In addition to making your content mobile-friendly using the writing tips in Chapter 4 (see pages 103–104), you can follow these steps to format that content for mobile devices:

- **Think in small chunks.** Remember that mobile users consume information one screen at a time, so try to divide your message into independent, easy-to-consume bites. If readers have to scroll through a dozen screens to piece together your message, they might miss key points or just give up entirely.
- **Make generous use of white space.** White space is always helpful, but it's critical on small screens because readers are trying to get the point of every message as quickly as possible. Keep your paragraphs short (four to six lines) and separate them with blank lines so the reader's eyes can easily jump from one point to the next.[9]
- **Format simply.** Avoid anything that is likely to get in the way of fast, easy reading, including busy typefaces, complex graphics, and complicated layouts.
- **Consider horizontal and vertical layouts.** Most phones and tablets can automatically rotate their screen content from horizontal to vertical as the user rotates the device. A layout that doesn't work well with the narrow vertical perspective might be acceptable at the wider horizontal perspective.

MOBILE APP

Ginger Page offers a grammar checker, dictionary, thesaurus, translator, and other tools to help with mobile writing.

Compare the two messages in Figure 5.4; notice how much more difficult the screen in Figure 5.4a is to read.

Proofreading Your Message

5 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Explain the importance of proofreading, and give six tips for successful proofreading.

Proofreading is the quality inspection stage for your documents. It is your last chance to make sure your document is ready to carry your message—and your reputation—to the intended audience. Even a small mistake can doom your efforts, so take proofreading seriously.

Accuracy and attention to detail help build your credibility, so proofread messages and documents carefully.

Look for two types of problems: (1) undetected mistakes from the writing, design, and layout stages, and (2) mistakes that crept in during production. For the first category, you can review format and layout guidelines in Appendix A (including standard formats for letters and memos) and brush up on writing basics with the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage at the end of the book. The second category can be anything from computer glitches such as missing fonts to broken web links to problems with the ink used in printing. Be particularly vigilant with complex documents and production processes that involve teams of people and multiple computers. Strange things can happen as files

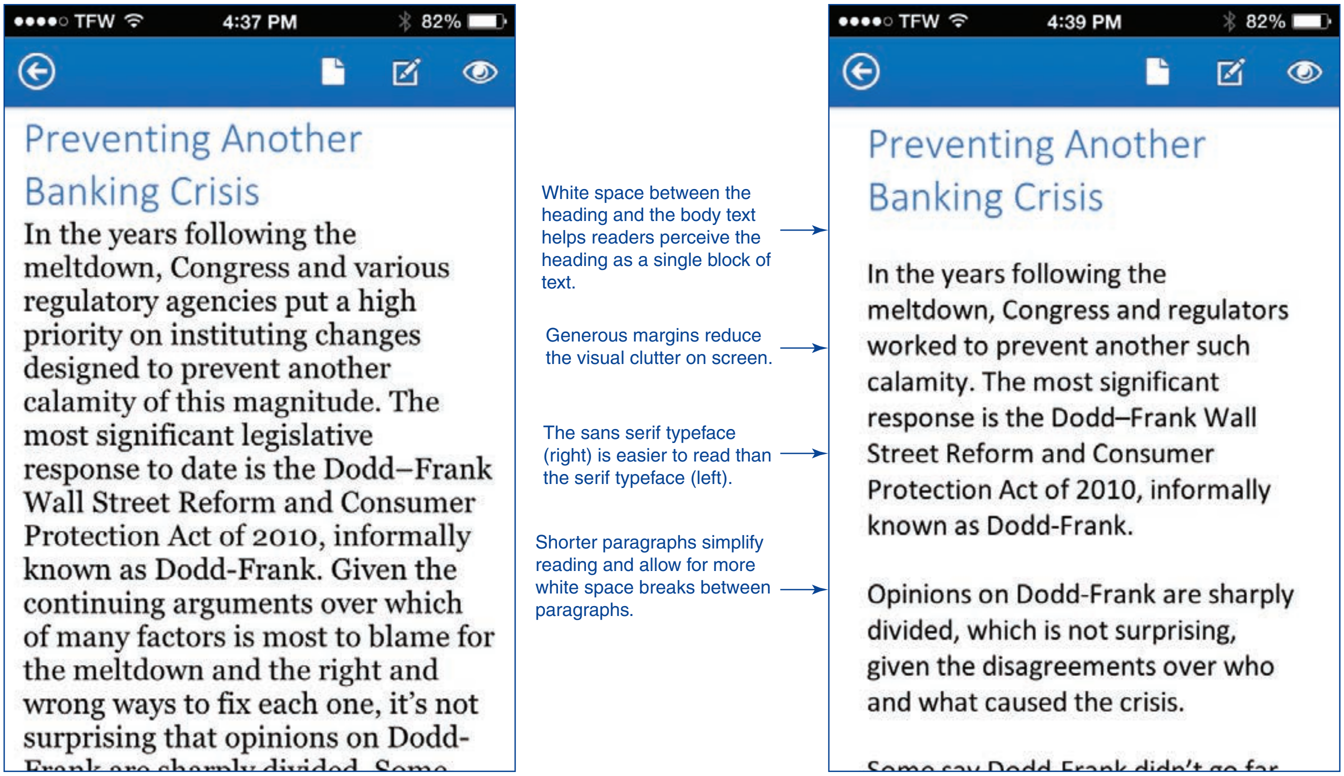

Figure 5.4 Designing for Mobile Devices
Even simple changes such as revising with shorter paragraphs, choosing cleaner typefaces, and making generous use of white space in and around the text can dramatically improve readability on mobile screens.

move from computer to computer, especially when lots of separate media elements are involved.

To be most effective, proofreading should be a methodical procedure in which you look for specific problems. Here is some advice from the pros:

The types of details to look for when proofreading include language errors, missing material, design errors, and typographical errors.

- **Make multiple passes.** Go through the document several times, focusing on a different aspect each time. For instance, look for content errors the first time and layout errors the second time.
- **Use perceptual tricks.** To keep from missing errors that are "in plain sight," try reading pages backward, placing your finger under each word and reading it silently, covering everything but the line you're currently reading, or reading the document aloud.
- **Focus on high-priority items.** Double-check names, titles, dates, addresses, and any number that could cause grief if incorrect.
- **Get some distance.** If possible, don't proofread immediately after finishing the document. Let your brain wander off to new topics and then come back fresh later.
- **Stay focused and vigilant.** Block out distractions and focus as completely as possible on your proofreading. Avoid reading large amounts of material in one sitting and try not to proofread when you're tired.
- **Review complex digital documents on paper.** Some people have trouble proofreading webpages, online reports, and other digital documents on screen. If you have trouble, print the materials so you can review them on paper.
- **Take your time.** Quick proofreading is not careful proofreading.

Table 5.4 offers some handy tips to improve your proofreading efforts.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE
Proven tips for proofreading
This advice for class assignments will help you on the job, too. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

TABLE 5.4 Proofreading Tips

Look for Writing and Typing Errors
☑ Typographical mistakes
☑ Misspelled words
☑ Grammatical errors
☑ Punctuation mistakes
Look for Design and Layout Errors
☑ Lack of adherence to company standards
☑ Page or screen layout errors (such as incorrect margins and column formatting)
☑ Clumsy page breaks or line breaks
☑ Inconsistent font usage (such as with headings and subheadings)
☑ Alignment problems (columns, headers, footers, and graphics)
☑ Missing or incorrect page and section numbers
☑ Missing or incorrect page headers or footers
☑ Missing or incorrect URLs, email addresses, or other contact information
☑ Missing or incorrect photos and other graphical elements
☑ Missing or incorrect source notes, copyright notices, or other reference items
Look for Production Errors
☑ Printing problems
☑ Browser compatibility problems
☑ Screen size or resolution issues for mobile devices
☑ Incorrect or missing tags on blog posts

Distributing Your Message

6 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Discuss the most important issues to consider when distributing your messages.

Consider cost, convenience, time, security, and privacy when choosing a distribution method.

With the production finished, you're ready to distribute your message. You don't always have a choice of which distribution method to use, but if you do, consider the following factors:

- **Cost.** Cost isn't a concern for most messages, but for multiple copies of lengthy reports or multimedia productions, it may well be. Printing, binding, and delivering reports can be expensive, so weigh the cost versus the benefits. Be sure to consider the nonverbal message you send regarding cost as well. Overnight delivery of a printed report could seem responsive in one situation but wasteful in another, for example.
- **Convenience.** Make sure your audience can conveniently access and use the material you send. For instance, sending huge files may be fine on a fast office network, but receiving such files can be a major headache for remote colleagues trying to download them over slower wireless networks.
- **Time.** How soon does the message need to reach the audience? Don't waste money on overnight delivery if the recipient won't read a report for a week.
- **Security and privacy.** The convenience offered by digital communication needs to be weighed against security and privacy concerns. For the most sensitive messages, your company will probably restrict both the people who can receive the messages and the means you can use to distribute them. In addition, most computer users are wary of opening attachments these days. Instead of sending word-processor files, you can use Adobe Acrobat or an equivalent product to convert your documents to PDF files (which are more immune to viruses).

MOBILE APP
DocuSign is one of many apps that solve the problem of signing digital documents such as contracts; you can sign right on your phone screen.

The Future of Communication: Telepathic Communication

Mental telepathy—sending and receiving messages purely through the power of the mind—has long been a staple of science fiction and the province of psychics. However, some rudimentary experiments in technology-enabled telepathy show at least a hint of promise that telepathy could add an intriguing element to business communication in the future.

Using existing medical technologies for sensing and stimulating brain activity, scientists at the University of Washington demonstrated a simple video game in which one user's thoughts controlled a second user's physical motions. When the first user saw something on his screen and made a decision about how to react (without actually moving his hand), that brain activity was detected and transmitted to a second user. Using essentially the reverse technology, the decision the first user made would stimulate the brain of the second user and cause him to move his hand to implement the decision via his game controller. In a separate test, an international team of researchers showed it was possible to send simple verbal messages using a similar concept of encoding and decoding.

If the technology has practical applications, it is years away from being ready for the market. The potential is mindboggling to consider, though. Imagine just thinking up a message and having it appear on a colleague's mobile screen or, better yet, directly in his or her mind. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has speculated on this very possibility.

Even if it never achieves mainstream use, technological telepathy could be a boon for people with sensory or motor issues that prevent them from using existing modes of sending and receiving messages. They could put the full power of their creative and analytical minds directly to work without being stymied by layers of input/output technology.[10]

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Look into the current research on technology-enabled telepathy. Is it getting close to practical application? Aside from the technological hurdles, what other hurdles will need to be overcome to make this a practical tool for communication?

Chapter Review and Activities

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** to complete the problems marked with this icon ✪.

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: Discuss the value of careful revision, and describe the tasks involved in evaluating your first drafts and the work of other writers.

- Revision is an essential aspect of completing messages because it can make your first drafts tighter, clearer, and more compelling.
- Revision consists of three main tasks:
  - Evaluating content, organization, and tone
  - Reviewing for readability
  - Editing for clarity and conciseness
- After you revise your message, complete it by using design elements effectively, proofreading to ensure quality, and distributing it to your audience.
- When asked to evaluate, edit, or revise someone else's work, remember that your job is to help the other writer succeed, so make sure you understand the writer's intent.

Objective 2: List four techniques you can use to improve the readability of your messages.

These four techniques can improve readability:

- Varying the length of your sentences makes your writing more dynamic while emphasizing the most important points.
- Keeping most paragraphs short makes it easier for readers to consume information.
- Using lists and bullets helps you group related items, steps, or other points.
- Adding headings and subheadings organizes your message and calls attention to important information.

Objective 3: Describe the steps you can take to improve the clarity of your writing, and give four tips on making your writing more concise.

Use these techniques to clarify your messages:

- Break up overly long sentences.
- Rewrite hedging sentences.
- Impose parallelism.
- Correct dangling modifiers.
- Reword long noun sequences.
- Replace camouflaged verbs.
- Clarify sentence structure.
- Clarify awkward references.

Make your writing more concise with these techniques:

- Delete unnecessary words and phrases.
- Shorten overly long words and phrases.
- Eliminate redundancies.
- See whether you can recast sentences that begin with "It is" and "There are."

Objective 4: List four principles of effective design, and explain the role of major design elements in document readability.

Pay attention to these four key principles of effective design:

- Consistency
- Balance
- Restraint
- Significant details

Here are four major design elements that affect readability:

- White space (any empty space, regardless of color) helps organize the sections and pieces and makes text more inviting.
- Generous margins make text easier to read; ragged right margins are best for most business uses.
- Typeface choices affect readability because some are easier to read than others.
- Type styles (boldface, italics, and underlining) can highlight key points if used sparingly.

Objective 5: Explain the importance of proofreading, and give six tips for successful proofreading.

Proofreading is vital for two reasons:

- It is your last chance to fix any problems with your writing or production work.
- Even a small mistake can doom your efforts.

Follow these six tips for effective proofreading:

- Make multiple passes, looking for specific problems each time.
- Use perceptual tricks such as reading backward or reading aloud.
- Focus on high-priority items.
- If possible, allow some time between revising and proofreading.
- Stay focused and vigilant.
- Take your time.

Objective 6: Discuss the most important issues to consider when distributing your messages.

Here are four key issues to consider:

- Cost: Although not usually an issue for digital messages, cost can be a factor for printed documents or physical media.
- Convenience: Make sure the method is convenient for your recipients.
- Time: Deliver messages when they are needed, but don't overspend if things aren't urgent.
- Security and privacy: Some methods are more secure than others, and your company may have strict policies for some kinds of messages.

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

5-1. What are the four main tasks involved in completing a business message? [LO-1]

5-2. What are your two main responsibilities when you review and edit the work of others? [LO-1]

5-3. What functions do headings serve? [LO-2]

5-4. What are hedging sentences, and why should they be avoided unless truly necessary? [LO-3]

5-5. What steps should you take to format content for mobile devices? [LO-4]

5-6. Why is proofreading an important part of the writing process? [LO-5]

5-7. What factors should you consider when choosing a method for distributing a message (when you have more than one choice)? [LO-6]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

5-8. How does careful revision reflect the "you" attitude? [LO-1]

5-9. Why is it essential to understand the writer's intent before suggesting or making changes to another person's document? [LO-1]

5-10. What is likely to happen if too many words in a paragraph are set in boldface? [LO-4]

5-11. How does white space help with readability on mobile screens? [LO-4]

5-12. How can you demonstrate good business sense in the choices you make regarding message distribution? [LO-6]

Practice Your Skills

Exercises for Perfecting Your Writing

To review chapter content related to each set of exercises, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

Revising Messages: Clarity [LO-3]

Break the following sentences into shorter ones; revise as necessary to maintain sense and smooth flow.

5-13. The next time you write something, check your average sentence length in a 100-word passage, and if your sentences average more than 16 to 20 words, see whether you can break up some of the sentences.

5-14. Unfortunately, no gadget will produce excellent writing, but using spell checkers and grammar checkers can help by catching common spelling errors and raising grammatical points that writers might want to reconsider, such as suspect sentence structure and problems with noun-verb agreement.

5-15. Know the flexibility of the written word and its power to convey an idea, and know how to make your words behave so that your readers will understand.

Revising Messages: Conciseness [LO-3]

Eliminate unnecessary words in the following sentences.

5-16. The board cannot act without a consensus of opinion.

5-17. To surpass our competitors, we need new innovations both in products and in company operations.

5-18. George McClannahan has wanted to be head of engineering a long period of time, and now he has finally gotten the promotion.

5-19. Don't pay more than you have to; you can get our new fragrance for a price of just $20.

Revising Messages: Conciseness [LO-3]

Revise the following sentences, using shorter, simpler words.

5-20. It is imperative that the pay increments be terminated before the company accumulates an inordinate deficit.

5-21. There was unanimity among the executives that Ms. Jackson's idiosyncrasies were cause for a mandatory meeting with the company's personnel director.

5-22. The impending liquidation of the company's assets was cause for jubilation among the company's competitors.

Revising Messages: Conciseness [LO-3]

Use infinitives as substitutes for the overly long phrases in the following sentences.

5-23. For living, I require money.

5-24. They did not find sufficient evidence for believing in the future.

5-25. Bringing about the destruction of a dream is tragic.

Revising Messages: Conciseness [LO-3]

Condense the following sentences to as few words as possible; revise as needed to maintain clarity and sense.

5-26. We are of the conviction that writing is important.

5-27. In all probability, we're likely to have a price increase.

5-28. Our goals include making a determination about that in the near future.

5-29. When all is said and done at the conclusion of this experiment, I'd like to summarize the final windup.

Revising Messages: Modifiers [LO-3]

Remove all the unnecessary modifiers from the following sentences.

5-30. Tremendously high pay increases were given to the extraordinarily skilled and extremely conscientious employees.

5-31. The union's proposals were highly inflationary, extremely demanding, and exceptionally bold.

Revising Messages: Hedging [LO-3]

Rewrite the following sentences so that they no longer contain any hedging.

5-32. It would appear that someone apparently entered illegally.

5-33. It may be possible that sometime in the near future the situation is likely to improve.

5-34. Your report seems to suggest that we might be losing money.

5-35. I believe Nancy apparently has somewhat greater influence over employees in the new-accounts department.

Revising Messages: Indefinite Starters [LO-3]

Rewrite the following sentences to eliminate the indefinite starters (forms of *There are* or *It is*).

5-36. There are several examples here to show that Elaine can't hold a position very long.

5-37. It would be greatly appreciated if every employee would make a generous contribution to Mara Cook's retirement party.

5-38. It has been learned in Washington today from generally reliable sources that an important announcement will be made shortly by the White House.

5-39. There is a rule that states that we cannot work overtime without permission.

Revising Messages: Parallelism [LO-3]

Revise the following sentences to fix the parallelism problems.

5-40. Mr. Hill is expected to lecture three days a week, to counsel two days a week, and must write for publication in his spare time.

5-41. She knows not only accounting, but she also reads Latin.

5-42. Both applicants had families, college degrees, and were in their thirties, with considerable accounting experience but few social connections.

5-43. This book was exciting, well written, and held my interest.

Revising Messages: Awkward References [LO-3]

Revise the following sentences to delete the awkward references.

5-44. The vice president in charge of sales and the production manager are responsible for funding the demo unit program and the loaner unit program, respectively.

5-45. The demo unit program and the loaner unit program are funded from different budgets, with the former the responsibility of the vice president in charge of sales and the latter the responsibility of the production manager.

5-46. The budgets for the demo unit program and the loaner unit program were increased this year, with the aforementioned budgets being increased 10 percent in both cases.

5-47. A laser printer and an inkjet printer were delivered to John and Megan, respectively.

Revising Messages: Dangling Modifiers [LO-3]

Rewrite the following sentences to clarify the dangling modifiers.

5-48. Running down the railroad tracks in a cloud of smoke, we watched the countryside glide by.

5-49. Lying on the shelf, Ruby saw the seashell.

5-50. In need of a major equipment upgrade, I think the factory would be a bad investment.

5-51. Being cluttered and filthy, Sandy took the whole afternoon to clean up her desk.

Revising Messages: Noun Sequences [LO-3]

Rewrite the following sentences to eliminate the long strings of nouns.

5-52. The focus of the meeting was a discussion of the bank interest rate deregulation issue.

5-53. Following the government task force report recommendations, we are revising our job applicant evaluation procedures.

5-54. The production department quality assurance program components include employee training, supplier cooperation, and computerized detection equipment.

5-55. The supermarket warehouse inventory reduction plan will be implemented next month.

Revising Messages: Sentence Structure [LO-3]

Rearrange each of the following sentences to bring the subjects closer to their verbs.

5-56. Trudy, when she first saw the bull pawing the ground, ran.

5-57. It was Terri who, according to Ted, who is probably the worst gossip in the office (Tom excepted), mailed the wrong order.

5-58. William Oberstreet, in his book *Investment Capital Reconsidered*, writes of the mistakes that bankers through the decades have made.

5-59. Judy Schimmel, after passing up several sensible investment opportunities, despite the warnings of her friends and family, invested her inheritance in a jojoba plantation.

Revising Messages: Camouflaged Verbs [LO-3]

Rewrite each of the following sentences so that the verbs are no longer camouflaged.

5-60. Adaptation to the new rules was performed easily by the employees.

5-61. The assessor will make a determination of the tax due.

5-62. Verification of the identity of the employees must be made daily.

5-63. The board of directors made a recommendation that Mr. Ronson be assigned to a new division.

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information will be found in another chapter, as indicated.

5-64. Collaboration: Evaluating the Work of Other Writers [LO-1] Visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8**, select Student Assignments, then select Chapter 5, Evaluation Activity. Download and open the document using word-processing software that can accommodate Microsoft Word documents and offers revision tracking and commenting features. Using your knowledge of effective writing and the tips on page 114–117 for evaluating the work of other writers, evaluate this message. Make any necessary corrections using the revision tracking feature. Insert comments, as needed, to explain your changes to the author.

5-65. Completing: Evaluating Content, Organization, and Tone; Collaboration: Using Collaboration Technologies [LO-1], **Chapter 2** Visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8**, select Student Assignments, and then select Chapter 5, Collaboration Activity. Copy the text of this assignment and use it to start a document in Zoho (free for personal use) or a comparable collaboration system. In a team of three or four students, evaluate the content, organization, and tone of this message. After you reach agreement on the problems in the message, use the system's tools to rewrite and revise the text.

5-66. Communication Ethics: Making Ethical Choices; Media Skills: Blogging [LO-3] The time and energy required for careful revision can often benefit you or your company directly. For example, reader-friendly product descriptions will increase the probability that website visitors will buy your products. But what about situations in which the quality of your writing and revision work really doesn't stand to benefit you directly? For instance, assume that you are putting a notice on your website, informing the local community about some upcoming construction to your manufacturing plant. The work will disrupt traffic for nearly a year and generate a significant amount of noise and air pollution, but knowing the specific dates and times of various construction activities will allow people to adjust their commutes and other activities in order to minimize the negative impact on their daily lives. However, your company does not sell products in the local area, so the people affected by all this are not potential customers. Moreover, providing accurate information to the surrounding community and updating it as the project progresses will take time away from your other job responsibilities. Do you have an ethical obligation to keep the local community informed with accurate, up-to-date information? Why or why not? In a post on your class blog, explain your position on this question.

5-67. Completing: Revising for Readability [LO-2] Rewrite the following paragraph to vary the length of the sentences and to shorten the paragraph so it looks more inviting to readers:

Although major league baseball remains popular, more people are attending minor league baseball games because they can spend less on admission, snacks, and parking and still enjoy the excitement of America's pastime. Connecticut, for example, has three AA minor league teams, including the New Haven Ravens, who are affiliated with the St. Louis Cardinals; the Norwich Navigators, who are affiliated with the New York Yankees; and the New Britain Rock Cats, who are affiliated with the Minnesota Twins. These teams play in relatively small stadiums, so fans are close enough to see and hear everything, from the swing of the bat connecting with the ball to the thud of the ball landing in the outfielder's glove. Best of all, the cost of a family outing to see rising stars play in a local minor league game is just a fraction of what the family would spend to attend a major league game in a much larger, more crowded stadium.

5-68. Completing: Designing for Readability; Media Skills: Blogging [LO-5] Compare the homepages of Bloomberg (**www.bloomberg.com**) and MarketWatch (**www.marketwatch.com**), two websites that cover financial markets. What are your first impressions of these two sites?

How do their designs compare in terms of information delivery and overall user experience? Choose three pieces of information that a visitor to these sites would be likely to look for, such as a current stock price, news from international markets, and commentary from market experts. Which site makes it easier to find this information? Why? Present your analysis in a post for your class blog.

5-69. Completing: Designing for Readability [LO-5] Visit real-timeupdates.com/bce8, select Student Assignments, and then select Chapter 5, Designing for Readability Activity. Download and open the document in word-processing software capable of handling Microsoft Word files. Using the various page, paragraph, and font formatting options available in your word processor, modify the formatting of the document so that its visual tone matches the tone of the message.

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Identify a company website that in your opinion violates one or more of the principles of good design discussed on page 120–124. Using whatever medium your instructor requests, write a brief analysis of the site (no more than one page), citing specific elements from the piece and support from the chapter.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at **websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that offers advice on any aspect of revising, designing, producing, or proofreading business messages. Write a brief email message to your instructor or a post for your class blog, describing the item that you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from **real-timeupdates.com/bce8**; select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 5, Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Adverbs

Review Section 1.5 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage and then complete the following 15 items. Answers to these exercises appear on page 490.

For the following items, indicate the correct adjective or adverb provided in parentheses.

5-70. Their performance has been (good, well).

5-71. I (sure, surely) do not know how to help you.

5-72. He feels (sick, sickly) again today.

5-73. Customs dogs are chosen because they smell (good, well).

5-74. The redecorated offices look (good, well).

For the following items, provide the correct form of the adverb in parentheses.

5-75. Which of the two programs computes ____________ (fast)?

5-76. Kate has held five jobs over 13 years, and she was ____________ (recently) employed by Graphicon.

5-77. Could they be ____________ (happily) employed than they are now?

5-78. Of the two we have in stock, this model is the ____________ (well) designed.

5-79. Of all the arguments I've ever heard, yours is the ____________ (logically) reasoned.

For the following items, rewrite the sentences to correct double negatives.

5-80. He doesn't seem to have none.

5-81. That machine is scarcely never used.

5-82. They can't get no replacement parts until Thursday.

5-83. It wasn't no different from the first event we promoted.

5-84. We've looked for it, and it doesn't seem to be nowhere.

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

5-85. All too often, whomever leaves the most out of his cost estimate is the one who wins the bid—if you can call it winning.

5-86. Carol Bartz CEO for fourteen years guided Autodesk; from a small company, to it's preeminent position in the computer aided design (cad) software market.

5-87. Shoppers were disinterested in the world-wide Web initially because many hyped services, offered no real cost or convenience advantages over offline stores.

5-88. Different jobs and different customers call for different pricing, estimating, and negotiating strategies.

5-89. Get to know the customer and their expectations, get the customer to talk about their primary use for you're product.

5-90. To homeowners, who feel they have found a competent contractor who has they're best interest's at heart, price will not matter nearly as much.

5-91. If I was you, I would of avoided investing in large conglomerates in light of the collapse of energy trader, Enron Corp., over accounting irregularities.

5-92. Outdoor goods retailer REI has had significant, success with in-store kiosks that let customers choose between several types of merchandise.

5-93. To people in some areas of cyberspace "Advertising" is a four letter word but "Marketing" is perfectly acceptable.

5-94. In any business effort, making money requires planning. Strategic marketing, a good product, good customer service, considerable shrewdness—and much hard work.

5-95. Investors must decide weather to put their capitol into bonds or CDs.

5-96. Running at full capacity, millions of Nike shoes are being produced by manufacturing plants every day.

5-97. Metropolis' stationary has a picture of the Empire state building on it.

5-98. Starbucks are planning to add fruit drinks to their menu in states throughout the south.

5-99. Credit ratings ain't what they used to be.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, abbreviation, number style, vocabulary, and spelling. You will also find errors related to topics in this chapter. For example, look for ways to improve long words and phrases, redundancies, dangling modifiers, camouflaged verbs, and problems with parallelism as you improve this memo. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C) or download the document and make the corrections in your word-processing software.

[blog post title] Ways to improve your response to technology failures

There is always a chance of racing toward a deadline and suddenly having equipment fall. The following includes a few proposed suggestions to help you stave off, and cope with, technical equipment and system failures:

- Stay cool. There are many technical failures so they are commonplace in business; and it is likely that your bosses and co-workers will understand that you're having a prolbem and why.
- Practice preventive maintenance: Use cleaning cloths and sprays regularly, liquids and foods should be kept away from keyboards and printers; and you should make sure systems are shut down when you leave at night.
- It is important for faster repair asistance to promptly report computer failures to Bart Stone assistant director of information services ext. 2238, who will get to your poblem as soon as it is humanly possible for him to do so but you must keep in mind that there are many people demanding his focused attention at any given time.
- If you suspect that a problem may be developing, don't wait until the crucial last moment to call for assistance.
- When a last-minute technical failure of equipment threatens to disrupt your composure you might want to consider taking a walk to calm down.

The last suggestion is perhaps the most important to keep your career on track. Lost tempers; taking out your feelings in violent outbursts, and rude language are threatening to co-workers and could result in a reprimand or other disciplinary action. By calling technical support lines for help, your equipment can stay in good working order and your temper will stay calm.

The timely implemention of repairs is important, so ask your supervisor for a list of support numbers to keep handy. Then, the next time you experience a technology giltch in your equipment or systems, there are going to be quite a few numbers handy for you to call to help you handle it as just another aspect of your business regeem.

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

5-100. Why should you let a first draft "age" for a while before you begin the revision process? [LO-1]

5-101. How do your typeface selections help determine the personality of your documents and messages? [LO-4]

Endnotes

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PART 3 Brief Business Messages

Most of your communication on the job will be through brief messages, from Twitter updates and blog posts to formal letters that might run to several pages. Learning how to write these messages effectively is vital to maintaining productive working relationships with colleagues and customers. Start by adapting what you already know about digital media to the professional challenges of business communication. Then learn specific techniques for crafting routine, positive, negative, and persuasive messages—techniques that will help you in everything from getting a raise to calming an angry customer to promoting your next great idea.

Wong yu liang/Fotolia

6 Crafting Messages for Digital Channels

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Identify the major digital channels used for brief business messages, and describe the nine compositional modes needed for digital media.
2. Describe the use of social networks in business communication.
3. Explain how companies and business professionals can use content-sharing websites.
4. Describe the evolving role of email in business communication, and explain how to adapt the three-step writing process to email messages.
5. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of business messaging, and identify guidelines for effective messaging in the workplace.
6. Describe the use of blogging and microblogging in business communication, and briefly explain how to adapt the three-step process to blogging.
7. Explain how to adapt the three-step writing process to podcasts.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"You're right, this is becoming an issue. Supercharger spots are meant for charging, not parking. Will take action."[1]
—Tweet reply from Tesla CEO Elon Musk

Only minutes after a customer complained on Twitter that some Tesla owners were using the company's charging stations as parking lots and thereby preventing other owners from charging their cars, CEO Elon Musk responded with the above tweet. While it might seem like just one more tweet among the millions posted every day, it represents a profound change in the practice of business communication. First, an individual customer was able to reach out directly to the CEO of a major corporation, which was practically unheard of before social media. Second, the CEO—not an assistant or someone from customer service—responded, and responded almost immediately. Third, the exchange took place entirely in public view, so millions of people could judge the company's response and collectively hold it accountable to take action (which Tesla did in a matter of days).[2]

Kristoffer Tripplaar/Alamy Stock Photo

When Tesla CEO Elon Musk responded within minutes to a customer complaint on Twitter—and then quickly fixed the problem—the exchange demonstrated how powerful social media have become in the world of business communication.

Digital Channels for Business Communication

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Identify the major digital channels used for brief business messages, and describe the nine compositional modes needed for digital media.

Elon Musk's Twitter exchange illustrates how the changes brought about by advances in digital communication go much deeper than simply offering new ways to send and receive messages. As Chapter 1 notes, these technologies have redefined the relationships between companies and their stakeholders in a fundamental way. Digital channels dominate business communication today, and using these platforms effectively will be vital to your success.

MEDIA CHOICES FOR BRIEF MESSAGES

The range of options for short business messages continues to grow with innovations in digital and social media.

Individuals and companies have a broad range of options for sending brief messages (from one or two sentences up to several pages long), including the following:

- Social networks
- Content-sharing sites
- Email
- Messaging
- Blogging and microblogging
- Podcasting

This chapter covers all of these media, and Chapters 10 and 11 explore two other important digital channels: conventional websites and wikis.

As this list suggests, businesses use many of the same tools you use for personal communication. In general, companies are quick to jump on any communication platform where consumers are likely to congregate or that promises more efficient internal or external communication.

Even with the widespread use of digital formats, printed memos and letters still play an important role in business communication.

Although most of your business communication is likely to be via digital means, don't automatically dismiss the benefits of printed messages. Here are several situations in which you should use a printed message over digital alternatives:

- When you want to make a formal impression
- When you are legally required to provide information in printed form
- When you want to stand out from the flood of digital messages
- When you need a permanent, unchangeable, or secure record

Obviously, if you can't reach a particular audience through digital channels, you'll also need to use a printed message. Appendix A offers guidelines on formatting printed memos and letters.

COMPOSITIONAL MODES FOR DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

As you complete assignments in this course, focus on the principles of effective communication and the fundamentals of good writing, rather than the technical details of any particular digital platform.

As you practice using digital media in this course, focus on the principles of effective communication and the fundamentals of good writing, rather than on the specific details of any one medium or system.[3] Fortunately, with a few minor adjustments, your skills will transfer from one system to another without much trouble.

Communicating successfully with digital media requires a wide range of writing approaches.

You can succeed with written communication in virtually all digital media by using one of nine *compositional modes*, each of which is well-suited to particular communication goals:

- **Conversations.** Although they take place via writing, some forms of digital communication function more like real-time conversations than the sharing of written documents. The section on messaging (see page 148) explores this important and ever-expanding communication format.
- **Comments and critiques.** One of the most powerful aspects of social media is the opportunity for interested parties to express opinions and provide feedback, whether it's leaving comments on a blog post or reviewing products on an e-commerce site. Sharing helpful tips and insightful commentary is also a great way to build your

personal brand. To be an effective commenter, focus on short chunks of information that a broad spectrum of other site visitors will find helpful. Rants, insults, jokes, and blatant self-promotion are usually of little benefit to other visitors.

- **Orientations.** The ability to help people find their way through an unfamiliar system or subject is a valuable writing skill and a talent that readers greatly appreciate. Unlike summaries (see the next item), orientations don't give away the key points in the collection of information, but rather tell readers where to find those points. Writing effective orientations can be a delicate balancing act because you need to know the material well enough to guide others through it while being able to step back and view it from the inexperienced perspective of a "newbie."

Writing orientations that help people find their way through a subject or system is a valuable skill.

- **Summaries.** At the beginning of an article or webpage, a summary functions as a miniature version of the document, giving readers all the key points while skipping over details. At the end of an article or webpage, a summary functions as a review, reminding readers of the key points they've just read.
- **Reference materials.** One of the greatest benefits of the Internet is providing vast quantities of reference materials—numerical or textual information that people typically don't read in a linear way but rather search through to find particular data points, trends, or other details. One of the challenges of writing reference material is that you can't always know how readers will want to access it. Making the information accessible via search engines is an important step. However, readers don't always know which search terms will yield the best results, so consider including an orientation and organize the material in logical ways, with clear headings that help people who want to browse through it.
- **Narratives.** The storytelling techniques covered in Chapter 3 (see page 79) can be effective in a wide variety of situations, from company histories to training to product demonstrations. Narratives work best when they have an intriguing beginning that piques readers' curiosity, a middle section that moves quickly through the challenges that an individual or company faced, and an inspiring or instructive ending that gives readers information they can apply in their own lives and jobs.
- **Teasers.** Teasers intentionally withhold key pieces of information as a way to pull readers or listeners into a story or other document. Teasers are widely used in marketing and sales messages, such as a short message on the outside of an envelope that promises important information on the inside. In digital media, the space limitations and URL linking capabilities of Twitter and other microblogging systems make them a natural tool for the teaser approach. Be sure that the *payoff*, the information a teaser links to, is valuable and legitimate. You'll quickly lose credibility if readers think they are being tricked into clicking through to information they don't really want. (*Tweetables* are Twitter-ready bites of information extracted from blog posts or other messages. They often serve as teasers, although a series of them can make an effective summary as well.)

Teasers are short messages that entice people to want to read a longer message or document.

- **Status updates and announcements.** If you use social media frequently, much of your writing will involve status updates and announcements (see Figure 6.1 on the next page). However, don't post trivial information that only you are likely to find interesting. Post updates that readers will find useful, and include only the information they need.
- **Tutorials.** Given the community nature of social media, the purpose of many messages is to share how-to advice. Becoming known as a reliable expert is a great way to build customer loyalty to your company while enhancing your own personal value.

Most of these modes of writing can be useful in offline, nondigital communication as well, so they are great skills to have in your communication toolbox.

CREATING CONTENT FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media are public or private systems that help users connect, interact, and share information. Facebook and Twitter are perhaps the two best-known social media platforms, but social functionality is built into a wide variety of communication systems, from YouTube to blogs.

Figure 6.1 Compositional Modes: Status Updates and Announcements
Contests, such as this one featuring Fender musical equipment, are a popular message form on Facebook and other social media.
Source: Courtesy Fender Musical Instruments Corporation.

Writing for social media requires a different approach than writing for traditional media.

The social component of social media redefines the traditional sender-receiver relationship, so writing for social media requires a different approach than for traditional media. Whether you're writing a blog or scripting a product demonstration video for YouTube, consider these tips for creating successful content for social media:

- **Support the ways your readers want to consume information.** One of the reasons for the explosion of digital, social, and mobile media options in recent years is that no single approach works best for all readers. Some are comfortable reading long articles and documents, whereas others prefer brief summaries, videos, podcasts, or other formats. Many people engage in "content snacking," consuming small pieces of information, often from multiple sources in rapid succession, and bypassing larger documents that might require more than a few minutes or even a few seconds to read.[4] To reach all your target readers, you might need to change how you organize and distribute messages. For instance, rather than writing a single, long report on a complicated topic, you might want to write a teaser on Twitter that links through to an orientation or summary on your blog, which then offers a download of the full report or links to reference information on a website.
- **Provide information that your followers are likely to share.** One of the biggest benefits of social media is the "message boost" you can get from having the people who follow you share your content with the people who follow *them*. When you're choosing what to post, emphasize material that your followers will think is valuable enough to pass along.[5]

A conversational style is an essential aspect of social media writing.

- **Remember that it's a conversation, not a lecture or a sales pitch.** One of the great appeals of social media is the feeling of conversation, of people talking *with* one another instead of one person talking *at* everyone else. As more and more people gain a voice in the marketplace, companies that try to maintain the old "we talk, you listen" mindset are likely to be ignored in the social media landscape.
- **Write informally but not carelessly.** Write as a human being with a unique, personal voice. However, don't take this as a license to get sloppy. No one wants to slog through misspelled words and half-baked sentences to find your message, and poor writing reflects badly on you and your company.

- **Create concise, specific, and informative headlines.** In the face of content snacking and information overload, headlines are extremely important in social media. Avoid the temptation to engage in clever wordplay when writing headlines and teasers. Readers don't want to spend time figuring out what your witty headlines mean. Search engines won't know what they mean either, so fewer people will find your content. Headline space is precious real estate, so focus these words on the tangible benefits each post offers your readers.[6]

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- **Get involved and stay involved.** Social media make some businesspeople nervous because they don't permit a high level of control over messages. However, don't hide from criticism. Take the opportunity to correct misinformation or explain how mistakes will be fixed.
- **Be transparent and honest.** Honesty is always essential, but the social media environment is unforgiving. Attempts to twist the truth, withhold information, or hide behind a virtual barricade only invite attack in the "public square" of social media.
- **Think before you post!** Careless decisions on social media can have damaging consequences to companies, careers, relationships, and reputations. Remember that you share the responsibility of keeping your company's and your customers' data private and secure. Assume that every message you send in any digital medium will be stored forever and might be read by people far beyond your original audience. Ask yourself two questions: "Would I say this to my audience face to face?" and "Am I comfortable with this message becoming a permanent part of my personal and professional communication history?"

A momentary lapse of concentration or judgment while using social media can cause tremendous damage to your company or your career.

OPTIMIZING CONTENT FOR MOBILE DEVICES

Chapters 4 and 5 offer tips on writing and formatting messages for mobile devices. While keeping in mind the limitations of small screens and alternative input methods, look for opportunities to take advantage of mobile-specific capabilities via apps and mobile-friendly websites. Mobile expands your options as a content creator, and it gives your audience members a wider range of more engaging ways to consume your content:

Mobile offers a range of exciting ways to enhance the audience experience.

- **Location-aware content and services.** Thanks to the GPS location-tracking feature available in many mobile devices, businesses can customize content and services based on users' current geographic locations.
- **Augmented reality.** Superimposing data on live camera images can help workers and consumers with a variety of mobile tasks, from retail shopping to training to on-site repair and maintenance work (see Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2 Augmented Reality
The augmented reality feature in Panasonic's computer-integrated manufacturing software is a great example of using augmented reality for business communication. By simply pointing a mobile device at a machine, technicians can get detailed information needed for maintenance and repair by tapping the text labels that pop up on screen.
Source: Photo courtesy of Panasonic.

- **Wearable technology.** From virtual-reality goggles to smartwatches to body-movement sensors, wearable technology pushes the radical connectivity of mobile to the next level. Some of these devices work as auxiliary screens and controls for other mobile devices, but others are meant for independent use. One of the key promises of wearable technology is simplifying and enhancing everyday tasks for consumers and employees alike.[7]
- **Mobile blogging.** Smartphones and tablets are ideal for mobile blogs, sometimes referred to as *moblogs*. The mobile capability is great for workers whose jobs keep them on the move and for special event coverage such as live blogging at trade shows and industry conventions.
- **Mobile podcasting.** Similarly, smartphone-based podcasting tools make it easy to record audio on the go and post finished podcasts to your blog or website.
- **Cloud-based services.** Mobile communication is ideal for cloud-based services—digital services that rely on resources stored in the cloud.

Social Networks

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe the use of social networks in business communication.

Social networks, online services that help people and organizations form connections and share information, have become a major force in both internal and external business communication in recent years. In addition to Facebook, a variety of public and private social networks are used by businesses and professionals. They can be grouped into three categories:

Business communicators make use of a wide range of specialized and private social networks, in addition to public networks such as Facebook.

- **Public, general-purpose networks.** Facebook is the largest and best-known of these networks.
- **Public, specialized networks.** In contrast to Facebook's universal approach, many public networks focus on the needs and interests of one specific audience, such as entrepreneurs, small-business owners, professionals in a particular industry, product enthusiasts, or music fans. The most widely known of these is LinkedIn, with its emphasis on career- and sales-related networking.
- **Private networks.** Some companies have built private social networks for internal use. The Mexican building materials company Cemex keeps its 40,000-plus global employees connected through a private collaboration and networking system called Cemex Shift, for example.[8]

MOBILE APP
Facebook for Every Phone lets people who don't have smartphones access the popular social network on their feature phones.

Regardless of the purpose and audience, social networks are most beneficial when all participants give and receive information, advice, support, and introductions—just as in offline social interaction. The following two sections describe how social networks are used in business communication and offer advice on using these platforms successfully.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION USES OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

With their ability to reach virtually unlimited numbers of people through a variety of digital formats, social networks are a great fit for many business communication needs. Here are some of the key applications of social networks for internal and external business communication:

Social networks can perform a wide variety of business communication functions.

- **Integrating company workforces.** Just as public networks can bring friends and family together, internal social networks can help companies grow closer, including helping new employees navigate their way through the organization, finding experts, mentors, and other important contacts; encouraging workforces to jell after reorganizations or mergers; and overcoming structural barriers in communication channels, bypassing the formal communication system to deliver information where it is needed in a timely fashion.
- **Fostering collaboration.** Networks can play a major role in collaboration by identifying the best people, both inside the company and at other companies, to collaborate on projects; finding pockets of knowledge and expertise within the organization;

giving meeting or seminar participants a way to meet before an event and to maintain relationships after an event; accelerating the development of teams by helping members get to know one another and to identify individual areas of expertise; and sharing information throughout the organization.

- **Building communities.** Social networks are a natural tool for bringing together *communities of practice* (people who engage in similar work) and *communities of interest* (people who share enthusiasm for a particular product or activity). Large and geographically dispersed companies can benefit greatly from communities of practice that connect experts who may work in different divisions or different countries. Communities of interest that form around a specific product are sometimes called **brand communities**, and nurturing these communities can be a vital business communication task.

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Socializing a brand is becoming an increasingly important element of marketing and public relations strategies.

Smart businesses use social networks to listen to stakeholders and their concerns.

- **Socializing brands and companies.** According to one survey of company executives, *socialization* now accounts for more than half of a company's or brand's global reputation.[9] **Brand socialization** is a measure of how effectively a company engages with its various online stakeholders in a mutually beneficial exchange of information.
- **Understanding target markets.** With hundreds of millions of people expressing themselves via social media, you can be sure that smart companies are listening. In addition, a number of tools now exist to gather market intelligence from social media more or less automatically. For example, tools for *sentiment analysis* (also known as opinion mining) and *reputation analysis* assess the reputations of companies and individuals, measure the emotional quality of online conversations, identify outrage "hot spots" on social media, and uncover trending topics of interest.[10]
- **Recruiting employees and business partners.** Companies use social networks to find potential employees, short-term contractors, subject matter experts, product and service suppliers, and business partners. A key advantage here is that these introductions are made via trusted connections in a professional network. On LinkedIn, for example, members can recommend each other based on current or past business relationships, which helps remove the uncertainty of initiating business relationships with complete strangers.
- **Connecting with sales prospects.** Salespeople on networks such as LinkedIn can use their network connections to identify potential buyers and then to ask for introductions through those shared connections. Sales networking can reduce *cold calling*, or telephoning potential customers out of the blue—a practice that few people on either end of the conversation find pleasant.
- **Supporting customers.** Customer service is another fundamental area of business communication that has been revolutionized by social media. *Social customer service* involves using social networks and other social media tools to give customers a more convenient way to get help from the company and to help each other.
- **Extending the organization.** Social networking is also fueling the growth of *networked organizations*, sometimes known as virtual organizations, where companies supplement the talents of their employees with services from one or more external partners, such as a design lab, a manufacturing firm, or a sales and distribution company.
- **Crowdspeaking.** Companies, nonprofits, musicians, authors, and others can use *crowdspeaking* to "boost a signal" by taking advantage of the *social reach* of their supporters. By recruiting supporters to spread their messages, communicators can reach hundreds or thousands of times as many people as they could on their own.[11]

MOBILE APP

The social media management app **SocialOomph** lets you monitor multiple social media sites, schedule updates, and perform other time-saving tasks.

STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

Social networks offer attractive opportunities for business communication, but they must be used with the same care as other professional media. Follow these guidelines to make the most of social networks for both personal branding and company communication:[12]

Successful communication on social networks starts with choosing the best compositional mode for each message.

- **Choose the best compositional mode for each message, purpose, and network.** As you visit various social networks, take some time to observe the variety of message types you see in different parts of each website. For example, the informal status update mode works well for Facebook posts but would be less effective for company overviews and mission statements.
- **Offer valuable content to members of your online communities.** People don't join social networks to be sales targets. They join looking for connections and information. *Content marketing* is the practice of providing free information that is valuable to community members and also helps a company build closer ties with current and potential customers.[13]
- **Join existing conversations.** Search for online conversations that are already taking place. Answer questions, solve problems, offer advice, and respond to rumors and misinformation.

A hub is a central online location such a website or a blog that unifies your online presence.

- **Anchor your online presence in your hub.** Although it's important to join conversations and be visible where your stakeholders are active, it's equally important to anchor your presence at your own central *hub*—a web presence you own and control. This can be a combination of a conventional website, a blog, and a company-sponsored online community, for example.[14] Use the hub to connect the various pieces of your online "self" (as an individual or a company) and help people to find and follow you.
- **Facilitate community building.** Make it easy for customers and other audiences to connect with the company and with each other. For example, you can use the group feature on Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social networks to create and foster special-interest groups within your networks. Groups are a great way to connect people who are interested in specific topics, such as owners of a particular product.

Products can be promoted on social networks, but it needs to be done in a low-key, indirect way.

- **Restrict conventional promotional efforts to the right time and right place.** Persuasive communication efforts are still valid for specific communication tasks, such as regular advertising and the product information pages on a website, but efforts to inject blatant "salespeak" into social networking conversations are usually not welcome.
- **Maintain a consistent personality.** Each social network is a unique environment with particular norms of communication.[15] For example, as a strictly business-oriented network, LinkedIn has a more formal "vibe" than Facebook, which caters to both consumers and businesses. Adapt to the expectations of each network, but be sure to maintain a consistent personality across all the networks in which you are active.[16]

See "Writing Promotional Messages for Social Media" in Chapter 9 (pages 235–237) for more tips on writing messages for social networks and other social media.

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Content-Sharing Sites

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain how companies and business professionals can use content-sharing websites.

Social networks allow members to share information and media items as part of the networking experience, but a variety of systems have been designed specifically for sharing content.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT SITES

YouTube and other user-generated content sites are now important business communication channels.

YouTube, Flickr, Yelp, and other **user-generated content** (UGC) **sites**, in which users rather than website owners contribute most or all of the content, have become serious business tools. On YouTube, for example, companies post everything from product demonstrations and TV commercials to company profiles and technical support explanations. A *branded channel* on YouTube lets a company organize all its videos in one place, making it easy for visitors to browse the selection or subscribe to get automatic updates of future videos.

Moreover, the business communication value of sites such as YouTube goes beyond the mere ability to deliver content. The social aspects of these sites—including the ability to vote for, comment on, and share material—encourage enthusiasts to spread the word about the companies and products they endorse.[17] Companies can also encourage UGC submissions on their own websites or through other social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook. Burberry, Starbucks, and Belkin are among the companies that generated thousands of responses when they invited customers to submit photos and other media.[18]

CONTENT CURATION SITES

In many fields of business, so much original content is already available that sometimes the biggest value a communicator can offer audiences is guiding them to the best of what's out there, rather than creating new content. Similar to what museum curators do when they decide which pieces in their collection to display, business communicators can find and share valuable material with the audiences through **content curation**.

Content curation is the process of collecting and presenting information on a particular topic in a way that makes it convenient for target readers.

At its simplest, content curation can involve sharing links to useful articles or videos via blogs or social media accounts. Companies can also set up dedicated websites that publish links to original content in a variety of topic categories. The authors' Business Communication Headline News (**bchn.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**), for instance, is one of the earliest examples of content curation in the field of business communication. As an alternative, a number of websites offer ready-made content curation solutions. Pinterest and Scoop.it!, for example, make it easy to assemble attractive online magazines or portfolios on specific topics.

Curating content for a target audience can be a great way to add value and stand out as an expert in your field, but content curators need to be aware of two key ethical concerns. First, you must not plagiarize, which is presenting someone else's content as your own. Second, you are promoting yourself as an expert when you curate content, and people will expect you to do a competent job of finding and filtering materials. As with any communication task, make sure you understand the needs of your target audience so that you can provide the best material possible to meet their needs.[19]

COMMUNITY Q&A SITES

Community Q&A sites, on which visitors answer questions posted by other visitors, are a contemporary twist on the early ethos of computer networking, which was people helping each other. (Groups of like-minded people connected online long before the World Wide Web was even created.) Community Q&A sites include dedicated customer support communities such as those hosted on Get Satisfaction and public sites such as Quora and Yahoo! Answers.

Community Q&A sites offer great opportunities for building your personal brand by demonstrating expertise and a helpful attitude.

Responding to questions on Q&A sites can be a great way to build your personal brand, demonstrate your company's commitment to customer service, and counter misinformation about your company and its products. Keep in mind that when you respond to an individual query on a community Q&A site, you are also "responding in advance" to every person who comes to the site with the same question in the future. In other words, you are writing a type of reference material in addition to corresponding with the original questioner, so keep the long time frame and wider audience in mind.

Email

Email has been an important communication tool for many companies for several decades, and in the beginning it offered a huge advantage in speed and efficiency over the media it replaced (usually printed and faxed messages). Over the years, email began to be used for many communication tasks simply because it was the only widely available digital medium for written messages and millions of users were comfortable with it. However, workgroup messaging and other tools are taking over various tasks for which they are better suited than email is.

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Describe the evolving role of email in business communication, and explain how to adapt the three-step writing process to email messages.

(*continued on page 146*)

BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS INNOVATING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Companies in virtually every industry use social media and continue to experiment with new ways to connect with customers and other stakeholders. From offering helpful tips on using products to helping customers meet each other, these companies show the enormous range of possibilities that new media continue to bring to business communication.

Enterprise Social Networking

The social networking concepts that keep you connected with friends and family are widely used in business today. *Enterprise social networks* are closed digital communities that connect employees within a company (and in some cases, selected external business partners). They often include a variety of communication and collaboration tools as well, including workgroup messaging, online meeting functions, and access to work files and other shared resources.

Cathy Yeulet/123RF

Monkey Business/Fotolia

Tweetups

A powerful capability of online social media is bringing people with similar interests together offline. *Tweetups*, for example, are in-person meetings planned and organized over Twitter.

Value-Added Content via Social Networks

Thousands of companies are on social networking platforms, but blatantly promotional posts are not always welcome by fans and followers. Instead, companies such as Whole Foods use social networks to share information of interest, such as recipes and nutritional advice.

Courtesy of Whole Foods Market, "Whole Foods Market" is a registered trademark of Whole Foods Market IP, L.P.

Community Building via Social Media

Customer-affiliation groups can be an effective way to build stakeholder support for a company and its products. Indian Motorcycles used this Google+ post to spur interest in its rider groups.

Indian Motorcycle® is a registered trademark of Indian Motorcycle, LLC

Social Video

As social networking continues to expand, much of the content shared through online communities is shifting from text-dominant messages to video. Social video has become particularly important in consumer communication, but businesses also use it for employee recruiting, technical support, training, community outreach, and other purposes.

Chaay_Tee/Shutterstock

Employee Recruiting

Zappos is one of the many companies now using Twitter as a recruiting tool. The company's @InsideZappos account gives potential employees an insider's look at the company's offbeat and upbeat culture.

Courtesy of Zappos

The overuse and misuse of email has made it less appealing for many professionals.

In addition to the widespread availability of better alternatives for many communication purposes, the indiscriminate use of email has lowered its appeal in the eyes of many professionals. In a sense, email is too easy to use—with little effort you can send low-value messages to multiple recipients or trigger long message chains that become impossible to follow as people chime in along the way. And because it is such a general-purpose tool, email gets used for everything from critically important messages to automated updates and confirmations with little or no value. As a consequence, some professionals get inundated with hundreds of email messages a day.

Email also suffers from an enormous problem with *spam* (unsolicited bulk email) and security risks such as *computer viruses* and *phishing* (fraudulent messages that prompt unwary users to divulge sensitive information or grant access to protected networks). Spam accounts for roughly half of all email and requires great effort to keep it from flooding users' inboxes.[20] Most systems use spam and threat filters, but these filters are never 100 percent accurate and can also reject messages that are legitimate.

Even with its drawbacks, email is an important communication channel because it is universal; well-suited for private, short to medium-length messages; and not as intrusive as instant messaging systems.

Even with these drawbacks, email still has compelling advantages that will keep it in steady use in many companies. First, email is universal. Anybody with an email address can reach anybody else with an email address, no matter which systems the senders and receivers are on. Second, email is still the best medium for many private, short to medium-length messages, particularly when the exchange is limited to two people. Unlike with microblogs or most messaging systems, for instance, midsize messages are easy to compose and easy to read on email. Third, email's noninstantaneous nature is an advantage when used properly. Email lets senders compose substantial messages in private and on their own schedule, and it lets recipients read those messages at their leisure.

PLANNING EMAIL MESSAGES

Do your part to stem the flood of email by making sure you don't send unnecessary messages.

The solution to email overload starts in the planning step, by making sure every message has a useful, business-related purpose. Also, be aware that many companies now have formal email policies that specify how employees can use email, including restrictions against using company email service for personal messages, sending confidential information, or sending material that might be deemed objectionable. In addition, many employers now monitor email, either automatically with software programmed to look for sensitive content or manually via security staff actually reading selected email messages. Regardless of formal policies, though, every email user has a responsibility to avoid actions that could cause trouble, from opening virus-infected attachments to sending inappropriate photographs.

Even with fairly short messages, spend a moment or two on the message-planning tasks described in Chapter 3: analyzing the situation, gathering necessary information for your readers, and organizing your message. You'll save time in the long run because you will craft a more effective message on the first attempt. Your readers will get the information they need and won't have to generate follow-up messages asking for clarification or additional information.

WRITING EMAIL MESSAGES

Business email messages are more formal than the email messages you send to family and friends.

When you approach email writing on the job, recognize that business email is a more formal medium than you are probably accustomed to with personal communication (see Figure 6.3). The expectations of writing quality for business email are higher than for personal email, and the consequences of bad writing or poor judgment can be much more serious. For example, email messages and other digital documents have the same legal weight as printed documents, and they are often used as evidence in lawsuits and criminal investigations.[21]

The subject line is critical because it often determines whether and when recipients will open a message.

The email subject line might seem like a small detail, but it is actually one of the most important parts of an email message because it helps recipients decide which messages to read and when to read them. To capture your audience's attention, make your subject lines informative and compelling. Go beyond simply describing or classifying your message; use

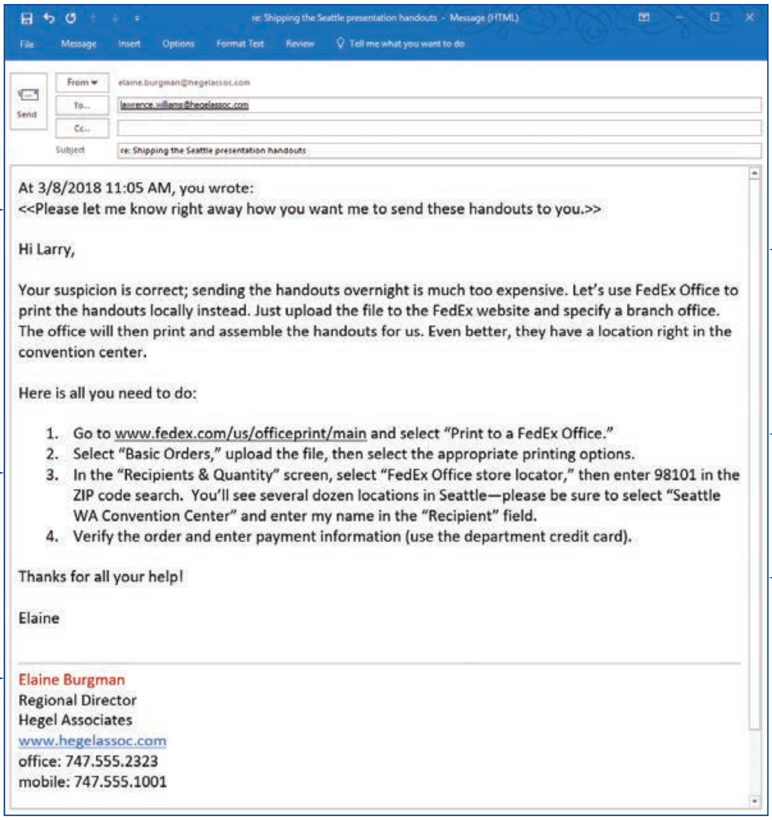

Figure 6.3 **Email for Business Communication**

In this response to an email query from a colleague, Elaine Burgman takes advantage of her email system's features to create an efficient and effective message.

Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation.

the opportunity to build interest with keywords, quotations, directions, or questions.[22] For example, "July sales results" may accurately describe the content of a message, but "July sales results: good news and bad news" is more intriguing. Readers will want to know why some news is good and some is bad.

In addition, many email programs display the first few words or lines of incoming messages, even before the recipient opens them. As noted by the social media public relations expert Steve Rubel, you can "tweetify" the opening lines of your email messages to make them stand out. In other words, choose the first few words carefully to grab your reader's attention.[23] Think of the first sentence as an extension of your subject line.

COMPLETING EMAIL MESSAGES

Think twice before hitting Send. A simple mistake in your content or distribution can cause major headaches.

Particularly for important messages, taking a few moments to revise and proofread might save you hours of headaches and damage control. Also, go for simplicity when it comes to producing your email messages. A clean, easily readable font, in black on a white background, is sufficient for nearly all email messages. Take advantage of your email system's ability to include an **email signature**, a small file that automatically includes such items as your full name, title, company, and contact information at the end of your messages.

When you're ready to distribute your message, pause to verify what you're doing before you send it. Make sure you've included everyone necessary—and no one else. Don't use Reply All when you mean to select Reply. The difference could be embarrassing or even career threatening. Don't include people in the cc (courtesy copy or "carbon copy," historically) or bcc (blind courtesy copy) fields unless you know how these features work. (Everyone who receives the message can see who is on the cc line but not who is on the bcc line.) Also, don't set the message priority to "high" or "urgent" unless your message is truly urgent. And if you intend to include an attachment, be sure that it is indeed attached.

TABLE 6.1 Tips for Effective Email Messages

Tip	Why It's Important
When you request information or action, make it clear what you're asking for, why it's important, and how soon you need it; don't make your reader write back for details.	People will be tempted to ignore your messages if they're not clear about what you want or how soon you want it.
When responding to a request, either paraphrase the request or include enough of the original message to remind the reader what you're replying to.	Some businesspeople get hundreds of email messages a day and may need reminding what your specific response is about.
If possible, avoid sending long, complex messages via email.	Long messages are easier to read as attached reports or web content.
Adjust the level of formality to the message and the audience.	Overly formal messages to colleagues can be perceived as stuffy and distant; overly informal messages to customers or top executives can be perceived as disrespectful.
Activate a signature file, which automatically pastes your contact information into every message you create.	A signature saves you the trouble of retyping vital information and ensures that recipients know how to reach you through other means.
Don't let unread messages pile up in your in-box.	You'll miss important information and create the impression that you're ignoring other people.
Never type in all caps.	ALL CAPS ARE INTERPRETED AS SCREAMING.
Don't overformat your messages with background colors, multicolored type, unusual fonts, and so on.	Such messages can be difficult and annoying to read on screen.
Remember that messages can be forwarded anywhere and saved forever.	Don't let a moment of anger or poor judgment haunt you for the rest of your career.
Use the *return receipt requested* feature only for the most critical messages.	This feature triggers a message back to you whenever someone receives or opens your message; many consider this an invasion of privacy.
Make sure your computer has up-to-date virus protection.	One of the worst breaches of "netiquette" is infecting other computers because you haven't bothered to protect your own system.
Pay attention to grammar, spelling, and capitalization.	Some people don't think email needs formal rules, but careless messages make you look unprofessional and can annoy readers.
Use acronyms sparingly.	Shorthand such as IMHO (in my humble opinion) and LOL (laughing out loud) can be useful in informal correspondence with colleagues, but avoid using them in more formal messages.
Assume that recipients may read your messages on small mobile screens.	Email is more difficult to read on small screens, so don't burden recipients with long, complicated messages.

Table 6.1 offers a number of helpful tips for effective email; for the latest information on using email in business, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Chapter 6.

Messaging

5 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe the advantages and disadvantages of business messaging, and identify guidelines for effective messaging in the workplace.

A variety of digital messaging solutions are now available, from text messaging on mobile devices to private group messaging systems.

In contrast to email, which is a digital alternative to printed memos and letters, messaging is best thought of as a digital alternative to live voice conversation. Messaging technologies include messaging apps on mobile phones, computer-based instant messaging (IM) systems, online chat systems (such as those used by many companies for customer support), and workplace or workgroup messaging systems.

Messaging is a diverse category, and various systems offer a variety of capabilities. They range from semipublic systems such as standard text messaging on mobile phones, in which anyone with your phone number can send you a message, to private systems that are closed to anyone outside of invited members. The popular Slack and other enterprise or workgroup messaging systems are catching on with many businesses because they do a better job of enabling and capturing the communication flows that teams, departments, and other groups need in order to work together successfully. Messaging is also a feature available on many collaboration platforms and social networks and within a number of mobile apps. And messaging isn't strictly limited to human-to-human exchanges. Automated messaging bots can participate in simple conversational exchanges and assist users with various business tasks (see page 181).

THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF MESSAGING

Messaging offers several key benefits over email for specific communication purposes, so it's not surprising that it has been steadily replacing email in many applications. First, because it mimics voice conversation to a high degree, it is better suited to back-and-forth exchanges than email and other digital formats. If you've ever tried to carry on a conversation via email or Facebook comments, you know how agonizingly slow it can be to wait for the other person to respond. Second, with closed, private systems, administrators can choose who is allowed to participate, which means they can block out all outside distractions and threats. Unlike email, which has no centralized control mechanism on the Internet, these private messaging systems spare users from many of the overload problems and security threats that plague mail. Third, the instantaneous nature of messaging makes it the best choice when senders want messages to be seen and acted on immediately. (Email systems can be set up with alerts to tell receivers about incoming messages, but the email messages still need to be opened before they can be read.)

Messaging offers key benefits over email:
- The ability to mimic live conversation
- Improved security
- Instantaneous delivery

Messaging does have several potential drawbacks. First, for real-time conversational exchange, users of all systems are at the mercy of other users' typing speed and accuracy. Second, messaging systems vary widely in their levels of security and privacy, and public systems aren't as secure as private, enterprise-level systems. Third, like email, messaging is a lean medium with less ability to convey nuances and nonverbal signals, which increases the chances of misinterpretation.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

The security worries behind the surge in business messaging

Find out why mobile messaging apps can be security risks. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESSFUL MESSAGING

Although messages are often conceived, written, and sent within a matter of seconds, you can still apply key principles of the three-step process:

- **Planning instant messages.** While you may not deliberately plan every individual statement you make or question you pose, take a moment to plan the overall exchange. If you're requesting something, think through what you need and the most effective way to ask for it. If someone is asking you for something, consider his or her needs and your ability to meet them before you respond. And although you rarely need to organize instant messages in the sense of creating an outline, try to deliver information in a coherent, complete way that minimizes the number of individual messages required.
- **Writing instant messages.** As with email, the appropriate writing style for business messaging is more formal than the style you may be accustomed to with personal IM or text messaging. You should generally avoid acronyms (such as FWIW for "for what it's worth" or HTH for "hope that helps") except when communicating with close colleagues. In the exchange in Figure 6.4, notice how the participants communicate quickly and rather informally but still maintain good etiquette and a professional tone. This style is even more important if you or your staff use messaging to communicate with customers and other external audiences.
- **Completing instant messages.** One of the biggest attractions of messaging is that the completing step is so easy. You don't have to produce the message in the usual sense, and distribution is as simple as tapping a button on screen. However, don't skip over the revising and proofreading tasks. Quickly scan each message before you send it, to make sure you don't have any missing or misspelled words and that your message is clear and complete. Keep in mind that many corporate messaging systems store every message and can make them easily searchable, too, so even brief messages that you send in a hurry become part of a permanent record.

View important messaging exchanges as conversations with specific goals.

Regardless of the system you're using, you can make messaging more efficient and effective by following these tips:

- Be thoughtful and courteous. People can be overloaded by messages just as easily as they can by emails and social media updates, so don't waste time with chatter. When

Successful messaging starts with being thoughtful and courteous.

Eduardo Lopes – Hi Marcy, do you have a second?	Lopes ask whether DeLong is available for a chat, rather than launching right into his discussion on the assumption that she can chat this minute.
Marcy DeLong – You bet. What's up?	
Eduardo Lopes – I have a favor to ask, and I'm afraid I'm on a tight deadline. We need to cut the Qualcomm bid by 5%. Can we reduce the consulting time by 80 or 100 hrs?	He makes his request clearly and succinctly.
Marcy DeLong – That's a big chunk! I'm not sure we can cut that much, but I'll give it a try.	DeLong expresses skepticism, which helps to set the expectations for what she can deliver. Note how her tone remains positive, however.
Eduardo Lopes – I really appreciate it. Any chance you can get to it by noon my time?	He completes his request by provide a deadline. Note how he phrases it as a question, which is less jarring than a demand.
Marcy DeLong – No problem. I'll send you a revised bid sheet in an hour. Wish me luck...	She concludes with a positive response while gently reiterating the difficulty of the task.

Figure 6.4 Instant Messaging for Business Communication
Instant messaging is widely used in business, but you should not use the same informal style of communication you probably use for IM with your friends and family.

you want to start an exchange, ask the other person whether he or she is free to chat, just as you would knock on someone's office door and ask whether this is a good time to talk. Introduce yourself if you're messaging someone in your company for the first time.

- Unless a messaging conversation or meeting is scheduled, make yourself unavailable when you need to focus on other work.
- If you're not on a secure system, don't send confidential information.
- Be extremely careful about sending personal messages. They clutter communication channels meant for business, and they can embarrass recipients if they pop up at awkward moments.
- Don't use messaging for impromptu meetings if you can't verify that everyone concerned is available.
- Don't use messaging for lengthy, complex messages; email and other formats are better for those.
- Try to avoid carrying on multiple conversations at once in order to minimize the chance of sending messages to the wrong people or making one person wait while you tend to another conversation.
- Follow all security guidelines designed to keep your company's information and systems safe from attack.

Blogging and Microblogging

6 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Describe the use of blogging and microblogging in business communication, and briefly explain how to adapt the three-step process to blogging.

Writing in a personal, authentic voice is key to attracting and keeping blog readers.

Blogs, online journals that are easier to personalize and update than conventional websites, have become a major force in business communication. Millions of business-oriented blogs are now in operation, and blogs have become an important source of information for consumers and professionals alike.[24] Good business blogs and microblogs pay close attention to several important elements:

- **Communicating with personal style and an authentic voice.** Business messages designed for large audiences are often carefully scripted and written in a "corporate voice" that is impersonal and objective. In contrast, successful business blogs are usually written by individuals and exhibit their personal style. Audiences seem to relate to this fresh approach, and it can encourage closer emotional bonds with the blogger's organization as a result.
- **Delivering new information quickly.** Blogging tools let you post new material as soon as you create or find it. This feature not only allows you to respond quickly when needed—such as during a corporate crisis—but also lets your audiences know that

active communication is taking place. Blogs that don't offer a steady stream of new and interesting content are quickly ignored in today's online environment.

- **Choosing topics of peak interest to audiences.** Successful blogs cover topics that readers care about, and they emphasize useful information while downplaying product promotion.[25] These topics don't necessarily need to be earthshaking or cutting edge—they just need to be things that matter to target readers.
- **Encouraging audiences to join the conversation.** Not all blogs invite comments, but comments can be a valuable source of news, information, and insights. To protect against comments that are not helpful or appropriate, many bloggers review all comments and post only the most helpful or interesting ones.

UNDERSTANDING THE BUSINESS APPLICATIONS OF BLOGGING

Blogs are a potential solution whenever you have a continuing stream of information to share with an online audience—and particularly when you want the audience to have the opportunity to respond. Here are some of the many ways businesses are using blogs for internal and external communication:[26]

The business applications of blogs include a wide range of internal and external communication tasks.

- **Anchoring the social media presence.** As noted on page 142, the multiple threads of any social media program should be anchored in a central hub the company or individual owns and controls. Blogs make an ideal social media hub.
- **Project management and team communication.** Using blogs is a good way to keep project teams up to date, particularly when team members are geographically dispersed.
- **Internal news and employee engagement.** Internal blogs can give senior managers a channel through which they can communicate with employees and give employees the chance to offer comments and ask questions.
- **Customer support.** Customer support blogs answer questions, offer tips and advice, and inform customers about new products. This function can also improve sales and support productivity by reducing the need for one-on-one communication.
- **Public relations and media relations.** Many company employees and executives now share company news with both the general public and journalists via their blogs. Plus, journalists often consult well-known bloggers when writing articles, which gives professionals and companies the chance to influence media coverage.
- **Recruiting.** A blog is a great way to let potential employees know more about your company, the people who work there, and the nature of the company culture. In the other direction, employers often find and evaluate the blogs and microblogs of prospective employees, making blogging a great way to build a name for yourself within your industry or profession.
- **Policy and issue discussions.** Executive blogs in particular provide a public forum for discussing legislation, regulations, and other broad issues of interest to an organization.
- **Crisis communication.** Using blogs is a convenient way to provide up-to-the-minute information during emergencies, correct misinformation, and respond to rumors.
- **Market research.** Blogs are a good mechanism for soliciting feedback from customers and experts in the marketplace. In addition to using their own blogs to solicit feedback, companies should monitor the *blogosphere* and the *Twittersphere* (terms for the universe of blogs and Twitter accounts) for ideas, complaints, and other information.
- **Brainstorming.** Online brainstorming via blogs offers a way for people to toss around ideas and build on each other's contributions.
- **Word-of-mouth marketing.** Bloggers often make a point of providing links to other blogs and websites that interest them, giving marketers a great opportunity to have their messages spread by enthusiasts. (Online word-of-mouth marketing is often called *viral marketing* in reference to the way biological viruses are transmitted from person to person. However, viral marketing is not really an accurate metaphor. Real viruses spread from host to host on their own, whereas word-of-mouth marketing requires "hosts" to spread messages voluntarily. The distinction is critical, because you need to give people a good reason—good content, in other words—to pass along your message.)

Blogs are an ideal medium for word-of-mouth marketing, in which enthusiastic readers share your message with their own readers.

- **Community building.** Blogging is a great way to connect people with similar interests, and popular bloggers often attract a community of readers who connect with one another through the commenting function.

The business applications of blogs are limited only by your creativity, so be on the lookout for new ways you can use them to foster positive relationships with colleagues, customers, and other important audiences (see Figure 6.5).

ADAPTING THE THREE-STEP PROCESS FOR SUCCESSFUL BLOGGING

The three-step writing process is easy to adapt to blogging tasks. The planning step is particularly important when you're launching a blog because you're planning an entire communication channel, not just a single message. Pay close attention to your audience, your purpose, and your scope:

Before you launch a blog, make sure you have a clear understanding of your target audience, the purpose of your blog, and the scope of subjects you plan to cover.

- **Audience.** Except with team blogs and other efforts that have an obvious and well-defined audience, defining the target audience for a blog can be challenging. You want an audience that is large enough to justify the time you'll be investing but narrow enough that you can provide a clear focus for the blog. For instance, if you work for a firm that develops computer games, would you focus your blog on "hardcore" players, the types who spend thousands of dollars on super-fast PCs optimized for video games, or would you broaden the reach to include casual gamers as well? The decision often comes down to business strategy.
- **Purpose.** A business blog needs to have a business-related purpose that is important to your company and to your chosen audience. Moreover, the purpose has to "have legs"—that is, it needs to be something that can drive the blog's content for months or years—rather than focus on a single event or an issue of only temporary interest. For

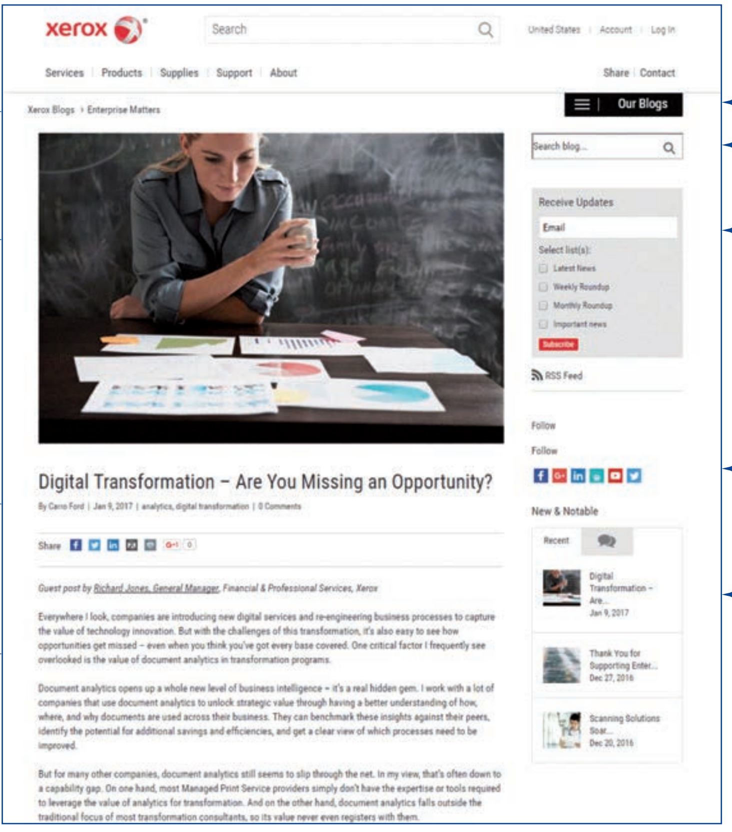

Figure 6.5 Business Applications of Blogging
This Xerox blog illustrates the content, writing style, and features that make an effective, reader-friendly company blog.
Source: Screenshot: Courtesy of Xerox Corporation; Photo: Cadalpe/Image Source/Alamy Stock Photo.

instance, if you're a technical expert, you might create a blog to give the audience tips and techniques for using your company's products more effectively—a never-ending subject that's important to both you and your audience. This would be the general purpose of your blog; each post would have a specific purpose within the context of that general purpose.

- **Scope.** Defining the scope of your blog can be a bit tricky. You want to cover a subject area that is broad enough to offer discussion possibilities for months or years but narrow enough to have an identifiable focus.

After you begin writing your blog, careful planning needs to continue with each message. Unless you're posting to a restricted-access blog, such as an internal blog on a company intranet, you can never be sure who might see your posts or who might link to them in the future. Also, whether you are writing an official company blog or a personal blog, make sure you understand your employer's blogging guidelines.

Write blog posts in a comfortable—but not careless—style.

Use a comfortable, personal writing style. Blog audiences don't want to hear from your company; they want to hear from *you*. Bear in mind, though, that comfortable does not mean careless. Sloppy writing damages your credibility. Successful blog content also needs to be interesting, valuable to readers, and as brief as possible. In addition, although audiences expect you to be knowledgeable in the subject area your blog covers, you don't need to know everything about a topic. If you don't have all the information yourself, provide links to other blogs and websites that supply relevant content. In fact, content curation (see page 143) is one of the most valuable aspects of blogging. Just be sure the content you share is relevant to your readers and compatible with your communication goals.

Completing messages for your blog is usually easy. Evaluate the content and readability of your message, proofread to correct any errors, and post it. Most blogging systems have built-in *newsfeed options* (often called RSS newsfeeds) so that your audience can automatically receive new posts from you.

Finally, make your material easier to find by **tagging** it with descriptive words. Your readers can then select these "content labels" to find additional posts on those topics. Tags are usually displayed with each post, and they can also be groups in a *tag cloud* display, which shows all the tags in use on your blog.

Table 6.2 on the next page summarizes a number of suggestions for successful blogging. For the latest information on using blogs in business, visit real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Chapter 6.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE
Practical guidelines for successful business blogging
IBM has been encouraging employees to blog for years, and the guidelines it gives employees are great advice for any business blogger. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

MICROBLOGGING

A **microblog** is a variation on blogging in which messages are restricted to specific character counts. Twitter is the best known of these systems, but many others exist. Some companies have private microblogging systems for internal use only.

The business communication uses of microblogging extend beyond the publication of brief updates.

Many of the concepts of regular blogging apply to microblogging as well, although the severe length limitations call for a different approach to composition. Microblog messages often involve short summaries or teasers that provide links to more information.

Like regular blogging, microblogging quickly caught on with business users and is now a mainstream business medium. Microblogs are used for virtually all of the blog applications mentioned on pages 151–152, as well as for providing company updates, offering coupons and notice of sales, presenting tips on product usage, sharing relevant and interesting information from experts, announcing headlines of new blog posts, and serving as the *backchannel* in meetings and presentations (see page 349). By following top names in your field, you can customize Twitter as your own personal news source.[27] Customer service is a popular use for Twitter as well, thanks to its ease, speed, and the option of switching between public tweets and private direct messages as the situation warrants[28] (see Figure 6.6 on page 155).

MOBILE APP
The **Twitter** mobile app helps you stay connected with your followers and the accounts you follow.

TABLE 6.2 Tips for Effective Business Blogging

Tip	Why It's Important
Don't blog without a clear plan.	Without a clear plan, your blog is likely to wander from topic to topic and fail to build a sense of community with your audience.
Post frequently; the whole point of a blog is fresh material.	If you won't have a constant supply of new information or new links, create a traditional website instead.
Make it about your audience and the issues important to them.	Readers want to know how your blog will help them, entertain them, or give them a chance to communicate with others who have similar interests.
Write in an authentic voice; never create an artificial character who supposedly writes a blog.	Flogs, or fake blogs, violate the spirit of blogging, show disrespect for your audience, and will turn audiences against you as soon as they uncover the truth. Fake blogs used to promote products are now illegal in some countries.
Link generously—but carefully.	Providing interesting links to other blogs and websites is a fundamental aspect of blogging, but make sure the links will be of value to your readers and don't point to inappropriate material.
Keep it brief.	Most online readers don't have the patience to read lengthy reports. Rather than writing long, report-style posts, write brief posts that link to in-depth reports.
Don't post anything you wouldn't want the entire world to see.	Future employers, government regulators, competitors, journalists, and community critics are just a few of the people who might eventually see what you've written.
Minimize marketing and sales messages.	Even product enthusiasts and motivated shoppers don't want to be "sold to" on company blogs. They want information about how products and services will meet their needs.
Take time to write compelling, specific headlines for your posts.	Readers usually decide within a couple of seconds whether to read your posts; boring or vague headlines will turn them away instantly.
Pay attention to spelling, grammar, and mechanics.	No matter how smart or experienced you are, poor-quality writing undermines your credibility with intelligent audiences.
Respond to criticism openly and honestly.	Hiding sends the message that you don't have a valid response to the criticism. If your critics are wrong, patiently explain why you think they're wrong. If they are right, explain how you'll fix the situation.
Listen and learn.	If you don't take the time to analyze the comments people leave on your blog or the comments other bloggers make about you, you're missing out on one of the most valuable aspects of blogging.
Respect intellectual property.	Improperly using material you don't own is not only unethical but can be illegal as well.
Be scrupulously honest and careful with facts.	Honesty is an absolute requirement for every ethical business communicator, of course, but you need to be extra careful online because inaccuracies (both intentional and unintentional) are likely to be discovered quickly and shared widely.
If you review products on your blog, disclose any beneficial relationships you have with the companies that make those products.	Bloggers who receive free products or other compensation from companies whose products they write about are now required to disclose the nature of these relationships.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE
Tips for ensuring a positive Twitter experience

Twitter offers advice for getting the most from the service while avoiding common blunders. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

The social networking aspect of Twitter and other microblogs also makes them good for *crowdsourcing* research questions: asking ones' followers for input or advice.[29] Finally, the ease of *retweeting*, the practice of forwarding messages from other Twitter users, is the microblogging equivalent of sharing other content from other bloggers via content curation.

In addition to its usefulness as a standalone system, Twitter is also integrated with other social media systems and a variety of publishing and reading tools and services. Many of these systems use the informal Twitter feature known as the *hashtag* (the # symbol followed by a word or phrase),

This tweet answers a follower's question about how to send materials to the company.

This tweet promotes the company's products in an unobtrusive way ("time to upgrade").

This tweet takes advantage of Twitter's URL-embedding capability to provide readers with additional information.

Figure 6.6 Business Applications of Microblogging
Mathews, a small manufacturer of archery products, uses Twitter to foster relationships with customers and other interested parties. Notice how every tweet in this timeline is part of a conversation.
Source: Mathews, Inc.

which makes it easy for people to label and search for topics of interest and to monitor ongoing Twitter conversations about particular topics.

Although microblogs are designed to encourage spontaneous communication, when you're using the medium for business communication, don't just tweet whatever pops into your head. Make sure messages are part of your overall communication strategy. Twitter followers consider tweets that are entertaining, surprising, informative, or engaging (such as asking followers for advice) as the most valuable. In contrast, the least-valuable tweets tend to be random complaints (those that aren't seeking solutions to specific problems), conversations between the Twitter account owner and a specific follower, and relatively pointless messages such as saying "good morning."[30]

Don't let the speed and simplicity of microblogging lull you into making careless mistakes; every message should support your business communication objectives.

Podcasting

7 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Explain how to adapt the three-step writing process to podcasts.

Podcasting can be thought of as the audio equivalent of blogging. Rather than writing a continuing series of blog posts on a particular topic, podcasters produce audio recordings that listeners can stream online or download to portable devices. For podcast producers, the opportunity to capture listeners' attention for an extended period of time is one of the biggest advantages of the format. Conversations with interesting guests and storytelling are popular podcasting strategies. For example, the StartUp podcast uses an extended storytelling structure to follow the fortunes of a particular company as it endeavors to get off the ground.[31]

MOBILE APP

Mobile Podcaster (iOS) lets you record audio podcasts on your mobile devices and instantly post them on your WordPress blog.

For listeners, a major appeal of podcasting is the ability to consume content while engaging in some other activity, such as driving, walking, or exercising. You can find a wide selection on iTunes, many of which are free (in the iTunes store, go to the Podcasts section and select the Business category).

The three-step process adapts quite well to podcasting.

Although it might not seem obvious at first, the three-step writing process adapts quite nicely to podcasting. First, focus the planning step on analyzing the situation, gathering the information you'll need, and organizing your material. As with planning a blog, be sure to think through the range of topics you want to address over time to verify that you have a sustainable purpose. If you bounce from one theme to another, you risk losing your audience.[32] Maintaining a consistent schedule is also important; listeners will stop paying attention if they can't count on regular updates.[33]

Steering devices such as transitions, previews, and reviews are vital in podcasts.

Although you probably won't write a script for every podcast episode, use the writing step to think through what you plan to say and make sure you have sufficient notes to guide you through your talk. Pay close attention to previews, transitions, and reviews. These steering devices are especially vital in audio recordings because audio lacks the "street signs" (such as headings) that audiences rely on in written documents. Moreover, scanning back and forth to find specific parts is much more difficult with an audio or video message than with textual messages, so you need to do everything possible to make sure your audience successfully receives and interprets your message on the first try.

Plan your podcast content carefully to minimize mistakes and rambling; editing is more difficult with podcasts than with written messages.

One of the attractions of podcasting is the conversational, person-to-person feel of the recordings, so unless you need to capture exact wording, speaking from an outline and notes rather than a prepared script is often the best choice. However, no one wants to listen to rambling podcasts that take several minutes to get to the topic or struggle to make a point, so don't try to make up your content on the fly. Effective podcasts, like effective stories, have a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Chances are you can record basic podcasts with your existing laptop computer or mobile device, but higher-quality productions require additional hardware and software.

The completing step correlates to the actual recording session for podcasts. Most laptops, tablets, and smartphones (see Figure 6.7) now have basic audio recording capability, and free editing software such as Audacity is available online. These tools can be sufficient for creating informal podcasts for internal use, but to achieve the higher production quality expected in formal or public podcasts, you'll need additional pieces of hardware and software. These can include an audio processor (to filter out extraneous noise and otherwise improve the audio signal), a mixer (to combine multiple audio or video signals),

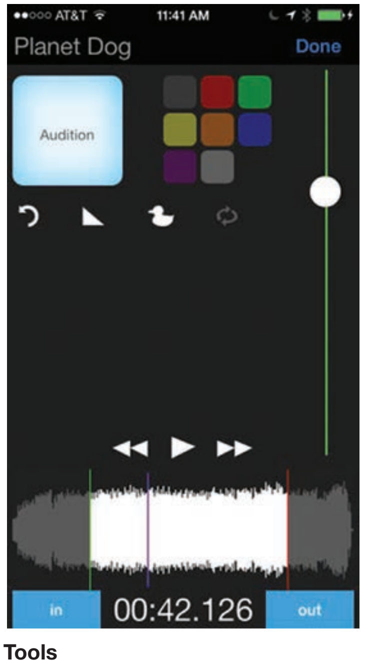

Figure 6.7 Mobile Podcasting Tools
Mobile podcasting apps make it easy to record podcasts on location.
Source: Courtesy of bossjock studio, www.bossjockstudio.com.

a better microphone, more sophisticated recording and editing software, and perhaps some physical changes in your recording location to improve the acoustics.

Podcasts can be distributed in several ways, including through media stores such as iTunes and Google Play, streaming services such as SoundCloud, dedicated podcast hosting services, and a company's own website or blog.

For the latest information on using podcasts in business, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Chapter 6.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Everything you need to know to launch a podcast

From refining your goals to measuring your success, here's how to get started. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

The Future of Communication: Emoticons and Emoji

You know this dilemma well: You're about to send a message via email or some form of messaging, but you're worried that the right tone won't come across. What if you're trying to be humorously sarcastic, but the recipient thinks you're being serious? Or what if you are trying to be friendly and sympathetic, but the words come across as cold and uncaring?

If you were communicating in person, you could modulate the emotional tone of your message by smiling, using your voice to accent certain words or syllables, shrugging your shoulders, rolling your eyes, or otherwise sending nonverbal signals that help say what your words have trouble saying. Plus, you could monitor the recipient's response and immediately react if you see that the message didn't quite land.

To fine-tune the tone of their written messages, many people resort to emoticons or emojis. (Opinions vary on the exact difference between the two, but for simplicity's sake, you can think of *emoticons* as symbols made up of text characters, such as :-), and *emojis* as graphical icons such as ☺.) Emoticons and emojis can be effective way to minimize the limitations of a lean medium, which is why so many people now use them for personal and business communication. A smiley face can inject a touch of levity into a tense situation and a frowny face can convey sympathy for someone who has suffered a setback, for example.

As useful as these visual gadgets can be, however, they do present two problems for business communicators. First, even though an increasing number of professionals seem to be using them, particularly for communication with close colleagues, many other professionals continue to view them as evidence of lazy or immature writing.[34] Unless you know your audience well enough to use emoticons and emojis without worry, the best advice is to avoid using them—particularly in formal and external communication.

Second, emoticons and emojis can cause problems of their own when people don't agree on what they mean. If you get a message that says "Why don't you and I get away from this stress-fest and brainstorm some solutions over coffee" and ends with a "winkie" emoticon or emoji, what does that digital wink mean? Is the person flirting with you or just innocently suggesting that the two of you could think more clearly if you got out of the hectic office for a while? The meanings of emoticons and emojis are so problematic that they are causing confusion in legal trials, and serious criminal cases can hinge on their interpretation. Moreover, the Unicode Standard, the global reference of text and graphical symbols used in computers and digital communication, now contains more than 1,200 emojis.[35] Ironically enough, these graphical devices created to improve written communication have become a vast and often confusing language of their own.

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Research the current state of options on emoticons and emojis in business. Do you sense that attitudes are changing and that their use will be widely accepted in business communication in the coming years? Why or why not?

Chapter Review and Activities

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** to complete the problems marked with this icon ✪.

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: Identify the major digital channels used for brief business messages, and describe the nine compositional modes needed for digital media.

Primary digital media for short business messages include:

- Social networks
- Information- and content-sharing websites
- Email
- Messaging
- Blogging and microblogging
- Podcasting

The nine compositional modes are:

- Conversations
- Comments and critiques
- Orientations
- Summaries
- Reference materials
- Narratives
- Teasers
- Status updates and announcements
- Tutorials

Objective 2: Describe the use of social networks in business communication.

Businesses use three major types of social networks:

- Public, general purpose networks such as Facebook
- Public, specialized networks such as LinkedIn
- Private, internal networks

Businesses use social networks in a variety of ways:

- Integrating company workforces
- Fostering collaboration
- Building communities
- Socializing brands and companies
- Understanding target markets
- Recruiting employees and business partners
- Connecting with sales prospects
- Supporting customers
- Extending the organization
- Crowdspeaking

Objective 3: Explain how companies and business professionals can use content-sharing websites.

User-generated content sites such as YouTube let companies host media items that customers and other stakeholders contribute.

Content curation sites let professionals and consumers with expertise or interest in a particular field to collect and republish material on a particular topic.

Community Q&A sites give individuals the opportunity to build their personal brands by providing expertise, and they give companies the chance to address customer complaints and correct misinformation.

Objective 4: Describe the evolving role of email in business communication, and explain how to adapt the three-step writing process to email messages.

As the earliest widely available digital channel, email was applied to a broad range of communication tasks—some it was well suited for and some it wasn't.

Over time, newer media such as messaging and social networks have been taking over some of these tasks.

Email remains a vital medium that is optimum for many private, short to medium-length messages.

The three-step process adapts easily to email communication:

- Make sure every message has a valuable purpose.
- Spend at least a moment or two planning each message; it will save you time and lead to better messages.
- When writing email messages, bear in mind that the expectations of writing quality and formality are higher with business email.
- Take care with the subject line; it often determines whether and when recipients open and read the message.
- Completing email messages is straightforward. Proof and revise messages, stick with a clean design, make use of the email signature feature, and make sure you distribute the message to the right people.

Objective 5: Describe the advantages and disadvantages of business messaging, and identify guidelines for effective messaging in the workplace.

Business messaging offers several key advantages:

- It can mimic conversation more closely than email.
- With closed, private systems, administrators can choose who is allowed to participate.
- It's a good choice when senders want messages to be seen and acted on immediately.

Messaging also has some potential disadvantages:

- Users are at the mercy of other users' typing speed and accuracy.
- Messaging systems vary widely in their levels of security and privacy.

- Messaging is a lean medium with less ability to convey nuances and nonverbal signals.

Follow these guidelines for effective messaging:

- Be thoughtful and courteous.
- Make yourself unavailable when you need to focus on other work.
- If you're not on a secure system, don't send confidential information.
- Be extremely careful about sending personal messages.
- Don't use messaging for impromptu meetings if you can't verify that everyone concerned is available.
- Don't use messaging for lengthy, complex messages.
- Avoid carrying on multiple conversations at once.
- Follow all security guidelines.

Objective 6: Describe the use of blogging and microblogging in business communication, and briefly explain how to adapt the three-step process to blogging.

Businesses use blogs and microblogs in a variety of ways:

- Social media anchoring
- Project management and team communication
- Internal news and employee engagement
- Customer support
- Public relations and media relations
- Recruiting
- Policy and issue discussions
- Crisis communication
- Market research
- Brainstorming
- Word-of-mouth marketing
- Community building

The three-step process adapts readily to blogging:

- Planning: Pay particular attention to defining your audience, identifying the overall purpose of your blog and specific purposes of each post, and establishing a scope that is narrow enough to be focused but broad enough to afford a steady supply of topics.
- Writing: Be sure to write in a personal, authentic style, without slipping into overly familiar or careless writing.
- Completing: Perform the usual tasks of proofing and revising, along with the particular tasks needed to distribute your posts via newsfeeds.

Objective 7: Explain how to adapt the three-step writing process to podcasts.

The three-step process adapts readily to podcasting:

- Planning: Focus on analyzing the situation, gathering the information you'll need, and organizing your material. Before launching a podcast, make sure your purpose is rich enough to be sustainable.
- Writing: Although you probably won't script every episode, think through what you want to say so you don't wander off topic, and pay close attention to previews, transitions, and reviews.
- Completing (production): Consider the necessary level of production quality; good-quality podcasts usually require some specialized hardware and software.

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

6-1. What are the situations in which a printed memo or letter might be preferable to a digital message? [LO-1]

6-2. How do the compositional modes of orientations, summaries, and teasers differ? [LO-2]

6-3. Why are subject lines important in email messages? [LO-4]

6-4. What is word-of-mouth marketing? [LO-6]

6-5. How can Twitter be used to crowdsource research? [LO-6]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

6-6. What are three innovative ways you could optimize your college's website for mobile devices? [LO-1]

6-7. Can your company stay in control of its messages if it stays off social media? Why or why not? [LO-2]

6-8. Is leveraging your connections on social networks for business purposes ethical? Why or why not? [LO-2]

6-9. If one of the benefits of blogging is the personal, intimate style of writing, is it a good idea to limit your creativity by adhering to conventional rules of grammar, spelling, and mechanics? Why or why not? [LO-6]

6-10. If you know that most readers of your management advice blog access it on mobile devices, should you switch to Twitter instead so the shorter messages would be easier to read on small screens? Why or why not? [LO-6]

6-11. Given the strict limits on length, should all your microblogging messages function as teasers that link to more detailed information on a blog or website? Why or why not? [LO-6]

6-12. What are some ways the president of a hiking equipment company could use Twitter to engage potential customers without being overtly promotional? [LO-6]

Practice Your Skills

Exercises for Perfecting Your Writing

To review chapter content related to each set of exercises, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

6-13. Planning: Creating an Audience Profile, Selecting Media [LO-1], Chapter 3 You are in charge of public relations for a cruise line that operates out of Miami. You are shocked to read a letter in a local newspaper from a disgruntled passenger complaining about the service and entertainment on a recent cruise. You will have to respond to these publicized criticisms in some way.

What audiences will you need to consider in your response? For each of these audiences, which combinations of media and channels should you use to send your message?

6-14. Media Skills: Blogging [LO-6] The members of the project team of which you are the leader have enthusiastically embraced blogging as a communication medium.

Unfortunately, as emotions heat up during the project, some of the blog posts are getting too casual, too personal, and even sloppy. Because your boss and other managers around the company also read this project blog, you don't want the team to look unprofessional in anyone's eyes. Revise the following blog post so that it communicates in a more businesslike manner while retaining the informal, conversational tone of a blog (be sure to correct any spelling and punctuation mistakes you find as well).

Well, to the profound surprise of absolutely nobody, we are not going to be able meet the June 1 commitment to ship 100 operating tables to Southeast Surgical Supply. (For those of you who have been living in a cave the past six month, we have been fighting to get our hands on enough high-grade chromium steel to meet our production schedule.) Sure enough, we got news, this morning that we will only get enough for 30 tables. Yes, we look lik fools for not being able to follow through on promises we made to the customer, but no, this didn't have to happpen. Six month's ago, purchasing warned us about shrinking supplies and suggested we advance-buy as much as we would need for the next 12 months, or so. We naturally tried to followed their advice, but just as naturally were shot down by the bean counters at corporate who trotted out the policy about never buying more than three months worth of materials in advance. Of course, it'll be us–not the bean counters who'll take the flak when everybody starts asking why revenues are down next quarter and why Southeast is talking to our friends at Crighton Manuf!!! Maybe, some day this company will get its head out of the sand and realize that we need to have some financial flexibility in order to compete.

Collaboration: Working in Teams; Planning: Selecting Media [**LO-1**] Working with at least two other students, identify the best medium to use for each of the following messages. For each of these message needs, choose a medium that you think would work effectively and explain your choice. (More than one medium could work in some cases; just be able to support your particular choice.)

6-15. A technical support service for people trying to use their digital music players

6-16. A message of condolence to the family of an employee who passed away recently

6-17. A collection of infographics from a variety of sources on the state of the consumer electronics industry

6-18. A series of observations on the state of the industry

6-19. A series of messages, questions, and answers surrounding the work of a project team

Media Skills: Writing Email Subject Lines [**LO-4**] Using your imagination to make up whatever details you need, revise the following email subject lines to make them more informative:

6-20. New budget figures

6-21. Marketing brochure—your opinion

6-22. Production schedule

Media Skills: Messaging, Creating a Businesslike Tone [**LO-5**] Your firm, which makes professional paint sprayers, uses messaging extensively for internal communication and frequently for external communication with customers and suppliers. Several customers have recently forwarded copies of messages they've received from your staff, asking if you know how casually some employees are treating this important medium. You decide to revise parts of several messages to show your staff a more appropriate writing style. Rewrite these sentences, making up any information you need, to convey a more businesslike style and tone. (Look up the acronyms online if you need to.)

6-23. IMHO, our quad turbo sprayer is best model 4U.

6-24. No prob; happy2help!

6-25. FWIW, I use the L400 myself & it rocks

6-26. Most cust see 20–30% reduct in fumes w/this sprayer—of course, YMMV.

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information will be found in another chapter, as indicated.

6-27. Media Skills: Social Networking [**LO-2**] Joining an ongoing social media conversation, such as a comment thread on Facebook, requires a delicate touch if you work for a company that has a commercial interest in the subject at hand. Imagine you work for a company that makes audiophile-quality headphones, acoustic guitars, or electronic drum kits (choose whichever product interests you the most). While monitoring a Facebook group for enthusiasts of this product category, you see an active thread in which people are complaining about the quality of one of your competitor's products. You know that for years this company had a reputation for making high-quality equipment, but after a poorly executed plan to outsource manufacturing in order to cut costs, quality has suffered. A similar product that your company offers is slightly more expensive but has significantly higher quality, according to a recent survey conducted by a respected and impartial industry website.

Draft a brief comment that you could use to join the conversation. Decide what information you'll include and whether you will disclose your company affiliation. Assume that representatives from various companies do occasionally make posts and leave comments in this group, but overt selling is explicitly forbidden by the group's moderator.

6-28. Media Skills: Email [**LO-4**] The following email message contains numerous errors related to what you've learned about planning and writing business messages.

SUBJECT: Compliance with new break procedure

Some of you may not like the rules about break times; however, we determined that keeping track of employees while they took breaks at times they determined rather than regular breaks at prescribed times was not working as well as we would have liked it to work. The new rules are not going to be an option. If you do not follow the new rules, you could be docked from your pay for hours when you turned up missing, since your direct supervisor will not be able to tell whether you were on a "break" or not and will assume that you have walked away from your job. We cannot be responsible for any errors that result from your inattentiveness to the new rules. I have already heard complaints from some of you and I hope this memo will end this issue once and for all. The decision has already been made.

Starting Monday, January 1, you will all be required to take a regular 15-minute break in the morning and again in the afternoon, and a regular thirty-minute lunch at the times specified by your supervisor, NOT when you think you need a break or when you "get around to it."

There will be no exceptions to this new rule!

Felicia August

Manager

Billing and accounting

First, describe the flaws you discover in this email message. Next, develop a plan for rewriting the message. Use the following steps to organize your efforts before you begin writing:

- Determine the purpose.
- Identify and analyze your audience.
- Define the main idea.
- Outline the major supporting points.
- Choose between the direct and indirect approaches.

Now rewrite the email message. Don't forget to leave ample time for revision of your own work before you turn it in.

6-29. Media Skills: Messaging [**LO-5**] Review the following IM exchange and explain how the customer service agent could have handled the situation more effectively.

AGENT:	Thanks for contacting Home Exercise Equipment. What's up?
CUSTOMER:	I'm having trouble assembling my home gym.
AGENT:	I hear that a lot! LOL
CUSTOMER:	So is it me or the gym?
AGENT:	Well, let's see <g>. Where are you stuck?
CUSTOMER:	The crossbar that connects the vertical pillars doesn't fit.
AGENT:	What do you mean doesn't fit?
CUSTOMER:	It doesn't fit. It's not long enough to reach across the pillars.
AGENT:	Maybe you assembled the pillars in the wrong place. Or maybe we sent the wrong crossbar.
CUSTOMER:	How do I tell?
AGENT:	The parts aren't labeled so could be tough. Do you have a measuring tape? Tell me how long your crossbar is.

6-30. Media Skills: Blogging [**LO-6**] Read the following blog post and (a) analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each sentence and (b) revise it so that it follows the guidelines in this chapter.

[headline] We're DOOMED!!!!!

I was at the Sikorsky plant in Stratford yesterday, just checking to see how things were going with the assembly line retrofit we did for them last year. I think I saw the future, and it ain't pretty. They were demo'ing a prototype robot from Motoman that absolutely blows our stuff out of the water. They wouldn't let me really see it, but based on the 10-second glimpse I got, it's smaller, faster, and more maneuverable than any of our units. And when I asked about the price, the guy just grinned. And it wasn't the sort of grin designed to make me feel good.

I've been saying for years that we need to pay more attention to size, speed, and maneuverability instead of just relying on our historical strengths of accuracy and payload capacity, and you'd have to be blind not to agree that this experience proves me right. If we can't at least show a design for a better unit within two or three months, Motoman is going to lock up the market and leave us utterly in the dust.

Believe me, being able to say "I told you so" right now is not nearly as satisfying as you might think!!

6-31. Media Skills: Blogging [**LO-6**] From what you've learned about planning and writing business messages, you should be able to identify numerous errors made by the writer of the following blog post.

[headline] Get Ready!

We are hoping to be back at work soon, with everything running smoothly, same production schedule and no late projects or missed deadlines. So you need to clean out your desk, put your stuff in boxes, and clean off the walls. You can put the items you had up on your walls in boxes, also.

We have provided boxes. The move will happen this weekend. We'll be in our new offices when you arrive on Monday.

We will not be responsible for personal belongings during the move.

First, describe the flaws you discover in this blog post. Next, develop a plan for rewriting the post. Use the following steps to organize your efforts before you begin writing:

- Determine the purpose.
- Identify and analyze your audience.
- Define the main idea.
- Outline the major supporting points.
- Choose between the direct and indirect approaches.

Now rewrite the post. Don't forget to leave ample time for revision of your own work before you turn it in.

6-32. Media Skills: Microblogging [**LO-6**] You're on the marketing staff of Knitting-Warehouse, and you like to keep your loyal shoppers up to date with the latest deals. Visit the Knitting-Warehouse website at **www.knitting-warehouse.com**, select any on-sale product that catches your eye, and write a Twitter update that describes the product and the sale. Be sure to include a link back to the website so your Twitter followers can learn more. (Unless you are working on a private Twitter account that is accessible only by your instructor and your classmates, don't actually send this Twitter update. Email it to your instructor instead.)

6-33. Media Skills: Podcasting [**LO-7**] You've recently begun recording a weekly podcast to share information with your large and far-flung staff. After a month, you ask for feedback from several of your subordinates, and you're disappointed to learn that some people stopped listening to the podcast after the first couple of weeks. Someone eventually admits that many staffers feel that the recordings are too long and rambling and that the information they contain isn't valuable enough to justify the time it takes to listen. You aren't pleased, but you want to improve. An assistant transcribes the introduction to last week's podcast so you can review it. Revise the introduction based on what you've learned in this chapter.

So there I am, having lunch with Selma Gill, who just joined and took over the Northeast sales region from Jackson Stroud. In walks our beloved CEO with Selma's old boss at Uni-Plex; turns out they were finalizing a deal to co-brand our products and theirs and to set up a joint distribution program in all four domestic regions. Pretty funny, huh? Selma left Uni-Plex because she wanted sell our products instead, and now she's back selling her old stuff, too. Anyway, try to chat with her when you can; she knows the biz inside and out and probably can offer insight into just about any sales challenge you might be running up against. We'll post more info on the co-brand deal next week; should be a boost for all of us. Other than those two news items, the other big news this week is the change in commission reporting. I'll go into the details in minute, but when you log onto the intranet, you'll now see your sales results split out by product line and industry sector. Hope this helps you see where you're doing well and where you might beef things up a bit. Oh yeah, I almost forgot the most important bit. Speaking of our beloved CEO, Thomas is going to be our guest of honor, so to speak, at the quarterly sales meeting next week and wants an update on how petroleum prices are affecting customer behavior. Each district manager should be ready with a brief report. After I go through the commission reporting scheme, I'll outline what you need to prepare.

6-34. **Media Skills: Podcasting** [LO-7] To access this podcast exercise, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8**, select Student Assignments, and select Chapter 6 Podcast. Listen to the podcast. Identify at least three ways in which the podcast could be improved, then draft a brief email message you could send to the podcaster with your suggestions for improvement.

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Locate the YouTube channel page of any company you find interesting and assess its social networking presence using the criteria for effective communication discussed in this chapter and your own experience using social media. What does this company do well with its YouTube channel? How might it improve? Using whatever medium your instructor requests, write a brief analysis of the company's YouTube presence (no more than one page), citing specific elements from the piece and support from the chapter.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at **websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that offers advice on using social media in business. Write a brief email message to your instructor or a post for your class blog, describing the item that you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Cases

SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS

6-35. Media Skills: Social Networking; Online Etiquette [LO-2], Chapter 2 Employees who take pride in their work are a practically priceless resource for any business. However, pride can sometimes manifest itself in negative ways when employees face criticism—and public criticism is a fact of life in social media. Imagine that your company has recently experienced a rash of product quality problems, and these problems have generated some unpleasant and occasionally unfair criticism on a variety of social media sites. Someone even set up a Facebook page specifically to give customers a place to vent their frustrations.

You and your public relations team jumped into action, responding to complaints with offers to provide replacement products and help customers who have been affected by the quality problems. Everything seemed to be going as well as could be expected, until you were checking a few industry blogs one evening and discovered that two engineers in your company's product design lab have been responding to complaints on their own. They identified themselves as company employees and defended their product design, blaming the company's production department and even criticizing several customers for lacking the skills needed to use such a sophisticated product. Within a matter of minutes, you see their harsh comments being retweeted and reposted on multiple sites, only fueling the fire of negative feedback against your firm. Needless to say, you are horrified.

Your task: You manage to reach the engineers by private message and tell them to stop posting messages, but you realize you have a serious training issue on your hands. Write a post for the internal company blog that advises employees on how to respond appropriately when they are representing the company online. Use your imagination to make up any details you need.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS

6-36. Media Skills: Social Networking [LO-2] Social media can be a great way to, well, socialize during your college years, but employers are increasingly checking up on the online activities of potential hires to avoid bringing in employees who may reflect poorly on the company.

Your task: Team up with another student and review each other's public presence on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, blogs, and any other website that an employer might check during the interview and recruiting process. Identify any photos, videos, messages, or other material that could raise a red flag when an employer is evaluating a job candidate. Write your teammate an email message that lists any risky material.

EMAIL SKILLS/MOBILE SKILLS

6-37. Media Skills: Email [LO-4] The size limitations of smartphone screens call for a different approach to writing (see pages 103–104) and formatting (see page 124) documents.

Your task: On the website of any company that interests you, find a news release (some companies refer to them as *press releases*) that announces the launch of a new product. Using Pages or any other writing app at your disposal, revise and format the material in a way that would be effective on smartphone screens.

6-38. Media Skills: Email; Collaboration: Team Projects [LO-4], Chapter 2 Colleges and universities are complex organizations that try to optimize results for students while wrestling with budgetary constraints, staffing issues, infrastructure concerns, limitations on available space, and a host of other issues. Even in the best-managed and most generously funded institutions, some aspects of campus life could be improved.

Your task: With a team assigned by your instructor, choose an issue of campus life that you think could and should be improved. It can be anything from transportation to housing to personal safety. Draft an email message that could be sent to your school's administration. In your message concisely describe the problem, speculate on why the problem or situation exists, offer suggestions on how it could be solved or improved, and explain how addressing it would improve campus life. (Don't send the message unless your instructor directs you to do so.)

EMAIL SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

6-39. Media Skills: Email [LO-4] Studying real-life examples is a great way to get a feel for how various companies communicate with customers and other stakeholders.

Your task: With teammates assigned by your instructor, select five email messages from the Just Good Copy website at www.goodemailcopy.com. Evaluate them based on the criteria for effective email discussed in the chapter. Rank them from most effective to least effective and summarize your analysis in a presentation to your class or a post on your class blog.

EMAIL SKILLS

6-40. Media Skills: Email; Message Strategies: Routine Messages [LO-4], Chapter 7 Team messaging apps are improving communication in all kinds of organizations, from small teams to entire companies to school groups and other nonbusiness entities.

Your task: Imagine that you are responsible for choosing an organization's new messaging software. You can use an organization you are already a member of, such as a current or past employer, a nonprofit where you volunteer, or a project team in one of your classes. Alternatively, choose any real or imaginary organization in which at least a few people would need to coordinate their efforts using text-centric messaging.

Research the capabilities of Slack and two of its competitors, identifying the three or four of the most important features of each system. Write an email message (no more than four paragraphs) comparing these key features and recommending one of the systems for your chosen organization.

MESSAGING SKILLS

6-41. Media Skills: Messaging; Compositional Modes: Tutorials [LO-1], [LO-5] High-definition television can be a joy to watch—but, oh, what a pain to buy. The field is cluttered with competing technologies and arcane terminology that is meaningless to most consumers. Moreover, it's nearly impossible to define one technical term without invoking two or three others, leaving consumers swimming in an alphanumeric soup of confusion. As a sales support manager for Crutchfield, a leading online retailer of audio and video systems, you understand the frustration buyers feel; your staff is deluged daily by their questions.

Your task: To help your staff respond quickly to consumers who ask questions via Crutchfield's online IM chat service, you are developing a set of "canned" responses to common questions. When a consumer asks one of these questions, a sales adviser can simply select the ready-made answer. Find the TV Buying Guide on the Crutchfield website at www.crutchfield.com, then write concise, consumer-friendly definitions of the following terms: *1080p*, *OLED*, *4K*, and *3D TV*.

BLOGGING SKILLS

6-42. Media Skills: Blogging; Compositional Modes: Tutorials [LO-6] Tumblr has become a popular "short-form" blogging platform by combining the simplicity of Twitter with the ability to share photos and other media easily.

Your task: Write a 300- to 400-word post for your class blog that explains how to set up an account on Tumblr and get involved in the Tumblr community. The help pages on Tumblr are a good place to get more information about the service.

BLOGGING SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

6-43. Media Skills: Blogging; Compositional Modes: Tutorials [LO-6] Studying abroad for a semester or a year can be a rewarding experience in many ways—improving your language skills, experiencing another culture, making contacts in the international business arena, and building your self-confidence.

Your task: Write a post for your class blog that describes your college's study-abroad program and summarizes the steps involved in applying for international study. If your school doesn't offer study-abroad opportunities, base your post on the program offered at another institution in your state.

MICROBLOGGING SKILLS

6-44. Media Skills: Microblogging; Compositional Modes: Summaries [LO-1], [LO-6] A carefully constructed series of tweets can serve as a summary of a blog post, video, or other message or document.

Your task: Find any article, podcast, video, or webpage on a business topic that interests you. Write four to six tweetables that summarize the content of the piece. Restrict the first tweetable to 117 characters to allow for a URL. Email the series to your instructor or publish them on Twitter if your instructor directs. If you quote phrases directly from the original, be sure to put them in quotation marks.

MICROBLOGGING SKILLS

6-45. Media Skills: Microblogging; Compositional Modes: Teasers [LO-1], [LO-6] Twitter updates are a great way to alert people to helpful articles, videos, and other online resources.

Your task: Find an online resource (it can be a website quiz, a YouTube video, a PowerPoint presentation, a newspaper article, or anything else appropriate) that offers some great tips to help college students prepare for job interviews. Write a teaser of no more than 117 characters that hints at the benefits other students can get from this resource. If your class is set up with private Twitter accounts, use your private account to send your message. Otherwise, email it to your instructor. Be sure to include the URL; if you're using a Twitter account, the system will shorten it to 23 characters to keep you within the 140-character limit.

PODCASTING SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

6-46. Media Skills: Podcasting [LO-7] While writing the many messages that are part of the job search process, you find yourself wishing you could just talk to some of these companies so your personality could shine through. Well, you've just gotten that opportunity. One of the companies you've applied to has emailed you back, asking you to submit a two-minute podcast introducing yourself and explaining why you would be a good person to hire.

Your task: Identify a company you'd like to work for after graduation and select a job that would be a good match for your skills and interests. Write a script for a two-minute podcast (two minutes represents roughly 250 words for most speakers). Introduce yourself and the position you're applying for, describe your background, and explain why you think you're a good candidate for the job. Make up any details you need. If your instructor asks you to do so, record the podcast and submit the audio file.

PODCASTING SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

6-47. Media Skills: Podcasting [LO-7] Between this chapter and your own experience as a user of social media, you probably know enough about social media to offer some insights to other business communicators.

Your task: Write a script for a two- to three-minute podcast (roughly 250 to 400 words) on any social media topic that you find compelling. Be sure to introduce your topic clearly in the introduction and provide helpful transitions along the way. If your instructor asks you to do so, record the podcast and submit the file.

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from real-timeupdates.com/bce8; select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 6, Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Prepositions and Conjunctions

Review Sections 1.6.1 and 1.6.2 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage. Answers to these exercises appear on page 490.

Rewrite the following items, deleting unnecessary words and prepositions and adding required prepositions:

6-48. Where was your argument leading to?
6-49. I wish he would get off of the phone.
6-50. This is a project into which you can sink your teeth.
6-51. U.S. Mercantile must become aware and sensitive to its customers' concerns.
6-52. We are responsible for aircraft safety in the air, the hangars, and the runways.

In the following items, provide the missing preposition:

6-53. Dr. Namaguchi will be talking the marketing class, but she has no time for questions.
6-54. Matters like this are decided after thorough discussion all seven department managers.
6-55. We can't wait their decision much longer.
6-56. Their computer is similar ours.
6-57. This model is different the one we ordered.

In the following items, rewrite the sentences to make phrases parallel:

6-58. She is active in not only a civic group but also in an athletic organization.
6-59. That is either a mistake or was an intentional omission.
6-60. The question is whether to set up a booth at the convention or be hosting a hospitality suite.
6-61. We are doing better in both overall sales and in profits.
6-62. She had neither the preferred educational background, nor did she have suitable experience.

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

6-63. Peabody Energys commitment to environmental excellence is driven by the companies' mission statement which states that when mining is complete, the company will leave the land in a condition equal or better than it was before mining.

6-64. In 1998, Blockbuster opened a state of the art distribution center in McKinney, Texas, just North of the company's Dallas Headquarters.

6-65. Miss Tucci was responsible for developing Terraspring's business plan, establishing the brand, and for launching the company.

6-66. The principle goals of the new venture will be to offer tailored financial products and meeting the needs of the community.

6-67. Nestle Waters North America are the number one bottled water company in the U.S. and Canada.

6-68. The reason egg prices dropped sharply is because of a Post Easter reduction in demand.

6-69. Joining bank officials during the announcement of the program were U.S. congressman Luis V. Guitierrez, Carlos Manuel Sada Solana, General Consul of Mexico in the Midwest, and "Don Francisco", the leading hispanic entertainment figure in the United States and Latin America.

6-70. The summer advertising campaign is the most unique in 7-Eleven's history.

6-71. Upon introducing it's new Quadruple Fudge flavor, consumers are expected to flock to Baskin-Robbins ice cream parlors.

6-72. The signing of a Trade Pact between the european union and Chile, is being delayed by european negotiators who insist the deal includes an agreement requiring Chile to stop using the names Cognac, Champagne, and Burgundy.

6-73. Federal Trade commissioner, Mrs. Sheila F. Anthony called on the dietary supplement industry to institute better self regulation, and called on the media to refuse ads containing claims that are obviously false.

6-74. Founded in 1971, GSD&M has grown to become a nationally-acclaimed advertising agency with more than 500 employees and having billings of over $1 billion dollars.

6-75. Although marketing may seem to be the easier place to cut costs during a downturn its actually the last place you should look to make strategic cuts.

6-76. After closing their plant in Mecosta county, Green Mountain will have less than 200 employees.

6-77. The purchasing needs of professional's differ from blue collar workers.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C) or download the document and make the corrections in your word-processing software.

SUBJECT: My trip back East

Dear George:

I went back to New York for apresentation the 15th of this month and I found it very informative. The sponsor of my visat was Vern Grouper. Vern is the Manager of IS at headquarters; that is, their centralized information systems operation. They've got quite a bit of power out there. And they do encourage us to utilize their capabilities, there services, and experiences to whatever extent will be beneficial to us. However, you could say it would be my observation that although they have a tremendous amount of computing capability that capability is directed toward a business dimension very different than ours and unlike anything we have. However, their are certain services that might be performed in our behalf by headquarters. For example, we could utilize people such as Vern to come and address our IS advisory group since I am planning on convening that group on a monthly basis.

By the way, I need to talk to you about the IS advicory group when you get a chance. I have 1 or 2 thoughts about some new approaches we can take with it I'd like to run by you if you don't mind. Its not too complicated just some simple ideas.

Let me know what you think of this idea about Vern coming here. If you like it than I will go ahead and set things in motion with Vern.

Sincerely,

John

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

6-78. How can businesses make use of social networks such as Facebook for business communication? [LO-2]

6-79. Why does a personal style of writing help bloggers build stronger relationships with audiences? [LO-6]

Endnotes

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7 Writing Routine and Positive Messages

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Outline an effective strategy for writing routine business requests.
2. Describe three common types of routine requests.
3. Outline an effective strategy for writing routine replies, routine messages, and positive messages.
4. Describe seven common types of routine replies and positive messages.

MyLab Business Communication

If your instructor is using MyLab Business Communication, visit **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for videos, simulations, and writing exercises.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"I delete more than half my new messages before I even start reading email."
—Jill Duffy, digital productivity expert and author of *Get Organized: How to Clean Up Your Messy Digital Life*

Jill Duffy's observation about her morning email habits offers several insights into daily communication in the workplace. First, many of the routine messages that businesspeople receive every day are perceived to have little or no value. After studying her incoming email over a period of time, Duffy determined that 60 to 70 percent of messages either didn't require her attention or didn't offer information she needed in order to do her work.[1] Second, her rapid-fire deletions suggest the importance of good subject lines with email. If a subject line doesn't promise anything of value, chances are she deletes the message without even reading it. Third, in your roles as a sender and as a receiver, you need to develop the ability to process routine messages quickly in order to avoid getting bogged down.

This chapter will equip you with practical strategies for developing a wide variety of routine messages. You'll learn how to write more effective messages in less time, so you'll be more productive and increase the odds that your routine messages will be noticed, read, and acted on.

Photo Courtesy of Jill Duffy

Jill Duffy offers research-based advice on handling the barrage of routine messages that most business communicators deal with on the job.

Strategy for Routine Requests

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Outline an effective strategy for writing routine business requests.

Much of your daily communication will involve routine requests for information or action. By applying a simple strategy with the direct approach, you'll be able to generate effective requests quickly:

- Use the opening to make your request.
- Use the body of the message to explain and justify your request, as needed.
- Use the close to confirm details and express appreciation.

The direct approach is fine for most routine requests, routine messages, and positive messages.

For the typical routine request, your audience will be inclined to respond as you ask, so the direct approach is fine. For unusual, unexpected, or even unwelcome requests, the indirect approach is a better choice. Chapter 9 covers persuasive messages, for those times when a request goes beyond the routine.

OPEN WITH YOUR REQUEST

Take care that your direct approach doesn't come across as abrupt or tactless.

With routine requests, you can make your request at the beginning of the message. Just be sure to be clear and courteous:

- **Pay attention to tone.** Instead of demanding action ("Send me the latest version of the budget spreadsheet"), show respect by using words such as *please*, *could you*, or *I would appreciate*.
- **If appropriate, acknowledge that you are asking for someone's time and effort.** Even if responding to your request is part of someone's job responsibilities, a few words of acknowledgment will help maintain a positive relationship: "I know you're swamped this week, but when you have a second, could you send me. . ."
- **Be specific.** State precisely what you want. Doing so will save time for both you and the other party. For example, if you request the latest market data from your research department, be sure to say whether you want a 1-page summary or 100 pages of raw data.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Insight into mobile strategies for routine communication

ClickSoftware's MobileFever blog discusses a range of topics on mobile business communication. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

EXPLAIN AND JUSTIFY YOUR REQUEST

If you have an unusual or complex request, break it down into specific, individual questions that are easier to process.

Use the body of your message to explain or justify your request, as needed. Make the explanation a smooth and logical outgrowth of your opening remarks. If complying with the request could benefit the reader, be sure to mention that. If you have an unusual or complex request, break it down into specific, individual questions so that the reader can address each one separately. This consideration shows respect for your audience's time and will help them respond more accurately to your request.

REQUEST SPECIFIC ACTION IN A COURTEOUS CLOSE

Close a request with
- Deadlines and other information that will help the reader respond
- Information about how you can be reached
- An expression of appreciation

Close your message with three important elements: (1) deadlines and other important information that will help the reader respond, (2) information about how you can be reached (if it isn't obvious), and (3) an expression of appreciation or goodwill. "Please send the figures by April 5 so that I can return first-quarter results to you before the April 15 board meeting. I appreciate your help." When you says thanks, avoid the phrase "thank you in advance," which suggests that your request is more of a command and the reader doesn't have any choice but to comply with it.

Common Examples of Routine Requests

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe three common types of routine requests.

The most common types of routine messages are asking for information or action, asking for recommendations, and making claims and requesting adjustments.

ASKING FOR INFORMATION OR ACTION

Most of your routine requests will involve asking someone to provide information or take some specific action. As you plan your message, think about what you can do to make responding to the request as easy as possible for your recipients. Doing so is courteous and respectful, and it will likely prompt better and faster responses that will benefit you, too. If it's relevant, point out any benefits of complying with your request, whether it's a personal benefit to those involved or something that will benefit your organization as a whole. Naturally, be sure to adapt your request to your audience and the situation (see Figure 7.1 on the next page).

As you plan a request, think about what you can do to make it as easy as possible for your recipients to respond.

ASKING FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Employers, business partners, investors, lenders, and other organizations often ask applicants to supply references before hiring or promoting people, extending credit, awarding contracts, or granting scholarships or other benefits. Consequently, at various stages of your career you may need to ask people who know you in a professional or personal capacity to provide a recommendation or serve as a reference.

For a variety of reasons, you may need to ask people who know you in a professional or personal capacity to provide you with a recommendation or serve as a reference.

A recommendation usually takes the form of a brief letter or email message that expresses someone's confidence in your ability to perform a job, to fulfill the terms of a contract, or to do whatever the situation entails (see page 175). Serving as a reference often means agreeing to have a phone conversation or email exchange with a representative from the hiring company or other organization involved, during which the person will answer questions and provide background information about you. (Before you volunteer anyone's name as a reference, you must ask permission to do so.)

Such requests are usually routine, but you shouldn't always assume a positive response, and a negative response may not be related to your qualifications. You are asking busy people to devote time and energy on your behalf, and you're asking them to put their own reputations on the line. In some cases, the person may not know you well enough or may not believe that the opportunity you are pursuing is a good fit for you. In addition, when it comes to job references, some organizations don't allow their staff to provide anything beyond confirmation of employment.

When requesting recommendations, remember you are asking people to put their own reputations on the line.

Open your message by clearly stating why the recommendation is required (if it's not for a job, be sure to explain its purpose) and what you would like your reader to do on your behalf. If you haven't had contact with the person for some time, use the opening to trigger memories of the relationship you had, including dates and any special events or accomplishments that might bring a clear and favorable picture of you to mind.

Use the body to provide information that will make it easy for the recipient to comply with your request:

- The nature of the opportunity you are pursuing
- The action you are asking for (such as writing a message or agreeing to answer questions)
- Information that you would like the recommendation to convey, such as your work experience, skills, training, character, and fitness for the opportunity
- Full contact information if you are asking the person to send a letter or email message
- The application deadline or other date by which you need the recommendation

If it gives the recipient a helpful overview of your career since your last contact, consider including an up-to-date résumé.

Close your message with a sincere thank you. If you are requesting a printed letter, always be sure to enclose a stamped, preaddressed envelope as a convenience to the other party. Figure 7.2 on page 171 provides an example of a request that follows these guidelines.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

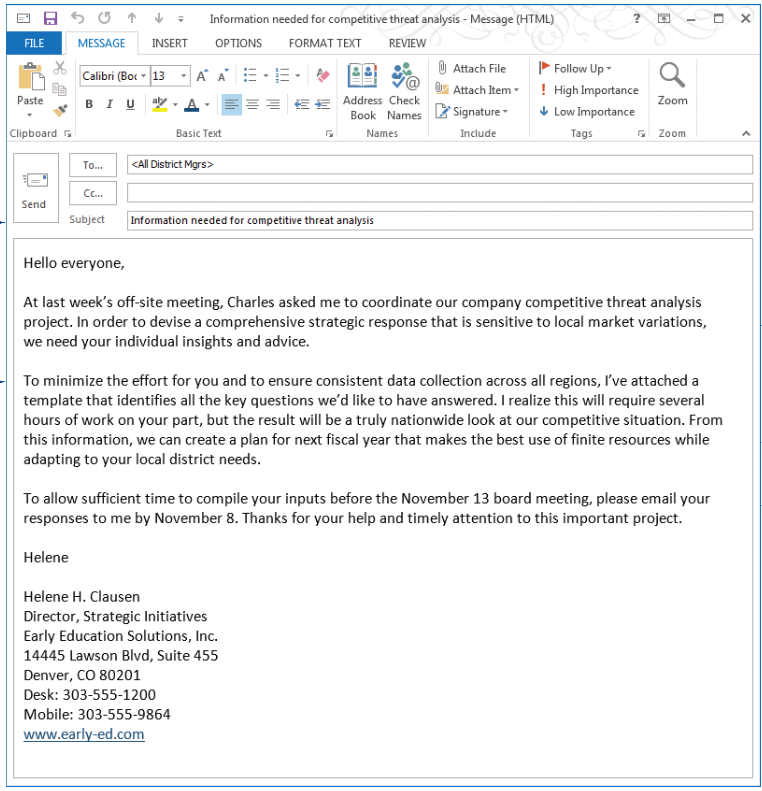
LinkedIn's advice for college students

Follow these tips to get the most from LinkedIn, including the most appropriate and effective ways to ask for recommendations. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

1 Plan →	2 Write →	3 Complete
Analyze the Situation Verify that the purpose is to request information from company managers. **Gather Information** Gather accurate, complete information about local competitive threats. **Choose Medium and Channel** Email is effective for this internal message, and it allows the attachment of a Word document to collect the information. **Organize the Information** Clarify that the main idea is collecting information that will lead to a better competitive strategy, which will in turn help the various district managers.	**Adapt to Your Audience** Show sensitivity to audience needs with a "you" attitude, politeness, positive emphasis, and bias-free language. The writer already has credibility as manager of the department. **Compose the Message** Maintain a style that is conversational but still businesslike, using plain English and appropriate voice.	**Revise the Message** Evaluate content and review readability; avoid unnecessary details. **Produce the Message** Simple email format is all the design this message needs. **Proofread the Message** Review for errors in layout, spelling, and mechanics. **Distribute the Message** Deliver the message via the company's email system.

The informative subject line alerts the audience to an important request.

Clausen acknowledges that responding to the request will require some work but emphasizes that the result will benefit everyone.


Information needed for competitive threat analysis - Message (HTML)

To... <All District Mgrs>

Cc...

Subject Information needed for competitive threat analysis

Hello everyone,

At last week's off-site meeting, Charles asked me to coordinate our company competitive threat analysis project. In order to devise a comprehensive strategic response that is sensitive to local market variations, we need your individual insights and advice.

To minimize the effort for you and to ensure consistent data collection across all regions, I've attached a template that identifies all the key questions we'd like to have answered. I realize this will require several hours of work on your part, but the result will be a truly nationwide look at our competitive situation. From this information, we can create a plan for next fiscal year that makes the best use of finite resources while adapting to your local district needs.

To allow sufficient time to compile your inputs before the November 13 board meeting, please email your responses to me by November 8. Thanks for your help and timely attention to this important project.

Helene

Helene H. Clausen
Director, Strategic Initiatives
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Mobile: 303-555-9864
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The opening explains the context of the message, then gets to the point of the request.

The body explains the benefit of responding to the request.

The close provides a clear deadline, then concludes in a courteous manner.

Figure 7.1 Routine Message Requesting Action
In this email request to district managers across the country, Helene Clausen asks them to fill out an attached information collection form. Although the request is not unusual and responding to it is part of the managers' responsibility, Clausen asks for their help in a courteous manner and points out the benefits of responding.
Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation.

1 Plan → **2 Write** → **3 Complete**

1 Plan

Analyze the Situation
Verify that the purpose is to request a recommendation letter from a college professor.

Gather Information
Gather information on classes and dates to help the reader recall you and to clarify the position you seek.

Choose Medium and Channel
The letter format gives this message an appropriate level of formality, although many professors prefer to be contacted by email.

Organize the Information
Messages like this are common and expected, so a direct approach is fine.

2 Write

Adapt to Your Audience
Show sensitivity to audience needs with a "you" attitude, politeness, positive emphasis, and bias-free language.

Compose the Message
Style is respectful and businesslike, while still using plain English and appropriate voice.

3 Complete

Revise the Message
Evaluate content and review readability; avoid unnecessary details.

Produce the Message
Simple letter format is all the design this message needs.

Proofread the Message
Review for errors in layout, spelling, and mechanics.

Distribute the Message
Deliver the message via postal mail or email if you have the professor's email address.

1181 Ashport Drive
Tate Springs, TN 38101
March 14, 2019

Professor Lyndon Kenton
School of Business
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Knoxville, TN 37916

Dear Professor Kenton:

I recently interviewed with Strategic Investments and have been called for a second interview for their Analyst Training Program (ATP). They have requested at least one recommendation from a professor, and I immediately thought of you. May I have a letter of recommendation from you?

← The opening states the purpose of the letter and makes the request, assuming the reader will want to comply.

Tucker includes information near the opening to refresh her professor's memory. →

As you may recall, I took FINC 425, Investment and Portfolio Management, from you during the Fall 2017 semester. I was fascinated by the methods of risk and return analysis you presented, and the class confirmed my decision to pursue a career in investment management.

My enclosed résumé includes all my relevant work experience and volunteer activities. I would also like to add that I've handled the financial planning for our family since my father passed away several years ago, and I have increasingly applied my business training in deciding what stocks or bonds to trade. This, I believe, has given me a practical edge over others who may be applying for the same job.

← The body refers to the enclosed résumé and mentions experience that could set the applicant apart from other candidates—information the professor could use in writing the recommendation.

She provides a deadline for response and includes information about the person who is expecting the recommendation. →

If possible, Ms. Blackmon in Human Resources needs to receive your letter by March 30. For your convenience, I've enclosed a preaddressed, stamped envelope.

I appreciate your time and effort in writing this letter of recommendation for me. It will be great to put my education to work, and I'll keep you informed of my progress. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

← The close is warm and respectful.

Sincerely,

Joanne Tucker

Joanne Tucker

Enclosure

Figure 7.2 Effective Request for a Recommendation
This writer uses a direct approach when asking for a recommendation from a former professor. Note how she takes care to refresh the professor's memory because she took the class a year and a half ago. She also indicates the date by which the letter is needed and points to the enclosure of a stamped, preaddressed envelope.

MAKING CLAIMS AND REQUESTING ADJUSTMENTS

A *claim* is a formal complaint; an *adjustment* is a remedy you ask for to settle a claim.

When writing a claim or requesting an adjustment
- Explain the problem and give details
- Provide backup information
- Request specific action

MOBILE APP
Send Anywhere is a secure file-transfer app that lets you send files of any size.

If you're unhappy with a product or service, you can make a **claim** (a formal complaint) or request an **adjustment** (a settlement of a claim). In either case, it's important to maintain a professional tone in all your communication, no matter how angry or frustrated you may be. Keeping your cool will help you get the situation resolved sooner.

Open with a clear and calm statement of the problem, along with your request. In the body, give a complete and specific explanation of the situation. Provide any information the recipient needs in order to verify your complaint. In the close, politely request specific action or convey a sincere desire to find a solution. And, if appropriate, suggest that the business relationship will continue if the problem is solved satisfactorily. Be prepared to back up your claim with invoices, sales receipts, canceled checks, dated correspondence, and any other relevant documents. Send copies and keep the originals for your files.

If the remedy is obvious, tell your reader what you expect or would like to have happen. If you're uncertain about the precise nature of the trouble, you could ask the company to make an assessment and then advise you on how the situation could be fixed. Be sure to provide up-to-date contact information so you can be reached by phone or email. Compare the ineffective and effective versions in Figure 7.3.

Strategy for Routine Replies, Routine Messages, and Positive Messages

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Outline an effective strategy for writing routine replies, routine messages, and positive messages.

If a reply or unsolicited message is unexpected and could have significant negative consequences, consider using the indirect approach instead (see Chapter 8).

You have several goals with routine and positive messages: to communicate the information answer all questions, provide all required details, and leave your reader with a good impression of you and your firm.

The direct approach is an appropriate and efficient way to structure these messages because your readers will range from neutral to receptive. Whenever you have significant or unexpected negative information to share, the indirect approach covered in Chapter 8 is more appropriate.

OPEN WITH THE MAIN IDEA

With the direct approach, open with a clear and concise expression of the main idea or good news.

Even with the direct approach, it's often helpful to open with a few words of "socializing" before getting to your main idea.

In most cases, you can get right to the point with these routine messages. Of course, you'll want to adapt your opening to the specific situation. If the message is unexpected or you haven't been in contact with the reader for a long time, a brief explanation of why you're writing is appropriate.

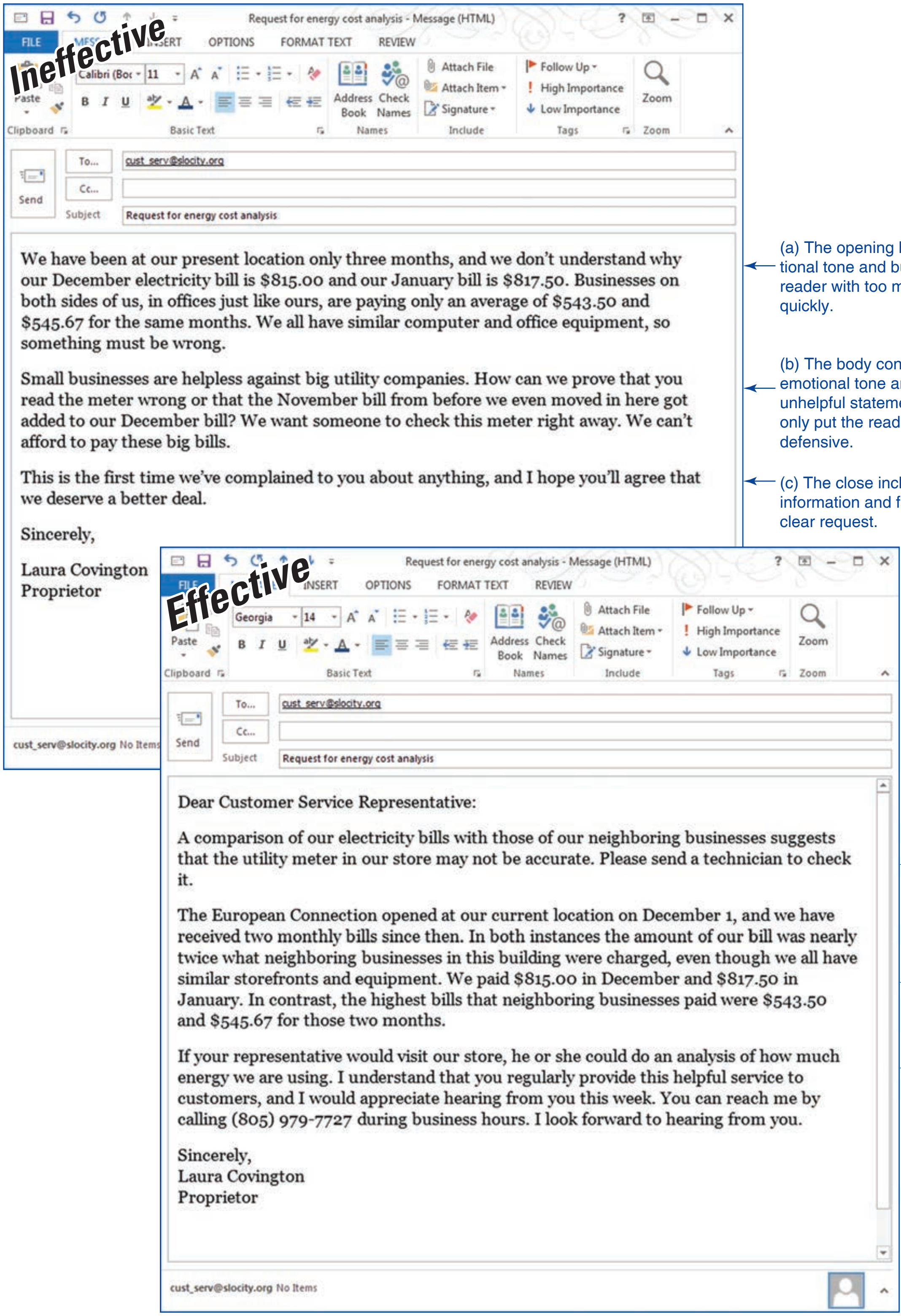
Depending on the nature of the message, a few words of "socializing" can be a good way to foster a positive working relationship—just as you usually would do on the phone or in person. In this example, a manager is writing to let a subordinate know that her proposal has been approved. The tone is upbeat, and after a brief thanks, the writer moves directly to the good news.

> Hi Olivia,
>
> Thanks for your proposal to improve employee orientation. You've made some great suggestions, and I will meet with HR this week to plan how we can implement your ideas.

In the following example, the customer service manager of a blog-hosting company is alerting customers about a potential disruption of service:

> Dear customer:
>
> To maintain the high level of reliability you've come to expect from SpiderHost, we are transitioning our hosting platform to a new cloud-based architecture. The change will take place this Saturday between 1:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m., and your site may be unavailable for a brief period during the switchover.

In both examples, the writer gets to the point after a brief introduction that establishes the context of the message and promotes a positive relationship with the reader.



Ineffective

To... cust_serv@slocity.org

Subject: Request for energy cost analysis

We have been at our present location only three months, and we don't understand why our December electricity bill is $815.00 and our January bill is $817.50. Businesses on both sides of us, in offices just like ours, are paying only an average of $543.50 and $545.67 for the same months. We all have similar computer and office equipment, so something must be wrong.

Small businesses are helpless against big utility companies. How can we prove that you read the meter wrong or that the November bill from before we even moved in here got added to our December bill? We want someone to check this meter right away. We can't afford to pay these big bills.

This is the first time we've complained to you about anything, and I hope you'll agree that we deserve a better deal.

Sincerely,

Laura Covington
Proprietor

(a) The opening has an emotional tone and burdens the reader with too many facts too quickly.

(b) The body continues with the emotional tone and includes unhelpful statements that will only put the reader on the defensive.

(c) The close includes irrelevant information and fails to make a clear request.

Effective

To... cust_serv@slocity.org

Subject: Request for energy cost analysis

Dear Customer Service Representative:

A comparison of our electricity bills with those of our neighboring businesses suggests that the utility meter in our store may not be accurate. Please send a technician to check it.

The European Connection opened at our current location on December 1, and we have received two monthly bills since then. In both instances the amount of our bill was nearly twice what neighboring businesses in this building were charged, even though we all have similar storefronts and equipment. We paid $815.00 in December and $817.50 in January. In contrast, the highest bills that neighboring businesses paid were $543.50 and $545.67 for those two months.

If your representative would visit our store, he or she could do an analysis of how much energy we are using. I understand that you regularly provide this helpful service to customers, and I would appreciate hearing from you this week. You can reach me by calling (805) 979-7727 during business hours. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Laura Covington
Proprietor

(a) The opening clearly and calmly states the problem.

(b) The body presents details clearly, concisely, and completely.

(c) The close requests specific action and provides contact information to make responding easy.

Figure 7.3 Ineffective and Effective Versions of a Claim

Note the difference in both tone and information content in these two versions. The ineffective version is emotional and unprofessional, whereas the effective version communicates calmly and clearly.

Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation.

PROVIDE NECESSARY DETAILS AND EXPLANATION

Use the body of the message to expand on the main idea from the opening, as needed.

Use the body to expand on the opening so that readers get all the information they need. As you provide the details, maintain the supportive tone established in the opening. The writer in the previous example might continue by explaining how the change will help customers and what they can expect during the transition:

> With this new architecture, we will be able to expand bandwidth at the flip of a switch whenever blog traffic increases. Even if traffic to your site jumps literally overnight, we can keep delivering as much bandwidth as you need.
>
> We are staging the switchover in a way that should minimize downtime for customer sites, and we don't expect any site to be unavailable for more than two or three seconds. If people do visit your site during that narrow window, they will see a message asking them to try again in a moment or two.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

Using Twitter for routine customer communication

These 10 tips can help any company respond to the growing number of routine requests delivered on Twitter. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

END WITH A COURTEOUS CLOSE

Use the close to make sure readers have all the information they need in order to take action or otherwise respond to the message.

The close is usually short and simple, because you're leaving things on a neutral or positive note and not usually asking for the reader to do anything. Often, a simple thank you is all you need. However, if follow-up action is required or expected, use the close to identify who will do what and when that action will take place.

Common Examples of Routine Replies, Routine Messages, and Positive Messages

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe seven common types of routine replies and positive messages.

Most routine messages fall into seven categories: answers to routine requests, grants of claims and requests for adjustment, recommendations, routine informational messages, instructions, good-news announcements, and goodwill messages.

ANSWERING REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION OR ACTION

Every professional answers requests for information or action from time to time. If the response is straightforward, the direct approach is appropriate. Keep the message brief and confirm any expectations, such as when you will provide information or perform a task. However, if you need to give an unexpected negative response to a request, consider the indirect approach covered in Chapter 8. For positive responses, a prompt, gracious, and thorough response will enhance how people think about you and the organization you represent. When you're answering requests from a potential customer or other decision maker, look for subtle and respectful ways to encourage a decision in your favor.

GRANTING CLAIMS AND REQUESTS FOR ADJUSTMENT

Responding to mistakes in a courteous, reader-focused way helps repair important business relationships.

Even the best-run companies make mistakes, and each of these events represents a turning point in your relationship with your customer. If you handle the situation well, your customer is likely to be even more loyal than before because you've proven that you're serious about customer satisfaction. However, if a customer believes that you mishandled a complaint, the situation could get even worse. Dissatisfied customers often take their business elsewhere without notice and tell numerous friends, colleagues, and social media contacts about the negative experience. A transaction that might be worth only a few dollars by itself could cost you many times that amount in lost business.

Your specific response to a customer complaint depends on your company's policies for resolving such issues and whether the company, the customer, or some third party is at fault. In general, take the following steps:

- Acknowledge receipt of the customer's claim or complaint.
- Sympathize with the customer's inconvenience or frustration.
- Take (or assign) personal responsibility for setting matters straight.
- Explain how you have resolved, or plan to resolve, the situation.
- Take steps to repair the relationship.
- Follow up to verify that your response was satisfactory.

In addition to taking these positive steps, maintain a professional demeanor. Don't blame colleagues by name, don't make exaggerated or insincere apologies, don't imply that the customer is at fault, and don't promise more than you can deliver.

Communication about a claim is a delicate matter when the customer is clearly at fault. If you choose to grant the claim, open with that good news. However, the body needs special attention because you want to discourage similar claims in the future. Close in a courteous manner that expresses your appreciation for the customer's business (see Figure 7.4 on the next page).

To grant a claim when the customer is at fault, try to discourage future mistakes without offending the customer.

PROVIDING RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERENCES

Letters of recommendation used to be considered a fairly routine matter, but employment recommendations and references can raise complex legal issues. Employees have sued employers and individual managers for providing negative information or refusing to provide letters of recommendation, and employers have sued other employers for failing to disclose negative information about job candidates. Before you write a letter of recommendation for a former employee or provide information in response to another employer's background check, make sure you understand your company's policies. Your company may refuse to provide anything more than dates of employment and other basic details.[2]

Recommendation letters are vulnerable to legal complications, so consult your company's legal department before writing one.

If you decide to write a letter of recommendation or respond to a request for information about a job candidate, your goal is to convince readers that the person being recommended has the characteristics necessary for the job, assignment, or other objective the person is seeking. A successful recommendation letter contains a number of relevant details (see Figure 7.5 on page 177):

- The candidate's full name
- The position or other objective the candidate is seeking
- The nature of your relationship with the candidate
- Facts and evidence relevant to the candidate and the opportunity
- A comparison of this candidate's potential with that of peers, if available (for example, "Ms. Jonasson consistently ranked in the top 10 percent of our national salesforce.")
- Your overall evaluation of the candidate's suitability for the opportunity

Keep in mind that every time you write a recommendation, you're putting your own reputation on the line. If the person's shortcomings are so pronounced that you don't think he or she is a good fit for the job, the only choice is to not write the letter at all. Unless your relationship with the person warrants an explanation, simply suggest that someone else might be in a better position to provide a recommendation. (For more advice on turning down requests for recommendations, see pages 202–204.)

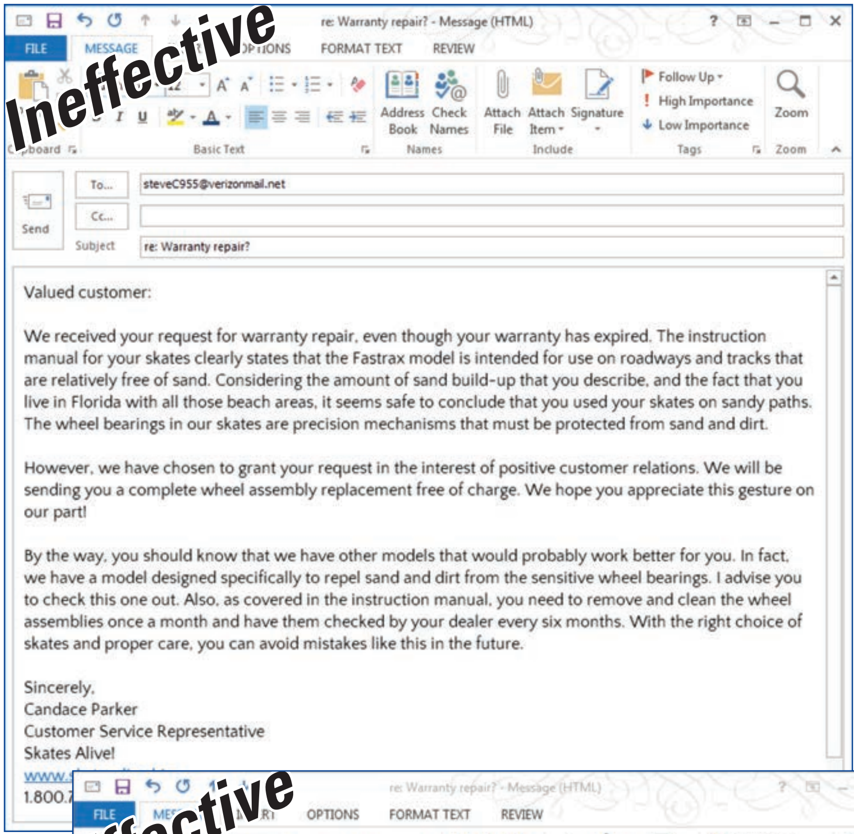
REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Get expert tips on writing (or requesting) a letter of recommendation

Find helpful advice on employment recommendations, academic recommendations, and character references. Go to **real-timeupdates .com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

SHARING ROUTINE INFORMATION

Many messages involve sharing routine information, such as project updates and order status notifications. Use the opening of these routine messages to state the purpose and



Valued customer:

We received your request for warranty repair, even though your warranty has expired. The instruction manual for your skates clearly states that the Fastrax model is intended for use on roadways and tracks that are relatively free of sand. Considering the amount of sand build-up that you describe, and the fact that you live in Florida with all those beach areas, it seems safe to conclude that you used your skates on sandy paths. The wheel bearings in our skates are precision mechanisms that must be protected from sand and dirt.

However, we have chosen to grant your request in the interest of positive customer relations. We will be sending you a complete wheel assembly replacement free of charge. We hope you appreciate this gesture on our part!

By the way, you should know that we have other models that would probably work better for you. In fact, we have a model designed specifically to repel sand and dirt from the sensitive wheel bearings. I advise you to check this one out. Also, as covered in the instruction manual, you need to remove and clean the wheel assemblies once a month and have them checked by your dealer every six months. With the right choice of skates and proper care, you can avoid mistakes like this in the future.

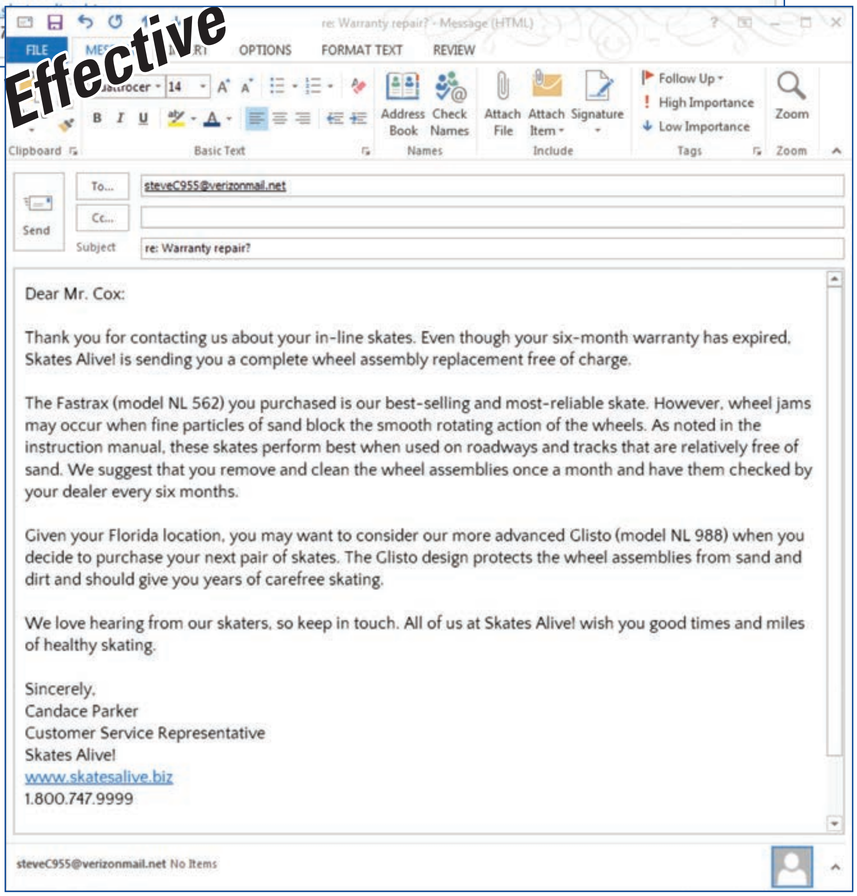
Sincerely,
Candace Parker
Customer Service Representative
Skates Alive!

(a) The salutation is cold and impersonal.

(b) The tone is immediately accusatory, and the opening paragraph goes on to insult the customer for not following instructions.

(c) The second paragraph finally delivers the good news but does so in a self-congratulatory way that is likely to destroy whatever goodwill the gesture builds.

(d) The concluding paragraph continues with the high-handed tone and ends on a negative note.



Dear Mr. Cox:

Thank you for contacting us about your in-line skates. Even though your six-month warranty has expired, Skates Alive! is sending you a complete wheel assembly replacement free of charge.

The Fastrax (model NL 562) you purchased is our best-selling and most-reliable skate. However, wheel jams may occur when fine particles of sand block the smooth rotating action of the wheels. As noted in the instruction manual, these skates perform best when used on roadways and tracks that are relatively free of sand. We suggest that you remove and clean the wheel assemblies once a month and have them checked by your dealer every six months.

Given your Florida location, you may want to consider our more advanced Glisto (model NL 988) when you decide to purchase your next pair of skates. The Glisto design protects the wheel assemblies from sand and dirt and should give you years of carefree skating.

We love hearing from our skaters, so keep in touch. All of us at Skates Alive! wish you good times and miles of healthy skating.

Sincerely,
Candace Parker
Customer Service Representative
Skates Alive!
www.skatesalive.biz
1.800.747.9999

(a) The salutation is personal and respectful.

(b) The writer opens by thanking the customer and then delivers the good news.

(c) The second paragraph explains the cause of the problem and gently suggests that the customer could have prevented it, but does so without insulting or accusing.

(d) The third paragraph offers a specific suggestion for the customer's next purchase and does so in a positive way, then the closing ends the message on an upbeat, forward looking note.

Figure 7.4 Responding to a Claim When the Buyer Is at Fault

Responding to a claim when the buyer is at fault is a positive gesture, so the content and tone of the message need to reflect that. After all, there's no point in fostering a positive relationship through actions but then undermining it through negative communication. Notice how the ineffective version sounds like a crabby parent who gives in to a child's demand but sends a mixed message by being highly critical anyway. The effective version is much more subtle, letting the customer know how to take care of his skates without blaming or insulting him.

Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation.

Point1 Promotions

105 E. Madison
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
tel: 800-747-9786
email: info@point1promo.net
www.point1promo.net

November 14, 2019

Ms. Clarice Gailey
Director of Operations
McNally and Associates, Inc.
8688 Southgate Ave.
Augusta, GA 30906

Dear Ms. Gailey:

LeClerc specifies the duration and nature of the relationship to give credibility to her evaluation.

I am pleased to recommend Talvin Biswas for the marketing position at McNally and Associates. Mr. Biswas has worked with Point1 Promotions as an intern for the past two summers while working toward his degree in marketing and advertising. His duties included customer correspondence, web content updates, and direct-mail campaign planning.

The opening clearly states the candidate's full name and the specific purpose of the letter.

As his supervisor, in addition to knowing his work here, I also know that Mr. Biswas has served as secretary for the International Business Association at the University of Michigan. He tutored other international students in the university's writing center. His fluency in three languages (English, French, and Hindi) and thorough knowledge of other cultures will make him an immediate contributor to your international operations.

The body continues with specific examples to support the writer's positive evaluation.

Mr. Biswas is a thoughtful and careful professional who will not hesitate to contribute ideas when invited to do so. In addition, because Mr. Biswas learns quickly, he will learn your company's routine with ease.

Mr. Biswas will make an excellent addition to your staff at McNally and Associates. If I can provide any additional information, please call me at the number above. If you prefer to communicate by email, my address is angela_leclerc@point1promo.net.

The close summarizes the writer's recommendation and invites further communication.

Sincerely,

Angela LeClerc

Angela LeClerc
Vice President, Marketing

Pointers for Writing Recommendation Letters

- Take great care to avoid a lawsuit (either for including too much negative information or for omitting negative information).
- Follow your company's policies in all details; verify only the dates of employment and job titles if that is all the information your company allows to be released.
- Release information only to people who have written authorization from the former employee.
- Consider collaborating with the former employee so that the contents of the letter meet both of your needs.
- If you are unable or unwilling to represent your company in a professional capacity, offer to be a personal reference instead.
- Comment only on your direct experience working with the former employee.
- Limit your remarks to provable facts; avoid hyperbole.
- Ask your human resource department to review the letter before you send it.

Figure 7.5 Effective Recommendation Letter
This letter clearly states the nature of the writer's relationship to the candidate and provides specific examples to support the writer's endorsements.

briefly mention the nature of the information you are providing. Give the necessary details in the body and end your message with a courteous close.

Most routine communications like this are neutral, so you don't have to take special steps in anticipation of emotional reactions from readers. However, make sure you've considered the likely response of all your readers and addressed the full range of reactions. For example, announcing that the company is opening an on-site daycare facility will likely be welcome news to those employees who have children. But what if employees without children feel it is unfair to spend money on a benefit that helps some workers but not others? These employees might prefer help with elder care or some other need, for example. If you anticipate a mixed reaction, looks for ways to put the news in a positive context for everyone—such as pointing out that the daycare will reduce the amount

When sharing routine information

- State the purpose at the beginning and briefly mention the nature of the information you are providing.
- Provide the necessary details.
- End with a courteous close.
- Make sure you consider the full range of potential audience responses.

of time parents need to take off from work, which will reduce the workload burden on everyone else.

WRITING INSTRUCTIONS

Writing instructions for employees or customers is another common communication task. For major projects such as user manuals, companies often employ specialist technical writers, but you could be involved in writing shorter instructions on a variety of topics. Follow these steps to create clear and effective instructions on any topic:

To write effective instructions on any subject, start by figuring out how much your intended readers are likely to know about the topic or process.

1. Make sure you understand how much your readers know about the subject. A common mistake when writing instructions is to assume too much knowledge or experience on the part of readers.
2. Provide an overview of the procedure. Explain what users will be doing and identify any information or tools they will need in order to complete the procedure.
3. Define any technical terms or acronyms that readers need to understand.
4. Divide the procedure into discrete steps, with each step focusing on a single task.
5. Tell readers what to expect when they complete each step so they know they've done it correctly (for example, "If the green LED is on, you've made a secure connection").
6. Test the instructions on someone from the target audience.
7. Whenever possible, provide a way for readers to ask for help.

ANNOUNCING GOOD NEWS

A news release or press release is a message (usually routine, but not always) designed to share information with the news media, although many are now written with customers and other stakeholders in mind as well.

To develop and maintain good relationships, smart companies recognize that it's good business to spread the word about positive developments. Such developments can include opening new facilities, hiring a top executive, introducing new products or services, or sponsoring community events. Because good news is always welcome, use the direct approach (see Figure 7.6).

External good-news announcements are often communicated in a **news release**, also known as a *press release*, a specialized document used to share relevant information with the news media. (News releases are also used to announce negative news, such as plant closings.) In most companies, news releases are usually prepared or at least supervised by specially trained writers in the public relations department. The content follows the customary pattern for a positive message: good news followed by details and a positive close. However, traditional news releases have a critical difference: You're not writing directly

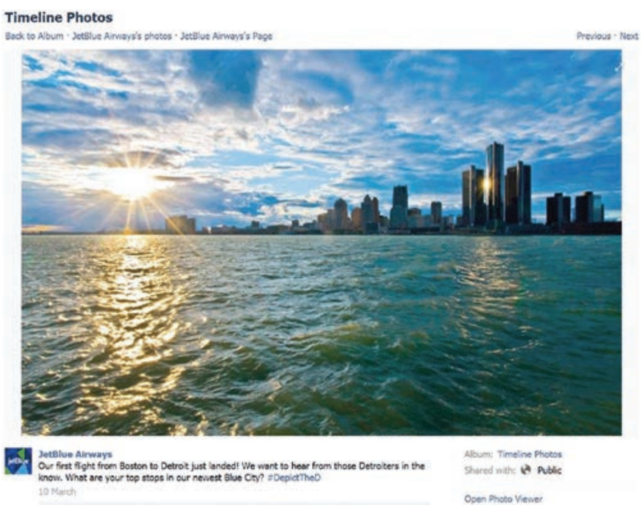


Figure 7.6 Announcing Good News
Encouraging online conversations is an important element of brand socialization. In this Facebook post celebrating its inaugural flight from Boston to Detroit, JetBlue asked residents of Detroit to recommend their favorite places around the city.
Source: JetBlue Airways.

to the ultimate audience (such as the readers of a newspaper); you're trying to interest an editor or a reporter in a story, and that person will then write the material that is eventually read by the larger audience.

Traditionally, news releases were crafted in a way to provide information to reporters, who would then write their own articles if the subject matter was interesting to their readers. Thanks to the Internet and social media, however, the nature of the news release has changed. Many companies now view it as a general-purpose tool for communicating directly with customers and other audiences, creating *direct-to-consumer news releases*.[3] Many of these are considered *social media releases* because they include social networking links, tweetable key points, and other sharable content.

A social media release includes share-ready content that is easy to reuse in blog posts, tweets, and other social media formats.

FOSTERING GOODWILL

All business messages should be written with an eye toward fostering positive relationships with audiences, but some messages are written specifically to build goodwill. You can use these messages to enhance your relationships with customers, colleagues, and other businesspeople by sending friendly, even unexpected, notes with no direct business purpose (see Figure 7.7). Whether you're thanking an employee for a job well done or congratulating a colleague for a personal or professional achievement, the small effort to send a goodwill message can have a positive and lasting effect on the people around you.

Goodwill is the positive feeling that encourages people to maintain a business relationship.

Sending Congratulations

One prime opportunity for sending goodwill messages is to congratulate individuals or companies for significant business achievements. Other reasons for sending congratulations include highlights in people's personal lives, such as weddings, births, graduations, and success in nonbusiness competitions. You may congratulate business acquaintances on their own achievements or on the accomplishments of a family member. You may also take note of personal events, even if you don't know the reader well. If you're already friendly with the reader, a more personal tone is appropriate.

Offering congratulations to companies or individuals for significant achievements is a good opportunity to build goodwill.

Sending Messages of Appreciation

An important leadership quality is the ability to recognize the contributions of employees, colleagues, suppliers, and other associates. Your praise does more than just make the person feel good; it encourages further excellence. A message of appreciation may also become an

An effective message of appreciation documents a person's contributions in a meaningful way.

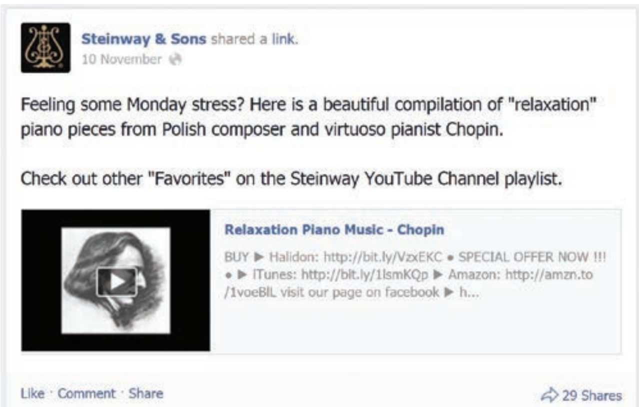


Figure 7.7 Goodwill Messages
Goodwill messages serve a variety of business functions. Fans who follow Steinway on Facebook love great pianos and great piano music. In this post, the company offers its fan community something of value—a playlist of relaxing piano music as a Monday mood booster. The post doesn't attempt to sell anything (the "Buy" link shown in the video capture is for the album itself and isn't part of Steinway's message). It's just a way of fostering goodwill among fellow music lovers.
Source: Steinway & Sons.

MOBILE APP
INKredible gives you the convenience and personal touch of handwriting in a digital format.

important part of someone's personnel file, so provide specific information wherever possible, as in this example:

> Thank you and everyone on your team for the heroic efforts you took to bring our servers back up after last Friday's flood. We were able to restore business right on schedule first thing Monday morning. You went far beyond the level of contractual service in restoring our data center within 16 hours. I would especially like to highlight the contribution of networking specialist Julienne Marks, who worked for 12 straight hours to reconnect our Internet service. If I can serve as a reference in your future sales activities, please do not hesitate to ask.

Hearing a sincere thank you can do wonders for morale.[4] Moreover, in today's digital communication media environment, a handwritten thank-you note can be a particularly welcome acknowledgment.[5]

Offering Condolences

The primary purpose of condolence messages is to let the audience know that you and the organization you represent care about the person's loss.

Condolence letters are brief personal messages written to comfort someone after the death of a loved one. You may have occasion to offer condolences to employees or other business associates (when the person has lost a family member) or to the family of an employee or business associate (when that person has died).

These messages can feel intimidating to write, but they don't need to be. Follow these three principles: short, simple, and sincere. You don't need to produce a work of literary art. The fact that you are writing sends a message that is as meaningful as anything you can say.

Timing and media choice are important considerations with condolence letters. The sooner your message is received, the more comforting it will be, so don't delay. And unless circumstances absolutely leave you no choice, do not use digital formats. A brief, handwritten note on quality stationery is the best option.

Open a condolence message with a simple expression of sympathy, such as "I am deeply sorry to hear of your loss" or "I am sorry for your loss." How you continue from there depends on the circumstances and your relationships with the deceased and the person to whom you are writing. For example, if you are writing to the husband of a colleague who recently died and you have never met him, you might continue with "Having worked with Janice for more than a decade, I know what a kind and caring person she was." Such a statement accomplishes two goals: explaining why you in particular are writing and letting the recipient know that his loved one was appreciated in the workplace.

Conversely, if you are writing to a colleague who recently lost a loved one, you might continue with "After meeting Warren at last year's company picnic and hearing your stories about his involvement with your son's soccer league and the many other ways he contributed to his community, I know what a special person he was." Sharing brief and positive memories like this adds meaning and depth to your expression of sympathy.

You can conclude with a simple statement such as "My thoughts are with you during this difficult time." If appropriate for the situation and your relationship, you might also include an offer of assistance. "Please call if there is anything I do for you."

Keep your condolence message focused on the recipient, not on your own emotions, and don't offer "life advice" or trite sayings.

As you decide what to include in the message, keep two points in mind. First, make it a personal expression of sympathy, but don't make the whole message about you and your sense of loss. You might be grieving as well, but unless you, the deceased, and the reader were all personally close, don't say things like "I was so devastated to hear the news about Mollie."

Second, don't offer "life advice," and don't include trite sayings that you may have heard or read. At this point, soon after the loss, the recipient probably doesn't want advice, only sympathy. Also, don't bring religion into the discussion unless you have a close personal relationship with the recipient and religion is already a part of it. Otherwise, you risk offending with unwelcome or inappropriate sentiments.

Condolence letters are the most personal business messages you may ever have to write, so they require the utmost in care and respect for your reader. By keeping the messages short, simple, and sincere, you will be able to achieve the right tone.

For the latest information on writing routine and positive messages, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Chapter 7.

The Future of Communication: Communication Bots

The bots are back. Automated bots (short for *robots*) made a small wave a decade or so ago when "chatbots" began appearing on websites to help companies handle online conversations with customers. Ikea's Anna, perhaps the first chatbot to receive widespread attention, was built to answer routine questions from customers looking for advice regarding the chain's furniture products. Other chatbots followed, smartphones gained virtual assistants, and nonchatty bots continued to do automated work of various kinds on the Internet, but bots didn't really catch on as a mainstream technology.

With advances in artificial intelligence and the growing use of messaging systems for both consumer and business communication, however, a new wave of bots as personal assistants has taken off. Major categories of bot technology include *task bots* that perform routine chores within digital systems and *social bots* that mimic human conversation.

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella believes bots will transform technology usage the same way mobile apps have. As bot capability is added to more devices and systems—particularly workgroup messaging systems, where a growing number of employees now conduct increasing amounts of their routine business communication—bots are finally entering the mainstream. If you've ever carried on a Facebook Messenger conversation with the band Maroon 5, for example, you were talking with a bot.

Bots are popular on the widely used Slack workgroup messaging system, where they can do everything from ordering lunch to monitoring the mood of team conversations. The Howdy bot, for example, can perform such tasks as simultaneously interviewing all the members of a project team to give the team leader a real-time status update. On Slack, bots are treated just like human team members in many ways—they can send and receive messages, be assigned tasks, and be invited to join specific groups and communication channels. As bots get better at understanding language, they'll be able to contribute to conversations, such as finding background information that could help solve a problem colleagues are discussing, without anyone asking for their help.

How far this bot revolution will go is anybody's guess, but the appeal of this new generation of digital genies is undeniable. They are more connected to the systems that people use every day on the job, and they can reduce the need to navigate yet another website or learn yet another app in order to get something done. Instead, you just message your bot and let it figure out how to make things happen.[6]

To see a chatbot in action, check out BusCommBot, created by Courtland L. Bovée, one of the authors of this book. Log onto Facebook and search for Bovee & Thill's Business Communication Blog, then on that page, select "Message" under the photo at the top of the page.

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Research the current state of bot communication to identify one way in which the technology is changing or has the potential to change business communication practices. Do you agree with the predictions the experts make? Why or why not?

Chapter Review and Activities

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** to complete the problems marked with this icon ✪.

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: Outline an effective strategy for writing routine business requests.

Follow this approach for writing a routine request:

- Use the opening to make your request. The direct approach is fine for most routine requests, but don't be blunt.
- Use the body of the message to explain and justify your request, as needed.
- Use the close to confirm details such as deadlines and to express appreciation.

Objective 2: Describe three common types of routine requests.

Here are the three most common types of routine requests, along with key tips for successful messages:

- Asking for information or action: Think about what you can do to make the request as easy as possible for your recipients.
- Asking for recommendations: Remember that you are asking people to put their own reputations on the line, and make it easy for them to comply with your request.
- Making claims and requesting adjustments: Open with a clear statement of the problem, give a complete explanation of the situation, then close with a polite request to resolve the situation.

Objective 3: Outline an effective strategy for writing routine replies, routine messages, and positive messages.

The direct approach works well for routine replies and positive messages because recipients will generally be interested in what you have to say:

- Open with your main idea (the positive reply, the routine message, or the positive news).
- Use the body to provide necessary details and explanations.
- End with a courteous close and any information related to follow-up actions that need to be taken.

Objective 4: Describe seven common types of routine replies and positive messages.

Most routine replies and positive messages fall into seven categories. Here are key tips for creating successful messages of each type:

- Answers to requests for information and action: Keep the message brief and confirm any expectations.
- Messages to grant claims and requests for adjustment: Adapt your response based on whether your company, the customer, or a third party is at fault; in all cases, stay respectful and focused on the solution.
- Recommendations: Make sure you understand your company's policy on employment recommendations; if you do write a full recommendation, use the checklist on page 175.
- Routine informational messages: These are straightforward, so be clear and concise; make sure you've considered the full range of possible responses.
- Instructions: Start by figuring out how much your target readers know about the topic, then follow the sequence on page 178.
- Good-news announcements: Keep the message brief and upbeat; consider whether to use a formal news release for external announcements.
- Goodwill messages: Match the tone of your message to the situation; always keep the focus on the reader, not on your own needs or objectives.

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

7-1. What information should be included in a routine request? [LO-1]

7-2. How does a claim differ from an adjustment? [LO-2]

✪ **7-3.** Why might a request for a recommendation be rejected, even if the person writing is qualified for the opportunity? [LO-2]

7-4. What is the first step to take when writing instructions? [LO-3]

✪ **7-5.** How can you avoid sounding insincere when writing a goodwill message? [LO-4]

7-6. What are three principles to follow for writing condolence messages? [LO-4]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

✪ **7-7.** You're applying for a job as a website designer at a digital marketing agency. In a previous job at another agency, you excelled at website design but you were also asked to "pitch" the agency's services to potential clients. Unfortunately, you did not excel at this aspect of the job, and you were let go when the agency had to lay off 10 percent of its staff. The new opportunity will not require you to pitch new clients. How should you approach your former boss for a recommendation that focuses on your web design skills? [LO-2]

✪ **7-8.** The latest issue of a local business newspaper names 10 area executives who have exhibited excellent leadership skills in the past year. You are currently searching for a job, and a friend suggests that you write each executive a congratulatory letter and mention in passing that you are looking for new career opportunities and would appreciate the opportunity for an interview. Is this a smart strategy? Why or why not? [LO-2]

7-9. Your company made a mistake that cost an important business customer a new client; you know it, and your customer knows it. Do you apologize, or do you refer to the incident in a positive light without admitting any responsibility? Briefly explain. [LO-4]

7-10. You've been asked to write a letter of recommendation for an employee who worked for you some years ago. You recall that the employee did an admirable job, but you can't remember any specific information at this point. How should you handle the situation? [LO-4]

Practice Your Skills

Exercises for Perfecting Your Writing

To review chapter content related to each set of exercises, refer to the indicated Learning Objective or chapter.

Routine Requests [LO-1] Revise the following messages so that they are more direct and concise.

7-11. I can't make heads or tails of this trip report. Did you accomplish the tasks you set out to accomplish or only some of them or none of them? I see that you visited four separate clients but instead of enumerating the outcome of each meeting in a separate way, the conclusion of your report jumbles them all together in a way that makes it impossible to determine the status of each client project. Is any management-level action required for any of these clients. If so, which ones? What action? It's impossible to tell because your report doesn't specify meeting outcomes by client, as would normally be the case in a report from someone who visited multiple client sites during a single trip.

7-12. Thank you for contacting us about the difficulty you had collecting your luggage at the Denver airport. We are very sorry for the inconvenience this has caused you. Traveling can create problems of this sort regardless of how careful the airline personnel might be. To receive compensation, please send us a detailed list of the items that you lost and complete the following questionnaire. You can email it back to us.

7-13. Sorry it took us so long to get back to you. We were flooded with résumés. Anyway, your résumé made the final 10, and after meeting three hours yesterday, we've decided we'd like to meet with you. What is your schedule like for next week? Can you come in for an interview on June 15 at 3:00 p.m.? Please get back to us by the end of this work week and let us know if you will be able to attend. As you can imagine, this is our busy season.

Routine Messages [LO-3] Rewrite the following sentences to make them more direct and concise.

7-14. We wanted to invite you to our special 40 percent off by-invitation-only sale. The sale is taking place on November 9.

7-15. We wanted to let you know that we are giving a special-edition tote bag with every $100 donation you make to our radio station.

7-16. The director plans to go to the meeting that will be held on Monday at 11:00 a.m. but plans to arrive early to speak individually with department heads.

7-17. In today's meeting, we were happy to have the opportunity to welcome Paul Eccelson. He went over the product plans for next year. If you have any questions about these new products, feel free to call him at his office.

Message Planning [LO-3], **Chapter 2** With another student, decide on the best strategy for a message to all employees announcing that to avoid layoffs, the company will reduce salaries by 10 percent for the next six months.

7-18. If the company is small and all employees work in the same location, which medium would you recommend for communicating this message?

7-19. If the company is large and employees work in a variety of locations around the world, which medium would you recommend for communicating this message?

7-20. How is the audience likely to respond to this message?

7-21. Based on this audience analysis, would you use the direct or the indirect approach for this message? Explain your reasoning.

Revising Messages: Closing Paragraphs [LO-1], [LO-3] Rewrite each of the following closing paragraphs to be concise, courteous, and specific.

7-22. I need your response sometime soon so I can order the parts in time for your service appointment. Otherwise your air-conditioning system may not be in tip-top condition for the start of the summer season.

7-23. Thank you in advance for sending me as much information as you can about your products. I look forward to receiving your package in the very near future.

7-24. To schedule an appointment with one of our knowledgeable mortgage specialists in your area, you can always call our hotline at 1-800-555-8765. This is also the number to call if you have more questions about mortgage rates, closing procedures, or any other aspect of the mortgage process. Remember, we're here to make the home-buying experience as painless as possible.

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information can be found in another chapter, as indicated.

7-25. Message Strategies: Making Routine Requests; Completing Messages: Evaluating Content, Organization, and Tone [LO-2], **Chapter 5** Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of this message and then revise it so that it follows this chapter's guidelines for routine requests for information:

I'm fed up with the mistakes that our current accounting firm makes. I run a small construction company, and I don't have time to double-check every bookkeeping entry and call the accountants a dozen times when they won't return my messages. Please explain how your firm would do a better job than my current accountants. You have a good reputation among homebuilders, but before I consider hiring you to take over my accounting, I need to know that you care about quality work and good customer service.

7-26. Message Strategies: Making Routine Requests; Completing Messages: Evaluating Content, Organization, and Tone [LO-2], Chapter 5 Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of this message and then revise it so that it follows this chapter's guidelines for routine requests for information:

I'm contacting you about your recent email request for technical support on your cable Internet service. Part of the problem we have in tech support is trying to figure out exactly what each customer's specific problem is so that we can troubleshoot quickly and get you back in business as quickly as possible. You may have noticed that in the online support request form, there are a number of fields to enter your type of computer, operating system, memory, and so on. While you did tell us you were experiencing slow download speeds during certain times of the day, you didn't tell us which times specifically, nor did you complete all the fields telling us about your computer. Please return to our support website and resubmit your request, being sure to provide all the necessary information; then we'll be able to help you.

7-27. Message Strategies: Writing Routine Messages; Completing Messages: Evaluating Content, Organization, and Tone [LO-4], Chapter 5 Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of this message and then revise it so that it follows this chapter's guidelines for sharing routine information, including using the direct approach:

Those of you who read the business media might have heard about job enlargement (expanding the scope of a job horizontally), job enhancement (expanding the scope of a job vertically), and job rotation (training employees to handle more than one job) as ways to make work more fulfilling and to increase staffing flexibility. All three have pros and cons, and the management team has thought about each one carefully. We particularly like the concept of job enlargement, which lets employees take on gradually more and more responsibilities from their immediate supervisors.

Job rotation is the one we've decided to implement starting next quarter. The reasons are because it makes work more interesting and challenging because you're always learning, and it makes life easier for managers because they have a wide pool of trained talent to throw at every new challenge and opportunity. We have analyzed all the job categories in the plant and identified the most appropriate cross-training opportunities (job rotation is also called cross-training, by the way).

Follow the link below to identify your current job title, then check out the specific cross-training opportunities you can choose from. Then prioritize your first, second, and third choices (if your job has more than one listed) for job rotation. Please make your choices by April 10. This gives you plenty of time to discuss the possibilities with your supervisor and discuss the nature of each job with people who are already performing it. Please note also that we are asking all non-management employees to identify their preferences, so this is not optional.

7-28. Message Strategies: Writing Positive Messages; Media Skills: Microblogging [LO-4], Chapter 6 Locate an online announcement for a new product you find interesting or useful. Read enough about the product to be able to describe it to someone else in your own words, then write four Twitter tweets: one to introduce the product to your followers and three follow-up tweets that describe three particularly compelling features or benefits of the product.

7-29. Message Strategies: Writing Goodwill Messages [LO-4] Identify someone in your life who has recently accomplished something significant, such as graduating from high school or college, completing a major project, or winning an important professional award. Write a brief congratulatory message using the guidelines presented in the chapter.

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Locate an online example of a news release in which a company announces good news, such as a new product, a notable executive hire, an expansion, strong financial results, or an industry award. Analyze the release using the guidance provided in the chapter. In what ways did the writer excel? What aspects of the release could be improved? Does the release provide social media–friendly content and features? Using whatever medium your instructor requests, write a brief analysis of the release (no more than one page), citing specific elements from the piece and support from the chapter.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at **websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that offers advice on writing goodwill messages such as thank-you notes or congratulatory letters. Write a brief email message to your instructor or a post for your class blog, describing the item that you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Cases

For all cases, feel free to use your creativity to make up any details you need in order to craft effective messages.

MESSAGING SKILLS

7-30. Message Strategies: Routine Requests [LO-2] One of the reasons you accepted the job offer from your current employer was the happy, relaxed vibe of the open-plan office. When you interviewed, it seemed as far away from a boring, conventional "cubicle farm" as you could get, which appealed to your nonconformist instincts. After a year in the job, however, you've experienced some of the disadvantages of the company's relaxed attitudes toward just about every aspect of workplace behavior. People routinely bring pets to work, even though several people have explained they have allergies to dogs or cats. Some of the pets are less than ideally behaved, too, and a couple of dogs who are frequent visitors get into snarling matches when they see each other. One person even brings a pet bird, which has been known to fly loose around the office. Employees bring children of all ages to work, too, from infants still in diapers to teenagers who play video games on mobile devices—sometimes using headphones but sometimes not. Music lovers get into volume wars at least once a week, trying to drown each other out on their portable speaker systems.

You wonder how anybody can get any work done, until you privately interview several colleagues and realize that, like you, they aren't getting any work done. The office has become such a festival of distractions that people routinely bring work home on nights and weekends because home is the only place they can concentrate.

Your task: Write a brief request that could be sent out via the company's internal messaging system, asking people to consider the needs of their colleagues before bringing pets, children, and other potential distractions into the workplace.

EMAIL SKILLS

7-31. Message Strategies: Routine Requests [LO-2] In the weeks after your company rolled out a new online collaboration system, you thought your eyesight was beginning to fail. You had to squint to read posted messages, and the file archive was almost impossible to navigate because you couldn't read the file names. Then you noticed people in the department you manage having the same problem, particularly people who work on laptops and tablets.

You began to wonder how the programmers in the information technology (IT) department who configured the system didn't notice the problem until you walked through their department and realized they all had multiple, giant computer monitors. Everything you could see on their screens was displayed in large, easy-to-read type.

Your task: Write a brief email message to the head of IT, asking her group to meet with users in your department to discuss the new system's on-screen readability.

EMAIL SKILLS

7-32. Message Strategies: Requesting a Recommendation [LO-2] One of your colleagues, Katina Vander, was recently promoted to department manager and now serves on the company's strategic planning committee. At its monthly meeting next week, the committee will choose an employee to lead an important market research project that will help define the company's product portfolio for the next five years.

You worked side by side with Vander for five years, so she knows your abilities well and has complimented your business insights on many occasions. You know that because she has only recently been promoted to manager, she needs to build credibility among her peers and will therefore be cautious about making such an important recommendation. On the other hand, making a stellar recommendation for such an important project would show that she has a good eye for talent—an essential leadership trait.

Your task: Write an email message to Vander, telling her that you are definitely interested in leading the project and asking her to put in a good word for you with the committee. Mention four attributes that you believe would serve you well in the role: a dozen years of experience in the industry, an engineering degree that helps you understand the technologies involved in product design, a consistent record of excellent or exceptional ratings in annual employee evaluations, and the three years you spent working in the company's customer support group, which gave you a firsthand look at customer satisfaction and quality issues. Make up any additional details you need to write the message.

MESSAGING SKILLS

7-33. Message Strategies: Making Routine Requests [LO-2] The vast Consumer Electronics Show (CES) is the premier promotional event in the electronics industry. More than 150,000 industry insiders from all over the world come to see the exciting new products on display—everything from virtual-reality gadgets to Internet-enabled refrigerators with built-in computer screens.[7] You've just stumbled onto a video game controller that has a built-in webcam to allow networked gamers to see and hear each other while they play. Your company also makes game controllers, and you're worried that your customers will flock to this new controller-cam. You need to know how much "buzz" is circulating around the show: Have people seen it? What are they saying about it? Are they excited about it?

Your task: Compose a text message to your colleagues at the show, alerting them to the new controller-cam and asking them to listen for any buzz that it might be generating among the attendees at the Las Vegas Convention Center and the several surrounding hotels where the show takes place. Your text messaging service limits messages to 160 characters, including spaces and punctuation, so keep your message within that limit.

EMAIL SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

7-34. Message Strategies: Routine Responses [LO-4] As administrative assistant to Walmart's director of marketing, you have just received a request from the company's webmaster to analyze Walmart's website from a consumer's point of view.

Your task: With a teammate, visit **www.walmart.com** and browse through the site, considering the language, layout, graphics, and overall ease of use. In particular, look for aspects of the site that might be confusing or frustrating—annoyances that could prompt shoppers to abandon their quests and head to a competitor such as Target or Amazon. Summarize your findings and recommendations in an email message that could be sent to the webmaster.

EMAIL SKILLS

7-35. Message Strategies: Granting Claims [LO-4] Like many of the staff at Razer, you are an avid game player. You can therefore sympathize with a customer who got so excited during a hotly contested game that he slammed his Razer Anansi keyboard against his chair in celebration. Razer products are built for serious action, but no keyboard can withstand a blow like that. However, in the interest of building goodwill among the online gaming community, your manager has approved a free replacement. This sort of damage is rare enough that the company isn't worried about unleashing a flood of similar requests.

Your task: Respond to Louis Hapsberg's email request for a replacement, in which he admitted to inflicting some abuse on this keyboard. Explain, tongue in cheek, that the company is "rewarding" him with a free keyboard in honor of his massive gaming win, but gently remind him that even the most robust electronic equipment needs to be used with care. You can learn more about the company and its products at **www.razerzone.com**.

PODCASTING SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

7-36. Message Strategies: Writing Instructions [LO-4], Chapter 6 As a training specialist in the human resources department at Winnebago Industries, you're always on the lookout for new ways to help employees learn vital job skills. While watching a production worker page through a training manual to learn how to assemble a new recreational vehicle, you get what seems to be a great idea: Record the assembly instructions as audio files that workers can listen to while performing the necessary steps. With audio instructions, they wouldn't need to keep shifting their eyes between the product and the manual—and constantly losing their place. They could focus on the product and listen for each instruction. Plus, the new system wouldn't cost much at all; any computer can record the audio files, and you'd simply make them available on an intranet site for download onto smartphones and other mobile devices.

You immediately run your new idea past your boss, who has heard about podcasting but isn't sure it is appropriate for business training. He asks you to prove the viability of the idea by recording a demonstration.

Your task: With a teammate, choose a process that you engage in yourself—anything from replacing the strings on a guitar to sewing a quilt to changing the oil in a car—and write a brief (one page or less) description of the process that could be recorded as an audio file. Think carefully about the limitations of the audio format as a replacement for printed text (for instance, do you need to tell people to pause the audio while they perform each task?). If your instructor directs, record your podcast and submit the audio file.

MICROBLOGGING SKILLS

7-37. Message Strategies: Routine Announcements [LO-4] As a way to give back to the communities in which it does business, your company supports the efforts of the United Way, a global organization that works to improve lives through education, income stability, and healthy living choices.[8] Each year, your company runs a fundraising campaign in which employees are encouraged to donate money to their local United Way agencies, and it also grants employees up to three paid days off to volunteer their time for the United Way. This year, you are in charge of the company's campaign.

Your task: Compose a four-message sequence to be posted on the company's internal microblogging system (essentially a private version of Twitter). The messages are limited to 200 characters, including spaces and punctuation. The first message will announce the company's annual United Way volunteering and fundraising campaign (make up any details you need), and the other three messages will explain the United Way's efforts in the areas of education, income stability, and healthy living. Visit the United Way website at **www.unitedway.org** to learn more about these three areas.

BLOGGING SKILLS

7-38. Message Strategies: Routine Announcements [LO-4] Scoop.it is one of the most popular platforms for content curation (see page 143). One of the ways a company can use Scoop.it is to find and present content of interest to its customers.

Your task: Choose any company that interests you and imagine that you are in charge of its public communication efforts. Write a post for the company's internal blog, announcing that the company is now on Scoop.it. Briefly describe Scoop.it and explain how it will help the company connect with its customers. Visit the Scoop.it website at **www.scoop.it** to learn more about the system.

BLOGGING SKILLS/TEAM PROJECTS

7-39. Message Strategies: Instructions [LO-4] Innovations in communication can make life easier for employees and managers, but they often require learning new systems, new terminology, and sometimes new habits.

Your task: Visit the website of Slack, the popular workgroup messaging system, at **slack.com** and familiarize yourself with the capabilities of the system. Write a post for your class blog that introduces Slack, defines any key terms users need to know (such as *channels*), and lists the most important benefits of using the system for team and workplace communication. Supplement your research on the Slack website by reviewing other online sources as needed.

LETTER WRITING SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

7-40. Message Strategies: Writing Positive Messages; Collaboration: Team Projects [LO-4], Chapter 2 As a project manager at Expedia, one of the largest online travel services in the world, you've seen plenty of college interns in action. However, few have impressed you as much as Maxine "Max" Chenault. For one thing, she learned how to navigate the company's content management system virtually overnight and always used it properly, whereas other interns sometimes left things in a hopeless mess. She asked lots of intelligent questions about the business. You've been teaching her blogging and website design principles, and she's picked them up quickly. Moreover, she has always been on time, professional, and eager to assist, and she doesn't complain about doing mundane tasks.

On the down side, Chenault is a popular student. Early on, you often found her busy on the phone planning her many social activities when you needed her help. However, after you had a brief talk with her, this problem vanished.

You'll be sorry to see Chenault leave when she returns to school in the fall, but you're pleased to respond when she asks you for a letter of recommendation. She's not sure where she'll apply for work after graduation or what career path she'll choose, so she asks you to keep the letter fairly general.

Your task: Working with a team assigned by your instructor, discuss what should and should not be in the letter. Prepare an outline based on your discussion and then draft the letter.

BLOGGING SKILLS

7-41. Message Strategies: Good News Messages [LO-4] Amateur and professional golfers in search of lower scores want to find clubs that are optimized for their individual swings. This process of club fitting has gone decidedly high tech in recent years, with fitters using Doppler radar, motion-capture video, and other tools to evaluate golfers' swings and ball flight characteristics. Hot Stix Golf is a leader in this industry, having fitted hundreds of professionals and thousands of amateurs.[9]

Your task: Imagine that you are the communications director at the Indian Wells Golf Resort in Indian Wells, California. Your operation has just signed a deal with Hot Stix to open a fitting center on site. Write a three-paragraph message that could be posted on the resort blog. The first paragraph should announce the news that the Hot Stix center will open in six months, the second should summarize the benefits of club fitting, and the third should offer a brief overview of the services that will be available at the Indian Wells Hot Stix Center. Information on club fitting can be found on the Hot Stix website at www.hotstixgolf.com; make up any additional information you need in order to complete the post.

BLOGGING SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

7-42. Message Strategies: Good-News Messages [LO-4] Most people have heard of the Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony awards for television, music, movies, and theater performances, but fewer know what the Webby award is all about. Sponsored by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences, the Webbys shine a spotlight on the best in website design, interactive media, and online film and video.[10]

Your task: Visit the Webby Awards website at webbyawards.com, select Winners, and choose one of the companies listed as a winner in the Websites or Interactive Advertising categories. Now imagine you are the chief online strategist for this company, and you've just been informed your company won a Webby. Winning this award is a nice validation of the work your team has put in during the past year, and you want to share their success with the entire company. Write a brief post for the internal company blog, describing what the Webby awards are, explaining why they are a significant measure of accomplishment in the online industry, and congratulating the employees in your department who contributed to the successful web effort.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS

7-43. Message Strategies: Goodwill Messages [LO-4] Every April, your company stages a competition for the sales department called Spring Surge, which awards sales representatives who bring in the most new revenue during the month. The awards are significant, including a first prize of a trip to Hawaii for the winning sales rep's entire family, and most people in the department take the competition seriously.

Here are the results of this years' competition:

1st place (trip for family to Hawaii): Juanita Hermosa
2nd place (luxury box seats at an NFL playoff game): Jackson Peabody
3rd place ($500 prepaid credit card): Duane Redd
Total new revenue booked during April: $4.7 million

Your task: Write a brief post (150–200 words) for your company's internal social networking platform, incorporating these results and thanking everyone in the sales department for their efforts during the Spring Surge.

LETTER WRITING SKILLS

7-44. Message Strategies: Goodwill Messages [LO-4] The office was somber this morning when you arrived to work, as employees learned that the partner of the chief operating officer, Leo West, had been killed in a car accident over the weekend. You never met Michael, and West is two levels above you in the corporate hierarchy (you're a first-level supervisor), so you don't have a close working relationship. However, you have been on comfortable terms with West during the ten years you've been at this company, and although you've never socialized with him outside of work, you've both occasionally shared personal and social news during casual conversations in the cafeteria.

Your task: Write a letter of condolence to West.

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from real-timeupdates.com/bce8; select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 7.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Periods, Question Marks, and Exclamation Points

Review Sections 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage, then complete the following 15 items. Answers to these exercises appear on page 491.

For the following items, add periods, question marks, and exclamation points wherever they are appropriate.

7-45. Dr Eleanor H Hutton has requested information on Task-Masters, Inc.

7-46. That qualifies us as a rapidly growing new company, don't you think

7-47. Our president, Daniel Gruber, is a CPA On your behalf, I asked him why he started the company

7-48. In the past three years, we have experienced phenomenal growth of 800 percent

7-49. Contact me at 1358 N Parsons Avenue, Tulsa, OK 74204

7-50. Jack asked, "Why does he want to know Maybe he plans to become a competitor"

7-51. The debt load fluctuates with the movement of the US prime rate

7-52. I can't believe we could have missed such a promising opportunity

7-53. Is consumer loyalty extinct Yes and No

7-54. Johnson and Kane, Inc, has gone out of business What a surprise

7-55. Will you please send us a check today so that we can settle your account

7-56. Ms Jasmine R Capp will be our new CEO, beginning January 20, 2019

7-57. The rag doll originally sold for $1098, but we have lowered the price to a mere $599

7-58. Will you be able to make the presentation at the conference, or should we find someone else

7-59. So I ask you, "When will we admit defeat" Never

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

7-60. Attached to both the Train Station and the Marriott hotel, one doesnt even need to step outside the convention center to go from train to meeting room.

7-61. According to Federal statistics, 61 percent of the nations employers have less than 5 workers.

7-62. "The problem", said Business Owner Mike Millorn, "Was getting vendor's of raw materials to take my endeavor serious."

7-63. After pouring over trade journals, quizzing industry experts, and talks with other snack makers, the Harpers' decided to go in the pita chip business.

7-64. The couple has done relatively little advertising, instead they give away samples in person at trade shows, cooking demonstrations, and in grocery stores.

7-65. CME Information Services started by videotaping doctor's conventions, and selling the recorded presentations to nonattending physicians that wanted to keep track of the latest developments.

7-66. For many companies, the two biggest challenges to using intranets are: getting people to use it and content freshness.

7-67. Company meetings including 'lunch and learn' sessions are held online often.

7-68. Most Children's Orchard franchisees, are men and women between the ages of 30–50; first time business owners with a wide range of computer skills.

7-69. Joining the company in 1993, she had watched it expand and grow from a single small office to a entire floor of a skyscraper.

7-70. One issue that effected practically everyone was that they needed to train interns.

7-71. The website includes information on subjects as mundane as the filling out of a federal express form, and as complex as researching a policy issue.

7-72. Some management theories are good, but how many people actually implement them the right way?", says Jack Hartnett President of D. L. Rogers Corp.

7-73. Taking orders through car windows, customers are served by roller-skating carhops at Sonic restaurants.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following email message (an initial inquiry to a firm that designs and builds corporate websites) may contain errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, abbreviation, number style, vocabulary, and spelling. You will also find errors related to topics in this chapter. For example, consider the organization and relevance of material as you improve this routine request for information. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C), or download the document and make the corrections in your word-processing software.

TO: info@spacewebdesign.biz

FROM: gloria_m@midwestliquidators.com

SUBJECT: New website!

To Whom it may concern.

We need a new website. One that offers all the whizzy new social media apabilities plus ful e/commerce ordering & retailing function.

I am seeing your name in the fine print of a few nice looking sights. So I wanted to get more info on you people and find out about costs, schedules, info needs from us, etc., etc., etc. What it will take to get this new thing up and running, inother words. We also need to know what you plan to do about our "visual" appearance on the website—as in—how will you design a site that screams "good values found here" without looking cheap and shoddy like some discount/retail webbsites are . . .

My name is Gloria MacPherson, and I am in charge of Marketing and sales department here at Midwest Liquidators. I've been with the Company since 2003; before that I was with Costco; before that I was with Sears.

Part of my analysis of outsiders like you will depend on how fast you respond to this query, just to let you know.

Sincerely.

Gloria

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

7-74. Why is it good practice to explain, when applicable, how replying to a request could benefit the reader? [LO-1]

7-75. You have a complaint against one of your suppliers, but you have no documentation to back it up. Should you request an adjustment anyway? Why or why not? [LO-2]

Endnotes

1. Jill E. Duffy, *Get Organized: How to Clean Up Your Messy Digital Life* (New York: PC Magazine, 2013), Kindle location 1051.
2. "How to Write Reference Letters," National Association of Colleges and Employers website, accessed 5 July 2010, www.naceweb.org; "Five (or More) Ways You Can Be Sued for Writing (or Not Writing) Reference Letters," *Fair Employment Practices Guidelines*, July 2006, 1, 3.
3. David Meerman Scott, *The New Rules of Marketing and PR*, 5th Ed. (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2015), Kindle location 7497.
4. Pat Cataldo, "Op-Ed: Saying 'Thank You' Can Open More Doors Than You Think," Penn State University Smeal College of Business website, accessed 19 February 2008, www.smeal.psu.edu.
5. Jackie Huba, "Five Must-Haves for Thank-You Notes," Jackie Huba blog, 16 November 2007, http://jackiehuba.com.
6. Ben Sisario, "It's Not Their Pop Idol—Just a Bot—But Fans Cheer Anyway," *New York Times*, 3 April 2017, www.nytimes.com; Casey Coombs, "Amazon Offers $2.5 Million for Socialbots to Develop Alexa's Voice Control," *Puget Sound Business Journal*, 29 September 2016, www.bizjournals.com; Kelly Evans, "Chatbots Rise, and the Future May be 'Re-written,'" CNBC, 10 April 2016, www.cnbc.com; Casey Newton, "The Search for the Killer Bot," *The Verge*, 6 January 2016, www.theverge.com; Clint Boulton, "How Messaging Bots Will Change Workplace Productivity," *CIO*, 1 February 2016, www.cio.com; Ben Brown, "Your New Digital Coworker," Howdy blog, 20 October 2015, blog.howdy.ai; "Bot Users," Slack, accessed 10 April 2016, www.slack.com; Molly McHugh, "Slack Is Overrun with Bots. Friendly, Wonderful Bots." *Wired*, 21 August 2015, www.wired.com.
7. "CES by the Numbers," CES website, accessed 24 March 2017, www.cesweb.org.
8. United Way website, accessed 24 March 2017, www.unitedway.org.
9. Hot Stix Golf website, accessed 24 March 2017, www.hotstixgolf.com.
10. The Webby Awards website, accessed 24 March 2017, www.webbyawards.com.

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8 Writing Negative Messages

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.
2. Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.
3. Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news, and explain how to avoid ethical problems when using this approach.
4. Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.
5. Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.
6. List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.
7. Describe an effective strategy for responding to negative information in a social media environment.

MyLab Business Communication

If your instructor is using MyLab Business Communication, visit **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for videos, simulations, and writing exercises.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"We are deeply sorry for the unintended offensive and hurtful tweets from Tay, which do not represent who we are or what we stand for, nor how we designed Tay."
—Peter Lee, Corporate Vice President, Microsoft Research

Microsoft knows a thing or two about the artificial intelligence (AI) that enables chatbots to mimic human conversation—more than 40 million people have interacted with its XiaoIce chatbot in China. In an effort to refine its conversational AI in another language and culture, the company created a Twitter chatbot named Tay aimed at young adults in the United States. Tay was carefully engineered and vigorously tested before it was launched. Sadly, within hours after it went live on Twitter, Tay was targeted in a coordinated attack that dragged it over to the dark side and taught the bot how to spew hate speech and profanity.

Microsoft quickly removed Tay from Twitter and issued an apology that serves as a great example for sharing negative news in general and making apologies in particular. Lee's complete message was a genuine apology that took full responsibility for the negative result, explained what happened, and described the steps the company was taking to prevent another such calamity. (You can read the message via the Real-Time Updates Learn More link on page 192.)

Mistakes and unintended outcomes happen in business, but what separates top professionals is how they respond. This chapter will show you how to write effective and sensitive messages that address a wide range of negative scenarios.

Microsoft's Peter Lee issued a thoughtful and responsible apology when the company's chatbot Tay had to be pulled down from Twitter.

Using the Three-Step Writing Process for Negative Messages

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

Sharing unwelcome news is never pleasant, no matter where the fault may lie in the situation. Learning how to do it with sensitivity and honesty will make the task easier for you as a writer and the experience less traumatic for the recipients of your messages.

Negative news messages need to accomplish as many as five distinct goals, so they require careful planning and sensitive writing.

Depending on the situation, you can have as many as five goals when communicating negative information:

- To convey the bad news
- To gain acceptance of the bad news
- To preserve as much of your audience's goodwill as possible
- To maintain (or repair) your reputation or your organization's reputation
- To reduce or eliminate the need for future correspondence on the matter

This is a lot to accomplish in one message, so careful planning and execution are particularly critical with negative messages.

STEP 1: PLANNING NEGATIVE MESSAGES

Start with a clear purpose and your audience's needs in mind.

To minimize damage to business relationships and to encourage the acceptance of your message, start with a clear purpose and your audience's needs in mind. Think about the information your audience will need in order to understand and accept your message. Negative messages can be intensely personal to recipients, who often have a right to expect a thorough explanation of your answer.

Choose the medium and channel with care when preparing negative messages; some negative messages are best conveyed in person.

Selecting the best combination of medium and channel is critical. If you're delivering bad news to employees, for instance, sharing it in person shows respect for them and gives them an opportunity to ask questions. Handling the situation live and in person can be uncomfortable, to be sure, but doing so is often the best way to clear the air and prevent the spread of rumors. In-person conversation isn't always possible, however, and many negative messages will need to be delivered via digital channels.

The organization of a negative message requires special attention, starting with whether to use the direct or indirect approach (see Figure 8.1). A negative message using the **direct approach** opens with the bad news, proceeds to the reasons for the situation or decision, offers any additional information that may help the audience, and ends with a positive statement aimed at maintaining a good relationship with the audience. In contrast, the **indirect approach** opens with a *buffer* (see page 196), then builds up the reasons behind the bad news before presenting the bad news itself.

Use the direct approach when your negative answer or information will have minimal personal impact.

To help decide which approach to take in a particular situation, ask yourself the following questions:

- **Do you need to get the reader's attention immediately?** If the situation is an emergency, or if someone has ignored repeated messages, the direct approach can help you get attention quickly.
- **Does the recipient prefer a direct style of communication?** Some recipients prefer the direct approach no matter what, so if you know this to be the case, go with direct.
- **How important is this news to the reader?** For minor or routine scenarios, the direct approach is nearly always best. However, if the reader has an emotional investment in the situation or if the consequences to the reader are considerable, the indirect approach is often better, particularly if the bad news is unexpected.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE
A great example of a thoughtful, responsible apology
When its Twitter chatbot Tay got hijacked and had to be taken down, Microsoft issued an apology that got every note right. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

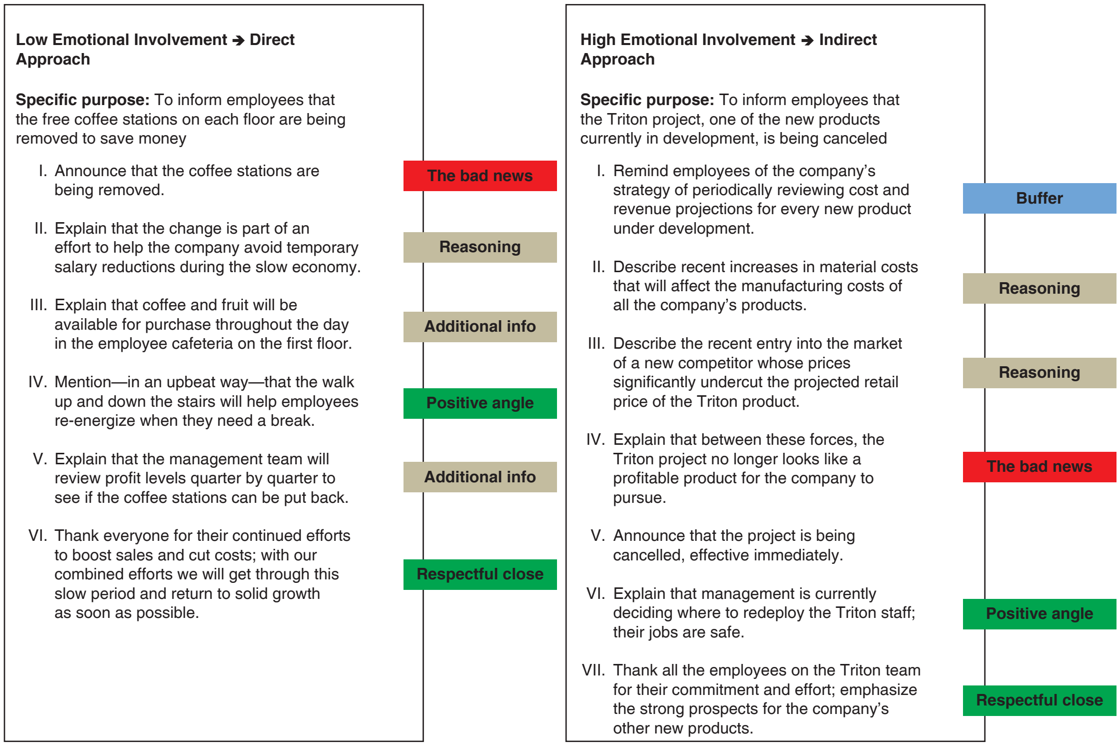


Figure 8.1 Comparing the Direct and Indirect Approaches for Negative Messages
The direct and indirect approaches differ in two important ways: the position of the bad news within the sequence of message points and the use of a *buffer* in the indirect approach. ("Using the Indirect Approach for Negative Messages" on page 196 explains the use of a buffer.) Both these messages deal with changes made in response to negative financial developments, but the second example represents a much higher emotional impact for readers, so the indirect approach is called for in that case. Figure 8.2 explains how to choose the right approach for each situation.

- **Will the bad news come as a shock?** The direct approach is fine for many business situations in which people understand the possibility of receiving bad news. However, if the bad news might come as a shock to readers, use the indirect approach to help them prepare for it.

Use the indirect approach for more serious matters or when the news will come as a shock.

Figure 8.2 on the next page offers a convenient decision tree to help you decide which approach to use.

STEP 2: WRITING NEGATIVE MESSAGES

By writing clearly and sensitively, you can take some of the sting out of bad news and help your reader accept the decision and move on. If your credibility hasn't already been established with an audience, clarify your qualifications so recipients won't question your authority or ability.

When you use language that conveys respect and avoids an accusing tone, you protect your audience's pride. This kind of communication etiquette is always important, but it demands special care with negative messages. Moreover, you can ease the sense of disappointment by using positive words rather than negative, counterproductive ones (see Table 8.1 on the next page).

Choose your language carefully; you can deliver negative news without being negative.

STEP 3: COMPLETING NEGATIVE MESSAGES

Even small flaws in a message are likely to be magnified in readers' minds as they react to the negative news, because these errors can create the impression that you are careless or incompetent. Revise your content to make sure everything is clear, complete, and concise. Produce clean, professional-looking digital messages or printed documents, and proofread carefully to eliminate mistakes. Finally, be sure to deliver messages promptly. Withholding or delaying bad news can be unethical—even illegal, in some cases.

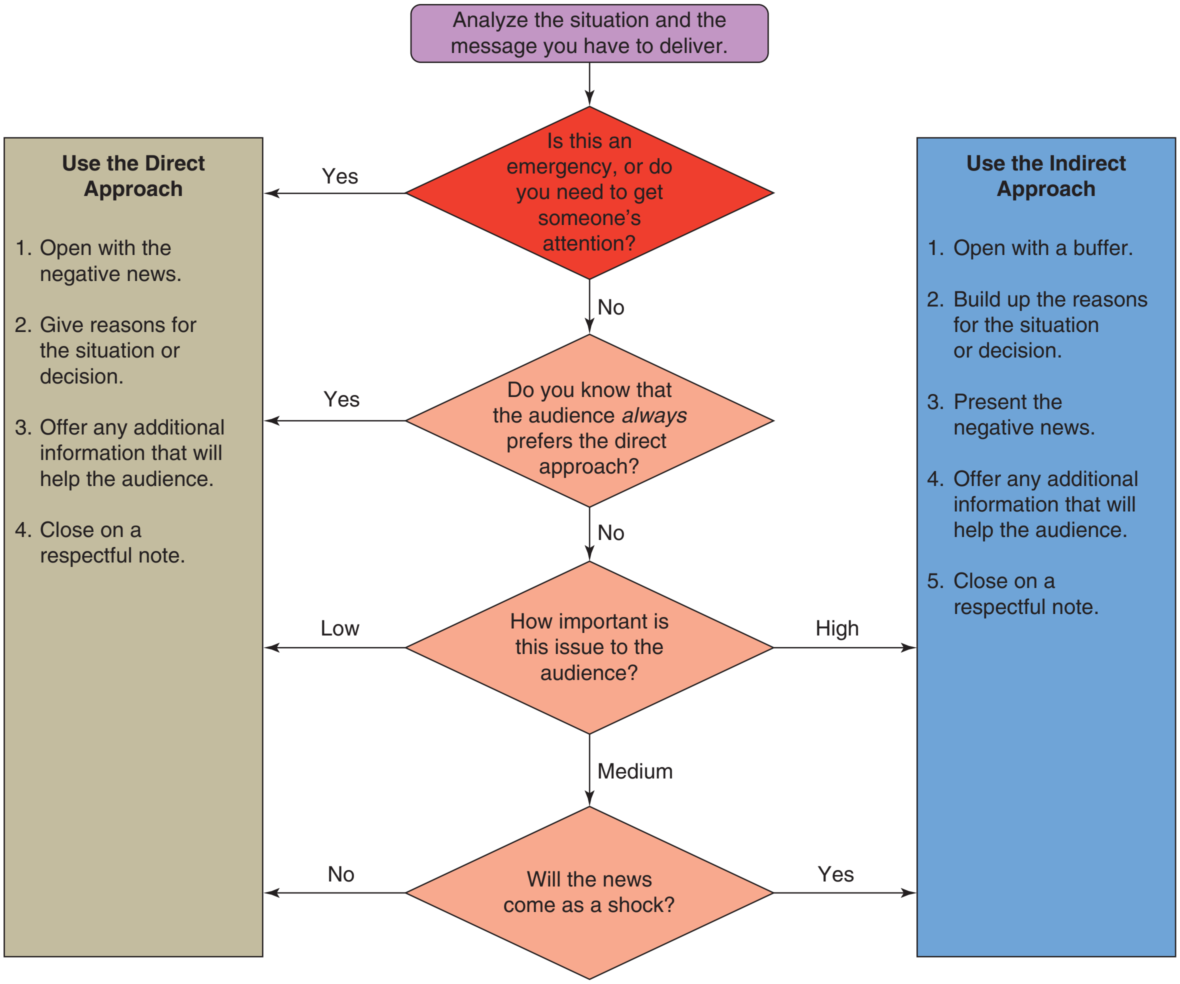


Figure 8.2 Choosing the Direct or Indirect Approach
Following this decision tree will help you decide whether the direct or indirect approach is better in a given situation. Of course, use your best judgment as well. Your relationship with the audience could affect your choice of approaches, for example.

TABLE 8.1 Choosing Positive Words

Examples of Negative Phrasings	Positive Alternatives
Your request *doesn't make any sense.*	Please clarify your request.
The *damage won't be fixed* for a week.	The item will be repaired next week.
Although it wasn't *our fault*, there will be an *unavoidable delay* in your order.	We will process your order as soon as we receive an aluminum shipment from our supplier, which we expect within 10 days.
You are clearly *dissatisfied*.	I recognize that the product did not live up to your expectations.
I was *shocked* to learn that you're *unhappy*.	Thank you for sharing your concerns about your shopping experience.
The enclosed statement is *wrong*.	Please verify the enclosed statement and provide a correct copy.

Using the Direct Approach for Negative Messages

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.

A negative message using the direct approach opens with the bad news, proceeds to the reasons for the situation or decision, and ends with a positive statement aimed at maintaining a good relationship with the audience. Depending on the circumstances, the message may also offer alternatives or a plan of action to fix the situation under discussion. Stating the bad news at the beginning can have two advantages: (1) It makes a shorter message possible, and (2) it allows the audience to reach the main idea of the message in less time.

OPEN WITH A CLEAR STATEMENT OF THE BAD NEWS

If you've chosen the direct approach to convey bad news, use the introductory paragraph of your message to share that information. As Chapter 7 notes regarding routine negative replies, you can open with a few words that are the equivalent of in-person "socializing" before moving to the negative news. If necessary, remind the reader why you're writing.

PROVIDE REASONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In most cases, follow the direct opening with an explanation of how the negative situation came to be or whatever information your readers need in order to grasp and accept the main idea. The extent of your explanation depends on the nature of the news and your relationship with the reader. For example, if you want to preserve a long-standing relationship with an important customer, a detailed explanation could well be worth the extra effort such a message would require.

The amount of detail you provide in a negative message depends in part on your relationship with the audience.

However, you will encounter some situations in which explaining negative news is neither appropriate nor helpful, such as when the reasons are confidential, excessively complicated, or irrelevant to the reader.

Should you apologize when delivering bad news or responding to negative situations? The answer isn't quite as simple as one might think, partly because the notion of *apology* is hard to pin down. To some people, it simply means an expression of sympathy that something negative has happened to another person. To others, it can mean admitting fault and, if appropriate, taking responsibility for specific compensations or corrections to atone for the mistake.

Some experts have advised that a company should never apologize, even when it knows it has made a mistake, because the apology might be taken as a confession of guilt that could be used against the company in a lawsuit. However, several states have laws that specifically prevent expressions of sympathy from being used as evidence of legal liability. In fact, judges, juries, and plaintiffs tend to be more forgiving of companies that express sympathy for wronged parties. Moreover, a sincere, effective apology can help repair—and even improve—a company's reputation.[1]

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

In-depth advice on issuing an apology

Balance the needs of all affected stakeholders with these timely tips. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Creating an effective apology involves four key decisions:[2]

- First, the apology should be delivered by someone whose position in the organization corresponds with the gravity of the situation. The CEO doesn't need to apologize for a late package delivery, but he or she does need to be the public face of the company when a major problem occurs.
- Second, the apology needs to be real. Don't say "I'm sorry if anyone was offended." The conditional *if* implies that you're not sorry at all and that it's the other party's fault for being offended.[3] Peter Lee's apology on behalf of Microsoft (see Communication Matters on page 191) is a great example to follow.
- Third, apologies need to be delivered quickly, particularly in the social media age. A fast response makes the message more meaningful to the affected parties, and it helps the company maintain some control over the story, rather than reacting to social media outrage.
- Fourth, media and channel choices are crucial. The right choice can range from a private conversation to a written message posted online to a public press conference, depending on the situation.

An effective apology involves four key decisions:

- It should be delivered by someone whose position in the organization matches the gravity of the situation.
- It must be a real apology; don't say "I'm sorry *if* anyone was offended . . ."
- It must be delivered quickly.
- Media and channel choices are crucial.

Recognize that you can express sympathy with someone's plight without suggesting that you are to blame. For example, if a customer damaged a product through misuse and suffered a financial loss as a result of not being able to use the product, you can say something along the lines of "I'm sorry to hear of your difficulties." This demonstrates sensitivity without accepting blame.

CLOSE ON A RESPECTFUL NOTE

Close your message on a respectful note, being as positive as you can be without being insincere.

After you've explained the negative news, close the message in a manner that respects the impact the news is likely to have on the recipient. If it's possible and appropriate, offer your readers an alternative solution, but only if doing so is a smart use of your time. Look for opportunities to include positive statements, but avoid creating false hopes or writing in a way that seems to suggest that something negative didn't happen. Ending on a false positive can leave readers feeling "disrespected, disregarded, or deceived."[4]

Using the Indirect Approach for Negative Messages

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news, and explain how to avoid ethical problems when using this approach.

The indirect approach helps readers prepare for the bad news by outlining the reasons for the situation before presenting the bad news itself. However, the indirect approach is not meant to obscure bad news, delay it, or limit your responsibility. The purpose of this approach is to ease the blow and help readers accept the news. When done poorly, the indirect approach can be disrespectful and even unethical. But when done well, it is a good example of audience-oriented communication crafted with attention to both ethics and etiquette. Showing consideration for the feelings of others is never dishonest.

OPEN WITH A BUFFER

A buffer gives you the opportunity to start the communication process without jumping immediately into the bad news.

Messages using the indirect approach open with a **buffer**, which is a neutral, noncontroversial statement that is closely related to the point of the message but doesn't convey the bad news. Depending on the circumstances, a good buffer can express your appreciation for being considered, assure the reader of your attention to the request, indicate your understanding of the reader's needs, introduce the general subject matter, or simply establish common ground with your reader. A good buffer also needs to be relevant and sincere. In contrast, a poorly written buffer might trivialize the reader's concerns, divert attention from the problem with insincere flattery or irrelevant material, or mislead the reader into thinking your message actually contains good news.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE
A better way to say no
"Say no with a comma, not a period" and more advice from executive Beth Brady. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Consider these possible responses to a manager of the order-fulfillment department who requested some temporary staffing help from your department (a request you won't be able to fulfill):

Our department shares your goal of processing orders quickly and efficiently.	← Establishes common ground with the reader and validates the concerns that prompted the original request—without promising a positive answer
As a result of the last downsizing, every department in the company is running shorthanded.	← Establishes common ground, but in a negative way that downplays the recipient's concerns
You folks are doing a great job over there, and I'd love to be able to help out.	← Potentially misleads the reader into concluding that you will comply with the request
Those new state labor regulations are driving me crazy over here; how about in your department?	← Trivializes the reader's concerns by opening with an irrelevant issue

Poorly written buffers mislead or insult the reader.

Only the first of these buffers can be considered effective. The other three are likely to damage your relationship with the other manager. Table 8.2 provides several types of effective buffers you can use to open a negative message tactfully.

TABLE 8.2 Types of Buffers

Buffer Type	Strategy	Example
Agreement	Find a point on which you and the reader share similar views.	We both know how hard it is to make a profit in this industry.
Appreciation	Express sincere thanks for receiving something.	Your check for $127.17 arrived yesterday. Thank you.
Cooperation	Convey your willingness to help in any way you realistically can.	Employee Services is here to assist all associates with their health insurance, retirement planning, and continuing education needs.
Fairness	Assure the reader that you've closely examined and carefully considered the problem, or mention an appropriate action that has already been taken.	For the past week, we have had our bandwidth monitoring tools running around the clock to track your actual upload and download speeds.
Good news	Start with the part of your message that is favorable.	We have credited your account in the amount of $14.95 to cover the cost of return shipping.
Praise	Find an attribute or an achievement to compliment—but don't create false hope that a positive message will follow.	The Stratford Group clearly has an impressive record of accomplishment in helping clients resolve financial reporting problems.
Resale	Favorably discuss the product or company related to the subject of the letter.	With their heavy-duty, full-suspension hardware and fine veneers, the desks and file cabinets in our Montclair line have long been popular with value-conscious professionals.
Understanding	Demonstrate that you understand the reader's goals and needs.	So that you can more easily find the printer with the features you need, we are enclosing a brochure that describes all the Epson printers currently available.

PROVIDE REASONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

An effective buffer serves as a transition to the next part of your message, in which you build up the explanations and information that will culminate in your negative news. An ideal explanation section leads readers to your conclusion before you come right out and say it. The reader has followed your line of reasoning and is ready for the answer. By giving your reasons effectively, you help maintain focus on the issues at hand and defuse the emotions that always accompany significantly bad news. An effective way approach is to start with positive or neutral points and move through progressively negative points. Provide enough detail for the audience to understand your reasons, but be concise.

Build your reasoning in a way that signals the negative news ahead.

As much as possible, avoid hiding behind company policy to cushion your bad news. If you say, "Company policy forbids our hiring anyone who does not have two years' supervisory experience," you imply that you won't consider anyone on his or her individual merits. By sharing the reasons behind the policy (if appropriate in the circumstances), you can give readers a more satisfying answer. Consider this response to an applicant:

Whenever possible, don't use the blanket phrase "company policy" as the reason for the bad news.

> Because these management positions are quite challenging, the human relations department has researched the qualifications needed to succeed in them. The findings show that the two most important qualifications are a bachelor's degree in business administration and two years' supervisory experience.
>
> ← Shows the reader that the decision is based on a methodical analysis of the company's needs and not on some arbitrary guideline
>
> ← Establishes the criteria behind the decision and lets the reader know what to expect

This paragraph does a good job of stating reasons for the refusal:

- It provides enough detail to logically support the refusal.
- It implies that the applicant is better off avoiding a position in which he or she might fail.
- It doesn't apologize for the decision, because no one is at fault.
- It avoids negative personal statements (such as "You do not meet our requirements").

Even valid, well-thought-out reasons won't convince every reader in every situation, but if you've done a good job of laying out your reasoning, then you've done everything you can to prepare the reader for the main idea, which is the negative news itself.

If you've done a good job of laying out your reasoning, you've done everything you can to prepare the reader for the negative news.

CONTINUE WITH A CLEAR STATEMENT OF THE BAD NEWS

To convey bad news sensitively
- Express it clearly but don't repeat it or belabor it
- Use a conditional statement if appropriate
- Tell what you can or did do, not what you can't or didn't do

After you've thoughtfully and logically established your reasons and readers are prepared to receive the bad news, you can use three techniques to convey the negative information as clearly and as kindly as possible. First, make sure you don't overemphasize the bad news:

- Minimize the space or time devoted to the bad news—without trivializing it or withholding important information. In other words, don't repeat it or belabor it.
- Subordinate bad news within a complex or compound sentence ("My department is already shorthanded, so I'll need all my staff for at least the next two months").
- Embed bad news in the middle of a paragraph or use parenthetical expressions ("Our profits, which are down, are only part of the picture").

Keep in mind, however, that it's possible to abuse this notion of deemphasizing bad news. For instance, if the primary point of your message is that profits are down, it would be inappropriate to marginalize that news by burying it in the middle of a sentence. State the negative news clearly, and then make a smooth transition to any positive news that might balance the story.

Second, if appropriate, use a conditional (*if* or *when*) statement to imply that the audience could have received, or might someday receive, a favorable answer under different circumstances ("When you have more managerial experience, you are welcome to apply for any openings that we may have in the future"). Such a statement could motivate applicants to improve their qualifications. However, you must avoid any suggestion that you might reverse the decision you've just made or any phrasing that could give a rejected applicant false hope.

Third, emphasize what you can do or have done rather than what you cannot do. Also, by implying the bad news, you may not need to actually state it, thereby making the bad news less personal ("Our development budget for next year is fully committed to our existing slate of projects"). However, make sure your audience understands the entire message—including the bad news. If an implied message might lead to uncertainty, state your decision in direct terms. Just be sure to avoid overly blunt statements that are likely to offend:

Instead of This	Write This
I *must refuse* your request.	I will be out of town on the day you need me.
We *must deny* your application.	The position has been filled.
We *cannot afford to* continue the program.	The program will conclude on May 1.
Much as I would like to attend . . .	Our budget meeting ends too late for me to attend.
We *must turn down* your extension request.	Please send in your payment by June 14.

CLOSE ON A RESPECTFUL NOTE

Don't disguise the bad news when you emphasize the positive.

As in the direct approach, the close in the indirect approach offers an opportunity to emphasize your respect for your audience, even though you've just delivered unpleasant news. Express best wishes without ending on a falsely upbeat note. If you can find a positive angle that's meaningful to your audience, by all means consider adding it to your conclusion. However, don't try to pretend that the negative news didn't happen or that it won't affect the reader. Suggest alternative solutions if such information is available and doing so is a good use of your time. If you've asked readers to decide between alternatives or to take some action, make sure that they know what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. Whatever type of conclusion you use, follow these guidelines:

A respectful close
- Avoids an uncertain conclusion
- Manages expectations about future correspondence
- Expresses optimism, if appropriate
- Is sincere

- **Avoid an uncertain conclusion.** If the situation or decision is final, avoid statements such as "I trust our decision is satisfactory," which imply that the matter is open to discussion or negotiation.
- **Manage expectations about future correspondence.** Encourage additional communication *only* if you're willing to discuss your decision further. If you're not, avoid wording such as "If you have further questions, please write."

- **Express optimism, if appropriate.** If the situation might improve in the future, share that with your readers if it's relevant. However, don't suggest the possibility of a positive change if you don't have insight that it might happen.
- **Be sincere.** Avoid clichés that are insincere in view of the bad news. If you can't help, don't say, "If we can be of any help, please contact us."

Keep in mind that the close can have a lasting impact on your audience. Even though they're disappointed, leave them with the impression that they were treated with respect.

Sending Negative Messages on Routine Business Matters

Professionals and companies receive a wide variety of requests and cannot respond positively to every single one. In addition, mistakes and unforeseen circumstances can lead to delays and other minor problems that occur in the course of business. Whatever the purpose, crafting routine negative responses and messages quickly and graciously is an important skill for every businessperson.

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

MAKING NEGATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS ON ROUTINE BUSINESS MATTERS

On occasion managers need to make unexpected negative announcements. Because the news is unexpected, the indirect approach is usually the better choice. Follow the steps outlined for indirect messages: Open with a buffer that establishes some mutual ground between you and the reader, advance your reasoning, announce the change, and close with as much positive information and sentiment as appropriate under the circumstances.

For unexpected negative messages on routine matters, the indirect approach is usually more appropriate.

REJECTING SUGGESTIONS AND PROPOSALS

Managers receive a variety of suggestions and proposals, both solicited and unsolicited, from internal and external sources. For an unsolicited proposal from an external source, you may not even need to respond if you don't already have a working relationship with the sender. However, if you need to reject a proposal you solicited, you owe the sender an explanation, and because the news may be unexpected, the indirect approach is better. In general, the closer your working relationship, the more thoughtful and complete you need to be in your response. For example, if you are rejecting a proposal from an employee, explain your reasons fully and carefully so that the employee can understand why the proposal was not accepted and so that you don't damage an important working relationship.

Rejecting suggestions and proposals, particularly if you asked for input, requires special care and tact in order to maintain a positive working relationship.

REFUSING ROUTINE REQUESTS

When you are unable to meet a routine request, your primary communication challenge is to give a clear negative response without generating negative feelings or damaging either your personal reputation or the company's. The direct approach works best for most routine negative responses because it is simpler and more efficient. The indirect approach works best when the stakes are high for you or for the receiver, when you or your company has an established relationship with the person making the request, or when you're forced to decline a request that you might have accepted in the past (see Figure 8.3 on the next page).

When turning down an invitation or a request for a favor, consider your relationship with the reader.

Consider the following points as you develop routine negative messages:

- Manage your time carefully; focus on the most important relationships and requests.
- If the matter is closed, don't imply that it's still open by using phrases such as "Let me think about it and get back to you" as a way to delay saying no.
- Offer alternative ideas if you can, particularly if the relationship is important.
- Don't imply that other assistance or information might be available if it isn't.

1 Plan →	2 Write →	3 Complete
Analyze the Situation Verify that the purpose is to decline a request and offer alternatives; audience is likely to be surprised by the refusal. **Gather Information** Determine audience needs and obtain the necessary information. **Choose Medium and Channel** For formal messages, printed letters on company letterhead are best. **Organize the Information** The main idea is to refuse the request, so limit your scope to that; select the indirect approach based on the audience and the situation.	**Adapt to Your Audience** Adjust the level of formality based on your degree of familiarity with the audience; maintain a positive relationship by using the "you" attitude, politeness, positive emphasis, and bias-free language. **Compose the Message** Use a conversational but professional style and keep the message brief, clear, and as helpful as possible.	**Revise the Message** Evaluate content and review readability to make sure the negative information won't be misinterpreted; make sure your tone stays positive without being artificial. **Produce the Message** Maintain a clean, professional appearance on company letterhead. **Proofread the Message** Review for errors in layout, spelling, and mechanics. **Distribute the Message** Deliver your message using the chosen medium.

InfoTech
927 Dawson Valley Road, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74151
Voice: (918) 669-4428 Fax: (918) 669-4429
www.infotech.com

March 6, 2019

Dr. Sandra Wofford, President
Whittier Community College
333 Whittier Avenue
Tulsa, OK 74150

Dear Dr. Wofford:

The buffer eases the recipient into the message by demonstrating respect and recapping the request. →

Infotech has been happy to support Whittier Community College in many ways over the years, and we appreciate the opportunities you and your organization provide to so many deserving students. Thank you for considering our grounds for your graduation ceremony on June 3.

We would certainly like to accommodate Whittier as we have in years past, but our companywide sales meetings will be held this year during the weeks of May 29 and June 5. With more than 200 sales representatives and their families from around the world joining us, activities will be taking place throughout our facility.

← She provides a meaningful reason for the negative response, without apologizing (because the company is not at fault).

Kwan suggests an alternative, showing that she cares about the college and has given the matter some thought. →

My assistant, Robert Seagers, suggests you contact the Municipal Botanical Gardens as a possible graduation site. He recommends calling Jerry Kane, director of public relations.

We remain firm in our commitment to you, President Wofford, and to the fine students you represent. Through our internship program, academic research grants, and other initiatives, we will continue to be a strong corporate partner to Whittier College and will support your efforts as you move forward.

← Her close emphasizes the importance of the relationship and the company's continuing commitment.

Sincerely,

May Yee Kwan

May Yee Kwan
Public Relations Director

Figure 8.3 Effective Letter Declining a Routine Request
In declining a request to use her company's facilities, May Yee Kwan took note of the fact that her company has a long-standing relationship with the college and wants to maintain that positive relationship. Because the news is unexpected based on past experience, she chose the indirect approach to build up to her announcement.

HANDLING BAD NEWS ABOUT TRANSACTIONS

Bad news about transactions is always unwelcome and usually unexpected. The preferred approach and the specific content and tone of each message can vary widely, depending on the nature of the transaction and your relationship with the customer. Telling an individual consumer that his new sweater will be arriving a week later than you promised is a much simpler task than telling Toyota that 30,000 transmission parts will be a week late, especially when you know the company will be forced to idle a multimillion-dollar production facility as a result.

Some negative messages regarding transactions carry significant business ramifications.

If you haven't done anything specific to set the customer's expectations—such as promising delivery within 24 hours—the message simply needs to inform the customer of the situation, with little or no emphasis on apologies (see Figure 8.4).

If you aren't in a position to offer additional information or assistance, don't imply that you are.

If you did set the customer's expectations and now find that you can't meet them, your task is more complicated. In addition to resetting those expectations and explaining how you'll resolve the problem, you may need to include an element of apology. The scope of the apology depends on the magnitude of the mistake. For the customer who ordered

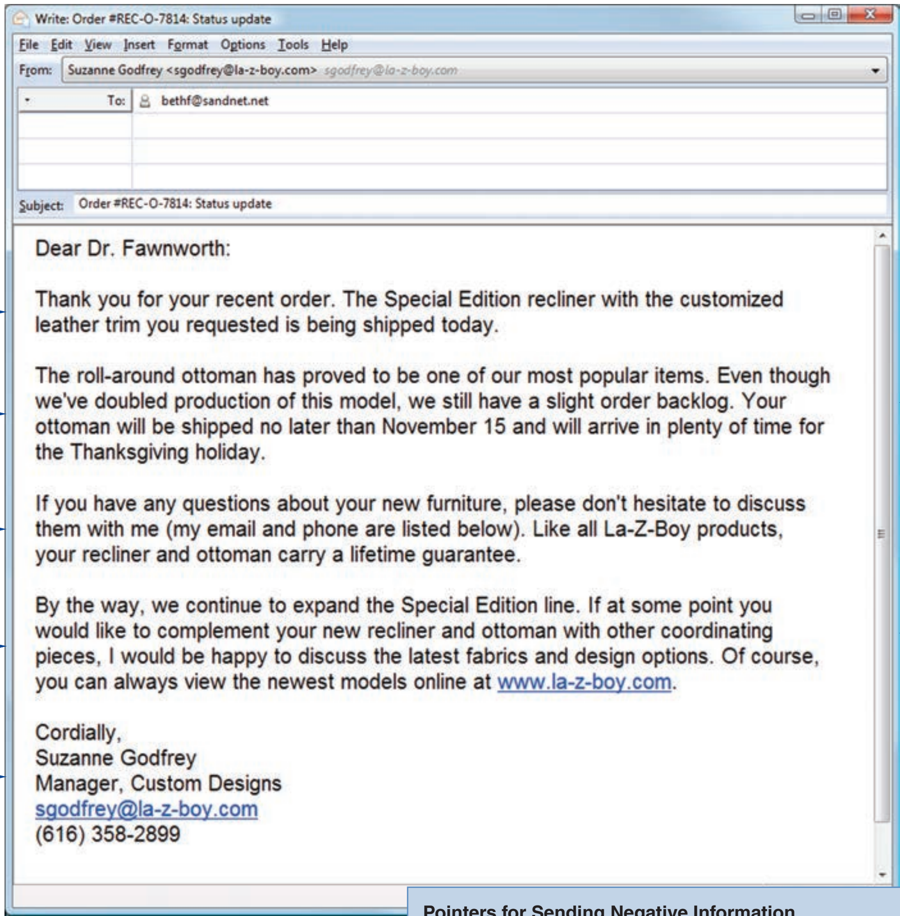
The right approach to bad news about business transactions depends on the customer's expectations.

Godfrey uses the buffer to convey the good news.

These two sentences imply the forthcoming bad news by telling the reader what's being done, not what can't be done.

The body and close foster a positive ongoing relationship by inviting inquiries and reminding the cutomer of a key benefit.

She includes helpful contact information.



Write: Order #REC-O-7814: Status update

File Edit View Insert Format Options Tools Help

From: Suzanne Godfrey <sgodfrey@la-z-boy.com> sgodfrey@la-z-boy.com

To: bethf@sandnet.net

Subject: Order #REC-O-7814: Status update

Dear Dr. Fawnworth:

Thank you for your recent order. The Special Edition recliner with the customized leather trim you requested is being shipped today.

The roll-around ottoman has proved to be one of our most popular items. Even though we've doubled production of this model, we still have a slight order backlog. Your ottoman will be shipped no later than November 15 and will arrive in plenty of time for the Thanksgiving holiday.

If you have any questions about your new furniture, please don't hesitate to discuss them with me (my email and phone are listed below). Like all La-Z-Boy products, your recliner and ottoman carry a lifetime guarantee.

By the way, we continue to expand the Special Edition line. If at some point you would like to complement your new recliner and ottoman with other coordinating pieces, I would be happy to discuss the latest fabrics and design options. Of course, you can always view the newest models online at www.la-z-boy.com.

Cordially,
Suzanne Godfrey
Manager, Custom Designs
sgodfrey@la-z-boy.com
(616) 358-2899

She explains the delay and immediately cushions bad news with a pledge to ship by a definite time.

This resale information encourages future purchasing, but in a way that addresses the customer's needs, not La-Z-Boy's.

Pointers for Sending Negative Information Regarding Transactions

- Base your response on the expectations your company previously set for the customer (such as a delivery date).
- If no expectations were set, share the negative information with little emphasis on apology.
- If expectations were set and you can no longer live up them, include an element of apology when you reset those expectations.
- If the situation warrants, explain what steps are being taken to avoid similar letdowns in the future.
- Take steps to repair the damage to the customer relationship, as appropriate.

Figure 8.4 Effective Negative Message Regarding a Transaction

This message, which is a combination of good and bad news, uses the indirect approach—with the good news serving as a buffer for the bad news. In this case, the customer wasn't promised delivery by a certain date, so the writer simply informs the customer when to expect the rest of the order. The writer also takes steps to repair the relationship and encourage future business with her firm.

Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation.

If you've failed to meet expectations that you set for the customer, an element of apology should be considered.

the sweater, a simple apology followed by a clear statement of when the sweater will arrive would probably be sufficient. For larger business-to-business transactions, the customer may want an explanation of what went wrong to determine whether you'll be able to perform as you promise in the future.

To help repair the damage to the relationship and encourage repeat business, many companies offer discounts on future purchases, free merchandise, or other considerations. Even modest efforts can go a long way to rebuilding a customer's confidence in your company.

REFUSING CLAIMS AND REQUESTS FOR ADJUSTMENT

Use the indirect approach in most cases of refusing a claim.

MOBILE APP

Pocket Letter Pro for iOS includes templates for a variety of letter types to simplify writing business letters on your mobile device.

Customers who make a claim or request an adjustment tend to be emotionally involved, so the indirect approach is usually the better choice if you need to deny such a request. Your delicate task as a writer is to avoid accepting responsibility for the unfortunate situation and yet avoid blaming or accusing the customer. To steer clear of these pitfalls, pay special attention to the tone of your letter. Demonstrate that you understand and have considered the complaint carefully, and then rationally explain why you are refusing the request. Close on a respectful and action-oriented note (see Figure 8.5). And be sure to respond quickly. With so many instantaneous media choices at their disposal, some angry consumers will take their complaints public if they don't hear back from you within a few days or even a few hours.[5]

If you deal with lots of customers over time, chances are you'll get a request that is particularly outrageous. You may even be convinced that the person is not telling the truth. However, you must resist the temptation to call the person dishonest or incompetent. If you don't, you could be sued for **defamation**, a false statement that damages someone's reputation. (Written defamation is called *libel*; spoken defamation is called *slander*.) To successfully sue for defamation, the aggrieved party must prove (1) that the statement is false, (2) that the language injures the person's reputation, and (3) that the statement has been communicated to others.

To avoid accusations of defamation, follow these guidelines:

You can help avoid accusations of defamation by avoiding an emotional response.

- Avoid using any kind of abusive language or terms that could be considered defamatory.
- Provide accurate information and stick to the facts.
- Never let anger or malice motivate your messages.
- Consult your company's legal advisers whenever you think a message might have legal consequences.
- Communicate honestly and make sure you believe what you're saying is true.
- Emphasize a desire for a good relationship in the future.

Keep in mind that nothing positive can come out of antagonizing a customer, even one who has verbally abused you or your colleagues. Reject the claim or request for adjustment in a professional manner and move on to the next challenge.

Sending Negative Employment Messages

5 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

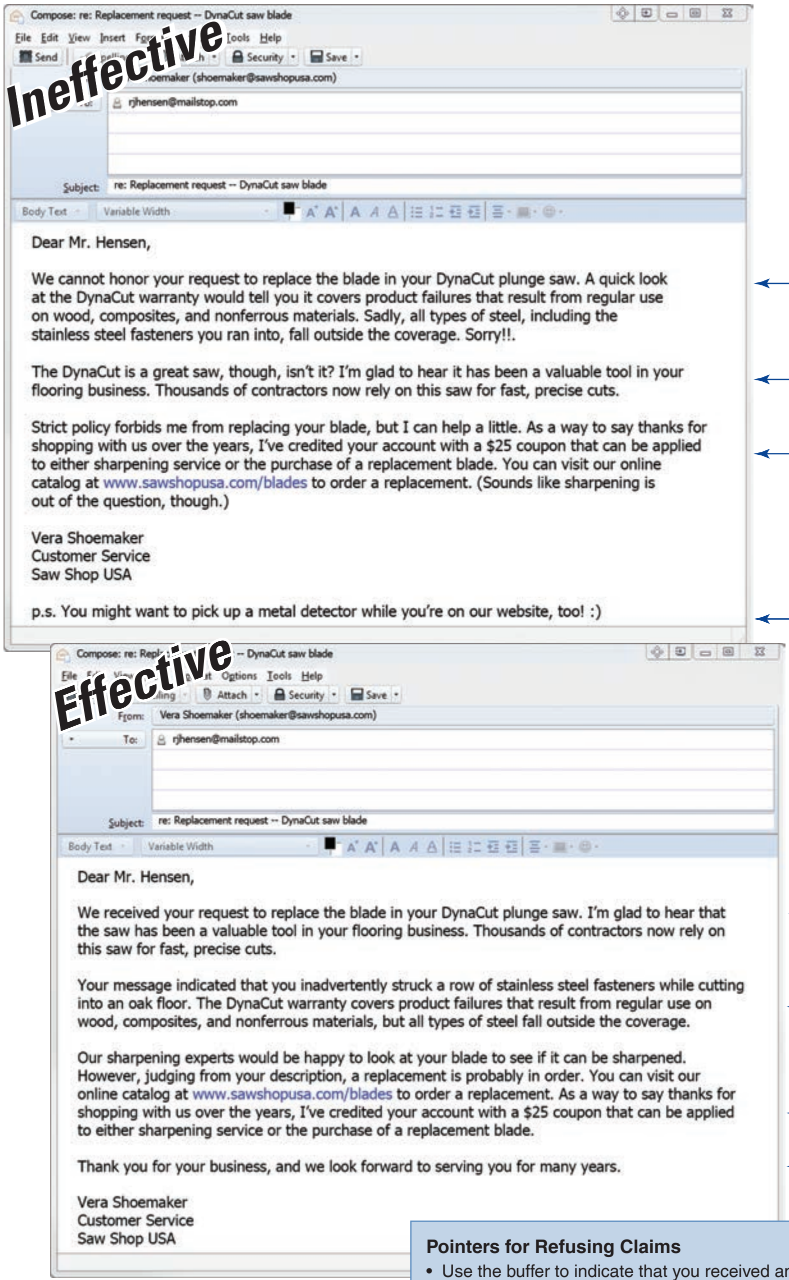
As a manager, you will find yourself in a variety of situations in which you have to convey bad news to individual employees or potential employees. Even if you're not in a supervisory role, you may need to reject requests for recommendations.

Recipients have an emotional stake in negative employment messages, so the indirect approach is usually the best choice.

Recipients have an emotional stake in these messages, so the indirect approach is usually your best choice. In addition, use great care in selecting the medium and channel for each situation. For instance, email and other written forms let you control the message and avoid personal confrontation, but one-on-one conversations are often viewed as more sensitive and give both sides the opportunity to ask and answer questions.

REFUSING REQUESTS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Saying no when someone asks for a recommendation is an unpleasant but sometimes necessary task. Remind yourself of two points. First, you're never under any obligation to provide



Ineffective

Compose: re: Replacement request -- DynaCut saw blade

From: Vera Shoemaker (shoemaker@sawshopusa.com)

To: rjhensen@mailstop.com

Subject: re: Replacement request -- DynaCut saw blade

Dear Mr. Hensen,

We cannot honor your request to replace the blade in your DynaCut plunge saw. A quick look at the DynaCut warranty would tell you it covers product failures that result from regular use on wood, composites, and nonferrous materials. Sadly, all types of steel, including the stainless steel fasteners you ran into, fall outside the coverage. Sorry!!.

The DynaCut is a great saw, though, isn't it? I'm glad to hear it has been a valuable tool in your flooring business. Thousands of contractors now rely on this saw for fast, precise cuts.

Strict policy forbids me from replacing your blade, but I can help a little. As a way to say thanks for shopping with us over the years, I've credited your account with a $25 coupon that can be applied to either sharpening service or the purchase of a replacement blade. You can visit our online catalog at www.sawshopusa.com/blades to order a replacement. (Sounds like sharpening is out of the question, though.)

Vera Shoemaker
Customer Service
Saw Shop USA

p.s. You might want to pick up a metal detector while you're on our website, too! :)

(a) The direct approach is not the right choice for this message, and the opening is way too blunt, even for the direct approach. The second sentence is somewhat insulting, and "Sadly" and "Sorry!!" sound unprofessional.

(b) This upbeat paragraph, coming immediately after the disappointing and insulting opening, will only annoy the reader.

(c) The information about the $25 coupon is positive and presented well. However, hiding behind "policy" in the first sentence only tells the reader that the company is unwilling to consider each customer's needs individually.

(d) This misguided attempt at humor is insulting. The reader already knows about the problem; he wants a solution.

Effective

Compose: re: Replacement request -- DynaCut saw blade

From: Vera Shoemaker (shoemaker@sawshopusa.com)

To: rjhensen@mailstop.com

Subject: re: Replacement request -- DynaCut saw blade

Dear Mr. Hensen,

We received your request to replace the blade in your DynaCut plunge saw. I'm glad to hear that the saw has been a valuable tool in your flooring business. Thousands of contractors now rely on this saw for fast, precise cuts.

Your message indicated that you inadvertently struck a row of stainless steel fasteners while cutting into an oak floor. The DynaCut warranty covers product failures that result from regular use on wood, composites, and nonferrous materials, but all types of steel fall outside the coverage.

Our sharpening experts would be happy to look at your blade to see if it can be sharpened. However, judging from your description, a replacement is probably in order. You can visit our online catalog at www.sawshopusa.com/blades to order a replacement. As a way to say thanks for shopping with us over the years, I've credited your account with a $25 coupon that can be applied to either sharpening service or the purchase of a replacement blade.

Thank you for your business, and we look forward to serving you for many years.

Vera Shoemaker
Customer Service
Saw Shop USA

(a) Using the indirect approach, the opening confirms the customer's claim, letting him know his request has been considered. The writer also confirms the high level of satisfaction with the product in general—signaling that the situation is not a product problem.

(b) The second paragraph offers more confirmation that the reader's message was heard. The description of the warranty lays out the reasoning for the refusal, which is presented indirectly at the end of the paragraph.

(c) The writer continues with helpful advice and the offer of a $25 discount that will help the customer solve his problem.

(d) The closing is respectful and looks to the future on a positive note.

Pointers for Refusing Claims

- Use the buffer to indicate that you received and understand the request or complaint.
- In the body, provide an accurate, objective account of the transaction.
- Make the refusal clear without being abrupt, insulting, or accusatory.
- Maintain an impersonal tone that doesn't offend the reader.
- Don't apologize for refusing, since your company hasn't done anything wrong.
- If appropriate, offer an alternative solution.
- Emphasize your continued desire for a positive relationship with the customer.
- Include resale information if appropriate.
- Make any suggested actions easy for the reader to follow.

Figure 8.5 Message to Refuse a Claim

Vera Shoemaker diplomatically refuses this customer's request for a new saw blade, which he inadvertently damaged after cutting into some steel fasteners. Without blaming the customer (even though the customer clearly made a mistake), she points out that the saw blade is not intended to cut steel, so the warranty doesn't cover a replacement in this instance.

Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation.

a recommendation. Second, if you have legitimate reasons to refuse the request, the long-term consequences of providing one anyway could be much more negative for you and the other party than the short-term disappointment of saying no.[6]

A careful and sensitive approach to negative employment messages can make the task less emotionally draining for you while minimizing the disappointment for the recipient.

By taking a careful and sensitive approach, you can make the task less emotionally draining for yourself while minimizing the disappointment for the other person. Note that if you're being asked to give a recommendation in your official capacity as a representative of your firm, you need to be aware of your company's policy regarding recommendations. To avoid lawsuits from former employees who receive negative references during background checks, many companies no longer offer anything more than confirmation of employment and don't allow managers to give recommendations as personal communication.[7]

Ideally, someone whose performance was inadequate in your past working relationship will be self-aware enough not to ask for a recommendation. And if you had been the person's supervisor, it would've been your responsibility to share this information.[8]

If you are in a position to write a recommendation but choose not to, here are several options:[9]

Here are several options for rejecting a request for a recommendation:
- Disqualify yourself by saying you're not the best person to write it.
- Suggest someone else.
- Take a mentoring approach and suggest an alternative.
- Explain you have a personal policy against writing recommendations.

- **Disqualify yourself.** With this approach, you simply say something along the lines of "I'm not in a good position to offer an objective assessment" or "I'm not the best person to be giving you a recommendation for this opportunity." This approach will feel most natural in situations where you didn't have a close working relationship.
- **Suggest an alternative.** If you believe the person is qualified but you don't want to provide the reference, you can suggest someone else. You don't have to name anyone in particular, but perhaps suggest he or she ask another former supervisor.
- **Take a mentoring approach.** Remember that being asked to provide a recommendation is a reflection of the respect the person has for you and your position. If you have had a formal or informal mentoring relationship and want to help, you can respectfully explain why you don't think this opportunity is a good path to follow and perhaps offer some guidance about how to find the right opportunity.
- **Explain your personal policy.** If you haven't had a close working relationship or aren't motivated to continue one into the future, you can say that "in the interest of simplicity, I've opted not to provide recommendations."

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

These templates make it easier to turn down recommendation requests

The career expert Alison Doyle offers advice and message templates to help you handle these uncomfortable messages. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Whichever course you take, be sure to establish a respectful tone and don't go overboard with an apology (you've done nothing wrong). Also, avoid any phrasing that might lead to false hopes or continued communication on the matter. For example, if you truly intend to say no, don't say "I can't do it just now" or "let me review your previous performance evaluations."

REFUSING SOCIAL NETWORKING RECOMMENDATION REQUESTS

Making recommendations in a social networking environment is more complicated than with a traditional recommendation letter because the endorsements you give become part of your online profile. On a network such as LinkedIn, others can see whom you've recommended and what you've written about these people. Much more so than with traditional letters, then, the recommendations you make in a social network become part of your personal brand.[10] Moreover, networks make it easy to find people and request recommendations, so chances are you will get more requests than you would have otherwise—and sometimes from people you don't know well.

Social networks have created new challenges in recommendation requests, but they also offer more flexibility in responding to these requests.

Fortunately, social networks give you a bit more flexibility when it comes to responding to these requests. One option is to simply ignore or delete the request. Of course, if you do know a person, ignoring a request could create an uncomfortable situation, so you will need to decide each case based on your relationship with the requester. Another option is to refrain from making recommendations at all, and just let people know this policy when they ask. Whatever you decide, remember that it is your choice.[11]

If you choose to make recommendations and want to respond to a request, you can write as much or as little information about the person as you are comfortable sharing. Unlike the situation with an offline recommendation, you don't need to write a complete letter. You can write a brief statement, even just a single sentence that focuses on one positive aspect.[12] This flexibility allows you to respond positively in those situations in which you have mixed feelings about a person's overall abilities.

REJECTING JOB APPLICATIONS

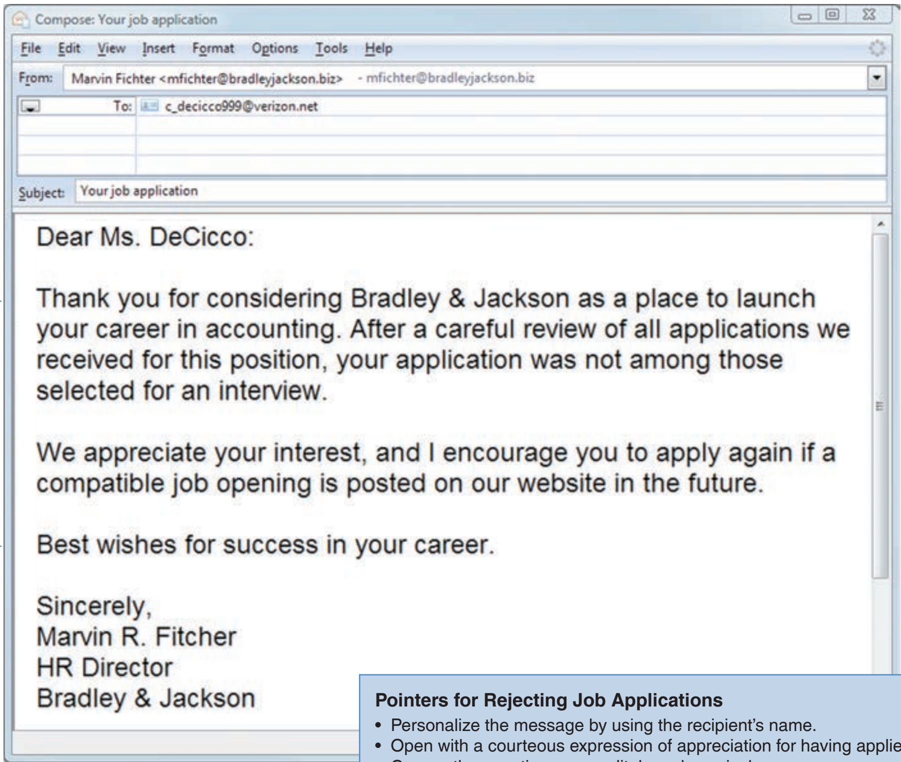
Application rejections are routine communications, but saying no is never easy, and recipients are emotionally invested in the decision. Moreover, companies must take care to avoid illegal or unethical bias in their employment decisions—or even the appearance of unfairness. Of course, having fair and nondiscriminatory hiring practices is essential, but rejections must also be written in a way that doesn't inadvertently suggest any hint of discrimination. Expert opinions differ on the level of information to include in a rejection message, but the safest strategy is to avoid sharing any explanations for the company's decision and to avoid making or implying any promises of future consideration (see Figure 8.6):[13]

The safest strategy for rejecting job applications is a minimalist approach that doesn't explain the reasons for the decision.

- **Personalize the message by using the recipient's name.** "Dear Applicant" can make it sound as though you never bothered to read the application.
- **Open with a courteous expression of appreciation for having been considered.** In a sense, this is like the buffer in an indirect message because it gives you an opportunity to begin the conversation without immediately and bluntly telling the reader that his or her application has been rejected.
- **Convey the negative news politely and concisely.** The passive voice is helpful in this situation because it depersonalizes the response. For example, "Your application was not among those selected for an interview" is less blunt than the active phrase "We have rejected your application."

Fitcher opens with a simple expression of appreciation for being considered, which acts as a mini-buffer for the bad news to come.

He closes on a positive note without apologizing or implying that the matter is open for discussion.



Compose: Your job application

File Edit View Insert Format Options Tools Help

From: Marvin Fichter <mfichter@bradleyjackson.biz> - mfichter@bradleyjackson.biz

To: c_decicco999@verizon.net

Subject: Your job application

Dear Ms. DeCicco:

Thank you for considering Bradley & Jackson as a place to launch your career in accounting. After a careful review of all applications we received for this position, your application was not among those selected for an interview.

We appreciate your interest, and I encourage you to apply again if a compatible job opening is posted on our website in the future.

Best wishes for success in your career.

Sincerely,
Marvin R. Fitcher
HR Director
Bradley & Jackson

The opening conveys the bad news quickly, using the passive voice to depersonalize the decision.

He invites her to reapply for any positions that may appear in the future, while avoiding any promise of reviewing her current application again.

Pointers for Rejecting Job Applications

- Personalize the message by using the recipient's name.
- Open with a courteous expression of appreciation for having applied.
- Convey the negative news politely and concisely.
- Avoid explaining why an applicant was rejected or why other applicants were chosen instead.
- Don't state or imply that the application will be reviewed at a later date.
- Close with positive wishes for the applicant's career success.

Figure 8.6 Effective Message Rejecting a Job Applicant

This message rejecting a job applicant takes care to avoid making or implying any promises about future opportunities, beyond inviting the person to apply for positions that may appear in the future. Note that this would not be appropriate if the company did not believe the applicant was a good fit for the company in general.

Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation.

- **Avoid explaining why an applicant was rejected or why other applicants were chosen instead.** Although it was once more common to offer such explanations, and some experts still advocate this approach, the simplest strategy from a legal standpoint is to avoid offering reasons for the decision. Avoiding explanations lowers the possibility that an applicant will perceive discrimination in the hiring decision or be tempted to challenge the reasons given.
- **Don't state or imply that the application will be reviewed at a later date.** Saying that "we will keep your résumé on file for future consideration" can create false hopes for the recipient and leave the company vulnerable to legal complaints if a future hiring decision is made without actually reviewing this candidate's application again. If the candidate might be a good fit for another position in the company in the future, you can suggest he or she reapply if a new job opening is posted.
- **Close with positive wishes for the applicant's career success.** A brief statement such as "We wish you success in your career" is sufficient.

Naturally, you should adjust your tactics to the circumstances. A simple and direct written message is fine when someone has only submitted a job application, but a phone call might be more appropriate for rejecting a candidate who has made it at least partway through the interview process.

GIVING NEGATIVE PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Conventional performance reviews are written reports combined with in-person discussion between manager and employee.

Performance reviews are periodic evaluations of employee performance designed to clarify job requirements, give employees feedback on their performance, and establish personal action plans. The traditional annual performance review combines a written assessment with a one-on-one conversation in which the manager shares the review with the employee and discusses the evaluation. Reviews often include a scoring system that can be used to rank employees and establish target pay levels.

Although this approach has been widely used for years, it has some potential weaknesses: Writing these reports consumes a lot of management's time, the long gaps between evaluations can result in employees drifting far off course before getting corrective input, and ranked evaluations can foster an unhealthy atmosphere of competition in the workplace.[14]

In response to these issues, some companies have abandoned the traditional annual review in favor of shorter and more frequent forms of feedback. Some have dropped written reviews altogether in favor of ongoing coaching and feedback sessions between managers and employees, the use of feedback apps, and simpler survey methods.[15]

If you need to give an employee a negative appraisal, using whatever approach and media your company embraces, take steps to help ensure fair and objective reviews:[16]

Negative evaluations should be based on objective, documented evidence.

- **Base your evaluation on concrete, documented evidence.** To avoid basing your evaluation on vague impressions and "gut feelings," be sure to compile objective performance evidence throughout the period leading up to the evaluation. From the employee's perspective, if you don't have detailed evidence, a negative review can come across as a personal attack. This detailed evidence also gives the employee examples of specific behaviors to repeat or avoid.
- **Don't focus on just the negative elements.** Negative behaviors and decisions tend to stick out from the norm, so it's easy to focus on them and overlook positive aspects of performance.

Give employees ample opportunity to ask questions and respond to a negative evaluation.

- **Make it a conversation, not a lecture.** Give the employee the opportunity to respond to your feedback and ask questions.
- **Don't avoid difficult topics.** Pretending that problems don't exist is harmful for everyone, including the employee.
- **Make sure your written and oral communication match.** If you write a strongly negative assessment but then gloss over the problems in order to avoid an uncomfortable live conversation, for example, you'll send mixed messages.

- **Evaluate all employees consistently.** Consistency is not only fair but also helps protect the company from claims of discriminatory practices.
- **Maintain a calm, objective tone.** Whether it's in writing or in person, manage the emotions of the situation by maintaining a professional tone. Be mindful of your nonverbal signals, too.
- **Focus on opportunities for improvement.** This information can serve as the foundation for an improvement plan for the coming year.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE
IBM crowdsources a replacement for its annual performance reviews

CEO Ginni Rometty explains why the company turned to its employees to create a better alternative to the traditional approach. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

TERMINATING EMPLOYMENT

If an employee's performance cannot be brought up to company standards or if other factors such as declining sales cause a reduction in the workforce, a company often has no choice but to terminate employment. As with other negative employment messages, termination is fraught with emotions and legal ramifications, so careful planning, complete documentation, and sensitive writing and conversational skills are essential.

Termination messages should always be written with input from the company's legal staff, but here are general guidelines to bear in mind:[17]

Termination letters require the utmost in objective documentation and sensitive language in order to avoid creating undue ill will and grounds for legal action.

- Whatever the reasons for the decision, present them clearly and objectively, using calm language. For performance-related terminations, provide the company's evidence for making the decision.
- If the termination is related to an individual's performance, avoid framing these problems as personality conflicts or other vague issues.
- Avoid any suggestion that someone else was behind the decision or that you don't agree with it. Otherwise, you could create the impression that the firing decision is unfair or open to negotiation.
- Follow all company policies, contractual requirements, and applicable state and federal laws.
- Deliver the termination letter in person if at all possible. Arrange a meeting that will ensure privacy and freedom from interruptions.
- Be prepared for questions that the employee is likely to have, such as what will happen to his or her retirement benefits.
- Avoid surprises. Unless an employee exhibited some unexpected behavior that warrants immediate termination, firing shouldn't come as a surprise. Through regular and honest feedback, underperforming employees should be made aware of their shortcomings and given opportunities to improve.
- If there are legitimately positive aspects to the decision, share those with the employee. For example, if you recognize that even though someone hasn't worked out in his or her current job but could excel in a different role in another company, share that information as a way to help the employee transition to a more successful situation.

Any termination is clearly a negative outcome for the employee, but careful attention to content and tone in the termination message can help the employee move on gracefully and minimize the misunderstandings and anger that can lead to expensive lawsuits.

Sending Negative Organizational News

6 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.

As a manager or business owner, you may at times need to issue negative announcements regarding some aspect of your products, services, or operations. Unlike routine negative announcements, these messages involve significant changes that negatively affect one or more groups (such as losing a major contract or canceling a popular product), announcements of workforce reductions, project cancelations, and crisis communication

Negative organizational messages often require extensive planning because multiple audiences can be involved.

regarding environmental incidents, workplace accidents, or other difficult situations (see Figure 8.7).

When making negative announcements, follow these guidelines:

- **Match your approach to the situation.** For example, in an emergency such as product tampering or a toxic spill, get to the point immediately and make sure all affected parties get the information they need.

Ineffective

Pulling the plug on Triton

JUNE 6 BY OSCAR HUERTA LEAVE A COMMENT

Most of you probably don't follow the costs of materials on the world market, but let me tell you, it's been brutal for those of us who do. We're seeing some major increases in the cost of high-grade steel, ceramics, and semiconductor-grade silicon. We can accommodate moderate increases in these costs by raising our list prices, but there's only so far we can raise prices before sales start to drop.

Of course, we periodically revisit our sales forecasts for products in development, to make sure our revenue projections are valid. Sad to say, Triton looks like it will get hammered when it hits the market. AMG Magnetics recently introduced a product that will compete directly with Triton, and it has both higher performance and a lower price.

This won't come as a surprise to anyone who has been looking at the numbers: We have to pull the plug on Triton. It just won't fly under these new circumstances.

Now, I don't want to hear any gossip about the Triton team failing or not being up to the task or whatever. Sue Wentworth and her crew have been putting in long hours for months, and it was tough for me at the other top managers to deliver this news.

Disruptions like this always start the rumor mill going about job security, so I'm happy to report that there is no need to worry. We have plenty of other projects that could use some extra help, and other project managers are already lobbying to get their hands on the Triton staffers.

By the way, these reviews are something the management team does every quarter to make sure we focus our time and investment on new products with the greatest potential for strong sales and profit levels, the management team reviews the costing analysis and sales projections for every R&D project once a quarter. Sometimes circumstances change after we launch a project, and the financial assumptions we made at that point might no longer be valid.

(a) The writer attempts the indirect approach in the body of the message but gives away the bad news in the headline of the blog post.

(b) This opening makes it more about the writer than the readers or the company in general.

(c) Saying that Triton "will get hammered when it hits the market" is too blunt for such a sensitive message.

(d) He started the post by saying most people don't look at the numbers, so this news will come as a surprise. Also, "pull the plug" and "It just won't fly" feel too flippant for such an important message.

(e) This remark about gossip introduces an additional layer of negativity that serve no purpose.

(f) This paragraph has positive information about job security, but it starts with an unnecessary negative remark about the rumor mill.

(g) This information would make a good buffer (see the Effective example), but it makes a poor close because it doesn't leave the reader with anything to feel good about.

Effective

Triton project: important update

JUNE 6 BY OSCAR HUERTA LEAVE A COMMENT

As part of the ongoing effort to make sure we focus our time and investment on new products with the greatest potential for strong sales and profit levels, the management team reviews the costing analysis and sales projections for every R&D project once a quarter. Conducting these reviews every quarter gives us time to respond in the event that current circumstances no longer align with the financial assumptions we made when a particular project was launched.

On the cost side of the equation, we're seeing some major increases in the cost of high-grade steel, ceramics, and semiconductor-grade silicon. We can accommodate moderate increases in these costs by raising our list prices, but there's only so far we can raise prices before sales start to drop.

Regarding sales projections, our forecasts still look solid for every new product, except for the Triton project. AMG Magnetics recently introduced a product that will compete directly with Triton, and it has both higher performance and a lower price. Accordingly, we have had to reduce Triton's sales forecasts by 35 percent.

Unfortunately, the increase in material costs and the decrease in projected sales volume put Triton in an impossible position. We believe the company has better opportunities for investing our development capital and the time and energy of our talented engineering staff. Accordingly, we have decided to cancel Triton, effectively immediately.

Please rest assured that this will not affect staffing levels. We have plenty of other projects that can use some extra help, and other project managers are already lobbying to get the Triton staffers on their teams.

Please join me in thanking Sue Wentworth and everyone on the Triton team for the months of dedication and creativity they devoted to this project. I know they are disappointed in this outcome but recognize the necessity of focusing on our brightest prospects.

(a) The post title preserves the indirect approach by not giving away the bad news.

(b) The opening serves as an effective buffer because it explains the process that was used to reach the decision. This will put the audience in a rational frame of mind, rather than an emotional one.

(c) This paragraph conveys the first of the two reasons that led to the decision, and it does so in a calm but authoritative way.

(d) This paragraph shares the second reason and narrows the focus from all products to just the Triton project. At this point, readers should be prepared for the bad news that is coming.

(e) He delivers the bad news while keeping the focus on the project and its financial parameters. He also immediately shifts into a positive stance, talking about the talented staff and other opportunities.

(f) This paragraph puts to rest any worries other readers will have about their jobs.

(g) The close is respectful and demonstrates sensitivity toward the people most affected by the decision.

Figure 8.7 Internal Message Providing Bad News About Company Operations

The cancelation of a major development project before completion can be a traumatic event for a company's employees. People who worked on the project are likely to feel that all their time and energy were wasted and to worry that their jobs are in jeopardy. Employees who didn't work on the project might worry about the company's financial health and the stability of their own jobs. Such messages are therefore prime candidates for the indirect approach. Note how much more effectively the revised version manages the reader's emotions from beginning to end.

- **Consider the unique needs of each group.** When a company or facility closes, for instance, employees need time to find new jobs, customers may need to find new suppliers, and community leaders may need to be prepared to help people who have lost their jobs.
- **Minimize the element of surprise whenever possible.** Give affected groups as much time as possible to prepare and respond.
- **If possible, give yourself enough time to plan and manage a response.** Make sure you're ready with answers to potential questions.
- **Look for positive angles but don't exude false optimism.** Laying off 10,000 people does not give them "an opportunity to explore new horizons." It's a traumatic event that can affect employees, their families, and their communities for years. The best you may be able to do is thank people for their past support and wish them well in the future.
- **Seek expert advice.** Many significant negative announcements have important technical, financial, or legal elements that require the expertise of lawyers, accountants, or other specialists.
- **Use multiple channels to reach out to affected audiences.** Provide information through your normal communication network, such as your company website, Facebook page, and Twitter account, but also reach out and participate in conversations that are taking place elsewhere in the social media landscape.[18]
- **Be accessible and be as transparent as possible.** Particularly in this age of social media, people affected by business developments expect answers to questions and concerns. You might not be able to share every detail that people demand, but be as open as business concerns will allow.

Give people as much time as possible to react to negative news.

Don't go it alone: Ask for legal help and other assistance if you're not sure how to handle a significant negative announcement.

Negative situations give you an opportunity to excel as a communicator and as a business leader. Inspirational leaders try to seize such situations as opportunities to reshape or reinvigorate the organization, and they offer encouragement to those around them.

Responding to Negative Information in a Social Media Environment

7 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe an effective strategy for responding to negative information in a social media environment.

For all the benefits they bring to business, social media and other communication technologies have created a major new challenge: responding to online rumors, false information, and attacks on a company's reputation. Customers who believe they have been treated unfairly like these sites and tools because they can use the public exposure as leverage. Most companies appreciate the feedback, too, and many actively seek out complaints to improve their products and operations.

However, false rumors and both fair and unfair criticisms can spread around the world in a matter of minutes. Responding to rumors and countering negative information require an ongoing effort and case-by-case decisions about which messages require a response. Follow these four steps:[19]

Responding effectively to rumors and negative information in social media requires continual engagement with stakeholders and careful decision making about which messages should get a response.

- **Engage early, engage often.** The most important step in responding to negative information has to be done *before* the negative information appears, and that is to engage with communities of stakeholders as a long-term strategy. Companies that have active, mutually beneficial relationships with customers and other interested parties are less likely to be attacked unfairly online and more likely to survive such attacks if they do occur. In contrast, companies that ignore constituents or jump into "spin doctoring" mode when a negative situation occurs don't have the same credibility as companies that have done the long, hard work of fostering relationships within their physical and online communities.
- **Monitor the conversation.** If people are interested in what your company does, chances are they are blogging, tweeting, podcasting, posting videos, posting on Facebook, and otherwise sharing their opinions. Use automated reputation analysis and other technologies to listen to what people are saying.
- **Evaluate negative messages.** When you encounter negative messages, resist the urge to fire back immediately. Instead, evaluate the source, the tone, and the content of

MOBILE APP
The **Yelp** mobile app is an easy way to keep the consumer review site at your fingertips—and to monitor what's being said about your business.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE
Is there any truth to that rumor?
The Emergent website from Columbia University tracks and evaluates rumors spreading online. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

the message and then choose a response that fits the situation. For example, the Public Affairs Agency of the U.S. Air Force groups senders of negative messages into four categories, including "trolls" (those whose only intent is to stir up conflict), "ragers" (those who are just ranting or telling jokes), "the misguided" (those who are spreading incorrect information), and "unhappy customers" (those who have had a negative experience with the Air Force).

- **Respond appropriately.** After you have assessed a negative message, quickly make the appropriate response based on an overall public relations plan. The Air Force, for instance, doesn't respond to trolls or ragers, responds to misguided messages with correct information, and responds to unhappy customers with efforts to rectify the situation and reach a reasonable solution. In addition to replying promptly, make sure your response won't make the situation even worse. For example, taking legal action against critics, even if technically justified, can rally people to their defense and create a public relations nightmare. In some instances, the best response can be to contact a critic privately (through direct messaging on Twitter, for example) to attempt a resolution away from the public forum.

Whatever you do, keep mind that positive reputations are an important asset and need to be diligently guarded and defended. Everybody has a voice now, and some of those voices don't care to play by the rules of ethical communication.

For more information on writing negative messages, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Chapter 8.

The Future of Communication: Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality

Augmented reality and virtual reality (VR) are two intriguing technologies that are starting to change the way employees perform a variety of job tasks, from training to research and development to customer service. Augmented reality provides a layer of digital information that enhances the immediate physical reality a person sees. This information can be as simple as text that displays on a mobile or wearable device pointed at a particular location or item, or as elaborate as 3D graphics that overlay whatever live scene the user is looking at through a device. For example, using an augmented reality app, technicians can point a smartphone or tablet at a machine and get information about its operation and repair. Travelers can use mobile devices to get additional information about environments they're moving through—everything from reviews of a restaurant they're walking past to details about the various businesses in an office building.

In contrast, VR creates a simulation in which the person experiences the sensation of being in an environment, even though that environment is entirely computer-generated. (Holograms, in which 3D representations of real people are projected into a physical space, are explored on page 350.) For training applications, for example, if it is difficult, expensive, or dangerous to put trainees in a real-life situation, a VR simulation can let employees experience the sensation of being there and doing whatever tasks are required. VR can also help people experience a product or structure before it is built. Ford uses VR to get feedback from drivers by letting them sit in and experience prototype designs before the cars are manufactured, and Audi lets buyers experience a virtual car with the options they'd like to order. The home improvement chain Lowes uses VR to let customers walk through rooms they want to build or redecorate in their homes. These simulated experiences can communicate much more powerfully than video, photos, or other conventional media.[20]

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Research an augmented reality or VR system that is currently used for business purposes (not games or other entertainment systems, in other words). Write a one-paragraph summary of how this technology is more effective than conventional business media, and offer your prediction on whether it will enter the mainstream of business usage.

Chapter Review and Activities

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** to complete the problems marked with this icon .

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

Follow these tips in the planning stage:

- Start with a clear purpose and your audience's needs in mind.
- Gather the information your audience will need in order to understand and accept your message.
- Choose the best combination of medium and channel; for messages that are intensely personal, try to deliver the message in person.
- Choose carefully between the direct and indirect approaches. If the bad news is not unexpected or particularly traumatic, the direct approach is usually fine, but if the news is shocking or painful, the indirect approach is better (see Figures 8.1 and 8.2).

Follow these tips in the writing stage:

- If your credibility hasn't already been established with an audience, clarify your qualifications so recipients won't question your authority or ability.
- Use language that conveys respect and avoids an accusing tone.

Follow these tips in the completing stage:

- Take extra care to avoid errors, which can compound any impression that you don't care about the recipient's feelings.
- Deliver bad news promptly to give recipients as much time as possible to react to it.

Objective 2: Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.

The direct approach works in three stages:

- Open with the negative news, but don't use the direct approach as a license to be rude or overly blunt.
- Follow up with reasons or additional details.
- Close with a respectful statement that shares any positive aspects that are relevant.

Objective 3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news, and explain how to avoid ethical problems when using this approach.

The indirect approach works in four stages:

- Open with a buffer, a neutral, noncontroversial statement that is closely related to the point of the message but doesn't convey the bad news.
- Build toward the main idea by laying out your reasons and explanations.
- Convey the negative news.
- Close with a respectful statement that shares any positive aspects that are relevant.

Be sure to avoid ethical lapses when using the indirect approach:

- Don't obscure the bad news.
- Don't trivialize the audience's concerns.
- In the buffer, don't mislead the audience into thinking you're actually delivering good news. Remember that the purpose of the indirect approach is to cushion the blow, not to avoid delivering it.

Objective 4: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

To make negative announcements on routine business matters, use the indirect approach unless the news has minor consequences for the audience.

To reject suggestions or proposals when you requested input or it came from someone with whom you have an established relationship, use the indirect approach to gently reset the other party's expectations.

To refuse routine requests, use the direct approach unless the matter is significant, you or your company have an established relationship with the person making the request, or you're forced to decline a request that you might have accepted in the past.

To convey bad news about transactions, choose your approach based on the situation and your relationship with the customer. Address the following points:

- Modify the customer's expectations.
- Explain how you will resolve the situation.
- Repair whatever damage might have been done to the business relationship.

Whether or not you should apologize depends in part on the magnitude of the situation and whether you previously established specific expectations about the transaction.

To refuse a claim or a request for adjustment, the indirect approach is usually preferred because the other party is emotionally involved and expects you to respond positively.

Objective 5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

The indirect approach is usually the better choice for negative employment messages because the recipient is always emotionally involved and the decisions are usually significant.

To refuse a request for a recommendation (when your employer allows you to write them), choose one of these options:

- Disqualify yourself. ("I'm not in a position to offer an objective assessment.")

- Suggest an alternative. ("Have you asked your finance professor for a recommendation?")
- Take a mentoring approach. ("Perhaps a job that doesn't include the public relations component would be a better fit for your skills.")
- Explain your personal policy. ("In the interest of simplicity, I've opted not to provide recommendations.")

You have some flexibility when responding to requests for recommendations or endorsements on social networks such as LinkedIn:

- You can choose to ignore the request if you don't know the person.
- You can decline the request as a matter of personal policy.
- You can write a full recommendation if that matches your assessment of the person.
- You can write a limited recommendation on just one or a few aspects of the person's capabilities.

Messages rejecting job applicants raise a number of emotional and legal issues and therefore must be approached with great care. Here is a safe strategy:

- Personalize the message with the recipient's name, even if it's a form letter or email.
- Open with an expression of appreciation for being considered.
- Convey the negative news politely and concisely ("Your application was not among those selected for an interview").
- Avoid explaining why an applicant was rejected or why other applicants were chosen instead.
- Don't state or imply that the application will be reviewed at a later date.
- Close with positive wishes for the applicant's career success.

Many companies are reevaluating their approach to employee performance reviews, but if you are asked to write a negative evaluation for someone, follow this advice:

- Base your evaluation on concrete, documented evidence.
- Don't focus on just the negative aspects of performance.
- When you discuss the evaluation with the employee, make it a conversation, not a lecture.
- Don't avoid difficult topics.
- Make sure your written and oral communication match so the employee doesn't get mixed signals.
- Evaluate all employees consistently.
- Maintain a calm, objective tone.
- Focus on opportunities for improvement.

Termination messages are the most challenging employment messages of all. Always consult with company legal staff and follow this general advice:

- Present the reasons for the decision clearly and objectively, using calm language.
- Avoid framing performance problems as personality conflicts or other vague issues.
- Avoid any suggestion that someone else was behind the decision or that you don't agree with it.
- Follow policies, contracts, and applicable laws to the letter.
- Deliver the termination letter in person if at all possible.
- Be prepared for questions the employee is likely to have.
- Avoid surprises; for ongoing performance issues, termination should never come as a shock.
- If there are legitimately positive aspects to the decision, share those with the employee.

Objective 6: List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.

Follow these steps to convey negative organizational news:

- Match your approach to the situation.
- Consider the unique needs of each audience group.
- Minimize the element of surprise whenever possible.
- Give yourself as much time as possible to plan and manage a response.
- Look for positive angles but don't exude false optimism.
- Seek expert advice.
- Use multiple channels to reach out to affected audiences.
- Be open and transparent.

Objective 7: Describe an effective strategy for responding to negative information in a social media environment.

These four steps provide an effective way to deal with negative information about your company:

1. Get engaged and stay engaged with important stakeholders before negative situations occur.
2. Monitor the conversations taking place about your company and its products.
3. When you see negative messages, evaluate the situation before responding.
4. After evaluating negative messages, take the appropriate response based on an overall public relations plan. Some messages are better ignored, whereas others should be addressed immediately with corrective information.

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

8-1. What five general goals could you have for delivering bad news? [LO-1]

8-2. What questions should you ask yourself when choosing between the direct and indirect approaches? [LO-1]

8-3. What is the sequence of elements in a negative message organized using the direct approach? [LO-2]

8-4. What is a buffer, and what is the advantage of using a respectful, ethical buffer? [LO-3]

8-5. What are four options for declining a request to provide someone with a recommendation? [LO-5]

8-6. Why is it important to be engaged with stakeholders before trying to use social media during a crisis or other negative scenario? [LO-7]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

8-7. Can you express sympathy with someone's negative situation without apologizing for the circumstances? Explain your answer. [LO-2]

8-8. Is intentionally deemphasizing bad news the same as distorting graphs and charts to deemphasize unfavorable data? Why or why not? [LO-3]

8-9. Should you ever apologize when giving an employee a negative performance evaluation? Why or why not? [LO-5]

8-10. If your social media monitoring efforts pick up a tweet that accuses your customer service staff of lying and claims to have evidence to back it up, how would you respond? [LO-7]

Practice Your Skills

Exercises for Perfecting Your Writing

To review chapter content related to each set of exercises, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

Message Strategies: Writing Negative Messages [LO-2], [LO-3] Select which approach (direct or indirect) you would use for the following negative messages.

8-11. An email message to your boss, informing her that one of your key clients is taking its business to another accounting firm

8-12. An email message to a customer informing her that one of the books she ordered from your website is temporarily out of stock

8-13. A letter to a customer explaining that the DVD burner he ordered for his new custom computer is on back order and that, as a consequence, the shipping of the entire order will be delayed

Message Strategies: Writing Negative Messages [LO-3] Answer the following questions pertaining to buffers.

8-14. You have to tell a local restaurant owner that your plans have changed and you are canceling the 90-person banquet scheduled for next month. Do you need to use a buffer? Why or why not?

8-15. Write a buffer for a letter declining an invitation to speak at an industry association's annual fundraising event. Show your appreciation for being asked.

8-16. Write a buffer for an email message rejecting an unsolicited proposal from a vendor with whom you have a positive and long-standing business relationship. Make up any details you need.

Message Strategies: Refusing Routine Requests; Collaboration: Team Projects [LO-4], Chapter 2 Working alone, revise the following statements to deemphasize the bad news without hiding it or distorting it. (*Hint*: Minimize the space devoted to the bad news, subordinate it, or embed it in other information.) Then team up with a classmate and read each other's revisions. Did you both use the same approach in every case? Which approach seems to be most effective for each of the revised statements?

8-17. The airline can't refund your money. The "Conditions" section on the back of your ticket states that there are no refunds for missed flights. Sometimes the airline makes exceptions, but only when life and death are involved. Of course, your ticket is still valid and can be used on a flight to the same destination.

8-18. I'm sorry to tell you, we can't supply the custom decorations you requested. We called every supplier, and none of them can do what you want on such short notice. You can, however, get a standard decorative package on the same theme in time. I found a supplier that stocks these. Of course, it won't have quite the flair you originally requested.

8-19. We can't refund your money for the malfunctioning smartphone. You shouldn't have immersed the unit in water while swimming; the user's manual clearly states the unit is not designed to be used in adverse environments.

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information can be found in another chapter, as indicated.

8-20. **Message Strategies: Making Negative Announcements [LO-4]** Read the following document and (a) analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each sentence and (b) revise the document so that it follows this chapter's guidelines.

> Your spring fraternity party sounds like fun. We're glad you've again chosen us as your caterer. Unfortunately, we have changed a few of our policies, and I wanted you to know about these changes in advance so that we won't have any misunderstandings on the day of the party.
>
> We will arrange the delivery of tables and chairs as usual the evening before the party. However, if you want us to set up, there is now a $100 charge for that service. Of course, you might want to get some of the brothers and pledges to do it, which would save you money. We've also added a small charge for cleanup. This is only $3 per person (you can estimate because I know a lot of people come and go later in the evening).
>
> Other than that, all the arrangements will be the same. We'll provide the skirt for the band stage, tablecloths, bar setup, and of course, the barbecue. Will you have the tubs of ice with soft drinks again? We can do that for you as well, but there will be a fee.
>
> Please let me know if you have any problems with these changes and we'll try to work them out. I know it's going to be a great party.

8-21. **Message Strategies: Refusing Routine Requests [LO-4]** As a customer service supervisor for a mobile phone company, you're in charge of responding to customers' requests for refunds. You've just received an email message from a customer who unwittingly ran up a $550 bill for data charges after forgetting to disable his smartphone's WiFi hotspot feature. The customer says it wasn't his fault because he didn't know his roommates were using his phone to get free Internet access. However, you've dealt with this situation before and provided a notice to all customers to be careful about excess data charges resulting from the use of the hotspot capability. Draft a short buffer (one or two sentences) for your email reply, sympathizing with the customer's plight but preparing him for the bad news (that company policy specifically prohibits refunds in such cases).

8-22. Message Strategies: Refusing Routine Requests [LO-4] Read the following document and (a) analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each sentence and (b) revise the message so that it follows this chapter's guidelines.

> I am responding to your email of about six weeks ago asking for an adjustment on your wireless router, model WM39Z. We test all our products before they leave the factory; therefore, it could not have been our fault that your hub didn't work.
>
> If you or someone in your office dropped the unit, it might have caused the damage. Or the damage could have been caused by the shipper if he dropped it. If so, you should file a claim with the shipper. At any rate, it wasn't our fault. The parts are already covered by warranty. However, we will provide labor for the repairs for $50, which is less than our cost, since you are a valued customer.
>
> We will have a booth at the upcoming trade fair there and hope to see you or someone from your office. We have many new models of computing and networking accessories that we're sure you'll want to see. I've enclosed our latest catalog. Hope to see you there.

8-23. Message Strategies: Making Negative Announcements; Communication Ethics: Distinguishing Ethical Dilemmas and Ethical Lapses [LO-4], Chapter 1 The insurance company where you work is planning to raise all premiums for health-care coverage. Your boss has asked you to read a draft of her letter to customers, announcing the new, higher rates. The first two paragraphs discuss some exciting medical advances and the expanded coverage offered by your company. Only in the final paragraph do customers learn that they will have to pay more for coverage starting next year. What are the ethical implications of this draft? What changes would you suggest?

8-24. Message Strategies: Making Negative Announcements [LO-4] The following email message about travel budget cutbacks at Black & Decker contains numerous blunders. Using what you've learned in the chapter, read the message carefully and analyze its faults. Then revise the message with a stronger "you" attitude, including a more diplomatic opening and the use of lists to simplify reading. Since many employees will read it while traveling, be sure to make it mobile friendly.

> [Subject line]: Travel Budget Cuts Effective Immediately
>
> Dear Traveling Executives:
>
> We need you to start using some of the budget suggestions we are going to issue as a separate memorandum. These include using videoconference equipment instead of traveling to meetings, staying in cheaper hotels, arranging flights for cheaper times, and flying from less-convenient but also less-expensive suburban airports.
>
> The company needs to cut travel expenses by fifty percent, just as we've cut costs in all departments of Black & Decker. This means you'll no longer be able to stay in fancy hotels and make last-minute, costly changes to your travel plans.
>
> You'll also be expected to avoid hotel WiFi surcharges. Hotels that charge for in-room Wifi often provide free WiFi in their lobbies, so do your work downstairs. And never return a rental car with an empty tank! That causes the rental agency to charge us a premium price for the gas they sell when they fill it up upon your return.
>
> You'll be expected to make these changes in your travel habits immediately.
>
> M. Juhasz
>
> Travel & Meeting Services

8-25. Message Strategies: Refusing Routine Requests; Collaboration: Team Projects [LO-4], Chapter 2 The following letter rejecting a faucet manufacturer's product presentation contains many errors in judgment. Working with your classmates in a team effort, you should be able to improve its effectiveness as a negative message. First, analyze and discuss the letter's flaws. Then rewrite it using the indirect approach.

> July 15, 2019
>
> Pamela Wilson, Operations Manager
> Sterling Manufacturing
> 133 Industrial Avenue
> Gary, IN 46403
>
> Dear Ms. Wilson:
>
> We regret to inform you that your presentation at Home Depot's recent product review sessions in St. Petersburg did not meet our expert panelists' expectations. We require new products that will satisfy our customers' high standards. Yours did not match this goal. Our primary concern is to continue our commitment to product excellence, customer knowledge, and price competitiveness, which has helped make Home Depot a Fortune 500 company with more than a thousand stores nationwide. The panel found flaws in your design and materials. Also, your cost per unit was too high.
>
> The product review sessions occur annually. You are allowed to try again; just apply as you did this year. Again, I'm sorry things didn't work out for you this time.
>
> Sincerely, Hilary Buchman, Assistant to the Vice President, Sales

8-26. Message Strategies: Negative Employment Messages [LO-5] Read the following document and (a) analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each sentence and (b) revise the message so that it follows this chapter's guidelines.

> I regret to inform you that you were not selected for our summer intern program at Equifax. We had over a thousand résumés and cover letters to go through and simply could not get to them all. We have been asked to notify everyone that we have already selected students for the 25 positions based on those who applied early and were qualified.
>
> We're sure you will be able to find a suitable position for summer work in your field and wish you the best of luck. We deeply regret any inconvenience associated with our reply.

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Locate an example online of a negative-news message from any company. Possible examples include announcements of product recalls, poor financial results, layoffs, and fines or other legal troubles. Analyze the approach the company took: Was it the most effective strategy possible? Did the company apologize, if doing so would have been appropriate under the circumstances, and does the apology seem sincere? Does the tone of the message match the seriousness of the situation? Does the message end on a positive note, as appropriate? Using whatever medium your instructor requests, write a brief analysis of the message (no more than one page), citing specific elements from the piece and support from the chapter.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at **websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that offers advice on conveying negative news in business messages. Write a brief email message to your instructor or a post for your class blog describing the item that you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Cases

For all cases, feel free to use your creativity to make up any details you need in order to craft effective messages.

Negative Messages on Routine Business Matters

EMAIL SKILLS

8-27. Message Strategies: Refusing Claims and Requests for Adjustment [LO-4] Your company markets a line of rugged smartphone cases designed to protect the sensitive devices from drops, spills, and other common accidents. Your guarantee states that you will reimburse customers for the cost of a new phone if the case fails to protect it from any of the following: (1) a drop of no more than 6 feet onto any surface, (2) spills of any beverage or common household chemical, (3) being crushed by any object of up to 100 pounds, or (4) being chewed on by dogs, cats, or other common household pets.

Jack Simmons, a rancher from Wyoming, emailed your customer support staff requesting a reimbursement after he dropped his iPhone in his hog barn and a 900-pound boar crushed it with a single bite.

Your task: Write an email response to Mr. Simmons, denying his request for a new phone.

EMAIL SKILLS

8-28. Message Strategies: Rejecting Suggestions and Proposals; Communication Ethics: Making Ethical Choices [LO-5] Knowing how much online product reviews can shape consumer behavior, the other cofounder of your company has just circulated an internal email message with the not-so-subtle hint that everyone in your small startup should pose as happy customers and post glowing reviews of your new product on Amazon and other shopping sites. You're horrified at the idea—not only is this highly unethical, but if (or more likely when) the scheme is exposed, the company's reputation will be severely damaged.

Your task: You would prefer to address this in a private conversation, but since your partner has already pitched the idea to everyone via email, you have no choice but to respond via email as well. You need to act quickly before anyone acts on the suggestion. Write a response, explaining why this is a bad idea and telling employees not to do it. Keep in mind that you are chastising your business partner in front of all your employees. Make up any names or other details you need.

MICROBLOGGING SKILLS

8-29. Message Strategies: Making Routine Negative Announcements [LO-5] Professional musicians do everything they can to keep the show going, particularly for tours that are scheduled months in advance. However, illness and other unforeseeable circumstances can force an act to cancel shows, even after all the tickets have been sold.

Your task: Choose one of you favorite musical acts and assume that you are the tour manager who needs to tell 25,000 fans that an upcoming concert must be canceled because of illness. Ticket holders can apply for a refund at the artist's website or keep their tickets for a future concert date, which will be identified and announced as soon as possible. Write two tweets, one announcing the cancellation and one outlining the options for ticket holders. Make up any information you need, and send your tweets to your instructor via email (don't actually tweet them!).

EMAIL SKILLS

8-30. Message Strategies: Rejecting Suggestions and Proposals [LO-4] Imagine you are the president of a student club or some other campus group that is unaffiliated with any larger national or international organization. (It can be any type of organization—recreational, charitable, academic, cultural, professional, or social, but try to use a real organization, even if you aren't a member.) You've just received a message from someone who is the president of a similar club at another college or university, proposing to form a national organizational structure. Her proposal has some appealing aspects, including unified branding and recruiting, the opportunity to share best practices, and the chance to socialize with and learn from like-minded students across the country. However, after talking it over with some of your members, you decide it's not right for you. You believe that the benefits of a national organization would not be worth the time, trouble, and costs it could entail.

Your task: Draft an email response politely declining the offer. Explain that you might consider joining in the future, but it's not right for at this point.

EMAIL SKILLS

8-31. Message Strategies: Rejecting Suggestions and Proposals [LO-4] Walter Joss is one the best employees in your department, a smart and hard worker with a keen mind for business. His upbeat attitude has helped the entire department get through some rough times recently, and on a personal level, his wise counsel helped you grow into a leadership role when you were promoted to marketing manager several years ago.

You generally welcome Joss's input on the department's operations, and you have implemented several of his ideas to improve the company's marketing efforts. However, the proposal he emailed you yesterday was not his best work, to put it mildly. He proposed that the company dump the advertising agency it has used for a decade and replace it with some new agency you've never heard of. The only reasons he offered were that the agency "had become unresponsive" and that a "smaller agency could meet our needs better." He failed to address any of the other criteria that are used to select advertising agencies, such as costs, creative skills, technical abilities, geographic reach, research capabilities, and media experience.

This is the first you've heard any criticism of the agency, and in fact, their work has helped your company increase sales every year.

Your task: Draft an email message to Joss, rejecting his proposal. (Note that in a real-life setting, you would want to discuss this with Joss in person, rather than through email, but use email for the purposes of this exercise.)

EMAIL SKILLS

8-32. Message Strategies: Making Routine Negative Announcements [LO-4] You've been proud of many things your gardening tool company has accomplished as it grew from just you working in your basement shop to a nationally known company that employs more than 200 people. However, nothing made you prouder than the company's Helping Our Hometown Grow program, in which employees volunteer on company time to help residents in your city start their own vegetable gardens, using tools donated by the company. Nearly 50 employees participated directly, helping some 500 families supplement their grocery budgets with home-grown produce. Virtually everyone in the company contributed, though, because employees who didn't volunteer to help in the gardens pitched in to cover the work responsibilities of the volunteers.

Sadly, 10 years after you launched the program, you have reached the inescapable conclusion that the company can no longer afford to keep the program going. With consumers around the country still struggling with the aftereffects of a deep recession, sales have been dropping for the past three years—even as lower-cost competitors step up their presence in the market. To save the program, you would have to lay off several employees, but your employees come first.

Your task: Write an email to the entire company, announcing the cancelation of the program.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS

8-33. Message Strategies: Rejecting Suggestions and Proposals [LO-5] All companies love *product enthusiasts*, those customers who are such fans that their activities help the company market its products and support its customers. Enthusiasts of a particular company or product often join *owners groups* or *user groups* to network, share ideas, and offer support to one another. These groups can be sponsored by the company or entirely independent. Social media are a natural forum for product enthusiasts as they meet online to share tips, tricks, rumors about upcoming products, and pros and cons of various products, and to provide feedback to the companies that make the products they use and enjoy.

Imagine you're on the social media team for Android, the operating system made by Google that is used in more than a billion mobile devices. With nearly 2 billion likes, the Android Facebook page is a popular online destination for Android smartphone and tablet users. After posting an item about some new software features, you get a comment from Shauna Roberts, an Android enthusiast who has commented on hundreds of posts over the past few years. She has helped many other users with technical support issues—and has helped the Android team with a number of great product suggestions.

Today she has a proposal for you: She wants Google to start paying the top commenters on the Android Facebook page, in return for the work they do to help both customers and the company. Her argument is that Google benefits from the enthusiasts' time and expertise, so it would be fair to offer some modest compensation in return.

Your task: Draft a response that you could post on the company's Facebook page in response to this proposal. The idea has come up before, and the company's response has always been that paying enthusiasts for social media activity, even if it helps the company through word-of-mouth marketing and lower support costs, would be too difficult to manage. First, judging the relative value of thousands of comments would be next to impossible. Second, quantity doesn't necessarily mean quality when it comes to sharing technical information. And third, the administrative and contractual overhead needed to make these work-for-hire relationships legal and legitimate would be overwhelming.[21]

PODCASTING SKILLS

8-34. Message Strategies: Making Negative Announcements [LO-4] Offering an employee concierge seemed like a great idea when you added it as an employee benefit last year. The concierge handles a wide variety of personal chores for employees—everything from dropping off their dry cleaning to ordering event tickets to sending flowers. Employees love the service, and you know the time they save can be devoted to work or family activities. Unfortunately, profits are way down, and concierge use is up—up so far that you'll need to add a second concierge to keep up with the demand. As painful as it will be for everyone, you decide that the company needs to stop offering the service.

Your task: Script a brief podcast announcing the decision and explaining why it was necessary. Make up any details you need. If your instructor asks you to do so, record your podcast and submit the file.

LETTER WRITING SKILLS

8-35. Message Strategies: Negative Announcements on Routine Matters [LO-5] You enjoy helping other people learn, and your part-time work as a tutor for high-school students has brought in some much-needed income during the past two years. You pride yourself on giving everything you can to help every one of your clients, but you've reached the end of the line with Drew Whitechapel. You know he has the ability, but he refuses to take tutoring seriously and continues to get failing grades in his American History class. You know he isn't getting much value from your tutoring, and you would rather devote your time and energy to a more serious student.

Your task: Write a letter to Drew's parents, explaining that you will no longer be able to tutor him after this month. (They've already paid you for this month's sessions.)

Negative Employment Messages

MESSAGING SKILLS/MOBILE SKILLS

8-36. Message Strategies: Refusing Requests for Recommendations [LO-5] Your classmates could end up being important business contacts as you all progress through your careers. Of course, this also means you might be asked for favors that you're not comfortable giving, such as providing recommendations for someone whose skills or other attributes you don't admire. Choose a person who was in a course you recently took and imagine that a few years after graduation he or she texts you with a request for a job recommendation letter. You've kept in touch socially, at least online, and would like to continue to do so, but your memory of this person's professional potential is more negative than positive. (Make up any combination of negative traits, such as failing to contribute to team projects, giving up quickly in the face of adversity, struggling to understand basic concepts, or other limitations.)

Your task: You've decided to decline the request, so now you must figure out how to phrase your response. Draft a response that you could send in this scenario, making up any information you need. Don't use the person's real name and don't include any information that your instructor or anyone else could use to identify the person, but imagine that you are in fact writing to this individual. You're on a compatible mobile service that doesn't limit the length of text messages, but remember that your message will be read on a small mobile screen. Email your response to your instructor.

MEMO-WRITING SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

8-37. Message Strategies: Negative Employment Messages [LO-5] Elaine Bridgewater, the former professional golfer you hired to oversee your golf equipment company's relationship with retailers, knows the business inside and out. As a former touring pro, she has unmatched credibility. She also has seemingly boundless energy, solid technical knowledge, and an engaging personal style. Unfortunately, she hasn't been quite as attentive as she needs to be when it comes to communicating with retailers. You've been getting complaints about voicemail messages gone unanswered for days, confusing emails that require two or three rounds of clarification, and reports that are haphazardly thrown together. As valuable as Bridgewater's other skills are, she's going to cost the company sales if this goes on much longer. The retail channel is vital to your company's survival, and she's the employee most involved in the channel.

Your task: Draft a brief (one page maximum, in memo format) informal performance appraisal and improvement plan for Bridgewater. Be sure to compliment her on the areas in which she excels, but don't shy away from highlighting the areas in which she needs to improve: punctual response to customer messages; clear writing; and careful revision, production, and proofreading. Use what you've learned in this course so far to supply any additional advice about the importance of these skills.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS/EMAIL SKILLS

8-38. Message Strategies: Refusing Requests for Recommendations [LO-5] You're delighted to get a message from an old friend and colleague, Heather Lang. You're delighted right up to the moment you read her request that you write a recommendation about her web design and programming skills for your LinkedIn profile. You would do just about anything for Lang—anything except recommend her web design skills. She is a master programmer whose technical wizardry saved many client projects, but when it comes to artistic design, Lang simply doesn't have "it." From gaudy color schemes to unreadable type treatment to confusing layouts, her design sense is as weak as her technical acumen is strong.

Your task: First, write a brief email message to Lang, explaining that you would be most comfortable highlighting her technical skills because that is where you believe her true strengths lie. Second, write a two-sentence recommendation that you could include in your LinkedIn profile, recommending Lang's technical skills. Make up or research any details you need.

Negative Organizational News

SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS

8-39. Message Strategies: Negative Organizational Messages [LO-6] XtremityPlus is known for its outlandish extreme-sports products, and the Looney Launch is no exception. Fulfilling the dream of every childhood daredevil, the Looney Launch is an aluminum and fiberglass contraption that quickly unfolds to create the ultimate bicycle jump. The product has been selling as fast as you can make it, even though it comes plastered with warning labels proclaiming that its use is inherently dangerous.

As CEO of XtremityPlus, you were nervous about introducing this product, and your fears were just confirmed: You've been notified of the first lawsuit by a parent whose child broke several bones after crash-landing off a Looney Launch.

Your task: Write a post for your internal blog, explaining that the Looney Launch is being removed from the market immediately. Tell your employees to expect some negative reactions from enthusiastic customers and retailers, but explain that (a) the company can't afford the risk of additional lawsuits and (b) even for XtremityPlus, the Looney Launch pushes the envelope a bit too far. The product is simply too dangerous to sell in good conscience.

Messages in Response to Social Media Rumors

MICROBLOGGING SKILLS

8-40. Message Strategies: Responding to Rumors [LO-7] Sheila Elliot, a well-known actress, appeared on a national talk show last night and claimed that your company's Smoothstone cookware was responsible for her toddler's learning disability. Elliot said the nonstick surfaces of Smoothstone pots and pans contain a dangerous chemical that affected her child's cognitive development. There's just one problem with her story—well, three problems, actually: (1) Your company's cookware line is called Moonstone, not Smoothstone; (2) Moonstone does not contain and never has contained the chemical Elliot mentioned; and (3) the product she is really thinking of was called Smoothfire, which was made by another company and was pulled off the market five years ago.

Thousands of worried parents aren't waiting for the fact checkers, however. They took to the blogosphere and Twittersphere with a vengeance overnight, warning people to throw away anything made by your company (Tatum Housewares). Several television stations have already picked up the Twitter chatter and repeated the rumor. Retailers are already calling your sales staff to cancel orders.

Your task: Write a three-message sequence to be posted on your company's Twitter account, correcting the rumor and conveying the three points outlined above. Each message will include a URL linking to your company's website, so restrict each message to 120 characters, including spaces.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS/MOBILE SKILLS

8-41. Message Strategies: Responding to Rumors and Public Criticism [LO-7] The consumer reviews on Yelp can be a promotional boon to any local business—provided the reviews are positive, of course. Negative reviews, fair or not, can affect a company's reputation and drive away potential customers. Fortunately for business owners, sites like Yelp give them the means to respond to reviews, whether they want to apologize for poor service, offer some form of compensation, or correct misinformation in a review.

Your task: Search Yelp for a negative review (one or two stars) on any business in any city. Find a review that has some substance to it, not just a simple, angry rant. Now imagine that you are the owner of that business, and write a reply that could be posted via the "Add Owner Comment" feature. Use information you can find on Yelp about the company, and fill in any details by using your imagination. Remember that your comment will be visible to everyone who visits Yelp. People searching for restaurant reviews often do so on mobile devices, so make sure your message will be easily readable on smartphone screens.

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from **real-time-updates.com/bce8**; select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 8. Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Semicolons, Colons, and Commas

Review Sections 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage, and then complete the following 15 items. Answers to these exercises appear on page 489.

For the following items, insert all required semicolons, colons, and commas.

8-42. This letter looks good that one doesn't.

8-43. I want to make one thing perfectly clear neither of you will be promoted if sales figures don't improve.

8-44. The Zurich airport has been snowed in therefore I won't be able to meet with you before January 4.

8-45. His motivation was obvious to get Meg fired.

8-46. Only two firms have responded to our survey J. J. Perkins and Tucker & Tucker.

8-47. Send a copy to Mary Kent Marketing Director Robert Bache Comptroller and Dennis Mann Sales Director.

8-48. Please be sure to interview these employees next week Henry Gold Doris Hatch and George Iosupovich.

8-49. We have observed your hard work because of it we are promoting you to manager of your department.

8-50. You shipped three items on June 7 however we received only one of them.

8-51. The convention kit includes the following response cards, giveaways, brochures, and a display rack.

8-52. The workers wanted an immediate wage increase they had not had a raise in nearly two years.

8-53. This then is our goal for 2020 to increase sales 35 percent.

8-54. His writing skills are excellent however he still needs to polish his management style.

8-55. We would like to address three issues efficiency profitability and market penetration.

8-56. Remember this rule When in doubt leave it out.

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

8-57. Hector's, Julie's, and Tim's report was well-received by the Committee.

8-58. Everyone who are interested in signing up for the training seminar must do so by 3:00 o'clock pm on friday.

8-59. David Stern is a management and training expert that has spent a major part of his career coaching, counseling, and giving advise both to managers and workers.

8-60. Be aware and comply with local "zoning ordnances" and building codes.

8-61. Garrett didn't seem phased when her supervisor didn't except her excuse for being late, she forgot to set her alarm.

8-62. Copyright laws on the Internet is not always clearly defined, be sure your research doesn't extend to "borrowing" a competitors' keywords or copy.

8-63. Sauder Woodworking, in Archibald, Ohio sell a line of ready to assemble computer carts, desks, file cabinets, and furniture that is modular that can be mixed and matched to meet each business owners' personal taste.

8-64. Spamming is the most certain way to loose you're email account, Web site, and you're reputation.

8-65. Us programmers have always tried to help others learn the tricks of the trade, especially Roger and myself.

8-66. The person whom was handling Miss Martinez' account told her that an error had been made by the bank in her favor.

8-67. "The trouble with focus groups" says Marketing Expert Frances Knight, "Is that consumers rarely act in real life they way they do in a "laboratory" setting."

8-68. In a industry in which design firms tend to come and go Skyline has licensed seventy products and grown to 8 employees.

8-69. If youv'e ever wondered why fast food restaurants are on the left and gift shops are on the right as you walk toward the gate into a newly-constructed airport you should read Malcolm Gladwells article, 'The Science of Shopping,' in the New Yorker.

8-70. Anyone whose starting a business should consider using their life story, as a way to generate customer's interest.

8-71. Having been in business since 1993, over 1000s of sales calls has been made by Mr. Jurzang, on prospects for his minority owned company.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C), or download the document and make the corrections in your word-processing software.

[Subject line] Health insurance—Changes

Unlike many companies, Bright Manufacturing has always paid a hundred % of medical car insurance for it's employees, absorbing the recent 10–20 percent annual cost increases in order to provide this important benefit. This year; Blue Cross gave us some terrible news: the cost increase for our employee's medical coverage would be a staggering fourty percent per month next year

To mange the increase and continue to offer you and your family highquality medical coverage we have negotiated several changes with Blue Cross; a new cost saving alternative is also being offered by us:

Under the Blue Cross Plus plan, copay amounts for office visits will be ten dollars next year/ $50 for emergency room visits.

80 % of employees' insurance coverage (including 10 percent of the cost increase) will be paid by Bright next year and 100 % of the prescription drug costs (including a 23 percent cost increase). The remaining twenty percent of medical coverage will be deducted by us monthly from your salary, if you choose to remain on a Blue Cross Plus plan. We realize this is alot, but its still less than many companies charge their employees.

A fully paid alternative health plan, Blue Cross HMO, will now be provided by Bright at no cost to employees. But be warned that there is a deadline. If you want to switch to this new plan you must do so during our open enrollment period, Nov. 20 to December 1, and we will not consder applications for the change after that time so don't get your forms in late.

There are forms available in the Human Resources office for changing your coverage. They must be returned between November 20 and December 1. If you wish to remain on a Blue Cross Plus policy, you do not need to notify us; payroll deductions for company employees on the plan will occur automatic beginning January first.

If you have questions, please call our new Medical Benefits Information line at ext. 3392. Our Intranet sight will also provide you easy with information about health care coverage online if you click the "Medical Benefits" icon. Since our founding in 1946, we have provided our company employees with the best medical coverage available. We all hate rising costs and although things are looking bleak for the future but we're doing all we can do to hold on to this helpful benefit for you.

Lucinda Goodman, Benefits Mangr., Human resources

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

8-72. Would you choose the direct or indirect approach to announce that a popular employee benefit is being eliminated for cost reasons? Why? [LO-1]

8-73. How would you respond to a LinkedIn network connection who asks for a recommendation when you barely remember working with this person and don't remember whether she was good at her job? [LO-5]

Endnotes

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21. This scenario, and all the information presented in this case, is fictitious.

9 Writing Persuasive Messages

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Apply the three-step writing process to persuasive messages.
2. Describe an effective strategy for developing persuasive business messages.
3. Identify the three most common categories of persuasive business messages.
4. Describe an effective strategy for developing marketing and sales messages, explain how to modify this approach for social media, and identify steps you can take to avoid ethical lapses in marketing and sales messages.

MyLab Business Communication

If your instructor is using MyLab Business Communication, visit **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for videos, simulations, and writing exercises.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"Trustworthiness, lots of high-value content, and just plain old decency are your best weapons."
—Sonia Simone, Chief Content Officer, Rainmaker Digital

Sonia Simone was discussing how online sites can address the fear that keeps shoppers from completing a transaction, but her insight applies to every form of persuasive communication.[1] Trust is an essential element of persuasion, whether you're trying to convince people to help fund your new business via Kickstarter, asking your boss for a raise, or selling tickets to a concert. If people don't believe in you, they won't believe in what you're promoting.

In this chapter, you'll apply what you've learned so far about writing to the unique challenges of persuasive messages. You'll explore two types of persuasive messages: *persuasive business messages* (those that try to convince audiences to approve new projects, enter into business partnerships, and so on) and *marketing and sales messages* (those that try to convince audiences to consider and then purchase products and services).

Photo Courtesy of Copyblogger Media

Sonia Simone emphasizes the power of trust in persuasive communication; without it, you'll have a hard time convincing people to change their beliefs or behaviors.

Using the Three-Step Writing Process for Persuasive Messages

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Apply the three-step writing process to persuasive messages.

You will encounter many business communication situations in which your goal is to influence the attitudes, actions, or beliefs of other people. Common examples of persuasive messages include asking colleagues to take action, asking managers to provide resources, asking investors to provide funding for a growing company, and asking potential customers to buy goods and services.

Persuasion is the attempt to change someone's attitudes, beliefs, or actions.

Persuasion may seem like a specialized skill that is required only by salespeople or marketing specialists, but virtually all business professionals can benefit from knowing how to apply persuasive techniques in their communication efforts. The good news is you are probably already more persuasive than you think you are. In fact, one of the biggest mistakes made in persuasive communication is not even trying. Too often, people think they don't have the skills required or aren't in a position to make propose new ideas.[2]

Fortunately, the techniques of effective persuasion are simple to learn and easy to use, as long as you start from the audience's point of view. Ethical persuasion never attempts to coerce or trick people into acting against their own best interests. The secret is to demonstrate in a compelling way how your interests align with your audience's interest.

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STEP 1: PLANNING PERSUASIVE MESSAGES

Having a great idea or a great product is not enough; you need to be able to convince others of its merits.

In today's information-saturated business environment, having a great idea or a great product is no longer enough. Every day, untold numbers of good ideas go unnoticed and good products go unsold simply because the messages meant to promote them aren't compelling enough to be heard above the competitive noise. Creating successful persuasive messages in these challenging situations demands careful attention to all four tasks in the planning step, starting with an insightful analysis of your purpose and your audience.

Analyzing the Situation

Clarifying your purpose is an essential step with persuasive messages; make sure you really know how you would like your audience to respond.

In defining your purpose, make sure you're clear about what you really hope to achieve. Suppose you want to persuade company executives to support a particular research project. But what does "support" mean? Do you want them to pat you on the back and wish you well? Or do you want them to give you a staff of five researchers and a $1 million annual budget?

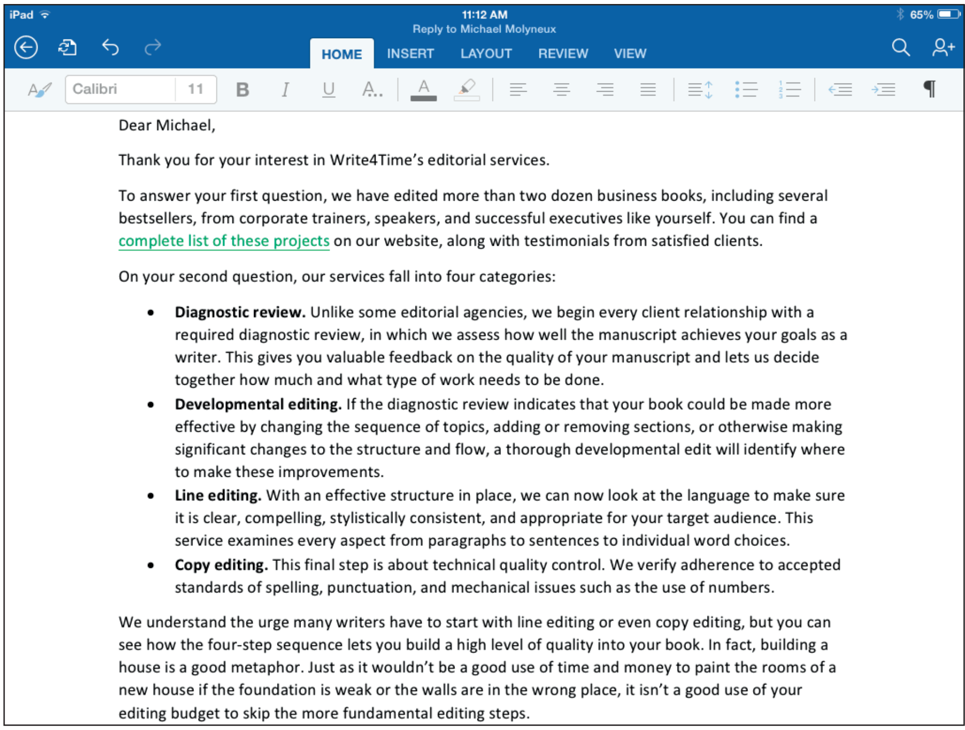
In every persuasive message you're asking for something that is important to you, but keep in mind that the most effective persuasive messages are closely connected to the things that are important to your audience[3] (see Figure 9.1). Whether you're writing a proposal to your manager or a sales letter to a potential customer, start by imagining yourself in that person's position and identify the issues or opportunities they are likely to already be thinking about.[4] For example, what problems or challenges are keeping your boss awake at night? If your persuasive message holds the promise of reducing those worries, you stand a much better chance of being successful than if your proposal is unrelated to the issues that are important to your boss (or, worse yet, has the potential to make his or her life even more complicated).

Demographics include characteristics such as age, gender, occupation, income, and education.

Psychographics include characteristics such as personality, attitudes, and lifestyle.

To understand and categorize audience needs, you can refer to specific information, such as **demographics** (the age, gender, occupation, income, education, and other quantifiable characteristics of the people you're trying to persuade) and **psychographics** (personality, attitudes, lifestyle, and other psychological characteristics). When analyzing your audiences, take into account their cultural expectations and practices so that you don't undermine your persuasive message by using an inappropriate appeal or by presenting your message in a way that seems unfamiliar or uncomfortable to your readers.

If you aim to change someone's attitudes, beliefs, or actions, it is vital to understand his or her **motivation**—the combination of forces that drive people to satisfy their needs.



Dear Michael,

Thank you for your interest in Write4Time's editorial services.

To answer your first question, we have edited more than two dozen business books, including several bestsellers, from corporate trainers, speakers, and successful executives like yourself. You can find a complete list of these projects on our website, along with testimonials from satisfied clients.

On your second question, our services fall into four categories:

- **Diagnostic review.** Unlike some editorial agencies, we begin every client relationship with a required diagnostic review, in which we assess how well the manuscript achieves your goals as a writer. This gives you valuable feedback on the quality of your manuscript and lets us decide together how much and what type of work needs to be done.
- **Developmental editing.** If the diagnostic review indicates that your book could be made more effective by changing the sequence of topics, adding or removing sections, or otherwise making significant changes to the structure and flow, a thorough developmental edit will identify where to make these improvements.
- **Line editing.** With an effective structure in place, we can now look at the language to make sure it is clear, compelling, stylistically consistent, and appropriate for your target audience. This service examines every aspect from paragraphs to sentences to individual word choices.
- **Copy editing.** This final step is about technical quality control. We verify adherence to accepted standards of spelling, punctuation, and mechanical issues such as the use of numbers.

We understand the urge many writers have to start with line editing or even copy editing, but you can see how the four-step sequence lets you build a high level of quality into your book. In fact, building a house is a good metaphor. Just as it wouldn't be a good use of time and money to paint the rooms of a new house if the foundation is weak or the walls are in the wrong place, it isn't a good use of your editing budget to skip the more fundamental editing steps.

This paragraph succinctly answers the client's first question, which was whether the company had experience editing business books like the one he has written. By mentioning best-sellers, the message also addresses the client's emotional and financial needs to publish a successful book.

The message outlines the company's services but does so in a way that addresses the client's needs at every step.

This section addresses the frequent urge to jump right into the final stages of editing by explaining that doing so ultimately doesn't meet the client's true objectives. Note the effective use of metaphor here as well.

Figure 9.1 Appealing to Audience Needs
This draft of a response to an inquiry about an editorial company's services addresses the writer's concerns about the time, cost, and effectiveness of those services.
Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation.

Table 9.1 on the next page lists some of the needs that psychologists have identified or suggested as being important in influencing human motivation. Obviously, the more closely a persuasive message aligns with a recipient's existing motivation, the more effective the message is likely to be. For example, if you try to persuade consumers to purchase a product on the basis of its trendy fashion appeal, that message will connect with consumers who are motivated by a desire to be in fashion, but it probably won't connect with consumers driven more by functional or financial concerns.

Gathering Information

Once your situation analysis is complete, you need to gather the information necessary to create a compelling persuasive message. You'll learn more about the types of information to include in persuasive business messages and marketing and sales messages later in the chapter. Chapter 10 presents advice on how to find the information you need.

Selecting the Right Combination of Medium and Channel

Media and channel choices are always important, of course, but these decisions are particularly sensitive with persuasive messages because such messages are often unexpected and sometimes even unwelcome. The more you understand and respect your audience's habits and preferences, the better your chances of getting past the various physical, digital, and perceptual filters that people use to protect themselves from the daily barrage of promotional messages.

Choose your medium carefully to maximize the chance of getting through to your audience.

Social media provide some effective options for persuasive messages, particularly marketing and sales messages. However, as "Writing Promotional Messages for Social Media" on page 235 explains, messages in these media require a unique approach.

Organizing Your Information

The most effective main ideas for persuasive messages have one thing in common: They are about the receiver, not the sender. For instance, if you're trying to convince others to join you in a business venture, explain how it will help them, not how it will help you.

Effective persuasive messages always emphasize the recipient's needs over the sender's.

TABLE 9.1 Human Needs That Influence Motivation

Need	Implications for Communication
Basic physiological requirements: The needs for food, water, sleep, oxygen, and other essentials	Everyone has these needs, but the degree of attention an individual gives to them often depends on whether the needs are being met; for instance, an advertisement for sleeping pills will have greater appeal to someone suffering from insomnia than to someone who has no problem sleeping.
Safety and security: The needs for protection from bodily harm, for the safety of loved ones, and for financial security, protection of personal identity, career security, and other assurances	These needs influence both consumer and business decisions in a wide variety of ways; for instance, advertisements for life insurance often encourage parents to think about the financial security of their children and other loved ones.
Affiliation and belonging: The needs for companionship, acceptance, love, popularity, and approval	The need to feel loved, accepted, or popular drives a great deal of human behavior, from the desire to be attractive to potential mates to wearing the clothing style that a particular social group is likely to approve.
Power and control: The need to feel in control of situations or to exert authority over others	You can see many examples appealing to this need in advertisements: *Take control of your life*, *your finances*, *your future*, *your career*, and so on. Many people who lack power want to know how to get it, and people who have power often want others to know they have it.
Achievement: The need to feel a sense of accomplishment—or to be admired by others for accomplishments	This need can involve both *knowing* (when people experience a feeling of accomplishment) and *showing* (when people are able to show others that they've achieved success); advertising for luxury consumer products frequently appeals to this need.
Adventure and distraction: The need for excitement or relief from daily routine	People vary widely in their need for adventure; some crave excitement—even danger—whereas others value calmness and predictability. Some needs for adventure and distraction are met *virtually*, such as through video games, horror movies, thriller novels, and so on.
Knowledge, exploration, and understanding: The need to keep learning	For some people, learning is usually a means to an end, a way to fulfill some other need; for others, acquiring new knowledge is the goal.
Aesthetic appreciation: The desire to experience beauty, order, symmetry, and so on	Although this need may seem "noncommercial" at first glance, advertisers appeal to it frequently, from the pleasing shape of a package to the quality of the gemstones in a piece of jewelry.
Self-actualization: The need to to reach one's full potential as a human being	Psychologists Kurt Goldstein and Abraham Maslow popularized self-actualization as the desire to make the most of one's potential, and Maslow identified it as one of the higher-level needs in his classic hierarchy; even if people met most or all of their other needs, they would still feel the need to self-actualize. An often-quoted example of appealing to this need is the U.S. Army's one-time advertising slogan "Be all that you can be."
Helping others: The need to believe that one is making a difference in the lives of other people	This need is the central motivation in fundraising messages and other appeals to charity.

Sources: Courtland L. Bovée and John V. Thill, *Business in Action*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2017), 225–239; Saundra K. Ciccarelli and Glenn E. Meyer, *Psychology* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2006), 336–346; Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," Psychological Review 50 (1943): 370–396.

Limiting your scope is vital. If you seem to be wrestling with more than one main idea, chances are you haven't identified your readers' most important concerns. If you try to craft a persuasive message without focusing on the one central problem or opportunity your audience truly cares about, you're unlikely to persuade successfully.[5]

The nature of persuasion is to convince people to change their attitudes, beliefs, or actions, so most persuasive messages use the indirect approach to build up the moment when you make the request. The indirect approach lets you explain your reasons and build interest before asking for a decision or for action—or perhaps even before revealing your purpose. However, in some instances, such as when you have a close relationship with your audience and the message is welcome or at least neutral, the direct approach can be effective.

For persuasive business messages, the choice of approach is influenced by your position (or authority within the organization) relative to your audience's.

For persuasive business messages, the choice between the direct and indirect approaches is also influenced by the extent of your authority, expertise, or power in an organization. For example, if you are a highly regarded technical expert with years of experience, you might use the direct approach in a message to top executives. In contrast, if you don't have "expertise authority" and therefore need to rely more on the strength of your message than the power of your reputation, the indirect approach will probably be more successful.

STEP 2: WRITING PERSUASIVE MESSAGES

Encourage a positive response to your persuasive messages by (1) using positive and polite language, (2) understanding and respecting cultural differences, (3) being sensitive to organizational cultures, and (4) taking steps to establish your credibility.

Persuasive messages are often unexpected or even unwelcome, so the "you" attitude is crucial.

Positive language usually happens naturally with persuasive messages because you're promoting an idea, a plan, or a product you believe in. However, take care not to inadvertently insult your readers by implying that they've made poor choices in the past and that you're here to save them from their misguided ways.

Be sure to understand cultural expectations as well. For example, a message that seems forthright and direct in a low-context culture might seem brash and intrusive in a high-context culture.

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Just as social culture affects the success of a persuasive message, so too does the culture within an organization. For instance, some organizations handle disagreement and conflict in an indirect, behind-the-scenes way, whereas others accept and even encourage open discussion and sharing differing viewpoints.

Organizational culture can influence persuasion as much as social culture.

Finally, if you are trying to persuade a skeptical or hostile audience, you must convince them you know what you're talking about and that you're not trying to mislead them. Use these techniques:

- Use straightforward language to avoid suspicions of fantastic claims and emotional manipulation.
- Provide objective evidence for the claims and promises you make.
- Identify your sources, especially if your audience already respects those sources.
- Establish common ground by emphasizing beliefs, attitudes, and background experiences you have in common with the audience.
- Be objective and present fair and logical arguments.
- Show that you respect your audience's values and priorities.
- Persuade with logic, evidence, and compelling narratives, rather than trying to coerce with high-pressure, "hard-sell" tactics.
- Whenever possible, try to build your credibility before you present a major proposal or ask for a major decision. That way, audiences don't have to evaluate both you and your message at the same time.[6]

Audiences often respond unfavorably to over-the-top language, so keep your writing simple and straightforward.

STEP 3: COMPLETING PERSUASIVE MESSAGES

Professional writers who specialize in persuasive messages know how vital the details are, so they're careful not to skimp on this part of the writing process. When you evaluate your content, try to judge your argument objectively and not overestimate your credibility. When revising for clarity and conciseness, carefully match the purpose and organization to audience needs. If possible, ask an experienced colleague who knows your audience well to review your draft. Your design elements must complement, not detract from, your argument. In addition, meticulous proofreading will identify any mechanical or spelling errors that would weaken your persuasive potential. Finally, make sure your distribution methods fit your audience's expectations and your purpose.

Careless production undermines your credibility, so revise and proofread with care.

Developing Persuasive Business Messages

Your success as a businessperson is closely tied to your ability to encourage others to accept new ideas, change old habits, or act on your recommendations. Unless your career takes you into marketing and sales, most of your persuasive messages will consist of persuasive business messages, which are those designed to elicit a preferred response in a nonsales situation.

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe an effective strategy for developing persuasive business messages.

Even if you have the power to compel others to do what you want them to do, persuading them is more effective than forcing them. People who are forced into accepting a decision or plan are less motivated to support it and more likely to react negatively than if they're persuaded.[7] Within the context of the three-step process, effective persuasion involves four essential strategies: framing your arguments, balancing the three types of persuasive appeals, reinforcing your position, and anticipating objections. (Note that all the concepts in this section apply as well to marketing and sales messages, covered later in the chapter.)

FRAMING YOUR ARGUMENTS

The AIDA model is a useful approach for many persuasive messages:
- Attention
- Interest
- Desire
- Action

As noted previously, most persuasive messages use the indirect approach. One of the most commonly used variations is called the **AIDA model**, which organizes your message into four phases (see Figure 9.2):

- **Attention.** Your first objective is to encourage your audience to want to hear about your problem, idea, or new product—whatever your main idea is. Be sure to find some common ground on which to build your case.
- **Interest.** Provide additional details that prompt audience members to imagine how the solution might benefit them.
- **Desire.** Help audience members embrace your idea by explaining how the change will benefit them and answering potential objections.
- **Action.** Suggest the specific action you want your audience to take. Include a deadline, when applicable.

The AIDA model is ideal for the indirect approach.

The AIDA model is tailor-made for using the indirect approach, allowing you to save your main idea for the action phase. However, it can also work with the direct approach, in which case you use your main idea as an attention-getter, build interest with your argument, create desire with your evidence, and emphasize your main idea in the action phase with the specific action you want your audience to take.

When your AIDA message uses the indirect approach and is delivered by email, keep in mind that your subject line usually catches your reader's eye first. Your challenge is to make it interesting and relevant enough to capture reader attention without revealing your main idea. If you put your request in the subject line, you're likely to get a quick "no" before you've had a chance to present your arguments:

Instead of This	Write This
Request for development budget to add automated IM response system	Reducing the cost of customer support inquiries

MOBILE APP
Want to persuade your local government to address a problem? The **CitySourced** app aims to facilitate civic engagement through mobile communication.

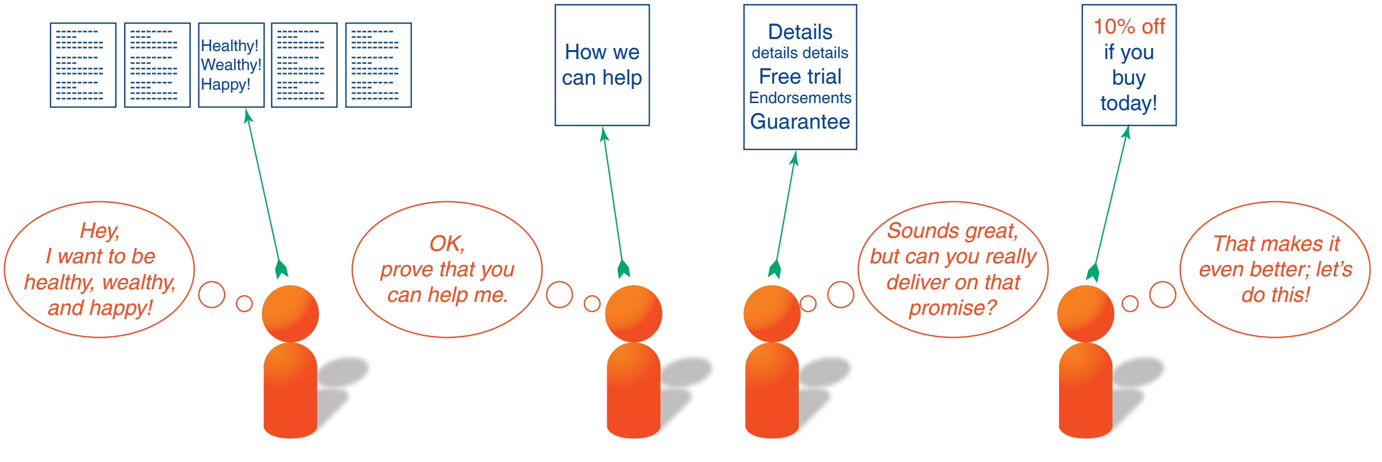


Figure 9.2 The AIDA Model for Persuasive Messages
With the AIDA model, you craft one or more messages to move recipients through the four stages of attention, interest, desire, and action. The model works well for both persuasive business messages (such as persuading your manager to fund a new project) and marketing and sales messages.

With either the direct or indirect approach, AIDA and similar models do have limitations. First, AIDA is a unidirectional method that essentially talks *at* audiences, not *with* them. Second, AIDA is built around a single event, such as asking an audience for a decision, rather than on building a mutually beneficial, long-term relationship.[8] AIDA is still a valuable tool for the right purposes, but as you'll read later in the chapter, a conversational approach is more compatible with today's social media.

The AIDA approach has limitations:
- It essentially talks *at* audiences, not *with* them
- It focuses on one-time events, not long-term relationships

BALANCING THE THREE TYPES OF PERSUASIVE APPEALS

Persuasive communication is based on three types of appeals: *ethos* (the ethical dimension, particularly your credibility as the writer), *pathos* (appeals to emotion), and *logos* (argumentation based on logic and evidence). These are powerful tools that can benefit senders and receivers alike if they are used wisely and ethically.[9]

Persuasive communication is based on three types of appeals:
- *Ethos*—the ethical dimension, particularly your credibility as the writer
- *Pathos*—appeals to emotion
- *Logos*—argumentation based on logic and evidence

The ethos element of persuasion depends on how much trust your readers or listeners have in your expertise, character, and reliability. Chapter 4 also discusses the vital step of establishing your credibility as part of the three-step writing process.

Within the message itself, you have the task of balancing emotional and logical appeals. Few persuasive appeals are purely logical or purely emotional, and it's important to find the right balance for each message (see Figure 9.3). Many marketing and sales messages rely heavily on emotional appeals, but most persuasive business messages rely more on logic. However, even a predominantly emotional message needs to make logical sense at some level, and logical business messages can often be strengthened with the judicious use of emotion.

An **emotional appeal** calls on feelings or audience sympathies. For instance, you can make use of the emotions inspired by words such as *freedom*, *success*, *prestige*, *compassion*, *free*, and *comfort*. Such words put your audience in a certain frame of mind and help people accept your message.

A **logical appeal** involves the use of reason and factual evidence. Three common modes of logical persuasion are induction, deduction, and analogy:

Logical appeals are based on the reader's notions of reason; these appeals can use induction, deduction, or analogy.

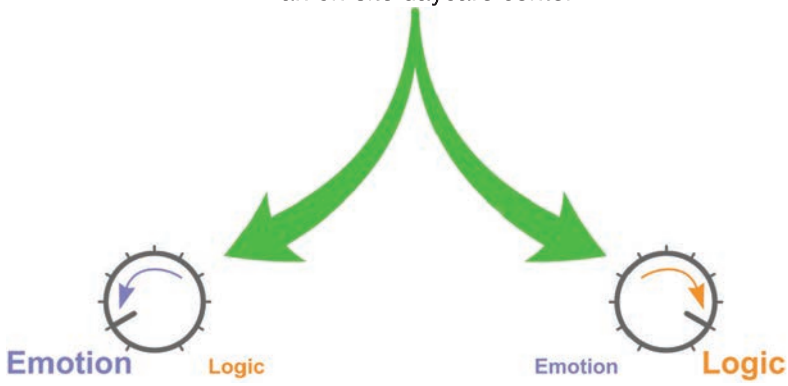
- **Induction.** With inductive reasoning, you work from specific evidence to a general conclusion that you can then apply to the situation at hand. To convince your company to adopt a new production process, you could collect specific evidence showing how every company that has adopted it so far has seen increased profits and from there reach the general conclusion that the new process is likely to benefit any company that implements it.
- **Deduction.** With deductive reasoning, you work from a general theory or hypothesis to a specific conclusion. A generalization could be that dissatisfied customers tend not to buy from the same companies in the future, which proceeds to the specific conclusion that your company should take steps to improve customer satisfaction before it starts losing business.
- **Analogy.** With analogy, you reason from specific evidence to specific evidence, in effect "borrowing" from something familiar to explain something unfamiliar. To persuade management to launch an internal social network, you could argue that the network would be an online version of the coffee machine or water cooler, places were employees currently meet and exchange information and ideas.

Every method of reasoning is vulnerable to misuse—both intentional and unintentional. Logical errors, commonly known as *logical fallacies*, result from misleading readers via faulty language or misusing reasoning tools such as induction and analogy. Here are some of the more common logical fallacies that you need to avoid in persuasive communication:[10]

- **Hasty or sweeping generalizations.** A hasty generalization occurs when you jump to a generalization without enough evidence to support it. A sweeping generalization ignores exceptions or contradictions.

Using logical appeals carries with it the ethical responsibility to avoid faulty logic.

Specific purpose:
To persuade management to fund
an on-site daycare center



Proposal to improve employee satisfaction and work/life balance

Being separated during the day is stressful for both parents and children.

Many parents are now working more hours and second jobs to make ends meet, so the situation is getting worse.

The extra travel time every morning and evening to put children in day care adds to the stress and cost of coming to work.

When parents need to leave work to pick up sick children from day care or stay home with them, this often creates an unfair burden on other employees to pick up the slack.

Knowing that the company cares about them and their children would boost employee morale.

Therefore, the company should provide an on-site daycare facility with a separate infirmary where sick children could stay during the day.

Proposal to boost productivity and reduce absenteeism

Analysis of employee time records shows that employees with children under the age of 10 take unscheduled days off three times more often than employees without young children.

Daycare issues are cited as the number one reason for these unscheduled days off.

In the 98 exit interviews conducted last year, 24 departing employees mentioned the need to balance family and work commitments as the primary reason for leaving.

In the last six months, HR has logged 14 complaints from employees who say they have to take on extra work when colleagues leave the office to pick up sick children from day care.

Research shows that on-site day care can improve productivity by as much as 20 percent—among parents and nonparents alike.

Therefore, the company should provide an on-site daycare facility with a separate infirmary where sick children could stay during the day.

Figure 9.3 Balancing Logical and Emotional Appeals
Whenever you plan a persuasive message, imagine you have a knob that turns from *emotion* at one extreme to *logic* at the other, letting you adjust the relative proportions of each type of appeal. Compare these two outlines for a proposal that asks management to fund an on-site daycare center. The version on the left relies heavily on emotional appeals, whereas the version on the right uses logical appeals. Through your choice of words, images, and supporting details, you can adjust the emotional-to-logical ratio in every message.

- **Circular reasoning.** Circular reasoning is a logical fallacy in which you try to support your claim by restating it in different words. In other words, all you've done is argue around in a circle, rather than advancing the argument to a new conclusion. The statement "We know temporary workers cannot handle this task because temps are unqualified for it" doesn't prove anything because the claim and the supposed evidence are essentially identical.
- **Flawed analogies.** Be sure that the two objects or situations being compared are similar enough for the analogy to hold. For instance, explaining that an Internet firewall

is like a prison wall is a poor analogy, because a firewall keeps things out, whereas a prison wall keeps things in.

- **Inappropriate appeals.** Appeals to tradition ("we've always done it this way"), popular opinion ("everybody else is doing this"), or authority ("the CEO says this is the best option") are examples of logical fallacies because they aren't based on evidence and reason.
- **Ad hominem attacks.** An *ad hominem* attack is an attack directed at another person rather than at his or her line of reasoning. For example, dismissing a colleague's suggestion just because he is the newest member of the department is an ad hominem attack.
- **Oversimplifications.** Simplifying complex situations to make them easier to understand is a valuable skill, but going too far can lead to a variety of logical fallacies. For instance, reducing a complicated scenario to a simple yes/no choice in a way that leaves out other viable options is a logical error.
- **Mistaken assumptions or claims of cause and effect.** Be careful with any line of argument that involves causes and effects. You can stumble into a variety of logical mistakes by assuming that *A* caused *B* without having conclusive evidence to support that statement. To argue cause and effect, you need to show that *A* did indeed cause *B* to happen (and it wasn't just coincidence or correlation) and that *A* is the only factor that could have caused *B* to happen. For example, if sales of a certain product dropped the month after you redesigned it, you can't conclude beyond doubt that the redesign hurt sales unless you can demonstrate that buyers didn't like the new design as much has the old one and that no other force in the market (such as a new competitor) was responsible.

REINFORCING YOUR POSITION

After you've worked out the basic elements of your argument, step back and look for ways to strengthen your position. How can you bolster your message to give your readers more confidence in the solution you are suggesting? Are all your claims supported by believable evidence? Can you show that other people or companies have adopted a solution you propose?[11] Would a quotation from a recognized expert help make your case? The more certainty you can give your readers, the more likely they are to take the actions you would like them to take.[12]

Choose your words carefully to encourage the desired responses.

Next, examine your language. Can you find more powerful words to convey your message? For example, if your company is in serious financial trouble, talking about *fighting for survival* is a more powerful emotional appeal than talking about *ensuring continued operations*. As with any other powerful tool, though, vivid language and abstractions must be used carefully and honestly.

In addition to examining individual word choices, consider using metaphors and other figures of speech. If you want to describe a quality-control system as being designed to detect every possible product flaw, you might call it a "spider web" to imply that it catches everything that comes its way. Similarly, anecdotes (brief stories) can help your audience grasp the meaning and importance of your arguments. Instead of just listing the number of times the old laptop computers in your department have failed, you could describe how you lost a sale when your computer broke down during a critical sales presentation.

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ANTICIPATING OBJECTIONS

Even powerful persuasive messages can encounter audience resistance.

Even compelling ideas and exciting projects can encounter objections, if only because people have a natural tendency to resist change. You can increase your odds of a positive response by anticipating likely objections and addressing them before your audience settles into a negative, defensive mindset. By doing so, you can remove these potential stumbling blocks from the conversation and keep the focus on positive communication.

Note that you don't need to explicitly mention a particular concern. For instance, if your proposal to switch to lower-cost materials is likely to raise concerns about quality, you can emphasize that the new materials are just as good as existing materials. You'll not only get this issue out of the way sooner but also demonstrate a broad appreciation of the issue and imply confidence in your message.[13]

If you expect to encounter strong resistance, present all sides of an issue.

If you expect a hostile audience that is biased against your message, be sure to present all sides of the situation. As you cover each option, explain the pros and cons. You'll gain additional credibility if you mention these options before presenting your recommendation or decision.[14] If you can, involve your audience in the design of the solution; people are more likely to support ideas they help create.

AVOIDING COMMON MISTAKES IN PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

Don't let confidence or enthusiasm lead you to some common mistakes in persuasive communication.

When you believe in a concept or project you are promoting, it's easy to get caught up in your own confidence and enthusiasm and thereby fail to see things from the audience's perspective. When putting together persuasive arguments, avoid these common mistakes (see Figure 9.4 on the next page):[15]

- **Using a hard sell.** No one likes being pressured into making a decision. Communicators who take this approach can come across as being more concerned with meeting their own goals than with satisfying the needs of their audiences. In contrast, a "soft sell" is more like a comfortable conversation that uses calm, rational persuasion.
- **Resisting compromise.** Successful persuasion is often a process of give-and-take, particularly with persuasive business messages, where you don't always get everything you asked for in terms of budgets, investments, or other commitments.
- **Relying solely on great arguments.** Great arguments are important, but connecting with your audience on the right emotional level and communicating through vivid language are just as vital. Sometimes a well-crafted story can be even more compelling than dry logic.
- **Assuming that persuasion is a one-shot effort.** Persuasion is often a process, not a one-time event. In many cases, you need to move your audience members along one small step at a time rather than try to convince them to say "yes" in one huge step.
- **Resorting to deception or other unethical behaviors.** The combination of emotional and logical appeals, amplified by an audience's trust in the messenger, can be a powerful persuasive force. Always keep the audience's needs in mind to make sure you use this force in a positive and ethical manner.

Common Examples of Persuasive Business Messages

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Identify the three most common categories of persuasive business messages.

Throughout your career, you'll have numerous opportunities to write persuasive messages within your organization, such as proposals suggesting more efficient operating procedures or budget requests for new equipment. Similarly, you may produce a variety of persuasive messages for people outside the organization, such as websites shaping public opinion or letters requesting adjustments that go beyond a supplier's contractual obligations. Most of these messages can be divided into persuasive requests for action, persuasive presentations of ideas, and persuasive claims and requests for adjustment.

PERSUASIVE REQUESTS FOR ACTION

Most persuasive business messages involve a request for action.

The bulk of your persuasive business messages will involve requests for action. In some cases, your request will be anticipated, so the direct approach is fine. In others, you'll need

Ineffective

It's time to call the Fast Track program what it truly is—a disaster. Everyone was excited last year when we announced the plan to speed up our development efforts and introduce at least one new product every month. We envisioned rapidly expanding market share and strong revenue growth. What we got instead is a nightmare that is getting worse every month.

As a company, we clearly underestimated the resources it would take to market, sell, and support so many new products. We can't hire and train fast enough, and every department are overwhelmed. Forced to jump from one new product to the next, the sales and technical specialists can't develop the expertise needed to help buyers before the sale or support them after the sale. As a result, too many customers either buy the wrong product or buy the right product but then can't get knowledgeable help when they need it. We're losing credibility in the market, we're starting to lose sales, and it won't be long before we start losing employees who are fed up with the insanity.

To make matters even worse, some of the recent products were clearly rushed to market before they were ready. With numerous quality issues, returns and warranty costs are skyrocketing.

New products are the lifeblood of the company, to be sure, but there is no point in introducing products that only create enormous support headaches and cost more to support than they generate in profits. We need to put the Fast Track initiative on hold immediately so the entire company can regroup. The R&D lab can devote its time to fixing problems in the recent products, and the rest of us can catch our breath and try to figure out how to meet our sales and customer support goals.

(a) The company has clearly staked a lot on this program, so opening by calling it a disaster will only put the reader on the defensive.

(b) Word choices such as *nightmare* here and *insanity* in the next paragraph give the message an emotional, almost hysterical, tone that detracts from the serious message.

(c) The writer mingles together an observation that may be subjective (declining credibility), a hard data point (declining sales), and a prediction (possibility of employee defections).

(d) The claim that recent products were "clearly rushed to market" is unnecessarily inflammatory (because it blames another department) and distracts the reader from the more immediate problems of poor quality.

(e) The first sentence of the last paragraph is insulting to anyone with basic business sense—particularly the president of a company.

Effective

Everyone was excited last year when we launched the Fast Track program to speed up our development efforts and introduce at least one new product every month. We envisioned rapidly expanding market share and strong revenue growth in all our product lines.

While the R&D lab has met its goal of monthly releases, as a company, we clearly underestimated the resources it would take to market, sell, and support so many new products. We can't hire and train fast enough, and our teams in every department are overwhelmed. The sales and technical specialists haven't had time to develop the expertise needed to help buyers before the sale or support them after the sale. As a result, too many customers either buy the wrong product or buy the right product but then can't get knowledgeable help when they need it. We're losing credibility in the market, and we're starting to lose sales. If the situation continues, I fear we will being losing employees, too.

In addition, some of the recent products are generating multiple reports of hardware quality problems and buggy software. Returns and warranty costs are climbing at an unprecedented rate.

With costs rising faster than revenues and our people getting overwhelmed, I believe it is time to put the Fast Track initiative on hold until the company can regroup. The hiatus would give R&D time to address the quality problems and give the marketing, sales, and tech support teams the chance to reassess our goals with the current product portfolio and our current staffing levels.

(a) This neutral summary of events serves as an effective buffer for the indirect approach and provides a subtle reminder of the original goals of the program.

(b) This paragraph contains the same information as the ineffective version, but does so in a calmer way that won't trigger the reader's defense mechanisms and will thereby keep the focus on the facts.

(c) The writer separates a personal hunch (about the possibility of losing employees) from an observation about the market and a measured data point (declining sales).

(d) The writer introduces the information about quality problems without directing blame.

(e) With the evidence assembled, the writer introduces the main idea of putting the program on hold. The recommendation is a judgment call and a suggestion to a superior, so the hedging phrase I *believe* is appropriate.

Figure 9.4 Persuasive Argumentation

Imagine you're the marketing manager in a company that decided to speed up its new product launches but did too much too fast and wound up creating chaos. You decide enough is enough and write a memo to the company president advocating that the new program be shut down until the company can regroup—a suggestion you know will meet with resistance. Notice how the ineffective version doesn't quite use the direct approach but comes out swinging, so to speak, and is overly emotional throughout. The effective version builds to its recommendation indirectly, using the same information but in a calm, logical way. Because it sticks to the facts, it is also shorter.

to introduce your intention indirectly, and the AIDA model or a similar approach is ideal for this purpose (see Figure 9.5 on the next page).

Open with an attention-getting device and show readers that you understand their concerns. Use the interest and desire sections of your message to demonstrate that you have good reason for making such a request and to cover what you know about the situation: the facts and figures, the benefits of helping, and any history or experience that will enhance your appeal. Your goals are (1) to gain credibility (for yourself and your request) and (2) to make your readers believe that helping you will indeed help solve a significant problem. Close with a request for some specific action, and make that course of action as easy to follow as possible in order to maximize the chances of a positive response.

PERSUASIVE PRESENTATION OF IDEAS

Sometimes the objective of persuasive messages is simply to encourage people to consider a new idea or a different perspective.

You may encounter situations in which you simply want to change attitudes or beliefs about a particular topic, without asking the audience to decide or do anything—at least not yet. The goal of your first message might be nothing more than convincing your audience to reexamine long-held opinions or to admit the possibility of new ways of thinking.

For instance, the World Wide Web Consortium, a global association that defines many of the guidelines and technologies behind the World Wide Web, launched a campaign called the Web Accessibility Initiative. Although the consortium's ultimate goal is to make websites more accessible to people who have disabilities or age-related limitations, a key interim goal is simply making website developers more aware of the need. As part of this effort, the consortium has developed a variety of presentations and documents that highlight the problems many web visitors face.[16]

PERSUASIVE CLAIMS AND REQUESTS FOR ADJUSTMENTS

Most claims are routine messages and use the direct approach discussed in Chapter 7. However, consumers and business professionals sometimes encounter situations in which they believe they haven't received a fair deal by following normal procedures. These situations require a more persuasive message.

The key ingredients of a good persuasive claim are a complete and specific review of the facts and a confident and positive tone based on your right to be satisfied with every transaction. Begin persuasive claims by outlining the problem and continue by reviewing what has been done about it so far, if anything. The recipient might be juggling numerous claims and other demands on his or her attention, so be clear, calm, and complete when presenting your case. Be specific about how you would like the situation to be resolved.

Next, give your reader a good reason for granting your claim. Show how the individual or organization is responsible for the problem, and appeal to your reader's sense of fair play, goodwill, or moral responsibility. Explain how you feel about the problem, but don't get carried away and don't make threats. People generally respond most favorably to requests that are calm and reasonable. Close on a respectful note that reflects how a successful resolution of the situation will repair or maintain a mutually beneficial working relationship.

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe an effective strategy for developing marketing and sales messages, explain how to modify this approach for social media, and identify steps you can take to avoid ethical lapses in marketing and sales messages.

Developing Marketing and Sales Messages

Marketing and sales messages use the same basic techniques as other persuasive messages, with the added emphasis of encouraging someone to participate in a commercial transaction. Although the terms *marketing message* and *sales message* are often used interchangeably, there is an important difference: **Marketing messages** usher potential buyers through

1 Plan → **2 Write** → **3 Complete**

Analyze the Situation
Verify that the purpose is to solve an ongoing problem, so the audience will be receptive.

Gather Information
Determine audience needs and obtain the necessary information on recycling problem areas.

Choose Medium and Channel
Verify that an email message is appropriate for this communication.

Organize the Information
Limit the scope to the main idea, which is to propose a recycling solution; use the indirect approach to lay out the extent of the problem.

Adapt to Your Audience
Adjust the level of formality based on the degree of familiarity with the audience; maintain a positive relationship by using the "you" attitude, politeness, positive emphasis, and bias-free language.

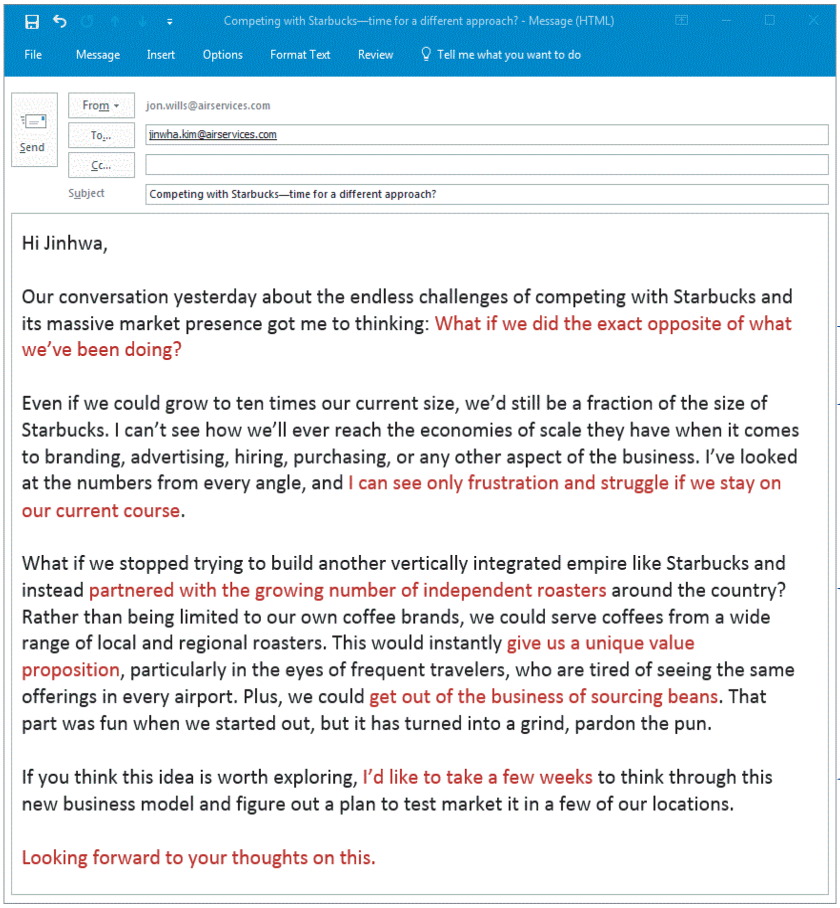
Compose the Message
Use a conversational but professional style and keep the message brief, clear, and as helpful as possible.

Revise the Message
Evaluate content and review readability to make sure the information is clear and complete without being overwhelming.

Produce the Message
Emphasize a clean, professional appearance.

Proofread the Message
Review for errors in layout, spelling, and mechanics.

Distribute the Message
Verify that the right file is attached and then deliver the message.



Competing with Starbucks—time for a different approach? - Message (HTML)

File Message Insert Options Format Text Review Tell me what you want to do

Send

From: jon.wills@airservices.com

To...: jinwha.kim@airservices.com

Cc...:

Subject: Competing with Starbucks—time for a different approach?

Hi Jinhwa,

Our conversation yesterday about the endless challenges of competing with Starbucks and its massive market presence got me to thinking: What if we did the exact opposite of what we've been doing?

Even if we could grow to ten times our current size, we'd still be a fraction of the size of Starbucks. I can't see how we'll ever reach the economies of scale they have when it comes to branding, advertising, hiring, purchasing, or any other aspect of the business. I've looked at the numbers from every angle, and I can see only frustration and struggle if we stay on our current course.

What if we stopped trying to build another vertically integrated empire like Starbucks and instead partnered with the growing number of independent roasters around the country? Rather than being limited to our own coffee brands, we could serve coffees from a wide range of local and regional roasters. This would instantly give us a unique value proposition, particularly in the eyes of frequent travelers, who are tired of seeing the same offerings in every airport. Plus, we could get out of the business of sourcing beans. That part was fun when we started out, but it has turned into a grind, pardon the pun.

If you think this idea is worth exploring, I'd like to take a few weeks to think through this new business model and figure out a plan to test market it in a few of our locations.

Looking forward to your thoughts on this.

Attention: The writer gets the reader's attention with a provocative question.

Interest: This paragraph "sells the problem" that the writer wants to fix. By convincing the reader that the current course of action isn't sustainable, the writer sparks Jinhwa's interest in hearing about an alternative strategy.

Desire: To build Jinhwa's desire to consider a new approach, the writer lists some key benefits that the new strategy could bring.

Action: The call to action asks Jinhwa for permission to take time off from his regular duties for a few weeks.

Figure 9.5 Persuasive Message Using the AIDA Model
This writer uses the AIDA model to persuade his manager to give him a few weeks away from his regular duties to explore a new business strategy. The passages in red are key points in each step of the AIDA approach. (These passages would not appear in red in the actual email message.)

the purchasing process without asking them to make an immediate decision. **Sales messages** take over at that point, encouraging potential buyers to make a purchase decision then and there. Marketing messages focus on such tasks as introducing new brands to the public and encouraging customers to visit websites for more information, whereas sales messages make an explicit request for people to buy a specific product or service.

Marketing and sales messages use many of the same techniques as persuasive business messages.

Most marketing and sales messages, particularly in larger companies, are created and delivered by professionals with specific training in marketing, advertising, sales, or public relations. However, in smaller companies you may be called on to review the work of these specialists or to write such messages, and having a good understanding of how these messages work will help you be a more effective manager.

PLANNING MARKETING AND SALES MESSAGES

Everything you've learned about planning messages applies in general to marketing and sales messages, but the planning steps for these messages have some particular aspects to consider as well:

Understanding the purchase decision from the buyer's perspective is a vital step in framing an effective marketing or sales message.

- **Assessing audience needs.** As with every other business message, successful marketing and sales messages start with an understanding of audience needs. Depending on the product and the market, these considerations can range from a few functional factors (such as the size, weight, and finish of office paper) to a complicated mix of emotional and logical issues (all the factors that play into buying a house, for example).

Marketing and sales messages have to compete for the audience's attention.

- **Analyzing your competition.** Marketing and sales messages nearly always compete with messages from other companies trying to reach the same audience. When Nike plans a marketing campaign to introduce a new shoe model to current customers, the company knows its audience has also been exposed to messages from Adidas, New Balance, Reebok, and numerous other shoe companies. Finding a unique message in crowded markets can be quite a challenge.

Selling points focus on the product; benefits focus on the user.

- **Determining key selling points and benefits.** With some insight into audience needs and the alternatives offered by your competitors, the next step is to decide which features and benefits to highlight. **Selling points** are the most attractive features of a product, whereas benefits are the particular advantages purchasers can realize from those features. In other words, selling points focus on what the product does. **Benefits** focus on what the user experiences or gains. Benefits can be practical, emotional, or a combination of the two. For example, the feature of a thin, flexible sole in a running shoe offers the practical benefit of a more natural feel while running. In contrast, the visual design features of the shoe offer no practical benefits but can offer the emotional benefit of wearing something stylish or unusual.

Anticipate buyer objections and try to address them before they become stumbling blocks.

- **Anticipating purchase objections.** Marketing and sales messages usually encounter objections, and, as with persuasive business messages, the best way to handle them is to identify these objections up front and address as many as you can. Objections can range from high price or low quality to a lack of compatibility with existing products or a perceived risk involved with the product. By identifying potential objections up front, you can craft your promotional messages in ways that address those concerns. If price is a likely objection, for instance, you can look for ways to increase the perceived value of the purchase and decrease the perception of high cost. When promoting a home gym, you might say that it costs less than a year's worth of health club dues. Of course, any attempts to minimize perceptions of price or other potential negatives must be done ethically.

WRITING CONVENTIONAL MARKETING AND SALES MESSAGES

Conventional marketing and sales messages are often prepared using the AIDA model or some variation of it. (See the next section on crafting messages for social media.) Here are the key points of using the AIDA model for these messages:

- **Getting the reader's attention.** By looking and listening during any given day, you'll notice the many ways advertisers try to get your attention. For example, a headline might offer an exciting product benefit, a piece of interesting news, an appeal to people's emotions or sense of financial value, or a unique solution to a common problem. Of course, words aren't the only attention-getting devices. Depending on the medium, marketers can use evocative images, music, animation, or video. "Cutting through the clutter" to get the audience's attention is one of the biggest challenges with marketing and sales messages.

- **Building interest.** After catching the reader's or viewer's attention, your next step is to build interest in the product, company, or idea you are promoting. A common technique is to "pay off" the promise made in the headline by explaining how you can deliver those benefits. For example, if the headline offers a way to "Get Fit for $2 a Day," the first paragraph could explain that the home gyms your company sells start at less than $700, which works out to less than $2 a day over the course of a year.

To build interest, expand on and support the promises in your attention-getting opening.

- **Increasing desire.** Now that you've given the audience some initial information to start building interest, the next step is to boost desire for the product by expanding on your explanation of its benefits. Think carefully about the sequence of support points and use plenty of subheadings, hyperlinks, video demonstrations, and other devices to help people quickly find the information they need. You can also use a variety of techniques to address potential objections and minimize doubts, including testimonials from satisfied users, articles written by industry experts, competitive comparisons, offers of product samples or free demonstrations, independent test results, and money-back guarantees.

Add details and audience benefits to increase desire for the product or service.

- **Motivating action.** The final step in the AIDA model is persuading the audience to take action, such as encouraging people to pick up the phone to place an order or visit an online app store to download your software. The keys to a successful call to action are making it as easy and as risk-free as possible. If the process is confusing or time-consuming, you'll lose potential customers.

After you've generated sufficient interest and desire, you're ready to persuade readers to take the preferred action.

If you analyze the advertisements you encounter in any medium, you'll see variations on these techniques used again and again.

WRITING PROMOTIONAL MESSAGES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

The AIDA model and similar approaches have been successful with marketing and sales messages for decades, but in the social media landscape, consumers are more apt to look for product information from other consumers, not the companies marketing those products. Consequently, your emphasis should shift to encouraging and participating in online conversations. Follow these guidelines (see Figure 9.6 on the next page):[17]

In a social media environment, persuasive efforts require a more conversational, interactive approach.

MOBILE APP

Talkwalker helps companies monitor social media conversations in real time.

- **Facilitate community building.** Give customers and other audiences an opportunity to connect with you and one another, such as on your Facebook page or through members-only online forums.
- **Listen at least as much as you talk.** Listening is just as essential for online conversations as it is for in-person conversations.
- **Initiate and respond to conversations within the community.** Through content on your website, blog postings, social network profiles and messages, newsletters, and other tools, make sure you provide the information customers need in order to evaluate your products and services. Use an objective, conversational style; people in social networks want useful information, not "advertising speak."
- **Provide information people want.** Whether it's industry-insider news, in-depth technical guides to using your products, or brief answers to questions posted on community Q&A sites, fill the information gaps about your company and its products.
- **Identify and support your champions.** In marketing, *champions* are enthusiastic fans of your company and its products. Champions are so enthusiastic they help spread your message through their social media accounts and other outlets, defend you against detractors, and help other customers use your products.

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Offering potential customers information of value is a popular marketing technique; read these tips to do it successfully. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

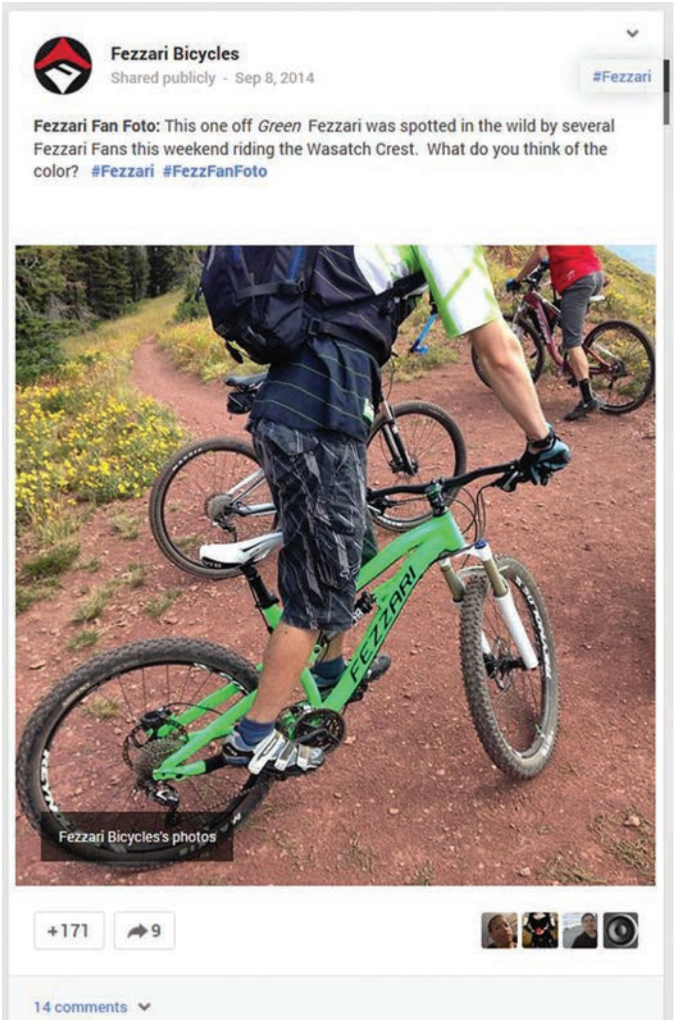

Figure 9.6 Persuasive Messages in Social Media
Persuasive communication on social media often avoids overt promotion and instead tries to engage the target audience, as Fezzari Bicycles did with this social network post.
Source: Courtesy of Fezzari Bicycles. To see more information go to www.fezzari.com.

- **Be real.** Social media audiences respond positively to companies that are open and conversational about themselves, their products, and subjects of shared interest. In contrast, if a company is serving its stakeholders poorly with shoddy products, bad customer service, or unethical behavior, an attempt to improve its reputation by adopting social media without fixing the underlying problems is likely to fail as soon as audiences see through the superficial attempt to "be social."
- **Integrate conventional marketing and sales strategies at the right time and in the right places.** AIDA and similar approaches are still valid for specific communication tasks, such as conventional advertising and the product promotion pages on your website.

CREATING PROMOTIONAL MESSAGES FOR MOBILE DEVICES

Promotional messages aimed at mobile audiences need to be short, simple, and easy to respond to.

Mobile advertising and mobile commerce (sometimes referred to as *m-commerce*) are two of the hottest developments in marketing communications. Companies are putting so much emphasis on mobile marketing because mobile devices now play such a big role in consumer buying behavior. Smartphone owners tend to use their devices for many shopping-related tasks, from searching for product reviews to finding stores and service businesses, looking for coupons and other promotions, and doing in-store price comparisons.[18]

If you are involved with creating mobile marketing or sales messages, keep two essential points in mind. First, like all mobile messages, promotional messages need to be kept short and simple. Second, the mobile experience needs to be fast and straightforward. Mobile users are often time-constrained, and they will quickly abandon websites that don't load quickly or are confusing to navigate.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Best practices in mobile marketing

Get everything you need to know from the Mobile Marketing Association. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

MAINTAINING HIGH ETHICAL AND LEGAL STANDARDS

The word *persuasion* has negative connotations for some people, especially in a marketing or sales context. However, ethical businesspeople view persuasion as a positive force, aligning their own interests with what is best for their audiences. To maintain the highest standards of business ethics, always demonstrate the "you" attitude by showing honest concern for your audience's needs and interests.

Marketing and sales messages are covered by a wide range of laws and regulations.

As marketing and selling grow increasingly complex, so do the legal ramifications of marketing and sales messages. In the United States, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has the authority to impose penalties (ranging from cease-and-desist orders to multimillion-dollar fines) on advertisers who violate federal standards for truthful advertising. Other federal agencies have authority over advertising in specific industries, such as transportation and financial services. Individual states have additional laws that may apply. The legal aspects of promotional communication can be quite complex, varying from state to state and from country to country, and most companies require marketing and salespeople to get clearance from company lawyers before sending messages.

Marketers have a responsibility to stay up to date on laws and regulations that restrict promotional messages.

Moreover, communicators must stay on top of changing regulations, such as the latest laws governing unsolicited bulk email ("spam"), disclosure requirements for bloggers who review products, privacy, and data security. For example, two ethical concerns that could produce new legislation are *behavioral targeting*, which tracks the online behavior of website visitors and serves up ads based on what they seem to be interested in, and *remarketing* or *retargeting*, in which behaviorally targeted ads follow users even as they move on to other websites.[19]

For all marketing and sales efforts, pay close attention to the following legal considerations:[20]

- **Marketing and sales messages must be truthful and nondeceptive.** The FTC considers messages to be deceptive if they include statements that are likely to mislead reasonable customers and if those statements are an important part of the purchasing decision. Failing to include important information is also considered deceptive. The FTC also looks at *implied claims*—claims you don't explicitly make but that can be inferred from what you do or don't say.
- **You must back up your claims with evidence.** According to the FTC, offering a money-back guarantee or providing letters from satisfied customers is not enough; you must still be able to support your claims with objective evidence such as a survey or scientific study.
- **"Bait and switch" advertising is illegal.** Trying to attract buyers by advertising a product that you don't intend to sell—and then trying to sell them another (and usually more expensive) product—is illegal.
- **Marketing messages and websites aimed at children are subject to special rules.** For example, online marketers must obtain consent from parents before collecting personal information about children under age 13.
- **Companies must disclose when they give products to online reviewers.** Given the strong influence of online product reviews, some companies give products to consumers in exchange for their reviews on Amazon and other retail sites. The practice is not illegal, but it must be disclosed.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Stay on the right side of federal marketing regulations

The FTC's Business Center has helpful guidance on applying federal marketing regulations in a wide variety of specific situations. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

- **Companies that coordinate with product champions and social media influencers have a degree of responsibility for what those people say to the public.** Marketers are expected to train these people in responsible communication and monitor what these outside parties write and say about their products.

For the latest information on writing persuasive messages, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Chapter 9.

The Future of Communication: Gestural Computing

If you've ever wished that you could just wave your hands at your computer and have it do your bidding, that wish might come true in a few years. The aim of *gestural computing* is to let users control computers and other digital devices through motion, such as waving your hands or moving your eyes.

Gestural computing can be accomplished through various means. One approach, which is already used widely in video games, involves handheld devices that convert motion to digital commands. The Nintendo Wii controller is a well-known example of this technology. Another approach involves sensors that detect and translate motion without requiring users to hold anything. Good examples are BMW's Gesture Control interface, which lets drivers wave their hands and move their fingers to select entertainment and navigation functions, and wireless control mechanisms for smartwatches and other wearables that let users interact with their devices simply by moving their fingers in the air (rather than reaching with one hand to use a touch interface).

Entertainment and other consumer applications of gestural control are intriguing, but the technology can also aid business communication. By simplifying interaction with mobile devices, it could make creating and consuming content on media devices more efficient. Imagine "typing" a report through your smartwatch by wiggling your fingers while you commute to work on your bicycle. In addition, like haptic computing (see page 81), gestural computing can open up possibilities for digital interaction for people with motor impairments that limit the use of conventional input devices such as keyboards.[21]

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Research the current state of gestural computing to identify one way in which the technology has the potential to change business communication practices. Do you agree with the predictions the experts make? Why or why not?

Chapter Review and Activities

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** to complete the problems marked with this icon ★.

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: Apply the three-step writing process to persuasive messages.

Follow these tips in the planning stage:

- Carefully clarify your purpose to make sure you focus on a single persuasive goal.
- Understand audience needs so you can align your persuasive appeal with the concerns and motivations of your readers.
- If relevant, categorize audience needs with demographic and psychographic variables.
- Make sure you have the information that helps audience members understand how your persuasive goal aligns with their interests.
- Consider media and channel choices carefully, particularly with marketing and sales messages in a social media landscape.

- Use the indirect approach if you need to explain your reasons or build interest before asking for a decision, particularly if you don't have "expertise authority" in your organization.

Follow these tips in the writing stage:

- Use positive and polite language.
- Understand and respect cultural nuances that affect how your audiences will respond to your attempt at changing their attitudes or behaviors.
- Establish or confirm your credibility by using simple language, supporting your claims, identifying your sources, establishing common ground, being objective, displaying good intentions, and avoiding the hard sell.

In the completing stage, bear in mind that accuracy and completeness are especially important in persuasive messages because they send crucial signals about your credibility.

Objective 2: Describe an effective strategy for developing persuasive business messages.

One of the most commonly used methods for framing a persuasive argument is the AIDA model:

- **A**: Open your message by getting the audience's *attention*.
- **I**: Build *interest* with facts, details, and additional benefits.
- **D**: Increase *desire* by providing more evidence and answering possible objections.
- **A**: Motivate a specific *action*.

Persuasive business messages combine three types of persuasive appeals:

- ***Ethos***—the ethical dimension, particularly your credibility as the writer
- ***Pathos***—appeals to emotion
- ***Logos***—argumentation based on logic and evidence, including induction (from specific evidence to a general conclusion), deduction (from a general theory to a specific conclusion), and analogy (comparing one specific example to another)

Use these techniques to reinforce your position:

- Add convincing evidence, quotations from experts, or other support material.
- Fine-tune your language to make it more compelling.

Anticipate potential objections and address them as you craft your message:

- Help prevent audience members from gravitating toward negative answers before you have the opportunity to ask them for a positive response.
- Resolve these issues before the audience has a chance to go on the defensive.

Avoid these common mistakes in persuasive communication:

- Using a hard sell
- Resisting compromise
- Relying solely on great arguments
- Assuming that persuasion is a one-shot effort
- Resorting to deception or other unethical behaviors

Objective 3: Identify the three most common categories of persuasive business messages.

Persuasive requests for action ask the recipient to make a decision or engage in some activity.

Persuasive presentations of ideas encourage the audience to consider a different way of looking at a particular topic.

Persuasive claims and requests for adjustments address situations in which you believe you have not received fair treatment and would like the reader to give your case fresh consideration.

Objective 4: Describe an effective strategy for developing marketing and sales messages, explain how to modify this approach for social media, and identify steps you can take to avoid ethical lapses in marketing and sales messages.

Marketing and sales messages use the same basic techniques as other persuasive messages, with the added emphasis of encouraging someone to participate in a commercial transaction:

- Marketing messages do this indirectly, such as persuading potential customers to visit a website for more information.
- Sales messages do it directly, asking readers or listeners to make a decision now.

Here's the basic strategy for creating both types of promotional messages:

- Identify the full range of customer needs and how your product or service satisfies them.
- Analyze your competition to find your strengths and weaknesses.
- Identify your key selling points and benefits.
- Anticipate likely purchase objections and try to address them proactively.

When using conventional media, apply the AIDA model or a similar approach.

Adapt your approach for social media:

- Facilitate community building; bring current and potential customers together for mutual benefit.
- Listen at least as much as you talk.
- Initiate and respond to conversations within the community.
- Provide information people want.
- Identify and support your champions.
- Be open, honest, and conversational.
- Integrate conventional marketing and sales strategies at the right time and in the right places.

Ethical businesspeople view persuasion as a positive force, aligning their own interests with what is best for their audiences.

Marketing and sales messages are subject to variety of laws and regulations, including these considerations:

- Marketing and sales messages must be truthful and nondeceptive.
- You must back up your claims with evidence.
- "Bait and switch" advertising is illegal.
- Marketing messages and websites aimed at children are subject to special rules.
- Companies must disclose when they give products to online reviewers.

- Companies that coordinate with product champions and social media influencers have a degree of responsibility for what those people say to the public.

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

9-1. What are demographics and psychographics? [LO-1]

9-2. How do the concepts of ethos, pathos, and logos apply to persuasive messages? [LO-2]

9-3. How do emotional appeals differ from logical appeals? [LO-2]

9-4. What three types of reasoning can you use in logical appeals? [LO-2]

9-5. What is the AIDA model, and what are its limitations? [LO-2]

9-6. Why do promotional messages need to be short and simple on mobile devices? [LO-4]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

9-7. Why is it essential to understand your readers' likely motivations before writing a persuasive message? [LO-1]

9-8. Is the "hard-sell" approach unethical? Why or why not? [LO-2]

9-9. What is likely to happen if a promotional message starts immediately with a call to action? Why? [LO-4]

9-10. Are emotional appeals ethical? Why or why not? [LO-4]

9-11. Are promotional slogans such as "Best sushi in town" or "Atlanta's most popular restaurant" ethical? Why or why not? [LO-4]

Practice Your Skills

Exercises for Perfecting Your Writing

To review chapter content related to each set of exercises, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

Message Strategies: Persuasive Business Messages; Collaboration: Team Projects [LO-2] With another student, analyze the persuasive email message in Figure 9.5 by answering the following questions.

9-12. What techniques are used to capture the reader's attention?

9-13. Does the writer use the direct or indirect organizational approach? Why?

9-14. Is the subject line effective? Why or why not?

9-15. How does the writer establish credibility?

9-16. How are emotional and logical appeals balanced?

9-17. What reader benefits are included?

9-18. What tools does the writer use to reinforce his position?

Message Strategies: Persuasive Business Messages; Mobile Skills [LO-2] Compose effective subject lines for the following email messages. Make sure they are mobile friendly.

9-19. A recommendation to your branch manager to install wireless networking throughout the facility. Your primary reason is that management has encouraged more teamwork, and the teams often congregate in meeting rooms, the cafeteria, and other places that lack network access, without which they can't do much of the work they are expected to do.

9-20. A sales brochure to be sent to area residents, soliciting customers for your new business, "Meals à la Car," a carryout dining service that delivers from most local restaurants. Diners place orders online, and individual households can order from up to three restaurants at a time to accommodate different tastes. The price is equal to the standard menu prices plus a 10 percent delivery charge.

9-21. A special request to the company president to allow managers to carry over their unused vacation days to the following year. Apparently, many managers canceled their fourth-quarter vacation plans to work on the installation of a new company computer system. Under their current contract, vacation days not used by December 31 can't be carried over to the following year.

Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages [LO-4] Determine whether the following sentences focus on features or benefits; rewrite them as necessary to focus on benefits.

9-22. All-Cook skillets are coated with a durable, patented nonstick surface.

9-23. The message archiving function saves every discussion thread in a way that is easily searchable by any authorized user.

9-24. With this huge library of loops and virtual drum kits at your fingertips, you'll be making club-ready beats in a matter of minutes.

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information will be found in another chapter, as indicated.

9-25. Message Strategies: Persuasive Business Messages; Media Skills: Podcasting [LO-2], Chapter 6 To access this message, visit real-timeupdates.com/bce8, select Student Assignments, and select Chapter 9, Activity 1. Listen to this podcast and identify at least three ways in which the podcast could be more persuasive. Draft a brief email message that you could send to the podcaster with your suggestions for improvement.

9-26. Message Strategies: Persuasive Business Messages [LO-3] Read the following message, then (a) analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each sentence and (b) revise the document so that it follows this chapter's guidelines.

Dear TechStar Computing:

I'm writing to you because of my disappointment with my new multimedia PC display. The display part works all right, but the audio volume is also set too high and the volume knob doesn't turn it down. It's driving us crazy. The volume knob doesn't seem to be connected to anything but simply spins around. I can't believe you would put out a product like this without testing it first.

I depend on my computer to run my small business and want to know what you are going to do about it. This reminds me of every time I buy electronic equipment from what seems like any company. Something is always wrong. I thought quality was supposed to be important, but I guess not.

Anyway, I need this fixed right away. Please tell me what you want me to do.

9-27. Message Strategies: Persuasive Business Messages [LO-3] The following persuasive request for adjustment contains numerous flaws. Read the message carefully and analyze its faults. Then determine whether to use the direct or indirect approach, and write an improved message.

March 22, 2019
Mr. Robert Bechtold, Manager
Kukyendahl Joint, Inc.
88 North Park Road
Houston, TX 77005

Re: Last Warning

Dear Mr. Bechtold:

Enclosed is a summary of recent ETS-related court cases in which landlords and owners were held responsible for providing toxin-free air for their tenants. In most of these cases, owners were also required to reimburse rents and pay damages for the harm done before the environmental tobacco smoke problem was remedied.

We've been plagued with this since we moved in on January 2, 2017. You haven't acted on our complaints, or responded to our explanations that secondhand smoke is making us sick, filtering in from nearby offices. You must act now or you will be hearing from our lawyers. We've told you that we were forced to hire contractors to apply weather stripping and seal openings. This cost us $3,000 (bills attached) and we expect reimbursement. But the smoke is still coming in. We also want a refund for the $9,000 we've paid you in rent since January. Call us immediately at (832) 768-3899, or our attorneys will be calling you.

Cigarette smoke from tenants on either side of us, and perhaps above and below as well, has been infiltrating our space and you have done nothing, despite our pleas, to stop it. This is unacceptable. This is a known human carcinogen. Ask the Environmental Protection Agency, which classified it as this Group A toxin. It causes lung, breast, cervical, and endocrine cancer in nonsmokers. You wouldn't want to breathe it, either.

One employee already quit who suffered from asthma. Another is threatening because he's a high risk for heart attack. Migraines, bronchitis, respiratory infections—all caused by the 4,600 chemicals in ETS, including poisons such as cyanide, arsenic, formaldehyde, carbon monoxide, and ammonia. We've had them all—the illnesses, that is.

Secondhand smoke is even more dangerous than what smokers inhale, since the inhalation process burns off some of the toxins. Sick time has already cost CMSI valuable business and lowered productivity. Plus many of us are considering finding other jobs unless our office air becomes safe to breathe again. But as the court cases prove, the responsibility for fixing this problem is yours. We expect you to live up to that responsibility immediately. Frankly, we're fed up with your lack of response.

Kathleen Thomas
Manager

9-28. Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages [LO-4] Read the following message, then (a) analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each sentence and (b) revise the document so that it follows this chapter's guidelines.

At Tolson Auto Repair, we have been in business for over 25 years. We stay in business by always taking into account what the customer wants. That's why we are writing. We want to know your opinions to be able to better conduct our business.

Take a moment right now and fill out the enclosed questionnaire. We know everyone is busy, but this is just one way we have of making sure our people do their job correctly. Use the enclosed envelope to return the questionnaire.

And again, we're happy you chose Tolson Auto Repair. We want to take care of all your auto needs.

9-29. Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages [LO-4] Read the following message, then (a) analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each sentence and (b) revise the document so that it follows this chapter's guidelines.

I am considered the country's foremost authority on employee health insurance programs. My clients offer universally positive feedback on the programs I've designed for them. They also love how much time I save them—hundreds and hundreds of hours. I am absolutely confident that I can thoroughly analyze your needs and create a portfolio that realizes every degree of savings possible. I invite you to experience the same level of service that has generated such comments as "Best advice ever!" and "Saved us an unbelievable amount of money."

9-30. Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages [LO-4] Use what you know about sales messages to analyze the flaws in this promotional brochure, then revise it to produce a better version.

We are pleased to announce that ScrubaDub has added a new service, the Car Care Club.

It costs $5.95 for a lifetime membership (your car's lifetime) and features our computer automation. You'll be given a bar-coded sticker for your windshield so our computers can identify you as a club member when you pull in. If you sign up within the next 30 days, we will grant you a SuperWash for free.

The new club offers the standard ScrubaDub Touch-less systems to protect your finishes, our private formula Superglo detergent to clean your car safely and thoroughly, wheel sensors to prescribe the right treatment for whitewalls, wire, or chrome, soft, heated well water to eliminate spots, soft-cloth drying for final gloss. We also recycle our water and grant you a free wash on your birthday.

In addition, club members only will have access to a 48-hour guarantee (free rewashes) or 4 days if you purchased the premium Super Wash, Luxury Wash, Special or Works Wash. After ten washes, our computer will award you a free wash. Also available only to club members are $5 rebates for foam waxes (Turtle Wax, Simonize, or Blue Coral). Some additional specials will be granted by us to car club members, on an unplanned basis.

We can handle special requests if you inquire of our Satisfaction Supervisors. We honor our customers with refunds if they remain unsatisfied after a rewash. This is our Bumper-to-Bumper Guarantee.

9-31. Communication Ethics: Making Ethical Choices [LO-4], Chapter 1 Your boss has asked you to post a message on the company's internal blog, urging everyone in your department to donate money to the company's favorite charity, an organization that operates a summer camp for children with physical challenges. You wind up writing a lengthy post packed with facts and heartwarming anecdotes about the camp and the children's experiences. When you must work that hard to persuade your audience to take an action such as donating money to a charity, aren't you being manipulative and unethical? Explain.

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Visit the Facebook page of any company for which you are a current or potential customer. Read at least a dozen posts (from the company itself, not from anyone else posting on the company's timeline). How would you describe the company's approach to using Facebook as a promotional channel? As a current or potential customer, does the company's Facebook presence make you more or less inclined to buy its products or services? Are you interested in reading more posts from this company? Why or why not? Summarize your reactions in a brief email message to your instructor or a post on your class blog.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at **websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that offers advice on writing persuasive business messages or marketing and sales messages. Write a brief email message to your instructor or a post for your class blog, describing the item you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Cases

For all cases, feel free to use your creativity to make up any details you need in order to craft effective messages.

Persuasive Business Messages

MICROBLOGGING SKILLS

9-32. Message Strategies: Persuasive Business Messages [LO-3] You've been trying for months to convince your boss, company CEO Will Florence, to start using Twitter. You've told him that top executives in numerous industries now use Twitter as a way to connect with customers and other stakeholders without going through the filters and barriers of formal corporate communications, but he doesn't see the value.

Your task: You come up with the brilliant plan to demonstrate Twitter's usefulness using Twitter itself. First, find three executives from three different companies who are on Twitter (choose any companies and executives you find interesting). Second, study their tweets to get a feel for the type of information they share. Third, if you don't already have a Twitter account set up for this class, set one up for the purposes of this exercise (you can deactivate later). Fourth, write four tweets to demonstrate the value of executive microblogging: one that summarizes the value of having a company CEO use Twitter and three supporting tweets, each one summarizing how your three real-life executive role models use Twitter.

EMAIL SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

9-33. Message Strategies: Persuasive Business Messages [LO-2] At lunch with a colleague from your department last week, you discovered that as much as you both love your jobs, family obligations are making it difficult to keep working full time. Unfortunately, your company doesn't offer any conventional part-time jobs because it needs to keep positions such as yours staffed five days a week. However, you have heard about the concept of job sharing, in which two people divide a single job.

Your task: With a partner, research job sharing. Identify the pros and cons from the perspectives of the employer and the employees involved. Using the AIDA approach, draft a persuasive email message to your supervisor, outlining the benefits and addressing the potential problem areas. Your call to action should be to ask your supervisor to propose job sharing to company management.

EMAIL SKILLS

9-34. Message Strategies: Persuasive Business Messages [LO-2] While sitting at your desk during lunch break, slumped over as usual, staring at your computer screen, you see an online article about the dangers of sitting at your desk all day. Yikes. The article suggests trying a standing desk—or, even better, a treadmill desk, which has an exercise treadmill built into a standing desk. You'd love to lose a few pounds while being healthier and feeling more alert during the day. Plus, you know the company is encouraging employees to live healthier lifestyles in order to improve their overall well-being and to reduce its health-care costs.

Your task: Research treadmill desks and write a persuasive email message to your boss, requesting that the company buy or rent a treadmill desk for you to try out. Offer to serve as a research subject for the whole office, tracking your weight loss, alertness, and any other relevant variables you can think of.

BLOGGING SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

9-35. Message Strategies: Persuasive Business Messages [LO-3] As a strong advocate for the use of social media in business, you are pleased by how quickly people in your company have taken up blogging, wiki writing, and other new-media activities. You are considerably less excited by the style and quality of what you see in the writing of your colleagues. Many seem to have interpreted "authentic and conversational" to mean "anything goes." Several Twitter users in the company seem to have abandoned any pretense of grammar and spelling. A few managers have dragged internal disagreements about company strategy into public view, arguing with each other through comments on various industry-related forums. Production demonstration videos have been posted to the company's YouTube channel virtually unedited, making the entire firm seem unpolished and unprofessional. The company CEO has written some blog posts that bash competitors with coarse and even crude language.

You pushed long and hard for greater use of these tools, so you feel a sense of responsibility for this situation. In addition, you are viewed by many in the company as the resident expert on social media, so you have some "expertise authority" on this issue. On the other hand, you are only a first-level manager, with three levels of managers above you, so while you have some "position authority" as well, you can hardly dictate best practices to the managers above you.

Your task: Working with two other students, write a post for the company's internal blog (which is not viewable outside the company), outlining your concerns about these communication practices. Use the examples mentioned above, and make up any additional details you need. Emphasize that although social media communication is often less formal and more flexible than traditional business communication, it shouldn't be unprofessional. You are thinking of proposing a social media training program for everyone in the company, but for this message you just want to bring attention to the problem.

EMAIL SKILLS

9-36. Message Strategies: Requests for Action [LO-2] Managing a new-product launch can be an aggravating experience as you try to coordinate a wide variety of activities and processes while barreling toward a deadline that is often defined more by external factors than a realistic assessment of whether you can actually meet it. You depend on many other people to meet their deadlines as well, and if they fail, you fail. The pressure is enough to push anybody over the edge. Unfortunately, that happened to you last week. After a barrage of bad news from suppliers and the members of the team you lead, you lost your cool in a checkpoint meeting. Shouting at people and accusing them of slacking off was embarrassing enough, but the situation got a hundred times worse this morning when your boss suggested you needed some low-pressure work for a while and removed you as the leader of the launch team.

Your task: Write an email message to your boss, Sunil, requesting to be reinstated as the project team leader. Make up any information you need.

EMAIL SKILLS/MOBILE SKILLS

9-37. Message Strategies: Persuasive Business Messages [LO-3] Your new company, WorldConnect Language Services, started well and is going strong. However, to expand beyond your Memphis, Tennessee, home market, you need a one-time infusion of cash to open branch offices in other cities around the Southeast. At the Entrepreneur's Lunch Forum you attended yesterday, you learned about several "angels," as they are called in the investment community—private individuals who invest money in small companies in exchange for a share of ownership. One such angel, Melinda Sparks, told the audience she is looking for investment opportunities outside high technology, where angels often invest their money. She also indicated that she looks for entrepreneurs who know their industries and markets well, who are passionate about the value they bring to the marketplace, who are committed to growing their businesses, and who have a solid plan for how they will spend an investor's money. Fortunately, you meet all of her criteria.

Your task: Draft an email message to Sparks, introducing yourself and your business and asking for a meeting at which you can present your business plan in more detail. Explain that your Memphis office was booked to capacity within two months of opening, thanks to the growing number of international business professionals looking for translators and interpreters. You've researched the entire Southeast region and identified at least 10 other cities that could support language services offices such as yours. Making up whatever other information you need, draft a four-paragraph message following the AIDA model, ending with a request for a meeting within the next four weeks. You know Sparks tends to read email messages on her phone, so craft your message to be mobile friendly.

EMAIL SKILLS

9-38. Message Strategies: Persuasive Claims and Requests for Adjustment [LO-2] You thought it was strange that no one called you on your new mobile phone, even though you had given your family members, friends, and boss your new number. Two weeks after getting the new phone and agreeing to a $49 monthly fee, you called the service provider, InstantCall, just to check whether everything was working. Sure enough, the technician discovered that your incoming calls were being routed to an inactive number. You're glad she found the problem, but then it took the company nearly two more weeks to fix it. When you called to complain about paying for service you didn't receive, the customer service agent suggests you send an email message to Judy Hinkley at the company's regional business office to request an adjustment.

Your task: Decide how much of an adjustment you think you deserve under the circumstances and then send an email message to Hinkley to request the adjustment to your account. Write a summary of events in chronological order, supplying exact dates for maximum effectiveness. Make up any information you need, such as problems that the malfunctioning service caused at home or at work.

Marketing and Sales Messages

LETTER-WRITING SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

9-39. Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages [LO-3] Like all other states, Kentucky works hard to attract businesses that are considering expanding into the state or relocating entirely from another state. The Kentucky Cabinet for

Economic Development is responsible for reaching out to these companies and overseeing the many incentive programs the state offers to new and established businesses.

Your task: As the communication director of the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, you play the lead role in reaching out to companies that want to expand or relocate to Kentucky. Visit **www.thinkkentucky.com** and read "Top 10 Reasons for Locating or Expanding Your Business in Kentucky" (look under "Why Kentucky"). Identify the major benefits the state uses to promote Kentucky as a great place to locate a business. Summarize these reasons in a one-page form letter that will be sent to business executives throughout the country. Be sure to introduce yourself and your purpose in the letter, and close with a compelling call to action (have them reach you by telephone at 800-626-2930 or by email at econdev@ky.gov). As you plan your letter, try to imagine yourself as the CEO of a company and consider what a complex choice it would be to move to another state.[22]

LETTER-WRITING SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

9-40. Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages [LO-4] Water polo is an active sport that provides great opportunities for exercise and for learning the collaborative skills involved in teamwork. You can learn more at **www.usawaterpolo.org.**

Your task: Write a one-page letter to parents of 10- to 14-year-old boys and girls, promoting the health and socialization benefits of water polo and encouraging them to introduce their children to the sport through a local club. Tell them they can learn more about the sport and find a club in their area by visiting the USA Water Polo website.

WEB-WRITING SKILLS

9-41. Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages [LO-4] Convincing people to give their music a try is one of the toughest challenges new bands and performers face.

Your task: Imagine you've taken on the job of promoting an amazing new band or performer you just discovered. Choose someone you've heard live or online and write 100 to 200 words of webpage copy describing the music in a way that will convince people to listen to a few online samples.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS

9-42. Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages; Media Skills: Social Networking [LO-4], Chapter 6 Curves is a fitness center franchise that caters to women who may not feel at home in traditional gyms. With its customer-focused and research-based approach, Curves has become a significant force in the fitness industry and one of the most successful franchise operations in history.[23]

Your task: Read the About Us section at the Curves website. Imagine that you are adapting this material for the company's Facebook page. Write a "Company Overview" (95–100 words) and a "Mission Statement" (45–50 words).

SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

9-43. Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages; Media Skills: Social Networking [LO-4], Chapter 6 You chose your college or university based on certain expectations, and you've been enrolled long enough now to have some idea about whether those expectations have been met. In other words, you are something of an expert about the "consumer benefits" your school can offer prospective students.

Your task: In a team of four students, interview six other students who are not taking this business communication course. Try to get a broad demographic and psychographic sample, including students in a variety of majors and programs. Ask these students (a) why they chose this college or university and (b) whether the experience has met their expectations so far. To ensure the privacy of your respondents, do not record their names with their answers. Each member of the team should then answer these same two questions, so that you have responses from a total of ten students.

After compiling the responses (you might use Google Docs or a similar collaboration tool so that everyone on the team has easy access to the information), analyze them as a team, looking for any recurring "benefit themes." Is it the quality of the education? Research opportunities? Location? The camaraderie of school sporting events? The chance to meet and study with fascinating students from a variety of backgrounds? Identify two or three strong benefits that your college or university can promise—and deliver—to prospective students.

Now nominate one member of the team to draft a short marketing message that could be posted on your school's Facebook page. The message should include a catchy title that makes it clear the message is a student's perspective on why this is a great place to get a college education. When the draft is ready, the other members of the team should review it individually. Finally, meet as a team to complete the message.

MICROBLOGGING SKILLS

9-44. Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages; Media Skills: Microblogging [LO-4], Chapter 6 Effective microblogging messages emphasize clarity and conciseness—and so do effective sales messages.

Your task: Find the website of any product that can be ordered online (any product you find interesting and that is appropriate to use for a class assignment). Adapt the information on the website, using your own words, and write four tweets to promote the product. The first should get your audience's attention (with an intriguing benefit claim, for example), the second should build audience interest by providing some support for the claim you made in the first message, the third should increase readers' desire to have the product by layering on one or two more buyer benefits, and the fourth should motivate readers to take action to place an order. Your first three tweets can be up to 140 characters, but the fourth should be limited to 117 to accommodate a URL (you don't need to include the URL in your message, however).

If your class is set up with private Twitter accounts, use them to share your messages. Otherwise, email your four messages to your instructor or post them on your class blog, as your instructor directs.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

9-45. Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages; Media Skills: Social Networking [LO-3], Chapter 8 At this point in your collegiate career, you've developed areas of academic expertise that could benefit other students. After kicking around moneymaking ideas with friends, you decide that the tutoring business would be a more enjoyable way to share your expertise than a regular part-time job.

Your task: In a team assigned by your instructor, compile a list of all the subject areas in which your team would be qualified to tutor high-school students or other college students. Then brainstorm the best way to present your offerings through Facebook and other social media sites. Come up with a name for your tutoring company and write a 100- to 200-word "About Us" statement.

MICROBLOGGING SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

9-46. Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages; Media Skills: Social Networking [LO-3], Chapter 8 You and your tutoring team (from Case 9-45) know you should take advantage of every social media platform to inform potential clients about your new company.

Your task: With the same team as in Case 9-45, compose four tweets to introduce your tutoring service on Twitter. The first one should be limited to 117 characters to allow for a URL; the other three can be up to 140 characters. Submit the tweets to your instructor in whatever format he or she requests.

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from real-timeupdates.com/bce8; select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 9, Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Commas

Review Section 2.6 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage, and then complete the following 15 items. Answers to these exercises appear on page 489.

For the following items, insert required commas.

9-47. Please send us four cases of filters two cases of wing nuts and a bale of rags.

9-48. Your analysis however does not account for returns.

9-49. As a matter of fact she has seen the figures.

9-50. Before May 7 2015 they wouldn't have minded either.

9-51. After Martha has gone talk to me about promoting her.

9-52. Stoneridge Inc. will go public on September 9 2020.

9-53. We want the new copier not the old model.

9-54. "Talk to me" Sandra said "before you change a thing."

9-55. Because of a previous engagement Dr. Stoeve will not be able to attend.

9-56. The company started attracting attention during the long hard recession of the mid-1970s.

9-57. You can reach me at this address: 717 Darby Place Scottsdale Arizona 85251.

9-58. Transfer the documents from Fargo North Dakota to Boise Idaho.

9-59. Sam O'Neill the designated representative is gone today.

9-60. With your help we will soon begin.

9-61. She may hire two new representatives or she may postpone filling those territories until spring.

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

9-62. A pitfall of internal promotions is, that a person may be given a job beyond their competence.

9-63. What makes this development possible is the technological advances in todays workplace.

9-64. have up to date physical safeguards, such as secure areas in buildings, electronic safeguards, such as passwords and encryption, and we have procedural safeguards, such as customer authentication procedures.

9-65. When asked why BASF needs to bring in a consultant after so many years, process development quality assurance manager Merritt Sink says that experience is extremely important on these type of projects.

9-66. Looking at just one growth indicator imports to the United States from China "ballooned" to $102 billion in 2015; compared with 15 billion in 2004.

9-67. Levi Strauss was the first major manufacturer to develop and do publicity about a formal Code of Conduct for it's contract manufacturers.

9-68. In some other countries, while the local labor laws may be comparable or even more stringent than in the United States, law enforcement mechanisms are weak or nonexistent often.

9-69. Motor Co., South Koreas' largest-automotive producer are building a $1 billion assembly and manufacturing plant in Montgomery, Alabama.

9-70. The long term success of some Internet products rest heavily on broadbands wide acceptance.

9-71. Being creative, flexibility, and dynamic planning are the critical elements of any successful, manufacturing process.

9-72. "Starbucks expanded the Frappuccino family to satisfy customers by offering a broader array of blended beverages," said Howard Behar, Starbucks president, North American Operations.

9-73. Internationally-renowned interior designer, Jacques Garcia will be designing the hotel's interiors; the gardens will also be designed by him.

9-74. Anyone who thinks they know what a CEO does is probably wrong, according to Eric Kriss; a professional Chief Executive.

9-75. Doctor Ichak Adizes, who founded the Adizes institute, headquartered in Santa Barbara, Calif. has spent decade's studying the life cycle of businesses.

9-76. The best job-description in the world wont provide you with a trusted executive, finely-honed interviewing skills only will help one do that.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C) or download the document and make the corrections in your word-processing software.

Dear potential buyers:

You will be able to compare prices from more than three hundredinsurance companies'. Or find the lower rates for any insurance, such as Term life Automobile; Medical. dental. "No-exam" whole life, workers' compensation, Medicare supplements; Fixed annuities

$500 Dollar Guarantees

We'll find you the lowest U.S. rates for term life insurance, or we'll deliver $500 to you overnight. Plus, every quote will carry a $five hundred dollar guarrantee of uptotheday accuracy.

All quotes are free and accurrate; We offer Lightning-Fast Service

What their saying about us can be found at www.insure.com. Our speedy service is being talked about by everyone, which has received high ratings and postive reviews from every major business publication "Nation's Business" "Kiplinger's Personal Finance" Good Housekeeping, The Los Angeles Times, "Money" "U.S. News & World Report" "Insure.com provides rock-bottom quotes."—Forbes

Expert AdviSe Will be provided with No Sales Pitch:

You will not be dealing with insurance agents to save you time and money. But if you want advise our saleried insurance experts are available at our toll-free customer service number. We hope you will take a moment to peruse our webstie, www.insure.com today if possible.

Very truly yours,

Sasha Morgenstern

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

9-77. What role do demographics and psychographics play in audience analysis during the planning of a persuasive message? [LO-1]

9-78. What role do champions have in social media marketing? [LO-4]

Endnotes

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PART 4 Longer Business Messages

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Reports and presentations offer important opportunities to demonstrate your value to an organization. Depending on the project, you might analyze complex problems, educate audiences, address opportunities in the marketplace, win contracts, or even launch an entire company with the help of a compelling business plan. Adapt what you've learned so far to the particular challenges of long-format messages, including some special touches that can make formal reports stand out from the crowd. Then learn how to plan effective presentations, overcome the anxieties that every speaker feels, and respond to questions from the audience. Discover some tips and techniques for succeeding with the Twitter-enabled backchannel and with online presentations. Finally, complement your talk with compelling visual materials and learn how to create presentation slides that engage and excite your audience.

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10 Understanding and Planning Reports and Proposals

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Adapt the three-step writing process to reports and proposals.
2. Describe an effective process for conducting business research, explain how to evaluate the credibility of an information source, and identify the five ways to use research results.
3. Explain the role of secondary research, and describe the two major categories of online research tools.
4. Explain the role of primary research, and identify the two most common forms of primary research for business communication purposes.
5. Explain how to plan informational reports and website content.
6. Identify the three most common ways to organize analytical reports.
7. Explain how to plan proposals.

MyLab Business Communication

If your instructor is using MyLab Business Communication, visit **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for videos, simulations, and writing exercises.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"We are on your side. So please help us get to know you better by telling your story clearly and concisely."[1]
—from Garage Technology Ventures, a noted Silicon Valley venture capital firm

The venture capitalists at Garage Technology Ventures emphasize an often-overlooked point when it comes to report writing and business communication in general: Your readers want you to succeed, because it's a win-win scenario. They get the information they need, and you communicate the message you want to share. Whether you're writing a request for venture capital as part of an entrepreneurial business plan or preparing any other kind of business report, follow the steps in this chapter to create win-win reports of your own.

ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy Stock Photo

Noted entrepreneur, venture capitalist, and author Guy Kawasaki, one of the founders of Garage Technology Ventures, encourages report writers to tell their stories clearly and concisely.

Applying the Three-Step Writing Process to Reports and Proposals

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Adapt the three-step writing process to reports and proposals.

Reports can be classified as informational reports, analytical reports, and proposals.

In previous chapters, you learned to use the three-step writing process for developing shorter business messages; now it's time to apply those skills to longer messages such as business plans. Reports fall into three basic categories (see Figure 10.1):

- **Informational reports** offer data, facts, feedback, and other types of information, without analysis or recommendations.
- **Analytical reports** offer both information and analysis and can also include recommendations.
- **Proposals** present persuasive recommendations to internal or external audiences, often involving investments or purchases.

Reports often give you the opportunity to demonstrate your grasp of important business issues.

View every business report as an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of your audience's challenges and your ability to contribute to your organization's success. The three-step process you've used for shorter messages is easily adapted to reports and in fact simplifies these larger projects by ensuring a methodical and efficient approach.

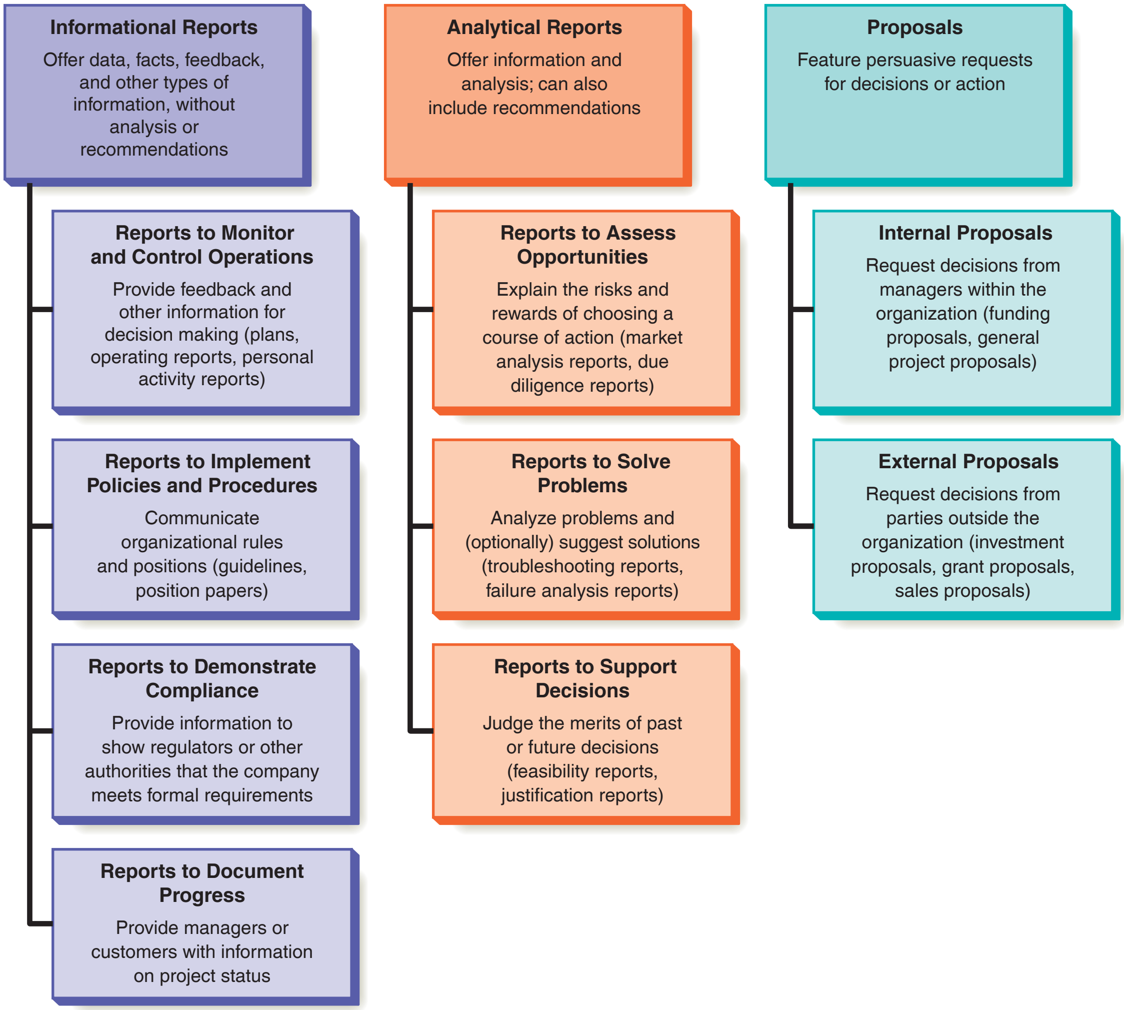

Figure 10.1 Common Business Reports and Proposals
You will have the opportunity to read and write many types of reports in your career; here are some of the most common.

ANALYZING THE SITUATION

Reports can be complex, time-consuming projects, so be sure to analyze the situation carefully before you begin to write. Pay special attention to your **statement of purpose**, which explains *why* you are preparing the report and *what* you plan to deliver.

Define your purpose clearly so you don't waste time with unnecessary rework.

The most useful way to phrase your purpose statement is to begin with an infinitive phrase (*to* plus a verb), which helps pin down your general goal (*to inform*, *to identify*, *to analyze*, and so on). For instance, in an informational report, your statement of purpose can be as simple as one of these:

To identify potential markets for our new language learning games
To update the board of directors on the progress of the research project
To submit required information to the Securities and Exchange Commission

The statement of purpose for an analytical report often needs to be more comprehensive. For example, if you were asked to find ways of reducing employee travel and entertainment (T&E) costs, you might phrase your statement of purpose like this:

To analyze the T&E budget, evaluate the impact of recent changes in airfares and hotel costs, and suggest ways to tighten management's control over T&E expenses

A proposal must also be guided by a clear statement of purpose to help you focus on crafting a persuasive message. Here are several examples:

The statement of purpose for a proposal should help guide you in developing a persuasive message.

To secure funding for robotic material handling systems in next year's budget
To get management approval to reorganize the North American salesforce
To secure $2 million from outside investors to start production of the new titanium mountain bike

In addition to considering your purpose carefully, you will want to prepare a **work plan** for most reports and proposals in order to make the best use of your time. For simpler reports, the work plan can be an informal list of tasks and a simple schedule. However, if you're preparing a lengthy report, particularly when you're collaborating with others, you'll want to develop a more detailed work plan (see Figure 10.2 on the next page).

A detailed work plan saves time and often produces more effective reports.

GATHERING INFORMATION

Obtaining the information needed for many reports and proposals requires careful planning, and you may even need to do a separate research project just to acquire the data and information you need. To stay on schedule and on budget, be sure to review both your statement of purpose and your audience's needs so that you can prioritize your information needs and focus on the most important questions.

Some reports require formal research projects in order to gather all the necessary information.

MOBILE APP

The **Instapaper** mobile app lets you instantly save web pages and articles to read later, a convenient capability when you're exploring a topic and want to collect potential sources for review.

SELECTING THE RIGHT COMBINATION OF MEDIA AND CHANNELS

In addition to the general media and channel selection criteria discussed in Chapter 3, consider several points for reports and proposals. First, for many reports and proposals, audiences have specific media requirements, and you might not have a choice. For instance, executives in many corporations now expect to review performance reports in conjunction with an **executive dashboard**, a customized graphical presentation of key performance parameters (see Figure 10.3 on page 253). Second, consider how your audience members want to provide feedback on your report or proposal. Do they prefer to write comments on a printed document or edit a wiki article? Third, will people need to be able to search through your document or update it in the future? Fourth, bear in mind that your choice of medium and channel sends a message. For instance, a routine sales report dressed up in expensive multimedia will look like a waste of valuable company resources.

When choosing the medium and channel combination for a report, think carefully about how your audience might want to use your report.

The problem statement clearly and succinctly defines the problem the writers intend to address.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
The rapid growth of our company over the past five years has reduced the sense of community among our staff. People no longer feel like part of an intimate organization that values teamwork.

This paragraph identifies exactly what will be covered by the research and addressed in the final report.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF WORK
The purpose of this study is to determine whether social networking technology such as Facebook and Socialtext would help rebuild a sense of community within the workforce and whether encouraging the use of such tools in the workplace will have any negative consequences. The study will attempt to assess the impact of social networks in other companies in terms of community-building, morale, project communication, and overall productivity.

This section explains how the researchers will find the data and information they need.

SOURCES AND METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION
Data collection will start with secondary research, including a review of recently published articles and studies on the use of social networking in business and a review of product information published by technology vendors. Primary research will focus on an employee and management survey to uncover attitudes about social networking tools. We will also collect anecdotal evidence from bloggers and others with experience using networks in the workplace.

The preliminary outline has enough detail to guide the research and set reader expectations.

PRELIMINARY OUTLINE
The preliminary outline for this study is as follows:

I. What experiences have other companies had with social networks in the workplace?
   A. Do social networks have a demonstrable business benefit?
   B. How do employees benefit from using these tools?
   C. Has network security and information confidentiality been an issue?
II. Is social networking an appropriate solution for our community-building needs?
   A. Is social networking better than other tools and methods for community building?
   B. Are employees already using social networking tools on the job?
   C. Will a company-endorsed system distract employees from essential duties?
   D. Will a company system add to managerial workloads in any way?
III. If we move ahead, should we use a “business-class” network such as Socialtext or a consumer tool such as Facebook?
   A. How do the initial and ongoing costs compare?
   B. Do the additional capabilities of a business-class network justify the higher costs?
IV. How should we implement a social network?
   A. Should we let it grow “organically,” with employees choosing their own tools and groups?
   B. Should we make a variety of tools available and let employees improvise on their own?
   C. Should we designate one system as the official company social network and make it a permanent, supported element of the information technology infrastructure?
V. How can we evaluate the success of a new social network?
   A. What are the criteria of success or failure?
   B. What is the best way to measure these criteria?

The assignments and schedule section clearly lists responsibilities and due dates.

TASK ASSIGNMENTS AND SCHEDULE
Each phase of this study will be completed by the following dates:

Secondary research: Hank Waters	September 15, 2020
Employee and management survey: Julienne Cho	September 22, 2020
Analysis and synthesis of research: Hank Waters/Julienne Cho	October 6, 2020
Comparison of business and consumer solutions: Julienne Cho	October 13, 2020
Comparison of implementation strategies: Hank Waters	October 13, 2020
Final report: Hank Waters	October 20, 2020

Figure 10.2 Work Plan for a Report
A formal work plan such as this is a vital tool for planning and managing complex writing projects. The preliminary outline here helps guide the research; the report writers may well modify the outline when they begin writing the report.

ORGANIZING YOUR INFORMATION

When your audience is likely to be receptive or at least open-minded, use the direct approach; if readers are skeptical about you or your report's main idea, use the indirect approach.

The direct approach is often used for reports because it is efficient and easy to follow, so use it whenever your audience is likely to be receptive or at least open-minded to what you have to say (see Figure 10.4 on page 254). Lead with a summary of your key findings, conclusions, recommendations, or proposal, whichever is relevant. This “up-front” arrangement saves time and makes the rest of the report easier to follow. For those readers who have questions or want more information, later parts of the report provide complete findings and supporting details.

However, if the audience is unsure about your credibility or is not ready to accept your main idea without seeing some reasoning or evidence, consider the indirect approach, as it

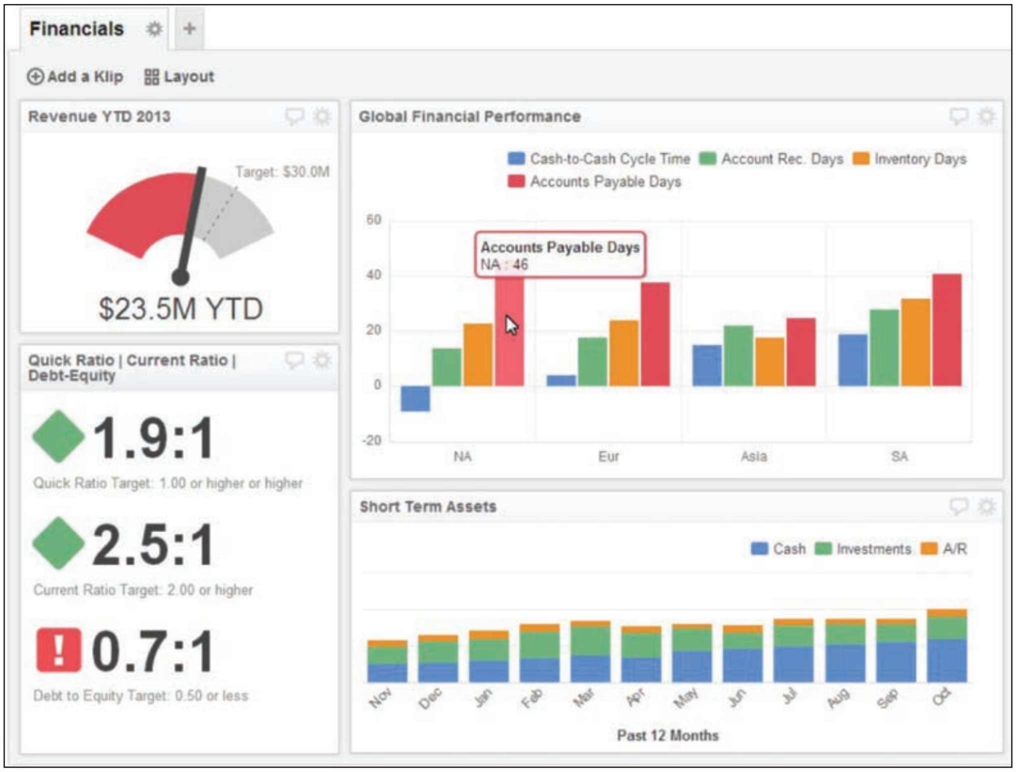

Figure 10.3 Executive Dashboards
To help managers avoid information overload, many companies now use executive dashboards to present carefully filtered highlights of key performance parameters. Dashboards are essentially super-summarized reports. The latest generation of software and mobile apps make it easy to customize screens to show each manager the specific summaries he or she needs to see.
Source: Courtesy of Klipfolio, https://www.klipfolio.com/resources/dashboard-examples/executive/financial-performance.

gives you the chance to prove your points one at a time and build acceptance for the main idea. Unsolicited proposals in particular often use the indirect approach.

Supporting Your Messages with Reliable Information

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe an effective process for conducting business research, explain how to evaluate the credibility of an information source, and identify the five ways to use research results.

Effective research involves a lot more than simply typing a few terms into a search engine. Save time and get better results by using a clear process:

Researching without a plan wastes time and usually produces unsatisfactory results.

- **Plan your research.** Planning is the most important step of any research project, because a clear plan yields better results in less time.
- **Locate the data and information you need.** Your next step is to figure out *where* the data and information are and *how* to access them.
- **Process the data and information you located.** The data and information you find probably won't be in a form you can use immediately and may require statistical analysis or other processing.
- **Apply your findings.** You can apply your research findings in three ways: summarizing information, drawing conclusions, and developing recommendations.
- **Manage information efficiently.** Many companies try to maximize the return on the time and money invested in business research by collecting and sharing research results in a variety of systems, known generally as **knowledge management systems**.

PLANNING YOUR RESEARCH

The problem statement guides your research by focusing on the decision you need to make or the conclusion you need to reach.

Start by developing a **problem statement** that defines the purpose of your research—the decision you need to make or the conclusion you need to reach at the end of the process. Next,

DIRECT APPROACH

Since the company's founding 25 years ago, we have provided regular repair service for all our electric appliances. This service has been an important selling point as well as a source of pride for our employees. However, rising labor costs have made it impossible to maintain profitability while offering competitive service rates. Last year, we lost $500,000 on our repair business.

Because of your concern over these losses, you asked me to study whether we should discontinue our repair service. After analyzing the situation in depth, I have concluded that the repair service is an expensive, impractical tradition, and I recommend that the service be discontinued.

By withdrawing from the electric appliance repair business, we can substantially improve our financial performance without damaging our reputation with customers. This conclusion is based on three basic points that are covered in the following pages:

- It is highly unlikely that we will ever be able to make a profit in the repair business.
- We can refer customers to a variety of qualified repair firms without significantly reducing customer satisfaction.
- Closing down the service operation will create few internal problems.

Summarizes the situation

Immediately introduces one of the report's major conclusions

Reminds the audience why the report was prepared

Presents the report's key recommendation, that the repair service should be discontinued

Emphasizes the benefits of acting on the recommendation and addresses any fears about possible negative consequences

Lists three important conclusions that led to the recommendation to end the service (notice how the indirect approach that follows presents these same three points as questions to be considered)

INDIRECT APPROACH

Since the company's founding 25 years ago, we have provided regular repair service for all our electric appliances. This service has been an important selling point as well as a source of pride for our employees. However, rising labor costs have made it impossible to maintain profitability while offering competitive service rates.

Because of your concern over these losses, you have asked me to study whether we should discontinue our repair service. I have analyzed the situation in depth, and the following pages present my findings and recommendations for your review. The analysis addressed three basic questions:

- What is the extent of our losses, and what can we do to turn the business around?
- Would withdrawal hurt our sales of electrical appliances?
- What would be the internal repercussions of closing down the repair business?

Summarizes the situation

Reminds the audience why the report was prepared

Indicates that conclusions and recommendations will be presented later in the report

Introduces the three points that will eventually lead to the conclusions and ultimately to the recommendation

Figure 10.4 Direct Approach Versus Indirect Approach in an Introduction
In the direct version of this introduction, the writer quickly presents the report's recommendation, followed by the conclusions that led to that recommendation. In the indirect version, the same topics are introduced in the same order, but no conclusions are drawn about them; the conclusions and the ultimate recommendation appear later, in the body of the report.

identify the information you need in order to make that decision or reach that conclusion. You can then begin to generate the questions that will constitute your research. Chances are you will have more questions than you have time or money to answer, so prioritize your information needs.

Before beginning any research project, remember that research carries some significant ethical responsibilities. Your research tactics affect the people you gather data and information from, the people who read your results, and the people who are affected by the way you present those results. To avoid ethical lapses, follow these guidelines:

- Keep an open mind so that you don't skew the research toward the answers you want or expect to see.
- Do not collect data from people without their knowledge or consent.
- Take every reasonable caution to protect the identity of research participants and the security of the information they give you.
- Don't mislead people about the purposes of your research, such as asking them to participate in a survey that is really a sales pitch in disguise.
- Document sources and give appropriate credit.
- Respect your sources' *intellectual property rights* (the ownership of creative and intellectual works).[2]
- Don't distort information from your sources.
- Don't misrepresent who you are or what you intend to do with the research results.

In addition to ethics, research etiquette deserves careful attention. For example, respect the time of anyone who agrees to be interviewed or to be a research participant, and maintain courtesy throughout the interview or research process.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Get clear answers to murky copyright questions

Find out what is covered by copyright, what isn't, and how to secure a copyright for your own work. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

LOCATING DATA AND INFORMATION

Primary research gathers information that you collect specifically for a new research project; secondary research gathers information that others have compiled.

The range of sources available to business researchers today can be overwhelming. The good news is that if you have a question about an industry, a company, a market, a technology, or a financial topic, somebody else has probably already researched the subject. Research done previously for another purpose is considered **secondary research**; sources for such research information include magazines, newspapers, websites, books, and other reports. Don't let the name *secondary* mislead you, though. You want to start with secondary research because it can save you considerable time and money for many projects. In contrast, **primary research** involves the collection of new data through surveys, interviews, and other techniques.

EVALUATING INFORMATION SOURCES

Evaluate your sources carefully to avoid embarrassing and potentially damaging mistakes.

No matter where you're searching, it is your responsibility to separate quality information from unreliable junk to avoid tainting your results or damaging your reputation. Social media tools have complicated this challenge by making many new sources of information available. On the positive side, independent sources communicating through blogs, Twitter, wikis, user-generated content sites, and podcasting channels can provide valuable and unique insights, often from experts whose voices might never be heard otherwise. On the negative side, these nontraditional information sources often lack the editorial boards and fact-checkers commonly used in traditional publishing. You cannot assume that the information you find in blogs and other sources is accurate, objective, and current. Answer the following questions about each piece of material:

- **Does the source have a reputation for honesty and reliability?** For example, try to find out how the source accepts articles and whether it has an editorial board, conducts peer reviews, or follows fact-checking procedures.
- **Is the source potentially biased?** To interpret an organization's information, you need to know its point of view. In general, there is nothing wrong with having a point of view, but as a user of information, you need to know whether that perspective might have skewed that information.
- **What is the purpose of the material?** For instance, was the material designed to inform others of new research, to advance a political position, or to promote a product?

- **Is the author credible?** Is the author a professional journalist, an informed amateur, or merely someone with an opinion?
- **Where did the source get *its* information?** Try to find out who collected the data and the methods they used.
- **Can you verify the material independently?** Verification is particularly important when the information goes beyond simple facts to include projections, interpretations, and estimates.
- **Is the material current and complete?** Make sure you are using the most current information available. Have you accessed the entire document or only a selection from it?
- **Does the information make sense?** Step back and determine whether the information stands up to logical scrutiny.

You probably won't have time to conduct a thorough background check on all your sources, so focus your efforts on the most important or most suspicious pieces of information. And if you can't verify critical facts or figures, be sure to let your readers know that.

USING YOUR RESEARCH RESULTS

After you collect data and information, the next step is converting it into usable content.

After you've collected data and information, the next step is to transform this raw material into the specific content you need. This step can involve quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing textual material; drawing conclusions; and making recommendations.

Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing Information

Quoting a source means reproducing the content exactly and indicating who originally created the information.

You can use textual information from secondary sources in three ways. *Quoting* a source means you reproduce the material exactly as you found it (giving full credit to the source, of course). Use direct quotations when the original language will enhance your argument or when rewording the passage would reduce its impact. However, be careful with direct quotes: Using too many creates a choppy patchwork of varying styles and gives the impression that all you've done is piece together the work of other people. When quoting sources, set off shorter passages with quotation marks and set off longer passages (generally five lines or more) as separate, indented paragraphs.

Paraphrasing is expressing someone else's ideas in your own words.

You can often maximize the impact of secondary material in your own writing by *paraphrasing* it: restating it in your own words and with your own sentence structures.[3] Paraphrasing helps you maintain a consistent tone while using vocabulary that's familiar to your audience. Of course, you still need to credit the originator of the information, but you don't need quotation marks or indented paragraphs.

Summarizing is similar to paraphrasing but distills the content into fewer words.

Summarizing is similar to paraphrasing but presents the gist of the material in fewer words than the original by leaving out details, examples, and less important information (see Figure 10.5). Summarizing is not always a simple task, and your audience will judge your ability to separate significant issues from less significant details. Like quotations and paraphrases, summaries also require complete documentation of sources.

Of course, all three approaches require careful attention to ethics. When quoting directly, take care not to distort the original intent of the material by quoting selectively or out of context. And never resort to **plagiarism**—presenting someone else's words as your own, such as copying material from an online source and dropping it into a report without giving proper credit.

Drawing Conclusions

A **conclusion** is a logical interpretation of facts and other information. In addition to being logically sound, a conclusion should be based only on the information provided or referred to in the report. Reaching good conclusions is one of the most important skills you can develop in your business career. In fact, the ability to see patterns and possibilities that others can't is one of the hallmarks of innovative business leaders.

Original: 116 words

Our facilities costs spiraled out of control last year. The 23 percent jump was far ahead of every other cost category in the company and many times higher than the 4 percent average rise for commercial real estate in the Portland metropolitan area. The rise can be attributed to many factors, but the major factors include repairs (mostly electrical and structural problems at the downtown office), energy (most of our offices are heated by electricity, the price of which has been increasing much faster than for oil or gas), and last but not least, the loss of two sublease tenants whose rent payments made a substantial dent in our cost profile for the past five years.

Analyze the text to find main idea, major supporting points, and details

Main idea

Major support points

Details

Our facilities costs spiraled out of control last year. The 23 percent jump was far ahead of every other cost category in the company and many times higher than the 4 percent average rise for commercial real estate in the Portland metropolitan area. The rise can be attributed to many factors, but the major factors include repairs (mostly electrical and structural problems at the downtown office), energy (most of our offices are heated by electricity, the price of which has been increasing much faster than for oil or gas), and last but not least, the loss of two sublease tenants whose rent payments made a substantial dent in our cost profile for the past five years.

45-word summary

Our facilities costs jumped 23 percent last year, far ahead of every other cost category in the company and many times higher than the 4 percent local average. The major factors contributing to the increase are repairs, energy, and the loss of two sublease tenants.

22-word summary

Our facilities costs jumped 23 percent last year, due mainly to rising repair and energy costs and the loss of sublease income.

Figure 10.5 **Summarizing Effectively**

To summarize a section of text, first analyze it to find the main idea, the major support points, and the less important details. Then assemble the appropriate pieces with additional words and phrases as needed to ensure a smooth flow.

Making Recommendations

Whereas a conclusion interprets information, a **recommendation** suggests what to do about the information. The following example shows the difference between a conclusion and a recommendation:

Conclusion	Recommendation
On the basis of its track record and current price, I believe that this company is an attractive buy.	I recommend that we offer to buy the company at a 10 percent premium over the current market value of its stock.

To be credible, recommendations must be practical and based on sound logical analysis. Also, when making a recommendation, be certain you have adequately described the recommended course of action so that readers aren't left wondering what happens next.

Conducting Secondary Research

Even if you intend to eventually conduct primary research, start with a review of any available secondary research. Inside your company, you might be able to find a variety of helpful reports and other documents. Outside the company, you can choose from a wide range of print and online resources, both in libraries and online.

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain the role of secondary research, and describe the two major categories of online research tools.

You'll want to start most research projects by conducting secondary research first.

FINDING INFORMATION AT A LIBRARY

Public, corporate, and university libraries offer printed sources with information that is not available online, as well as online sources that are available only by subscription. For entrepreneurs and small-business owners in particular, local libraries can provide access to expensive databases and other information sources that would be beyond their reach otherwise.[4]

Libraries offer information and resources you can't find anywhere else—including experienced research librarians.

Libraries are also where you'll find one of your most important resources: librarians. Reference librarians are trained in research techniques and can often help you find obscure information you can't find on your own. They can also direct you to the typical library's many sources of business information:

- **Newspapers and periodicals.** Libraries offer access (in print and online) to a wide variety of popular magazines, general business magazines, *trade journals* (which provide information about specific professions and industries), and *academic journals* (which provide research-oriented articles from researchers and educators).

- **Business books.** Although less timely than newspapers, periodicals, and online sources, business books provide in-depth coverage and analysis that often can't be found anywhere else.
- **Directories.** Thousands of directories are published in print and digital formats in the United States, and many include information for all kinds of professions, industries, and special-interest groups.
- **Almanacs and statistical resources.** Almanacs are handy guides to factual and statistical information about countries, politics, the labor force, and so on.
- **Government publications.** Information on laws, court decisions, tax questions, regulatory issues, and other governmental concerns can often be found in collections of government documents.
- **Databases.** Databases offer vast collections of computer-searchable information, often in specific areas such as business, law, science, technology, and education. Some of these are available only by institutional subscription, so the library may be your only way to gain access to them. Some libraries offer remote online access to some or all databases; for others, you'll need to visit in person.

Local, state, and federal government agencies publish a huge array of information that is helpful to business researchers.

FINDING INFORMATION ONLINE

Online research tools fall into two basic categories: search tools and monitoring tools.

The Internet can be a tremendous source of business information, provided you know where to look and how to use the tools available. Roughly speaking, the tools fall into two categories: those you can use to actively *search* for existing information and those you can use to *monitor* selected sources for new information. (Some tools can perform both functions.)

Online Search Tools

General-purpose search engines are tremendously powerful tools, but they have several shortcomings you need to consider.

The most familiar search tools are general-purpose **search engines**, such as Google and Bing, which scan millions of websites to identify individual webpages that contain a specific word or phrase and then attempt to rank the results from most useful to least useful. Website owners use *search engine optimization* techniques to help boost their rankings in the results, but the ranking algorithms are kept secret to prevent unfair manipulation of the results.

For all their ease and power, conventional search engines have three primary shortcomings: (1) no human editors are involved to evaluate the quality or ranking of the search results; (2) various engines use different search techniques, so they often find different material; and (3) search engines can't reach all the content on some websites (this part of the Internet is sometimes called the *hidden Internet* or the *deep Internet*).

Metasearch engines format your search request for multiple search engines, making it easy to find a broader range of results.

A variety of tools are available to overcome these weaknesses of general-purpose search engines, and you should consider one or more of them in your business research. *Metasearch engines* (such as Bovée and Thill's Web Search, at **websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**) help overcome the differences among search engines by formatting your search request for multiple search engines, making it easy to find a broader range of results. With a few clicks, you can compare results from multiple search engines to make sure you are getting a broad view of the material.

Online databases can give you access to resources you can't reach with regular search engines.

Online databases help address the challenge of the hidden Internet by offering access to newspapers, magazines, journals, digital copies of books, and other resources often not available with standard search engines. Some of these databases offer free access to the public, but others require a subscription (check with your library).

Online Monitoring Tools

The tools available for monitoring for new information from online sources can help you track industry trends, consumer sentiment, and other information.

One of the most powerful aspects of online research is the ability to automatically monitor selected sources for new information. The possibilities include subscribing to newsfeeds from blogs, following people on Twitter and other microblogs, setting up alerts on search engines and online databases, and using specialized monitors such as TweetDeck and Hootsuite to track tweets that mention specific companies or other terms.

Search Tips

Search engines, metasearch engines, and databases offer a variety of ways to find information. Unfortunately, no two of them work in exactly the same way, and you have to learn how to use each one most effectively. This learning may take a few extra minutes at the beginning of your research, but it could save you hours of lost time later—and save you from embarrassing oversights. You can usually find a Help or Support page that explains both basic and advanced functions, with advice on how to use a particular tool most effectively.

Search tools work in different ways, and you can get unpredictable results if you don't know how each one operates.

To make the best use of any search tool, keep the following points in mind:

- **Think before you search.** The neatly organized results you get from a search engine can create the illusion that the Internet is an orderly warehouse of all the information in the universe, but the reality is far different. The Internet is an incomplete, unorganized hodgepodge of millions of independent websites with information that ranges in value from priceless to worse than worthless. After you have identified what you need to know, spend a few moments thinking about where that information might be found, how it might be structured, and what terms various websites might use to describe it.
- **Pay attention to the details.** Details can make all the difference in a search. On Google, for example, you can filter results according to when items were published online. This setting could drastically change your results, so make sure you haven't inadvertently limited your search by selecting a narrower time frame than you really want.
- **Don't limit yourself to a regular web search engine.** Google, Bing, and other search engines are remarkably powerful, but they can't access all online content. Moreover, the content you need might not even be online.
- **Review the search and display options carefully.** When using advanced search or while searching in databases, pay close attention to whether you are searching in the title, author, subject, or document field and whether the search is limited to particular types of documents (such as full-text documents only). Each choice will return different results. And when the results are displayed, verify the presentation order; results might be sorted by date or by relevance.
- **Try variations of your terms.** If you can't find what you're looking for, try abbreviations (*CEO*, *CPA*), synonyms (*man*, *male*), related terms (*child*, *adolescent*, *youth*), different spellings (*dialog*, *dialogue*), singular and plural forms (*woman*, *women*), and nouns and adjectives (*manager*, *management*, *managerial*).
- **Adjust the scope of your search, if needed.** If a search yields little or no information, broaden your search by specifying fewer terms. Conversely, if you're inundated with too many hits, use more terms to narrow your search.
- **Review the various types of information each search engine offers.** Google, for example, displays a list of related topics that other people search for. This can help you explore a topic by considering angles you haven't thought of before.
- **Look beyond the first page of results.** Don't assume that the highest-ranking results are the best sources for you. For example, materials that haven't been optimized for search engines won't rank as high (meaning they won't show up in the first few pages of results), but they may be far better for your purposes.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Use Google more effectively

Google's Inside Search offers tips and techniques to help you get the best research results in the least amount of time. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Search technologies continue to evolve rapidly, so be on the lookout for new ways to find the information you need. Again, librarians can be your best ally here.

Other powerful search tools include *enterprise search engines* that search all the computers on a company's network and *research and content managers* such as LiveBinders and the Zotero browser extension. And don't overlook the search functions in workplace messaging systems, groupware, and other closed systems.

MOBILE APP

Access and add to your **Zotero** research files with a variety of Zotero-compatible mobile apps.

DOCUMENTING YOUR SOURCES

Proper documentation of the sources you use is both an ethical requirement and an important resource for your readers.

Documenting your sources serves three important functions: It properly and ethically credits the person who created the original material, it shows your audience that you have sufficient support for your message, and it helps readers explore your topic in more detail, if desired. Be sure to take advantage of the source documentation tools in your software, such as automatic endnote or footnote tracking.

Appendix B discusses the common methods of documenting sources. Whatever method you choose, documentation is necessary for books, articles, blogs, websites, tweets, tables, charts, diagrams, song lyrics, scripted dialogue, letters, speeches—anything you take from someone else, including ideas and information you've re-expressed through paraphrasing or summarizing. However, you do not have to cite a source for knowledge that's generally known among your readers, such as the fact that Microsoft is a large software company or that computers are pervasive in business today.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
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Quick tips and easy-to-follow advice from the *Chicago Manual of Style*

The 1000-plus pages of advice in the *Chicago Manual of Style* for citations and other writing and formatting questions can be overwhelming, but the editors are here to help. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

Conducting Primary Research

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain the role of primary research, and identify the two most common forms of primary research for business communication purposes.

If secondary research can't provide the information and insights you need, you may have to gather the information yourself with primary research. The two most common primary research methods for report writing are surveys and interviews. Other primary techniques are observations (including tracking the behavior of website visitors) and experiments (in special situations such as test marketing), but they're less commonly used for day-to-day business research.

Surveys and interviews are the most common primary research techniques for business communication projects.

CONDUCTING SURVEYS

Surveys need to reliable, valid, and representative to be useful.

Surveys can provide invaluable insights, but only if they are *reliable* (would produce identical results if repeated under similar conditions) and *valid* (measure what they're supposed to measure). To conduct a survey that generates reliable and valid results, you need to choose research participants carefully and develop an effective set of questions. To develop an effective survey questionnaire, follow these tips:[5]

Provide clear instructions in a survey in order to prevent mistaken answers.

- Provide clear instructions to make sure people can answer every question correctly.
- Don't ask for information that people can't be expected to remember, such as how many times they went grocery shopping in the past year.
- Keep the questionnaire short and easy to complete; don't expect people to give you more than 10 or 15 minutes of their time.
- Whenever possible, formulate questions to provide answers that are easy to analyze. Numbers and facts are easier to summarize than opinions, for instance.
- Avoid *leading questions* that could bias your survey. If you ask, "Do you prefer that we stay open in the evenings for customer convenience?" you'll no doubt get a "yes." Instead, ask, "What time of day do you normally do your shopping?"
- Avoid vague descriptors such as *often* or *frequently*. Such terms mean different things to different people.
- Make each question about a single idea. Instead of asking "Do you read newspapers on your PC and on your smartphone?" ask about each device separately.

When selecting people to participate in a survey, the most critical task is getting a *representative sample* of the entire population in question. Doing so involves identifying enough of the right kinds of respondents and persuading them to participate. Every method of contacting people for research has limitations that need to be addressed to avoid *sampling bias*, which can skew a survey by under- or over-representing certain segments of the population. For example, the surveys you see on many websites capture only the opinions of people who visit the sites and who want to participate, which might not be a representative sample of the population of interest.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

An in-depth look at professional-grade survey research

The Pew Research Center is one of the most respected research organizations in the world; learn how they try to get it right. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

For major business decisions that rely on accurate survey data, the best course is to hire research professionals who know how to design surveys, select representative samples, and assess the statistical accuracy of the results. For many business writing projects, however, you can get useful results using less formal methods. To survey employees within your company, for instance, posting a questionnaire on your internal messaging or social networking system will probably yield adequate information as long as a reasonable portion of the workforce responds.

CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

Getting in-depth information straight from an expert, customer, or other interested party can be a great method for collecting primary information. Interviews can have a variety of formats, from email exchanges to group discussions. (Note that interviews can be done as part of formal survey research as well.)

Interviews can take place online, over the phone, or in person, and they can involve individuals or groups.

Ask **open-ended questions** (such as "Why do you believe that South America represents a better opportunity than Europe for this product line?") to solicit opinions, insights, and information. Ask **closed questions** to elicit a specific answer, such as yes or no. However, don't use too many closed questions in an interview, or the experience will feel more like a simple survey and won't take full advantage of the interactive interview setting.

Open-ended questions, which can't be answered with a simple yes or no, can provide deeper insights, opinions, and information.

Think carefully about the sequence of your questions and the potential answers so you can arrange them in an order that helps uncover layers of information. Also consider providing each subject with a list of questions at least a day or two before the interview, especially if you'd like to quote your subjects in writing or if your questions might require people to conduct research or think extensively about the answers. If you want to record interviews, ask ahead of time; never record without permission.

Arrange the sequence of questions to help uncover layers of information.

Planning Informational Reports

5 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain how to plan informational reports and website content.

Informational reports provide the feedback that employees, managers, and others need in order to make decisions, take action, and respond to changes. As Figure 10.1 on page 250 indicates, informational reports can be grouped into four general categories:

Informational reports are used to monitor and control operations, to implement policies and procedures, to demonstrate compliance, and to document progress.

- **Reports to monitor and control operations.** Managers rely on a wide range of reports to see how well their companies are functioning. *Plans* establish expectations and guidelines to direct future action. Among the most important of these are *business plans*, which summarize a proposed business venture and describe the company's goals and plans for each major functional area. *Operating reports* provide feedback on a variety of an organization's functions, including sales, inventories, expenses, shipments, and so on. *Personal activity reports* provide information regarding an individual's experiences during sales calls, industry conferences, and other activities.
- **Reports to implement policies and procedures.** *Policy reports* range from brief descriptions of business procedures to manuals that run dozens or hundreds of pages. *Position papers*, sometimes called *white papers* or *backgrounders*, outline an organization's official position on issues that affect the company's success.
- **Reports to demonstrate compliance.** Businesses are required to submit a variety of *compliance reports*, from tax returns to reports describing the proper handling of hazardous materials.
- **Reports to document progress.** Supervisors, investors, and customers frequently expect to be informed of the progress of projects and other activities. *Progress reports* range from simple updates in memo form to comprehensive status reports.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
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Step-by-step advice for developing a successful business plan

Take advantage of the Small Business Administration's comprehensive guide to preparing a business plan. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

ORGANIZING INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

The messages conveyed by informational reports can range from extremely positive to extremely negative, so the approach you take warrants careful consideration.

In most cases, the direct approach is the best choice for informational reports because you are simply conveying information. However, if the information is disappointing, such as a project being behind schedule or over budget, you might consider using the indirect approach to build up to the bad news. Most informational reports use a **topical organization**, arranging material in one of the following ways:

- **Comparison.** Showing similarities and differences (or advantages and disadvantages) between two or more entities
- **Importance.** Building up from the least important item to the most important (or going from most important to the least, if you don't think your audience will read the entire report)
- **Sequence.** Organizing the steps or stages in a process or procedure
- **Chronology.** Organizing a chain of events in order from oldest to newest or vice versa
- **Geography.** Organizing by region, city, state, country, or other geographic unit
- **Category.** Grouping by topical category, such as sales, profit, cost, or investment

ORGANIZING WEBSITE CONTENT

Many websites, particularly company websites, function as informational reports, offering sections with information about the company and its history, products and services, executive team, and so on. Most of what you've already learned about informational reports applies to website writing, but the online environment requires some special considerations.

The flexibility of the web makes it possible to address a wide range of audience needs with a single website.

Websites are potentially much more flexible than static reports, which can be both a good thing and a bad thing, depending on how carefully they are designed. Websites often have multiple audiences with distinct information needs, for example. A corporate website might have sections designed for investors, the news media, existing customers, potential customers, local communities, and job hunters. Moreover, many visitors don't start at the home page and follow a linear path through a website. A search engine may point them to a lower-level page, and from there they move around the site by following links that look promising.

The information architecture of a website is the equivalent of the outline for a paper report, but it tends to be much more complicated than a simple linear outline.

To be most effective, a website needs to provide each type of visitor a clear path into the information he or she wants (see Figure 10.6). Website designers use the term **information architecture** to describe the structure and navigational flow of all the parts

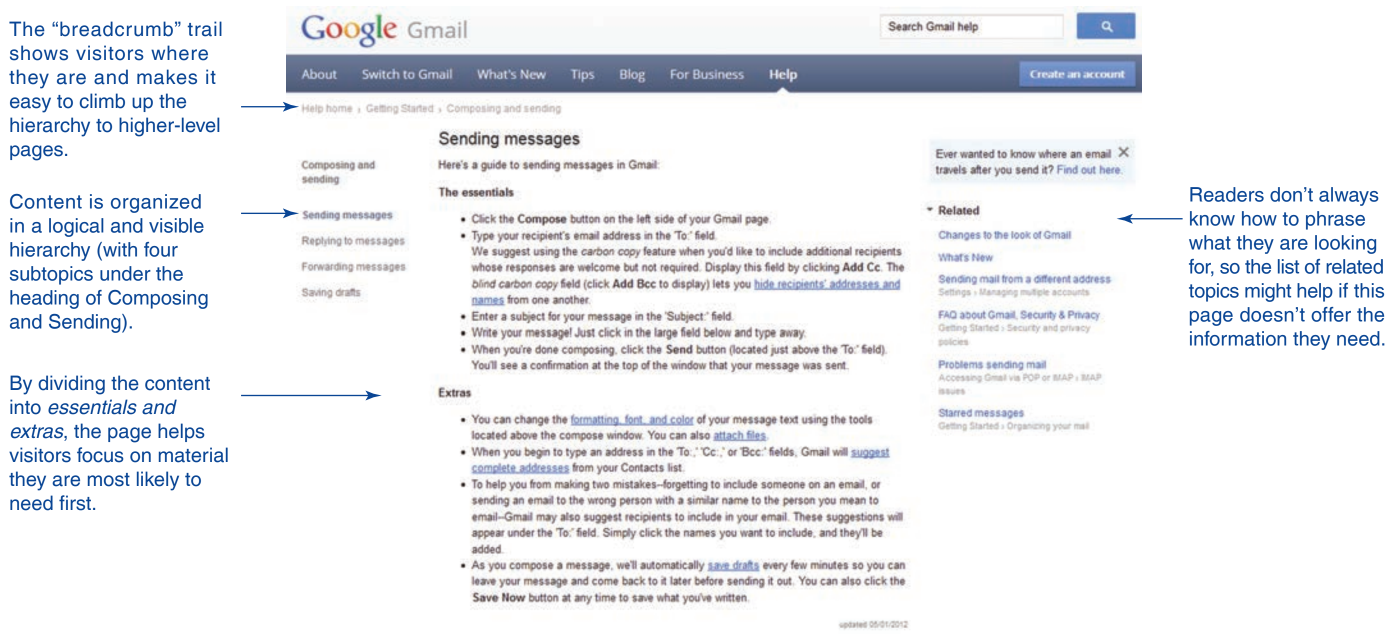

Figure 10.6 Organizing Website Content
This page from the Google Help feature for Gmail demonstrates several good points about organizing website content.
Source: Google and the Google logo are registered trademarks of Google Inc., used with permission.

of a website. As they develop the site architecture, they try to simulate how various audiences will enter and explore the site, based on the information the visitors are likely to be searching for.

If you're responsible for designing the structure of a website, keep the following advice in mind:

- If you know that a sizable percentage of your target audience will access your site with mobile devices, make sure the site is mobile friendly. Many contemporary blogging and website development platforms handle this for you.
- Give your readers control by creating links and pathways that let them explore on their own.
- Use simple, clear language for page titles and links so that visitors always know where they are and where a link will take them.
- Follow the conventions used by most business websites, such as having an "About Us" page that describes the company and a "Contact Us" page with phone, email, and messaging details.
- Help online readers scan and absorb information by breaking it into self-contained, easily readable chunks that are linked together logically. This is particularly helpful for mobile readers.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
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Ten mistakes that make websites difficult to use

Don't make these common mistakes on your website. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

Planning Analytical Reports

6 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Identify the three most common ways to organize analytical reports.

The purpose of analytical reports is to analyze, to understand, or to explain—to think through a problem or an opportunity and explain how it affects an organization and how the organization should respond. In many cases, you'll also be expected to make a recommendation based on your analysis. As you saw in Figure 10.1, analytical reports fall into three basic categories:

Analytical reports are used to assess opportunities, to solve problems, and to support decisions.

- **Reports to assess opportunities.** Every business opportunity carries some degree of risk and requires a variety of decisions and actions to capitalize on the opportunity. You can use analytical reports to assess both risk and required decisions and actions. For instance, *market analysis reports* are used to judge the likelihood of success for new products or sales. *Due diligence* reports examine the financial aspects of a proposed decision, such as acquiring another company.
- **Reports to solve problems.** Managers often assign *troubleshooting reports* when they need to understand why something isn't working properly and how to fix it. A variation, the *failure analysis report*, studies events that happened in the past, with the hope of learning how to avoid similar failures in the future.
- **Reports to support decisions.** *Feasibility reports* explore the potential ramifications of a decision that managers are considering, and *justification reports* explain a decision that has already been made.

Writing analytical reports presents a greater challenge than writing informational reports, for three reasons. First, you're doing more than simply delivering information—you're also analyzing a situation and presenting your conclusions. Second, when your analysis is complete, you need to present your thinking in a compelling and persuasive manner. Third, analytical reports often convince other people to make significant financial and personnel decisions, and these reports carry the added responsibility of the consequences of such decisions.

FOCUSING ON CONCLUSIONS

Focusing on conclusions is often the best approach when you're writing for a receptive audience.

When planning reports for readers who are likely to accept your conclusions—either because they've asked you to perform an analysis or they trust your judgment—consider using the direct approach and opening with your conclusions. This structure communicates the main idea quickly, but it does present some risks. Even if audiences trust your judgment, they may have questions about your data or the methods you used. Moreover, starting with a conclusion may create the impression that you have oversimplified the situation. To give readers the opportunity to explore the thinking behind your conclusion, support that conclusion with solid reasoning and evidence (see Figure 10.7).

FOCUSING ON RECOMMENDATIONS

When readers want to know what you think they should do in a particular situation, organize your report to focus on recommendations.

A slightly different approach is useful when your readers want to know what they ought to do in a given situation (as opposed to what they ought to conclude). The actions you want your readers to take become the main subdivisions of your report.

When structuring a report around recommendations, use the direct approach, as you would for a report that focuses on conclusions. Then present your recommendations using a series of five steps:

1. Establish the need for action by briefly describing the problem or opportunity in the introduction.
2. Introduce the benefit(s) that can be achieved if the recommendation is adopted, along with any potential risks.
3. List the steps (recommendations) required to achieve the benefit, using action verbs for emphasis.
4. Explain each step more fully, giving details on procedures, costs, and benefits; if necessary, also explain how risks can be minimized.
5. Summarize your recommendations.

FOCUSING ON LOGICAL ARGUMENTS

When readers are potentially skeptical or hostile, consider using the indirect approach to build logically toward your conclusion or recommendation. If you guide readers along a

In keeping with the direct approach, the report will open with the conclusion that the program is a success.

These two sections will support the conclusion with evidence from two key areas.

This section will complete the story by highlighting areas that still need improvement.

MEASURING QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS

I. Introduction

II. Conclusion: Outsourcing employee training has reduced costs and improved quality

III. Cost reductions
   - A. Exceeded 15 percent cost-reduction goal with 22 percent savings in first year
   - B. Achieved actual reduction of 22 percent
   - C. Reassigned three staffers who used to work on training full-time
   - D. Reduced management time needed to oversee training
   - E. Sold the computers that used to be reserved for training

IV. Quality improvements
   - A. Employees say they are more confident in 7 out of 10 key skill areas
   - B. Measurable mistakes have dropped by 12 percent

V. Areas needing improvement
   - A. Three skill areas still need improvement
   - B. Two trainers received approval ratings below 80 percent
   - C. Outside trainers aren't always aware of internal company issues
   - D. We have lost some flexibility for scheduling courses

VI. Summary

Figure 10.7 Preliminary Outline of a Research Report Focusing on Conclusions
A year after a bank decided to have an outside firm handle its employee training, an analyst was asked to prepare a report evaluating the results. The analysis shows that the outsourcing experiment was a success, so the report opens with that conclusion but supports it with clear evidence. Readers who accept the conclusion can stop reading, and those who desire more information can continue.

rational path toward the answer, they are more likely to accept it when they encounter it. The two most common logical approaches are known as the *2 + 2 = 4 approach*, in which you convince readers by demonstrating that everything adds up to your conclusion, and the *yardstick approach*, in which you use a number of criteria to decide which option to select from two or more possibilities (see Figure 10.8).

Logical arguments can follow two basic approaches: 2 + 2 = 4 (adding everything up) and the *yardstick method* (comparing ideas against a predetermined set of standards).

Planning Proposals

Proposals can be grouped into two general categories. *Internal proposals* (see Figure 10.9 on pages 268–271) request decisions from managers within the organization. *External*

7 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain how to plan proposals.

MEMO

TO: Robert Mendoza, Vice President of Marketing
FROM: Binh Phan, National Sales Manager BP
DATE: September 13, 2019
SUBJECT: Major accounts sales problems

The first paragraph verifies who requested the report, when it was requested, and who wrote it.

As you requested on August 20, this report outlines the results of my investigation into the recent slowdown in sales to major accounts and the accompanying rise in sales- and service-related complaints from some of our largest customers.

The second paragraph highlights the serious nature of the problem.

Over the last four quarters, major account sales dropped 12%, whereas overall sales were up 7%. During the same time, we've all noticed an increase in both formal and informal complaints from larger customers regarding how confusing and complicated it has become to do business with us.

This section explains how the information used in the analysis was collected.

My investigation started with in-depth discussions with the four regional sales managers, first as a group and then individually. The tension I felt in the initial meeting eventually bubbled to the surface during my meetings with each manager. Staff members in each region are convinced that other regions are booking orders they don't deserve, with one region doing all the legwork only to see another region get the sale, the commission, and the quota credit.

I followed up these formal discussions by talking informally and exchanging email with several sales representatives from each region. Virtually everyone who is involved with our major national accounts has a story to share. No one is happy with the situation, and I sense that some reps are walking away from major customers because the process is so frustrating.

The decline in sales to our major national customers and the increase in their complaints stem from two problems: (1) sales force organization and (2) commission policy.

Organizational problems are the first "2" in Phan's 2 + 2 = 4 approach.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS

Phan describes the first problem and explains how it occurred, without blaming anyone personally.

When we divided the national sales force into four geographical regions last year, the idea was to focus our sales efforts and clarify responsibilities for each prospective and current customer. The regional managers have gotten to know their market territories very well, and sales have increased beyond even our most optimistic projections.

However, while solving one problem, we have created another. In the past 12 to 18 months, several regional customers have grown to national status, and a few retailers have taken on (or expressed interest in) our products. As a result, a significant portion of both current sales and future opportunities lies with these large national accounts.

I uncovered more than a dozen cases in which sales representatives from two or more regions found themselves competing with each other by pursuing the same customers from different locations. Moreover, the complaints from our major accounts about

(continued)

Figure 10.8 Analytical Report Focusing on Logical Arguments
As national sales manager of a New Hampshire sporting goods company, Binh Phan was concerned about his company's ability to sell to its largest customers. His boss, the vice president of marketing, shared these concerns and asked Phan to analyze the situation and recommend a solution. In this troubleshooting report, his main idea is that the company should establish separate sales teams for these major accounts, rather than continuing to service them through the company's four regional divisions. However, Phan knew his plan would be controversial because it required a big change in the company's organization and in the way sales reps are paid. His thinking had to be clear and easy to follow, so he focused on logical argumentation.

2

overlapping or nonexistent account coverage are a direct result of the regional organization. In some cases, customers aren't sure which of our representatives they're supposed to call with problems and orders. In other cases, no one has been in contact with them for several months.

Phan brings the first problem to life by complementing the general description with a specific example.

For example, having retail outlets across the lower tier of the country, AmeriSport received pitches from reps out of our West, South, and East regions. Because our regional offices have a lot of negotiating freedom, the three were offering different prices. But all AmeriSport buying decisions were made at the Tampa headquarters, so all we did was confuse the customer. The irony of the current organization is that we're often giving our weakest selling and support efforts to the largest customers in the country.

COMMISSION PROBLEMS

Commission problems are the second "2" in Phan's 2 + 2 = 4 approach.

In discussing the second problem, he simplifies the reader's task by maintaining a parallel structure: a general description followed by a specific example.

The regional organization problems are compounded by the way we assign commissions and quota credit. Salespeople in one region can invest a lot of time in pursuing a sale, only to have the customer place the order in another region. So some sales rep in the second region ends up with the commission on a sale that was partly or even entirely earned by someone in the first region. Therefore, sales reps sometimes don't pursue leads in their regions, thinking that a rep in another region will get the commission.

For example, Athletic Express, with outlets in 35 states spread across all four regions, finally got so frustrated with us that the company president called our headquarters. Athletic Express has been trying to place a large order for tennis and golf accessories, but none of our local reps seem interested in paying attention. I spoke with the rep responsible for Nashville, where the company is headquartered, and asked her why she wasn't working the account more actively. Her explanation was that last time she got involved with Athletic Express, the order was actually placed from their L.A. regional office, and she didn't get any commission after more than two weeks of selling time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

He explains how his recommendation (a new organizational structure) will solve both problems.

Phan concludes the 2 + 2 = 4 approach: organizational problems + commission problems = the need for a new sales structure.

Our sales organization should reflect the nature of our customer base. To accomplish that goal, we need a group of reps who are free to pursue accounts across regional borders—and who are compensated fairly for their work. The most sensible answer is to establish a national account group. Any customers whose operations place them in more than one region would automatically be assigned to the national group.

He acknowledges that the recommended solution does create a temporary compensation problem but expresses confidence that a solution to that can be worked out.

In addition to solving the problem of competing sales efforts, the new structure will also largely eliminate the commission-splitting problem because regional reps will no longer invest time in prospects assigned to the national accounts team. However, we will need to find a fair way to compensate regional reps who are losing long-term customers to the national team. Some of these reps have invested years in developing customer relationships that will continue to yield sales well into the future, and everyone I talked to agrees that reps in these cases should receive some sort of compensation. Such a "transition commission" would also motivate the regional reps to help ensure a smooth transition from one sales group to the other. The exact nature of this compensation would need to be worked out with the various sales managers.

3

SUMMARY

The summary concisely restates both the problem and the recommended solution.

The regional sales organization is effective at the regional and local levels but not at the national level. We should establish a national accounts group to handle sales that cross regional boundaries. Then we'll have one set of reps who are focused on the local and regional levels and another set who are pursuing national accounts.

To compensate regional reps who lose accounts to the national team, we will need to devise some sort of payment to reward them for the years of work invested in such accounts. This can be discussed with the sales managers once the new structure is in place.

Figure 10.8 **Analytical Report Focusing on Logical Arguments *(continued)***

proposals request decisions from parties outside the organization. For example, *investment proposals* request funding from outside investors, *grant proposals* request funds from government agencies and other sponsoring organizations, and *sales proposals* present solutions for potential customers and request purchase decisions.

The most significant factor in planning a proposal is whether the recipient has asked you to submit a proposal. *Solicited proposals* are generally prepared at the request of external parties that require a product or a service, but they may also be requested by such internal sources as management or the board of directors. Some organizations prepare a formal invitation to bid on their contracts, called a **request for proposals (RFP)**, which includes instructions that specify the type of work to be performed or products to be delivered, along with budgets, deadlines, and other requirements. Other companies then respond by preparing proposals that show how they would meet those needs. In most cases, organizations that issue RFPs also provide strict guidelines on what the proposals should include, and you need to follow these guidelines carefully in order to be considered.

When submitting a solicited proposal in response to an RFP, follow its instructions exactly.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

Seven steps to successful proposals

A sales expert describes the process for crafting winning business proposals. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

Unsolicited proposals offer more flexibility but a completely different sort of challenge because recipients aren't expecting to receive them. In fact, your audience may not be aware of the problem or opportunity you are addressing, so before you can propose a solution, you might first need to convince your readers that a problem or an opportunity exists. Consequently, the indirect approach is often the wise choice for unsolicited proposals.

Unsolicited proposals require more creativity because readers don't expect them and may not even be aware of the problem or opportunity you propose to address.

Regardless of its format and structure, a good proposal explains what a project or course of action will involve, how much it will cost, and how the recipient and his or her organization will benefit.

The Future of Communication: Emotion Recognition Software

Assessing an audience's emotional response is an important step in judging the success of many communication efforts. If you're presenting a new idea to upper management, for example, you can try to read facial expressions and other nonverbal signals to determine whether the executives seem excited, annoyed, bored, or anywhere in between.

But what if you're not there in person and your message has to stand on its own? How can you judge the audience's reaction? This challenge has been taken up by a range of artificial intelligence software tools that attempt to measure people's emotional states based on their facial expressions or voice tones. This capability is being incorporated into mobile apps and other systems to measure such things as emotional reactions to TV commercials and other video material, stress levels, and emotional states as people interact with new products. The technology also holds some promise for people on the autism spectrum who have difficulty deciphering emotions from facial expressions.

As with many emerging technologies, emotion recognition has to navigate some complex issues surrounding ethics, privacy, accuracy, and what might be called the "creepiness factor" of knowing that a device is trying to read your feelings. On the plus side, having apps that respond to user moods could make device usage more satisfying and give businesses a powerful tool for improving communication.

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Research the current state of emotion recognition to identify one way in which the technology has the potential to change business communication practices. Do you agree with the predictions the experts make? Why or why not?

memo

CORPORATE HR

TO: Lailah Banks
FROM: Roger Hemmings
DATE: May 14, 2019
SUBJECT: Addressing Our High-Priority Personnel Issues

As you requested after last month's State of the Workforce meeting, I've been exploring potential responses to the top three personnel issues the team identified: job satisfaction, position readiness, and succession planning. We were all concerned about the cost and time commitment required to tackle these big issues, so the consensus reached at the meeting was to prioritize the issues and address them one at a time.

However, I believe there is a manageable way to address all three issues at once.

Areas of Concern: Finding Common Threads

The "big three" issues definitely feel overwhelming when we consider the changes needed in order to make meaningful improvements in all of them. There is hope in the details, however. Common threads run through all three areas, and we can address many of the problems with a single solution.

To review the three issues:

- **Job satisfaction:** Results from the last four internal surveys show a disturbing pattern of dissatisfaction, with many employees expressing uncertainty about where their careers are heading, confusion about how they fit into the big picture, and anger about not being given fair consideration for promotions.
- **Position readiness:** Managers frequently complain to us that our emphasis on promoting from within is difficult for them to adhere to because they can't find enough employees who are ready to move into positions of greater responsibility. Employees usually have the technical skills, but managers say that many lack the vision to see how their individual efforts contribute to the larger effort or lack the professionalism needed to function at a high level around customers, executives, and business partners.
- **Succession planning:** This has been a priority for several years, but we never seem to make much headway toward putting a real program in place. We've solved one side of the equation—identifying all the critical managerial and professional roles where we're vulnerable to employees leaving or being promoted—but we haven't figured out how to identify and prepare promising candidates to move into these positions.

As I dug through these issues, two themes kept popping up: a lack of shared purpose and inadequate relationship building.

The subject line establishes a connection to a topic previously discussed without divulging the main idea of the proposal (which uses the indirect approach).

The opening paragraph serves as a reminder of their previous discussion, the task he was given, and the expectations about how he would approach it.

This single-sentence paragraph is the attention-getter in the AIDA model; it promises a solution that is better than expected.

This section summarizes the previous discussion while laying the groundwork for introducing a key reason for the proposal he is going to make, which is that he has found a couple of common themes in the three areas of concern.

He introduces those two themes, which shape the proposal he is about to make. This works as the interest stage of the AIDA model, since it presents an intriguing and unexplored angle on issues previously discussed.

Figure 10.9 Internal Proposal
The manager in charge of his company's employee development efforts has a solution to three worrisome workforce issues that he has previously discussed with his boss, the director of human resources. He uses this memo-format proposal to outline a new employee mentoring program and suggest how the company can get started on it.[6]

Source: Report content based in part on Lorri Freifeld, "How-To: Start a Corporate Mentoring Program," Training, accessed 27 April 2016, trainingmag.com; Beth N. Carvin, "How to Start a Corporate Mentoring Program," Mentor Scout, accessed 27 April 2016, www.mentorscout.com; "Benefits of Mentoring Programs," Insala, accessed 27 April 2016, mentoringtalent.com; Heather R. Huhman, "Create a Corporate Mentoring Program and You May Reap the Benefits," Entrepreneur, 10 February 2015, www.entrepreneur.com.

Page 2

The Lack of Shared Purpose

The company has always prided itself on attracting the best people in every functional specialty, but I believe this has resulted in an overemphasis on hard skills and individual output, to the detriment of soft skills and an overall sense of teamwork and shared contribution. It's no surprise that so many employees feel adrift and disconnected, when we don't foster a communal sense of how the company functions as an integrated enterprise.We have some of the brightest employees in the industry, but many are too focused on the tactics of their own jobs.

Here he offers more information about the two themes he discovered as he continues to lay out the reasons for his proposed solution.

Inadequate Relationship Building

After reviewing the employee survey data, I wanted to get a more personal take on these issues, so I interviewed more than two dozen professional staffers and managers across all divisions. These interviews uncovered another troubling dynamic: We're not very good at building professional relationships throughout the organization.

Employees and their managers tend to stay isolated within their functional silos and don't seem to understand or even care about the challenges faced by their colleagues in other departments. One market analyst described cross-functional meetings as "strangers forced to cooperate with strangers." Managers trying to fill promotional opportunities sometimes don't know where to look because they rarely get to know employees outside their own chain of command. And every professional staffer I talked to expressed some variation of feeling lost, with no one to turn to for confidential career advice.

Proposed Solution: Employee Mentoring

Clearly, we have some challenges on our hands. The good news is that we have the potential to solve many of them with an employee mentoring program. Here is a brief overview of mentoring programs, their benefits, potential stumbling blocks, and a recommended strategy for launching our own program.

At this point, he is ready to shift from "selling the problem" and laying the groundwork to presenting his solution.

Common Features of Mentoring Programs

Here are the key features common to most mentoring programs:

- It's a formal program that matches interested employees with managers and senior professional staff in one-on-one coaching relationships. The coaching can involve job-specific challenges, work-life balance, workplace conflicts, or anything else the participants decide is useful.
- Employees and their mentors meet or at least talk on a regular schedule. Continuity is essential.
- HR provides the "matchmaking service" to help find the optimum pairings and manage demand, but isn't involved in the actual mentoring.
- Mentoring relationships are confidential, giving both sides the freedom to talk openly.

This brief overview of employee mentoring programs establishes common ground with his reader, so he can be sure they are thinking about the same thing.

(continued)

Figure 10.9 **Internal Proposal *(continued)***

Page 3

Potential Benefits of Mentoring Programs

Mentoring can go a long way toward solving these problems of shared purpose and relationship building, but companies report an even wider range of benefits from their mentoring programs:

- Employees can learn how to professionally navigate the corporate environment, from subtle issues such as business etiquette to broader questions such as how they contribute to company growth.
- Employees can discuss problems and worries with a trusted advisor, without fear of retribution.
- Managers gain insights into the challenges employees are facing, beyond the tactical demands of their jobs, which will help them manage and lead more effectively.
- Managers and employees learn about the challenges and contributions of other functional areas, which will foster better cooperation between departments.
- Through their mentors, employees can meet other managers, executives, and influential senior staff, expanding their networks within the company and opening more career doors.
- Managers can monitor the progress of promising employees and guide them into new opportunities.
- As an employee benefit, mentoring can help us attract a wider and more diverse pool of outside job candidates.
- Mentoring can boost productivity by helping employees find the best ways to invest their time and creative energy.
- Proactive mentoring can help the company get the full potential from employees who don't feel like they are part of the "in crowd" within the company.
- Through "reverse mentoring," senior staff and managers may have opportunities to learn about digital media use and other valuable skills they haven't had to embrace in their careers.

Here he presents the general benefits of mentoring programs in a way that connects them to the two themes he identified earlier.

The bottom-line impact of mentoring programs isn't always easy to measure, but my research found some compelling figures. For example, companies have seen turnover drop by as much as 20 percent in the year after mentoring was launched, and the majority of employees and mentors alike report improved job satisfaction as a result of being involved in mentoring.

Sharing the positive outcomes that other companies have experienced should heighten his boss's desire to explore the possibility of starting a program.

(continued)

Figure 10.9 **Internal Proposal *(continued)***

Page 4

Costs and Potential Challenges

The benefits of mentoring do need to be weighed against costs and some potential challenges:

- Many companies find themselves with more interested employees than their programs can support, so we need to manage the demand in a fair and transparent way.
- There will be some direct and indirect costs, including training for mentors, an automated system for matching mentors with employees as the program scales up, and clerical and supervisory workload for HR.
- Mentoring requires time and energy, so mentors' workloads will need to be adjusted accordingly.
- Mentoring can create conflicts with employees' direct supervisors, so HR will need to offer mediation.

We can predict some of these costs and complexities, but the most accurate way to assess them will be to run a pilot program, as I propose in the next section.

He is open about the downsides of mentoring programs, which addresses some potential objections and helps maintain his credibility on the subject.

Next Steps: Develop a Business Case and Launch a Pilot Program

"Next steps" signals his shift to the action phase of the AIDA model. He outlines a brief plan to move forward and concludes by asking for a meeting to get things rolling.

The research makes a clear case for mentoring, provided it is planned carefully and managed well. I propose that we develop a formal business case for a mentoring program and present it to the Executive Council. We need top-down support and the participation of executives themselves as mentors, so C-level buy-in is essential.

Rather than launching companywide, I think we should start with a limited pilot program, with perhaps two or three dozen participants. This will let us fine-tune the program and get a clearer estimate of costs in order to refine budgets before scaling up.

My rough estimate is that the pilot program will require one full-time staff member in HR to facilitate matchmaking, mediate conflicts, analyze results, and plan the companywide rollout. This new position will have a loaded cost of approximately $90k. I shouldn't have any problem clearing out this much in my operating budget, probably by canceling the lowest-rated training courses (as we've been discussing doing anyway).

Can I get on your calendar sometime next week to go over the potential structure of the program and answer any questions or concerns you may have?

Figure 10.9 **Internal Proposal *(continued)***

Chapter Review and Activities

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** to complete the problems marked with this icon ✪.

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: Adapt the three-step writing process to reports and proposals.

Apply what you learned in Chapters 3 through 5, with particular emphasis in these areas:

- Clearly identifying your purpose
- Preparing a work plan
- Determining whether a separate research project might be needed
- Choosing the medium and channel
- Selecting the best approach for the specific type of report

Objective 2: Describe an effective process for conducting business research, explain how to evaluate the credibility of an information source, and identify the five ways to use research results.

Here are the steps for effective business research:

1. Plan carefully to make sure you focus on the most important questions.
2. Locate the necessary data and information, using primary and secondary research as needed.
3. Process the results of your research, and apply your findings by summarizing information, drawing conclusions, or developing recommendations.
4. Manage information effectively so that you and others can retrieve it later and reuse it in other projects.

Evaluating the credibility of an information source can involve up to eight questions:

- Does the source have a reputation for honesty and reliability?
- Is the source potentially biased?
- What is the purpose of the material?
- Is the author credible?
- Where did the source get its information?
- Can you verify the material independently?
- Is the material current and complete?
- Does the information make sense?

Here are five main ways to use research results:

- Quoting
- Paraphrasing
- Summarizing
- Drawing conclusions
- Making recommendations

Objective 3: Explain the role of secondary research, and describe the two major categories of online research tools.

Secondary research is generally conducted first, before primary research:

- Doing so can save time in case someone else has already gathered the information needed.
- It can also offer additional insights into your research questions.

Two major categories of online research tools are available:

- Tools used for searching (including various types of search engines and online databases)
- Tools used to automatically monitor for new information on specific topics

Objective 4: Explain the role of primary research, and identify the two most common forms of primary research for business communication purposes.

Primary research is conducted when the information required is not available through secondary research.

The two most common primary research methods for business communication purposes are surveys and interviews.

Objective 5: Explain how to plan informational reports and website content.

Informational reports focus on the delivery of facts, figures, and other types of information.

Most informational reports use a topical organization, arranging material using one or more of these methods:

- Comparison
- Importance
- Sequence
- Chronology
- Geography
- Category

Here are the key steps in developing online reports and websites in general:

- Make sure your site is mobile friendly.
- Next, make sure you let readers be in control by giving them navigational flexibility.
- Use simple, clear language for page titles and links.
- Follow the organizational conventions used by most business websites.
- Break your information into chunks that can be scanned and absorbed quickly.

Objective 6: Identify the three most common ways to organize analytical reports.

Analytical reports, which assess a situation or problem and recommend a course of action in response, are usually organized in one of three ways:

- Focusing on conclusions
- Focusing on recommendations
- Focusing on logical arguments

Objective 7: Explain how to plan proposals.

The most significant factor in planning a proposal is whether the proposal is solicited or unsolicited:

- Solicited proposals often must follow a specific organization, particularly when they are submitted in response to a request for proposals (RFP).
- With unsolicited proposals, the writer often needs to explain why the solution offered in the proposal is even necessary for the reader to consider, so the indirect approach is usually better.

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

10-1. What are the three basic categories of reports? [LO-1]

10-2. What is typically covered in the work plan for a report? [LO-1]

10-3. How does a conclusion differ from a recommendation? [LO-2]

10-4. What is paraphrasing, and what is its purpose? [LO-4]

10-5. Should you use primary research before or after secondary research? Why? [LO-4]

10-6. What are the three major ways to organize an analytical report? [LO-6]

10-7. How do proposal writers use an RFP? [LO-7]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

10-8. Would "Look into employee morale problems" be an effective problem statement for a report? Why or why not? [LO-1]

10-9. Companies occasionally make mistakes that expose confidential information, such as when employees lose laptop computers containing sensitive data files or webmasters forget to protect confidential webpages from search engine indexes. If you conducted an online search that turned up competitive information on webpages that were clearly intended to be private, what would you do? Explain your answer. [LO-3]

10-10. Can you use the same approach for planning website content as you use for planning printed reports? Why or why not? [LO-5]

10-11. If you were writing a recommendation report for an audience that doesn't know you, would you use the direct approach, focusing on the recommendation, or the indirect approach, focusing on logic? Why? [LO-6]

Practice Your Skills

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information can be found in another chapter, as indicated.

10-12. Planning: Analyzing the Situation [LO-1] South by Southwest (SXSW) is a family of conferences and festivals in Austin, Texas, that showcase some of the world's most creative talents in music, interactive media, and film. In addition to being a major entertainment venue every year, SXSW is also an increasingly important *trade show*, an opportunity for companies to present products and services to potential customers and business partners. You work for a company that makes music training equipment, such as an electronic keyboard with an integrated screen that guides learners through every step of learning to play. Your manager has asked you to look into whether the company should rent an exhibition booth at SXSW next year. Prepare a work plan for an analytical report that will assess the promotional opportunities at SXSW, and make a recommendation on exhibiting. Include a statement of purpose, a problem statement for any research you will conduct, a description of what will result from your investigation, the sources and methods of data collection, and a preliminary outline. Visit the SXSW website at **www.sxsw.com** for more information.[7]

10-13. Documenting Sources [LO-2] Select five business articles from online sources. Develop a resource list, using Appendix B as a guideline.

10-14. Conducting Secondary Research (Online Monitoring) [LO-3], **Chapter 8** Select a business topic that interests you and configure a Twitter monitoring tool such as TweetDeck (**tweetdeck.twitter.com**) to track tweets on this topic. After you've found at least a dozen tweets, identify three that provide potentially useful information and describe them in a brief email message to your instructor.

Research: Conducting Secondary Research [LO-3] Using online, database, or printed sources, find the following information. Be sure to properly cite your sources using the formats discussed in Appendix B.

10-15. Contact information for the American Management Association

10-16. Median weekly earnings of men and women by occupation

10-17. Current market share for Perrier water

10-18. Performance ratios for office supply retailers

10-19. Annual stock performance for Tesla

10-20. Number of franchise outlets in the United States

10-21. Composition of the U.S. workforce by profession

10-22. Research: Conducting Secondary Research [LO-3] Select any public company and find the following information:

- Names of the company's current officers
- List of the company's products or services (or, if the company has a large number of products, the product lines or divisions)
- Some important current issues in the company's industry
- The outlook for the company's industry as a whole

10-23. Research: Conducting Primary Research [LO-4] You work for a movie studio that is producing a young director's first motion picture, the story of a group of unknown musicians finding work and making a reputation in a competitive industry. Unfortunately, some of your friends leave the screening saying that the 182-minute movie is simply too long. Others say they can't imagine any sequences to cut out. Your boss wants to test the movie on a typical audience and ask viewers to complete a questionnaire that will help the director decide whether edits are needed and, if so, where. Design a questionnaire that you can use to solicit valid answers for a report to the director about how to handle the audience's reaction to the movie.

10-24. Research: Conducting Primary Research [LO-4] You're conducting an informational interview with a manager in another division of your company. Partway through the interview, the manager shows clear signs of impatience. How should you respond? What might you do differently to prevent this from happening in the future? Explain your answers.

10-25. Message Strategies: Informational Reports [LO-5] Find an interactive, online annual report from a public corporation. A search for "interactive annual report" should yield a number of possibilities. IBM, MailChimp, Telstra, and Ford have all released interactive annual reports in recent years, so they are good candidates for this activity. Explore the annual report you've chosen, paying particular attention to how the company uses interactive techniques to present information. Do you find the report easy to use? Do you ever get lost or feel unsure about where to go next? Do you prefer this format over a downloadable (PDF) or printed report? Summarize your impressions in a brief email report or blog post.

10-26. Planning: Organizing Reports [LO-1] Look through recent issues (print or online) of *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *Fortune*, or other business publications for an article that describes how an executive's conclusions about his or her company's current situation or future opportunities led to changes in policy, plans, or products. Construct an outline of the material, first using a direct approach and then using an indirect approach. Which approach do you think the executive would use when reporting these conclusions to stockholders? To other senior managers? Explain your answers.

10-27. Message Strategies: Informational Reports [LO-5] You're the vice president of operations for a Florida fast-food chain. In the aftermath of a major hurricane, you're drafting a report on the emergency procedures to be followed by personnel in each restaurant when storm warnings are in effect. Answer who, what, when, where, why, and how, and then prepare a one-page outline of your report. Make up any details you need.

10-28. Message Strategies: Informational Reports [LO-5] Assume that your college president has received many student complaints about campus parking problems. You are appointed to chair a student committee organized to investigate the problems and recommend solutions. The president gives you a file labeled "Parking: Complaints from Students," and you jot down the essence of the complaints as you inspect the contents. Your notes look like this:

- Inadequate student spaces at critical hours
- Poor night lighting near the computer center
- Inadequate attempts to keep resident neighbors from occupying spaces
- Dim marking lines
- Motorcycles taking up full spaces
- Discourteous security officers
- Spaces (usually empty) reserved for college officials
- Relatively high parking fees
- Full fees charged to night students even though they use the lots only during low-demand periods
- Vandalism to cars and a sense of personal danger
- Inadequate total space
- Harassment of students parking on the street in front of neighboring houses

Now prepare an outline for an informational report to be submitted to committee members. Use a topical organization that categorizes this information.

Message Strategies: Analytical Reports [LO-6] Of the organizational approaches introduced in the chapter, which is best suited for writing a report that answers the following questions? Briefly explain why.

10-29. In which market segment—energy drinks or traditional soft drinks—should Fizz Drinks, Inc., introduce a new drink to take advantage of its enlarged research and development budget?

10-30. Should Major Manufacturing, Inc., close down operations of its antiquated Bellville, Arkansas, plant despite the adverse economic impact on the town that has grown up around the plant?

10-31. Should you and your partner adopt a new accounting method to make your financial statements look better to potential investors?

10-32. Should Grand Canyon Chemicals buy disposable test tubes to reduce labor costs associated with cleaning and sterilizing reusable test tubes?

10-33. What are the reasons for the recent data loss at the college computer center, and how can we avoid similar problems in the future?

10-34. Message Strategies: Proposals; Collaboration: Team Projects [LO-7], **Chapter 2** With a team assigned by your instructor, identify an aspect of campus operations that could be improved—perhaps involving registration, university housing, food services, parking, or library services. Outline a feasible solution and develop a list of information you would need to gather in order to convince readers that the problem exists and that your solution is worth considering.

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Company websites function as multidimensional informational reports, with numerous sections and potentially endless ways for visitors to navigate through all the various pages. Locate the website of a large public corporation. Imagine that you are approaching the site as (a) a potential employee, (b) a potential investor (purchaser of stock), (c) a member of one of the local communities in which this company operates, and (d) a potential customer of the company's products and services. Analyze how easy or difficult it is to find the information each of these four visitors would typically be seeking. Using whatever medium your instructor requests, write a brief analysis of the information architecture of the website, describing what works well and what doesn't.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that offers advice on conducting research for business reports. Write a brief email message to your instructor or a post for your class blog, describing the item you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Cases

For all cases, feel free to use your creativity to make up any details you need in order to craft effective messages.

Informational Reports

REPORT-WRITING SKILLS

10-35. Message Strategies: Informational Reports [LO-5] Employers and employees alike have embraced telecommuting as a way to reduce costs and save time.

Your task: Assume you work for a company that develops security software to protect corporate information networks. The executive team is considering developing a new product specifically for the telecommuting market that would address the unique challenges of having employees working from home amidst a host of potential security problems, from unsecured home WiFi networks to the risk of equipment theft. Research the current state of telecommuting in the United States and the prospects for growth over the next few years. Find some key facts and figures that will help the executives assess the potential for this new product, such as the industries and professions where telecommuting is popular or has the potential to grow, the number of people who telecommute now, and any economic or technological trends that could affect telecommuting. Write a report of no more than one page summarizing your findings.

REPORT WRITING SKILLS

10-36. Message Strategies: Informational Reports [LO-5] Concern is growing in many youth sports about the negative consequences of existing approaches to player development and competition. The long-term athlete development (LTAD) approach aims to instill methods and mindsets that will make athlete development more successful in the long run while making sports more enjoyable for kids. The American Development Model (ADM) used by USA Hockey is one example of the LATD approach in a specific sport.

Your task: Visit USA Hockey's website devoted to the ADM at www.admkids.com and review the information on ADM. Write a brief informational report (one to two pages) on the ADM concept, including the rationale behind it and the benefits it offers youth athletes.

BLOGGING SKILLS

10-37. Message Strategies: Informational Reports [LO-5] Anyone contemplating investing in the stock market is likely to shudder at least a little bit at the market's ups and downs.

Your task: Write a brief informational report for your class blog that contains a chart of one of the major stock market indexes (such as the Dow Jones Industrial Average or the S&P 500) over the past 20 years. Pick out four significant drops in the index during this time period and investigate economic or political events that occurred immediately before or during these declines. Briefly describe the events and their likely effect on the stock market.

EMAIL SKILLS

10-38. Message Strategies: Informational Reports [LO-5] You've put a lot of work into your college classes so far—make sure you don't have any glitches as you get ready to claim your certificate or degree.

Your task: Prepare an interim progress report that details the steps you've taken toward completing your graduation or certification requirements. After examining the requirements listed in your college catalog, indicate a realistic schedule for completing those that remain. In addition to course requirements, include steps such as completing the residency requirement, completing all necessary forms, and paying fees. Write a brief email report that you could send to anyone who is helping or encouraging you through school.

WIKI SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

10-39. Message Strategies: Informational Reports; Media Skills: Wiki Writing [LO-1], [LO-2] The use of social networks by employees during work hours remains a controversial topic, with some companies encouraging networking, some allowing it, and others prohibiting it.

Your task: Using the free wiki service offered by Zoho or a comparable system, collaborate on a report that summarizes the potential advantages and disadvantages of allowing social network use in the workplace.

BLOGGING SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

10-40. Message Strategies: Informational Reports [LO-5] If you're like many other college students, your first year was more than you expected: more difficult, more fun, more frustrating, more expensive, more exhausting, more rewarding—more of everything, positive and negative. Oh, the things you know now that you didn't know then!

Your task: With several other students, identify five or six things you wish you had realized or understood better before you started your first year of college. These can relate to your school life (such as "I didn't realize how much work I would have for my classes" or "I should've asked for help as soon as I got stuck") and your personal and social life ("I wish I had been more open to meeting people"). Use these items as the foundation of a brief informational report you could post on a blog that is read by high school students and their families. Your goal with this report is to help the next generation of students make a successful and rewarding transition to college.

WEB-WRITING SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

10-41. Message Strategies: Online Content [LO-5] As you've probably experienced, trying to keep all the different schools straight in one's mind while researching and applying for colleges can be difficult. Applicants and their families would no doubt appreciate a handy summary of your college or university's key points as they relate to the selection and application process.

Your task: Adapt content from your college or university's website to create a one-page "Quick Facts" sheet about your school. Choose the information you think prospective students and their families would find most useful. (Note that adapting existing content would be acceptable in a real-life scenario like this, because you would be reusing content on behalf of the content owner. Doing so would definitely *not* be acceptable if you were using the content for yourself or for someone other than the original owner.)

Analytical Reports

EMAIL SKILLS

10-42. Message Strategies: Analytical Reports [LO-6] Mistakes can be wonderful learning opportunities if we're honest with ourselves and receptive to learning from the mistake.

Your task: Identify a mistake you've made—something significant enough to have cost you a lot of money, wasted a lot of time, harmed your health, damaged a relationship, created serious problems at work, prevented you from pursuing what could've been a rewarding opportunity, or otherwise had serious consequences. Now figure out why you made that mistake. Did you let emotions get in the way of clear thinking? Did you make a serious financial blunder because you didn't take the time to understand the consequences of a decision? Were you too cautious? Not cautious enough? Perhaps several factors led to a poor decision.

Write a brief analytical report to your instructor that describes the situation and outlines your analysis of why the failure occurred and how you can avoid making a similar mistake in the future. If you can't think of a significant mistake or failure that you're comfortable sharing with your instructor, write about a mistake that a friend or family member made (without revealing the person's identity or potentially embarrassing him or her).

MEMO-WRITING SKILLS

10-43. Message Strategies: Analytical Reports [LO-6] Assume that you will have time for only one course next term. Identify the criteria you will use to decide which of several courses to take. (This is the yardstick approach mentioned in the chapter.)

Your task: List the pros and cons of four or five courses that interest you and use the selection criteria you identified to choose the one course that is best for you to take at this time. Write your report in printable memo format, addressing it to your academic adviser.

REPORT-WRITING SKILLS

10-44. Message Strategies: Analytical Reports [LO-6] Spurred in part by the success of numerous do-it-yourself (DIY) TV shows, homeowners across the country are redecorating, remodeling, and rebuilding. Many people are content with superficial changes, such as new paint or new accessories, but some are more ambitious. These homeowners want to move walls, add rooms, redesign kitchens, convert garages to home theaters—the big projects.

Publishers try to create magazines that appeal to carefully identified groups of potential readers and the advertisers who'd like to reach them. The DIY market is already served by numerous magazines, but you see an opportunity in the homeowners who tackle heavy-duty projects. Case Tables 10.1 through 10.3 summarize the results of some preliminary research you asked your company's research staff to conduct.

CASE TABLE 10.1 Rooms Most Frequently Remodeled by DIYers

Room	Homeowners Surveyed Who Have Tackled or Plan to Tackle at Least a Partial Remodel (%)
Kitchen	60
Bathroom	48
Home office/study	44
Bedroom	38
Media room/home theater	31
Den/recreation room	28
Living room	27
Dining room	12
Sun room/solarium	8

CASE TABLE 10.2 Average Amount Spent on Remodeling Projects

Estimated Amount ($)	Surveyed Homeowners (%)
<5,000	5
5,000–9,999	21
10,000–19,999	39
20,000–49,999	22
>50,000	13

CASE TABLE 10.3 Tasks Performed by Homeowner on a Typical Remodeling Project

Task	Surveyed Homeowners Who Perform or Plan to Perform Most or All of This Task Themselves (%)
Conceptual design	90
Technical design/architecture	34
Demolition	98
Foundation work	62
Framing	88
Plumbing	91
Electrical	55
Heating/cooling	22
Finish carpentry	85
Tile work	90
Painting	100
Interior design	52

Your task: You think the data show a real opportunity for a "big projects" DIY magazine, although you'll need more extensive research to confirm the size of the market and refine the editorial direction of the magazine. Prepare a brief analytical report that presents the data you have, identifies the opportunity or opportunities you've found (suggest your own ideas, based on the data in the tables), and requests funding from the editorial board to pursue further research.

Proposals

REPORT-WRITING SKILLS/ PORTFOLIO BUILDER

10-45. Message Strategies: Proposals [LO-3] Your boss, the national sales manager, insists that all company sales reps continue to carry full-size laptop computers for making presentations to clients and to manage files and communication tasks. In addition to your laptops, you and your colleagues have to carry a bulky printed catalog and a variety product samples—up and down stairs, on and off airplanes, and in and out of cars. You are desperate to lighten the load, and you think switching from laptops to tablets would help.

Your task: Write an informal proposal suggesting that the company equip its traveling salespeople with tablets instead of laptops. Making up any information you need, address three questions you know your boss will have. First, can sales reps type at an adequate speed on tablets? (Using an accessory keyboard can be part of your solution.) Second, can sales reps make informal "tabletop" presentations on tablets, the way they can on their laptops? (Currently, sales reps can sit at a conference table and give a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation to two or three people, without the need for a projector screen.) Third, do tablets have a sufficient selection of business software, from word-processing to database management software?

REPORT-WRITING SKILLS/ PORTFOLIO BUILDER

10-46. Message Strategies: Proposals [LO-1] Select a product you are familiar with and imagine you are the manufacturer trying to get a local retail outlet to carry it.

Your task: Research the product online and in person, if possible, to learn as much as you can about it, then write an unsolicited sales proposal in letter format to the owner (or manager) of the store, proposing that the item be stocked. Use the information you gathered on the product's features and benefits to make a compelling case for why the product would be a strong seller for the store. Then make up some reasonable figures, highlighting what the item costs, what it can be sold for, and what services your company provides (return of unsold items, free replacement of unsatisfactory items, necessary repairs, and so on).

EMAIL SKILLS

10-47. Message Strategies: Proposals [LO-7] One of the banes of apartment living is those residents who don't care about the condition of their shared surroundings. They might leave trash all over the place, dent walls when they move furniture, spill food and beverages in common areas, destroy window screens, and otherwise degrade living conditions for everyone. Landlords obviously aren't thrilled about this behavior, either, because it raises the costs of cleaning and maintaining the facility.

Your task: Assume you live in a fairly large apartment building some distance from campus. Write an email proposal you could send to your landlord, suggesting that fostering a sense of stronger community among residents in your building might help reduce incidents of vandalism and neglect. Propose that the little-used storage area in the basement of the building be converted to a community room, complete with a simple kitchen and a large-screen television. By attending Super Bowl parties and other events there, residents could get to know one another and perhaps forge bonds that would raise the level of shared concern for their living environment. You can't offer any proof of this in advance, of course, but share your belief that a modest investment in this room could pay off long term in lower repair and maintenance costs. Moreover, it would be an attractive feature to entice new residents.

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from real-timeupdates.com/bce8; select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 10. Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Dashes and Hyphens

Review Sections 2.7 and 2.8 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage and then complete the following 15 items. Answers to these exercises appear on page 492.

For the following items, insert the required dashes (—) and hyphens (-).

10-48. Three qualities speed, accuracy, and reliability are desirable in any applicant to the data entry department.

10-49. A highly placed source explained the top secret negotiations.

10-50. The file on Marian Gephardt yes, we finally found it reveals a history of late payments.

10-51. They're selling a well designed machine.

10-52. A bottle green sports jacket is hard to find.

10-53. Argentina, Brazil, Mexico these are the countries we hope to concentrate on.

10-54. Only two sites maybe three offer the things we need.

10-55. How many owner operators are in the industry?

10-56. Your ever faithful assistant deserves without a doubt a substantial raise.

10-57. Myrna Talefiero is this organization's president elect.

10-58. Stealth, secrecy, and surprise those are the elements that will give us a competitive edge.

10-59. The charts are well placed on each page unlike the running heads and footers.

10-60. We got our small business loan an enormous advantage.

10-61. Ron Franklin do you remember him? will be in town Monday.

10-62. Your devil may care attitude affects everyone involved in the decision making process.

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

10-63. Commerce One helps its customer's to more efficiently lower administrative costs, improve order times, and to manage contract negotiations.

10-64. The intermodal bus vehicle seats up to 35 passengers, but is equipped with a 20 feet standardized container in the rear. The same container one sees on ships, trains and on planes.

10-65. "The American Dream of innovation, persistence, and a refusal to except the status quo has just created, in our opinion, Americas newest and most exciting company to watch," said James Gaspard President of Neoplan USA.

10-66. This new, transportation paradigm may have a global affect and the barriers to entry will be extremely costly too overcome.

10-67. Autobytel also owns and operates Carsmart.com and Autosite.com as well as AIC Automotive Information Center a provider of automotive marketing data and technology.

10-68. Mymarket.com offers a low cost high reward, entry into e-commerce not only for buyers but also suppliers.

10-69. Eclipse Aviation's main competitor are another start-up Safire Aircraft of west Palm Beach, Fl.

10-70. After identifying the factors that improve a industrial process, additional refining experiments must be conducted to confirm the results.

10-71. The fair labor standards Act regulates minimum wages, establishes overtime compensation, and it outlaws labor for children.

10-72. The Chinese government are supporting use of the Internet as a business tool because it is seen by it as necessary to enhance competitiveness.

10-73. At a certain point in a company's growth, the entrepreneur, who wants to control everything, can no longer keep up so they look mistakenly for a better manager and call that person a CEO.

10-74. City Fresh foods is paid by City health agencies to provide Ethnic food to the homebound "elderly" in the Boston Area.

10-75. Being in business since 2003, Miss Rosen has boiled down her life story into a 2-minute sound bight for sales prospects.

10-76. Anyone that wants to gain a new perspective on their product or service must cast aside one's own biases.

10-77. If I was Microsoft's Satya Nadella, I'd handle the Federal government's antitrust lawsuit much different.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C) or download the document and make the corrections in your word-processing software.

Memo

Date: March 14 2019

TO: Jeff Black and HR staff

FROM: Carrie andrews

Subject: Recruiting and hiring Seminar

As you all know the process of recruiting screening and hiring new employees might be a legal minefield. Because we don't have an inhouse lawyer to help us make every decision, its important for all of us to be aware of what actions are legally acceptible and what isn't. Last week I attended a American management Association seminar on this subject. I given enough useful information to warrant updating our online personnel handbook and perhaps developing a quick training session for all interviewing teams. First, heres a quick look at the things I learned.

Avoiding Legal Mistakes

1. How to write recruiting ads that accurately portray job openings and not discriminate
2. Complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act
3. How to use an employment agency effectively and safe (without risk of legal entanglements)

How to Screen and Interview More Effectively

1. How to sort through résumés more efficient (including looking for telltale signs of false information)
2. We can avoid interview questions that could get us into legal trouble
3. When and how to check criminal records

Measuring Applicants

1. Which type of preemployment tests have been proven most effective?
2. Which drug-testing issues and recommendations effect us as you can see the seminar addressed alot of important information. We covering the basic guidelines for much of this already; but a number of specific recommendations and legal concepts should be emphisized and underline.

It will take me a couple of weeks to get the personel handbook updated: but we don't have any immediate hiring plans anyway so that shouldn't be too much of a problem unless you think I should complete it sooner and then we can talk about that.

I'll keep the seminar handouts and my notes on my desk in case you want to peruse them.

After the handbook is updated by me, we can get together and decide whether we need to train the interviewing team members.

Although we have a lot of new information, what people need to be aware of can be highlighted and the new sections can be read as schedules allow, although they might be reluctant to do this and we can also talk about that later, at a time of your conveinence that you can select later.

If you have any questions in the mean-time; don't hesitate to email me or drop by for a chat.

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

10-78. Why must you be careful when using information from the Internet in a business report? [LO-3]

10-79. Why are unsolicited proposals more challenging to write than solicited proposals? [LO-7]

Endnotes

1. "Writing a Compelling Executive Summary," Garage Technology Ventures website, accessed 2 April 2017, www.garage.com.

2. *Understanding Industrial Property*, World Intellectual Property Organization, 2016, p. 5.

3. Lynn Quitman Troyka, *Simon & Schuster Handbook for Writers*, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2002), 481.

4. Jon Chavez, "Library Card Is Key Business Tool as Firms Utilize Resource-Rich, Free System," *Toledo Blade*, 26 April 2015, www.toledoblade.com.

5. Ross Tartell, "Write an Effective Survey Question," *Training*, July/August 2015, 14; Naresh K. Malhotra, *Basic Marketing Research* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2002), 314–317.

6. Report content based in part on Lorri Freifeld, "How-To: Start a Corporate Mentoring Program," *Training*, accessed 27 April 2016, trainingmag.com; Beth N. Carvin, "How to Start a Corporate Mentoring Program," Mentor Scout, accessed 27 April 2016, www.mentorscout.com; "Benefits of Mentoring Programs," Insala, accessed 27 April 2016, mentoringtalent.com; Heather R. Huhman, "Create a Corporate Mentoring Program and You May Reap the Benefits," *Entrepreneur*, 10 February 2015, www.entrepreneur.com.

7. SXSW website, accessed 4 April 2017, www.sxsw.com; Catherine Holahan and Spencer E. Ante, "SXSW: Where Tech Mingles with Music," *Businessweek*, 7 March 2008, www.businessweek.com.

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11 Writing and Completing Reports and Proposals

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. List the topics commonly covered in the introduction, body, and close of informational reports, analytical reports, and proposals.
2. Identify six guidelines for drafting effective website content, and offer guidelines for becoming a valuable wiki contributor.
3. Discuss six principles of graphic design that can improve the quality of your visuals, and identify the major types of business visuals.
4. Summarize the four tasks involved in completing business reports and proposals.

MyLab Business Communication

If your instructor is using MyLab Business Communication, visit **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for videos, simulations, and writing exercises.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"There is no way to write a six-page, narratively structured memo and not have clear thinking."
—Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO, Amazon.com

Jeff Bezos was referring to the pre-meeting reports he had instituted as an unusual group decision-making tool at the online retailing giant, but his observation applies to every type of report writing: The process of writing a clear and succinct report on any topic forces you to think about that topic clearly and succinctly.

In Amazon's case, senior executive meetings begin with everyone sitting in silence and reading six-page reports that attendees have written on the topics they are expected to present. Bezos wants to be sure that the executives who share their conclusions and recommendations in these meetings have thought through their ideas carefully and thoroughly. Writing these reports takes time and effort, but that investment pays off for readers and writers alike.

Take the same approach to your business reports and proposals. View them as an opportunity to clarify your own thinking before you share important ideas and recommendations to colleagues, managers, and clients.[1]

Brendan Mcdermid/Reuters/Alamy Stock Photo

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos knows that the process of planning and writing a report can be as helpful to you as it is to your readers, because it forces you to understand the subject in depth.

Writing Reports and Proposals

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
List the topics commonly covered in the introduction, body, and close of informational reports, analytical reports, and proposals.

This chapter focuses on writing and completing reports, along with creating content for websites, collaborating on wikis, and creating graphical elements to illustrate messages of all kinds. All the writing concepts and techniques you learned in Chapter 4 apply to the longer format of business reports. However, the length and complexity of reports call for special attention to several issues, starting with adapting to your audience.

ADAPTING TO YOUR AUDIENCE

The "you" attitude is especially important with long or complex reports because they demand a lot from readers.

Reports and proposals can put heavy demands on your readers, so the "you" attitude is especially important with these long messages. In general, try to strike a balance between being overly informal (which can be perceived as trivializing important issues) and overly formal (which can put too much distance between you and your readers). If you know your readers reasonably well and your report is likely to meet with their approval, you can generally adopt an informal tone. To make your tone less formal, speak to readers in the first person, refer to them as *you*, and refer to yourself as *I* (or *we* if there are multiple report authors).

You can adjust the formality of your writing through your word choices and writing style.

To make your tone more formal, use the impersonal journalism style: Emphasize objectivity, avoid personal opinions, and generally restrict your argument to provable facts (see Figure 11.1). Eliminate all personal pronouns (including *I*, *you*, *we*, *us*, and *our*). Avoid humor, and be careful with your use of similes, metaphors, and particularly colorful adjectives or adverbs. However, you don't need to make the writing monotonous. For example, you can still create interest by varying the types of sentences to create a pleasing rhythm.

Take into account that communicating with people in other cultures often calls for more formality in reports, both to respect cultural preferences and to reduce the risk of miscommunication. Informal elements such as humor and casual language tend to translate poorly from one culture to another.

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DRAFTING REPORT CONTENT

You can simplify report writing by breaking the job into three main sections: an introduction (or opening), a body, and a close. Table 11.1 on page 285 summarizes the goals of each section and lists elements to consider including in each. You can use this table as a handy reference whenever you need to write a report in school or on the job.

At a minimum, an effective *introduction* accomplishes these four tasks:

The introduction needs to put the report in context for the reader, introduce the subject, preview main ideas, and establish the tone of the document.

- It helps the reader understand the context of the report by tying it to a problem or an assignment.
- It introduces the subject matter and indicates why it is important.
- It previews the main idea (if you're using the direct approach).
- It establishes the tone and the writer's relationship with the audience.

The body of your report presents, analyzes, and interprets the information you have to offer your readers.

The *body* presents, analyzes, and interprets the information you have to offer and supports your recommendations or conclusions. The length and content of the body can vary widely based on the subject matter.

The *close* has three important functions:

Your close is often the last opportunity to get your message across, so make it clear and compelling.

- It summarizes your key points.
- It emphasizes the benefits to the reader if the document suggests a change or some other course of action.
- It brings all the action items together in one place.

To serve the needs of your readers and build your reputation as a careful and insightful professional, make sure your content in every section is accurate, complete, balanced, clear, and logical. As always, be sure to properly document all your sources (see Appendix B).

Executive Summary

Eating and physical activity patterns that are focused on consuming fewer calories, making informed food choices, and being physically active can help people attain and maintain a healthy weight, reduce their risk of chronic disease, and promote overall health. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010* exemplifies these strategies through recommendations that accommodate the food preferences, cultural traditions, and customs of the many and diverse groups who live in the United States.

By law (Public Law 101-445, Title III, 7 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.), *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* is reviewed, updated if necessary, and published every 5 years. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) jointly create each edition. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010* is based on the *Report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010* and consideration of Federal agency and public comments.

Dietary Guidelines recommendations traditionally have been intended for healthy Americans ages 2 years and older. However, *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010* is being released at a time of rising concern about the health of the American population. Poor diet and physical inactivity are the most important factors contributing to an epidemic of overweight and obesity affecting men, women, and children in all segments of our society. Even in the absence of overweight, poor diet and physical inactivity are associated with major causes of morbidity and mortality in the United States. Therefore, the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010* is intended for Americans ages 2 years and older, including those at increased risk of chronic disease.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 also recognizes that in recent years nearly 15 percent of American households have been unable to acquire adequate food to meet their needs.[1] This dietary guidance can help them maximize the nutritional content of

1. Nord M, Coleman-Jensen A, Andrews M, Carlson S. Household food security in the United States, 2009. Washington (DC): U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. 2010 Nov. Economic Research Report No. ERR-108. Available from http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err108.

viii DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS, 2010

Long and somewhat rigorous sentences help give the report its formal tone. For a more consumer-oriented publication, this writing could certainly be simplified.

A less formal report might have said something along the lines of "Poor diet and physical inactivity are killing U.S. citizens" instead of the more formal (and more precise) "are associated with major causes of morbidity and mortality."

This paragraph mentions the troubling statistic that 15 percent of U.S. households can't afford to meet basic nutritional requirements, but because the report is presenting dietary recommendations and not public policy statements about economics or other issues, the tone is objective and dispassionate.

(continued)

Figure 11.1 Achieving the Appropriate Tone for a Report
This report excerpt (part of the executive summary of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) uses a number of techniques to create a formal tone. This is a formal policy document whose intended readers are educators, government regulators, and others charged with using the information to help inform consumers. If the document had been written with consumers in mind, you can imagine how the tone might have been lighter and less formal.
Source: Part of the executive summary of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Make Your Reports Easier to Read

Help today's time-pressed readers find what they're looking for and stay on track as they navigate through your documents. First, write clear headings and subheadings that let readers follow the structure of your document and help them pick up the key points of your message. Second, use plenty of transitions to tie together ideas and show how one thought is related to another. Third, include *preview sections* to help readers get ready for new information and *review sections* after a body of material to summarize key points.

Help your readers find what they want and stay on track with headings or links, transitions, previews, and reviews.

their meals. Many other Americans consume less than optimal intake of certain nutrients even though they have adequate resources for a healthy diet. This dietary guidance and nutrition information can help them choose a healthy, nutritionally adequate diet.

This is an example of a sentence that is precise and uses language appropriate for the purpose of this report. In contrast, a document aimed primarily at consumers might have said "We've converted the latest nutritional insights into recommendations for healthy eating."

The intent of the Dietary Guidelines is to summarize and synthesize knowledge about individual nutrients and food components into an interrelated set of recommendations for healthy eating that can be adopted by the public. Taken together, the Dietary Guidelines recommendations encompass two overarching concepts:

- **Maintain calorie balance over time to achieve and sustain a healthy weight.** People who are most successful at achieving and maintaining a healthy weight do so through continued attention to consuming only enough calories from foods and beverages to meet their needs and by being physically active. To curb the obesity epidemic and improve their health, many Americans must decrease the calories they consume and increase the calories they expend through physical activity.
- **Focus on consuming nutrient-dense foods and beverages.** Americans currently consume too much sodium and too many calories from solid fats, added sugars, and refined grains.[2] These replace nutrient-dense foods and beverages and make it difficult for people to achieve recommended nutrient intake while controlling calorie and sodium intake. A healthy eating pattern limits intake of sodium, solid fats, added sugars, and refined grains and emphasizes nutrient-dense foods and beverages—vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products,[3] seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans and peas, and nuts and seeds.

A basic premise of the Dietary Guidelines is that nutrient needs should be met primarily through consuming foods. In certain cases, fortified foods and dietary supplements may be useful in providing one or more nutrients that otherwise might be consumed in less than recommended amounts. Two eating patterns that embody the Dietary Guidelines are the USDA Food Patterns and their vegetarian adaptations and the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) Eating Plan.

In a less formal report, the authors might have written "One of our basic premises is that nutrient needs should be met primarily through consuming foods" or even "You should meet your nutrient needs by eating food, not by taking supplements." However, to maintain a formal tone, they avoid both first- and second-person usage.

A healthy eating pattern needs not only to promote health and help to decrease the risk of chronic diseases, but it also should prevent foodborne illness. Four basic food safety principles (Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill) work together to reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses. In addition, some foods (such as milks, cheeses, and juices that have not been pasteurized, and undercooked animal foods) pose high risk for foodborne illness and should be avoided.

The information in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* is used in developing educational materials and aiding policymakers in designing and carrying out nutrition-related programs, including Federal food, nutrition education, and information programs. In addition, the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* has the potential to offer authoritative statements as provided for in the Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act (FDAMA).

The following are the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010* Key Recommendations, listed by the chapter in which they are discussed in detail. These Key Recommendations are the most important in terms of their implications for improving public health.[4] To get the full benefit, individuals should carry out the Dietary Guidelines recommendations in their entirety as part of an overall healthy eating pattern.

2. Added sugars: Caloric sweeteners that are added to foods during processing, preparation, or consumed separately. Solid fats: Fats with a high content of saturated and/or *trans* fatty acids, which are usually solid at room temperature. Refined grains: Grains and grain products missing the bran, germ, and/or endosperm; any grain product that is not a whole grain.
3. Milk and milk products also can be referred to as dairy products.
4. Information on the type and strength of evidence supporting the Dietary Guidelines recommendations can be found at http://www.nutritionevidencelibrary.gov.

DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS, 2010 ix

Figure 11.1 Achieving the Appropriate Tone for a Report (*continued*)

Make Your Reports Easier to Write

Look for ways to use technology to reduce the mechanical work involved in writing long reports.

Writing lengthy reports and proposals can be a huge task, so be sure to take advantage of technological tools to help throughout the process. In addition to features such as automatic table of contents and index generators, look for opportunities to use *linked and embedded documents* to incorporate graphics, spreadsheets, databases, and other elements produced in other software programs. For instance, in Microsoft Office you can choose to either *link* to another file (which ensures that changes in that file are reflected in your report) or *embed* another file (which doesn't include the automatic updating feature).

Also, be sure to explore your media and channel options. Video clips, animation, presentation slides, *screencasts* (recordings of on-screen activity), and other media elements can enhance the communication and persuasion powers of the written word.

TABLE 11.1 Content Elements to Consider for Reports and Proposals

Reports	Proposals
Introduction: Establish the context, identify the subject, preview main ideas (if using the direct approach), and establish tone and reader relationship. • **Authorization.** Reiterate who authorized the report, if applicable. • **Problem/purpose.** Explain the reason for the report's existence and what the report will achieve. • **Scope.** Describe what will and won't be covered in the report. • **Background.** Review historical conditions or factors that led up to the report. • **Sources and methods.** Discuss the primary and secondary sources consulted and research methods used. • **Definitions.** List terms and their definitions, including any terms that might be misinterpreted. Terms may also be defined in the body, explanatory notes, or glossary. • **Limitations.** Discuss factors beyond your control that affect report quality (but do not use this as an excuse for poor research or a poorly written report). • **Report organization.** Identify the topics to be covered and in what order.	**Introduction:** Identify the problem you intend to solve or the opportunity you want to pursue. • **Background or statement of the problem.** Briefly review the situation at hand, establish a need for action, and explain how things could be better. In unsolicited proposals, convince readers that a problem or an opportunity exists. • **Solution.** Briefly describe the change you propose, highlighting your key selling points and their benefits to show how your proposal will solve the reader's problem. • **Scope.** State the boundaries of the proposal—what you will and will not do. • **Proposal organization.** Orient the reader to the remainder of the proposal and call attention to the major divisions of thought.
Body: Present relevant information and support your recommendations or conclusions. • **Explanations.** Give complete details of the problem, project, or idea. • **Facts, statistical evidence, and trends.** Lay out the results of studies or investigations. • **Analysis of action.** Discuss potential courses of action. • **Pros and cons.** Explain the advantages, disadvantages, costs, and benefits of a particular course of action. • **Procedures.** Outline steps for a process. • **Methods and approaches.** Discuss how you've studied a problem (or gathered evidence) and arrived at your solution (or collected your data). • **Criteria.** Describe the benchmarks for evaluating options and alternatives. • **Conclusions and recommendations.** Discuss what you believe the evidence reveals and what you propose should be done about it. • **Support.** Give the reasons behind your conclusions or recommendations.	**Body:** Give complete details on the proposed solution and describe anticipated results. • **Facts and evidence to support your conclusions.** Provide information that will help readers take the action you would like them to take. • **Proposed approach.** Describe your concept, product, or service. Stress reader benefits and emphasize any advantages you have over your competitors. • **Work plan.** Describe how you'll accomplish what must be done (unless you're providing a standard, off-the-shelf item). Explain the steps you'll take, their timing, the methods or resources you'll use, and the person(s) responsible. State when work will begin, how it will be divided into stages, when you'll finish, and whether follow-up will be needed. • **Statement of qualifications.** Describe your organization's experience, personnel, and facilities—relating it all to readers' needs. Include a list of client references. • **Costs.** Prove that your costs are realistic—break them down so that readers can see the costs of labor, materials, transportation, travel, training, and other categories.
Close: Summarize key points, emphasize the benefits of any recommendations, list action items; label as "Summary" or "Conclusions and Recommendations." • **For direct approach.** Summarize key points (except in short reports), listing them in the order in which they appear in the body. Briefly restate your conclusions or recommendations, if appropriate. • **For indirect approach.** If you haven't done so at the end of the body, present your conclusions or recommendations. • **For motivating action.** Spell out exactly what should happen next and provide a schedule with specific task assignments.	**Close:** Summarize key points, emphasize the benefits and advantages of your proposed solution, ask for a decision from the reader. • **Review of argument.** Briefly summarize the key points. • **Review of reader benefits.** Briefly summarize how your proposal will help the reader. • **Review of the merits of your approach.** Briefly summarize why your approach will be more effective than alternatives. • **Restatement of qualifications.** For external proposals, briefly reemphasize why you and your firm should do the work. • **Request.** Ask for a decision from the reader.

DRAFTING PROPOSAL CONTENT

All of the guidelines for writing reports apply to proposals as well, but these persuasive messages have some unique considerations. As Chapter 10 notes, the most important factor is whether the proposal is solicited or unsolicited, because that affects your organization, content, and tone.

The AIDA model is a good approach for many proposals, but make sure you follow the RFP if you are responding to one.

The general purpose of any proposal is to persuade readers to do something, so your writing approach should be similar to that used for persuasive messages, perhaps including the use of the AIDA model to gain attention, build interest, create desire, and motivate action. Of course, you may need to adapt it if you're responding to an RFP or working within some other constraints. Here are some additional strategies to strengthen your argument:[2]

- Demonstrate your knowledge.
- Provide concrete information and examples.
- Research the competition so you know what other proposals your audience is likely to read.
- Demonstrate that your proposal is appropriate and feasible for your audience.
- Relate your product, service, or personnel to the reader's unique needs.

Moreover, make sure your proposal is error-free, visually inviting, and easy to read. Readers will prejudge the quality of your products, services, or capabilities by the quality of your proposal. Errors, omissions, and inconsistencies will work against you—and might even cost you important career and business opportunities.

Consider using proposal-writing software if you and your company need to submit proposals as a routine part of doing business. These programs can automatically personalize proposals, ensure proper structure (making sure you don't forget any sections, for instance), organize storage of all your boilerplate text and previous proposal content, integrate contact information from sales databases, scan RFPs to identify questions (and even assign them to content experts), and fill in preliminary answers to common questions from a centralized knowledge base.[3]

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Build your company with effective responses to RFPs

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Writing for Websites and Wikis

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Identify six guidelines for drafting effective website content, and offer guidelines for becoming a valuable wiki contributor.

In addition to standalone reports and proposals, you may be asked to write in-depth content for websites or to collaborate on a wiki. The basic principles of report writing apply to both formats, but each has some unique considerations as well.

DRAFTING WEBSITE CONTENT

Major sections on websites often function in much the same way as reports. The skills you've developed for report writing adapt easily to this environment, as long as you keep a few points in mind (see Figure 11.2):

- Because readers can be skeptical of online content, take special care to build trust with your intended audiences. Make sure your content is accurate, current, complete, and authoritative.
- As much as possible, adapt your content for a global audience. Translating content is expensive, so some companies compromise by *localizing* the homepage while keeping the deeper, more detailed content in its original language.
- Wherever you can, use the *inverted pyramid* style, in which you cover the most important information briefly at first and then gradually reveal successive layers of detail—letting readers choose to see those additional layers if they want to.

Structure website content in a concise, skimmable format so readers can quickly find and consume topics of interest.

- Present your information in a concise, skimmable format. Effective websites use a variety of means to help readers skim pages quickly, including lists, color and boldface, informative headings, and helpful summaries that give readers the option of learning more if they choose to do so.
- Write concise, reader-friendly links that serve for both site navigation and content skimming. Clearly identify where a link will take readers, and don't resort to cute wordplay that forces readers to guess what a section or page is about.
- Keep content up to date. If content on a particular page is likely to go out of date over time, include an indication on the page of when it was last updated to help readers judge whether it is current when they read it.

Thanks to the concise and clear navigation labels, headings, and subheadings, readers can skim down the screen and get all the key points in a matter of seconds.

With an uncluttered layout and generous use of white space, the page is visually inviting and easy to read.

Notice how it follows the contemporary convention of sans serif typefaces for both headings and text. In fact, it's the same typeface for both applications, giving the page a particularly unified look and feel.

The screen is divided into two unequal columns, with the main narrative taking 2/3 of the width on the left side and a dated timeline taking the remaining 1/3 down the right side. Even though two threads are on display at once, the proportion of space and the font sizes make it immediately obvious which section is primary and which is secondary.

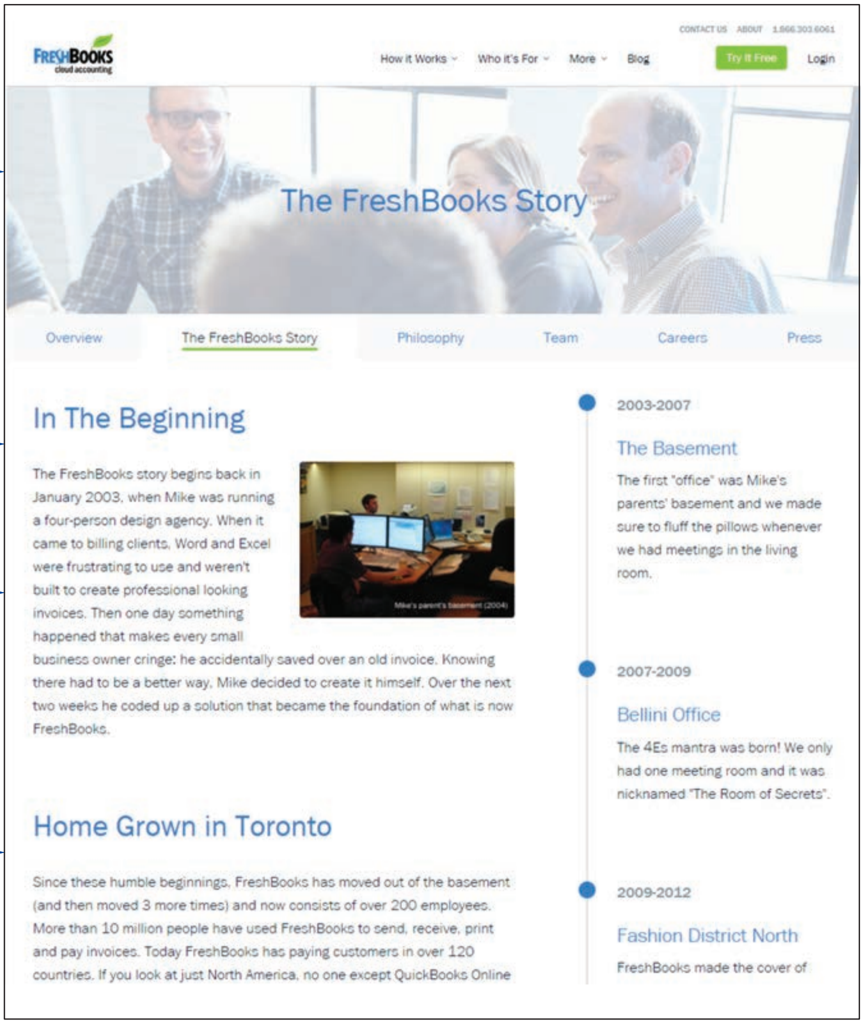

Figure 11.2 Writing and Designing for the Web

This section of the company history page on the website of the software developer FreshBooks demonstrates effective design and writing choices.

Source: Courtesy of FreshBooks.

COLLABORATING ON WIKIS

Effective collaboration on wikis requires a unique approach to writing.

Wikis are a great way for teams and other groups to collaborate on writing projects, from brief articles to long reports and reference works. Although wikis have many benefits, they do require a unique approach to writing. To be a valuable wiki contributor, keep these points in mind:[4]

- Let go of traditional expectations of authorship, including individual recognition and control.
- Encourage all team members to improve each other's work.
- Use page templates and other formatting options to make sure your content matches the rest of the wiki.
- Use the separate editing and discussion capabilities appropriately.
- Take advantage of the *sandbox*, if available; this is a "safe," nonpublished section of the wiki where team members can practice editing and writing.

Wikis usually have guidelines to help new contributors integrate their work into the group's ongoing effort. Be sure to read and understand these guidelines, and don't be afraid to ask for help.

If you are creating a new wiki, think through your long-term purpose carefully, just as you would with a new blog or podcast channel. Doing so will help you craft appropriate guidelines, editorial oversight, and security policies.

Before you add new pages to a wiki, figure out how the material fits with the existing content.

If you are adding a page or an article to an existing wiki, determine how this new material fits in with the existing organization. Also, learn the wiki's preferred style for handling incomplete articles. For example, on the wiki that contains the user documentation for the popular WordPress blogging software, contributors are discouraged from adding new pages until the content is "fairly complete and accurate."[5]

If you are revising or updating an existing wiki article, use the questions on pages 116–117 in Chapter 5 to evaluate the content before you make changes. If you don't agree with published content and plan to revise it, you can use the wiki's discussion facility to share your concerns with other contributors. The wiki environment should encourage discussions and even robust disagreements, as long as everyone remains civil and respectful. Also, take care not to let individual pages grow too long over time, as people continue to add content. Periodically assess whether these pages need to be restructured and divided into multiple smaller pages.[6]

Illustrating Your Reports with Effective Visuals

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Discuss six principles of graphic design that can improve the quality of your visuals, and identify the major types of business visuals.

Carefully crafted visuals enhance the power of your words.

Visual literacy is the ability to create effective images and to interpret images correctly.

Well-designed visual elements can enhance the communication power of textual messages and, in some instances, even replace textual messages. In general, in a given amount of time, effective images can convey much more information than text.[7] Moreover, humans have a prodigious capacity for accurately memorizing and recalling images.[8] Thanks to infographics and other tools, visuals have also become an important aspect of contemporary storytelling.[9] In addition, using pictures is a helpful way to communicate with multilingual audiences.

Given the importance of visuals in today's business environment, **visual literacy**—the ability (as a sender) to create effective images and (as a receiver) to correctly interpret visual messages—has become a key business skill.[10] Even without any formal training in design, being aware of the following six principles will help you be a more effective visual communicator:

Pay close attention to consistency, contrast, balance, emphasis, convention, and simplicity.

- **Consistency.** Think of consistency as *visual parallelism*, similar to textual parallelism, that helps audiences understand and compare a series of ideas.[11] You can achieve visual parallelism through the consistent use of color, shape, size, texture, position, scale, or typeface.
- **Contrast.** To emphasize differences, depict items in contrasting colors, such as red and blue or black and white. To emphasize similarities, make color differences more subtle.
- **Balance.** Visual balance can be either *formal*, in which the elements in the images are arranged symmetrically around a central point or axis, or *informal*, in which elements are not distributed evenly, but rather stronger and weaker elements are arranged in a way that achieves an overall effect of balance.[12] Formal balance tends to feel calming and serious, whereas informal balance tends to feel dynamic and engaging.
- **Emphasis.** Audiences are likely to assume that the dominant element in a design is the most important, so make sure that the visually dominant element really does represent the most important information.
- **Convention.** Just as written communication is guided by spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage conventions, visual communication is guided by generally accepted rules or conventions that dictate virtually every aspect of design.[13] In every culture, for instance, certain colors and shapes have specific meanings. In the United States, for example, the color green is often associated with money because green is a featured color on U.S. currency. However, this association has no meaning in most other countries.
- **Simplicity.** When you're designing graphics for your documents, limit the number of colors and design elements and take care to avoid *chartjunk*—decorative elements that

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Four communication challenges where visuals can be more effective than text

Training, product reviews, complex data presentations, and social media can all benefit from visual content. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

clutter documents without adding any relevant information.[14] Think carefully about using some of the chart features available in your software, too. Many of these features can actually get in the way of effective visual communication.[15] For example, three-dimensional bar charts, cones, and pyramids can look appealing, but the third dimension usually adds no additional information and can be visually deceiving as well.[16]

CHOOSING THE RIGHT VISUAL FOR THE JOB

After you've identified the points in your message that would benefit most from visual presentation, your next decision is to choose the types of visuals to use (see Table 11.2).

You can choose from many types of visuals, and each is best suited to particular communication tasks.

For certain kinds of information, the decision is usually obvious. If you want to present a large set of numeric values or detailed textual information, for example, a table is the best choice in most cases. Also, certain visuals are commonly used for certain applications; for example, your audience is likely to expect line charts and bar charts to show trends. (Note that *chart* and *graph* are used interchangeably for most of the display formats discussed here.)

Tables

When you need to show a large number of specific data points or pieces of information, choose a **table**, a systematic arrangement of data in columns and rows. Tables are ideal when your audience needs information that would be either difficult or tedious to handle in the main text. Most tables contain the standard parts illustrated in Figure 11.3 on the next page. Follow these guidelines to create clear, effective tables:

Printed tables can display extensive amounts of data, but tables for online display and electronic presentations need to be simpler.

- Use common, understandable units (such as dollars, pounds, liters, and so on) and clearly label them.
- Express all items in a column in the same unit and round off for simplicity, if doing so doesn't distort the meaning.
- Label column headings clearly and use subheadings if necessary.
- Separate columns or rows with lines, extra space, or colors to make the table easy to follow. Make sure the intended reading direction—down the columns or across the rows—is obvious, too.
- Keep online tables small enough to read comfortably on screen.
- Document the source of data using the same format as a text footnote (see Appendix B).

TABLE 11.2 Selecting the Best Visual

Communication Challenge	Effective Visual Choice
Presenting Data	
To present individual, exact values	Table
To show trends in one or more variables, or the relationship between those variables, over time	Line chart, bar chart
To compare two or more sets of data	Bar chart, line chart
To show frequency or distribution of parts in a whole	Pie chart
To show massive data sets, complex quantities, or dynamic data	Data visualization
Presenting Information, Concepts, and Ideas	
To show geographic relationships or comparisons	Map, geographic information system
To illustrate processes or procedures	Flowchart, diagram
To show conceptual or spatial relationships (simplified)	Illustration
To tell a data-driven story visually	Infographic
To show (realistic) spatial relationships	Photograph
To show processes, transformations, and other activities	Animation, video

	Multicolumn Heading			Single-Column Heading
	Column Subheading	Column Subheading	Column Subheading	
Row Heading	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
Row Heading	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
Row Subheading	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
Row Subheading	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
Row Heading	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
Row Heading	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
TOTALS	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx

Figure 11.3 Parts of a Table
Here are the typical parts of a table. No matter which design you choose, make sure the layout is clear and the individual rows and columns are easy to follow.

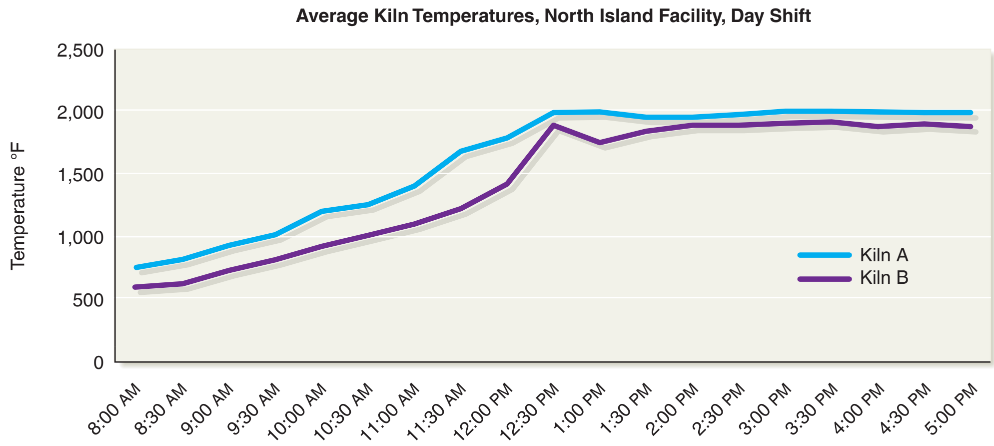


Figure 11.4 Line Chart
This two-line chart compares the temperatures measured inside two cement kilns every half hour from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Line Charts and Surface Charts

Line charts are commonly used to show trends over time or the relationship between two variables.

A **line chart** illustrates trends over time or plots the relationship of two variables (see Figure 11.4). In line charts that show trends, the vertical axis shows the amount, and the horizontal axis shows the time or other quantity against which the amount is being measured. You can plot just a single line or overlay multiple lines to compare different entities.

A **surface chart**, also called an **area chart**, is a form of line chart that shows a cumulative effect; all the lines add up to the top line, which represents the total (see Figure 11.5). This type of chart helps you illustrate changes in the composition of something over time. When preparing a surface chart, put the most significant line at the bottom and move up toward the least significant.

MOBILE APP

Graph and **Numbers** (iOS) are two of the many apps available for creating charts and graphs on mobile devices.

Bar Charts and Pie Charts

Bar charts can show a variety of relationships among two or more variables.

A **bar chart** portrays numbers with the height or length of its rectangular bars, making a series of numbers easy to grasp quickly. Bars can be oriented horizontally or vertically (in which case they are sometimes referred to as *column charts*) in a variety of formats (see Figure 11.6). Specialized bar charts such as *timelines* and *Gantt charts* are used often in project management, for example.

Pie charts are used frequently in business reports, but often they are not as helpful to readers as bar charts and other types of visuals would be.

A **pie chart** is a tool commonly used to show how the parts of a whole are distributed. Although pie charts are popular and can quickly highlight the dominant parts of a whole, they are often not as effective as bar charts or tables. For example, comparing percentages accurately is often difficult with a pie chart but can be fairly easy with a bar chart (see Figure 11.7 on page 293). Making pie charts easier to read can require labeling each slice with data values, in which case a table might serve the purpose more effectively.[17]

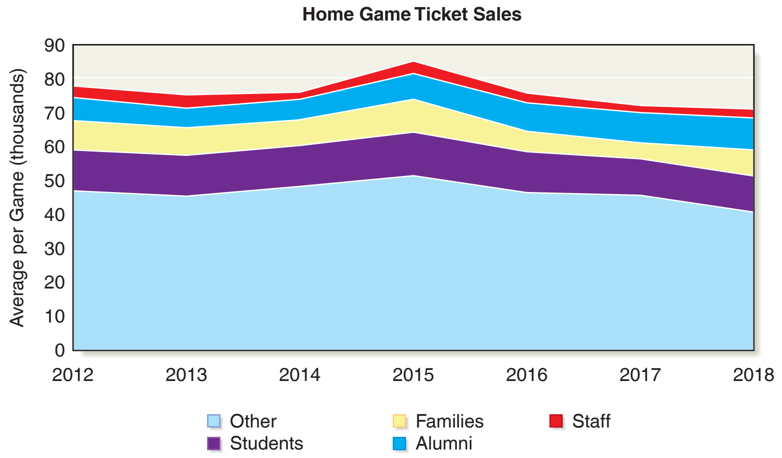
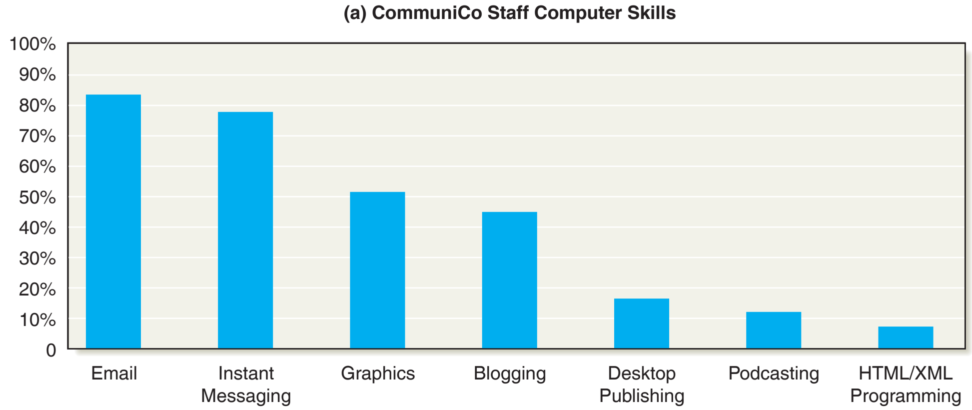
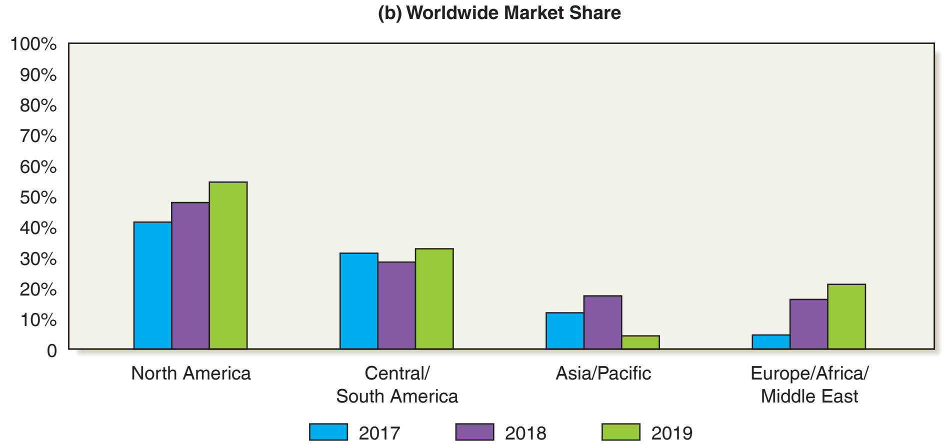


Figure 11.5 Surface Chart
Surface or area charts can show a combination of trends over time and the individual contributions of the components of a whole.





(continued)

Figure 11.6 Bar Charts
Here are six of the dozens of variations possible with bar charts: singular (a), grouped (b), deviation (c), segmented (d), combination (e), and paired (f).

Data Visualization

Conventional charts and graphs are limited in several ways: Most types can show only a limited number of data points before becoming too cluttered to interpret, they often can't show complex relationships among data points, and they can represent only numeric data. As computer technologies continue to generate large amounts of data that can be combined and connected in endless ways, a diverse class of display capabilities known as **data**

Data visualization tools can overcome the limitations of conventional charts and other display types.

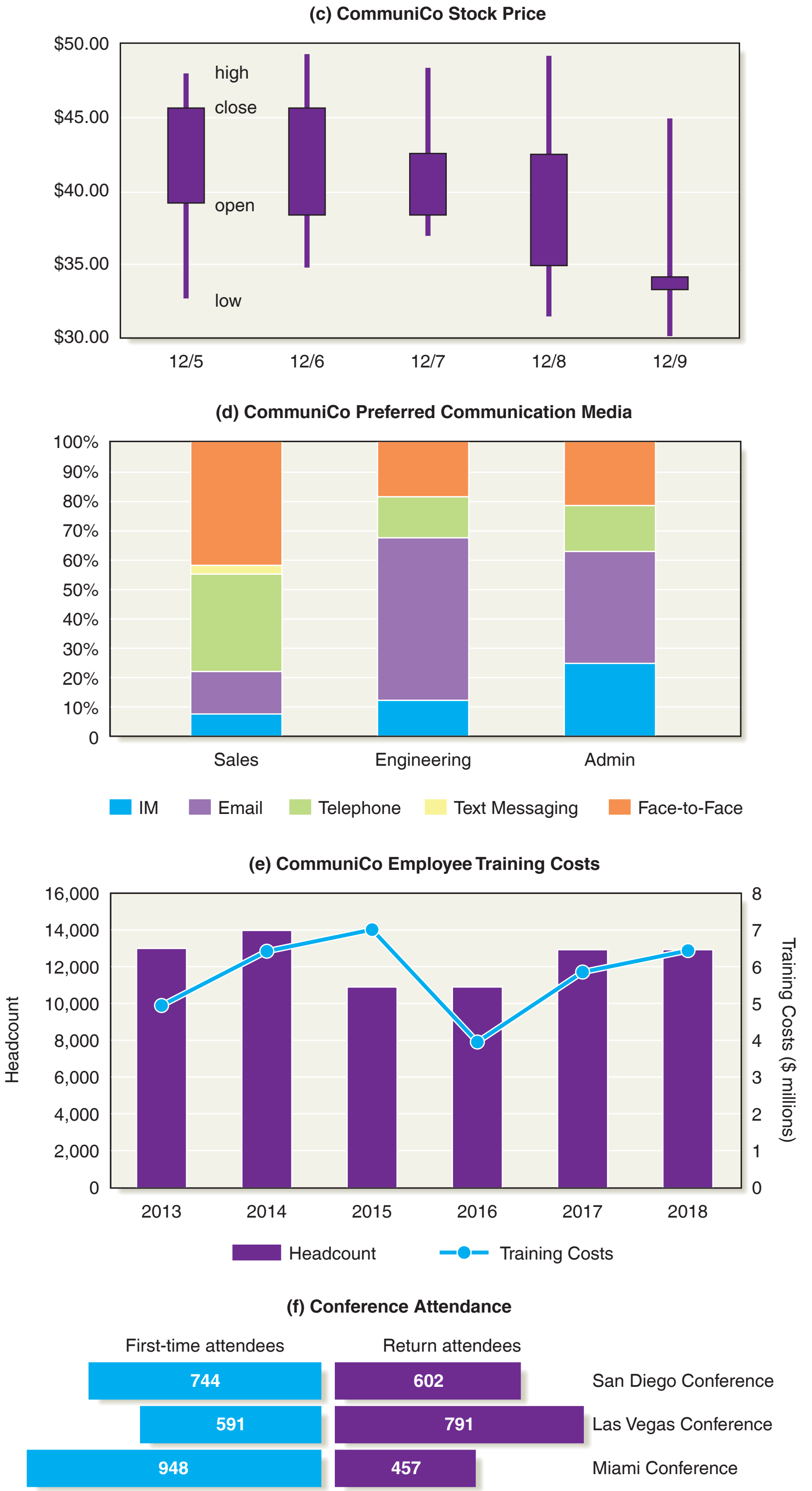


Figure 11.6 **Bar Charts (*continued*)**

Data visualization is an important tool for companies using *big data* because it helps users experiment with data sets and discover new relationships.

visualization work to overcome all these drawbacks. In some instances, data visualization is less about clarifying individual data points and more about extracting broad meaning from giant masses of data or putting the data in context.[18]

Data visualization has become an important tool for companies working with *big data*, a term used to describe massive collections of data from a variety of sources piling

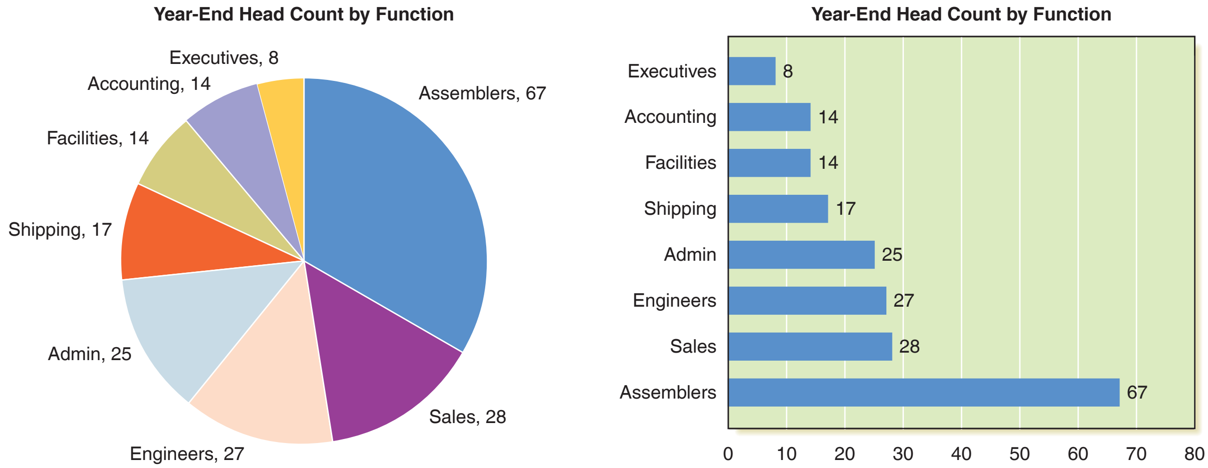


Figure 11.7 Pie Charts Versus Bar Charts
Pie charts are used frequently, but they aren't necessarily the best choice for many data presentations. This pie chart does make it easy to see that assemblers are the largest employee category, but other slice sizes (such as Sales, Engineers, and Admin) are not as easy to compare and require a numerical rather than a visual comparison. In contrast, the bar chart gives a quick visual comparison of every data point.

up at high speeds.[19] Interactive apps let users "drill down" into data sets to find details or look at data collections from a variety of perspectives (see Figure 11.8). This notion of experimentation and discovery is perhaps the most important benefit that data visualization can bring to businesses.[20]

In addition to displaying large data sets and linkages within data sets, other kinds of visualization tools combine data with textual information to communicate complex or dynamic data much faster than conventional presentations can. For example, a *tag cloud* shows the relative frequency of terms, or tags (content labels), in an article, a blog, a website, survey data, or another collection of text.[21]

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Data visualization and infographics gateway

This unique web resource offers links to a vast array of data visualization and infographic techniques and examples. Go to **real-timeupdates .com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

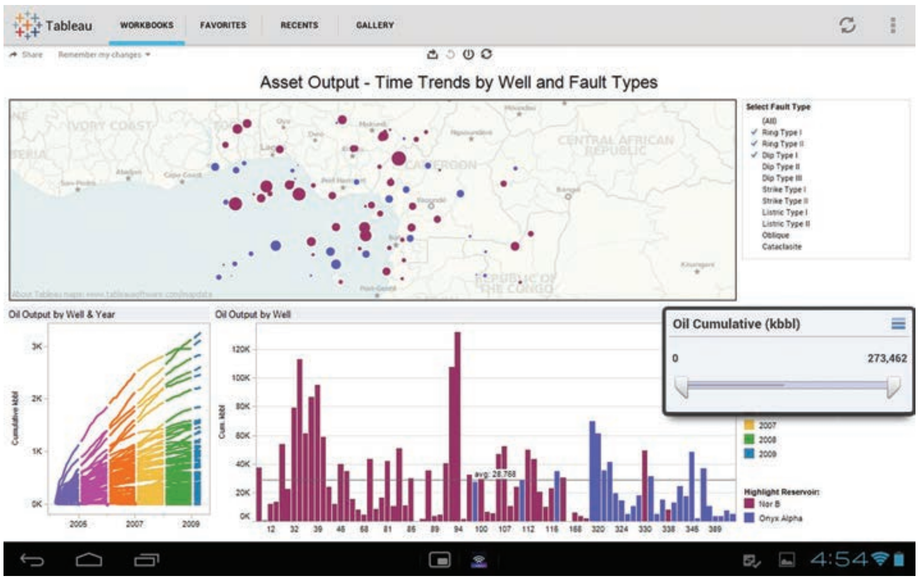

Figure 11.8 Data Visualization
Data visualization displays and software tools take a wide variety of forms. Here is a mobile app that lets users explore a large data set from different perspectives and at varying levels of detail.
Source: Courtesy of Tableau Software, Inc.

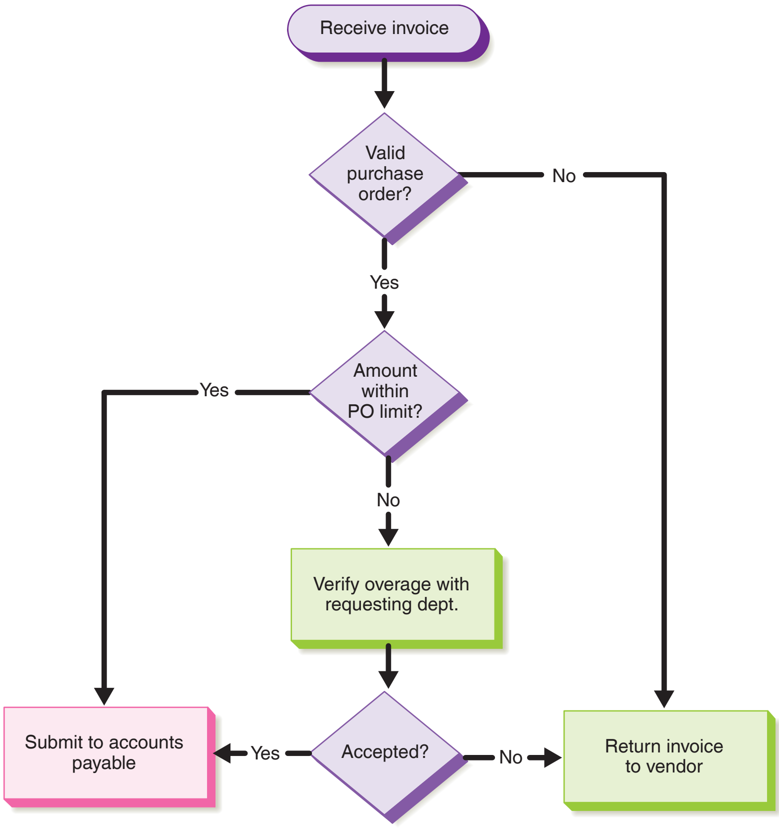

Figure 11.9 Flowchart
Flowcharts show sequences of events and are most valuable when the process or procedure has a number of decision points and variable paths.

Flowcharts and Organization Charts

Be aware that there is a formal symbolic "language" in flowcharting; each shape has a specific meaning.

A **flowchart** illustrates a sequence of events from start to finish (see Figure 11.9); it is indispensable when illustrating processes, procedures, and sequential relationships. For general business purposes, you don't need to be too concerned about the specific shapes on a flowchart; just be sure to use them consistently. However, you should be aware that there is a formal flowchart "language," in which each shape has a specific meaning (diamonds are decision points, rectangles are process steps, and so on). If you're communicating with computer programmers and others who are accustomed to formal flowcharting, make sure you use the correct symbols to avoid confusion.

As the name implies, an **organization chart** illustrates the positions, units, or functions in an organization and the ways they interrelate (see Figure 11.10). In fact, organization charts can be used to portray almost any hierarchy, including the topics, subtopics, and supporting points you need to organize for a report.

Maps, Illustrations, Diagrams, Infographics, and Photographs

Use maps to represent statistics by geographic area and to show spatial relationships.

Maps can show location, distance, points of interest (such as competitive retail outlets), and geographic distribution of data (such as sales by region or population by state). In addition to presenting facts and figures, maps are useful for showing market territories, distribution routes, and facilities locations. When combined with databases and aerial or satellite photography in *geographic information systems (GISs)*, maps become extremely powerful visual reporting tools.

Illustrations are sometimes better than photographs because they let you focus on the most important details.

Illustrations and diagrams can show an endless variety of business concepts, such as the network of suppliers in an industry, the flow of funds through a company, or the process for completing payroll each week. More complex diagrams can convey technical topics such as the operation of a machine or repair procedures. Word processors and presentation software now offer fairly advanced drawing capabilities, but for more precise and professional

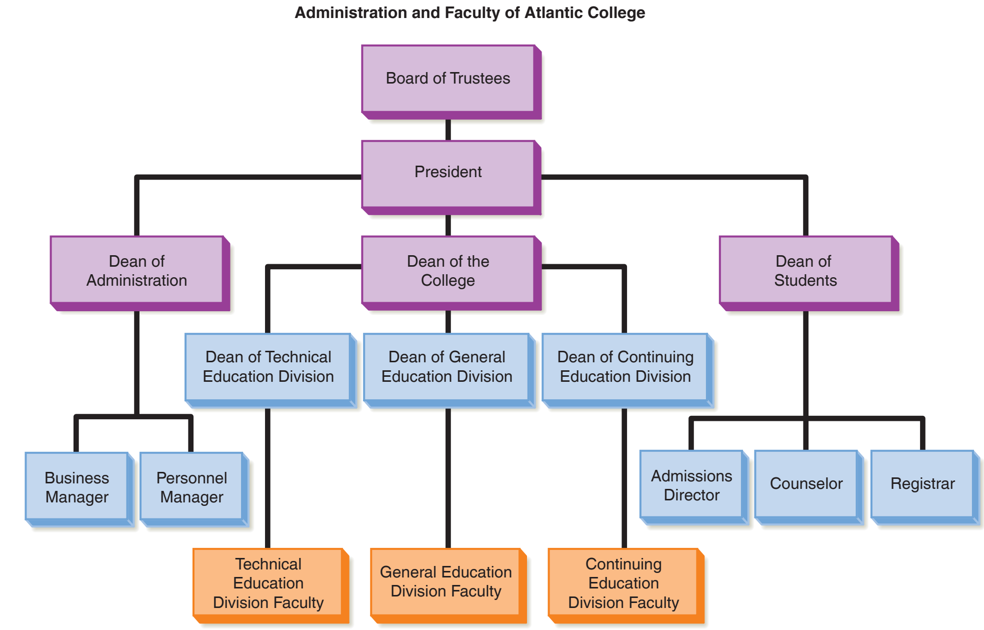

Figure 11.10 Organization Chart
An organization chart is the expected way to illustrate the hierarchy of positions in an organization.

illustrations, you may need a specialized package such as Adobe Illustrator or Trimble SketchUp. For more technical illustrations, *computer-aided design (CAD)* systems such as Autodesk's AutoCAD can produce extremely detailed architectural and engineering drawings.

Infographics are a special class of diagrams that can convey data as well as concepts or ideas. In addition, they contain enough visual and textual information to function as independent, standalone documents. Broadly speaking, there are two types of infographics: those that are stylized collections of charts or graphs and those that have a structured narrative. The first type, represented by Figure 11.11 on the next page, don't necessarily convey any more information than basic charts and graphs in a conventional report would, but their communication value lies in their ability to catch the audience's attention and the ease with which they can be distributed online. The second type take full advantage of the visual medium to tell stories or show interconnected processes. Both types can be powerful communication tools, even to the point of replacing conventional reports.

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Ten tools for creating infographics
These online tools (many are free) offer a variety of ways to create infographics. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

Photographs offer both functional and decorative value, and nothing can top a photograph when you need to show exact appearances. However, in some situations, a photograph can show too much detail, which is one reason technical manuals frequently use illustrations instead of photos, for instance. Because audiences expect photographs to show literal visual truths, you must take care when using image-processing tools such as Adobe Photoshop.

Use photographs for visual appeal and to show exact appearances.

MOBILE APP
Instagram is popular for personal photos, but many companies use the photo-sharing service for business communication as well.

Video

From tutorials and product demonstrations to seminars and speeches, online video is now an essential business communication medium. For videos that require the highest production quality, companies usually hire specialists with the necessary skills and equipment. For most routine needs, however, any business communicator with modest equipment and a few basic skills can create effective video. The three-step process adapts easily to video; professionals refer to the three steps as preproduction, production, and postproduction. The Real-Time Update on this page suggests a resource for advice on getting started with digital video.

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Great advice for getting started in digital video
This website offers a wealth of advice on producing quality videos. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

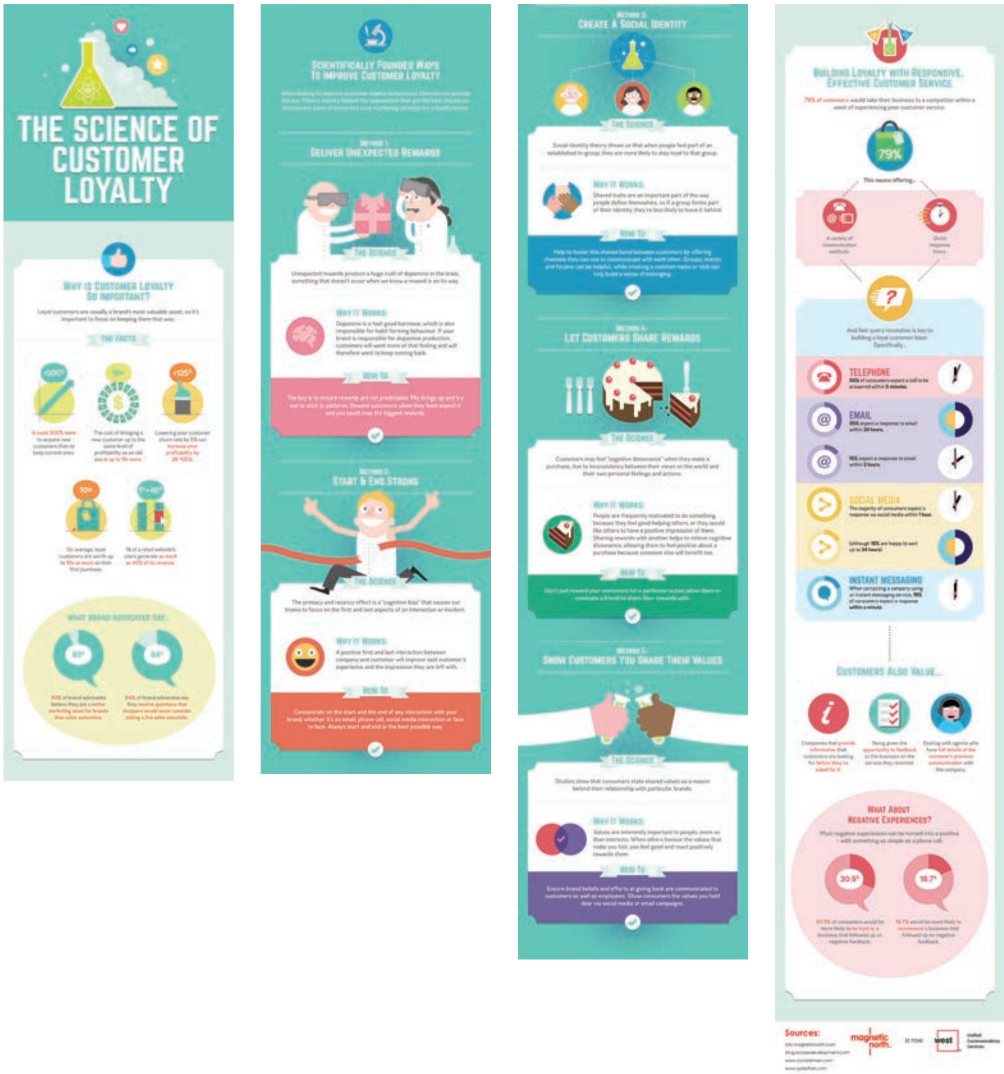

Figure 11.11 Infographics
Infographics are a great way to tell stories with data, as in this infographic on the science behind customer loyalty. (The infographic appears online as a single image.)
Source: Courtesy of West's Unified Communications Services.

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE VISUALS

MOBILE APP
Videoshop offers a variety of postproduction tools for enhancing mobile videos right on your phone.

Computers make it easy to create visuals, but they also make it easy to create ineffective visuals. By following the design principles discussed on page 288, you can create basic visuals that are attractive and effective. If possible, have a professional designer set up a template for the various types of visuals you and your colleagues need to create. By specifying color palettes, typeface selections, slide layouts, and other choices, design templates have three important benefits: They help ensure better designs, they promote consistency across the organization, and they save everyone time by eliminating repetitive decision making.

Remember that the style and quality of your visuals communicate a subtle message about your relationship with the audience. A simple sketch might be fine for a working meeting but inappropriate for a formal presentation or report. On the other hand, elaborate, full-color visuals may be viewed as extravagant for an informal report but may be expected for a message to top management or influential outsiders.

In addition to being well designed, visuals need to be well integrated with text. Follow these three steps:

To tie visuals to the text, introduce them in the text and place them near the points they illustrate.

- Try to position your visuals so that your audience won't have to flip back and forth (in printed documents) or scroll (on screen) between visuals and the text that discusses them. If space constraints prevent you from placing visuals close to relevant text, include pointers such as "Figure 2 (on the following page)" to help readers locate the image quickly.

- Clearly refer to visuals by number in the text of your report and help your readers understand the significance of visuals by referring to them before readers encounter them in the document or on screen.
- Write effective *titles*, *captions*, and *legends* to complete the integration of your text and visuals. A **title** provides a short description that identifies the content and purpose of the visual. A **caption** usually offers additional discussion of the visual's content and can be several sentences long, if appropriate. A **legend** helps readers "decode" the visual by explaining what various colors, symbols, or other design choices mean.

Proof visuals as carefully as you proof text.

Be sure to check your visuals carefully for accuracy. Check for mistakes such as typographical errors, inconsistent color treatment, confusing or unexplained symbols, and misaligned elements. Make sure your software hasn't done something unexpected, such as arranging chart bars in an order you don't want or plotting line charts in confusing colors. Most important, make sure your visuals are honest—that they don't intentionally or unintentionally distort the truth.

If you're designing visuals for mobile devices, be aware that the constraints of small screens are even more acute with visuals than they are with text. Preparing visual content for mobile users takes careful planning and the use of display tools designed for mobile devices. With screen space at a premium, think carefully about audience members' needs, including the circumstances in which they'll be using their devices, so you can prioritize and sequence the delivery of information (see Figure 11.12).

Finally, step back and consider the ethical implications of your visuals. Visuals are easy to misuse, intentionally or unintentionally. To avoid ethical lapses in your visuals, consider all possible interpretations, provide enough background information for readers

Figure 11.12 Visual Displays on Mobile Devices
Think through your audience's needs carefully when designing mobile visuals. As with this mobile app from the Hipmunk airfare-search service, show only the most essential information on each screen, with no extraneous information, and let users tap through for more details.
Source: Courtesy of Hipmunk, Inc. Used with permission.

to interpret your visuals correctly, and don't hide or minimize visual information that readers need in order to make informed judgments.[22]

For more information on visual communication, including design principles, ethical matters, and the latest tools for creating and displaying visuals, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Chapter 11.

Completing Reports and Proposals

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Summarize the four tasks involved in completing business reports and proposals.

The revision process for long reports can take considerable time, so be sure to plan ahead.

As with shorter messages, when you have finished your first draft, you need to perform four tasks in order to complete your document: revise, produce, proofread, and distribute. The revision process is essentially the same for reports as for other business messages, although it may take considerably longer, depending on the length and complexity of your documents. Evaluate your organization, style, and tone to make sure your content is clear, logical, and reader oriented. Then work to improve the report's readability by varying sentence length, keeping paragraphs short, using lists and bullets, and adding helpful headings and subheadings.

After assembling your report or proposal in its final form, review it thoroughly one last time, looking for inconsistencies, errors, and missing components. Don't forget to proof your visuals thoroughly and make sure they are positioned correctly. For online reports, make sure all links work as expected and all necessary files are active and available. If you need specific tips on proofreading documents, look back at Chapter 5.

PRODUCING FORMAL REPORTS AND PROPOSALS

Formal reports and proposals can contain a number of additional support features.

Formal reports and proposals can include a variety of features beyond the text and visuals (see Table 11.3). Most of these provide additional information; a few are more decorative and add a degree of formality.

A synopsis is a brief overview of a report's key points.

An executive summary is a fully developed "mini" version of the report.

One of the most important elements to consider is an introductory feature that helps time-pressed readers get a sense of what's in the document or even get all the key points without reading the document. A **synopsis**, sometimes called an **abstract**, is a brief overview (one page or less) of a report's most important points. The phrasing of a synopsis can be *informative* (presenting the main points in the order in which they appear in the text) if you're using the direct approach or *descriptive* (simply describing what the report is about, without "giving away the ending") if you're using the indirect approach. As an alternative to a synopsis or an abstract, a longer report may include an **executive summary**, a fully developed "mini" version of the report, for readers who lack the time or motivation to read the entire document.

For an illustration of how the various parts fit together in a report, see Figure 11.13, beginning on page 300.

Just as with reports, the text of a proposal comprises an introduction, a body, and a close. The introduction presents and summarizes the problem you intend to solve and your solution. It highlights the benefits the reader will receive from the solution. The body explains the complete details of the solution: how the job will be done, how it will be broken into tasks, what method will be used to do it (including the required equipment, material, and personnel), when the work will begin and end, how much the work will cost, and why your company is qualified (for external proposals). The close emphasizes the benefits readers will realize from your solution and ends with a persuasive *call to action* (see Figure 11.14 beginning on page 314).

DISTRIBUTING REPORTS AND PROPOSALS

For physical distribution of important printed reports or proposals, consider spending the extra money for a professional courier or package delivery service. Doing so can help you stand out in a crowd, and it lets you verify receipt. Alternatively, if you've prepared the document for a single person or small group in your office or the local area, delivering it in person will give you the chance to personally "introduce" the report and remind readers why they're receiving it.

TABLE 11.3 Production Elements to Consider for Formal Reports and Proposals

Reports	Proposals
Prefatory elements (before the introduction) • **Cover.** A concise title that gives readers the information they need in order to grasp the purpose and scope of the report. For a formal printed report, choose heavy, high-quality *cover stock*. • **Title fly.** Some formal reports open with a plain sheet of paper that has only the title of the report on it, although this is certainly not necessary. • **Title page.** Typically includes the report title, name(s) and title(s) of the writer(s), and date of submission; this information can be put on the cover instead. • **Letter of authorization.** If you received written authorization to prepare the report, you may want to include that letter or memo in your report. • **Letter of transmittal.** Cover letter that introduces the report and can include scope, methods, limitations, and highlights of the report; offers to provide follow-up information or assistance; and acknowledges help received while preparing the report. • **Table of contents.** List all section headings and major subheadings to show the location and hierarchy of the information in the report. • **List of illustrations.** Consider including if the illustrations are particularly important, and you want to call attention to them. • **Synopsis or executive summary.** See discussion on page 298.	**Prefatory elements** (before the introduction) • **Cover, title fly, title page.** Same uses as with reports; be sure to follow any instructions in the RFP, if relevant. • **Copy of or reference to the RFP.** Instead of having a letter of authorization, a solicited proposal should follow the instructions in the RFP. Some will instruct you to include the entire RFP in your proposal; others may want you to simply identify it by a name and tracking number. • **Synopsis or executive summary.** These components are less common in formal proposals than in reports. In an unsolicited proposal, your letter of transmittal will catch the reader's interest. In a solicited proposal, the introduction will provide an adequate preview of the contents. • **Letter of transmittal.** If the proposal is solicited, treat the transmittal letter as a positive message, highlighting those aspects of your proposal that may give you a competitive advantage. If the proposal is unsolicited, the transmittal letter should follow the advice for persuasive messages (see Chapter 9)—the letter must persuade the reader that you have something worthwhile to offer that justifies reading the proposal.
Supplementary elements (after the close) • **Appendixes.** Additional information related to the report but not included in the main text because it is too lengthy or lacks direct relevance. List appendixes in your table of contents and refer to them as appropriate in the text. • **Bibliography.** List the secondary sources you consulted; see Appendix B. • **Index.** List names, places, and subjects mentioned in the report, along with the pages on which they occur.	**Supplementary elements** (after the close) • **Appendixes.** Same uses as with reports; be sure to follow any instructions in the RFP, if relevant. • **Résumés of key players.** For external proposals, résumés can convince readers that you have the talent to achieve the proposal's objectives.

For digital distribution, ask your readers what format they would like to receive the report in. The two most common formats are Microsoft Word documents and PDF files, but depending on the circumstances a different format might be more useful. With PDF files, you can select a variety of security settings that restrict who can open, edit, or print the document.[23]

Whenever possible, ask your readers what digital format they would like to receive reports in.

If your company or client expects you to distribute your reports via cloud storage, a content management system, a shared workspace, or some other online location, double-check that you've uploaded the correct file(s) to the correct location. Verify the on-screen display of your reports after you've posted them, making sure graphics, charts, links, and other elements are in place and operational.

For more information on completing reports and proposals, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Chapter 11.

The Future of Communication: Three-Dimensional Communication

When it comes to descriptive writing, one of the toughest challenges is describing three-dimensional objects or physical spaces. For example, if you need to write training documents or marketing materials for a complicated product or system, chances are you'll need to describe its shape, function, operation, assembly, or some other aspect. Imagine

Reducing Electrovision's Travel and Entertainment Costs

Large, bold type distinguishes the title from the other elements on the cover.

Prepared for
Dennis McWilliams,
Vice President of Operations
Electrovision, Inc.

The name of the recipient, if applicable, typically comes after the title.

Generous use of white space between elements gives the cover an open feel.

Prepared by
Linda Moreno, Manager
Cost Accounting Services
Electrovision, Inc.

February 17, 2020

Dating the report gives it a feeling of currency when it is submitted and, conversely, as time passes, signals to future readers that the material might be out of date at that point.

The "how-to" tone of Moreno's title is appropriate for an action-oriented report that emphasizes recommendations. A more neutral title, such as "An Analysis of Electrovision's Travel and Entertainment Costs," would be more suitable for an informational report.

Figure 11.13 Analyzing an Effective Formal Report
This analytical report was prepared by an accounting manager who was asked to find ways to reduce the company's travel and entertainment (T&E) costs. As you review it, study how the writer presented her conclusions and recommendations and how she designed and formatted this fairly formal document.

The memo format is appropriate for this internal report; the letter format would be used for transmitting an external report.

The tone is conversational yet still businesslike and respectful.

Acknowledging help given by others is good etiquette and a way to foster positive working relationships.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dennis McWilliams, Vice President of Operations
FROM: Linda Moreno, Manager of Cost Accounting Services LM
DATE: February 17, 2020
SUBJECT: Reducing Electrovision's Travel and Entertainment Costs

Here is the report you requested January 28 on Electrovision's travel and entertainment costs.

Your suspicions were right. We are spending far too much on business travel. Our unwritten policy has been "anything goes," leaving us with no real control over T&E expenses. Although this hands-off approach may have been understandable when Electrovision's profits were high, we can no longer afford the luxury of going first class.

The solutions to the problem seem rather clear. We need to have someone with centralized responsibility for travel and entertainment costs, a clear statement of policy, an effective control system, and a business-oriented travel service that can optimize our travel arrangements. We should also investigate alternatives to travel, such as videoconferencing.

Getting people to economize is not going to be easy. In the course of researching this issue, I've found that our employees are deeply attached to their generous travel privileges. I think some would almost prefer a cut in pay to a loss in travel status. We'll need a lot of top management involvement to sell people on the need for moderation.

I'm grateful to Mary Lehman and Connie McIlvain for their considerable help in rounding up and sorting through five years' worth of expense reports.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to work on this assignment. It's been a real education. If you have any questions about the report, please give me a call.

Moreno expects a positive response, so she presents her main conclusion right away.

She closes graciously, with thanks and an offer to discuss the results.

In this report, Moreno decided to write a brief memo of transmittal and include a separate executive summary. Short reports (fewer than 10 pages) often combine the synopsis or executive summary with the memo or letter of transmittal.

Figure 11.13 **Analyzing an Effective Formal Report (*continued*)**

The table of contents doesn't include any elements that appear before the "Contents" page.

The headings are worded exactly as they appear in the text.

Moreno lists the figures because they are all significant, and the list is fairly short.

This and other prefatory pages are numbered with Roman numerals.

The table lists only the page number on which a section begins, not the entire range of numbers.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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Moreno included only first- and second-level headings in her table of contents, even though the report contains third-level headings. She prefers a shorter table of contents that focuses attention on the main divisions of thought. She used informative titles, which are appropriate for a report to a receptive audience.

Figure 11.13 **Analyzing an Effective Formal Report (*continued*)**

The executive summary begins by stating the purpose of the report.

Moreno presents the points in the executive summary in the same order as they appear in the report, using subheadings that summarize the content of the main sections of the report.

The page numbering in the executive summary continues with Roman numerals.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyzes Electrovision's travel and entertainment (T&E) costs and presents recommendations for reducing those costs.

Travel and Entertainment Costs Are Too High

Travel and entertainment is a large and growing expense category for Electrovision. The company spends over $16 million per year on business travel, and these costs have been increasing by 12 percent annually. Company employees make roughly 3,390 trips each year at an average cost per trip of $4,720. Airfares are the biggest expense, followed by hotels, meals, and rental cars.

The nature of Electrovision's business does require extensive travel, but the company's costs are excessive: Our employees spend more than twice the national average on travel and entertainment. Although the location of the company's facilities may partly explain this discrepancy, the main reason for our high costs is a management style that gives employees little incentive to economize.

Cuts Are Essential

Electrovision management now recognizes the need to gain more control over this element of costs. The company is currently entering a period of declining profits, prompting management to look for every opportunity to reduce spending. At the same time, rising airfares and hotel rates are making T&E expenses more significant.

Electrovision Can Save $6 Million per Year

Fortunately, Electrovision has a number of excellent opportunities for reducing T&E costs. Savings of up to $6 million per year should be achievable, judging by the experience of other companies. A sensible travel-management program can save companies as much as 35 percent a year (Gilligan 39–40), and we should be able to save even more, since we purchase many more business-class tickets than the average. Four steps will help us cut costs:

1. Hire a director of travel and entertainment to assume overall responsibility for T&E spending, policies, and technologies, including the hiring and management of a national travel agency.
2. Educate employees on the need for cost containment, both in avoiding unnecessary travel and reducing costs when travel is necessary.
3. Negotiate preferential rates with travel providers.
4. Implement technological alternatives to travel, such as virtual meetings.

As necessary as these changes are, they will likely hurt morale, at least in the short term. Management will need to make a determined effort to explain the rationale for reduced spending. By exercising moderation in their own travel arrangements, Electrovision executives can set a good example and help other employees accept the changes. On the plus side, using travel alternatives such as web conferencing will reduce the travel burden on many employees and help them balance their business and personal lives.

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Her audience is receptive, so the tone in the executive summary is forceful; a more neutral approach would be better for hostile or skeptical readers.

The executive summary uses the same font and paragraph treatment as the text of the report.

Moreno decided to include an executive summary because her report is aimed at a mixed audience, some of whom are interested in the details of her report and others who just want the "big picture." The executive summary is aimed at the second group, giving them enough information to make a decision without burdening them with the task of reading the entire report.

Her writing style matches the serious nature of the content without sounding distant or stiff. Moreno chose the formal approach because several members of her audience are considerably higher up in the organization, and she did not want to sound too familiar. In addition, her company prefers the impersonal style for formal reports.

Figure 11.13 **Analyzing an Effective Formal Report (*continued*)**

A color bar highlights the report title and the first-level headings; a variety of other design treatments are possible as well.

REDUCING ELECTROVISION'S TRAVEL AND ENTERTAINMENT COSTS

INTRODUCTION

Electrovision has always encouraged a significant amount of business travel. To compensate employees for the stress and inconvenience of frequent trips, management has authorized generous travel and entertainment (T&E) allowances. This philosophy has been good for morale, but last year Electrovision spent $16 million on travel and entertainment—$7 million more than it spent on research and development.

The introduction opens by establishing the need for action.

This year's T&E costs will affect profits even more because of increases in airline fares and hotel rates. Also, the company anticipates that profits will be relatively weak for a variety of other reasons. Therefore, Dennis McWilliams, Vice President of Operations, has asked the accounting department to explore ways to reduce the T&E budget.

The purpose of this report is to analyze T&E expenses, evaluate the effect of recent hotel and airfare increases, and suggest ways to tighten control over T&E costs. The report outlines several steps that could reduce Electrovision's expenses, but the precise financial impact of these measures is difficult to project. The estimates presented here provide a "best guess" of what Electrovision can expect to save.

In preparing this report, the accounting department analyzed internal expense reports for the past five years to determine how much Electrovision spends on travel and entertainment. These figures were then compared with average statistics compiled by Dow Jones (publisher of the *Wall Street Journal*) and presented as the Dow Jones Travel Index. We also analyzed trends and suggestions published in a variety of business journal articles to see how other companies are coping with the high cost of business travel.

Moreno mentions her sources and methods to increase credibility and to give readers a complete picture of the study's background.

THE HIGH COST OF TRAVEL AND ENTERTAINMENT

Although many companies view travel and entertainment as an incidental cost of doing business, the dollars add up. At Electrovision the bill for airfares, hotels, rental cars, meals, and entertainment totaled $16 million last year. Our T&E budget has increased by 12 percent per year for the past five years. Compared with the average U.S. business traveler, Electrovision's expenditures are high, largely because of management's generous policy on travel benefits.

Reducing Electrovision's Travel and Entertainment Costs Page 1

A *running footer* that contains the report title and the page number appears on every page.

In her brief introduction, Moreno counts on topic sentences and transitions to indicate that she is discussing the purpose, scope, and limitations of the study.

Figure 11.13 Analyzing an Effective Formal Report (*continued*)

$16 Million per Year Spent on Travel and Entertainment

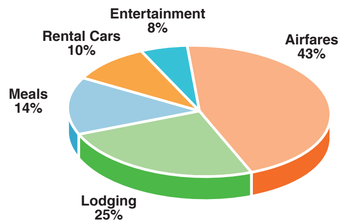
Electrovision's annual budget for T&E is only 8 percent of sales. Because this is a relatively small expense category compared with such things as salaries and commissions, it is tempting to dismiss T&E costs as insignificant. However, T&E is Electrovision's third-largest controllable expense, directly behind salaries and information systems.

Last year Electrovision personnel made about 3,390 trips at an average cost per trip of $4,720. The typical trip involved a round-trip flight of 3,000 miles, meals, hotel accommodations for two or three days, and a rental car. Roughly 80 percent of trips were made by 20 percent of the staff—top management and sales personnel traveled most, averaging 18 trips per year.

Figure 1 illustrates how the T&E budget is spent. The largest categories are airfares and lodging, which together account for $7 of every $10 that employees spend on T&E. This spending breakdown has been relatively steady for the past five years and is consistent with the distribution of expenses experienced by other companies.

The visual is placed as close as possible to the point it illustrates.

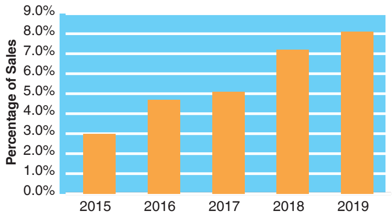
Figure 1
Airfares and Lodging Account for Over Two-Thirds of Electrovision's T&E Budget



Although the composition of the T&E budget has been consistent, its size has not. As mentioned earlier, these expenditures have increased by about 12 percent per year for the past five years, roughly twice the rate of the company's sales growth (see Figure 2). This rate of growth makes T&E Electrovision's fastest-growing expense item.

Each visual has a title that clearly indicates what it's about; titles are consistently placed to the left of each visual.

Figure 2
T&E Expenses Continue to Increase as a Percentage of Sales



Reducing Electrovision's Travel and Entertainment Costs Page 2

Moreno opens the first main section of the body with a topic sentence that introduces an important fact about the subject of the section. Then she orients the reader to the three major points developed in the section.

Figure 11.13 Analyzing an Effective Formal Report (*continued*)

The visuals are numbered consecutively and referred to by their numbers in the text.

Moreno introduces visuals before they appear and indicates what readers should notice about the data.

Electrovision's Travel Expenses Exceed National Averages

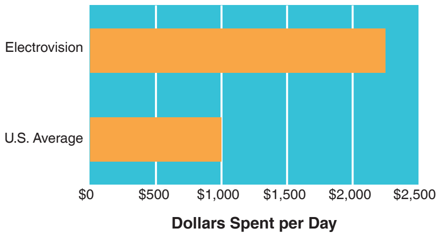
Much of our travel budget is justified. Two major factors contribute to Electrovision's high T&E budget:

- With our headquarters on the West Coast and our major customer on the East Coast, we naturally spend a lot of money on cross-country flights.
- A great deal of travel takes place between our headquarters here on the West Coast and the manufacturing operations in Detroit, Boston, and Dallas. Corporate managers and division personnel make frequent trips to coordinate these disparate operations.

However, even though a good portion of Electrovision's travel budget is justifiable, the company spends considerably more on T&E than the average business traveler (see Figure 3).

Figure 3
Electrovision Employees Spend Over Twice as Much as the Average Business Traveler

Source: *Wall Street Journal* and company records



The Dow Jones Travel Index calculates the average cost per day of business travel in the United States, based on average airfare, hotel rates, and rental car rates. The average fluctuates weekly as travel companies change their rates, but it has been running at about $1,000 per day for the last year or so. In contrast, Electrovision's average daily expense over the past year has been $2,250—a hefty 125 percent higher than average. This figure is based on the average trip cost of $4,720 listed earlier and an average trip length of 2.1 days.

Spending Has Been Encouraged

Although a variety of factors may contribute to this differential, Electrovision's relatively high T&E costs are at least partially attributable to the company's philosophy and management style. Since many employees do not enjoy business travel, management has tried to make the trips more pleasant by authorizing business-class airfare, luxury hotel accommodations, and full-size rental cars. The sale staff is encouraged to entertain clients at top restaurants and to invite them to cultural and sporting events.

Reducing Electrovision's Travel and Entertainment Costs Page 3

The chart in Figure 3 is simple but effective; Moreno includes just enough data to make her point. Notice how she is as careful about the appearance of her report as she is about the quality of its content.

Figure 11.13 **Analyzing an Effective Formal Report (*continued*)**

A bulleted list makes it easy for readers to identify and distinguish related points.

The cost of these privileges is easy to overlook, given the weakness of Electrovision's system for tracking T&E expenses:

- The monthly financial records do not contain a separate category for travel and entertainment; the information is buried under Cost of Goods Sold and under Selling, General, and Administrative Expenses.
- Each department head is given authority to approve any expense report, regardless of how large it may be.
- Receipts are not required for expenditures less than $100.
- Individuals are allowed to make their own travel arrangements.
- No one is charged with the responsibility for controlling the company's total spending on travel and entertainment.

GROWING IMPACT ON THE BOTTOM LINE

Informative headings focus reader attention on the main points. Such headings are appropriate when a report uses the direct approach and is intended for a receptive audience. However, descriptive headings are more effective when a report uses the indirect approach and readers are less receptive.

During the past three years, the company's healthy profits have resulted in relatively little pressure to push for tighter controls over all aspects of the business. However, as we all know, the situation is changing. We're projecting flat to declining profits for the next two years, a situation that has prompted all of us to search for ways to cut costs. At the same time, rising airfares and hotel rates have increased the impact of T&E expenses on the company's financial results.

Lower Profits Underscore the Need for Change

The next two years promise to be difficult for Electrovision. After several years of steady increases in spending, the Postal Service is tightening procurement policies for automated mail-handling equipment. Funding for the A-12 optical character reader has been canceled. As a consequence, the marketing department expects sales to drop by 15 percent. Although Electrovision is negotiating several other promising R&D contracts, the marketing department does not foresee any major procurements for the next two to three years.

At the same time, Electrovision is facing cost increases on several fronts. As we have known for several months, the new production facility now under construction in Salt Lake City, Utah, is behind schedule and over budget. Labor contracts in Boston and Dallas will expire within the next six months, and plant managers there anticipate that significant salary and benefits concessions may be necessary to avoid strikes.

Moreover, marketing and advertising costs are expected to increase as we attempt to strengthen these activities to better cope with competitive pressures. Given the expected decline in revenues and increase in costs, the Executive Committee's prediction that profits will fall by 12 percent in the coming fiscal year does not seem overly pessimistic.

Reducing Electrovision's Travel and Entertainment Costs Page **4**

Moreno designed her report to include plenty of white space so even those pages that lack visuals are still attractive and easy to read.

Figure 11.13 **Analyzing an Effective Formal Report (*continued*)**

Moreno supports her argument with objective facts and sound reasoning.

The recommendations are realistic, noting both the benefits and the risks of taking action.

Airfares and Hotel Rates Are Rising

Business travelers have grown accustomed to frequent fare wars and discounting in the travel industry in recent years. Excess capacity and aggressive price competition, particularly in the airline business, made travel a relative bargain.

However, that situation has changed as weaker competitors have been forced out and the remaining players have grown stronger and smarter. Airlines and hotels are better at managing inventory and keeping occupancy rates high, which translates into higher costs for Electrovision. Last year saw some of the steepest rate hikes in years. Business airfares (tickets most likely to be purchased by business travelers) jumped more than 40 percent in many markets. The trend is expected to continue, with rates increasing another 5 to 10 percent overall (Phillips 331; "Travel Costs Under Pressure" 30; Dahl B6).

Given the fact that air and hotel costs account for almost 70 percent of our T&E budget, the trend toward higher prices in these two categories will have serious consequences, unless management takes action to control these costs.

METHODS FOR REDUCING T&E COSTS

By implementing a number of reforms, management can expect to reduce Electrovision's T&E budget by as much as 40 percent. This estimate is based on the general assessment made by American Express (Gilligan 39) and on the fact that we have an opportunity to significantly reduce air travel costs by eliminating business-class travel. However, these measures are likely to be unpopular with employees. To gain acceptance for such changes, management will need to sell employees on the need for moderation in T&E allowances.

Four Ways to Trim Expenses

By researching what other companies are doing to curb T&E expenses, the accounting department has identified four prominent opportunities that should enable Electrovision to save about $6 million annually in travel-related costs.

Institute Tighter Spending Controls

A single individual should be appointed director of travel and entertainment to spearhead the effort to gain control of the T&E budget. More than a third of all U.S. companies now employ travel managers ("Businesses Use Savvy Managers" 4). The director should be familiar with the travel industry and should be well versed in both accounting and information technology. The director should also report to the vice president of operations. The director's first priorities should be to establish a written T&E policy and a cost-control system.

Electrovision currently has no written policy on T&E, a step that is widely recommended by air travel experts (Smith D4). Creating a policy would clarify management's position and serve as a vehicle for communicating the need for moderation.

Reducing Electrovision's Travel and Entertainment Costs Page 5

Moreno creates a forceful tone by using action verbs in the third-level subheadings of this section. This approach is appropriate to the nature of the study and the attitude of the audience. However, in a status-conscious organization, the imperative verbs might sound a bit too presumptuous coming from a junior member of the staff.

Figure 11.13 **Analyzing an Effective Formal Report (*continued*)**

In addition to making key points easy to find, bulleted lists help break up the text to relieve the reader's eye.

At a minimum, the policy should include the following:

- All T&E should be strictly related to business and should be approved in advance.
- Except under special circumstances to be approved on a case-by-case basis, employees should travel by coach and stay in mid-range business hotels.
- The T&E policy should apply equally to employees at all levels.

To implement the new policy, Electrovision will need to create a system for controlling T&E expenses. Each department should prepare an annual T&E budget as part of its operating plan. These budgets should be presented in detail so that management can evaluate how T&E dollars will be spent and can recommend appropriate cuts. To help management monitor performance relative to these budgets, the director of travel should prepare monthly financial statements showing actual T&E expenditures by department.

The director of travel should also be responsible for retaining a business-oriented travel service that will schedule all employee business trips and look for the best travel deals, particularly in airfares. In addition to centralizing Electrovision's reservation and ticketing activities, the agency will negotiate reduced group rates with hotels and rental car firms. The agency selected should have offices nationwide so that all Electrovision facilities can channel their reservations through the same company. This is particularly important in light of the dizzying array of often wildly different airfares available between some cities. It's not uncommon to find dozens of fares along commonly traveled routes (Rowe 30). In addition, the director can help coordinate travel across the company to secure group discounts whenever possible (Barker 31; Miller B6).

Moreno lists the steps needed to implement her recommendations.

Reduce Unnecessary Travel and Entertainment

One of the easiest ways to reduce expenses is to reduce the amount of traveling and entertaining that occurs. An analysis of last year's expenditures suggests that as much as 30 percent of Electrovision's T&E is discretionary. The professional staff spent $2.8 million attending seminars and conferences last year. Although these gatherings are undoubtedly beneficial, the company could save money by sending fewer representives to each function and perhaps by eliminating some of the less valuable seminars.

Similarly, Electrovision could economize on trips between headquarters and divisions by reducing the frequency of such visits and by sending fewer people on each trip. Although there is often no substitute for face-to-face meetings, management could try to resolve more internal issues through telephone, electronic, and written communication.

Electrovision can also reduce spending by urging employees to economize. Instead of flying business class, employees can fly coach class or take advantage of discount fares. Rather than ordering a $50 bottle of wine, employees can select a less expensive bottle or dispense with alcohol entirely. People can book rooms at moderately priced hotels and drive smaller rental cars.

Reducing Electrovision's Travel and Entertainment Costs Page **6**

Moreno takes care not to overstep the boundaries of her analysis. For instance, she doesn't analyze the value of the seminars that employees attend every year, so she avoids any absolute statements about reducing travel to seminars.

Figure 11.13 Analyzing an Effective Formal Report (*continued*)

Obtain Lowest Rates from Travel Providers

Apart from urging employees to economize, Electrovision can also save money by searching for the lowest available airfares, hotel rates, and rental car fees. Currently, few employees have the time or knowledge to seek out travel bargains. When they need to travel, they make the most convenient and comfortable arrangements. A professional travel service will be able to obtain lower rates from travel providers.

Judging by the experience of other companies, Electrovision may be able to trim as much as 30 to 40 percent from the travel budget simply by looking for bargains in airfares and negotiating group rates with hotels and rental car companies. Electrovision should be able to achieve these economies by analyzing its travel patterns, identifying frequently visited locations, and selecting a few hotels that are willing to reduce rates in exchange for guaranteed business. At the same time, the company should be able to save up to 40 percent on rental car charges by negotiating a corporate rate.

The possibilities for economizing are promising; however, making the best travel arrangements often requires trade-offs such as the following:

By pointing out possible difficulties and showing that she has considered all angles, Moreno builds reader confidence in her judgment.

- The best fares might not always be the lowest. Indirect flights are usually cheaper, but they take longer and may end up costing more in lost work time.
- The cheapest tickets often require booking 14 or even 30 days in advance, which is often impossible for us.
- Discount tickets are usually nonrefundable, which is a serious drawback when a trip needs to be canceled at the last minute.

Replace Travel with Technological Alternatives

Online meeting systems such as WebEx and GoTo Meeting offer a compelling alternative to many instances of business travel. With webcam video, application/ screen sharing, and collaboration tools such as virtual whiteboards, they have made great strides toward replicating the in-person meeting experience.

As effective as they can be, though, they shouldn't automatically replace every in-person meeting. When establishing a business relationship, for example, meeting face to face is an important part of building trust and getting past the uncertainties of working with a new partner. Part of the new travel director's job would be to draft guidelines for choosing travel or online meeting options.

Reducing Electrovision's Travel and Entertainment Costs Page 7

Note how Moreno makes the transition from section to section. The first sentence under the second heading on this page refers to the subject of the previous paragraph and signals a shift in thought.

Figure 11.13 Analyzing an Effective Formal Report (*continued*)

An informative title in the table is consistent with the way headings are handled throughout this report, and it is appropriate for a report to a receptive audience.

The Impact of Reforms

By implementing tighter controls, reducing unnecessary expenses, negotiating more favorable rates, and exploring alternatives to travel, Electrovision should be able to reduce its T&E budget significantly. As Table 1 illustrates, the combined savings should be in the neighborhood of $6 million, although the precise figures are somewhat difficult to project.

The in-text reference to the table highlights the key point the reader should get from the table.

Table 1
Electrovision Can Trim Travel and Entertainment Costs by an Estimated $6 Million per Year

SOURCE OF SAVINGS	ESTIMATED SAVINGS
Switching from business-class to coach airfare	$2,300,000
Negotiating preferred hotel rates	940,000
Negotiating preferred rental car rates	460,000
Systematically searching for lower airfares	375,000
Reducing interdivisional travel	675,000
Reducing seminar and conference attendance	1,250,000
TOTAL POTENTIAL SAVINGS	**$6,000,000**

Including financial estimates helps management envision the impact of the suggestions, even though the estimated savings are difficult to project accurately.

To achieve the economies outlined in the table, Electrovision will incur expenses for hiring a director of travel and for implementing a T&E cost-control system. These costs are projected at $115,000: $105,000 per year in salary and benefits for the new employee and a one-time expense of $10,000 for the cost-control system. The cost of retaining a full-service travel agency is negligible, even with the service fees that many are now passing along from airlines and other service providers.

The measures required to achieve these savings are likely to be unpopular with employees. Electrovision personnel are accustomed to generous T&E allowances, and they are likely to resent having these privileges curtailed. To alleviate their disappointment:

- Management should make a determined effort to explain why the changes are necessary.
- The director of corporate communication should be asked to develop a multifaceted campaign that will communicate the importance of curtailing T&E costs.
- Management should set a positive example by adhering strictly to the new policies.
- The limitations should apply equally to employees at all levels in the organization.

Note how Moreno calls attention in the first paragraph to items in the following table, without repeating the information in the table.

Figure 11.13 **Analyzing an Effective Formal Report (*continued*)**

She uses a descriptive heading for the last section of the text. In informational reports, this section is often called "Summary"; in analytical reports, it is called "Conclusions" or "Conclusions and Recommendations."

Moreno summarizes her conclusions in the first two paragraphs—a good approach because she organized her report around conclusions and recommendations, so readers have already been introduced to them.

Presenting the recommendations in a list gives each one emphasis.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Electrovision is currently spending $16 million per year on T&E. Although much of this spending is justified, the company's costs are high relative to competitors' costs, mainly because Electrovision has been generous with its travel benefits.

Electrovision's liberal approach to T&E was understandable during years of high profitability; however, the company is facing the prospect of declining profits for the next several years. Management is therefore motivated to cut costs in all areas of the business. Reducing T&E spending is particularly important because the bottom-line impact of these costs will increase as airline fares increase.

Electrovision should be able to reduce T&E costs by as much as 40 percent by taking four important steps:

1. *Institute tighter spending controls.* Management should hire a director of travel and entertainment who will assume overall responsibility for T&E activities. Within the next six months, this director should develop a written travel policy, institute a T&E budget and a cost-control system, and retain a professional, business-oriented travel agency that will optimize arrangements with travel providers.
2. *Reduce unnecessary travel and entertainment.* Electrovision should encourage employees to economize on T&E spending. Management can accomplish this by authorizing fewer trips and by urging employees to be more conservative in their spending.
3. *Obtain lowest rates from travel providers.* Electrovision should also focus on obtaining the best rates on airline tickets, hotel rooms, and rental cars. By channeling all arrangements through a professional travel agency, the company can optimize its choices and gain clout in negotiating preferred rates.
4. *Replace some travel with technological alternatives.* Online meeting system should be adequate for most of our tactical meetings with established clients and for most internal communication as well.

Because these measures may be unpopular with employees, management should make a concerted effort to explain the importance of reducing travel costs. The director of corporate communication should be given responsibility for developing a plan to communicate the need for employee cooperation.

Reducing Electrovision's Travel and Entertainment Costs Page 9

Moreno doesn't introduce any new facts in this section. In a longer report she might have divided this section into subsections, labeled "Conclusions" and "Recommendations," to distinguish between the two.

Figure 11.13 Analyzing an Effective Formal Report (*continued*)

MLA style lists references alphabetically by the author's last name, and when the author is unknown, by the title of the reference. (See Appendix B for additional details on preparing reference lists.)

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Moreno's list of references follows the style recommended in the *MLA Handbook*. The box below shows how these sources would be cited following American Psychological Association (APA) style.

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Figure 11.13 **Analyzing an Effective Formal Report (*continued*)**

using only words to describe a car engine or a metal lathe in enough detail that someone could repair it or use it. Illustrations, photographs, and video can be a big help, but even the best of these are constrained by the limitations of the two-dimensional page or screen.

Adding the third dimension promises to make these communication challenges much easier. What if you could send your readers a computer file that they can "fly around" in 3D? They could zoom in and out to see the big picture and small details and even travel inside the 3D model to see how it is laid out internally. Readily available software such as Trimble SketchUp (free at **www.sketchup.com**) makes that easy to do now.

3D printing promises to be the next step. As the price of 3D printers continues to drop, the number of businesses and consumers who have them continues to grow. Instead of

O'Donnell & Associates, Inc.

1793 East Westerfield Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005
(847) 398-1148 Fax: (847) 398-1149 Email: dod@ix.netcom.com

July 31, 2019

Ms. Joyce Colton, P.E.
AGI Builders, Inc.
1280 Spring Lake Drive
Belvidere, Illinois, 61008

Subject: Proposal No. F-0087 for AGI Builders, Elgin Manufacturing Campus

Dear Ms. Colton:

The opening paragraph serves as an introduction.

The introduction grabs the reader's attention by highlighting company qualifications.

O'Donnell & Associates is pleased to submit the following proposal to provide construction testing services for the mass grading operations and utility work at the Elgin Manufacturing Campus, 126th St., Elgin, Illinois. Our company has been providing construction-testing services in the Chicago area since 1972 and has performed numerous large-scale geotechnical investigations across Illinois, including more than 100 at O'Hare International Airport, Midway Airport, Meig's Field, and other airports.

Headings divide the proposal into logical segments for easy reading.

The project background section acknowledges the two projects and their required timeline.

Background

It is our understanding that the work consists of two projects: (1) the mass grading perations will require approximately six months, and (2) the utility work will require approximately three months. The two operations are scheduled as follows:

Mass Grading Operation	September 2019–February 2020
Utility Work	March 2020–May 2020

Proposed Approach and Work Plan

The work plan describes the scope of the project and outlines specific tests the company will perform.

O'Donnell & Associates will perform observation and testing services during both the mass grading operations and the excavation and backfilling of the underground utilities. Specifically, we will perform field density tests on the compacted material using a nuclear moisture/density gauge, as required by the job specifications. We will also conduct appropriate laboratory tests such as ASTM D-1557 Modified Proctors. We will prepare detailed reports summarizing the results of our field and laboratory testing. Fill materials to be placed at the site may consist of natural granular materials (sand), processed materials (crushed stone, crushed concrete, slag), or clay soils. O'Donnell & Associates will provide qualified personnel to perform the necessary testing.

(continued)

Figure 11.14 Solicited External Proposal

This proposal was submitted by Dixon O'Donnell, vice president of O'Donnell & Associates, a geotechnical engineering firm that conducts a variety of environmental testing services. The company is bidding on the mass grading and utility work specified by AGI Builders. As you review this document, pay close attention to the specific items addressed in the proposal's introduction, body, and close.

describing a design you've just completed for a client, you could simply email a digital file that the recipient can use to print the object on site and inspect in person. 3D sketching is another intriguing alternative. Pens that write in thin lines of plastic are widely available and can be used to sketch ideas as they come to you.

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Research the current state of 3D printing and various other 3D options and find a tool or system that could be used for some aspect of business communication. Do you think it has real potential to supplement other media and channels? Pick a few businesses and speculate on how these companies might use 3D communication.

The work plan also explains who will be responsible for the various tasks.

The qualifications section grabs attention by mentioning compelling qualifications.

Ms. Joyce Colton, AGI Builders Page 2 July 31, 2019

Kevin Patel will be the lead field technician responsible for the project. A copy of his résumé is included with this proposal for your review. Kevin will coordinate field activities with your job site superintendent and make sure that appropriate personnel are assigned to the job site. Overall project management will be the responsibility of Joseph Proesel. Project engineering services will be performed under the direction of Dixon O'Donnell, P.E. All field personnel assigned to the site will be familiar with and abide by the Project Site Health and Safety Plan prepared by Carlson Environmental, Inc., dated April 2019.

Qualifications

O'Donnell & Associates has been providing quality professional services since 1972 in the areas of

- Geotechnical engineering
- Materials testing and inspection
- Pavement evaluation
- Environmental services
- Engineering and technical support (CADD) services

The company provides Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments, preparation of LUST site closure reports, installation of groundwater monitoring wells, and testing of soil/groundwater samples for environmental contaminants. Geotechnical services include all phases of soil mechanics and foundation engineering, including foundation and lateral load analysis, slope stability analysis, site preparation recommendations, see page analysis, pavement design, and settlement analysis.

O'Donnell & Associates materials testing laboratory is certified by AASHTO Accreditation Program for the testing of Soils, Aggregate, Hot Mix Asphalt and Portland Cement Concrete. A copy of our laboratory certification is included with this proposal. In addition to in-house training, field and laboratory technicians participate in a variety of certification programs, including those sponsored by the American Concrete Institute (ACI) and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

Costs

On the basis of our understanding of the scope of the work, we estimate the total cost of the two projects to be $100,260.00, as follows:

The project leader's résumé is attached to the proposal, providing additional detail without cluttering up the body of the proposal.

Describing *certifications* (approvals by recognized industry associations or government agencies) helps build the company's credibility.

(continued)

Figure 11.14 **Solicited External Proposal (*continued*)**

A clear and complete itemization of estimated costs builds confidence in the dependability of the project's financial projections.

Ms. Joyce Colton, AGI Builders Page 3 July 31, 2019

Cost Estimates

Cost Estimate: Mass Grading	**Units**	**Rate ($)**	**Total Cost ($)**
Field Inspection			
Labor	1,320 hours	$38.50	$ 50,820.00
Nuclear Moisture Density Meter	132 days	35.00	4,620.00
Vehicle Expense	132 days	45.00	5,940.00
Laboratory Testing			
Proctor Density Tests (ASTM D-1557)	4 tests	130.00	520.00
Engineering/Project Management			
Principal Engineer	16 hours	110.00	1,760.00
Project Manager	20 hours	80.00	1,600.00
Administrative Assistant	12 hours	50.00	600.00
Subtotal			**$ 65,860.00**

Cost Estimate: Utility Work	**Units**	**Rate ($)**	**Total Cost ($)**
Field Inspection			
Labor	660 hours	$ 38.50	$ 25,410.00
Nuclear Moisture Density Meter	66 days	5.00	2,310.00
Vehicle Expense	66 days	45.00	2,970.00
Laboratory Testing			
Proctor Density Tests (ASTM D-1557)	2 tests	130.00	260.00
Engineering/Project Management			
Principal Engineer	10 hours	110.00	1,100.00
Project Manager	20 hours	80.00	1,600.00
Administrative Assistant	15 hours	50.00	750.00
Subtotal			**$ 34,400.00**
Total Project Costs			**$100,260.00**

This estimate assumes full-time inspection services. However, our services may also be performed on an as-requested basis, and actual charges will reflect time associated with the project. We have attached our standard fee schedule for your review. Overtime rates are for hours in excess of 8.0 hours per day, before 7:00 a.m., after 5:00 p.m., and on holidays and weekends.

To give the client some budgetary flexibility, the proposal offers an alternative to the fixed-fee approach—which may lower any resistance to accepting the bid.

(continued)

Figure 11.14 **Solicited External Proposal (*continued*)**

Ms. Joyce Colton, AGI Builders Page 4 July 31, 2019

The brief close emphasizes the bidder's qualifications and asks for a decision.

Authorization

With a staff of over 30 personnel, including registered professional engineers, resident engineers, geologists, construction inspectors, laboratory technicians, and drillers, we are confident that O'Donnell & Associates is capable of providing the services required for a project of this magnitude.

If you would like our firm to provide the services as outlined in this proposal, please sign this letter and return it to us along with a certified check in the amount of $10,000 (our retainer) by August 14, 2019. Please call me if you have any questions regarding the terms of this proposal or our approach.

The call to action clarifies the steps needed to put the project in motion.

Sincerely,

Dixon O'Donnell

Dixon O'Donnell
Vice President

Enclosures

Accepted for AGI BUILDERS, INC.

By________________________ Date ________________________

The customer's signature will make the proposal a binding contract.

Figure 11.14 **Solicited External Proposal (*continued*)**

Chapter Review and Activities

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** to complete the problems marked with this icon.

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: List the topics commonly covered in the introduction, body, and close of informational reports, analytical reports, and proposals.

Use the introduction of an informational or analytical report to provide these elements:

- The person (or organization) who authorized the report
- The report's purpose and scope
- The sources or methods used to gather information
- Important definitions
- Any limitations readers should be aware of
- The order in which the various topics are covered

Use the body to provide enough information to support the report's conclusions and recommendations.

Use the close to summarize key points, restate conclusions and recommendations if appropriate, and list action items.

To a large extent, the content of proposals is dictated by the circumstances, particularly by whether the proposal is solicited or unsolicited:

- Proposals submitted in response to an RFP should always follow its instructions.
- The introduction commonly includes a background or statement of the problem, an overview of the proposed solution (or, for indirect proposals, a statement that a solution is about to be presented), the scope, and a description of how the proposal is organized.
- The body often includes a description of the proposed solution, a work plan, a statement of qualifications of the individual or organization presenting the proposal, and a discussion of costs.
- The close summarizes key points, emphasizes the benefits to readers from the proposed solution, summarizes the merits of the approach, and asks for a decision from the reader.

Objective 2: Identify six guidelines for drafting effective website content, and offer guidelines for becoming a valuable wiki contributor.

Follow these six guidelines to draft effective online content:

- Build trust by being accurate, current, complete, and authoritative.
- Adapt content to global audiences.
- Write web-friendly content that is compact and efficient.
- Present information in a concise, skimmable format.
- Write clear and concise link names.
- Keep the content current and let readers know when dynamic content was last updated.

Here are key steps to becoming a valuable wiki contributor:

- Let go of traditional expectations of authorship, including individual recognition and control.
- Don't be afraid to edit and improve existing content.
- Use page templates and other formatting options to make sure your content is formatted in the same style as the rest of the wiki.
- Keep edits and comments separate by using the "talk page" to discuss content, rather than inserting comments directly into the text.
- Take advantage of the sandbox to learn how use the wiki's writing and editing tools.
- Understand and follow the wiki's contributor guidelines.

Objective 3: Discuss six principles of graphic design that can improve the quality of your visuals, and identify the major types of business visuals.

Follow these principles to create effective report visuals:

- Use design elements consistently.
- Use color and other elements to show contrast when appropriate.
- Strive for visual balance, either formal or informal, that creates a feel that is appropriate for your message.
- Use design choices to draw attention to key elements.
- Understand and follow design conventions.
- Emphasize simplicity.

Here are the major types of business visuals:

- Tables
- Line charts and surface charts
- Bar charts and pie charts
- Data visualization
- Flowcharts and organization charts
- Maps, illustrations, diagrams, infographics, and photographs
- Animation and video

Objective 4: Summarize the four tasks involved in completing business reports and proposals.

The revision process is essentially the same for reports as for other business messages, although it may take considerably longer.

Similarly, proofreading can require more time and careful attention to the numerous details that make up a formal report or proposal.

The production stage for a formal report or proposal can involve creating a number of elements not found in most other business documents:

- Possible *prefatory* parts (those coming before the main text of the report or proposal) include a cover, a title fly, a title page, a letter of authorization, a letter of transmittal, a table of contents, a list of illustrations, and a synopsis (a brief overview of the report) or an executive summary (a miniature version of the report).

- Possible *supplemental* parts (those coming after the main text of the report or proposal) include one or more appendixes, a bibliography, and an index.

Your choice of distribution methods depends on whether your audience wants printed or digital copies, the degree of formality you want to achieve, and any privacy or data security concerns.

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

11-1. How can you make the tone in a report more formal? [LO-1]

11-2. What navigational elements can you use to help readers follow the structure and flow of information in a long report? [LO-1]

11-3. How can you use the inverted pyramid style of writing to craft effective online content? [LO-2]

11-4. In addition to telling readers why an illustration is important, why else should you refer to it in the text of your document? [LO-3]

11-5. How do you check a visual for quality? [LO-3]

11-6. How does a synopsis differ from an executive summary? [LO-4]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

11-7. Should the most experienced member of a department have final approval of the content for the department's wiki? Why or why not? [LO-2]

11-8. If you wanted to compare average monthly absenteeism for five divisions in your company over the course of a year, which type of visual would you use? Explain your choice. [LO-3]

11-9. If a company receives a solicited formal proposal outlining the solution to a particular problem, is it ethical for the company to adopt the proposal's recommendations without hiring the firm that submitted the proposal? Why or why not? [LO-4]

11-10. Is an executive summary a persuasive message? Explain your answer. [LO-4]

Practice Your Skills

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information will be found in another chapter, as indicated.

11-11. Message Strategies: Informational Reports; Collaboration: Team Projects [LO-1], Chapter 2 You and a classmate are helping Linda Moreno prepare her report on Electrovision's travel and entertainment costs (see Figure 11.13). This time, however, the report is to be informational rather than analytical, so it will not include recommendations. Review the existing report and determine what changes would be needed to make it an informational report. Be as specific as possible. For example, if your team decides the report needs a new title, what title would you use? Draft a transmittal memo for Moreno to use in conveying this informational report to Dennis McWilliams, Electrovision's vice president of operations.

11-12. Message Strategies: Informational Reports [LO-1] Review a long article in a business magazine (print or online). Highlight examples of how the article uses headings, links (if online), transitions, previews, and reviews to help readers navigate through the content.

11-13. Media Skills: Wiki Collaboration [LO-2], Chapter 5 To access this wiki exercise, go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8**, select Student Assignments, and select Chapter 11 Wiki Project 1. Follow the instructions for evaluating this short article and revising it to make it more reader oriented. Refer to the guidelines in Chapter 5 for reminders about editing and revising the work of other writers.

11-14. Media Skills: Wiki Collaboration [LO-2], Chapter 5 To access this wiki exercise, go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8**, select Student Assignments, and select Chapter 11 Wiki Project 2. Follow the instructions for evaluating this wiki article and revising to make it more reader oriented. Refer to the guidelines in Chapter 5 (page 114) for reminders about editing and revising the work of other writers.

11-15. Applying Visual Design Principles [LO-3] Find three visual presentations of data, information, or concepts on any business subject. Which of the three presents its data or information most clearly? What design choices promote this level of clarity? What improvements would you make to the other visuals to make them clearer?

11-16. Visual Communication: Creating Visuals [LO-3] As directed by your instructor, team up with other students, making sure that at least one of you has a digital camera or camera phone capable of downloading images to your word-processing software. Find a busy location on campus or in the surrounding neighborhood, someplace with lots of signs, storefronts, pedestrians, and traffic. Scout out two different photo opportunities, one that maximizes the visual impression of crowding and clutter and one that minimizes this impression. For the first, assume that you are someone who advocates reducing the crowding and clutter, so you want to show how bad it is. For the second, assume that you are a real estate agent or someone else who is motivated to show people that even though the location offers lots of shopping, entertainment, and other attractions, it's actually a rather calm and quiet neighborhood.

Insert the two images into a word-processing document and write a caption for each that emphasizes the two opposite messages just described. Finally, write a brief paragraph discussing the ethical implications of what you've just done. Have you distorted reality or just presented it in ways that work to your advantage? Have you prevented audiences from gaining the information they would need in order to make informed decisions?

11-17. Message Strategies: Analytical Reports; Communication Ethics: Resolving Ethical Dilemmas [LO-1], **Chapter 1** Your boss has asked you to prepare a feasibility report to determine whether the company should advertise its custom-crafted cabinetry in the weekly neighborhood newspaper. Based on your primary research, you think it should. As you draft the introduction to your report, however, you discover that the survey administered to the neighborhood newspaper subscribers was flawed. Several of the questions were poorly written and misleading. You used the survey results, among other findings, to justify your recommendation. The report is due in three days. What actions might you want to take, if any, before you complete your report?

11-18. Completing: Producing Formal Reports [LO-4] You are president of the Friends of the Library, a nonprofit group that raises funds and provides volunteers to support your local library. Every February, you send a report of the previous year's activities and accomplishments to the County Arts Council, which provides an annual grant of $1,000 toward your group's summer reading festival. Now it's February 6, and you've completed your formal report. Here are the highlights:

- Back-to-school book sale raised $2,000.
- Holiday craft fair raised $1,100.
- Promotion and prizes for summer reading festival cost $1,450.
- Materials for children's program featuring local author cost $125.
- New reference databases for library's career center cost $850.
- Bookmarks promoting library's website cost $200.

Write a letter of transmittal to Erica Maki, the council's director. Because she is expecting this report, you can use the direct approach. Be sure to express gratitude for the council's ongoing financial support.

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Read the latest issue of the *International Trade Update* on the U.S. International Trade Administration's website (**www.trade.gov/publications/ita-newsletter**). What techniques does the report use to help readers find their way through the document or direct readers to other sources of information? What techniques are used to highlight key points in the document? Are these techniques effective? Using whatever medium your instructor requests, write a brief summary of your analysis.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at **websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that offers advice on creating visuals for business reports. Write a brief email message to your instructor or a post for your class blog, describing the item that you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Cases

For all cases, feel free to use your creativity to make up any details you need in order to craft effective messages.

Short Reports

REPORT-WRITING SKILLS/ PORTFOLIO BUILDER

11-19. Message Strategies: Informational Reports [LO-1], [LO-4] Health-care costs are a pressing concern at every level in the economy. Many companies are responding with *wellness programs* and other efforts to encourage employees to live healthier lifestyles and thereby reduce their need for expensive health care.

Your task: Research the wellness efforts at any U.S. company and draft a brief report (one to two pages) that describes the company's strategy, the details of the wellness program, and any measured outcomes that reflect its success or failure.

REPORT-WRITING SKILLS

11-20. Message Strategies: Informational Reports [LO-1], [LO-4] Success in any endeavor doesn't happen all at once. For example, success in college is built one quarter or semester at a time, and the way to succeed in the long term is to make sure you succeed in the short term. After all, even a single quarter or semester of college involves a significant investment of time, money, and energy.

Your task: Imagine you work for a company that has agreed to send you to college full-time, paying all your educational expenses. You are given complete freedom in choosing your courses, as long as you graduate by an agreed-upon date. All your employer asks in return is that you develop your business skills and insights as much as possible so that you can make a significant contribution to the company when you return to full-time work after graduation. To make sure that you are using your time—and your company's money—wisely, the company requires a brief personal activity report at the end of every quarter or semester (whichever your school uses). Write a brief informational report that you can email to your instructor, summarizing how you spent your quarter or semester. Itemize the classes you took, how much time you spent studying and working on class projects, whether you got involved in campus activities and organizations that help you develop leadership or communication skills, and what you learned that you can apply in a business career. (For the purposes of this assignment, your time estimates don't have to be precise.)

REPORT-WRITING SKILLS

11-21. Message Strategies: Informational Reports [LO-1], [LO-4] You've been in your new job as human resources director for only a week, and already you have a major personnel crisis on your hands. Some employees in the marketing department got their hands on a confidential salary report and learned that, on average, marketing employees earn less than engineering employees. In addition, several top performers in the engineering group make significantly more than anybody in marketing. The report was instantly passed around the company by email, and now everyone is discussing the situation. You'll deal with the data security issue later; for now, you need to address the dissatisfaction in the marketing group.

Case Table 11.1 lists the salary and employment data you were able to pull from the employee database. You also had the opportunity to interview the engineering and marketing directors to get their opinions on the pay situation; their responses are listed in Case Table 11.2.

Your task: The CEO has asked for a short report summarizing whatever data and information you have on engineering and marketing salaries. Feel free to offer your own interpretation of the situation as well (make up any information you need), but keep in mind that because you are a new manager with almost no experience in the company, your opinion might not have a lot of influence.

REPORT-WRITING SKILLS/ PORTFOLIO BUILDER

11-22. Message Strategies: Analytical Reports [LO-1], [LO-5] Anyone looking at the fragmented 21st-century landscape of media and entertainment options might be surprised to learn that poetry was once a dominant medium for not only creative literary expression but also philosophical, political, and even scientific discourse. Alas, such is no longer the case.

CASE TABLE 11.1 Selected Employment Data for Engineers and Marketing Staff

Employment Statistic	Engineering Department	Marketing Department
Average number of years of work experience	18.2	16.3
Average number of years of experience in current profession	17.8	8.6
Average number of years with company	12.4	7.9
Average number of years of college education	6.9	4.8
Average number of years between promotions	6.7	4.3
Salary range	$58–165k	$45–85k
Median salary	$77k	$62k

CASE TABLE 11.2 Summary Statements from Department Director Interviews

Question	Engineering Director	Marketing Director
1. Should engineering and marketing professionals receive roughly similar pay?	In general, yes, but we need to make allowances for the special nature of the engineering profession. In some cases, it's entirely appropriate for an engineer to earn more than a marketing person.	Yes.
2. Why or why not?	Several reasons: (1) Top engineers are extremely hard to find, and we need to offer competitive salaries; (2) the structure of the engineering department doesn't provide as many promotional opportunities, so we can't use promotions as a motivator the way marketing can; (3) many of our engineers have advanced degrees, and nearly all pursue continuous education to stay on top of the technology.	Without marketing, the products the engineers create wouldn't reach customers, and the company wouldn't have any revenue. The two teams make equal contributions to the company's success.
3. If we decide to balance pay between the two departments, how should we do it?	If we do anything to cap or reduce engineering salaries, we'll lose key people to our competitors.	If we can't increase payroll immediately to raise marketing salaries, the only fair thing to do is freeze raises in engineering and gradually raise marketing salaries over the next few years.

Your task: With a team of fellow students, your challenge is to identify opportunities to increase sales of poetry—any kind of poetry, in any medium. The following suggestions may help you get started:

- Research recent bestsellers in the poetry field and try to identify why they have been popular.
- Interview literature professors, professional poets, librarians, publishers, and bookstore personnel.
- Consider art forms and venues in which verse plays an essential role, including popular music and poetry slams.
- Conduct surveys and interviews to find out why consumers don't buy more poetry.
- Review professional journals that cover the field of poetry, including *Publishers Weekly* and *Poets & Writers*, from both business and creative standpoints.

Summarize your findings in a brief formal report; assume that your target readers are executives in the publishing industry.

Long Reports

REPORT-WRITING SKILLS/ PORTFOLIO BUILDER

11-23. Message Strategies: Analytical Reports [LO-1] Like any other endeavor that combines factual analysis and creative free thinking, the task of writing business plans generates a range of opinions.

Your task: Find at least six sources of advice on writing successful business plans (focus on start-up businesses that are likely to seek outside investors). Use at least two books, two magazine or journal articles, and two websites or blogs. Analyze the advice you find and identify points where most or all the experts agree and points where they don't agree. Wherever you find points of significant disagreement, identify which opinion you find most convincing and explain why. Summarize your findings in a brief formal report.

REPORT-WRITING SKILLS

11-24. Message Strategies: Informational Reports [LO-1], [LO-4] Your company is the largest private employer in your metropolitan area, and the 43,500 employees in your workforce have a tremendous impact on local traffic. A group of city and county transportation officials recently approached your CEO with a request to explore ways to reduce this impact. The CEO has assigned you the task of analyzing the workforce's transportation habits and attitudes as a first step toward identifying potential solutions. He's willing to consider anything from subsidized bus passes to company-owned shuttle buses to telecommuting, but the decision requires a thorough understanding of employee transportation needs. Case Tables 11.3 through 11.7 summarize data you collected in an employee survey.

Your task: Present the results of your survey in an informational report, using the data provided in the tables.

CASE TABLE 11.3 Employee Carpool Habits

Frequency of Use: Carpooling	Portion of Workforce
Every day, every week	10,138 (23%)
Certain days, every week	4,361 (10%)
Randomly	983 (2%)
Never	28,018 (64%)

CASE TABLE 11.4 Use of Public Transportation

Frequency of Use: Public Transportation	Portion of Workforce
Every day, every week	23,556 (54%)
Certain days, every week	2,029 (5%)
Randomly	5,862 (13%)
Never	12,053 (28%)

CASE TABLE 11.5 Effect of Potential Improvements to Public Transportation

Which of the Following Would Encourage You to Use Public Transportation More Frequently? (check all that apply)	Portion of Respondents
Increased perception of safety	4,932 (28%)
Improved cleanliness	852 (5%)
Reduced commute times	7,285 (41%)
Greater convenience: fewer transfers	3,278 (18%)
Greater convenience: more stops	1,155 (6%)
Lower (or subsidized) fares	5,634 (31%)
Nothing could encourage me to take public transportation	8,294 (46%)

Note: This question was asked of respondents who use public transportation randomly or never, a subgroup that represents 17,915 employees, or 41 percent of the workforce.

CASE TABLE 11.6 Distance Traveled to/from Work

Distance You Travel to Work (one way)	Portion of Workforce
Less than 1 mile	531 (1%)
1–3 miles	6,874 (16%)
4–10 miles	22,951 (53%)
11–20 miles	10,605 (24%)
More than 20 miles	2,539 (6%)

CASE TABLE 11.7 Is Telecommuting an Option?

Does the Nature of Your Work Make Telecommuting a Realistic Option?	Portion of Workforce
Yes, every day	3,460 (8%)
Yes, several days a week	8,521 (20%)
Yes, random days	12,918 (30%)
No	18,601 (43%)

REPORT-WRITING SKILLS/ PORTFOLIO BUILDER

11-25. Message Strategies: Analytical Reports [LO-1], [LO-5] As a college student and an active consumer, you may have considered one or more of the following questions at some point in the past few years:

- What criteria distinguish the top-rated MBA programs in the country? How well do these criteria correspond to the needs and expectations of business? Are the criteria fair for students, employers, and business schools?
- Which of three companies you might like to work for has the strongest corporate ethics policies?
- What will the music industry look like in the future? What's next after online stores such as Apple's iTunes and streaming services such as Spotify?
- Which industries and job categories are forecast to experience the greatest growth—and therefore the greatest demand for workers—in the next 10 years?
- What has been the impact of Starbucks's aggressive growth on small, independent coffeeshops? On midsized chains or franchises? In the United States or in another country?
- How large is the "industry" of major college sports? How much do the major football or basketball programs contribute—directly or indirectly—to other parts of a typical university?
- How much have minor league sports—baseball, hockey, arena football—grown in small- and medium-market cities? What is the local economic impact when these municipalities build stadiums and arenas?

Your task: Answer one of the preceding questions using information from secondary research sources. Be sure to document your sources using the format your instructor indicates. Give conclusions and offer recommendations where appropriate.

Proposals

PROPOSAL-WRITING SKILLS/ PORTFOLIO BUILDER/TEAM SKILLS

11-26. Message Strategies: Proposals [LO-1] Either to create opportunities in a slow job market or to avoid traditional employment altogether, some college graduates create their own jobs as independent freelancers or as entrepreneurs launching new companies.

Your task: Assemble a team of classmates as your instructor directs, then brainstorm all the services you could perform for local businesses. Identify as many services as you can that are related to you and your teammates' colleges majors and career interests, but also include anything you are willing to do to generate revenue. Next, identify a specific company that might have some opportunities for you. Outline and draft a short proposal that describes what your team can do for this company, how the company would benefit from your services, why you're the right people for the job, and how much you propose to charge for your services. Remember that this is an unsolicited proposal, so be sure introduce your proposal accordingly.

PROPOSAL-WRITING SKILLS/ PORTFOLIO BUILDER

11-27. Message Strategies: Proposals [LO-1], [LO-4] Presentations can make—or break—careers and companies. A good presentation can bring in millions of dollars in new sales or fresh investment capital. A bad presentation might cause any number of troubles, from turning away potential customers to upsetting fellow employees to derailing key projects. To help business professionals plan, create, and deliver more-effective presentations, you offer a three-day workshop that covers the essentials of good presentations:

- Understanding your audience's needs and expectations
- Formulating your presentation objectives
- Choosing an organizational approach
- Writing openings that catch your audience's attention
- Creating effective graphics and slides
- Practicing and delivering your presentation
- Leaving a positive impression on your audience
- Avoiding common mistakes with presentation slides
- Making presentations online using webcasting tools
- Handling questions and arguments from the audience
- Overcoming the top 10 worries of public speaking (including *How can I overcome stage fright?* and *I'm not the performing type; can I still give an effective presentation?*)

Workshop benefits. Students will learn how to prepare better presentations in less time and deliver them more effectively.

Who should attend. Top executives, project managers, employment recruiters, sales professionals, and anyone else who gives important presentations to internal or external audiences.

Your qualifications. 18 years of business experience, including 14 years in sales and 12 years of public speaking. Experience speaking to audiences as large as 5,000 people. More than a dozen speech-related articles published in professional journals. Have conducted successful workshops for nearly 100 companies.

Workshop details. Three-day workshop (9 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.) that combines lectures, practice presentations, and both individual and group feedback. Minimum number of students: 6. Maximum number of students per workshop: 12.

Pricing. The cost is $3,500, plus $100 per student; 10 percent discount for additional workshops.

Other information. Each attendee will have the opportunity to give three practice presentations ranging in duration from 3 to 5 minutes. Everyone is encouraged to bring PowerPoint files containing slides from actual business presentations. Each attendee will also receive a workbook and a digital video recording of his or her final class presentation on DVD. You'll also be available for phone or email coaching for six months after the workshop.

Your task: Identify a company in your local area that might be a good candidate for your services. Learn more about the company by visiting its website so you can personalize your proposal. Using the information listed above, prepare a sales proposal that explains the benefits of your training and what students can expect during the workshop.

PROPOSAL-WRITING SKILLS/ PORTFOLIO BUILDER/TEAM SKILLS

11-28. Message Strategies: Proposals [LO-1], [LO-4] It seems like everybody in your firm is frustrated. On the one hand, top executives complain about the number of lower-level employees who want promotions but just don't seem to "get it" when it comes to dealing with customers and the public, recognizing when to speak out and when to be quiet, knowing how to push new ideas through the appropriate channels, and performing other essential but difficult-to-teach tasks. On the other hand, ambitious employees who'd like to learn more feel that they have nowhere to turn for career advice from people who've been there. In between, a variety of managers and midlevel executives are overwhelmed by the growing number of mentoring requests they're getting, sometimes from employees they don't even know.

You've been assigned the challenge of proposing a formal mentoring program—and a considerable challenge it is:

- The number of employees who want mentoring relationships far exceeds the number of managers and executives willing and able to be mentors; how will you select people for the program?
- The people most in demand for mentoring also tend to be some of the busiest people in the organization.
- After several years of budget cuts and staff reductions, the entire company feels overworked; few people can imagine adding another recurring task to their seemingly endless to-do lists.
- What's in it for the mentors? Why would they be motivated to help lower-level employees?
- How will you measure the success or failure of the mentoring effort?

Your task: With a team assigned by your instructor, identify potential solutions to the issues (make up any information you need) and draft a proposal to the executive committee for a formal, companywide mentoring program that would match selected employees with successful managers and executives.

PROPOSAL-WRITING SKILLS

11-29. Message Strategies: Proposals [LO-1] Select a product you are familiar with and imagine that you are the manufacturer trying to get a local retail outlet to carry it.

Your task: Research the product online and in person if possible to learn as much as you can about it, then write an unsolicited sales proposal in letter format to the owner (or manager) of the store, proposing that the item be stocked. Use the information you gathered on the product's features and benefits to make a compelling case for why the product would be a strong seller for the store. Then make up some reasonable figures, highlighting what the item costs, what it can be sold for, and what services your company provides (return of unsold items, free replacement of unsatisfactory items, necessary repairs, and so on).

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from real-timeupdates.com/bce8; select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 11. Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Quotation Marks, Parentheses, Ellipses, Underscores, and Italics

Review Sections 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, and 3.2 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

For the following items, insert quotation marks, parentheses, and ellipses as needed, and add italics wherever necessary. Answers to these exercises appear on page 492.

11-30. Be sure to read How to Sell by Listening in this month's issue of Fortune.

11-31. Her response see the attached memo is disturbing.

11-32. Contact is an overused word.

11-33. We will operate with a skeleton staff during the holiday break December 21 through January 2.

11-34. The SBP's next conference, the bulletin noted, will be held in Minneapolis.

11-35. Sara O'Rourke a reporter from The Wall Street Journal will be here on Thursday.

11-36. I don't care why you didn't fill my order; I want to know when you'll fill it.

11-37. The term up in the air means undecided.

11-38. Her assistant the one who just had the baby won't be back for four weeks.

11-39. Ask not what your country can do for you is the beginning of a famous quotation from John F. Kennedy.

11-40. Whom do you think Time magazine will select as its Person of the Year?

11-41. Do you remember who said And away we go?

11-42. Refinements in robotics may prove profitable. More detail about this technology appears in Appendix A.

11-43. The resignation letter begins Since I'll never regain your respect and goes on to explain why that's true.

11-44. You must help her distinguish between i.e. which means that is and e.g. which means for example.

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

11-45. For the lst time, thank's to largely deals with the big chains like Stop & Shop, Sheila's Snak Treetz are showing a profit.

11-46. The premise for broadband, sometimes called simply 'high speed Internet', is that consumers need a more fast pipeline for getting digital information in our homes.

11-47. After moving into they're own factory, the Anderson's found theirselves in the market for an oven with airflow controls.

11-48. Cash-strapped entrepreneurs have learned penny–pinching, cost-cutting, credit-stretching techniques.

11-49. Designs in the Rough send out some 7 million catalogs a year yet until recently the company did'nt need a warehouse and they hadn't hardly any carrying costs.

11-50. Chisel estimates that 70 percent of the US population live within a 10 minute drive of a Starbucks.

11-51. Nestle Waters North America are the exclusive importer of globally-recognized brands such as: Perrier and Vittel from France and, S. Pelligrino from Italy,

11-52. The U.S. hispanic community; the largest Minority Group in the country; commands a impressive total purchasing power estimated at more than $500 billion dollars.

11-53. We conducted a six-month pilot in Chicago, to insure the affectiveness of the program.

11-54. A series of 7-Eleven television spots help make the term brain freeze part of every day American language.

11-55. The ad agencies accounts include the following consumer-brands; Walmart, Southwest airlines, FedEx, Land Rover, and Krispy Kreme.

11-56. PetSmart allows pets and their humans to together stroll the aisles of its stores; the number one Specialty Retailer of pet supplies.

11-57. Signature Fruit Co. has confirmed its closing it's Gridley, CA peach plant this Fall.

11-58. To unite the company's 91 franchisees around a common corporate identity WingsToGo have setup a corporate intranet.

11-59. It would be well for you to contract with an Internet service provider—a ISP to both run and to maintain your website.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C), or download the document and make the corrections in your word processing software.

Memco Construction
187 W. Euclid Avenue,
Glenview, ILL 60025
www.memco.com
April 19, 2020
PROJECT: IDOT Letting Item #83 Contract No. 79371 DuPage County

Dear Mr. Estes—

Memco Construction is pleased to submit a road construction proposal for the above project. Our company has been providing quality materials and subcontracting services for highway reconstruction projects for over twenty-three years. Our most recent jobs in Illinois have included Illinois State Route 60 resurfacing, and reconstructing Illinois tollway 294.

Should you have any questions about this proposal please contact me at the company 847-672-0344, extension #30) or by email at kbeirsdorf@memcocon.com.

Based on the scope of the work outlined: the total cost of this job is projected by us to run ninety-nine thousand, two hundred eighty-three dollars. Because material quantities can vary once a project gets underway a separate page will be attached by us to this letter detailing our per-unit fees. Final charges will be based on the exact quantity of materials used for the job, and anything that accedes this estimate will be added of course.

Our proposal assumes that the following items will be furnished by other contractors (at no cost to Memco). All forms, earthwork and clearing; All prep work; Water at project site; Traffic control setup, devices, and maintenance—Location for staging, stockpiling, and storing material and equipment at job sight.

If we win this bid, we are already to begin when the apropriate contracts have been signed by us and by you.

If you've have any questions, contact me at the phone number listed below.

Sincerely,
Kris Beiersdorf
Memco Construction
Office: (847) 352-9742, ext. 30
Fax: (847) 352-6595
Email: kbeiersdorf@memco.com

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

11-60. Why is it important to write clear, descriptive headings and link titles with online content, as opposed to headings that use clever wordplay? [LO-2]

11-61. For providing illustration in a report or proposal, when is a diagram a better choice than a photograph? [LO-3]

Endnotes

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12 Developing and Delivering Business Presentations

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Highlight the importance of presentations in your business career, and explain how to adapt the planning step of the three-step process to presentations.
2. Describe the tasks involved in developing a presentation.
3. Describe the six major design and writing tasks required to enhance your presentation with effective visuals.
4. Outline four key tasks involved in completing a presentation.
5. Describe four important aspects of delivering a presentation in today's social media environment.

MyLab Business Communication

If your instructor is using MyLab Business Communication, visit **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for videos, simulations, and writing exercises.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"As you play the instrument that is your body, that contains your thoughts, you can remake how it experiences the world around you."
—Gina Barnett, public speaking coach

In her coaching work with corporate executives, Gina Barnett helps presenters improve their performances by viewing their bodies as instruments of communication, just as musicians view their instruments.

For example, it's easy to think a smile is merely a *reaction* to a pleasant thought or experience, but smiles can also instigate positive thoughts. The physical act of smiling can trigger improvements in your own mood and in the moods of people watching you. A warm smile helps the audience connect with you and conveys your confidence in yourself and in your message. Smiling also forces you to relax your jaw and facial muscles, which helps to release pent-up stress and improve your vocal clarity and projection. With so many benefits to offer, the simple act of smiling as you step onto the stage can launch your presentation on a strong note.[1]

Max Gordon/Barnett International

Communication coach Gina Barnett advises speakers to learn how to read and use their body's signals to become more relaxed, open, and engaging.

Planning a Presentation

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Highlight the importance of presentations in your business career, and explain how to adapt the planning step of the three-step process to presentations.

Presentations give the opportunity to display all your communication skills.

Creating a high-quality presentation for an important event can take days, so be sure to allow enough time.

Presentations, delivered in person or online, offer important opportunities to display all your communication skills, including research, planning, writing, visual design, and interpersonal and nonverbal communication. Presentations also let you demonstrate your ability to think on your feet, grasp complex business issues, and handle challenging situations—all attributes that executives look for when searching for talented employees to promote.

Planning presentations is much like planning other business messages: You analyze the situation, gather information, select the best media and channels, and organize the information. Be aware that preparing a professional-quality business presentation can take a considerable amount of time. Presentation designer and trainer Nancy Duarte offers this rule of thumb: For a formal, 1-hour presentation, allow 36 to 90 hours to research, conceive, create, and practice.[2] Not every one-hour presentation justifies a week or two of preparation, of course, but important presentations certainly can.

ANALYZING THE SITUATION

As with written communications, analyzing the situation involves defining your purpose and developing an audience profile (see Table 12.1). The purpose of most of your presentations will be to inform or to persuade, although you may occasionally need to make a collaborative presentation, such as when you're leading a problem-solving or brainstorming session.

Learn as much as you can about the setting and circumstances of your presentation, from the audience's expectations to the seating arrangements.

In addition to following the audience analysis advice in Chapter 3, try to anticipate the likely emotional state of your audience members. Figure 12.1 offers tips for dealing with a variety of audience mindsets.

As you analyze the situation, also consider the circumstances. If some or all of the audience members will be in the same room with you, how will they be seated? Can you control the environment to minimize distractions? What equipment will you need? If you're presenting online, how will the meeting system you're using affect the audience's ability to see you and your presentation materials? Such variables can influence not only the style of your presentation but the content itself.

TABLE 12.1 Analyzing Audiences for Business Presentations

Task	Actions
To determine audience size and composition	• Estimate how many people will attend (in person and online). • Identify what they have in common and how they differ. • Analyze the mix of organizational positions, professions, language fluencies, and other demographic factors that could influence your content and delivery choices.
To predict the audience's probable reaction	• Analyze why audience members are attending the presentation. • Determine the audience's general attitude toward the topic: supportive, interested but neutral, uninterested, worried, or hostile. • Analyze your audience's likely mood when you speak to them. • Find out what kind of supporting information will help the audience accept and respond to your message: technical data, historical information, financial data, demonstrations, samples, and so on. • Consider whether the audience has any biases that might work against you. • Anticipate possible objections or questions.
To gauge the audience's experience	• Analyze whether everybody has the same background and level of understanding. • Determine what the audience already knows about the subject. • Consider whether the audience is familiar with the vocabulary you intend to use. • Analyze what the audience expects from you. • Think about the mix of general concepts and specific details you will need to present.

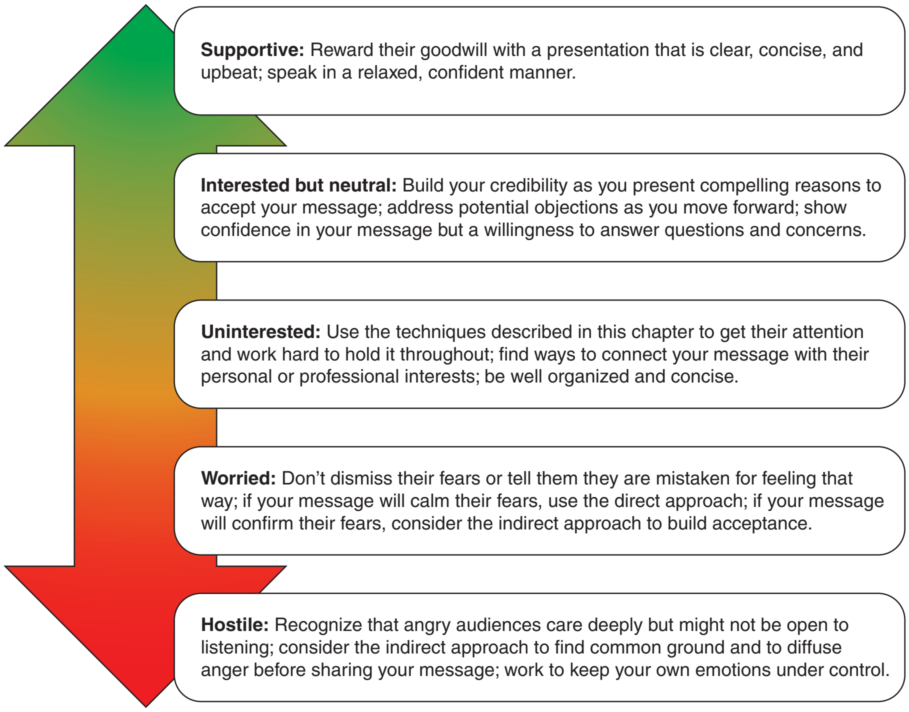

Figure 12.1 Planning for Various Audience Mindsets
Try to assess the emotional state of your audience ahead of time so you can plan your presentation approach accordingly.

SELECTING THE BEST MEDIA AND CHANNELS

For some presentations, you'll be expected to use whatever media and channels your audience, your manager, or the circumstances require. For example, you might be required to use specific presentation software and a conference room's built-in display system or your company's online meeting software.

For other presentations, though, you might be able to choose from an array of presentation modes, from live, in-person presentations to *webcasts* (online presentations that people either view live or download later from the web), screencasts (recordings of activity on computer displays with audio voiceover), or *twebinars* (the use of Twitter as a *backchannel*—see page 349—for real-time conversation during a web-based seminar[3]).

ORGANIZING A PRESENTATION

Linear presentations generally follow a fixed path from start to finish.

The possibilities for organizing a business presentation fall into two basic categories, *linear* or *nonlinear*. Linear presentations are like printed documents in the sense that they are outlined like conventional messages and follow a predefined flow from start to finish. The linear model is appropriate for speeches, technical and financial presentations, and other presentations in which you want to convey your message point by point or build up to a conclusion following logical steps.

Nonlinear presentations can move back and forth between topics and up and down in levels of detail.

In contrast, a nonlinear presentation doesn't flow in any particularly direction but rather gives the presenter the option to move back and forth between topics and up and down in terms of level of detail. Nonlinear presentations can be useful when you want to be able to show complicated relationships between multiple ideas or elements, to zoom in and out between the "big picture" and specific details, to explore complex visuals, or to have the flexibility to move from topic to topic in any order.

The difference between the two styles can be seen in the type of software typically used to create and deliver a presentation. Microsoft PowerPoint, Apple Keynote, Google Slides,

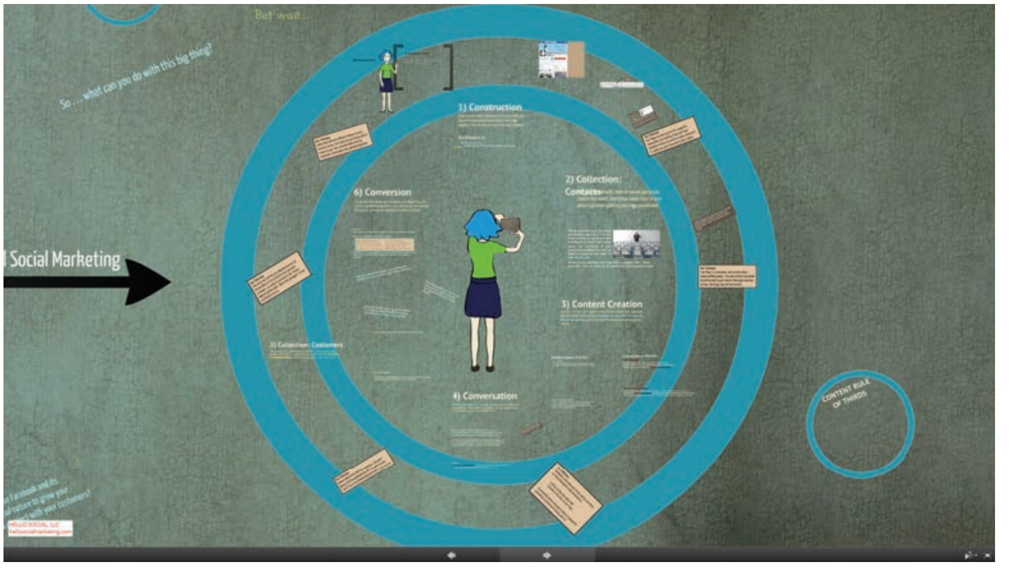

Figure 12.2 Nonlinear Presentations
Nonlinear presentations, particularly those using the cloud-based Prezi system, give the presenter more freedom to zoom in and out from the big picture to the details, and to cover topics in any order.
Source: "Nonlinear Presentations" copyright © by Matt Hollowell. Used by permission of Matt Hollowell.

and similar packages use sequences of individual slides, often referred to as a *slide deck*. They don't necessarily need to be presented in a strict linear order, because the presenter does have the option of jumping out of the predefined order, but in most presentations using slides, the speaker moves from start to finish in that order.

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Prezi is the best-known nonlinear presentation software and doesn't use the concept of individual slides. Instead, you start from a main screen, or canvas, which often presents the big-picture overview of your topic (see Figure 12.2). From there, you add individual objects (including blocks of text, photos, or videos) that convey specific information points. When you present, you can zoom in and out, discussing the individual objects and their relationship to the big picture and to each other. You can also establish a narrative flow by defining a path from one object to the next, which also lets people view the presentation on their own[4] (and effectively turns a Prezi presentation into a linear presentation).

Remember that presentations are not about flash and dazzle; they are about sharing ideas, information, and emotions with your audience.

Prezi is sometimes viewed as a more dynamic and engaging way to present, and it certainly has that potential. However, keep several points in mind if you have a choice of which approach to take and which software to use. First, match the tool to the task, not the other way around. A detailed technical discussion might need a linear presentation, whereas a free-form brainstorming session might benefit from a nonlinear approach. Second, if they are used well, software features can help you tell your story, but your story is what matters—not the software. If they are used poorly, software features only get in the way. (Overuse of zooming in Prezi is a good example.[5]) Third, in spite of their reputation, PowerPoint and other slide programs aren't limited to creating boring, linear flows of bullet points (see "Choosing Structured or Free-Form Slides" on page 337).

Defining Your Main Idea

If you can't express your main idea in a single sentence, you probably haven't defined it clearly enough.

Regardless of which overall approach you take, a successful presentation starts with a clear statement of the main idea you want to share with your audience. Start by composing a one-sentence summary that links your subject and purpose to your audience's frame of reference. Here are some examples:

> Convince management that reorganizing the technical support department will improve customer service and reduce employee turnover.
>
> Convince the board of directors that we should build a new plant in Texas to eliminate manufacturing bottlenecks and improve production quality.
>
> Address employee concerns regarding a new health-care plan by showing how the plan will reduce costs and improve the quality of their care.

Each of these statements puts a particular slant on the subject, one that directly relates to the audience's interests. By focusing on your audience's needs and using the "you" attitude, you help keep their attention and convince them your points are relevant.

Limiting Your Scope

Limiting your scope is important with any message, but it's particularly vital with presentations, for two reasons. First, for many presentations, you're expected to work within strict time limits. Second, the longer you speak, the more difficult it is to hold the audience's attention, and the more difficult it is for your listeners to retain your key points.[6]

Even if you don't have strict time limits, keep your presentations as short as possible to maintain audience interest.

The only sure way to know how much material you can cover in a given time is to practice your presentation after you complete it. As an alternative, if you're using conventional structured slides (see pages 338–339), you can figure on three or four minutes per slide as a rough guide.[7] Of course, be sure to factor in time for introductions, coffee breaks, demonstrations, question-and-answer sessions, and anything else that takes away from your speaking time.

The only sure way to measure the length of your presentation is to complete a practice run.

Approaching time constraints as a creative challenge can actually help you develop more effective presentations. Limitations can force you to focus on the essential message points that are important to your audience.[8]

Choosing Your Approach

With a well-defined main idea to guide you and a clear notion of the scope of your presentation, you can begin to arrange your message. If you have 10 minutes or less, consider organizing your presentation much as you would a letter or other brief message: Use the direct approach if the subject involves routine information or good news, and use the indirect approach if the subject involves bad news or persuasion. Plan your introduction to arouse interest and to give a preview of what's to come. For the body of the presentation, be prepared to explain the who, what, when, where, why, and how of your topic. In the final section, review the points you've made and close with a statement that will help your audience remember the subject of your speech (see Figure 12.3 on the next page).

Organize short presentations the same way you would a letter or other brief written message; organize long presentations as you would a report or proposal.

Longer presentations are often organized more like reports. If the purpose is to motivate or inform, you'll typically use the direct approach and a structure imposed naturally by the subject: comparison, importance, sequence, chronology, geography, or category (as discussed in Chapter 10). If your purpose is to analyze, persuade, or collaborate, organize your material around conclusions and recommendations or around a logical argument. Use the direct approach if the audience is receptive and the indirect approach if you expect resistance.

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No matter what the length, look for opportunities to integrate storytelling into the structure of your presentation. The dramatic tension (not knowing what will happen to the "hero") at the heart of effective storytelling is a great way to capture and keep the audience's attention.

Using a storytelling model can be a great way to catch and hold the audience's attention.

Progress Update: August 2020

Purpose: To update the Executive Committee on our product development schedule.

I. Review goals and progress.
   A. Mechanical design:
      1. Goal: 100%
      2. Actual: 80%
      3. Reason for delay: Unanticipated problems with case durability
   B. Software development:
      1. Goal: 50%
      2. Actual: 60%
   C. Material sourcing:
      1. Goal: 100%
      2. Actual: 45% (and materials identified are at 140% of anticipated costs)
      3. Reason for delay: Purchasing is understaffed and hasn't been able to research sources adequately.
II. Discuss schedule options.
   A. Option 1: Reschedule product launch date.
   B. Option 2: Launch on schedule with more expensive materials.
III. Suggest goals for next month.
IV. Q&A

Figure 12.3 Effective Outline for a 10-Minute Presentation
Here is an outline of a short presentation that updates management on the status of a key project. The presenter has some bad news to deliver, so she opted for an indirect approach to lay out the reasons for the delay before sharing the news of the schedule slip.

Preparing Your Outline

In addition to planning your speech, a presentation outline helps you plan your speaking notes.

An outline helps you organize your message, and it serves as the foundation for delivering your speech. Prepare your outline in several stages:[9]

- State your purpose and main idea, and then use these elements to guide the rest of your planning.
- Organize your major points and subpoints in logical order, expressing each major point as a single, complete sentence.
- Identify major points in the body first, then outline the introduction and close.
- Identify transitions between major points or sections, then write these transitions in full-sentence form.
- Prepare your bibliography or source notes; highlight those sources you want to identify by name during your talk.
- Choose a compelling title. Make it brief, action oriented, and focused on what you can do for the audience.[10]

You may find it helpful to create a simpler speaking outline from your planning outline.

Many speakers like to prepare both a detailed *planning outline* (see Figure 12.4) and a simpler *speaking outline* that provides all the cues and reminders they need in order to present their material. Follow these steps to prepare an effective speaking outline:[11]

- Start with the planning outline and then strip away anything you don't plan to say directly to your audience.
- Condense points and transitions to key words or phrases.
- Add delivery cues, such as places where you plan to pause for emphasis or use visuals.
- Arrange your notes on numbered cards or use the notes capability in your presentation software.

A clear statement of purpose helps the presenter stay focused on her message while she develops her outline.

OUR TRAVEL AND ENTERTAINMENT COSTS ARE OUT OF CONTROL

Purpose: To explain why Electrovision's travel and entertainment (T&E) costs are so high and to propose a series of changes to bring them under control.

The introduction starts by highlighting the problem she will address.

INTRODUCTION

I. Our T&E costs are way above average, and they pose a threat to the company's financial health; fortunately, we can fix the problem in four straightforward steps that could save as much as $6 million a year.

II. How we approached the investigation
   - A. We analyzed internal expense reports.
   - B. We compared our cost data with nationwide averages.
   - C. We analyzed published information on trends and cost-control suggestions.

The introduction continues with a description of the investigation she undertook; this will enhance her credibility by showing that the research was thorough and objective.

(Transition: This presentation reviews Electrovision's spending patterns, analyzes the impact on company profits, and recommends four steps for reducing the budget.)

BODY

I. Analysis of spending patterns
   - A. The amount we've been spending on T&E:
     1. Airfares, hotels, rental cars, restaurants, and entertainment totaled $16 million last year.
     2. T&E budget increased by 12 percent per year for the past five years.
   - B. Where the money goes:
     1. We took 3,390 trips last year at an average cost per trip of $4,725.
     2. Airfares and lodging represent 70 percent of T&E expenses.
   - C. How our spending compares with national averages:
     1. Facilities and customers spread from coast to coast force us to spend a lot on travel.
     2. However, we spend 125 percent more than the national average for every day of travel. (Source: Dow Jones)
   - D. Why do we spend so much?
     1. First-class travel has been viewed as compensation for the demands of extensive travel.
     2. The sales staff is encouraged to entertain clients.
     3. T&E costs are hard for managers to view and study.
     4. No one has central responsibility for controlling costs.

The organization of the body is clear and logical, moving from one key point to the next.

Part I of the body identifies the nature, scope, and causes of the problem.

(Transition: We need to control spending for two reasons: (1) profits are projected to be flat or declining over the next two years, and (2) hotel rates and airfares continue to rise sharply.)

(continued)

Figure 12.4 Effective Outline for a 30-Minute Presentation
This outline clearly identifies the purpose and the distinct points to be made in the introduction, body, and close. Notice also how the speaker has written her major transitions in full-sentence form to be sure she can clearly phrase these critical passages when it's time to speak.

Developing a Presentation

Although you don't usually write out a presentation word for word, you still engage in the writing process—developing your ideas, structuring support points, phrasing your transitions, and so on. Depending on the situation and your personal style, the eventual presentation might follow your initial words closely, or you might express your thoughts in fresh, spontaneous language.

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe the tasks involved in developing a presentation.

ADAPTING TO YOUR AUDIENCE

The size of your audience, the venue (in person or online), your subject, your purpose, your budget, and the time available for preparation all influence the style of your presentation. If you're speaking to a small group, particularly people you already know, you can use a casual style that encourages audience participation. A small conference room, with your audience seated around a table, may be appropriate. Use simple visuals and invite your audience to interject comments. Deliver your remarks in a conversational tone, using notes to jog your memory if necessary.

Adapting to your audience involves a number of questions, from speaking style to technology choices.

II. Impact on profits
   A. T&E costs continue to rise, as do other company costs.
   B. Revenue is projected to decline in coming years.
   C. Bottom line: We're headed for trouble.

(Transition: By implementing a number of reforms, management can expect to reduce Electrovision's T&E budget by as much as 40 percent. We can cut expenses in four ways.)

III. Solution
   A. We should institute tighter spending controls:
      1. Hire a travel manager to control costs and negotiate group discounts.
      2. Develop a formal, written policy to contain costs.
      3. Give departmental managers the data they need to make smarter decisions.
   B. We can reduce unnecessary travel and entertainment costs:
      1. Cut down on discretionary trips (seminars, etc.).
      2. Reduce the number of intracompany trips and employees sent on each trip.
      3. Encourage employees to economize.
   C. We can find lower travel rates:
      1. Negotiate corporate discounts.
      2. Plan trips more carefully to take advantage of lower fares.
   D. We can replace some travel with technological alternatives:
      1. Conference calls
      2. Videoconferences
      3. Other possibilities
   E. Potential impact of all these changes: As much as $6 million in reduced costs (Source: American Express)

(Transition: This presentation reviews Electrovision's spending patterns, analyzes the impact on company profits, and recommends four steps for reducing the budget.)

CLOSE

I. We spend more on T&E than we should
II. Four fairly obvious steps will yield significant cost savings
   A. Establish tighter controls
   B. Rein in unnecessary T&E costs
   C. Find lower travel rates
   D. Reduce travel by using technological alternatives

Part II of the body emphasizes the seriousness of the problem.

The logical organization continues throughout the body of her presentation.

Part III of the body provides the four-step solution mentioned in the introduction, then makes a recommendation for implementing the steps.

The close restates the four recommended steps.

Figure 12.4 Effective Outline for a 30-Minute Presentation (*continued*)

If you're addressing a large audience or if the event is important, establish a more formal atmosphere. During formal presentations, speakers are often on a stage or platform, standing behind a lectern and using a microphone so that their remarks can be heard throughout the room or captured for broadcasting or webcasting.

MOBILE APP
Haiku Deck lets you create and present from your (iOS) phone or tablet.

CRAFTING PRESENTATION CONTENT

Like written documents, presentations should have three distinct phases: the introduction, the body, and the close.

Presentation Introduction

An effective introduction fires up the audience, establishes your credibility, and prepares the audience for the body of your presentation.

A good introduction fires up the audience's interest in your topic, establishes your credibility, and prepares your listeners for the information and insights you have to share. That's a lot to accomplish in the first few minutes, so give yourself plenty of time to develop the words and visuals you'll use to get your presentation off to a great start.

Getting Your Audience's Attention Some subjects are naturally more interesting to some audiences than others. If your presentation involves the health, wealth, or happiness of your listeners, most people will be interested, regardless of how you begin. Other subjects call for more imagination. Here are seven ways to arouse audience interest:[12]

Think about creative ways to capture the audience's attention and interest with your opening remarks.

- Unite the audience around a common goal.
- Describe a problem your audience has or is worried about having.
- Tell a compelling story that illustrates an important and relevant point. If your entire presentation is structured as a story, of course, you'll want to keep the interest high by not giving away the ending yet.
- Pass around an example or otherwise appeal to listeners' senses.
- Ask a question that will get your audience thinking about your message.
- Share an intriguing, unexpected, or shocking detail.
- Open with an amusing observation about yourself, the subject matter of the presentation, or the circumstances surrounding the presentation—but make sure any humorous remarks are relevant, appropriate, and not offensive to anyone in the audience.

Regardless of which technique you choose, make sure you can give audience members a reason to care and to believe that the time they're about to spend listening to you will be worth their while.[13]

Building Your Credibility Audiences tend to decide within a few minutes whether you're worth listening to, so establishing your credibility quickly is vital.[14] If you're not a well-known expert or haven't already earned your audience's trust in other situations, you'll need to build credibility in your introduction. If someone else will introduce you, he or she can present your credentials. If you will be introducing yourself, keep your comments brief, but don't be afraid to mention your accomplishments. Your listeners will be curious about your qualifications, so tell them briefly who you are, why you're there, and how they'll benefit from listening to you. You might say something like this:

If someone else will be introducing you, ask this person to present your credentials in a way that relates to the audience's interest in your presentation.

> I'm Karen Whitney, a market research analyst with Information Resources Corporation. For the past five years, I've specialized in studying high-technology markets. Your director of engineering, John LaBarre, asked me to talk about recent trends in computer-aided design so that you'll have a better idea of how to direct your development efforts.

This speaker establishes credibility by tying her credentials to the purpose of her presentation. By mentioning her company's name, her specialization and position, and the name of the audience's boss, she lets her listeners know immediately that she is qualified to tell them something they need to know.

Previewing Your Message In addition to getting the audience's attention and establishing your credibility, a good introduction gives your audience a preview of what's ahead. Your preview should summarize the main idea of your presentation, identify major supporting points, and indicate the order in which you'll develop those points. By giving listeners the framework of your message, you help them process the information you'll be sharing. Of course, if you're using the indirect approach, you'll have to decide how much of your main idea to give away in the introduction.

Offer a preview to help your audience understand the importance, the structure, and the content of your message.

Presentation Body

The bulk of your presentation is devoted to a discussion of the main points in your outline. No matter what organizational pattern you're using, your goals are to make sure that the organization is clear and that you hold the audience's attention.

Connecting Your Ideas In written documents, you can show how ideas are related with a variety of design clues: headings, paragraph indentions, white space, and lists. However, with oral communication—particularly when you aren't using visuals for support—you have to rely primarily on spoken words to link various parts and ideas.

Use transitions to help your audience move from one idea to the next, particularly in longer presentations.

For the links between sentences and paragraphs, use one or two transitional words: *therefore*, *because*, *in addition*, *in contrast*, *moreover*, *for example*, *consequently*, *nevertheless*, or *finally*. To link major sections of a presentation, use complete sentences or paragraphs, such as "Now that we've reviewed the problem, let's take a look at some solutions." Every time you shift topics, be sure to stress the connection between ideas by summarizing what's been said and previewing what's to come. The longer your presentation, the more important your transitions. Your listeners need clear transitions to guide them to the most important points. Furthermore, they'll appreciate brief interim summaries to pick up any ideas they may have missed.

The most important way to hold an audience's attention is to show how your message relates to their individual needs and concerns.

Holding Your Audience's Attention A successful introduction will have grabbed your audience's attention; now the body of your presentation needs to hold that attention. Here are a few helpful tips for keeping the audience tuned in to your message:

- Keep relating your subject to your audience's needs.
- Don't overwhelm the audience with details, either in your slides or in your spoken message, particularly if you're presenting a complicated topic to people learning it for the first time.[15]
- Anticipate—and answer—likely questions as you move along so people don't get confused or distracted.
- Use clear, vivid language and throw in some variety; repeating the same words and phrases over and over puts people to sleep.
- Show how your subject is related to ideas that audience members already understand, and give people a way to categorize and remember your points.[16]
- If appropriate, encourage participation by asking for comments or questions.
- Illustrate your ideas with visuals, which enliven your message, help you connect with audience members, and help them remember your message more effectively (see "Enhancing Your Presentation with Effective Visuals").
- Invite questions. Don't assume that you need to hold off on questions until a formal question-and-answer (Q&A) session at the end of your talk. In fact, today's audiences tend to expect a more interactive give-and-take, so involve your audience members along the way.[17]

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Presentation Close

Your close has two tasks: making sure your listeners leave with your key points clear in their minds and putting your audience in the appropriate emotional state.

The close of a speech or presentation has two critical tasks to accomplish: making sure your listeners leave with the key points from your talk clear in their minds and putting your audience in the appropriate emotional state. For example, if the purpose of your presentation is to warn managers that their out-of-control spending threatens the company's survival, you want them to leave with that message ringing in their ears—and with enough concern for the problem to stimulate changes in their behavior.

When you repeat your main idea in the close, emphasize what you want your audience to do or to think.

Restating Your Main Points Use the close to succinctly restate your main points, emphasizing what you want your listeners to do or to think. For example, to close a presentation on your company's executive compensation program, you could repeat your specific recommendations and then conclude with a memorable statement to motivate your audience to take action:

> We can all be proud of the way our company has grown. However, if we want to continue that growth, we need to take four steps to ensure that our best people don't start looking for opportunities elsewhere:
>
> - First, increase the overall level of compensation
> - Second, establish a cash bonus program
> - Third, offer a variety of stock-based incentives
> - Fourth, improve our health insurance and pension benefits
>
> By taking these steps, we can ensure that our company retains the management talent it needs in order to face our industry's largest competitors.

By summarizing the key ideas, you improve the chance that your audience will leave with your message clearly in mind.

Ending with Clarity and Confidence If you've been successful with the introduction and body of your presentation, your listeners have the information they need, and they're in the right frame of mind to put that information to good use. Now you're ready to end on a strong note that confirms expectations about any actions or decisions that will follow the presentation—and to bolster the audience's confidence in you and your message one final time.

Plan your final statement carefully so you can end on a strong, positive note.

Some presentations require the audience to reach a decision or agree to take specific action, in which case the close should provide a clear wrap-up. If the audience reached agreement on an issue covered in the presentation, briefly review the consensus. If they didn't agree, make the lack of consensus clear by saying something like "We seem to have some fundamental disagreement on this question." Then be ready to suggest a method of resolving the differences.

If you expect any action to occur as a result of your speech, be sure to identify who is responsible for doing what. List the action items and, if possible within the time you have available, establish due dates and assign responsibility for each task.

Make sure your final remarks are memorable and expressed in a tone that is appropriate to the situation. For example, if your presentation is a persuasive request for project funding, you might emphasize the importance of this project and your team's ability to complete it on schedule and within budget. Expressing confident optimism sends the message that you believe in your ability to perform. Conversely, if your purpose is to alert the audience to a problem or risk, false optimism undermines your message.

Make sure your final remarks are memorable and have the right emotional tone.

Whatever final message is appropriate, think through your closing remarks carefully before stepping in front of the audience. You don't want to wind up on stage with nothing to say but "Well, I guess that's it."

Enhancing Your Presentation with Effective Visuals

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Describe the six major design and writing tasks required to enhance your presentation with effective visuals.

Slides and other visuals can improve the quality and impact of your presentation by creating interest, illustrating points that are difficult to explain through words alone, adding variety, and increasing the audience's ability to absorb and remember information.

Thoughtfully designed visuals create interest, illustrate complex points in your message, add variety, and help the audience absorb and remember information.

You can select from a variety of visuals to enhance presentations. Don't overlook "old-school" technologies such as overhead transparencies, chalkboards, whiteboards, and flipcharts—they can all have value in the right circumstances. However, most business presentation visuals are created using Microsoft PowerPoint, Apple Keynote, or Google Slides for linear presentations and Prezi for nonlinear presentations. Presentations slides and "Prezis" are easy to edit and update; you can add sound, photos, video, and animation; they can be incorporated into online meetings, webcasts, and *webinars* (a common term for web-based seminars); and you can record self-running presentations for trade shows, websites, and other uses.

Presentation slides are practically universal in business today, but their widespread use is not always welcome. You may have already heard the expression "death by PowerPoint," which refers to the agonizing experience of sitting through too many poorly conceived and poorly delivered slide shows. However, presentations don't have to be dull. In fact, they can be satisfying, educational, and invigorating for presenters and audiences alike. Keep the audience's needs in mind and focus on the satisfaction of sharing information and motivating people whose fortunes and futures you care about.

Focusing on making your presentations simple and authentic will help you avoid the "death by PowerPoint" stigma that presentations have in the minds of many professionals.

CHOOSING STRUCTURED OR FREE-FORM SLIDES

For linear presentations, the most important design choice you face when creating slides is whether to use conventional, bullet point–intensive *structured slides* or the looser, visually oriented *free-form slides* that many presentation specialists now advocate. Compare the two

Structured slides are usually based on templates that give all the slides in a presentation the same general look (which usually involves many bullet points); free-form slides are much less rigid and emphasize visual appeal.

rows of slides in Figure 12.5. The structured slides in the top row follow the same basic format throughout the presentation. In fact, they're based directly on the templates built into PowerPoint, which tend to feature lots of bullet points.

The free-form slides in the bottom row don't follow a rigid structure. However, free-form designs should not change randomly from one slide to the next. Even without the rigid pattern of a template, they should be unified by design elements such as color and font selections, as can be seen in Figures 12.5c and 12.5d. Also, note how Figure 12.5d combines visual and textual messages to convey the point about listening without criticizing. This complementary approach of pictures and words is a highlight of free-form design.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Structured Slides

Structured slides are often the best choice for project updates and other routine information presentations, particularly if the slides are intended to be used only once.

Structured slides have the advantage of being easy to create. You simply choose a design theme for the presentation, select a template for a new slide, and start typing. If you're in a schedule crunch, going the structured route might save the day because at least you'll have *something* ready to show. Given the speed and ease of creating them, structured slides can be a more practical choice for routine presentations such as project status updates.

Also, because more information can usually be packed onto each slide, carefully designed structured slides can be more effective at conveying complex ideas or sets of interrelated data to the right audiences. For example, if you are talking to a group of executives who must decide where to make budget cuts across the company's eight divisions, at

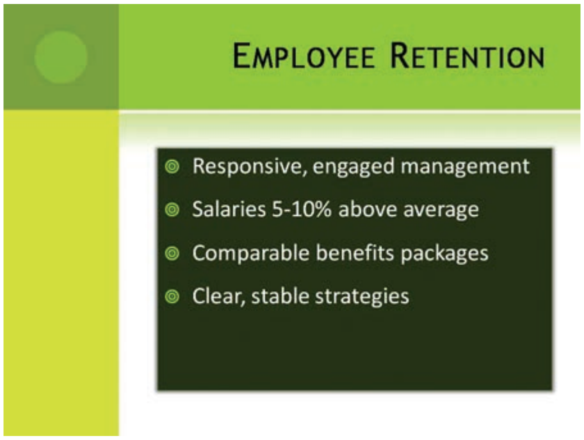
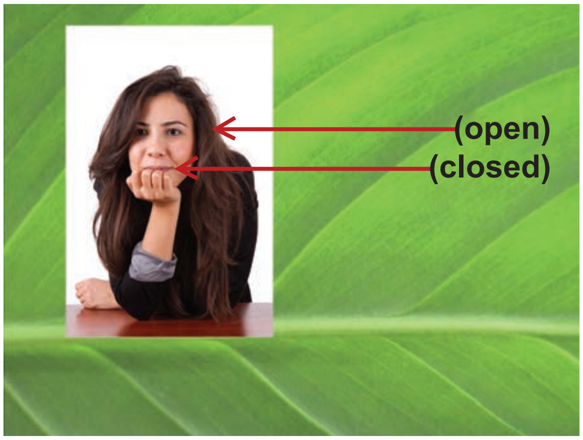


Figure 12.5a

Figure 12.5b

ESB Basic/Shutterstock

Figure 12.5c **Businesswoman holding five mini businesspeople in palm of her hand**



Yanugkelid/Shutterstock

Figure 12.5d **Young business woman resting against wooden table, listening on white background**

Figure 12.5 **Structured Versus Free-Form Slide Design**

Compare the rigid, predictable design of the two slides in the top row with the more dynamic free-form designs in the bottom row. Although the two free-form slides don't follow the same design structure, they are visually linked by color and font choices. (Note that Figure 12.6d is a humorous way of conveying the first bullet point in Figure 12.6b.)

some point in the presentation they will probably want to see summary data for all eight divisions on a single slide for easy comparison. Such a slide would be overcrowded by the usual definition, but this might be the only practical way to get a "big-picture" view of the situation. (The best solution is probably some high-level summary slides supported by a detailed handout, as "Creating Effective Handouts" on page 345 explains.)

The primary disadvantage of structured design is the mind-numbing effect that can be caused by too many text-heavy slides that all look alike. Slide after slide of dense, highly structured bullet points with no visual relief can put an audience to sleep.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Free-Form Slides

Free-form slide designs can overcome the drawbacks of text-heavy structured design by providing complementary visual and textual information and limiting the amount of information delivered on each slide. (Of course, well-designed structured slides can also meet these criteria, but the constraints of prebuilt templates make doing so more of a challenge.)

With appropriate imagery, free-form designs can also create a more dynamic and engaging experience for the audience. Given their ability to excite and engage, free-form designs are particularly good for motivational, educational, and persuasive presentations—particularly when the slides will be used multiple times and therefore compensate for the extra time and effort required to create them.

Well-designed free-form slides help viewers understand, process, and remember the speaker's message.

Free-form slides have several potential disadvantages, however. First, effectively designing slides with both visual and textual elements is more creatively demanding and more time-consuming than simply typing text into preformatted templates. The emphasis on visual content also requires more images, which take time to find.

Free-form slides can require more skill and time to create, and they put more demands on the speaker during the presentation.

Second, because far less textual information tends to be displayed on-screen, the speaker is responsible for conveying more of the content. Ideally, of course, this is how a presentation *should* work, but presenters sometimes find themselves in less-than-ideal circumstances, such as being asked to deliver a presentation that someone else created.

Third, if not handled carefully, the division of information into smaller chunks can make it difficult to present complex subjects in a cohesive, integrated manner. For instance, if you're discussing a business problem that has five interrelated causes, it might be helpful to insert a conventional bullet-point slide as a summary and reminder after discussing each problem on its own.

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE SLIDES

Despite complaints about "death by PowerPoint," the problem is not with the software itself (or with Apple Keynote or any other presentation program). It is just a tool and, like other tools, can be used well or poorly. Unfortunately, lack of design awareness, inadequate training, schedule pressures, and the instinctive response of doing things the way they've always been done can lead to ineffective slides and lost opportunities to really connect with audiences. And although Prezi is sometimes promoted as the antidote to PowerPoint, using Prezi does not guarantee you'll end up with an effective presentation; it, too, can be misused and wind up creating a barrier between the speaker and the audience.

This section offers helpful tips for creating slides that engage audiences without overwhelming them with too much information or poorly designed layouts.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

Design tips from presentation pro Garr Reynolds

Garr Reynolds brings Zen design instincts to his advice for visual design. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

Designing Slides Around a Key Visual

Rather than structuring slide content as headlines and bullet points, a more effective and more appealing approach is to structure around a key visual that helps organize and explain the points you are trying to make. For example, a pyramid suggests a hierarchical relationship, and a circular flow diagram emphasizes that the final stage in a process loops back to the beginning of the process. Figure 12.6 on the next page shows six of the many types of visual designs you can use to organize information on a slide.

Structuring a slide around a key visual helps organize and explain the points you are trying to make.

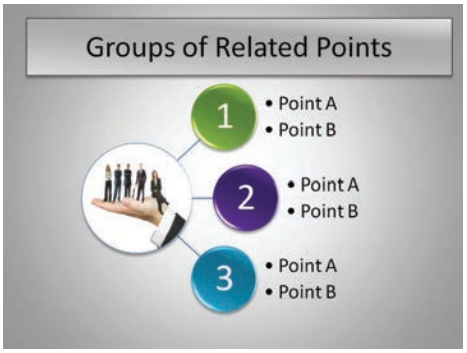


Figure 12.6a

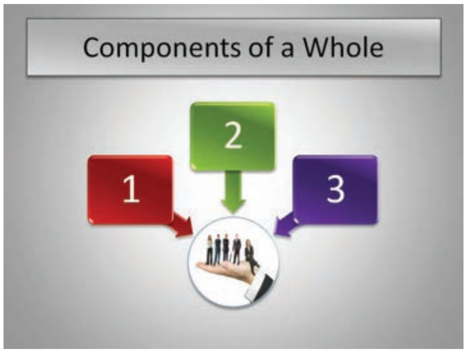


Figure 12.6b

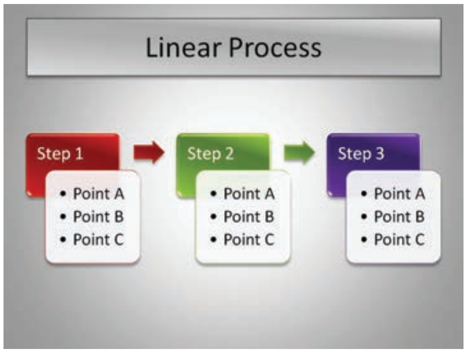


Figure 12.6c

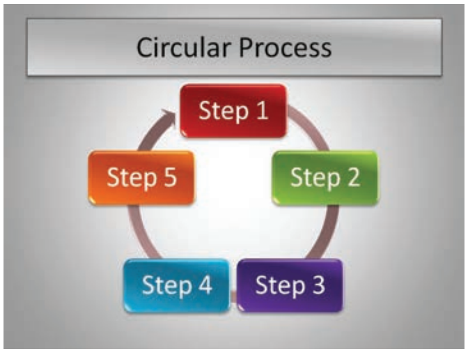


Figure 12.6d

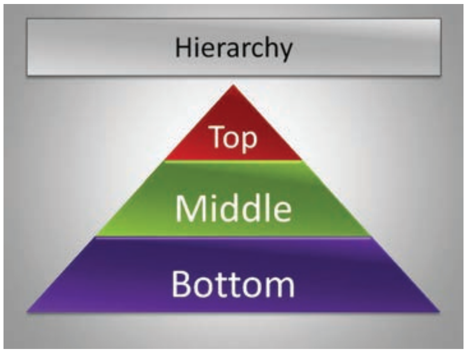


Figure 12.6e

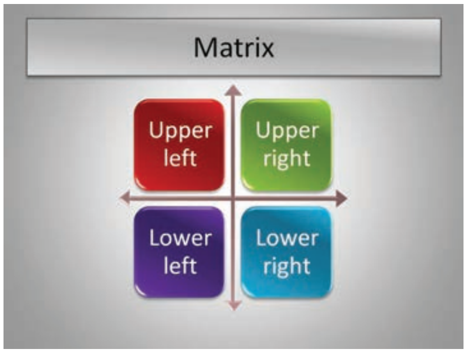


Figure 12.6f

Figure 12.6 Using a Key Visual to Organize Points on a Slide
Simple graphical elements such as these "SmartArt" images in Microsoft PowerPoint make it easy to organize slide content using a key visual. Whether you're trying to convey the relationship of ideas in a hierarchy, a linear process, a circular process, or just about any other configuration, a key visual can work in tandem with your written and spoken messages to help audiences get your message.

Writing Readable Content

Use slide text sparingly and only to emphasize key points, not to convey your entire message.

One of the most common mistakes beginners make—and one of the chief criticisms leveled at structured slide designs in general—is stuffing slides with too much text. Doing so overloads the audience with too much information too fast, takes attention away from the speaker by forcing people to read more, and requires the presenter to use smaller type.

Effective text slides supplement your words and help the audience follow the flow of ideas (see Figure 12.7). Use text to highlight key points, summarize and preview your message, signal major shifts in thought, illustrate concepts, or help create interest in your spoken message.

Creating Charts and Tables for Slides

Charts and tables for presentations need to be simpler than visuals for printed documents.

Charts and tables for presentations need to be simpler than visuals for printed documents. Detailed images that look fine on the printed page can be too dense and too complicated for presentations. Remember that your audience will view your slides from across the

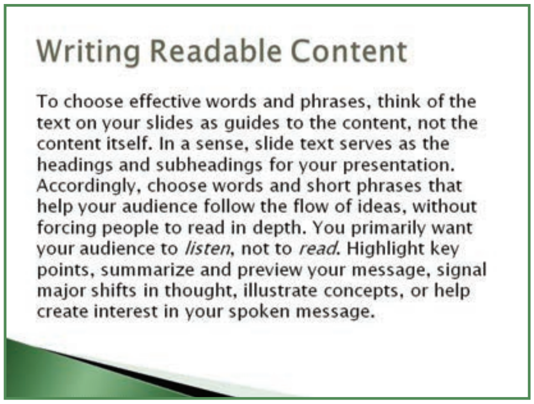


Figure 12.7a

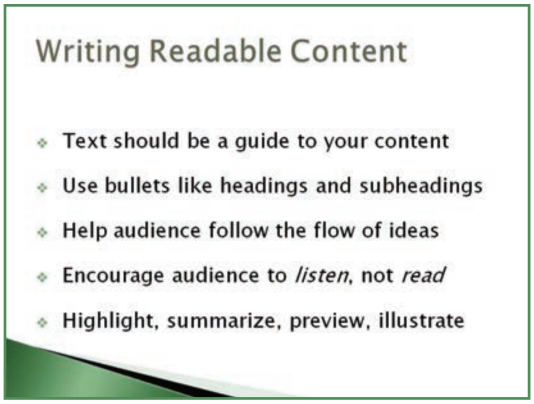


Figure 12.7b

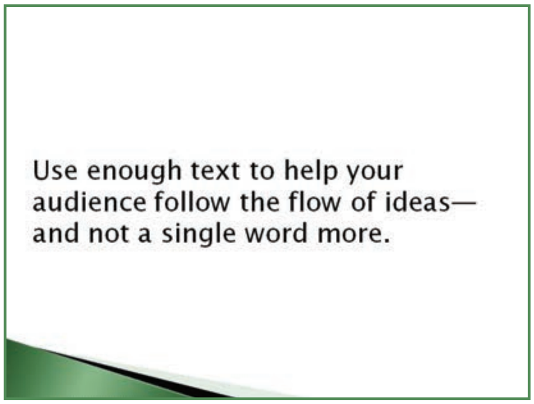


Figure 12.7c

Figure 12.7d

Figure 12.7 Writing Text for Slides
Effective text slides are clear, simple guides that help the audience understand and remember the speaker's message. Notice the progression toward simplicity in these slides: Figure 12.7a is a paragraph that would distract the audience for an extended period of time. Figure 12.7b offers concise, readable bullets, although too many slides in a row in this structured design would become tedious. Figure 12.7c distills the message down to a single thought that is complete on its own but doesn't convey all the information from the original and would need embellishment from the speaker. Figure 12.7d pushes this to the extreme, with only the core piece of the message to serve as an "exclamation point" for the spoken message. Figure 12.7c and especially Figure 12.7d could be even more powerful with a well-chosen visual that illustrates the notion of following a flow of ideas.

room—not from a foot or two away, as you do while you create them. Keep the level of detail to a minimum, eliminating anything that is not absolutely essential. If necessary, break information into more than one chart or table. It may also be useful to provide detailed versions of charts and tables in a handout.

Selecting Design Elements

As you create slides, pay close attention to the interaction of color, background and foreground designs, artwork, typefaces, and type styles.

- **Color.** Color is an expressive and powerful element of design, so take some time to choose the best colors for your slides. As Table 12.2 on the next page indicates, colors can evoke specific moods and connotations. Color has important functional uses as well, including improving the readability of text and highlighting important visual elements.
- **Background designs and artwork.** All visuals have two layers of design: the *background* and the *foreground*. The background is the equivalent of paper in a printed document, and the elements in the foreground are the essential content of your slides. If you use a design theme or template in your presentation software, it will apply the same background treatment to every slide. Whichever design theme you chose, make sure the background stays in the background and doesn't distract viewers or compete with the foreground. Some of the template designs in presentation software have backgrounds that are too distracting for serious business use.

Color is more than just decoration; colors themselves have meanings, based on both cultural experience and the relationships that you establish among the colors in your designs.

Make sure the background of your slides stays in the background; it should never get in the way of the informational elements in the foreground.

TABLE 12.2 Color and Emotion

Color	Emotional Associations (for U.S. audiences)	Potential Uses
Blue	Peaceful, soothing, tranquil, cool, trusting	Background for presentations (usually dark blue); a safe and conservative choice
White	Neutral, innocent, pure, wise, simple	Good choice for text displayed on a dark background
Yellow	Warm, bright, cheerful, enthusiastic	Primarily as a highlight color, such as text bullets and subheadings with a dark background
Red	Passionate, dangerous, active, painful	For promoting action or stimulating the audience; seldom used as a background ("in the red" specifically refers to financial losses)
Green	Assertive, prosperous, envious, relaxed, natural	Highlight and accent color (note that green symbolizes money in the United States but not in other countries)
Orange	Warm, dramatic	Useful to suggest energy and action
Gray	Dignified, serious, somber, practical	Providing a visually "quiet" background, enhancing contrast with brighter colors
Black	Serious, technical, formal	As either a functional or artistic color, depending on overall slide style

Sources: Based in part on "Choosing Colors for Your Presentation Slides," Think Outside the Slide, accessed 15 May 2017, www.thinkoutsidetheslide.com; Claudyne Wilder and David Fine, *Point, Click & Wow* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer, 1996), 63, 527.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY WATCHING THIS VIDEO

A low-tech approach to slide design

Nancy Duarte advises starting with the simplest tool imaginable, the humble sticky note. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

- **Foreground designs and artwork.** The foreground contains the unique text and graphic elements that make up each individual slide. Foreground elements can be either functional or decorative. *Functional artwork* includes photos, technical drawings, charts, and other visual elements containing information that's part of your message. In contrast, *decorative artwork* simply enhances the look of your slides and should be used sparingly, if at all.
- **Typefaces and type styles.** Type is harder to read on a screen than on a printed page, so you need to choose fonts and type styles with care. Sans serif fonts are usually easier to read than serif fonts. Avoid all-caps, use generous space between lines of text, and limit the number of fonts to one or two per slide. Choose type sizes that are easy to read from anywhere in the room, usually between 28 and 36 points, and test them in the room if possible. A clever way to test readability at your computer is to stand back as many feet from the screen as your screen size in inches (17 feet for a 17-inch screen, for example). If the slides are readable at this distance, you're probably in good shape.[18]

Many of the typefaces available on your computer are difficult to read on screen, so they aren't good choices for presentation slides.

Design inconsistencies confuse and annoy audiences; don't change colors and other design elements randomly throughout your presentation.

Maintaining design consistency is critical because audiences start to assign meaning to visual elements beginning with the first slide. For instance, if yellow is used to call attention to the first major point in your presentation, viewers will expect the next occurrence of yellow to also signal an important point. The design theme and the *slide master* features make consistency easy to achieve because they apply consistent design choices to every slide in a presentation.

Adding Animation and Multimedia

You can animate just about everything in an electronic presentation, but resist the temptation to do so; make sure an animation has a purpose.

Presentation software offers many options for livening up your slides, including sound, animation, video clips, transition effects, hyperlinks, and zooming. These special effects need to be used sparingly, and always with a focus on helping viewers grasp your message.

Functional animation involves motion that is directly related to your message, such as a highlight arrow that moves around the screen to emphasize specific points in a technical diagram. Such animation is also a great way to demonstrate sequences and procedures. In contrast, *decorative animation*, such as having a block of text cartwheel in from off screen or using the zooming and panning capabilities in Prezi in ways that don't enhance audience understanding, needs to be incorporated with great care. These effects don't add any functional value, and they easily distract audiences.

Slide transitions control how one slide replaces another, such as having the current slide gently fade out before the next slide fades in. Subtle transitions like this can ease your viewers' gaze from one slide to the next, but many transition effects are too busy and therefore best avoided. **Slide builds** control the release of text, graphics, and other elements on individual slides. With builds, you can make key points appear on a slide one at a time, rather than all at once, thereby making it easier for you and the audience to focus on each new message point.

If you use transitions between slides, make sure they are subtle; they should do nothing more than ease the eye from one slide to the next.

A *hyperlink* instructs your computer to jump to another slide in your presentation, to a website, or to another program entirely. Using hyperlinks is also a great way to build in flexibility so that you can instantly change the flow of your presentation in response to audience feedback.

Hyperlinks let you build flexibility into your presentations.

Multimedia elements offer the ultimate in active presentations. Using audio and video clips can be a great way to complement your textual message. Just be sure to keep these elements brief and relevant, as supporting points for your presentation, not as replacements for it.

Using Presentation Software to Create Visual Reports

With its easy ability to combine text and graphics, presentation software is sometimes used to create *visual reports* that are something of a hybrid between conventional reports and presentation slides (see Figure 12.8). These are sometimes referred to as "slideuments" (*slide* + *document*) or "slide docs" as well. If you have a lot of diagrams or other visual material, creating a report in PowerPoint or similar software can be easier than doing so in word-processing software.

Visual reports are documents made using presentation software, but they are intended to be read like documents, not projected as presentation slides.

If they are intended to be read like documents, these visual reports can be an effective and appealing communication tool. As you can see from the amount of text in the example in Figure 12.8, however, these reports do not function well as slides and should not be used for presentations. Avoid the temptation to use these slide-report hybrids for presentation slides *and* as handouts (or as reading material for people who can't attend your presentation).

As "Creating Effective Handouts" on page 345 explains, the ideal solution is to create an effective slide set and a separate handout document (either a visual report or a conventional report) that provides additional details and supporting information. This way, you can optimize each piece to do the job it is really meant to do.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Advice and free templates for visual reports

This free e-book and PowerPoint templates will help you make more-effective visual reports. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bct14** and select Learn More in the Students section.

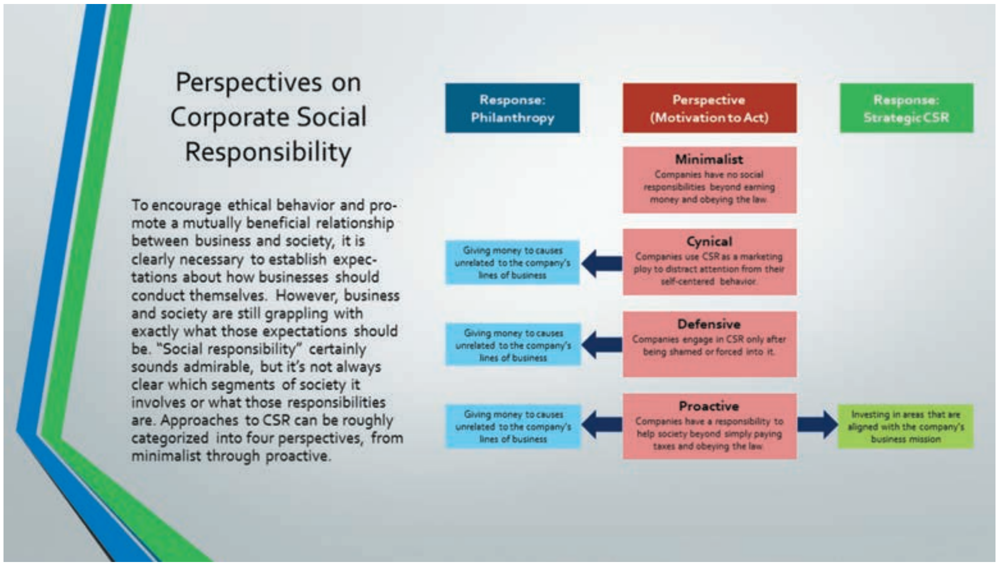


Figure 12.8 Visual Reports Using Presentation Software

Presentation software can be used to create visual reports that are designed to be read as other documents, rather than being projected as presentation slides.

Source: Courtland L. Bovée and John V. Thill, *Business in Action*, 8th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2017), 80–81.

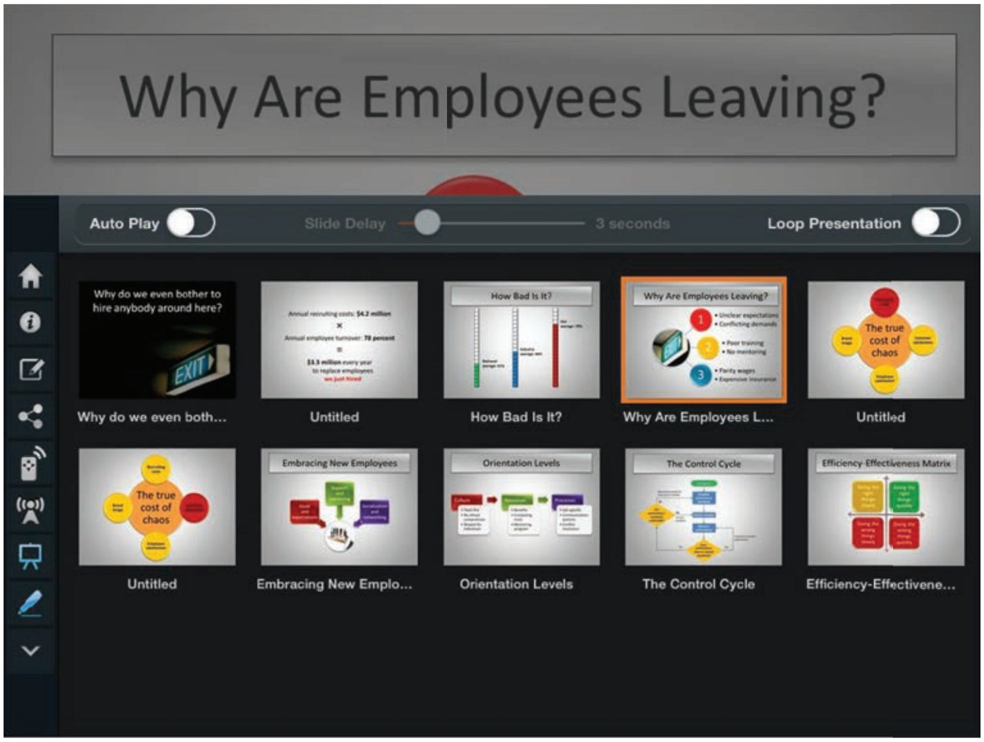


Figure 12.9 Using Mobile Devices in Presentations
A variety of mobile apps and cloud-based systems can free presenters and audiences from the constraints of a convention conference room.

INTEGRATING MOBILE DEVICES IN PRESENTATIONS

Mobile devices can enhance presentations for presenters as well as audience members.

MOBILE APP
SlideShark lets you present and share PowerPoint slides with mobile and PC users.

Smartphones and tablets offer a variety of ways to enhance presentations for presenters as well as audience members (see Figure 12.9). For example, you can get around the problem of everyone in the audience having a clear view of the screen with systems that broadcast your slides to tablets and smartphones. In fact, these systems can eliminate a conventional projection system entirely; everyone in the audience can view your slides on their mobile devices. You can also broadcast a live presentation to mobile users anywhere in the world. Each time you advance to a new slide, it is sent to the phone or tablet of everyone who is subscribed to your presentation.[19]

Completing a Presentation

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Outline four key tasks involved in completing a presentation.

The completion step for presentations involves a wider range of tasks than most other communication projects. Make sure you allow enough to time to test your presentation slides, verify equipment operation, practice your speech, and create handout materials. With a first draft of your presentation in hand, revise your slides to make sure they are readable, concise, consistent, and fully operational (including transitions, builds, animation, and multimedia). Complete your production efforts by finalizing your slides, creating handouts, choosing your presentation method, and practicing your delivery.

FINALIZING YOUR SLIDES

Presentation software can help you throughout the editing and revision process. For example, the *slide sorter* view (different programs have different names for this feature) lets you see some or all of the slides in your presentation on a single screen. Use this view to add and delete slides, reposition slides, check slides for design consistency, and verify the operation of any effects. Moreover, the slide sorter is a great way to review the flow of your story.[20]

In addition to using content slides, you can help your audience follow the flow of your presentation by creating slides for your title, agenda and program details, and navigation:

- **Title slide(s).** You can make a good first impression with one or two title slides, the equivalent of a report's cover and title page.
- **Agenda and program details.** These slides communicate the agenda for your presentation and any additional information the audience might need, such as hashtags and WiFi log-in information.
- **Navigation slides.** To help the audience follow along, you can use a series of navigation slides. A simple way to do this is to repeat your agenda slide at the beginning of each major section in your presentation, with the upcoming section highlighted in some way. (The two navigation slides in Figure 12.10 show a more stylized way of showing the audience where you are in the presentation.)

Navigation slides help your audience keep track of what you've covered already and what you plan to cover next.

Figure 12.10 on the next page illustrates some of the many options you have for presenting various types of information. Note that although these slides don't follow a rigid structure of text-heavy bullet points, they are unified by the color scheme (silver background and bold color accents) and typeface selections.

CREATING EFFECTIVE HANDOUTS

Handouts—any printed materials you give the audience to supplement your talk—should be considered an integral part of your presentation strategy. Handouts can include detailed charts and tables, case studies, research results, magazine articles, and anything else that supports the main idea of your presentation.

Use handout materials to support the points made in your presentation and to offer the audience additional information on your topic.

Plan your handouts as you develop your presentation so that you use each medium as effectively as possible. Your presentation should paint the big picture, convey and connect major ideas, set the emotional tone, and rouse the audience to action (if that is relevant to your talk). Your handouts can then carry the rest of the information load, providing the supporting details that audience members can consume at their own speed, on their own time. You won't need to worry about stuffing every detail into your slides, because you have the more appropriate medium of printed documents to do that.

For more information on tools and techniques for presentation slides, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Chapter 12.

CHOOSING YOUR PRESENTATION METHOD

With all your materials ready, your next step is to decide which method of speaking you want to use. Speaking from notes (rather than from a fully written script) is nearly always the most effective and easiest delivery mode. This approach gives you something to refer to as you progress while still allowing for plenty of eye contact, a natural flow, interaction with the audience, and improvisation in response to audience feedback.

In nearly all instances, speaking from notes (rather than a full script) is the most effective delivery mode.

In contrast, reciting your speech from memory is nearly always a bad idea. Even if you can memorize the entire presentation, you will sound stiff and overly formal because you are "delivering lines," rather than talking to your audience. However, memorizing an important quotation, an opening statement, or a few concluding remarks can bolster your confidence and strengthen your delivery.

Reading a speech is necessary in rare instances, such as when delivering legal information, policy statements, or other messages that must be conveyed in an exact manner. However, for all other business presentations, reading is a poor choice because it limits your interaction with the audience and lacks the fresh, dynamic feel of natural talking.

Another important decision at this point is preparing the venue where you will speak. Whenever you have the opportunity to arrange the setting, think carefully about the seating for the audience, your position in the room, and the lighting. For instance, for a formal presentation where you're standing on a stage and the audience is in theater-style seating, it's often a good idea to dim the room lights so people can see the screen more clearly.

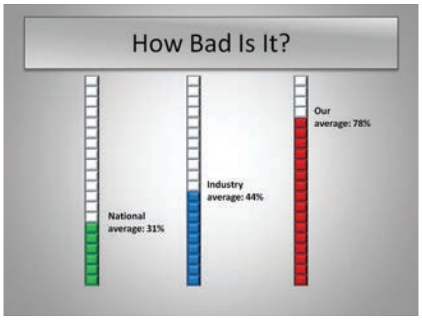
MOBILE APP
authorSTREAM lets you replay webcasts and other recorded presentations on your mobile device.

Left: This introductory slide is a blunt attention-getter, something that would have to be used with caution and only in special circumstances.

Right: This simple math equation gets the point across about how expensive high employee turnover is.

Left: This stylized bar graph sends a stark visual message about how bad the company's turnover really is.

Right: This slide is essentially a bullet list, with three groups of two bullets each. Repeating the photo element from the introductory slide emphasizes the message about employee turnover.



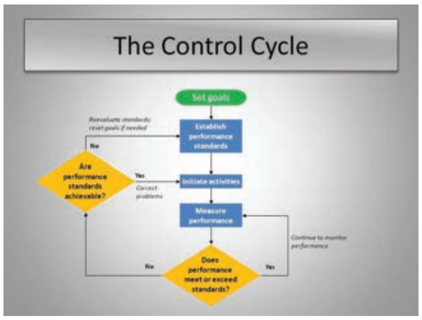
These two *navigation slides* show one way to introduce each of the four subtopics in this particular section. As the highlight moves around the central circle, the audience is reminded of which subtopics have been covered and which subtopic is going to be covered next. And each time it is shown, the message is repeated that all these problems are the "true cost of chaos" in the company's employment practices.

Left: This slide introduces three key points the speaker wants to emphasize in this particular section.

Right: This slide shows a linear flow of ideas, each with bulleted subpoints. This slide could be revealed one section at a time to help the speaker keep the audience's attention focused on a single topic.

Left: This flowchart packs a lot of information onto one slide, but seeing the sequence of events in one place is essential.

Right: This simple visual highlights the presenter's spoken message about being careful to choose the right tasks to focus on and then completing them quickly.



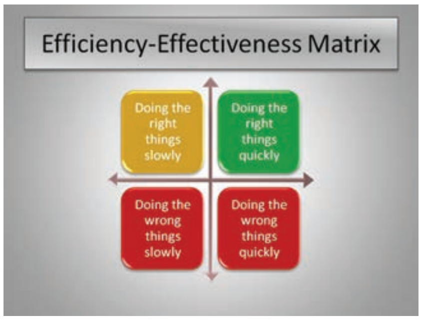


Figure 12.10 Designing Effective Visuals: Selected Slides

These slides, from a presentation that addresses a company's high employee turnover rate, illustrate the wide variety of design options you have for creating effective, appealing slides. (All the slides were created using features in PowerPoint.)

However, in a less-formal setting where you to want to interact with audience members, you might turn up the room lights and perhaps arrange chairs and tables in a U shape so that you can walk around in the middle of the group.

PRACTICING YOUR DELIVERY

The more you practice, the more confidence you'll have.

Practicing your presentation is essential. Practice boosts your confidence, gives you a more professional demeanor, and lets you verify the operation of your visuals and equipment. A test audience can tell you if your slides are understandable and whether your delivery is effective. A day or two before you're ready to step on stage for an important talk, make sure you and your presentation are ready:

Make sure you're comfortable with the equipment you'll be expected to use; you don't want to be fumbling with controls while the audience is watching and waiting.

- Can you present your material naturally, without reading your slides?
- Could you still make a compelling and complete presentation if you experience an equipment failure and have to proceed without using your slides at all?
- Is the equipment working, and do you know how to operate it?
- Is your timing on track?
- Can you easily pronounce all the words you plan to use?
- Have you anticipated likely questions and objections?

If you're addressing an audience that doesn't speak your language, consider using an interpreter. Send your interpreter a copy of your speech and visuals as far in advance of your presentation as possible. If your audience is likely to include persons with hearing impairments, be sure to team up with a sign-language interpreter as well.

When you deliver a presentation to people from other cultures, you may need to adapt the content of your presentation. It is also important to take into account any cultural differences in appearance, mannerisms, and other customs. Your interpreter or host will be able to suggest appropriate changes for a specific audience or occasion.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY WATCHING THIS VIDEO
Body wisdom from communication coach Gina Barnett

In this talk at Google, Gina Barnett shares some essentials of using your body as an effective speaking instrument. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Delivering a Presentation

It's show time. This section offers practical advice on four important aspects of delivery: overcoming anxiety, handling questions responsively, embracing the backchannel, and giving presentations online.

5 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe four important aspects of delivering a presentation in today's social media environment.

OVERCOMING PRESENTATION ANXIETY

Even seasoned pros get a little nervous before a big presentation. These techniques will help you convert anxiety into positive energy:[21]

Nervousness before a presentation is perfectly natural; use the energy to your advantage.

- **"Make friends with the stage."** If possible, take a tip from actors and spend some time alone on the stage (or at the front of the room) before your presentation. Get comfortable with the space, figure out where you'll stand, remind yourself how satisfying it will be to share your information with the audience, and visualize a successful outcome. Remember that your audience wants you to succeed, too.
- **Acknowledge your nervousness.** Don't try to bury that feeling. In fact, remind yourself that it's not only normal but healthy to have your senses on high alert—nervousness is an indication that you care about your audience, your topic, and the occasion. Use this energy to your advantage.
- **Stop worrying about being perfect.** Successful speakers focus on making an authentic connection with their listeners, rather than on trying to deliver a note-perfect presentation.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE
Don't let anxiety hold back your presentations

Take action to keep public speaking anxiety under control. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

- **Know your material and practice until you're comfortable with it.** The more familiar you are with your material, the less panic you'll feel. And the more you rehearse, the more confident you will be.
- **Remember to breathe.** Tension can lead people to breathe in a rapid and shallow fashion, which can create a lightheaded feeling. Breathe slowly and deeply to maintain a sense of calm and confidence.
- **Be ready with your opening line.** Have your first sentence memorized so you don't have to improvise your opening.
- **Be comfortable.** Dress appropriately but as comfortably as possible. Drink plenty of water ahead of time to hydrate your voice (bring a bottle of water with you, too).
- **Take a three-second break if you need to.** If you sense that you're starting to race, pause and arrange your notes or perform some other small task while taking several deep breaths. Then start again at your normal pace.
- **Concentrate on your message and your audience, not on yourself.** When you're busy thinking about your subject and observing your audience's response, you tend to forget your fears.
- **Maintain eye contact with friendly audience members.** Eye contact not only makes you appear sincere, confident, and trustworthy but can give you positive feedback as well.
- **Keep going.** Things usually get better as you move along, with each successful minute giving you more and more confidence.

HANDLING QUESTIONS RESPONSIVELY

Don't leave the question-and-answer period to chance: Anticipate potential questions and think through your answers.

Questions from the audience are often one of the most important parts of a presentation. They give you a chance to obtain important information, emphasize your main idea and supporting points, and build enthusiasm for your point of view.

Whether or not you can establish ground rules for questions depends on the audience and the situation. If you're presenting to a small group of upper managers or potential investors, for example, you will probably have no say in the matter: Audience members will likely ask as many questions as they want, whenever they want, to get the information they need. On the other hand, if you are presenting to your peers or a large public audience, you might want to establish some guidelines, such as the number of questions allowed per person and the overall time limit for questions.

Don't assume you can handle whatever comes up without some preparation.[22] Learn enough about your audience members to get an idea of their concerns, and think through answers to potential questions.

When people ask questions, pay attention to nonverbal signals to help determine what each person really means. Repeat the question to confirm your understanding and to ensure that the entire audience has heard it. If the question is vague or confusing, ask for clarification; then give a simple, direct answer.

If you don't have the complete answer to an important question, offer to provide it after the presentation.

If you are asked a difficult or complex question, avoid the temptation to sidestep it. Offer to meet with the questioner afterward if the issue isn't relevant to the rest of the audience or if giving an adequate answer would take too long. If you don't know the answer, don't pretend you do. Instead, offer to get a complete answer as soon as possible.

Be on guard for audience members who use questions to make impromptu speeches or to take control of your presentation. Without offending anyone, find a way to stay in control. You might admit that you and the questioner have differing opinions and offer to get back to the questioner after you've done more research.[23]

If you ever face hostile questions, respond honestly and directly while keeping your cool.

If a question ever puts you on the hot seat, respond honestly but keep your cool. Look the person in the eye, answer the question as well as you can, and keep your emotions under control. Defuse hostility by paraphrasing the question and asking the questioner to confirm that you've understood it correctly. Maintain a businesslike tone of voice and a pleasant expression.[24]

EMBRACING THE BACKCHANNEL

Many business presentations these days involve more than just the conversation between the speaker and his or her audience. Using Twitter and other electronic media, audience members often carry on their own parallel communication during a presentation via the **backchannel**, which presentation expert Cliff Atkinson defines as "a line of communication created by people in an audience to connect with others inside or outside the room, with or without the knowledge of the speaker."[25] Chances are you've participated in a backchannel already, such as when texting with your classmates or live-blogging during a lecture.

Twitter and other social media are changing business presentations by making it easy for all audience members to participate in the *backchannel*.

The backchannel presents both risks and rewards for business presenters. On the negative side, for example, listeners can research your claims the instant you make them and spread the word quickly if they think your information is shaky. The backchannel also gives contrary audience members more leverage, which can lead to presentations spinning out of control. On the plus side, listeners who are excited about your message can build support for it, expand on it, and spread it to a much larger audience in a matter of seconds. You can also get valuable feedback during and after presentations.[26]

By embracing the backchannel, rather than trying to fight it or ignore it, presenters can use this powerful force to their advantage. Follow these tips to make the backchannel work for you:[27]

Resist the urge to ignore or fight the backchannel; instead, learn how to use it to your advantage.

- **Integrate social media into the presentation process.** For example, you can create a website for the presentation so that people can access relevant resources during or after the presentation, create a Twitter hashtag that everyone can use when sending tweets, or display the Twitterstream during Q&A so that everyone can see the questions and comments on the backchannel.
- **Monitor and ask for feedback.** Using a free service such as TweetDeck, which organizes tweets by hashtag and other variables, you can monitor comments from people in the audience. To avoid trying to monitor the backchannel while speaking, you can schedule "Twitter breaks," during which you review comments and respond as needed.
- **Review comments afterward to improve your presentation.** After a presentation is over, review comments on audience members' Twitter accounts and blogs to see which parts confused them, which parts excited them, and which parts seemed to have little effect (based on few or no comments).
- **Automatically tweet key points from your presentation while you speak.** Add-ons for presentation software can send out prewritten tweets as you show specific slides during a presentation. By making your key points readily available, you make it easy for listeners to retweet and comment on your presentation.
- **Establish expectations with the audience.** Explain that you welcome audience participation but that to ensure a positive experience for everyone, comments should be civil, relevant, and productive.

GIVING PRESENTATIONS ONLINE

Online presentations offer many benefits, including the opportunity to communicate with a geographically dispersed audience at a fraction of the cost of travel and the ability for a project team or an entire organization to meet at a moment's notice. However, this format also presents some challenges for the presenter, thanks to that layer of technology between you and your audience. Many of those "human moments" that guide and encourage you through an in-person presentation won't travel across the digital divide. For instance, it's often difficult to tell whether audience members are bored or confused, because your view of them is usually confined to small video images (and sometimes not even that).

Online presentations give you a way to reach more people in less time, but they require special preparation and skills.

To ensure successful online presentations, keep the following advice in mind:

- **Make sure everyone has time to download and configure any required software.** If participants need to do anything to prepare their PCs or mobile devices, send a message well in advance of the presentation with the information they need.

- **Consider sending preview study materials ahead of time.** Doing so allows audience members to familiarize themselves with any important background information.
- **Allow plenty of time for everyone to get connected and familiar with the screen they're viewing.** Build extra time into your schedule to ensure that everyone is connected and ready to start.
- **Keep your presentation as simple as possible.** Break complicated slides down into multiple slides if necessary, and keep the direction of your discussion clear so that no one gets lost.
- **Ask for feedback frequently.** You won't have as much of the visual feedback that alerts you when audience members are confused, and many online viewers will be reluctant to call attention to themselves by interrupting you to ask for clarification. Setting up a backchannel via Twitter or as part of your online meeting system will help in this regard.

Last but not least, don't get lost in the technology. Use these tools whenever they'll help, but remember that the most important aspect of any presentation is getting the audience to receive, understand, and embrace your message.

The Future of Communication: Holograms

If you've ever wanted to be in two places at once, your wish could be coming true soon. At a recent executive meeting of the global management and technology consulting firm Accenture, the attendees included CEO Pierre Nanterme and human resources chief Ellyn Shook. During the meeting, which took place near Chicago, they chatted with other managers, pitched and listened to ideas, and even shared a few ceremonial fist bumps. Nothing remarkable there, except that Nanterme was in Paris and Shook was in New York City. Their three-dimensional selves were beamed in as holograms over the company's hyperadvanced information network.

Accenture has long been on the leading edge of communication technology, including the use of advanced telepresence facilities that help its huge workforce stay connected from outposts all over the world. As much as Nanterme would like to meet frequently with employees in person, the fact that there are 375,000 of them spread over 120 counties makes that impossible.

Vastly oversimplified, in this context holograms are created by scanning a person or an object with a laser, transmitting the resulting data to a second location, then re-creating the person or object as a three-dimensional "figure." The figure is made entirely of light, but today's systems can make that figure look extremely lifelike. And researchers at the University of Tokyo have invented a system that combines holograms with ultrasonic haptic technology that simulates the sensation of touch, making it possible to "touch" a hologram.

Few companies have the resources to pull off what Accenture can do with holograms, and as a technology consulting firm, it has other business reasons to keep pushing the limits of technology. If this use of holograms moves into the mainstream, however, it could change the way far-flung companies communicate. And holograms are already being used in such areas as research and product design, letting people interact with objects that aren't really there.[28]

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Research the current state of holograms to identify one way in which the technology has the potential to change business communication practices. Do you agree with the predictions the experts make? Why or why not?

Chapter Review and Activities

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** to complete the problems marked with this icon.

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: Highlight the importance of presentations in your business career, and explain how to adapt the planning step of the three-step process to presentations.

Presentations can help your career in two key ways:

- They give the opportunity to use all your communication skills, from research to writing to speaking.
- They let you demonstrate your ability to think quickly, adapt to challenging situations, and handle touchy questions and complex issues.

The tasks in planning presentations are generally the same as with any other business message, but several tasks require special consideration:

- When analyzing the situation, in addition to understanding the audience's information needs, you need to anticipate the likely emotional states of your listeners and the circumstances in which you will speak.
- You may need to incorporate several types of media during your presentation, from webcasts to the Twitter-enabled backchannel.
- To organize your presentation, you need to decide whether to create a conventional linear presentation (using PowerPoint or similar software) or a nonlinear presentation (using Prezi or a similar system).
- Limiting your scope is vital; keep presentations as short as possible to avoid losing the audience's attention.
- You may want to develop two outlines for important presentations: a detailed planning outline and simpler speaking outline.

Objective 2: Describe the tasks involved in developing a presentation.

Although you usually don't write out a presentation word for word, you still engage in the writing process—developing your ideas, structuring support points, phrasing your transitions, and so on.

Think carefully about how to adapt to the audience; audiences and venues can vary widely, from small, informal gatherings to formal keynote speeches in large auditoriums to virtual presentations given entirely online.

To compose a presentation, break it down into three essential parts:

- An *introduction* that arouses the audience's interest in your topic, establishes your credibility, and prepares the audience for what will follow
- A *body* that conveys your information in a way that maintains audience interest and makes it easy to connect one idea to the next
- A *close* that restates your main points, wraps up any unfinished business, and lets you end with clarity and confidence

Objective 3: Describe the six major design and writing tasks required to enhance your presentation with effective visuals.

Choose between structured and free-form slides:

- Structured slides tend to be text-heavy and follow the same design plan for most or all the slides in a presentation, are often created by using the templates provided with presentation software, and tend to convey most of their information through bullet points.
- Visually oriented free-form slides do not follow any set design scheme from slide to slide, although they should have a unified sense of color, font selection, and other design elements.

Look for opportunities to design slides around a key visual that unites and explains important points.

For any slides that have textual content, be sure to strictly limit the word count and keep the font size large enough to read easily.

Make sure any graphic elements are simple and clear enough to be easily grasped from anywhere in the room.

Choose and use design elements—color, background and foreground designs, artwork, typefaces, and type styles—in a way that enhances, not obscures, your message.

Add animation and multimedia elements if they will help build audience interest and understanding.

Objective 4: Outline four key tasks involved in completing a presentation.

Four tasks demand particular attention:

- Finalize your slides and support materials using the slide sorter to get a big-picture view of your presentation and create title slide(s), agenda and program detail slides, and navigation slides.
- Creative effective handouts that support your spoken message.
- Choose your presentation method: memorizing your material word for word, reading a printout of your material, or speaking from notes. Speaking from notes is the best choice for most presentations.
- Practice your delivery. Practice helps ensure a smooth presentation and boosts your confidence.

Objective 5: Describe four important aspects of delivering a presentation in today's social media environment.

Take steps to reduce your anxiety:

- Make friends with the stage, as actors like to say.
- Acknowledge your nerves and use them to boost your energy.
- Don't worry about being perfect.
- Know your material and practice until you're comfortable with it.
- Practice deep breathing.
- Be ready with an opening line.
- Dress as comfortably as appropriate.
- Take a deliberate pause if you're rushing.
- Concentrate on your message and the audience, rather than your own discomfort.
- Maintain eye contact with friendly audience members.
- Plow ahead no matter what happens.

Handle questions responsively:

- Determine whether you can establish ground rules for questions; you may not have a choice in the matter.
- Don't assume you can handle whatever comes up; prepare answers to potential questions.
- Pay attention to nonverbal signals and be sure to respond to all questions.
- If you can't answer a question, offer to find the answer and provide it later.
- Don't let questioners take control of the presentation.
- Face hostile questions head-on without getting defensive.

Embrace the backchannel, the parallel conversation that might be going on among audience members on Twitter and other media:

- Integrate social media into your presentation.
- Monitor and ask for feedback.
- Review comments afterward to improve your presentation.
- Automatically tweet key points from your presentation while you speak.
- Establish expectations with the audience regarding use of the backchannel.

Take steps to ensure a successful online presentation:

- Make sure everyone has advance notice to configure their PCs or mobile devices as needed.
- Consider sending preview materials ahead of time.
- Give participants time to get connected.
- Keep your presentation as simple as possible.
- Ask for feedback frequently.

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

12-1. What skills do presentations give you the opportunity to practice and demonstrate? [LO-1]

12-2. What are the potential disadvantages of Prezi-style presentations? [LO-1]

12-3. What three goals should you accomplish during the introduction of a presentation? [LO-2]

12-4. What techniques can you use to get an audience's attention during your introduction? [LO-2]

12-5. What three tasks should you accomplish in the close of your presentation? [LO-2]

12-6. What is the backchannel in presentations? [LO-5]

12-7. What steps can you take to ensure success with online presentations? [LO-5]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

12-8. You just gave an in-depth presentation on the company's new marketing programs, intended for the specialists in the marketing department. The marketing manager then asked you to give a shorter version of the presentation to the company's top executives. In general, how should you modify the scope of your presentation for this new audience? [LO-1]

12-9. Is it ethical to use design elements and special effects to persuade an audience? Why or why not? [LO-3]

12-10. If you're worried about forgetting your key message points, should you write them out and read them during your presentation? Why or why not? [LO-4]

12-11. Why is speaking from notes usually the best method of delivery? [LO-4]

Practice Your Skills

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, you can refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information will be found in another chapter, as indicated.

12-12. **Presentations: Planning a Presentation [LO-1]** Select one of the following topics:

- What I expect to learn in this course
- Past public speaking experiences: the good, the bad, and the ugly
- I would be good at teaching _______.
- I am afraid of _______.
- It's easy for me to _______.
- I get angry when _______.
- I am happiest when I _______.
- People would be surprised if they knew that I _______.
- My favorite older person
- My favorite charity
- My favorite place
- My favorite sport
- My favorite store
- My favorite television show
- The town you live in suffers from a great deal of juvenile vandalism. Explain to a group of community members why juvenile recreational facilities should be built instead of a juvenile detention complex.

- You are speaking to the Humane Society. Support or oppose the use of animals for medical research purposes.
- You are talking to civic leaders of your community. Try to convince them to build an art gallery.
- You are speaking to a first-grade class at an elementary school. Explain why they should brush their teeth after meals.
- You are speaking to a group of traveling salespeople. Convince them that they should wear seatbelts while driving.
- You are speaking to a group of elderly people. Convince them to adopt an exercise program.
- You are speaking to a group of first-time drivers. Convince them of the dangers of texting while driving.
- Energy issues
- An interesting new technology
- A political topic of interest to you
- A sports topic of interest to you

Research your topic as needed and prepare a brief presentation (5–10 minutes) to be given to your class.

12-13. Presentations: Developing a Presentation; Collaboration: Team Projects [LO-2], **Chapter 2** You've been asked to give an informative 10-minute talk on vacation opportunities in your home state. Draft your introduction, which should last no more than 2 minutes. Then pair up with a classmate and analyze each other's introductions. How well do these two introductions arouse the audience's interest, build credibility, and preview the presentation? Suggest how these introductions might be improved.

12-14. Presentations: Developing a Presentation [LO-2] Find the transcript of a business-oriented speech or presentation by searching online for "speech transcription" or "presentation transcription." Examine both the introduction and the close, and analyze how these two sections work together to emphasize the main idea. Does the speaker want the audience to take any specific actions? To change any particular beliefs or feelings?

Next, identify the transitional sentences or phrases that clarify the speech's structure for the listener, especially those that help the speaker shift between supporting points. Using these transitions as clues, list the main message and supporting points; then indicate how each transitional phrase links the current supporting point to the succeeding one. Finally, prepare a brief (two- to three-minute) presentation summarizing your analysis for your class.

12-15. Presentations: Designing Presentation Visuals [LO-4] Look through recent issues (print or online) of *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *Fortune*, or other business publications for articles discussing challenges that a specific company or industry is facing. Using the articles and the guidelines discussed in this chapter, create a short Prezi or three to five slides summarizing these issues.

12-16. Presentations: Designing Presentation Visuals [LO-4] Find a business-related slide presentation on SlideShare and analyze the design. Do you consider it structured or free form? Does the design help the audience understand and remember the message? Why or why not? What improvements would you suggest to the design?

12-17. Presentations: Mastering Delivery; Nonverbal Communication: Analyzing Nonverbal Signals [LO-5], **Chapter 2** Watch any talk that interests you at the TED website, **www.ted.com/talks**. What type of delivery did the speaker use? Was this delivery appropriate for the occasion? What nonverbal signals did the speaker use to emphasize key points? Were these signals effective? Which nonverbal signals would you suggest to further enhance the delivery of this oral presentation? Why?

12-18. Presentations: Delivering a Presentation; Collaboration: Team Projects; Media Skills: Microblogging [LO-5], **Chapter 2, Chapter 6** In a team of six students, develop a 10-minute Prezi or slide presentation on any topic that interests you. Nominate one person to give the presentation; the other five will participate via a Twitter backchannel. Create a webpage that holds at least one downloadable file that will be discussed during the presentation. Practice using the backchannel, including using a hashtag for the meeting and having the presenter ask for audience feedback during a "Twitter break." Be ready to discuss your experience with the entire class.

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Find a product demonstration video on YouTube for any product that is appropriate to discuss in class. (Find a video that is at least two minutes long and was uploaded by the company that makes the product, not by a customer or other outside party.) Study the effectiveness of the demonstration, including the use of visuals and the presenter's speech and mannerisms. Did you find the demonstration compelling? Why or why not? If not, what would have made it more compelling? Using whatever medium your instructor requests, write a brief summary of your analysis. Be sure to include a link to the video.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at **websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that offers advice on creating and delivering business presentations. Write a brief email message to your instructor or a post for your class blog, describing the item that you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Cases

For all cases, feel free to use your creativity to make up any details you need in order to craft effective messages.

PRESENTATION SKILLS

12-19. Planning, Designing, and Creating Presentation Slides [LO-1], [LO-2], [LO-3], [LO-4] Learning to play a musical instrument offers children multiple benefits, beyond the joys of creating and appreciating music.

Your task: Research the benefits of learning and playing an instrument, then prepare a brief presentation that conveys these benefits in a way that most parents would find compelling.

PRESENTATION SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

12-20. Planning, Designing, and Creating Presentation Slides [LO-1], [LO-2], [LO-3], [LO-4] Consumers who want to eat fresh, local produce and small farmers looking for more predictable revenue have found a match in *community-supported agriculture (CSA)*. CSA is essentially a subscription service in which consumers sign up for regular allotments of fruits and vegetables from a local farm. At regular intervals during the growing season, each subscriber gets a box of whatever produce is ripe and ready at that time.

Your task: Research CSA options in your area and prepare a brief presentation on how these programs work and how they benefit farmers and consumers. If you can't find any local programs, choose any location in the United States where CSA is available.

PRESENTATION SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

12-21. Planning, Designing, and Creating Presentation Slides [LO-1], [LO-2], [LO-3], [LO-4] One could argue that sleep is the single most important element of healthy living. Not only is adequate sleep essential for the body on its own, but getting enough sleep enables other activities that are essential for health, including getting exercise and taking the time to eat a healthy diet. Unfortunately, millions of people who recognize the value of sleep and want nothing more than to get enough sleep every night are frequently unable to do so.

Your task: Research the types and causes of insomnia and the cures most often recommended by sleep specialists. Using Prezi or slide software, prepare a 10- to 15-minute presentation on why insomnia affects so many people and the steps people can take to reduce or eliminate it.

PRESENTATION SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

12-22. Planning, Designing, and Creating Presentation Slides [LO-1], [LO-2], [LO-3], [LO-4] Screencasting is a great way to demonstrate how to use software or to review a website or online service. Screencast-O-Matic lets you create free screencasts up to 15 minutes long. (Your college or university may have a site license to use the service; check with your instructor.)

Your task: Visit screencast-o-matic.com and watch the introductory tutorials and the scripted recording tutorials. Next, choose a software program (Mac or PC) or a website that interests you. Choose something substantial enough that you can talk about it for 5 to 10 minutes, as either a demo or a review. Write the script for your screencast, then record it using the Screencast-O-Matic system. Format and deliver the video as your instructor advises.

PRESENTATION SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

12-23. Planning, Designing, and Creating Presentation Slides [LO-1], [LO-2], [LO-3], [LO-4] Not long ago, snowboarding seemed to be on pace to pass skiing as the country's favorite way to zoom down snowy mountains, but the sport's growth has cooled off in recent years.[29]

Your task: Research and prepare a 10-minute presentation on participation trends in snowboarding and skiing, including explanations for the relative popularity of both sports. Include at least three quotations to emphasize key points in your presentation. Use either structured or free-form slides.

PRESENTATION SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

12-24.Presentations: Designing Presentation Visuals [LO-4] Depending on the sequence your instructor chose for this course, you've probably covered 8 to 10 chapters at this point and learned or improved many valuable skills. Think through your progress and identify five business communication skills that you've either learned for the first time or developed during this course.

Your task: Create a Prezi or slide presentation that describes each of the five skills you've identified. Be sure to explain how each skill could help you in your career. Use any visual style that you feel is appropriate for the assignment.

PRESENTATION SKILLS/MOBILE SKILLS

12-25. Presentations: Designing Presentation Visuals; Mobile Media [LO-4] On SlideShare or any other source, find a business presentation on any topic that interests you.

Your task: Re-create the first five slides in the presentation in a manner that will make them more mobile-friendly. Create as many additional slides as you need.

PRESENTATION SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

12-26. Planning, Designing, and Creating Presentation Slides; Collaboration: Team Projects [LO-1], [LO-2], [LO-3], [LO-4], Chapter 2 Changing a nation's eating habits is a Herculean task, but the physical and financial health of the United States depends on it. You work for the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, and it's your job to educate people on the dangers of unhealthy eating and the changes they can make to eat more balanced and healthful diets.

Your task: Visit real-timeupdates.com/bce8, select Student Assignments, and download Chapter 12 Case (*Dietary Guidelines for Americans*). With a team assigned by your instructor, develop a 10- to 15-minute presentation that conveys the key points from Chapter 3 of the *Guidelines*, "Food and Food Components to Reduce." The objectives of your presentation are to alert people to the dangers of excessive consumption of the five components discussed in the chapter and to let them know what healthy levels of consumption are. This chapter has a lot of information, but you don't need to pack it all into your presentation; you can assume that the chapter will be available as a handout to anyone who attends your presentation. Along with your presentation, draft speaking notes that someone outside your team could use to give the presentation. You can use images from the *Guidelines* PDF, the websites of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or a nongovernment source such as Creative Commons. Cite all your image sources and make sure you follow the usage and attribution guidelines for any photos you find on nongovernment sites.

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from real-timeupdates.com/bce8; select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 12. Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Capitals and Abbreviations

Review Sections 3.1 and 3.3 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage. For the following 15 items, capitalize any words that should be capitalized, spell out any abbreviations that should be spelled out, and insert abbreviations where appropriate.

12-27. Dr. paul hansen is joining our staff.

12-28. New caressa skin cream should be in a position to dominate that market.

12-29. Send this report to Mister h. k. danforth, rural route 1, warrensburg, new york 12885.

12-30. You are responsible for training my new assistant to operate the xerox machine.

12-31. She received her master of business administration degree from the university of michigan.

12-32. The building is located on the corner of madison and center streets.

12-33. Call me at 8 tomorrow morning, pacific standard time, and I'll have the information you need.

12-34. When jones becomes ceo next month, we'll need your input asap.

12-35. Address it to art bowers, chief of production.

12-36. Please rsvp to sony corp. just as soon as you know your schedule.

12-37. The IT department will begin work on feb. 2, just one wk. from today.

12-38. You are to meet him on friday at the un building in nyc.

12-39. Whenever you can come, professor, our employees will greatly enjoy your presentation.

12-40. At 50 per box, our std. contract forms are $9.00 a box, and our warranty forms are $7.95 a box.

12-41. We plan to establish a sales office on the west coast.

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

12-42. Mc'Donalds and Sears' have partnered with the television program, "Its Showtime At The Apollo." To offer talented kids the opportunity too appear on national television.

12-43. Tiffany & Co., the internationally-renowned jeweler and specialty retailer plan to open a 5000 square feet store in Walnut Creek, CA next year.

12-44. If none of the solutions seem satisfying, pick the more easier one.

12-45. Ken Baker, the west coast bureau chief for Us magazine, will be responsible for overseeing all of magazine reporting in Hollywood, conducting high profile, celebrity interviews, for identifying news stories, and assist in the generation of cover concepts.

12-46. With experience managing numerous enthusiast brands, including "Kawasaki" and "Skechers," Juxt Interactive are cementing their role as a leader in strategic, integrated campaigns.

12-47. You're message, tone, and product positioning has to be right on to be excepted and successful.

12-48. As I begun to put the team together, it became apparent to myself that my idea was ahead of it's time.

12-49. Many think that the primary market for newspapers are the readers, however advertisers generate the majority of revenues.

12-50. REIs outlet website features items that are not available at REI's physical stores, catalog, or main website.

12-51. The company's C.E.O., who we had saw at the awards dinner wednesday night, was fired the next day.

12-52. A designer of high priced purses such as Kate Spade or Louis Vitton generally limit distribution to exclusive boutiques or high end retail stores: such as Neiman-Marcus.

12-53. There is many indications that an economic recovery is underway, and will continue to stabilize and build however modestly.

12-54. We bought the equipment at a second hand store which turned out to be shoddy and defective.

12-55. Experts site 2 principle reasons for Webvan's failure; consumer resistance and over expansion.

12-56. Implementation of the over time hours guidelines will be carried out by the Human Resources Staff members.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C), or download the document and make the corrections in your word-processing software.

Dear Mr. Hansford,

There is a favorite place in which Manchester students study on our campus: the library because of the quiet atmosphere excellent resources, and helpful staff. With a ajustment in library hours there assets could be taken advantage of by more students.

In an informal survey of the students in my English class, a desire for the library to be open more hours on the weekends became evident. Many students find weekends best for researching term papers: because that's when large blocks of time can be found in their schedules.

I'd like to sight several reasons for the change I am about to propose to encourage your interest and desire for my suggestion. Understandable, librarians need a day off. Perhaps students and librarians could both be accomodated if the library closed at five p.m. on Friday night. Friday night is the time most students like to relax and attend sports events or parties. The libary could then be open on Saturdays from ten a.m. until 4:30 p.m. To make this arrangement fair to librarians; perhaps their schedules could be staggered so that nobody would have to work every Saturday or those scheduled to work on Saturdays could be given Mondays or Fridays off.

Consider implementing this new schedule this Fall. Another much-appreciated service for students will be performed if you do this.

Sincerely:

Steve Pendergrass, student

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

12-57. How can visually oriented free-form slides help keep an audience engaged in a presentation? [LO-3]

12-58. How does embracing the backchannel reflect the "you" attitude? [LO-5]

Endnotes

1. Gina Barnett, *Play the Part: Master Body Signals to Connect and Communicate for Business Success* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2015), Kindle locations 166–167, 361–378.

2. Nancy Duarte, *Slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations* (Sebastopol, Calif.: O'Reilly Media, 2008), 13.

3. Amber Naslund, "Twebinar: GE's Tweetsquad," 4 August 2009, www.radian6.com/blog.

4. "Get Started with Prezi," Prezi website, accessed 2 May 2014, prezi.com.

5. Adam Noar, "PowerPoint vs. Prezi: What's the Difference?" Presentation Panda blog, 21 February 2012, presentationpanda.com.

6. Carmine Gallo, "How to Deliver a Presentation Under Pressure," *Businessweek* online, 18 September 2008, www.businessweek.com.

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PART
5

Employment Messages and Job Interviews

The same techniques you use to succeed in your career can also help you launch and manage that career. Understand the employer's perspective on the hiring process so that you can adapt your approach and find the best job in the shortest possible time. Learn the best ways to craft a résumé and the other elements in your job-search portfolio. Understand the interviewing process to make sure you're prepared for every stage and every type of interview.

Laflor/E+/Getty Images

13 Building Careers and Writing Résumés

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. List eight key steps to finding the ideal opportunity in today's job market.
2. Explain the process of planning your résumé, including how to choose the best résumé organization.
3. Describe the tasks involved in writing your résumé, and list the sections to consider including in your résumé.
4. Characterize the completing step for résumés, including the six most common formats in which you can produce a résumé.
5. Identify nine tips for creating a successful LinkedIn profile.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"A résumé that says 'You can count on me to get things done' makes an applicant stand out."
—Joanne Pokaski, director of workforce development, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center[1]

Employers want candidates who can step in and start producing results quickly. By crafting a persuasive, professional résumé with clear evidence of skills and accomplishments, you take the first step in convincing recruiters you are that kind of employee.

This chapter offers some practical advice for your job search and then guides you through the three-step process for writing résumés. A résumé is one of the most important writing projects in your entire career, but this course is giving you the skills you need in order to produce an effective one. This chapter will help you apply what you've learned, so you can write an effective résumé that helps you stand out from a crowded field of applicants.

Photo courtesy of Joanne Pokaski

Workforce expert Joanne Pokaski says it is vital for your résumé to send a clear message about your ability to get the job done.

Finding the Ideal Opportunity in Today's Job Market

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
List eight key steps to finding the ideal opportunity in today's job market.

Identifying and landing a job can be a long and challenging process. Fortunately, the skills you're developing in this course will give you a competitive advantage. This section offers a general job-search strategy with advice that applies to just about any career path you might want to pursue. As you craft your personal strategy, keep these three guidelines in mind:

If you haven't already, read the Prologue, "Building a Career with Your Communication Skills," before studying this chapter.

- **Get organized.** Your job search could last many months and involve multiple contacts with dozens of companies. You need to keep all the details straight to ensure that you don't miss opportunities or make mistakes such as losing someone's email address or forgetting an appointment.
- **Start now and stick to it.** Even if you are a year or more away from graduation, now is not too early to get started with some of the essential research and planning tasks. If you wait until the last minute, you might miss opportunities and you won't be as prepared as other candidates.
- **Look for stepping-stone opportunities.** If you can't find the opportunity you're looking for right away, you might need to take a job that doesn't meet your expectations while you keep looking to get on the right track. But view every job as an opportunity to learn workplace skills, observe effective and ineffective business practices, and fine-tune your sense of how you'd like to spend your career.

WRITING THE STORY OF YOU

Writing or updating your résumé is a great opportunity to step back and think about where you've been and where you'd like to go. Do you like the path you're on, or is it time for a change? Are you focused on a particular field, or do you need some time to explore?

What's your story? Thinking about where you've been and where you want to go will help focus your job search.

You might find it helpful to think about the "story of you"—the things you are passionate about, your skills, your ability to help an organization reach its goals, the path you've been on so far, and the path you want to follow in the future (see Figure 13.1). Think in terms of an image or a theme you'd like to project. Are you academically gifted? An effective leader? A well-rounded professional with wide-ranging talents? A creative problem solver? A technical wizard? Writing your story is a valuable planning exercise that helps you think about where you want to go and how to present yourself to target employers.

MOBILE APP
The **Good&Co** app aims to help professionals find jobs that bring more meaning to their careers.

LEARNING TO THINK LIKE AN EMPLOYER

When you know your side of the hiring equation a little better, switch sides and look at it from an employer's perspective. Recognize that companies take risks with every hiring decision—the risk that the person hired won't meet expectations and the risk that a better candidate has slipped through their fingers. Many companies judge the success of their recruiting efforts by *quality of hire*, a measure of how closely new employees meet the company's needs.[2] Given this perspective, what steps can you take to present yourself as the low-risk, high-reward choice?

Employers judge their recruiting success by *quality of hire*, so take steps to present yourself as a high-quality hire.

Of course, your perceived ability to perform the job is an essential part of your potential quality as a new hire. However, hiring managers consider more than just your ability to handle the job. They want to know if you'll be reliable and motivated—if you're somebody who "gets it" when it comes to being a professional in today's workplace. A great way to get inside the heads of corporate recruiters is to "listen in" on their professional conversations by reading periodicals such as *Workforce Management* and blogs such as Fistful of Talent (**fistfuloftalent.com**) and the HR Capitalist (**www.hrcapitalist.com**).

Follow the online conversations of professional recruiters to learn what their hot-button issues are.

My Story

Where I Have Been

- Honor student and all around big shot in high school (but discovered that college is full of big shots!)
- Have worked several part-time jobs; only thing that really appealed to me in any of them was making improvements, making things work better

What experiences from your past give you insight into where you would like to go in the future?

Where I Am Now

- Junior; on track to graduate in 2021
- Enjoy designing creative solutions to challenging problems
- Not a high-end techie in an engineering sense, but I figure most things out eventually
- Not afraid to work hard, whatever it takes to get the job done
- I can tolerate some routine, as long as I have the opportunity to make improvements if needed
- Tend to lead quietly by example, rather than by visibly and vocally taking charge
- Knowing that I do good work is more important than getting approval from others
- I tend not to follow fads and crowds; sometimes I'm ahead of the curve, sometimes I'm behind the curve

Where do you stand now in terms of your education and career, and what do you know about yourself?

Where I Want to Be

- Get an advanced degree; not sure what subject area yet, though
- Haven't really settled on one industry or profession yet; working with systems of any kind is more appealing than any particular profession that I've learned about so far
- Develop my leadership and communication skills to become a more "obvious" leader
- Collaborate with others while still having the freedom to work independently (maybe become an independent contractor or consultant at some point?)
- Have the opportunity to work internationally, at least for a few years
- Like the big bucks that corporate executives earn but don't want to live in the public eye like that or have to "play the game" to get ahead
- Believe I would be good manager, but not sure I want to spend all my time just managing people
- Want to be known as an independent thinker and creative problem solver, as somebody who can analyze tough situations and figure out solutions that others might not consider
- Are there jobs where I could focus on troubleshooting, improving processes, or designing new systems?

What would you like your future to be? What do you like and dislike? What would you like to explore? If you haven't figured everything out yet, that's fine—as long as you've started to think about the future.

Figure 13.1 Writing the Story of You
Writing the "story of you" is a helpful way to think through where you've been in your life and career so far, where you are now, and where you would like to go from here. Remember that this is a private document designed to help you clarify your thoughts and plans, although you probably will find ways to adapt some of what you've written to various job-search documents, including your résumé.

RESEARCHING INDUSTRIES AND COMPANIES OF INTEREST

Learning more about professions, industries, and individual companies is a vital step in your job search. It also impresses employers, particularly when you go beyond the easily available sources such as a company's own website. Table 13.1 lists some of the many websites where you can learn more about companies and find job openings. Your college's career center placement office probably maintains an up-to-date list as well.

To learn more about contemporary business topics, scan leading business periodicals and newspapers with significant business sections. In addition, thousands of bloggers, Twitter users, and podcasters offer news and commentary on the business world. Alltop (**alltop.com**) is another good resource for finding people who write about topics that interest you. In addition to learning more about professions and opportunities, this research will help you get comfortable with the jargon and buzzwords currently in use in a particular field, including essential *keywords* to use in your résumé (see page 372).

Employers expect you to be familiar with important developments in their industries, so stay on top of business news.

TABLE 13.1 Selected Job-Search Websites

Website*	URL	Highlights
CollegeRecruiter	www.collegerecruiter.com	Focused on opportunities for graduates with fewer than three years of work experience
Monster	www.monster.com	One of the most popular job sites, with hundreds of thousands of openings, many from hard-to-find small companies; extensive collection of advice on the job-search process
MonsterCollege	college.monster.com	Focused on job searches for new college grads; your school's career center site probably links here
CareerBuilder	www.careerbuilder.com	One of the largest job boards; affiliated with several hundred newspapers and job-related websites
Jobster	www.jobster.com	Uses social networking to link employers with job seekers
USAJOBS	www.usajobs.gov	Official job-search site for the U.S. government, featuring openings for everything from economists to astronauts to border patrol agents
IMDiversity	imdiversity.com	Good resource on diversity in the workplace, with job postings from companies that have made a special commitment to promoting diversity in their workforces
Dice.com	www.dice.com	One of the best sites for high-technology jobs
TopTechJobs.com	toptechjobs.com	Concentrates on jobs for IT specialists and engineers; also incorporates NetTemps.com for contractors and freelancers looking for short-term assignments
Internship Programs	internshipprograms.com	Posts listings from companies looking for interns in a wide variety of professions
SimplyHired Indeed	www.simplyhired.com www.indeed.com	Two specialized search engines that look for job postings on hundreds of websites worldwide; they find many postings that aren't listed on job board sites such as Monster

**Note:* This list represents only a small fraction of the hundreds of job-posting sites and other resources available online; be sure to check with your college's career center for the latest information.

Sources: Individual websites, all accessed 27 April 2017.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Advice for every phase of the job-search process

From an introduction to job-search strategies to details on résumé writing, you'll find advice from career counseling professionals. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Take advantage of job-search apps as well, including those offered by job-posting websites and major employers (see Figure 13.2). You can use them to learn more about the company as well as about specific jobs. In addition to researching companies and applying for openings, integrating a mobile device into your job-search strategy can help with networking and staying on top of your active job applications. For instance, some companies don't wait long after extending an offer. If they don't hear from the top candidate in a short amount of time, they'll move on their next choice. By staying plugged in via your mobile device, you won't let any opportunities pass you by.

TRANSLATING YOUR GENERAL POTENTIAL INTO A SPECIFIC SOLUTION FOR EACH EMPLOYER

An essential task in your job search is presenting your skills and accomplishments in a way that is relevant to the employer's business challenges.

An important aspect of any employer's quality-of-hire challenge is trying to determine how well a candidate's attributes and experience will translate into the demands of a specific position. As a job candidate, customizing your résumé to each job opening is an important step in showing employers that you will be a good fit. Customizing your résumé is not difficult if you have done your research. From your initial contact all the way through the interviewing process, in fact, you will have opportunities to impress recruiters by explaining how your general potential translates to the specific needs of the position.

MOBILE APP

The **Indeed.com** mobile app lets you search for jobs and apply from your phone.

TAKING THE INITIATIVE TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES

When it comes to finding the right opportunities for you, the easiest ways are not always the most productive ways. The major job boards such as Monster and classified services such as Craigslist have thousands of openings, but thousands of job seekers are looking at and applying for these same openings. Moreover, posting job openings on these sites is often a company's last resort, after it has exhausted other possibilities.

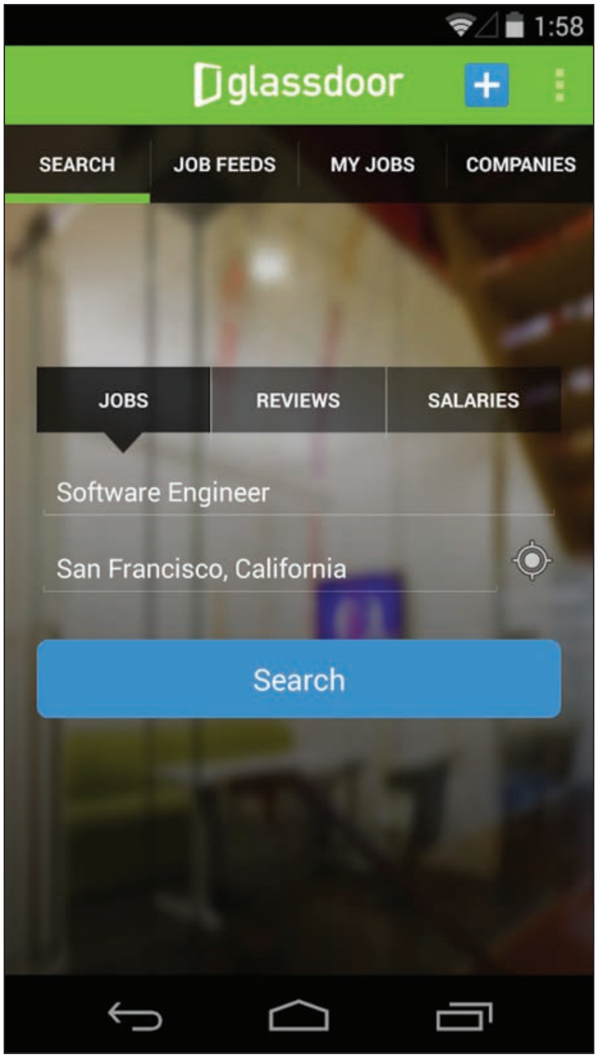

Figure 13.2 Mobile Job-Search Tools
Put your mobile phone or tablet to work in your job search, using some of the many employment apps now available.
Source: Courtesy of Glassdoor.

To maximize your chances, take the initiative and go find opportunities. Identify the companies you want to work for and focus your efforts on them. Get in touch with their human resources departments (or individual managers, if possible), describe what you can offer the company, and ask to be considered if any opportunities come up.[3] Reach out to company representatives on social networks. Your message might appear right when a company is starting to look for someone but hasn't yet advertised the opening to the outside world.

Don't hesitate to contact interesting companies even if they haven't advertised job openings to the public yet—they might be looking for somebody just like you.

BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

Networking is the process of making informal connections with mutually beneficial business contacts. Networking takes place wherever and whenever people talk: at industry functions, at social gatherings, at alumni reunions—and all over the Internet, from LinkedIn to Twitter to Facebook. In addition to making connections through social media tools, you might get yourself noticed by company recruiters.

Networking is an important way for professionals to help each other throughout their careers.

Networking is more essential than ever because the vast majority of job openings are never advertised to the general public. To avoid the time and expense of sifting through thousands of applications and the risk of hiring complete strangers, many companies start by asking their employees for recommendations—and these referrals are one of the most important sources of new employees.[4] The more people who know you, the better chance you have of being recommended for one of these hidden job openings.

MOBILE APP
Stay in touch with your professional network with the **LinkedIn** mobile app.

Creative Ways to Build Your Network

Start building your network now—your classmates could turn out to be some of your most important business contacts.

Start building your network now. Your classmates could end up being some of your most valuable contacts, if not right away then possibly later in your career. Then branch out by identifying people with similar interests in your target professions, industries, and companies. Read news sites, blogs, and other online sources. Follow industry leaders on Twitter. You can also follow individual executives at your target companies to learn about their interests and concerns.[5] Be on the lookout for career-oriented *Tweetups*, in which people who've connected on Twitter get together for in-person networking events. Connect with people on LinkedIn and Facebook, particularly in groups dedicated to particular career interests. Depending on the system and the settings on individual users' accounts, you may be able to introduce yourself via public or private messages.[6]

Participate in student business organizations, especially those with ties to professional organizations. Visit *trade shows* to learn about various industries and rub shoulders with people who work in those industries.[7] Don't overlook volunteering; you not only meet people but also demonstrate your ability to solve problems, manage projects, and lead others. You can do some good while creating a network for yourself.

Keys to Being a Valued Networker

Remember that networking is about people helping each other, not just about other people helping you. Pay close attention to networking etiquette:[8]

- Be polite in every exchange. Not only is this the professional way to behave, but people are more inclined to help those who are positive and respectful.
- Don't speak poorly of your current employer or any past employers. Doing so is off-putting to other people, and it harms your reputation.
- Respect other people's time. Don't inundate people with messages, questions, or requests for help.
- Stay away from politics and other volatile topics. Remember that you're building a business network, not a circle of friends.
- Follow through on your promises. If you agree to make an introduction or provide information, make sure you do so.
- Follow up after meeting people. If you meet someone with shared interests, send a brief message within a day or two to solidify the connection you've made.

Networking is a mutually beneficial activity, so look for opportunities to help others in some way.

To become a valued network member, you need to be able to help others in some way. You may not have any influential contacts yet, but because you're researching industries and trends as part of your own job search, you probably have valuable information you can share via your online and offline networks. Or you might simply be able to connect one person with another who can help. The more you network, the more valuable you become in your network—and the more valuable your network becomes to you.

Finally, be aware that your online network reflects on who you are in the eyes of potential employers, so exercise some judgment in making connections and giving recommendations on LinkedIn.

SEEKING CAREER COUNSELING

Don't overlook the many resources available through your college's career center.

Your college's career center probably offers a wide variety of services, including individual counseling, interview practice, résumé help, job fairs, on-campus interviews, and job listings. You can also find career planning advice online. Many of the websites listed in Table 13.1 offer articles and online tests to help you choose a career path, identify essential skills, and prepare to enter the job market.

AVOIDING CAREER-SEARCH MISTAKES

Don't let a careless mistake knock you out of contention for a great job.

While you're making all these positive moves to show employers you will be a quality hire, take care to avoid simple blunders such as these that can derail a job search:

- Not catching mistakes in your résumé
- Misspelling the name of a manager you're writing to

- Showing up late for an interview
- Posting something unprofessional on social media
- Failing to complete application forms correctly
- Asking for information that you can easily find yourself on a company's website

Busy recruiters will seize on these errors as a way to narrow the list of candidates they need to spend time on, so don't give them a reason to pass on your résumé.

Also, assume that every employer will conduct an online search on you, because the majority of companies now do so.[9] They want to know what your LinkedIn profile looks like and whether you've posted anything unprofessional on Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, or other sites. If they don't like what they see or if what they see doesn't match what they read on your résumé, you probably won't be invited for an interview.[10]

Planning Your Résumé

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Explain the process of planning your résumé, including how to choose the best résumé organization.

Although you will create many messages during your career search, your résumé will be the most important document in this process. You will be able to use it directly in many instances, adapt it to a variety of uses such as an e-portfolio, and reuse pieces of it in social networking profiles and online application forms. Even if you apply to a company that doesn't request résumés, the process of developing your résumé will prepare you for interviewing and preemployment testing.

Developing a résumé is one of those projects that really benefits from multiple sessions spread out over several days or weeks. You are trying to summarize a complex subject (yourself!) and present a compelling story to strangers in a brief document. Follow the three-step writing process (see Figure 13.3 on the next page) and give yourself plenty of time.

Before you dive into your résumé, be aware that you will find a wide range of opinions about résumés, regarding everything from appropriate length, content, design, distribution methods, and acceptable degrees of creativity to whether it even makes sense to write a traditional résumé in this age of online applications. For example, you may encounter a prospective employer that wants you to tweet your résumé or submit all the links that make up your online presence, rather than submit a conventional résumé.[11] You may run across examples of effective résumés that were produced as infographics, interactive videos, simulated search engine results, puzzles, games, graphic novels—you name it, somebody has probably tried it.

You will see lots of ideas and some conflicting advice about résumés; use what you know about effective business communication to decide what is right for your résumés.

When you hear conflicting advice or see trendy concepts that you might be tempted to try, remember the most important question in business communication: What is the most effective way to adapt your message to the individual needs of each member of your audience? An approach that is wildly successful with one company or in one industry could be a complete disaster in another industry. To forge your own successful path through this maze of information, get inside the heads of the people you are trying to reach—try to think the way they think—and then apply the principles of effective communication you are learning in this course.

ANALYZING YOUR PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

Once you view your résumé as a persuasive business message, it's easier to decide what should and shouldn't be in it.

Planning an effective résumé starts with understanding its true function—as a brief, persuasive business message intended to stimulate an employer's interest in meeting you and learning more about you (see Table 13.2 on the next page). In other words, the purpose of a résumé is not to get you a job but rather to get you an interview.[12]

Thanks to Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social media, you can often learn valuable details about individual managers in various companies.

As you conduct your research on various professions, industries, companies, and individual managers, you will have a better perspective on your target readers and their information needs. Learn as much as you can about the individuals who may be reading your résumé. Many professionals and managers are bloggers, Twitter users, and LinkedIn members, for example, so you can learn more about them online even if you've never met them. Any bit of information can help you craft a more effective message.

1 Plan →

Analyze the Situation
Recognize that the purpose of your résumé is to get an interview, not to get a job.

Gather Information
Research target industries and companies so that you know what they're looking for in new hires; learn about various jobs and what to expect; learn about the hiring manager, if possible.

Choose Media and Channels
Start with a traditional paper résumé and develop scannable, plain text, PDF, and social/online versions, as needed. Consider other formats as supplements.

Organize the Information
Choose an organizational model that highlights your strengths and downplays your shortcomings; use the chronological approach unless you have a strong reason not to.

2 Write →

Adapt to Your Audience
Plan your wording carefully so that you can catch a recruiter's eye within seconds; translate your education and experience into attributes that target employers find valuable.

Compose the Message
Write clearly and succinctly, using active, powerful language that is appropriate to the industries and companies you're targeting; use a professional tone in all communications.

3 Complete

Revise the Message
Evaluate content and review readability and then edit and rewrite for conciseness and clarity.

Produce the Message
Use effective design elements and suitable layout for a clean, professional appearance; seamlessly combine text and graphical elements. When printing, use quality paper and a good printer.

Proofread the Message
Review for errors in layout, spelling, and mechanics; mistakes can cost you interview opportunities.

Distribute the Message
Deliver your résumé, carefully following the specific instructions of each employer or job board website.

Figure 13.3 Three-Step Writing Process for Résumés
Following the three-step writing process will help you create a successful résumé in a short time. Remember to pay particular attention to the "you" attitude and presentation quality; your résumé will probably get tossed aside if it doesn't speak to audience needs or if it contains mistakes.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE
Converting your résumé to a CV
Find everything you need to know to convert your U.S.-style résumé to the *curriculum vitae* format used in many other countries (and in many academic positions in the United States). Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

By the way, if employers ask to see your "CV," they're referring to your *curriculum vitae*, the term used instead of *résumé* in academic professions and in many countries outside the United States. Résumés and CVs are essentially the same, although CVs can be much more detailed and include personal information that is not included in a résumé.

TABLE 13.2 Fallacies and Facts About Résumés

Fallacy	Fact
The purpose of a résumé is to list all your skills and abilities.	The purpose of a résumé is to kindle employer interest and generate an interview.
A good résumé will get you the job you want.	All a résumé can do is get you in the door.
Your résumé will always be read carefully and thoroughly.	In most cases, your résumé needs to make a positive impression within a few seconds; only then will someone read it in detail. Moreover, it will likely be screened by a computer looking for keywords first—and if it doesn't contain the right keywords, a human being may never see it.
The more good information you present about yourself in your résumé, the better, so stuff your résumé with every positive detail.	Recruiters don't need that much information about you at the initial screening stage, and they probably won't read it.

GATHERING PERTINENT INFORMATION

If you haven't been building an employment portfolio thus far, you may need to do some research on yourself at this point. Gather all the pertinent personal history you can think of, including all the specific dates, duties, and accomplishments from any previous jobs you've held. Compile all your educational accomplishments, including formal degrees, training certificates, professional and technical certifications, academic awards, and scholarships. Also, gather information about school or volunteer activities that might be relevant to your job search, including offices you have held in any club or professional organization, presentations given, and online or print publications. You probably won't use every piece of information you come up with, but you'll want to have it at your fingertips.

SELECTING THE BEST MEDIA AND CHANNELS

You should expect to produce your résumé in several media and formats. "Producing Your Résumé" on page 379 discusses your options.

ORGANIZING YOUR RÉSUMÉ AROUND YOUR STRENGTHS

Although a résumé can be organized in a number of ways, most are some variation of chronological organization, functional organization, or a combination of the two. The right choice depends on your background and your goals.

The Chronological Résumé

In a **chronological résumé**, the work experience section dominates and is placed immediately after your contact information and introductory statement (see Figure 13.6 on page 378 for an example). The chronological approach is the most common way to organize a résumé, and many employers prefer this format because it presents your professional history in a clear, easy-to-follow arrangement.[13] With its emphasis on your work history, however, it may not be the best choice if you have a limited experience in the field you are pursuing or if your work history doesn't show a stable career with a steady progression of increasing responsibility.[14]

The chronological résumé is the most common approach, but it might not be right for you at this stage in your career.

Develop your work experience section by listing your jobs in reverse chronological order, beginning with the most recent one and giving more space to the most recent positions you've held. For each job, start by listing the employer's name and location, your official job title, and the dates you held the position (write "to present" if you are still in your most recent job). Next, in a short block of text, highlight your accomplishments in a way that is relevant and understandable to your readers. If the general responsibilities of the position are not obvious from the job title, provide a little background to help readers understand what you did.

The Functional Résumé

A **functional résumé**, sometimes called a *skills résumé*, emphasizes your skills and capabilities, identifying employers and academic experience in subordinate sections. This arrangement stresses individual areas of competence rather than job history. The functional approach has three benefits: (1) Without having to read through job descriptions, employers can get an idea of what you can do for them; (2) you can emphasize earlier job experience through the skills you gained in those positions; and (3) you can deemphasize any lengthy unemployment or lack of career progress. However, you should be aware that because the functional résumé can obscure your work history, many employment professionals are suspicious of it.[15] Moreover, it lacks the evidence of job experience that supports your skills claims. If you don't believe the chronological format will work for you, consider the combination résumé instead.

The functional résumé is often considered by people with limited or spotty employment history, but many employers are suspicious of this format.

The Combination Résumé

If you don't have a lot of work history to show, consider a combination résumé to highlight your skills while still providing a chronological history of your employment.

A **combination résumé** meshes the skills focus of the functional format with the job history focus of the chronological format. Figures 13.4 (page 376) and 13.5 (page 377) show examples of combination résumés. The chief advantage of this format is that it allows you to highlight your capabilities and education when you don't have a long or steady employment history, without raising concerns that you might be hiding something about your past.

As you look at a number of sample résumés, you'll probably notice many variations on the three basic formats presented here. Study these other options in light of the effective communication principles you've learned in this course and the unique circumstances of your job search. If you find one that seems like the best fit for your unique situation, by all means use it.

ADDRESSING AREAS OF CONCERN

Many people have gaps in their career history or other issues that could be a concern for future employers. Here are some common issues and suggestions for handling them in a résumé or your accompanying cover letter:

- **Slow career growth.** If you stayed in one position for many years, highlight ways in which you took on increasing responsibility, such as training new hires or filling in for your supervisor during vacations.
- **Frequent job changes.** If you've had a number of short-term jobs of a similar type, such as independent contracting and temporary assignments, you can group them under a single heading.[16] Also, if past job positions were eliminated as a result of layoffs or mergers, find a subtle way to convey that information. Reasonable employers understand that many professionals have been forced to job hop by circumstances beyond their control.
- **Gaps in work history.** Mention relevant experience and education you gained during employment gaps, such as volunteer or community work. Also, consider the functional or combination résumé format.
- **Inexperience.** Include related volunteer work, membership in professional groups, relevant coursework, and internships.
- **Overqualification.** Tone down your résumé by focusing on the experience and skills that relate most directly to the target position.
- **Job termination for cause.** Your résumé doesn't need to disclose that you were fired from a previous position, but if you are asked that on an application form or in an interview, you need to answer truthfully. Be prepared with an answer that illustrates how you learned from the experience and will be a positive asset to your next employer.[17]
- **Criminal record.** Employment laws related to criminal history vary by state, industry, and profession. If this affects you, you may want to consult your state's department of labor or advocacy organizations such as the National Employment Law Project (**www.nelp.org**). You don't necessarily need to disclose on your résumé if you have a criminal record, but most employers run background checks and at some point in the application process are likely to ask whether you have been convicted of a crime. Be prepared to discuss new skills you acquired and other positive changes you have made.[18]

Writing Your Résumé

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe the tasks involved in writing your résumé, and list the sections to consider including in your résumé.

With the necessary information and a good plan in hand, you're ready to begin writing. If you feel uncomfortable writing about yourself, you're not alone. Many people, even accomplished writers, can find it difficult to write their own résumés. If you get stuck, imagine you are somebody else, writing a résumé for this person called you. By "being your own client," you might find that the words and ideas flow more easily. You could also pair up a classmate or friend who is writing a résumé and swap projects for a while. Working on each other's résumés might speed up the process for both of you.

If you're uncomfortable writing your own résumé, you might try to trade with a classmate and write each other's résumé.

KEEPING YOUR RÉSUMÉ HONEST

Your résumé is a promotional message, so you naturally want to portray yourself in the best possible light. However, you must avoid any temptation to stretch the truth. Not only is this the right thing to do, but résumé fraud has become so widespread that many employers are stepping up their efforts to confirm the information that candidates supply. These efforts include running background checks, verifying employment details, designing interview questions specifically to expose shaky information on résumés, and using standardized application forms that require candidates to provide specific details that might be missing from a résumé.[19] Chances are that false information on a résumé will be exposed somewhere during the application and interview process. Even if a deceptive candidate makes it past these checks, he or she has to live with the fear of being caught somewhere down the line—people have been fired years into their jobs for falsifying their résumés.[20]

To combat résumé fraud, employers now use a variety of screening techniques to expose falsified information.

By all means, express your talents and experience clearly and confidently, but don't inflate your accomplishments or do anything else to mislead employers. Stand out as a candidate with integrity.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

Tempted to twist the truth on your résumé?

Lying on a résumé can have legal ramifications. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

ADAPTING YOUR RÉSUMÉ TO YOUR AUDIENCE

In a competitive job market, the more you look like a good fit, the better your chances of securing interviews. Plan to adapt your résumé to each job opening in order to show how your capabilities meet the demands and expectations of the position.

Translate your past accomplishments into a compelling picture of what you can do for employers in the future.

For example, an in-house public relations (PR) department and an independent PR agency perform many of the same tasks, but the outside agency must also sell its services to multiple clients. Consequently, it needs employees who are skilled at attracting and keeping paying customers, in addition to being skilled at PR. If you are applying for both in-house and agency PR jobs, you need to adapt your résumé for each of these audiences.

An essential step in adapting your résumé is using the same terminology as the employer uses to describe job responsibilities and professional accomplishments. In Figures 13.4 through 13.6 starting on page 376, you can see how the sample résumés do this, echoing key terms and phrases from the job postings. With the rise of automated *applicant tracking systems*, matching your language to the employer's will help you get past the keyword filters these systems use to rank incoming résumés.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS INTERACTIVE WEBSITE

See how well your résumé matches a target job description

Increase your chances of getting past a company's résumé filters. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

If you are applying for business positions after military service or moving from one industry to another, you may need to "translate" your experience into the language of your target employers. For instance, military experience can help you develop many skills that are valuable in business, but military terminology can sound like a foreign language to people who aren't familiar with it. Isolate the important general concepts and present them in the business language your target employers use.

Military service and other specialized experiences may need to be "translated" into terms more readily understandable by your target readers.

COMPOSING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

Write your résumé using a simple and direct style. Use short, crisp phrases instead of whole sentences, and focus on what your reader needs to know. Avoid using the word *I*, which can sound both self-involved and repetitious by the time you outline all your

Draft your résumé using short, crisp phrases built around strong verbs and nouns.

skills and accomplishments. Instead, start your phrases with strong action verbs such as these:[21]

accomplished	coordinated	initiated	participated	set up
achieved	created	installed	performed	simplified
administered	demonstrated	introduced	planned	sparked
approved	developed	investigated	presented	streamlined
arranged	directed	launched	proposed	strengthened
assisted	established	maintained	raised	succeeded
assumed	explored	managed	recommended	supervised
budgeted	forecasted	motivated	reduced	systematized
chaired	generated	negotiated	reorganized	targeted
changed	identified	operated	resolved	trained
compiled	implemented	organized	saved	transformed
completed	improved	oversaw	served	upgraded

Whenever you can, quantify the results with carefully selected evidence that confirms your abilities:

Instead of This	Write an Active Statement That Shows Results
Responsible for developing a new system for tracking online service requests	Developed a new service-request system that reduced scheduling errors by 90 percent and improved customer satisfaction by 22 percent
Performed various social media functions	As community manager, directed all aspects of the company's social media program
Have a solid record of acquiring new customers	Led the department in customer acquisition three years in a row
Member of special campus task force to resolve student problems with existing cafeteria assignments	Assisted in implementing new campus dining program that balances student needs with cafeteria capacity

Job-Specific Keywords

Include relevant *keywords* from job descriptions throughout your résumé and cover letter.

In addition to clear writing with specific examples, the particular words and phrases used throughout your résumé are critically important. Most résumés are now subjected to *keyword searches* in an applicant tracking system or other database, in which a recruiter searches for résumés most likely to match the requirements of a particular job. Résumés that don't closely match the requirements may never be seen by a human reader, so it is essential to use the words and phrases that a recruiter is most likely to search on.

Follow these tips for using keywords in your résumé and cover letter:[22]

- Use the specific terminology that each employer uses in its job descriptions. This is another good reason for adapting your résumé to each job opening; various employers can use different terms to describe the same function or quality.
- Integrate keywords naturally. Work them into your introductory statement, your education section, your employment history, and any activities and achievements that you include.
- Without going overboard in a way that makes the writing awkward or unnatural, use as many relevant keywords as you can throughout your résumé and cover letter.
- Be sure to cover the full range of hard and soft skills each employer is looking for. *Hard skills* are measurable, specific abilities, such as using spreadsheets, operating equipment, speaking a particular language, designing websites, and so on. *Soft skills* are the less-tangible, interpersonal side of things—including communication, teamwork, leadership, and conflict resolution. Hard skills are easier to convey because they

are specific, such as saying you are fluent in Spanish or have four years of experience designing mobile apps. Soft skills are more challenging to express in a convincing way, so look for ways to quantify these with details, such as "nominated for the company's leadership development program."

Identifying these keywords requires some research, but you can uncover many of them while you are researching various industries and companies. In particular, study job descriptions carefully. In contrast to the action verbs that catch a human reader's attention, keywords that catch a computer's attention are usually nouns that describe the specific skills, attributes, and experiences an employer is looking for in a candidate. Keywords can include the business and technical terms associated with a specific profession, industry-specific jargon, names or types of products or systems used in a profession, job titles, and college degrees.[23]

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Find the keywords that will light up your résumé

This list of tips and tools will help you find the right keywords to customize your résumé for every opportunity. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Name and Contact Information

Your name and contact information constitute the heading of your résumé; include the following:

Be sure to provide complete and accurate contact information; mistakes in this section of the résumé are surprisingly common.

- Name
- Address (both permanent and temporary, if you're likely to move during the job-search process)
- Email address
- Phone number(s)
- The URL of your personal webpage, e-portfolio, or social media résumé (if you have one)

If the only email address you have is through your current employer, get a free personal email address from Google Gmail, Microsoft Outlook, or a similar service. It's not fair to your current employer to use company resources for a job search, and doing so sends a bad signal to potential employers. Choose a straightforward address that includes your first and last names, along with any additional numbers you might need to make it unique, such as taylor.jonson123@gmail.com.

Use a professional-sounding email address for business correspondence, such as *firstname.lastname@gmail.com*).

Introductory Statement

You have three options for a brief introductory statement that follows your name and contact information:[24]

You can choose to open with a career objective, a qualifications summary, or a career summary.

- **Career objective.** A career objective identifies either a specific job you want to land or a general career track you would like to pursue. Some experts advise against including a career objective because it can categorize you so narrowly that you miss out on interesting opportunities, and it is essentially about fulfilling your desires, not about meeting the employer's needs. In the past, most résumés included a career objective, but in recent years more job seekers are using a qualifications summary or a career summary. However, if you have little or no work experience in your target profession, a career objective might be your best option. If you do opt for an objective, word it in a way that relates your qualifications to employer needs.
- **Qualifications summary.** A qualifications summary offers a brief view of your key qualifications. The goal is to let a reader know within a few seconds what you can deliver. You can title this section generically as "Qualifications Summary" or "Summary of Qualifications," or, if you have one dominant qualification, you can use that as the title. Consider using a qualifications summary if you have one or more important qualifications but don't yet have a long career history. Also, if you haven't been working long but your college education has given you a dominant professional

If you have a focused skill set but don't yet have a long career history, a qualifications summary is probably the best type of introductory statement for you.

"theme," such as multimedia design or statistical analysis, you can craft a qualifications summary that highlights your educational preparedness.

- **Career summary.** A career summary offers a brief recap of your career with the goal of presenting increasing levels of responsibility and performance (see Figure 13.6 on page 378 for an example). A career summary is particularly good for people who have demonstrated the ability to take on increasing levels of responsibility in their chosen field and who want to continue in that field.

Whichever option you choose, make sure it includes the most essential keywords you identified in your research—and adapt these words and phrases to each job opportunity as needed.

Education

If you are early in your career, your education is probably your strongest selling point.

If you're still in college or have recently graduated, education is probably your strongest selling point. Present your educational background in depth, choosing facts that support your professional theme. Give this section a heading such as "Education," "Technical Training," or "Academic Preparation," as appropriate. Then, starting with the most recent, list the name and location of each school you have attended, the month and year of your graduation (say "anticipated graduation: ______" if you haven't graduated yet), your major and minor fields of study, significant skills and abilities you've developed in your coursework, and the degrees or certificates you've earned. Fine-tune your message by listing courses that are most relevant to each job opening, and indicate any scholarships, awards, or academic honors you've received.

The education section should also include relevant training sponsored by business or government organizations. Mention high school or military training only if the associated achievements are pertinent to your career goals.

Whether you list your grade point average depends on the job you want and the quality of your grades. If you don't show your GPA on your résumé—and there's no rule saying you have to—be prepared to answer questions about it during the interview process because many employers will assume that your GPA is not spectacular if you didn't list it on your résumé. If you choose to show a grade point average, be sure to mention the scale, especially if it isn't a four-point scale. If your grades are better within your major than in other courses, you can also list your GPA as "Major GPA" and include only those courses within your major.

Work Experience, Skills, and Accomplishments

When you describe past job responsibilities, identify the skills and knowledge that you can apply to a future job.

This section can be called "Work Experience," "Professional Experience," or "Work and Volunteer Experience," if you have limited work experience and want to bolster that with volunteer experience. Like the education section, the work experience section should focus on your overall theme in a way that shows how your past can contribute to an employer's future. Use keywords to call attention to the skills you've developed on the job and to your ability to handle responsibility. Emphasize what you accomplished in each position, not just the generic responsibilities of the job.

List your jobs in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent. Include military service and any internships and part-time or temporary jobs related to your career objective. Include the name and location of the employer, and if readers are unlikely to recognize the organization, briefly describe what it does. When you want to keep the name of your current employer confidential, you can identify the firm by industry only ("a large video game developer"). If an organization's name or location has changed since you worked there, state the current name and location and include the old information preceded by "formerly . . ." Before or after each job listing, state your job title and give the years you worked in the job; use the phrase "to present" to denote current employment. Indicate whether a job was part-time.

Devote the most space to the jobs that are most recent or most closely related to your target position. If you were personally responsible for something significant, be sure to mention it. Facts about your skills and accomplishments are the most important information you can give a prospective employer, so quantify them whenever possible.

Devote the most space to jobs that are most recent and most closely related to your target position.

One helpful exercise is to write a 30-second "commercial" for each major skill you want to highlight. The commercial should offer proof that you really do possess the skill. For your résumé, distill the commercials down to brief phrases; you can use the more detailed proof statements in cover letters and as answers to interview questions.[25]

If you have a number of part-time, temporary, or entry-level jobs that don't relate to your career objective, you have to use your best judgment when it comes to including or excluding them. Too many minor and irrelevant work details can clutter your résumé, particularly if you've been in the professional workforce for a few years. However, if you don't have a long employment history, including these jobs shows your ability and willingness to keep working.

Activities and Achievements

You can use this optional section to highlight activities and achievements outside of a work or educational context—but only if they make you a more attractive job candidate. For example, traveling, studying, or working abroad and fluency in multiple languages could weigh heavily in your favor with employers who do business internationally.

Include personal accomplishments only if they suggest special skills or qualities that are relevant to the jobs you're seeking.

Because many employers are involved in their local communities, they tend to look positively on applicants who are active and concerned members of their communities as well. Consider including community service activities that suggest leadership, teamwork, communication skills, technical aptitude, or other valuable attributes.

You should generally avoid indicating membership or significant activity in religious or political organizations (unless, of course, you're applying to such an organization) because doing so might raise concerns among people with differing beliefs or affiliations. However, if you want to highlight skills you developed while involved with such a group, you can refer to it generically as a "not-for-profit organization."

Finally, if you have little or no job experience and not much to discuss outside of your education, you can indicate involvement in athletics or other organized student activities. Also consider mentioning publications, projects, and other accomplishments that required relevant business skills.

Personal Data and References

In most cases, your résumé should not include any personal data beyond the information described in the previous sections. When applying to U.S. companies, never include any of the following: physical characteristics, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religious or political affiliations, race, national origin, salary history, reasons for leaving jobs, names of previous supervisors, names of references, Social Security number, or student ID number. Expectations differ in other countries, so research the job application process in specific countries if you need more information.

When applying to U.S. companies, your résumé should not include any personal data such as age, marital status, physical description, or Social Security number.

The availability of references is assumed, so you don't need to put "References available upon request" at the end of your résumé. However, be sure to have a list of several references ready when you begin applying for jobs. Prepare your reference sheet with your name and contact information at the top, using the same design and layout you use for your résumé. Then list three or four people who have agreed to serve as references. Include each person's name, job title, organization, address, telephone number, email address (if the reference prefers to be contacted by email), and the nature of your relationship.

Prepare a list of references but don't include them on your résumé.

Figures 13.4 through 13.6 show how a job applicant can put these guidelines to work in three job-search scenarios.

The Scenario

You are about to graduate and have found a job opening that is in your chosen field. You don't have any experience in this field, but the courses you've taken in pursuit of your degree have given you a solid academic foundation for this position.

The Opportunity

The job opening is for an associate market analyst with Living Social, the rapidly growing advertising and social commerce service that describes itself as "the online source for discovering valuable local experiences." (A market analyst researches markets to find potentially profitable business opportunities.)

The Communication Challenge

You don't have directly relevant experience as a market analyst, and you might be competing against people who do. Your education is your strongest selling point, so you need to show how your coursework relates to the position.

Don't let your lack of experience hold you back; the job posting makes it clear that this is an entry-level position. For example, the first bullet point in the job description says "Become an expert in market data . . .," and the required skills and experience section says that "Up to 2 years of experience with similar research and analysis is preferred." The important clues here are *become* (the company doesn't expect you to be an expert already) and *preferred* (experience would be great if you have it, but it's not required).

Keywords and Key Phrases

You study the job posting and highlight the following elements:

1. Working in a team environment
2. Research, including identifying trendy new businesses
3. Analyzing data using Microsoft Excel
4. Managing projects
5. Collaborating with technical experts and sales staff
6. Creating new tools to help maximize revenue and minimize risks
7. Bachelor's degree is required
8. Natural curiosity and desire to learn
9. Detail oriented
10. Hands-on experience with social media

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Summary of Qualifications

2 • In-depth academic preparation in marketing analysis techniques
3 • Intermediate skills with a variety of analytical tools, including Microsoft Excel and Google Analytics
• Front-line experience with consumers and business owners
2 10 • Multiple research and communication projects involving the business applications of social media

Education

7 B.S. in Marketing (Marketing Management Track), Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN, anticipated graduation: May 2020

Program coursework

6 • 45 credits of core business courses, including Business Information Tools, Business Statistics, Principles of Accounting, and Business Finance
2 • 27 credits of marketing and marketing management courses, including Buyer Behavior, Marketing Research, Product and Pricing Strategy, and seminars in e-commerce and social media

Special projects

2 • "Handcrafting a Global Marketplace: The Etsy Phenomenon," in-depth analysis of how Etsy transformed the market for handmade craft items by bringing e-commerce capabilities to individual craftspeople
1 2 4 6 • "Hybrid Communication Platforms for Small Businesses," team service project for five small businesses in Terre Haute, recommending best practices for combining traditional and social-media methods of customer engagement and providing a customized measurement spreadsheet for each company

Work and Volunteer Experience

9 **Independent math tutor, 2015-present.** Assist students with a variety of math courses at the elementary, middle, and high school level; all clients have achieved combined test and homework score improvements of at least one full letter grade, with an average improvement of 38 percent.

10 **LeafSpring Food Bank, Terre Haute, IN, 2018-present (weekends during college terms), Volunteer.** Stock food and supply pantries; prepare emergency baskets for new clients; assist director with public relations activities, including website updates and social media news releases.

5 4 10 **Owings Ford, Barrington, IL, 2017–2019 (summers), Customer care agent.** Assisted the service and sales managers of this locally owned car dealership with a variety of customer-service tasks; scheduled service appointments; designed and implemented improvements to service-center waiting room to increase guest comfort; convinced dealership owners to begin using Twitter and Facebook to interact with current and potential customers.

Professional Engagement

8 • Collegiate member, American Marketing Association; helped establish the AMA Collegiate Chapter at Indiana State
• Participated in AMA International Collegiate Case Competition, 2017–2018

Awards

8 • Dean's List: 2018, 2019
• Forward Youth award, Barrington Chamber of Commerce, 2016

Gomes includes phone and email contacts, along with a blog that features academic-oriented writing.

Using a summary of qualifications for her opening statement lets her target the résumé and highlight her most compelling attributes.

Her education is a much stronger selling point than her work experience, so she goes into some detail—carefully selecting course names and project descriptions to echo the language of the job description.

She adjusts the descriptions and accomplishments of each role to highlight the aspects of her work and volunteer experience that are relevant to the position.

The final sections highlight activities and awards that reflect her interest in marketing and her desire to improve her skills.

Notice how Gomes adapts her résumé to "mirror" the keywords and phrases from the job posting:

1. Offers concrete evidence of teamwork (rather than just calling herself a "team player," for example)
2. Emphasizes research skills and experience in multiple instances
3. Calls out Microsoft Excel, as well as Google Analytics, a key online tool for measuring activity on websites
4. Indicates the ability to plan and carry out projects, even if she doesn't have formal project management experience
5. Indicates some experience working in a supportive or collaborative role with technical experts and sales specialists (the content of the work doesn't translate to the new job, but the concept does)
6. Suggests the ability to work with new analytical tools
7. Displays her B.S. degree prominently
8. Demonstrates a desire to learn and to expand her skills
9. Tracking the progress of her tutoring clients is strong evidence of a detail-oriented worker—not to mention someone who cares about results and the quality of her work
10. Lists business-oriented experience with Facebook, Twitter, and other social media

Figure 13.4 Crafting Your Résumé, Scenario 1: Positioning Yourself for an Ideal Opportunity
Even for an ideal job-search scenario, where your academic and professional experiences and interests closely match the parameters of the job opening, you still need to adapt your résumé content carefully to "echo" the specific language of the job description.[37]

The Scenario

You are about to graduate but can't find job openings in the field you'd like to enter. However, you have found an opening that is in a related field, and it would give you the chance to get some valuable work experience.

The Opportunity

The job opening is for a seller support associate with Amazon, the online retail giant. Employees in this position work with merchants that sell products through the Amazon e-commerce system to make sure merchants are successful. In essence, it is a customer service job, but directed at these merchants, not the consumers who buy on Amazon.

The Communication Challenge

This isn't the job you ultimately want, but it is a great opportunity with a well-known company.

You note that the position does not require a college degree, so in that sense you might be a bit overqualified. However, you also see a strong overlap between your education and the responsibilities and required skills of the job, so be sure to highlight those.

Keywords and Key Phrases

You study the job posting and highlight the following elements:

1. Be able to predict and respond to merchant needs; good business sense with the ability to appreciate the needs of a wide variety of companies
2. Strong written and oral communication skills
3. High degree of professionalism
4. Self-starter with good time management skills
5. Logically analyze problems and devise solutions
6. Comfortable with computer-based tools, including Microsoft Excel
7. Desire to expand business and technical skills
8. Customer service experience
9. Collaborate with fellow team members to resolve difficult situations
10. Record of high performance regarding quality of work and personal productivity

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Permanent Address:
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Summary of Qualifications

- (8) Front-line customer service experience with consumers and business owners
- Strong business sense based on work experience and academic preparation
- (6) Intermediate skills with a variety of software tools, including Microsoft Excel and Google Analytics
- (10) Record of quality work in both business and academic settings

Gomes modified her summary of qualifications to increase emphasis on customer service.

Education

B.S. in Marketing (Marketing Management Track), Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN, expected graduation May 2020

Program coursework

- (6) 45 credits of core business courses, including Business Information Tools, Business Statistics, Principles of Accounting, and Business Finance
- (1) 27 credits of marketing and marketing management courses, including Marketing Fundamentals, Buyer Behavior, Marketing Research, Retail Strategies and seminars in e–commerce and social media

She adjusts the selection of highlighted courses to reflect the retail and e-commerce aspects of this particular job opening.

Special projects

- (1)(2) "Handcrafting a Global Marketplace: The Etsy Phenomenon," in-depth analysis of how the Etsy e-commerce platform helps craftspeople and artisans become more successful merchants
- (1)(2)(9) "Hybrid Communication Platforms for Small Businesses," team service project for five small businesses in Terre Haute, recommending best practices for combining traditional and social–media methods of customer engagement and providing a customized measurement spreadsheet for each company

She adjusts the wording of this Etsy project description to closely mirror what Amazon is—an e-commerce platform serving a multitude of independent merchants.

Work and Volunteer Experience

(3)(4)(10) **Independent math tutor, 2015-present.** Assist students with a variety of math courses at the elementary, middle, and high school level; all clients have achieved combined test and homework score improvements of at least one full letter grade, with an average improvement of 38 percent.

(2) **LeafSpring Food Bank, Terre Haute, IN, 2018-present (weekends during college terms), Volunteer.** Stock food and supply pantries; prepare emergency baskets for new clients; assist director with public relations activities, including website updates and social media news releases.

(8) **Owings Ford, Barrington, IL, 2017–2019 (summers), Customer care agent.** Assisted the service and sales managers of this locally owned car dealership with a variety of customer-service tasks; scheduled service appointments; designed and implemented improvements to service-center waiting room to increase (5) guest comfort; convinced dealership owners to begin using Twitter and Facebook to interact with current and potential customers.

She provides more detail regarding her customer support experience.

Professional Engagement

- (7) Collegiate member, American Marketing Association; helped establish the AMA Collegiate Chapter at Indiana State
- Participated in AMA International Collegiate Case Competition, 2017–2018

Awards

- (3)(4)(10) Dean's List: 2018, 2019
- (1) Forward Youth award, Barrington Chamber of Commerce, 2016

The final sections are still relevant to this job opening, so she leaves them unchanged.

Notice how Gomes adapts her résumé to "mirror" the keywords and phrases from the job posting:

1. Suggests strong awareness of the needs of various businesses
2. Examples of experience with written business communication; she can demonstrate oral communication skills during phone, video, or in-person interviews
3. Results-oriented approach to tutoring business suggests high degree of professionalism, as do the two awards
4. The ability to work successfully as an independent tutor while attending high school and college is strong evidence of self-motivation and good time management
5. Indicates ability to understand problems and design solutions
6. Suggests the ability to work with a variety of software tools
7. Demonstrates a desire to learn and to expand her skills
8. Highlights customer service experience
9. Offers concrete evidence of teamwork (rather than just calling herself a "team player," for example)
10. Tracking the progress of her tutoring clients is strong evidence of someone who cares about results and the quality of her work; Dean's List awards also suggest quality of work; record of working while attending high school and college suggests strong productivity

Figure 13.5 Crafting Your Résumé, Scenario 2: Repositioning Yourself for Available Opportunities

If you can't find an ideal job opening, you'll need to adjust your plans and adapt your résumé to the openings that are available. Look for opportunities that meet your near-term financial needs while giving you the chance to expand your skill set so that you'll be even more prepared when an ideal opportunity does come along.[38]

The Scenario

Moving forward from Figures 13.4 and 13.5, let's assume you have worked in both those positions, first for two years as a seller support associate at Amazon and since then as an associate market analyst at LivingSocial. You believe you are now ready for a bigger challenge, and the question is how to adapt your résumé for a higher-level position now that you have some experience in your chosen field. (Some of the details from the earlier résumés have been modified to accommodate this example.)

The Opportunity

The job opening is for a senior strategy analyst for Nordstrom. The position is similar in concept to the position at LivingSocial, but at a higher level and with more responsibility.

The Communication Challenge

This job is an important step up; a senior strategy analyst is expected to conduct in-depth financial analysis of business opportunities and make recommendations regarding strategy changes, merchandising partnerships with other companies, and important decisions.

You worked with a wide variety of retailers in your Amazon and LivingSocial jobs, including a number of fashion retailers, but you haven't worked directly in fashion retailing yourself.

Bottom line: You can bring a good set of skills to this position, but your financial analysis skills and retailing insights might not be readily apparent, so you'll need to play those up.

Keywords and Key Phrases

You study the job posting and highlight the following elements:

1. Provide research and analysis to guide major business strategy decisions
2. Communicate across business units and departments within Nordstrom
3. Familiar with retail analytics
4. Knowledge of fashion retailing
5. Qualitative and quantitative analysis
6. Project management
7. Strong communication skills
8. Bachelor's required; MBA preferred
9. Advanced skills in financial and statistical modeling
10. Proficient in PowerPoint and Excel

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Market and Strategy Analyst

1 3 • Five years of experience in local and online retailing, with three years of focus on market opportunity analysis

4 • Strong business sense developed through more than 60 marketing programs across a range of retail sectors, including hospitality, entertainment, and fashion

1 5 • Recognized by senior management for ability to make sound judgment calls in situations with incomplete or conflicting data

2 6 • Adept at coordinating research projects and marketing initiatives across organizational boundaries and balancing the interests of multiple stakeholders

9 10 • Advanced skills with leading analysis and communication tools, including Excel, PowerPoint, and Google Analytics

Professional Experience

1 4 7 3 5 7 **LivingSocial, Seattle, WA (July 2017–present), Associate market analyst.** Analyzed assigned markets for such factors as consumer demand, merchandising opportunities, and seller performance; designed, launched, and managed marketing initiatives in 27 retailing categories, including fashions and accessories; met or exceeded profit targets on 90 percent of all marketing initiatives; appointed team lead/trainer in recognition of strong quantitative and qualitative analysis skills; utilized both established and emerging social media tools and helped business partners use these communication platforms to increase consumer engagement in local markets.

4 7 3 **Amazon, Seattle WA (July 2015–June 2017), Seller support associate.** Worked with more than 300 product vendors, including many in the fashion and accessories sectors, to assure profitable retailing activities on the Amazon e-commerce platform; resolved vendor issues related to e-commerce operations, pricing, and consumer communication; anticipated potential vendor challenges and assisted in the development of more than a dozen new selling tools that improved vendor profitability while reducing Amazon's vendor support costs by nearly 15 percent.

Education

8 1 9 **Evening MBA program, University of Washington, Seattle, WA; anticipated graduation: May 2021.** Broad-based program combining financial reporting, marketing strategy, competitive strategy, and supply chain management with individual emphasis on quantitative methods, financial analysis, and marketing decision models.

9 **B.S. in Marketing (Marketing Management Track), Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN, May 2015.** Comprehensive coursework in business fundamentals, accounting and finance, marketing fundamentals, retailing, and consumer communications.

Professional Engagement

- Member, American Marketing Association
- Member, International Social Media Association
- 4 Active in National Retail Federation and Retail Advertising & Marketing Association

Awards

- LivingSocial Top Ten Deals (monthly employee achievement award for designing the most profitable couponing deals); awarded seven times, 2017–2019
- Social Commerce Network's Social Commerce Innovators: 30 Under 30; 2018

Gomes stays with a summary of qualifications as her opening statement but gives it a new title to reflect her experience and to focus on her career path as a market analyst.

Work experience is now her key selling point, so she shifts to a conventional chronological résumé that puts employment ahead of education. She also removes the part-time jobs she had during high school and college.

She updates the education section with a listing for the MBA program she has started (selecting points of emphasis relevant to the job opening) and reduces the amount of detail about her undergraduate degree.

She updates the professional engagement and awards sections with timely and relevant information.

Notice how Gomes adapts her résumé to "mirror" the keywords and phrases from the job posting:

1. Highlights her experience in market and business analysis and her continuing education in this area
2. Mentions skill at coordinating cross-functional projects
3. Lists experiences that relate to the collection and analysis of retail data
4. Emphasizes the work she has done with fashion-related retailing and retailing in general
5. Identifies experience and education that relates to quantitative and qualitative analysis (this point overlaps #1 and #3 to a degree)
6. Mentions project management experience
7. Lists areas that suggest effective communication skills
8. Lists education, with emphasis on coursework that relates most directly to the job posting
9. Mentions work experience and educational background related to these topics
10. Includes these programs in the list of software tools she uses

Figure 13.6 Crafting Your Résumé, Scenario 3: Positioning Yourself for More Responsibility

When you have a few years of experience under your belt, your résumé strategy should shift to emphasize work history and accomplishments. Here is how Emma Gomes might reshape her résumé if she had held the two jobs described in Figures 13.4 and 13.5 and is now ready for a bigger challenge. For an application letter that could accompany this résumé, see Figure 14.3 on page 397.[39]

Completing Your Résumé

Completing your résumé involves revising it for optimum quality, producing it in the various forms and media you'll need, and proofreading it for any errors before distributing it or publishing it online.

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Characterize the completing step for résumés, including the six most common formats in which you can produce a résumé.

REVISING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

Revising your résumé for clarity and conciseness is essential. Recruiters and hiring managers want to find key pieces of information about you, including your top skills, your current job, and your education, in a matter of seconds. Many are overwhelmed with résumés, so don't make them work to find or decode this information. Remember the fundamental purpose of the résumé—it's to get you an interview, not to get you a job. Weed out minor details until your résumé is tight, clear, and focused.

Revise your résumé until it is as concise and clear as possible.

The ideal length of your résumé depends on the depth of your experience and the level of the positions for which you are applying. As a general guideline, if you have fewer than five years of professional experience, keep your conventional résumé to one page. For online résumé formats such as LinkedIn, you can always provide links to additional information. If you have more experience and are applying for a higher-level position, you may need to prepare a somewhat longer résumé.[26] For highly technical positions, longer résumés are often the norm as well because the qualifications for such jobs can require more description.

If your employment history is brief, keep your printable résumé to one page; you can expand on this in your LinkedIn profile and other online platforms.

PRODUCING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

No matter how many media and formats you eventually choose for producing your résumé, a clean, professional-looking design is a must. Recruiters and hiring managers typically want to skim your essential information in a matter of seconds, and anything that distracts or delays them will work against you.

Effective résumé designs are clear, clean, and professional.

Choosing a Design Strategy for Your Résumé

You'll find a wide range of résumé designs in use today, from text-only documents that follow a conventional layout to full-color infographics with unique designs. As with every type of business message, keep your audience, your goals, and your resources in mind. Don't choose a style just because it seems trendy or flashy or different. For example, you can find some eye-catching infographic résumés online, but many of those are created by graphic designers applying for visually oriented jobs in advertising, fashion, web design, and other areas in which graphic design skills are a must. In other words, the intended audience expects an applicant to have design skills, and the résumé is a good opportunity to demonstrate those. In contrast, a colorful, graphically intense résumé might just look odd to recruiters in finance, engineering, or other professions.

Don't pick a résumé style just because it's trendy or different; make sure it works for your specific needs.

The sample résumés in Figures 13.4 through 13.6 use a classic, conservative design that will serve you well for most business opportunities. Notice how they feature simplicity, an easy-to-read layout, effective use of white space, and clear typefaces. Recruiters can pick out the key pieces of information in a matter of seconds.

You can certainly enhance your résumé beyond this style, but do so carefully and always with an eye on what will help the reader and avoid confusing an applicant tracking system. Make subheadings easy to find and easy to read. Avoid dense blocks of text, and use lists to itemize your most important qualifications. Color is not necessary by any means, but if you add color, make it subtle and sophisticated. Above all, don't make the reader work. Your résumé should be a high-efficiency information-delivery system, not a treasure hunt.

With any résumé design, make sure that readers can find essential information in a matter of seconds.

Be prepared to produce versions of your résumé in multiple formats.

Depending on the companies you apply to, you might want to produce your résumé in as many as six formats (all are explained in the following sections):

- Conventional résumé
- Scannable résumé
- Plain-text file
- Microsoft Word file
- Online résumé
- PDF file

Unfortunately, no single format or medium will work for all situations, and employer expectations continue to change as technology evolves. Find out what each employer or job website expects, and provide your résumé in that specific format.

Considering Photos, Videos, Presentations, and Infographics

In most cases, it's best not to include photos with résumés that you send to employers or post on job websites.

As you produce your résumé in various formats, you will encounter the question of whether to include a photograph of yourself on or with your résumé. For print or digital documents that you will be submitting to employers or job websites, the safest advice is to avoid photos. The reason is that seeing visual cues of the age, ethnicity, and gender of candidates early in the selection process exposes employers to complaints of discriminatory hiring practices. In fact, some employers won't even look at résumés that include photos, and some applicant tracking systems automatically discard résumés with any extra files.[27] However, photographs are acceptable and expected for social media résumés and other online formats where you are not actively submitting a résumé to an employer.

Some applicants create PowerPoint or Prezi presentations, videos, or infographics to supplement a conventional résumé. These other formats have the appealing options of flexibility and multimedia capabilities. For instance, you can present a menu of choices on the opening screen and allow viewers to click through to sections of interest. (Note that most of the things you can accomplish with a presentation can be done with an online résumé, which is probably more convenient for most readers.)

A video résumé can be a compelling supplement as well, but be aware that some employment law experts advise employers not to view videos, at least not until after candidates have been evaluated solely on their credentials. The reason for this caution is the same as with photographs. In addition, videos are more cumbersome to evaluate than paper or electronic résumés, and some recruiters refuse to watch them.[28] However, not all companies share this concern over videos, so you'll have to research their individual preferences. In fact, the online retailer Zappos encourages "video cover letters" from interested candidates.[29]

An infographic résumé attempts to convey a person's career development and skill set graphically through a visual metaphor such as a timeline or subway map or as a poster with an array of individual elements. A well-designed infographic could be an intriguing element of the job-search package for candidates in certain situations and professions because it can definitely stand out from traditional résumés and can show a high level of skill in visual communication. However, infographics are likely to be incompatible with most applicant tracking systems and with the screening habits of most recruiters, so don't submit an infographic when a company expects a conventional résumé. In virtually every situation, an infographic should complement a conventional résumé, not replace it. In addition, successful infographics require skills in graphic design, and if you lack those skills, you'll need to hire a designer.

Producing a Conventional Printed Résumé

Even though most of your application activity will take place online, having a copy of a conventional printed résumé is important for taking to job fairs, interviews, and other events. Many employers expect you to bring a printed résumé to the interview, even if you applied online. The résumé can serve as a note-taking form or discussion guide, and it is tangible evidence of your attention to professionalism and detail.[30] When printing a résumé, choose a heavier, higher-quality paper designed specifically for résumés and other important documents. White or slightly off-white is the best color choice. Avoid papers with borders or backgrounds.

Use high-quality paper when printing your résumé.

Printing a Scannable Résumé

You might encounter a company that prefers *scannable résumés*, a type of printed résumé that is specially formatted to be compatible with optical scanning systems that convert printed documents to digital text. These systems were quite common just a few years ago, but their use seems to be declining as more employers prefer email delivery or website application forms.[31] A scannable résumé can contain the same information as your conventional résumé, but it needs to have a simple format without underlining, bullet points, and other elements that can confuse the scanning system. If you need to produce a scannable résumé, search online for "formatting a scannable résumé" to get detailed instructions.

You may encounter an employer that prefers printed résumés in scannable format, but most now want online submissions.

Creating a Plain-Text File of Your Résumé

A *plain-text file* (sometimes known as an ASCII text file) is a digital version of your résumé that has no font formatting, no bullet symbols, no colors, no lines or boxes, and no other special formatting. The plain-text version can be used in two ways. First, you can include it in the body of an email message, for employers who want email delivery but don't want file attachments. Second, you can copy and paste the sections into the application forms on an employer's website.

A plain-text version of your résumé is simply a computer file without any of the formatting that you typically apply using word-processing software.

A plain-text version is easy to create with your word processor. Start with the file you used to create your résumé, use the "Save As" choice to save it as "plain text" or whichever similarly labeled option your software has, and verify the result using a basic text editor (such as Microsoft Notepad). If necessary, reformat the page manually, moving text and inserting space as needed. For simplicity's sake, left-justify all your headings rather than trying to center them manually.

Make sure you verify the plain-text file that you create with your word processor; it might need a few manual adjustments using a text editor such as NotePad.

Creating a Word File of Your Résumé

Some employers and job websites will ask you to upload a Microsoft Word file or attach it to an email message. This method of transferring information preserves the design and layout of your résumé and saves you the trouble of creating a plain-text version. However, before you submit a file to anyone, make sure your computer is free of viruses. Infecting a potential employer's computer will not make a good first impression.

Some employers and websites want your résumé in Microsoft Word format; make sure your computer is free from viruses before you upload the file.

Creating a PDF Version of Your Résumé

Creating a PDF file is a simple procedure, depending on the software you have. In newer versions of Microsoft Word, for example, you can save a document directly as a PDF file. The advantages of creating PDFs are that you preserve the formatting of your résumé (unlike pasting plain text into an email message) and that you create a file type that is less vulnerable to viruses than word-processor files.

Creating an Online Résumé

A variety of online résumé formats, variously referred to as *e-portfolios*, *interactive résumés*, or *social media résumés*, provide the opportunity to create a dynamic, multimedia presentation of your qualifications. You can expand on the information contained in your basic résumé with links to projects, publications, screencasts, online videos, course lists, blogs, social networking profiles, and other elements that give employers a more complete picture of who you are and what you can offer. For most job hunters, though, the most important online résumé you can create is your LinkedIn profile (see page 382).

You have various options for posting a résumé online, but your LinkedIn profile is the most important of these.

PROOFREADING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

Your résumé needs to be *perfect*, so proofread it thoroughly and ask several other people to verify it, too.

Employers view your résumé as a concrete example of your attention to quality and detail. Your résumé doesn't need to be good or pretty good—it needs to be *perfect*. A human reader will view errors as signs of carelessness, and an applicant tracking system can be programmed to automatically reject résumés with spelling and grammatical errors.[32]

Your résumé is one of the most important documents you'll ever write, so don't rush or cut corners when it comes to proofreading. Check all headings and lists for clarity and parallelism, and be sure your grammar, spelling, and punctuation are correct. Double-check all dates, phone numbers, email addresses, and other essential data. Ask at least three other people to read it, too. As the creator of the material, you could stare at a mistake for weeks and not see it.

DISTRIBUTING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

When distributing your résumé, pay close attention to the specific instructions provided by every employer, job website, or other recipient.

How you distribute your résumé depends on the number of employers you target and their preferences for receiving résumés. Employers usually list their requirements on their websites, so verify this information and follow it carefully. Beyond that, here are some general distribution tips:

- **Mailing printed résumés.** Take some care with the packaging. Spend a few extra cents to mail your documents in a flat 9 × 12 envelope, or better yet, use a Priority Mail flat-rate envelope, which gives you a sturdy cardboard mailer and faster delivery for just a few more dollars.
- **Emailing your résumé.** Some employers want applicants to include the text of their résumés in the body of an email message; others prefer an attached Microsoft Word or PDF file. If you have a reference number or a job ad number, include it in the subject line of your email message.
- **Submitting your résumé to an employer's website.** Many employers, including most large companies, now prefer or require applicants to submit their résumés online. In some instances, you will be asked to upload a complete file. In others, you will need to copy and paste sections of your résumé into individual boxes in an online application form.
- **Posting your résumé on job websites.** Before you upload your résumé to any site, learn about its privacy protection. Some sites allow you to specify levels of confidentiality, such as letting employers search your qualifications without seeing your personal contact information or preventing your current employer from seeing your résumé. You can also set your résumé to *private* on sites such as Monster so that you can use it to apply for jobs you find there but it won't be viewable or searchable by anyone.[33] To protect yourself from identity thieves and spammers, don't post your résumé to any website that doesn't give you the option of restricting the display of your personal information.

Don't post a résumé on any public website unless you understand its privacy and security policies.

Building an Effective LinkedIn Profile

5 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Identify nine tips for creating a successful LinkedIn profile.

Your LinkedIn profile is a great opportunity to showcase projects, awards, and multimedia elements.

LinkedIn (**www.linkedin.com**) is the most important website to incorporate in your job search. Employment recruiters search LinkedIn for candidates far more than any other social network, and companies doing background checks on you are almost certain to look for your LinkedIn profile.[34]

You can think of LinkedIn as a "socially networked multimedia résumé." An effective LinkedIn profile includes all the information from your conventional résumé, plus some additional features that help you present yourself in a compelling way to potential employers. Here are nine tips for building an effective profile:[35]

1. **Photo.** Add a photo that says "professional" without being overly formal. You don't need to hire a professional photographer, but the photo needs to be clear and lit well enough so that your face isn't in shadow. Stand against a visually "quiet" background that won't distract viewers, dress appropriately for the jobs you are pursuing, and remember to smile.
2. **Headline.** Write a headline that expresses who you are or aspire to be as a professional, such as "Data science major ready to make data come alive through leading-edge techniques in data mining, visualization, and AI." Include keywords that target employers are likely to be searching for. Like other text fields on LinkedIn, you have a limited number of characters to work with here, so focus on your most valuable attributes.
3. **Summary.** Write a summary that captures where you are and where you are going. Imagine that you are talking to a hiring manager in a personal and conversational tone, telling the story of where you've been and where you would like to go—but expressed in terms of meeting an employer's business needs. Highlight your job experience, education, skills, accomplishments, target industry, and career direction. Unlike the introductory statement on your conventional résumé, which you can fine-tune for every job opportunity, your LinkedIn summary offers a more general picture of who you are as a professional. Be sure to work in as many of the keywords from your research as you can, while keeping the style natural. Employers can use a variety of search tools to find candidates, and they'll look for these keywords.
4. **Experience.** Fill out the experience section, using the material from your conventional résumé. Make sure the details of your employment match your résumé, as employers are likely to cross-check. However, you can expand beyond those basics, including linking to photos and videos of work-related accomplishments.
5. **Recommendations.** Ask for recommendations from people you know on LinkedIn. You may have a limited number of connections as you start out, but as your network expands you'll have more people to ask. A great way to get recommendations is to give them to the people in your network.
6. **Featured skills.** List your top skills and areas of expertise. As you expand your network, endorse the skills of people you know; many users will endorse your skills in return.
7. **Education.** Make sure your educational listing is complete and matches the information on your conventional résumé.
8. **Accomplishments.** LinkedIn offers a variety of categories that let you highlight academic achievements, special projects, publications, professional certifications, important coursework, honors, patents, and more. If you don't have an extensive work history, use this section to feature academic projects and other accomplishments that demonstrate your skills.
9. **Volunteer experience and causes.** Add volunteering activities and charitable organizations that you support.

Figure 13.7 on the next page offers a helpful summary of these tips. For the most current instructions on performing these tasks, visit the LinkedIn Help center at **www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin**. Remember that the more robust you make your profile, the better your chances are of catching the eye of company recruiters.

In addition to completing your profile, search for and join groups that focus on your professional interests. This is great way to expand your network and learn from leaders in your field. Be sure to review the privacy and communication settings as well. The options are fairly extensive, so take time to consider each one carefully.

LinkedIn groups are an opportunity to expand your network and learn from experienced professionals.

For the more information on résumé writing, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Chapter 13.

Profile photo

Flashon Studio/123RF

- Strike a friendly pose that's not too formal or too casual.
- Make sure you face isn't in shadow.
- Stand against a visually quiet background that doesn't compete with your image.
- Don't wear dark glasses.
- Dress appropriately for target jobs in your chosen profession.

Headline

- Express who you are or aspire to be as a professional.
- Include keywords that target employers are likely to be searching for.
- Focus on your most valuable attributes to make best use of the limited space available.

Summary

- Capture where you are and where you are going—in terms of how you can contribute to a company.
- Imagine you are talking to a hiring manager in a company you want to work for; use a personal, conversational voice.
- Include top-level highlights of your job experience, education, skills, accomplishments, target industry, and career direction.
- Use keywords from target job descriptions.

Experience

- Start with the material from your résumé.
- Make sure the basic details of your employment (years, job titles, company names) match your résumé.
- Expand beyond those basics as appropriate, including linking to photos and videos of work-related accomplishments.

Recommendations

- Ask for recommendations from people you know on LinkedIn.
- As your network expands you'll have more people to ask.
- A great way to get recommendations is to give them to the peo-ple in your network.

Skills

- List your top skills and areas of expertise.
- As you expand your network, endorse the skills of people you know.
- Many users will endorse your skills in return.

Education

- Make sure your educational listing is complete.
- Include relevant military or company training and independent coursework.
- Verify that it matches the information on your conventional résumé.

Accomplishments

- Explore all the categories available to find opportunities to highlight academic successes, leadership qualities, creative thinking, industry certifications, and so on.
- Note that you need to manually add these categories to your profile.
- If you don't have extensive work history, use this section to feature academic projects and awards.

Volunteering

- Add volunteer work you've done, particularly activities that developed professional skills such as project management or team leadership.

Figure 13.7 Quick Tips for a Compelling LinkedIn Profile
Follow these tips to get started on building or expanding your LinkedIn profile.
Source: Bernard Marr, "How to Create a Killer LinkedIn Profile That Will Get You Noticed," LinkedIn, 2 June 2015, www.linked.com; "How to Build the Perfect LinkedIn Profile," Link Humans, accessed 28 April 2017, linkhumans.com; Laura Shin, "How to Create the Ideal LinkedIn Profile," *Forbes*, 20 October 2014, www.forbes.com; Carly Okyle, "18 Tips to Create Your Perfect LinkedIn Profile," *Entrepreneur*, 4 April 2016, Lindsay Kolowich, "How to Craft the Perfect LinkedIn Profile: A Comprehensive Guide," *HubSpot*, 25 January 2016, blog.hubspot.com; Quentin Fottrell, "How Job Recruiters Screen You on LinkedIn," *MarketWatch*, 16 June 2016, www.marketwatch.com; Alison Doyle, "9 Simple Tips to Make a Better LinkedIn Profile," *The Balance*, 19 February 2017, www.thebalance.com; Ed Han, "How to Write a Good LinkedIn Summary with Examples," *The Balance*, 16 March 2017, www.thebalance.com.

The Future of Communication: Gamification

The fact that millions of people spend billions of hours playing games on computers and mobile devices is not lost on companies looking for ways to enhance communication with employees and customers. Whether they feature skill, chance, or compelling story lines, successful games try to engage users intellectually and emotionally—just as successful business communicators try to do.

Gamification is the addition of game-playing aspects to an activity or a process with the goal of increasing user engagement. For example, Bunchball's Nitro software applies gamification concepts to a number of business communication platforms. On a customer-service system, the software rewards employees for increasing their productivity, meeting their service commitments to customers, and sharing knowledge with their colleagues. On several collaboration and brainstorming systems, gamification encourages people to make more connections, share ideas, and boost their influence within a community. Employee orientation systems can use game concepts to help new hires learn their way around the organization.

Gamification is also a key strategy for many companies trying to improve customer loyalty. Badgeville's Reputation Mechanics system boosts the profile of knowledgeable customers who share expertise on social media sites and other online forums. By rewarding their product champions (see page 235) this way, companies encourage them to keep contributing their expertise, thereby helping other customers be successful and satisfied.

Incidentally, if you are in the Millennial generation—those born between about 1981 and 1995—you're a special target of gamification in the workplace and the marketplace, given your generation's enthusiasm for video games. Don't be surprised to find more gamified apps and systems on the job and everywhere you turn as a consumer.[36]

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Research the current state of gamification and its use in business. Is the technology reaching acceptance as a mainstream approach to improving business processes? How is it affecting the practice of business communication? As a professional and consumer, how do you feel about being invited (or in some cases, required) to participate in gamification techniques?

Chapter Review and Activities

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** to complete the problems marked with this icon ✪.

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: List eight key steps to finding the ideal opportunity in today's job market.

Follow these eight steps:

1. Write the story of you, which involves describing where you have been in your career so far and where you would like to go in the future.
2. Learn to think like an employer so you can present yourself as a quality hire.
3. Research industries and companies of interest to identify promising opportunities and to learn the language of hiring managers.
4. Translate your general potential into a specific solution for each employer.
5. Take the initiative to approach interesting companies even if they haven't yet posted any job openings.
6. Build your network so you and your connections can help each other in the job search process.
7. Seek career counseling for advice and fresh insights.
8. Avoid mistakes that limit your chances.

Objective 2: Explain the process of planning your résumé, including how to choose the best résumé organization.

Recognize that a résumé is a persuasive message designed to get you job interviews.

Allow plenty of time to plan, write, revise, and produce your résumé—it's not something you should try to knock out in a single session.

Gather the materials you need:

- Information about target industries, professions, companies, and specific positions
- Information about your employment history, education, volunteer work, awards, and achievements

Choosing the best résumé organization depends on your background and your goals:

- A chronological résumé helps employers easily locate necessary information, highlights your professional growth and career progress, and emphasizes continuity and stability. Use this format if you can, because employers tend to prefer this approach.
- A functional résumé highlights your skills without drawing attention to the specific details of your work history. However, many employers are suspicious of functional résumés for this very reason.
- The combination approach uses the best features of the other two and is often the best choice for recent graduates.

Objective 3: Describe the tasks involved in writing your résumé, and list the sections to consider including in your résumé.

Promote yourself with confidence, but resist the temptation to embellish your résumé.

Be ready to adapt your résumé to every job opening; readers want to know how well you understand their businesses and can fill their specific talent needs.

Before you start composing your résumé, find the keywords that recruiters and applicant tracking systems will be looking for, then figure out how to use them throughout your résumé.

Here are major sections to consider including in your résumé:

- Your name and contact information
- An introductory statement, which can be a career objective, a qualifications summary, or a career summary
- Your education
- Your work experience
- Activities and achievements that are relevant to each job you are pursuing

Most résumés do not need to include any personal data.

Objective 4: Characterize the completing step for résumés, including the six most common formats in which you can produce a résumé.

Revise your résumé until it is concise, compelling, and focused.

Choose a design strategy that is compatible with the employers and professions you are pursuing.

Consider photos, videos, presentations, and infographics as supplements to a conventional résumé, but make sure they will be truly useful in your job search.

Plan to produce your résumé in as many as six formats:

- Conventional printed résumé
- Scannable résumé
- Plain-text file
- Microsoft Word file
- Online résumé (which might be called a personal webpage, an e-portfolio, or a social media résumé)
- PDF file

Objective 5: Identify nine tips for creating a successful LinkedIn profile.

Follow these tips for building an effective profile:

1. Add a profile photo that is friendly and appropriate for the types of positions you're interested in.
2. Write a headline that encapsulates who you are or aspire to be as a professional.
3. Write a robust summary that captures where you are and where you are going. Highlight your job experience, education, skills, accomplishments, target industry, and career direction.
4. Fill out the experience section, using the material from your conventional résumé.
5. Ask for recommendations from people you know on LinkedIn.
6. List your top skills and areas of expertise. Encourage skill endorsements from others by endorsing their skills.
7. Make sure your educational profile is complete and matches the information on your conventional résumé.
8. Use the Accomplishments fields to highlight academic achievements, special projects, publications, professional certifications, important coursework, honors, patents, and more.
9. Add volunteering activities and charitable organizations that you support.

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

13-1. What does *quality of hire* mean? [LO-1]

13-2. Why is networking an essential part of your lifelong career planning? [LO-1]

13-3. What is the purpose of a résumé? [LO-2]

13-4. Why do most employers prefer chronological résumés over functional résumés? [LO-2]

13-5. Why is it important to find and use relevant keywords in your résumé? [LO-3]

13-6. What is the function of the headline in a LinkedIn profile? [LO-5]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

13-7. If you were a team leader at a summer camp for children with special needs, should you include this in your employment history if you are applying for work that is unrelated? Explain your answer. [LO-3]

13-8. Can you use a qualifications summary if you don't yet have extensive professional experience in your desired career? Why or why not? [LO-3]

13-9. Some people don't have a clear career path when they enter the job market. If you're in this situation, how would your uncertainty affect the way your write your résumé? [LO-3]

13-10. How should you approach your LinkedIn headline if you don't have any work experience in your target profession? [LO-3]

Practice Your Skills

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information will be found in another chapter, as indicated.

13-11. Career Management: Researching Career Opportunities [LO-1] Based on the preferences you identified in the self-assessment in the Prologue (see page xxx) and the academic, professional, and personal qualities you have to offer, perform an online search for a career opportunity that matches your interests and qualifications (starting with any of the websites listed in Table 13.1). Draft a one-page report indicating how the career you select and the job openings you find match your strengths and preferences.

13-12. Message Strategies: Planning a Résumé [**LO-2**] Identify a position in an interesting career field that you could potentially be qualified for upon graduation. Using at least three different sources, including the description in an online job posting, create a list of 10 keywords that should be included in a résumé customized for this position.

13-13. Message Strategies: Writing a Résumé [**LO-3**] Rewrite this résumé so that it follows the guidelines presented in this chapter.

Sylvia Manchester
765 Belle Fleur Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70113
(504) 312-9504
smanchester@rcnmail.com

PERSONAL: Single, excellent health, 5′7″, 136 lbs.; hobbies include cooking, dancing, and reading.

JOB OBJECTIVE: To obtain a responsible position in marketing or sales with a good company.

EDUCATION: BA degree in biology, University of Louisiana, 1998. Graduated with a 3.0 average. Member of the varsity cheerleading squad. President of Panhellenic League. Homecoming queen.

WORK EXPERIENCE

<u>Fisher Scientific Instruments, 2017 to now, field sales representative.</u> Responsible for calling on customers and explaining the features of Fisher's line of laboratory instruments. Also responsible for writing sales letters, attending trade shows, and preparing weekly sales reports.

<u>Fisher Scientific Instruments, 2013–2016, customer service representative.</u> Was responsible for handling incoming phone calls from customers who had questions about delivery, quality, or operation of Fisher's line of laboratory instruments. Also handled miscellaneous correspondence with customers.

<u>Medical Electronics, Inc., 2010–2013, administrative assistant to the vice president of marketing.</u> In addition to handling typical secretarial chores for the vice president of marketing, I was in charge of compiling the monthly sales reports, using figures provided by members of the field sales force. I also was given responsibility for doing various market research activities.

<u>New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau, 2007–2010, summers, tour guide.</u> During the summers of my college years, I led tours of New Orleans for tourists visiting the city. My duties included greeting conventioneers and their spouses at hotels, explaining the history and features of the city during an all-day sightseeing tour, and answering questions about New Orleans and its attractions. During my fourth summer with the bureau, I was asked to help train the new tour guides. I prepared a handbook that provided interesting facts about the various tourist attractions, as well as answers to the most commonly asked tourist questions. The Bureau was so impressed with the handbook they had it printed up so that it could be given as a gift to visitors.

<u>University of Louisiana, 2007–2010, part-time clerk in admissions office.</u> While I was a student in college, I worked 15 hours a week in the admissions office. My duties included filing, processing applications, and handling correspondence with high school students and administrators.

13-14. Message Strategies: Writing a Résumé; Collaboration: Team Projects [**LO-3**]**, Chapter 2** Working with another student, change the following statements to make them more effective for a résumé by using action verbs and concrete keywords.

a. Have some experience with database design.
b. Assigned to a project to analyze the cost accounting methods for a large manufacturer.
c. I was part of a team that developed a new inventory control system.
d. Am responsible for preparing the quarterly department budget.
e. Was a manager of a department with seven employees working for me.
f. Was responsible for developing a spreadsheet to analyze monthly sales by department.
g. Put in place a new program for ordering supplies.

13-15. Message Strategies: Writing a Résumé [**LO-3**] Using your team's answers to Activity 13-14, make the statements stronger by quantifying them (make up any numbers you need).

13-16. Message Strategies: Writing a Résumé; Communication Ethics: Resolving Ethical Dilemmas [**LO-3**]**, Chapter 1** Assume that you achieved all the tasks shown in Activity 13-14 not as an individual employee, but as part of a work team. In your résumé, must you mention other team members? Explain your answer.

13-17. Message Strategies: Completing a Résumé; Media Strategies: Video [**LO-4**] Imagine you are applying for work in a field that involves speaking in front of an audience, such as sales, consulting, management, or training. Using material you created for any of the exercises or cases in Chapter 12, record a two- to three-minute video demonstration of your speaking and presentation skills. Record yourself speaking to an audience, if one can be arranged.

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Locate an example of a résumé (a sample or an actual résumé). Analyze it following the guidelines presented in this chapter. Using whatever medium your instructor requests, write a brief analysis (no more than one page) of the résumé's strengths and weaknesses, citing specific elements from the résumé and support from the chapter. If you are analyzing a real résumé, do not include any personally identifiable data, such as the person's name, email address, or phone number, in your report.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that offers advice on creating effective online résumés. Write a brief email message to your instructor or a post for your class blog, describing the item that you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Cases

For all cases, feel free to use your creativity to make up any details you need in order to craft effective messages.

CAREER SKILLS/EMAIL SKILLS

13-18. Career Planning: Researching Career Opportunities [LO-1] Knowing the jargon and "hot-button" issues in a particular profession or industry can give you a big advantage when it comes to writing your résumé and participating in job interviews. You can fine-tune your résumé for both human readers and applicant tracking systems, sound more confident and informed in interviews, and present yourself as a professional with an inquiring mind.

Your task: Imagine a specific job category in a company that has an informative, comprehensive website (to facilitate the research you'll need to do). This doesn't have to be a current job opening, but a position you know exists or is likely to exist in this company, such as a business systems analyst at Apple or a brand manager at Unilever.

Explore the company's website and other online sources to find the following: (1) a brief description of what this job entails, with enough detail so that you could describe it to a fellow student; (2) some of the terminology used in the profession or industry, both formal terms that might serve as keywords on your résumé and informal terms and phrases that insiders are likely to use in publications and conversations; (3) an ongoing online conversation among people in this profession, such as a LinkedIn Group, a popular industry or professional blog that seems to get quite a few comments, or an industry or professional publication that attracts a lot of comments; and (4) at least one significant issue that will affect people in this profession or companies in this industry over the next few years. For example, if your chosen profession involves accounting in a publicly traded corporation, potential changes in financial reporting standards would be a significant issue. Similarly, for a company in the consumer electronics industry, the recycling and disposal of *e-waste* is an issue. Write a brief email message summarizing your findings and explaining how you could use this information on your résumé and during job interviews.

CAREER SKILLS/EMAIL SKILLS

13-19. Career Management: Researching Career Opportunities [LO-1] Perhaps you won't be able to land your ultimate dream job right out of college, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't start planning right now to make that dream come true.

Your task: Using online job search tools, find a job that sounds just about perfect for you, even if you're not yet qualified for it. It might even be something that would take 10 or 20 years to reach. Don't settle for something that's not quite right—find a job that is so "you" and so exciting that you would jump out of bed every morning, eager to go to work. (Such jobs really do exist!) Start with the job description you found online and then supplement it with additional research so that you get a good picture of what this job and career path are all about. Compile a list of all the qualifications you would need in order to have a reasonable chance of landing such a job. Now compare this list with your current résumé. Write a brief email message to your instructor that identifies all the areas in which you would need to improve your skills, work experience, education, and other qualifications in order to land your dream job.

CAREER SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

13-20. Planning a Résumé [LO-2] If you haven't begun your professional career yet or you are pursuing a career change, the employment history section on your résumé can sometimes be a challenge to write. A brainstorming session with your wise and creative classmates could help.

Your task: In a team assigned by your instructor, help each other evaluate your employment histories and figure out the best way to present your work backgrounds on a résumé. First, each member of the team should compile his or her work history, including freelance projects and volunteer work if relevant, and share this information with the team. After allowing some time for everyone to review each other's information, meet as a team (in person if you can, or online otherwise). Discuss each person's history, pointing out strong spots and weak spots, and then brainstorm the best way to present each person's employment history.

Note: If you would rather not share aspects of your employment history with your teammates, substitute a similar experience of the same duration.

CAREER SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

13-21. Writing a Résumé [LO-3] The introductory statement of a résumé requires some careful thought, both in deciding which of the three types of introductory statement (see page 373) to use and what information to include in it. Getting another person's perspective on this communication challenge can be helpful. In this activity, in fact, someone else is going to write your introductory statement for you, and you will return the favor.

Your task: Pair off with a classmate. Provide each other with the basic facts about your qualifications, work history, education, and career objectives. Then meet in person or online for an informal interview in which you ask each other questions to flesh out the information you have on each other. Assume that each of you has chosen to use a qualifications summary for your résumé. Now write each other's qualifications summary and then trade them for review. As you read what your partner wrote about you, ask yourself whether this feels true to what you believe about yourself and your career aspirations. Do you think it introduces you effectively to potential employers? What about it might you change?

PRESENTATION SKILLS/PORTFOLIO BUILDER

13-22. Message Strategies: Completing a Résumé [LO-4] Creating presentations and other multimedia supplements can be a great way to expand on the brief overview that a résumé provides.

Your task: Starting with any version of a résumé you've created for yourself, create a presentation that expands on your résumé information to give potential employers a more complete picture of what you can contribute. Include samples of your work, testimonials from current or past employers and colleagues, videos of speeches you've made, and anything else that tells the story of the professional "you." If you have a specific job or type of job in mind, focus your presentation on that. Otherwise, present a more general picture that shows why you would be a great employee for any company to consider.

CAREER SKILLS/VIDEO SKILLS

13-23. Message Strategies: Completing a Résumé [LO-4] In the right circumstances, brief videos can be an effective complement to a traditional job-search communication package.

Your task: Find a job opening that interests you (something you are at least partially qualified for at this stage of your career) and produce a brief (30 to 60 seconds) video profile of yourself, highlighting the skills mentioned in the job description. For tips on producing effective video, visit www.indie-film-making.com.

CAREER SKILLS/SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS

13-24. Message Strategies: Building a LinkedIn Profile [LO-4] Your LinkedIn summary is a great opportunity to present a clear picture of who you are and what you can bring to a job.

Your task: Draft a summary for your LinkedIn profile, making sure to stay within the system's current length limits for this field. Review the advice in this chapter and search online for "writing a LinkedIn summary" if you need more tips.

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from real-timeupdates.com/bce8; select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 13. Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Numbers

Review Section 3.4 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage. For the following items, correct number styles wherever necessary.

13-25. We need to hire one office manager, four accountants, and twelve programmer-analysts.

13-26. The market for this product is nearly six million people in our region alone.

13-27. Make sure that all 1835 pages are on my desk no later than nine o'clock a.m.

13-28. 2014 was the year that José Guiterez sold more than $50 thousand dollars worth of stock.

13-29. Our deadline is 4/7, but we won't be ready before 4/11.

13-30. 95 percent of our customers are men.

13-31. More than 1/2 the U.S. population is female.

13-32. Cecile Simmons, thirty-eight, is the first woman in this company to be promoted to management.

13-33. Last year, I wrote 20 15-page reports, and Michelle wrote 24 three-page reports.

13-34. Of the 15 applicants, seven are qualified.

13-35. Our blinds should measure 38 inches wide by 64 and one-half inches long by 7/16 inches deep.

13-36. Deliver the couch to seven eighty-three Fountain Rd., Suite three, Procter Valley, CA 92074.

13-37. Here are the corrected figures: 42.7% agree, 23.25% disagree, 34% are undecided, and the error is .05%.

13-38. You have to agree that 50,000,000 U.S. citizens cannot be wrong.

13-39. We need a set of shelves 10 feet, eight inches long.

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

13-40. Speaking at a recent software conference Alan Nichols; ceo of Tekco Systems; said the companys' goal is to reduce response time to 2 to 4 hrs., using software as an enabler.

13-41. Selling stocks short are the latest rage on wall street, where lately things have just gone from bad to worst.

13-42. As Mobile Commerce grows people are trying to find new ways to make money off of it.

13-43. We give a notification not only to the customer but also our salespeople that the product has been shipped because they will want to follow up.

13-44. When deciding between these various suppliers, we found that each of them offer both advantages and also disadvantages.

13-45. I found the book, "Marketing is Easy, Selling is Hard," for three different prices on the Internet: $14, $13.25, and $12.00.

13-46. United Agra Products, a distributor of fertilizers and seeds, in transmission of customer orders over it's private network faced the possibility of serious bottlenecks.

13-47. The answers you receive on your questionnaire, are influenced by the types of question you ask, the way they are asked, and your subjects cultural and language background.

13-48. The creation of hazardous by products, like silver in film processing, require us to collect our used chemicals for disposal at a hazardous-waste-facility.

13-49. As a source of ingredients for our products, we try to establish relationships with small cooperative or farming communities often in developing countries–because, we believe that the best way to improve peoples' lives is to give them a chance at self reliance.

13-50. A entrepreneur really should never be in any organization that get's so big that it looses intimacy.

13-51. Racecar Driver Eddie Cheever, is founder of Aleanza Marketing Group, a seven-person company that handles $10 million dollars in sponsorship campaigns for Cheevers' team Red Bull Cheever Racing.

13-52. Over the last six years, Business Cluster Development have started 13 technology related incubators, that they call 'business clusters.'

13-53. In an interview, Gary Hoover said "When I dreamed up Bookstop, we asked people, 'If there was a bookstore that carried a huge selection of books and had them all at discount prices, would you go there?' and we got a lot of yawns".

13-54. The chief attraction of vending machines are their convenience, they are open 24 hours a day, on the other hand, vending machine prices are no bargain.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C) or download the document and make the corrections in your word processing software.

The Executive Summary (excerpt)

Purpose of the Proposal

This document will acquaint the reader with 3 principle topics by

- Showing what the San Diego State University (SDSU) Suntrakker project is;
- Showing that the team-oriented, inerdepartmental diciplines at SDSU possesses the tenacity and knowhow to build and race a solar-powered vehical in the World solar Challenge Race in Austrailia next year;
- Define and articulate how this business team expect to promote and generate the neccesary support; funds, and materials from the student body, alumni, community and local businesses to sieze and executive this opportunity.

Project Profile

The Suntrakker Solar Car project was conceived by a small group of San Diego State university engineering students motivated by the successof of the General motors "Sunrayce," committed itself to designing and building a superior solar-powered vehicle to compete in the world Solar Challenge.

From modest Beginnings, the Suntrakker project quickly revolved into a cross-disciplinary educational effort encompassing students from many colleges of San Diego State University. The project has provides students participants and volunteers with valuable real life experiences and has brought them together in an effort that benefits not only the students and the university but also the environment.

Sponsors of this project are not only contributing to the successful achievment of the overall Suntrakker project but will also enhance their goodwill, advertising, and name promotion by association with the project. In addition, the Suntrakker offers a unique opportunity for the companies who can donate parts and accessories to showcase their name and test field their products in public in this highly publicized international contest.

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

13-55. How can you "think like an employer" if you have no professional business experience? [LO-1]

13-56. What are the advantages of an online/social media résumé? [LO-4]

Endnotes

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14 Applying and Interviewing for Employment

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Explain the purposes of application letters, and describe how to apply the AIDA organizational approach to them.
2. Describe the typical sequence of job interviews, the major types of interviews, and the attributes employers look for during an interview.
3. List six tasks you need to complete in order to prepare for a successful job interview.
4. Explain how to succeed in all three stages of an interview.
5. Identify the most common employment messages that follow an interview, and explain when you would use each one.

MyLab Business Communication

If your instructor is using MyLab Business Communication, visit **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for videos, simulations, and writing exercises.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS . . .

"Decide and define for yourself what success is professionally, personally, philanthropically and spiritually."
—Carla Harris, Vice Chairman, Managing Director and Senior Client Advisor at Morgan Stanley

From writing "the story of you" (see Chapter 13) to engaging with employers during the interview process, keep this piece of wisdom from Carla Harris in mind. You will spend decades working to succeed in your career, so make sure you are pursuing goals that are meaningful and important to you. And as you begin to achieve success in your chosen field, Harris is ready with more advice: "Use your success to inspire others to achieve their goals. Success is personal and you can only truly attain it when you're using your own ambitions as a measuring stick—not someone else's report card."[1]

This chapter will give you a foundation for successful interviewing, along with tips on writing effective application letters and other important employment-related messages.

Courtesy of Carla Harris, Morgan Stanley

Financial executive Carla Harris encourages all professionals to think carefully about what success means to them as they pursue new opportunities.

Submitting Your Résumé

1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain the purposes of application letters, and describe how to apply the AIDA organizational approach to them.

Your résumé (see Chapter 13) is the centerpiece of your job-search package, but it needs support from several other employment messages, including application letters, job-inquiry letters, application forms, and follow-up notes.

WRITING APPLICATION LETTERS

Always accompany your résumé with a printed or email application letter, also known as a cover letter, that motivates the recipient to read the résumé.

Whenever you send or upload your résumé, you should include an **application letter**, also known as a *cover letter*. (Even though this message is often not a printed letter anymore, many professionals still refer to it as a letter.) This letter has three goals: to introduce your résumé, persuade an employer to read it, and request an interview.

The application letter can be as important as your résumé, so take the same care with it. Recognize that this message is a great opportunity, too: You can communicate in a more personal and conversational way than you can with your résumé, you can show that you understand what an employer is looking for, and you can demonstrate your writing skills.

The best approach for an application letter depends on whether you are responding to an advertised job opening or *prospecting*—writing to companies to express interest even though they haven't posted an opening.

The best approach for an application letter depends on whether you are applying for an identified job opening or are *prospecting*—taking the initiative to write to companies even though they haven't announced a job opening that is right for you.[2] In many ways, the difference between the two is like the difference between solicited and unsolicited proposals (see page 267).

Figure 14.1 shows an application message written in response to a posted job opening. The writer knows exactly what qualifications the organization is seeking and can "echo" those attributes back in his letter.

Writing a prospecting letter is more challenging because you don't have the clear target you have with a solicited letter, and the message is unexpected. You will need to do more research to identify the qualities that a company would probably seek for the position you hope to occupy (see Figure 14.2 on page 396). Also, search for news items that involve the company, its customers, the profession, or the individual manager to whom you are writing. Using this information in your application letter helps you establish common ground with your reader—and it shows that you are tuned in to what is going on in the industry.

For either type of letter, follow these tips to be more effective:[3]

- Resist the temptation to stand out with gimmicky application letters; impress with knowledge and professionalism instead.
- If the name of the hiring manager is findable, address your letter to that person. (And if it is findable, make sure you find it, because other applicants will.) Search LinkedIn, the company's website, industry directories, Twitter, and anything else you can think of to locate an appropriate name. Ask the people in your network if they know a name, or call the company and ask. If you're sure a name can't be found, address your letter to "Dear Hiring Manager."
- Clearly identify the opportunity you are applying for or expressing interest in.
- Show that you understand the company and its business challenges. Incorporate relevant keywords from your research.
- If applicable, explain employment gaps or other potential negatives from your résumé. This can be as simple as "After serving as a product manager at Microsoft, I took two years off for family reasons."
- Keep it short—no more than three or four brief paragraphs. Remember that all you are trying to do at this point is move the conversation forward one step.
- Show some personality while maintaining a business-appropriate tone. The letter gives you the opportunity to balance the facts-only tone of your résumé. Project confidence without being arrogant.
- Don't just repeat information from your résumé; use the conversational tone of the letter to convey additional professional and personal qualities and your reasons for wanting this particular job.
- Be sure to adapt each letter to a specific job opening (see Figure 14.3 on page 397).

Because application letters are persuasive messages, the AIDA approach you learned in Chapter 9 is ideal, as the following sections explain.

Position			Supply Chain Pricing Analyst Apply		
Position code	T23-6678	Location	Tacoma, WA	Status	Full-time

Sea-Air Global Transport has an immediate opening for a supply chain pricing analyst in our Tacoma, WA, headquarters. This challenging position requires excellent communication skills in a variety of media, a polished customer service presence both in person and over the phone, and proven aptitude in statistical analysis and business mathematics.

The minimum educational requirement for this position is a bachelors degree or equivalent, preferably in business, statistical methods, or applied mathematics. Experience in customer service is highly desirable, and experience in transportation or logistics is a major plus.

Click here to learn more about Sea-Air or click here to explore the attractive compensation and benefits packages we offer all employees.

Smith's application letter echoes the language of the job posting.

27225 Eucalyptus Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90806
March 13, 2020

Hiring Manager
Sea-Air Global Transport
5467 Port of Tacoma Rd., Suite 230
Tacoma, WA 98421

Dear Hiring Manager:

The first sentence grabs attention by indicating knowledge of the company and its industry.

Sea-Air Global Transport consistently appeared as a top transportation firm in the research I did for my senior project in global supply chain management, so imagine my delight when I discovered the opening for an export pricing analyst in your Tacoma headquarters (Position Code: T23-6678). With a major in business and a minor in statistical methods, my education has been ideal preparation for the challenges of this position.

The opening paragraph identifies the specific job for which he is applying.

In fact, my senior project demonstrates most of the skills listed in your job description, including written communication skills, analytical abilities, and math aptitude. I enjoyed the opportunity to put my math skills to the test as part of the statistical comparison of various freight modes.

In this discussion of his skills, he echoes the qualifications stated in the job posting.

The reference to his résumé emphasizes his customer service orientation and also shows he has done his homework by researching the company.

As you can see from my résumé, I also have more than three years of part-time experience working with customers in both retail and commercial settings. This experience taught me the importance of customer service, and I want to start my professional career with a company that truly values the customer. In reviewing your website and reading several articles on Lloyd's List and other trade websites, I am impressed by Sea-Air's constant attention to customer service in this highly competitive industry.

My verbal communication skills would be best demonstrated in an interview, of course. I would be happy to meet with a representative of your company at their earliest convenience. I can be reached at dalton.k.smith@gmail.com or by phone at (562) 555-3737.

In the close, he politely asks for an interview in a way that emphasizes yet another job-related skill.

Sincerely,

Dalton Smith

Dalton Smith

Figure 14.1 Solicited Application Message
In this response to an online job posting, Dalton Smith highlights his qualifications while mirroring the requirements specified in the posting. Following the AIDA model (see page 226), he grabs attention immediately by letting the reader know he is familiar with the company and the global transportation business.

Getting Attention

The opening paragraph of your application letter must accomplish two essential tasks: (1) explain why you are writing and (2) give the recipient a reason to keep reading by showing that you have some immediate potential for meeting the company's needs. Consider this opening:

> With the recent slowdown in corporate purchasing, I can certainly appreciate the challenge of new fleet sales in this business environment. With my high energy level and 16 months of new-car sales experience, I believe I can produce the results you listed as vital in the job posting on your website.

The first paragraph of your application letter needs to clearly convey the reason you're writing and give the recipient a compelling reason to keep reading.

Ineffective

457 Mountain View Rd.
Clear Lake, IA 50428
June 16, 2020

Ms. Patricia Downing, Store Manager
Walmart
840 South Oak
Iowa Falls, IA 50126

Dear Ms. Downing:

Do you have any openings for people who want to move into store management? I am really looking for an opportunity to get a job like yours, even if it takes starting at a low level and working my way up.

Allow me to list some highlights from my enclosed résumé. First, I have a BA degree in retailing, which included such key courses as retailing, marketing, management, and business information systems. Second, I have worked as a clerk and as an assistant manager in a large department store. Third, I have experience in the customer-facing aspect of retailing, as well as operations, marketing, and personnel supervision.

Successful retailing is about more than systems and procedures. It is also about anticipating customer needs, fostering positive relationships with the community, and delivering the type of service that keeps customers coming back. Retailers that fail in any of these areas are doomed to decline in today's hypercompetitive sales environment. I am the sort of forward-thinking, customer-focused leader who can help you avoid this fate.

I will call you next Wednesday at 2:00 to explain why I would make a great addition to your team.

Sincerely,

Glenda Johns
Enclosure

(a) The writer commits three major mistakes in the first paragraph: asking a question that she could answer herself by visiting the company's website, failing to demonstrate any knowledge of the company, and making the message all about her.

(b) This paragraph merely repeats information from the enclosed résumé, which wastes the reader's time and wastes the opportunity for the writer to present a more complete picture of herself.

(c) Johns' attempts to show that she understands retailing, but this paragraph comes across as an arrogant lecture. The tone is particularly inappropriate, given that she is writing to the store's top manager.

(d) The call to action is overly aggressive, and it presumes that the reader will be available and willing to take a phone call from a complete stranger about a job opening that might not even exist.

Effective

457 Mountain View Rd.
Clear Lake, IA 50428
June 16, 2020

Ms. Patricia Downing, Store Manager
Walmart
840 South Oak
Iowa Falls, IA 50126

Dear Ms. Downing:

Even with its world-class supply chain, admired brand name, and competitive prices, Walmart obviously would not be the success it is without enthusiastic, service-driven associates and managers. If you have or foresee an opening for such a professional, someone eager to learn the Walmart way and eventually move into a management position, please consider me for the opportunity.

As an associate or management trainee, I can bring a passion for retailing and the perspective I've gained through academic preparation and four years of experience. (Please refer to my enclosed résumé for more information.)

Working as a clerk and then as an assistant manager in a large department store taught me how to anticipate customer needs, create effective merchandising, and deliver service that keeps customers coming back. Moreover, my recent BA degree in retailing, which encompassed such courses as retailing concepts, marketing fundamentals, management, and business information systems, prepared me with in-depth awareness of contemporary retailing issues and strategies.

I understand Walmart prefers to promote its managers from within, and I would be pleased to start out with an entry-level position until I gain the necessary experience. Could we have a brief conversation about the possibilities of joining your team? I am available by phone at 641-747-2222 or email at glendajohns@mailnet.com.

Sincerely,

Glenda Johns
Enclosure

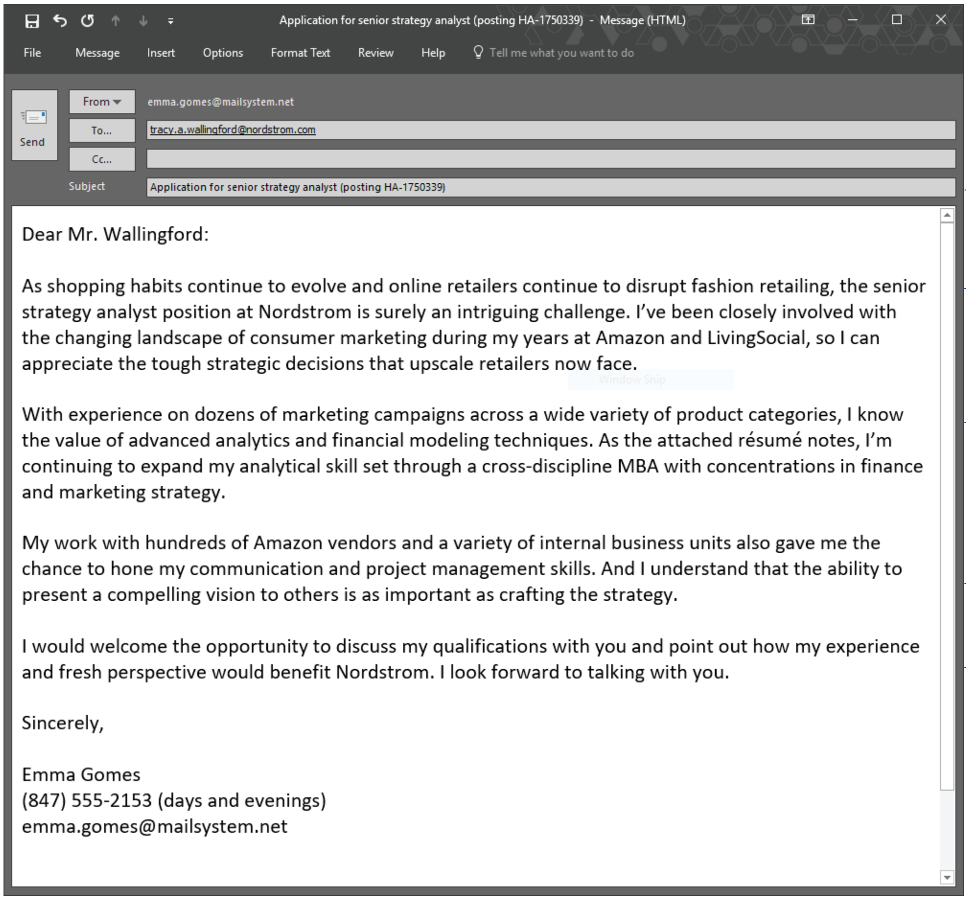
(a) Johns gets the reader's attention by demonstrating good awareness of the company and the type of people it hires, presents herself as just such a professional, and then asks to be considered for any relevant job openings.

(b) Johns uses the body of her letter to expand on the information presented in her résumé, rather than simply repeating that information.

(c) The close builds the reader's interest by demostrating knowledge of the company's policy regarding promotion.

(d) The call to action is respectful, and it makes a response easy for the reader by providing both phone and email contact information.

Figure 14.2 Unsolicited Application Letter
Demonstrating knowledge of the employer's needs and presenting your qualifications accordingly are essential steps in an unsolicited application letter.


Application for senior strategy analyst (posting HA-1750339) - Message (HTML)

File Message Insert Options Format Text Review Help Tell me what you want to do

Send

From: emma.gomes@mailsystem.net

To...: tracy.a.wallingford@nordstrom.com

Cc...:

Subject: Application for senior strategy analyst (posting HA-1750339)

Dear Mr. Wallingford:

As shopping habits continue to evolve and online retailers continue to disrupt fashion retailing, the senior strategy analyst position at Nordstrom is surely an intriguing challenge. I've been closely involved with the changing landscape of consumer marketing during my years at Amazon and LivingSocial, so I can appreciate the tough strategic decisions that upscale retailers now face.

With experience on dozens of marketing campaigns across a wide variety of product categories, I know the value of advanced analytics and financial modeling techniques. As the attached résumé notes, I'm continuing to expand my analytical skill set through a cross-discipline MBA with concentrations in finance and marketing strategy.

My work with hundreds of Amazon vendors and a variety of internal business units also gave me the chance to hone my communication and project management skills. And I understand that the ability to present a compelling vision to others is as important as crafting the strategy.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you and point out how my experience and fresh perspective would benefit Nordstrom. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Emma Gomes
(847) 555-2153 (days and evenings)
emma.gomes@mailsystem.net

The subject line refers to the job opening using the company's posting number.

The opening paragraph gets the reader's attention by conveying that Gomes understands the challenges the company now faces in a tough retailing environment. She uses the opportunity to mention her work experience, but in a way that relates to the reader's interests.

The first of the two middle paragraphs covers the analytical skills that are required in the position. She refers the reader to her résumé for details and makes a point to highlight the MBA she's working toward—which will fill in some areas missing in her work experience.

This paragraph addresses additional skills mentioned in the job description, particularly interdepartmental communication, project management, and presentations.

The close is confident without being brash, and the email signature provides the necessary contact information.

Figure 14.3 Complementing Your Résumé with an Application Message
When writing a letter or email message to accompany your résumé, use the opportunity to complement the information already contained in your résumé. Highlight how your qualifications match the needs of the position, without repeating the information from your résumé. Here is a message that could accompany the résumé in Figure 13.6 on page 378.
Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation.

This applicant does a smooth job of echoing the company's stated needs while highlighting personal qualifications and an understanding of the market. Notice how enthusiasm and knowledge of the industry balance the writer's relative lack of experience. Table 14.1 on the next page suggests some other ways you can spark interest and grab attention in your opening paragraph.

Building Interest and Increasing Desire

The middle section of your letter presents your strongest selling points in terms of their potential benefit to the organization, thereby building interest in you and creating a desire to interview you. Be specific and back up your assertions with convincing evidence:

Use the middle section of your application letter to expand on your opening and present a more complete picture of your strengths.

Ineffective: I am trained in business communication and have quite a bit of experience in dealing with customers.

Effective: My business major includes coursework in business communication skills, which helped me gain a promotion to shift supervisor during my summer job at Nordstrom Rack.

TABLE 14.1 Tips for Getting Attention in Application Letters

Tip	Example
Unsolicited Application Letters	
Show how your strongest skills will benefit the organization.	If you need a regional sales specialist who consistently meets sales targets while fostering strong customer relationships, please consider my qualifications.
Describe your understanding of the job's requirements and show how well your qualifications fit them.	Your annual report stated that improving manufacturing efficiency is one of the company's top priorities for next year. Through my postgraduate research in process analysis and consulting work for several companies in the industry, I've developed reliable methods for quickly identifying ways to cut production time while reducing resource use.
Mention the name of a person known to and highly regarded by the reader.	When Janice McHugh of your franchise sales division spoke to our business communication class last week, she said you often need promising new marketing graduates at this time of year.
Refer to publicized company activities, achievements, changes, or new procedures.	Today's issue of the *Detroit News* reports that you may need software engineers with robotics experience when your Lansing tire plant automates this spring.
Use a question to demonstrate your understanding of the organization's needs.	Can your fast-growing market analytics division use a researcher with two years of field survey experience, a B.S. in math, and a strong interest in data mining? If so, please consider me for the position.
Solicited Application Letters	
Identify where you discovered the job opening; describe what you have to offer.	My eight years of experience as a social director in the travel industry have given me all the skills highlighted in the Monster.com listing for the opening in your Caribbean cruise division.

In a solicited letter, be sure to discuss each major requirement listed in the job posting. If you are deficient in any of these requirements, stress other solid selling points to help strengthen your overall presentation. Don't restrict your message to just core job duties, either. Highlight personal characteristics that apply to the targeted position, such as your ability to work hard or handle responsibility:

> While attending college full-time, I worked part-time during the school year and up to 60 hours a week each summer in order to be totally self-supporting while in college. I can offer your organization the same level of effort and dedication.

Don't bring up salary in your application letter unless the recipient has asked you to include your salary requirements.

Mention your salary requirements only if the organization has asked you to state them. If you don't know the salary that's appropriate for the position and someone with your qualifications, you can find typical salary ranges at the Bureau of Labor Statistics website at **www.bls.gov** and a number of commercial websites. If you do state a target salary, tie it to the value you can offer:

> For the past two years, I have been helping a company similar to yours organize its database marketing efforts. I would therefore like to receive a salary in the same range (the mid-60s) for helping your company set up a more efficient customer database.

Toward the end of the middle section, refer the reader to your résumé by citing a specific fact or general point covered there:

> As you can see in the attached résumé, I've been working part-time with a local publisher since my sophomore year. During that time, I've used client interactions as an opportunity to build strong customer service skills.

Motivating Action

The final paragraph of your application letter has two important functions: to ask the reader for a specific action (usually an interview) and to facilitate a reply. Include your email address and phone number, as well as the best times to reach you:

In the final paragraph of your application letter, respectfully ask for specific action and make it easy for the reader to respond.

> After you have reviewed my qualifications, could we discuss the possibility of putting my marketing skills to work for your company? I am available at (360) 555–7845 from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday to Friday or by email at john.wagner462@mailcom.com.

Following Up After Submitting a Résumé

Think creatively about a follow-up message; show that you've continued to add to your skills or that you've learned more about the company or the industry.

Deciding if, when, and how to follow up after submitting your résumé and application letter is one of the trickiest parts of a job search. First and foremost, keep in mind that employers continue to evaluate your communication efforts and professionalism during this phase, so don't say or do anything to leave a negative impression. Second, follow whatever instructions the employer has provided. If a job posting says "no calls," for example, don't call. Third, if the job posting lists a *close date*, don't call or write before then, because the company is still collecting applications and will not have made a decision about inviting people for interviews. Wait a week or so after the close date. If no close date is given and you have no other information to suggest a time line, you can generally contact the company starting a week or two after submitting your résumé. Some companies offer application status updates on their websites, so be sure to look for that before sending an inquiry or telephoning.[4]

When you follow up by email or telephone, you can share an additional piece of information that links your qualifications to the position (keep an eye out for late-breaking news about the company, too) and ask a question about the hiring process as a way to gather some information about your status. Good questions to ask include[5]

- Has a hiring decision been made yet?
- Can you tell me what to expect next in terms of the hiring process?
- What is the company's time frame for filling this position?
- Could I follow up in another week if you haven't had the chance to contact me yet?
- Can I provide any additional information regarding my qualifications for the position?

Whatever the circumstances, a follow-up message can demonstrate that you're sincerely interested in working for the organization, persistent in pursuing your goals, and committed to upgrading your skills.

If you don't land a job at your dream company on the first attempt, don't give up. You can apply again if a new opening appears, or you can send an updated résumé with a new unsolicited application letter that describes how you have gained additional work experience or completed additional coursework. Showing that you are serious about making yourself valuable to a company is a great way to impress hiring managers.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Prepare for your next interview using these Pinterest pins

The Pinterest pinboard maintained by St. Edward's University offers dozens of helpful resources. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

Understanding the Interviewing Process

2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe the typical sequence of job interviews, the major types of interviews, and the attributes employers look for during an interview.

An **employment interview** is a meeting during which you and a potential employer ask questions and exchange information. The employer's objective is to find the best talent to fill available job openings, and your objective is to find the right match for your goals and capabilities.

As you get ready to begin interviewing, keep three points in mind:

Start preparing early for your interviews—and be sure to consider a wide range of options.

- The process takes time. Start your preparation and research early; the best job offers usually go to the best-prepared candidates.
- Don't limit your options by looking at only a few companies.
- Interviews are a two-way discovery process—the questions you ask can be as important as the questions companies ask you.

THE TYPICAL SEQUENCE OF INTERVIEWS

The interview process can vary from company to company, but most firms interview candidates in stages as they narrow down the list of possibilities.

The Screening Stage

During the screening stage of interviews, use the limited time available to confirm your fit for the position.

The process usually starts with a *screening* stage designed to filter out applicants who lack the desired qualifications or who might not be willing to accept the salary range or other parameters of the position. This first round of interviews may be conducted by an outside recruiting firm or by staff from the company's human resources (HR) department, rather than the manager you would eventually report to. Screening is often done via telephone or an online assessment system.[6]

During a screening interview, the company wants to know whether you meet the minimum requirements for the job. Study the job description carefully and be ready to respond to questions about the major qualifications of the position, using key points from your résumé. Screening interviews are usually rather brief, and screeners often have many candidates to interview, so keep your answers short and on topic.[7] Bear in mind that you're not going to win the job at this point; your goal is to make it past the filter and on to the next stage.

The Selection Stage

During the selection stage, continue to show how your skills and attributes can help the company.

Candidates who make it past screening are invited to more in-depth interviews that help the company select the person who is most likely to succeed in the position. Feel free to ask the recruiter or your company contact what to expect in the upcoming interviews, including what interviewing formats will be used and which managers are likely to interview you.[8]

Employers take various approaches to the selection stage, but a typical next step is a telephone interview with the hiring manager. The manager will want to dig a little deeper into your qualifications and start to determine your fit with the company's culture. This conversation also gives you the opportunity to see whether you can build rapport with your future boss. During these interviews, show keen interest in the job, relate your skills and experience to the organization's needs, listen attentively, and ask questions that show you've done your research.

During the final stage, the interviewer may try to sell you on working for the firm.

The most promising applicants are usually invited to visit the company for in-person interviews with a variety of staff and managers. For some positions, you might spend most of a day on-site, meeting a variety of managers and professional staff. If you begin to emerge as a favored candidate, the company will start selling you on the advantages of joining the organization. If the interviewers agree that you're the best candidate, you may receive a job offer, either on the spot or within a few days.

COMMON TYPES OF INTERVIEWS AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Be prepared to encounter a variety of interviewing approaches, often within the same interview or set of interviews. These can be distinguished by the way they are structured, the number of people involved, and the purpose of the interview.

Structured Versus Unstructured Interviews

A structured interview follows a set sequence of questions, allowing the interview team to compare answers from all candidates.

The overall format of an interview is based on whether it is structured or unstructured. In a **structured interview**, the interviewer (or an app or online system) asks a set series of questions in a fixed order. By asking every candidate the same set of questions, the structured format helps ensure fair interviews and makes it easier for an employer to compare and rank candidates.[9]

You can usually sense that you're in a structured interview if the interviewer is reading questions from a list and recording your answers. Answer each question thoughtfully and completely; your responses will be compared with those from other candidates, and you might not have the chance to revise previous answers as the interview moves along.

In contrast, an **unstructured interview** doesn't follow a predetermined sequence. It is likely to feel more conversational and personal, as the interviewer adapts the line of questioning based on your answers. You might encounter an unstructured interview after one or more structured interviews, perhaps with a potential colleague or a higher-level manager who wants to get a sense of what you would be like to work with. Take this as good news, that the company believes you can do the job and now wants to see whether you fit the culture.

In an unstructured interview, the interviewer adapts the line of questioning based on your responses and questions.

Even though it may feel like a conversation, remember that it's still an interview, so keep your answers focused and professional. If you sense that the interviewer is circling back to revisit a topic, particularly an answer that you gave in an earlier interview, chances are he or she is probing an area of concern. Use this opportunity to correct or expand on your earlier answer.

Panel and Group Interviews

Interviews can also vary by the number of people involved. Most of your interviews are likely to be one-on-one conversations, although if you are invited to visit a company you'll probably meet with a series of interviewers.

Some employers use panel or group interviews as well. In a **panel interview**, you answer questions from two or more interviewers in the same session. Panel interviews save time for employers and let them see how candidates perform under pressure. Facing several interviewers at once can feel intimidating, but you can minimize the "firing squad" feeling by treating it as a series of one-on-one interactions. Focus on each interviewer as you answer his or her question, then make eye contact with the others on the panel so everyone feels included.[10]

In a panel interview, you meet with several interviewers at once.

The interviewers typically come from different parts of the organization and will have different concerns, so frame each answer in that context.[11] For example, an upper-level manager is likely to be interested in your overall business sense and strategic perspective, whereas a potential colleague might be more interested in your technical skills and ability to work in a team.

Use a panel interview as an opportunity to see how people in the company work together. Are they collegial with one another or cold and distant? Does the boss interrupt and overrule or show respect to everyone regardless of rank?

In a **group interview**, one or more interviewers meet with several candidates simultaneously. These can involve group discussions and problem-solving activities. In addition to being an efficient way to interview a number of candidates, group interviews let employers see how individuals function in a group or team setting.[12] Whatever the activity, be sure to treat your fellow candidates with respect and encouragement, while looking for opportunities to show leadership and demonstrate the depth of knowledge you have about the company and its needs.

In a group interview, you and several other candidates meet with one or more interviewers at once.

Interview Questions

Interviewing techniques also vary based on the types of questions you are asked. You might encounter two or more types of questions within a single interview, so be prepared to shift your answering approach if you determine that the interviewer is using different types of questions.

Behavioral Interview Questions In contrast to generic questions that can often be answered with "canned" responses, **behavioral interview questions** require candidates to craft answers based on their own experiences and attributes.[13] Because it measures actual behavior, behavioral questions are a better predictor of success on the job than traditional interview questions.[14] Regardless of the overall style of an interview, you should expect at least a few behavioral questions.

Behavioral questions ask you to describe how you handled situations from your past.

Behavioral questions often deal with teamwork, communication, leadership, conflict resolution, problem solving, mistakes, job commitment, and other soft-skill areas that are difficult to measure other than by someone's actual on-the-job performance.[15] To give you an idea of what these questions are like, here are some typical behavioral questions:[16]

- Tell me how about a time you had to deal with a teammate who refused to do his or her share of the work.
- Describe your last high-stress project and how you dealt with the pressure.
- Explain how you resolved a communication breakdown with a boss, professor, or coworker.
- Tell me about a mistake you made on the job and how you resolved the situation and learned from the error.
- Tell me about an important goal you set for yourself and how you achieved it.

Use the STAR approach to craft answers to behavioral questions:
- **S/T:** The situation you faced or the task you were given
- **A:** The approach you took
- **R:** The results you achieved

Effective answers to behavioral questions have three parts: (1) a brief summary of the situation or task, (2) the approach you took to solve the problem or meet the challenge, and (3) the results you achieved. The acronym STAR can help you remember the sequence: **S/T** for situation or task, **A** for approach, and **R** for results.[17] You are essentially telling a mini-story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. If you don't have a work-related scenario to share in response to a question, consider using something appropriate from your personal or social experience that demonstrates the skill the interviewer is asking about.

To prepare for behavioral questions, study the job description for qualities the company is looking for, then review your work and college experiences to recall several instances in which you demonstrated these qualities. Practice your answers so that you can quickly summarize the situation, the actions you took, and the outcome of those actions.[18]

Situational questions ask you to explain how you would handle various hypothetical situations.

Situational Interview Questions **Situational interview questions** are similar to those in a behavioral interview except they focus on how you would handle various situations that could arise on the job. The situations will relate closely to the job you're applying for, so the more you know about the position and the company, the better prepared you'll be.

The interviewer might not expect you to have detailed, polished responses to all these hypothetical situations, but he or she will be judging how you go about assessing situations and formulating responses. Even if you aren't familiar with the business details of a particular scenario, use common sense to imagine how experienced people in that situation would respond.

In a case interview, you are asked to solve a business challenge with limited time and information.

Case Interviews If you are interviewing at investment banks or management consulting firms, chances are you will encounter the **case interview**.[19] Rather than a series of questions, the case interview presents you with one or more problems or questions to solve. If you are pursuing jobs in these fields, you are probably already familiar with the case-based methodology.

In these interviews, you will be given information about a scenario and be asked to make a forecast, solve a strategic dilemma, or come up with some other sort of answer. A particular case might have multiple viable answers or no right answer at all; what interviewers are really watching is how you approach the problem with limited time and limited resources. Do you assess the situation using all the information you were given? Do you make reasonable guesses about facts and figures you don't have in hand? Does your inquiry follow a logical progression?[20] Some management consulting firms and other organizations offer practice cases and interview preparation tips online; search for "case interviews."

Stress interviews are intended to let recruiters see how you handle yourself under pressure; recognize what is happening and don't take it personally.

Stress Interviews The most unnerving type of interview is the **stress interview**, during which you might be asked questions designed to unsettle you or might be subjected to long periods of silence, criticism, interruptions, or even hostile reactions by the interviewer. The theory behind this approach is that you'll reveal how well you handle stressful situations, although some experts question whether the technique is valuable or even ethical.[21] If you find yourself in a stress interview, recognize what is happening and collect your thoughts for a few seconds before you respond. Keep in mind that the perceived attacks aren't personal but simply a way to test your responses.

INTERVIEW MEDIA

To reduce travel costs and the demands on employee time, many employers now conduct at least some stages of interviews via telephone or video. Depending on the position, you might also encounter online interviews that range from simple structured questionnaires and tests to realistic job simulations (see Figure 14.4).

Treat a telephone interview as seriously as you would an in-person interview.

Interviewing by Phone

Chances are good that the screening interview and at least one interview after that will be conducted over the phone. Employers treat telephone interviews as seriously as in-person interviews, so you need to as well. Follow the advice in Table 14.2 on the next page.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

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Expert tips for successful phone interviews

Recruiting experts offer invaluable advice on succeeding in a phone interview. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

Interviewing by Video

Many employers use video chat for interviews as well. This can involve live video using Skype or similar video services or some form of video conferencing. You may also encounter video interviewing systems, in which you respond to prerecorded questions online. Everything in Table 14.2 applies to video calls, plus you need to consider the following points:[22]

MOBILE APP

Add the **Skype** mobile app to your phone to be ready for video interviews.

To get ready for a video interview, prepare the space you will be in, set up and verify the technology you'll be using, and dress as you would for an in-person interview.

- Make sure your interviewing space is clean and uncluttered. Remove anything from the walls behind you and the area around you that doesn't look professional.
- Don't sit in front of a window or other strong light source. Adjust the room lighting so that light is directed toward you, without making it glaring. You can use software to control your webcam settings to make you look great on camera.
- Make sure your video setup is ready to go. If the company asks you to use Skype or another public service, test your connection with a friend beforehand and get comfortable using it. If the company emails a link for a videoconferencing service, make sure you download and install any software that might be required well before the scheduled interview time.
- Dress and groom as you would for an in-person interview. Unlike phone interviews, where you do this to boost your mood, with a video call it's essential to look like the sort of person the company wants to hire. Choose solid colors and avoid hues that are too bright or too dark (both of which can throw off the webcam's auto-exposure).

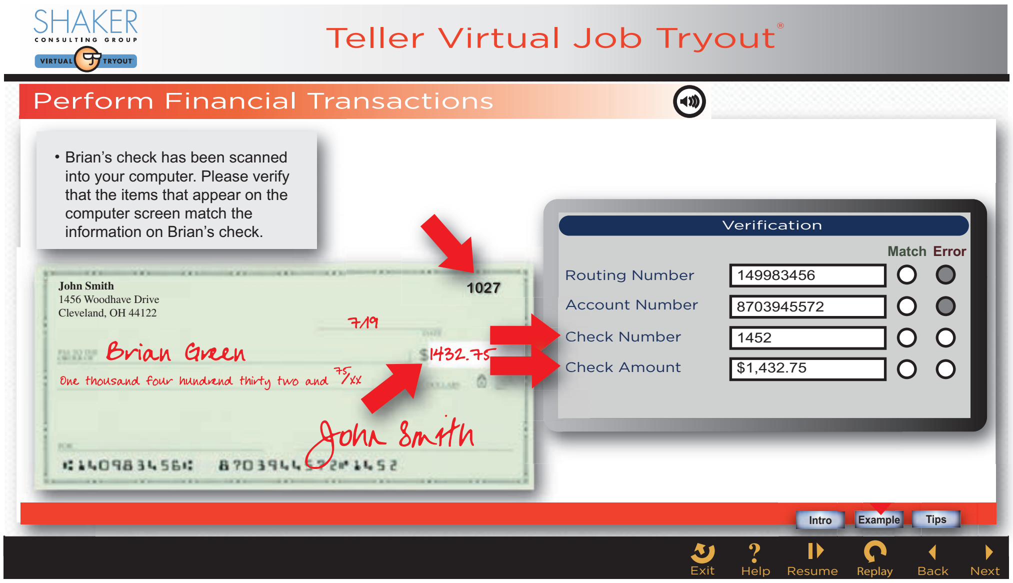

Figure 14.4 Job Task Simulations

Computer-based job simulations are an increasingly popular approach to testing job-related skills.

Source: Reprinted with permission from Shaker Consulting Group.

TABLE 14.2 Tips for a Successful Phone Interview

Tip	Details
Prepare your material.	Have these materials on hand: • Your résumé • Any correspondence you've had with the employer • Your research notes about the company • The job description • Note cards with key message points you'd like to make and questions you'd like to ask
Prepare your space.	Arrange a clean and quiet space to be during the interview. As much as possible, avoid distractions from pets, other people, television, music, and other audio and visual interruptions.
Practice your answers.	Call a friend and rehearse your answers to potential questions to make sure you're comfortable saying them over the phone.
Talk on a landline if possible.	If your mobile service isn't clear and reliable, try to arrange to talk on a landline.
Schedule the interview.	As much as possible, schedule a time when you can be in your prepared space, safe from interruptions.
Dress for a business meeting.	You don't need to go full out, but don't wear sweat pants and a T-shirt. Dressing up sends a signal to your mind and body to be attentive and professional.
Answer your phone professionally.	Say "Hi, this is —" to let callers know they've reached the right person. While your job search is active, answer every call from an unknown caller as if it's a potential employer.
Maintain good posture.	Whether you sit or stand during the interview, good posture will keep you alert and keep your voice strong.
Compensate for the lack of visual nonverbal signals.	You can't use facial expressions or hand gestures for emphasis, so make sure your voice is warm, friendly, and dynamic. Smile frequently—it changes the sound of your voice and lifts your mood.
Finish each answer in a definitive way.	Don't trail off and leave the interviewer wondering whether you're finished.
Speak clearly.	Remember that the interviewer can't see you; your spoken words have to carry the entire message.
Write down essential information you get during the interview.	Don't rely on your memory for important details such as arrangements for a follow-on interview. It's fine to pause and ask, "May I take a moment to write this down?"
End on a positive note.	No matter how you think the call went, thank the interviewer for the opportunity and say you look forward to hearing from the company.

Sources: Based in part on Larry Kim, "17 Phone Interview Tips to Guarantee a Follow-Up," *Inc.*, 24 March 2015, www.inc.com; Peter Vogt, "Phone Interview Questions & How to Master Them," Monster, accessed 2 May 2017, www.monster.com; Kate Finley, "How to Nail the Dreaded Phone Interview," *Fast Company*, 6 February 2015, www.fastcompany.com.

- Maintain frequent "eye contact," which means looking at the camera on your device, not at the person's face on your screen. You'll have the natural urge to look at the person's face, but on the other end it will look like you're staring off at an angle. Move the on-screen window that shows the other person's image as close as you can to the camera on your computer or device. This way you can look into the camera while still feeling like you're looking at the interviewer.
- Don't fidget or move around too much. This is distracting to the interviewer, and your microphone will pick up all the extraneous noise.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE
In-depth advice on successful video interviews

This comprehensive article covers everything from positioning your webcam to calming your nerves. Go to real-timeupdates.com/bce8 and select Learn More in the Students section.

WHAT EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR IN AN INTERVIEW

The first major question employers try to answer is whether you are qualified for the position.

Interviews give employers the chance to go beyond the basic data of your résumé to get to know you better and to answer two essential questions. First, can you handle the responsibilities of the position? Naturally, the more you know about the demands of the position, and the more you've thought about how your skills match those demands, the better you'll be able to respond.

The second major question employers try to answer is whether you would be a good fit in terms of personality and organizational culture.

Second, will you be a good fit with the organization and the target position? All good employers want people who are confident, dedicated, positive, curious, courteous, ethical, and willing to commit to something larger than their own individual goals. Companies also look for fit with their individual cultures. Just like people, companies have different personalities. Some are intense; others are more laid back. Some emphasize teamwork; others expect employees to forge their own way and even compete with one another. Expectations also vary from job to job within a company and from industry to industry. An outgoing personality is essential for sales but less so for research, for instance.

Beyond these two general questions, most employers look for the qualities of professionalism described in Chapter 1 (see page 6). Throughout the interview process, look for opportunities to show your commitment to excellence, dependability, teamwork, etiquette, ethics, and positive attitude.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY WATCHING THESE VIDEOS
Five TED talks that will help you prepare for interviews

MIT career advisor Lily Zhang handpicked these talks for the insights they can give all job hunters. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

PREEMPLOYMENT TESTING AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

In an effort to improve the predictability of the selection process, many employers now conduct a variety of preemployment evaluations and investigations. Here are types of assessments you are likely to encounter during your job search:

Preemployment tests attempt to provide objective, quantitative information about a candidate's skills, attitudes, and habits.

- **Integrity, personality, and cognitive ability tests.** Most midsize and large companies screen candidates with tests designed to ensure compatibility with the job and with the company's values. These tests can cover such areas as emotional intelligence, ethics, and problem solving.[23]
- **Job knowledge and job skills tests.** These assessments measure the knowledge and skills required to succeed in a particular position. An accounting candidate, for example, might be tested on accounting principles and legal matters (knowledge) and asked to create a simple balance sheet or income statement (skills).
- **Substance tests.** Many companies perform some level of drug and alcohol testing. If you take prescription painkillers or other medication that trigger an alert, you will need to show proof of the prescription.[24]
- **Background checks.** In addition to testing, most companies conduct some level of background checks, including reviewing your credit record, reviewing your driving record, checking to see whether you have a criminal history, confirming your identity, and verifying your education. Note that you must consent to a background check, and if a company finds something negative, it must report that information to you and give you the opportunity to explain.[25]
- **Online searches.** Finally, you should assume that every employer will conduct a general online search on you. To help prevent a background check from tripping you up, verify that your college transcripts are current, look for any mistakes or outdated information in your credit record, plug your name into multiple search engines to see whether anything embarrassing shows up, and scour your social network profiles and connections for potential problems. Some companies have asked applicants for the passwords to their social media accounts, but a number of states have begun to outlaw this practice.[26]

Google yourself before employers do; you need to know what they are likely to find when they study your online presence.

If you're concerned about any preemployment test, ask the employer for more information or ask your college career center for advice. You can also get more information from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) at **www.eeoc.gov**.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE
Know your privacy rights

Find out what employers can and cannot ask about you during the recruiting process. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Preparing for a Job Interview

Now that you're armed with insights into the interviewing and assessment process, you're ready to begin preparing for your interviews. Preparation will help you feel more confident and perform better under pressure, and it starts with learning about the organization.

3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
List six tasks you need to complete in order to prepare for a successful job interview.

TABLE 14.3 Investigating an Organization and a Job Opportunity

Where to Look and What You Can Learn

- *Company website, blogs, and social media accounts:* Overall information about the company, including key executives, products and services, locations and divisions, employee benefits, job descriptions
- *Competitors' websites, blogs, and social media accounts:* Similar information from competitors, including the strengths these companies claim to have
- *Industry-related websites and blogs:* Objective analysis and criticism of the company, its products, its reputation, and its management
- *Marketing materials (print and online):* The company's marketing strategy and customer communication style
- *Company publications (print and online):* Key events, stories about employees, new products
- *Your social network contacts:* Names and job titles of potential contacts within a company
- *Periodicals (newspapers and trade journals, both print and online):* In-depth stories about the company and its strategies, products, successes, and failures; you may find profiles of top executives
- *Career center at your college:* Often provides a wide array of information about companies that hire graduates
- *Current and former employees:* Insights into the work environment

Points to Learn About the Organization

- Full name
- Location (headquarters and divisions, branches, subsidiaries, or other units)
- Ownership (public or private; whether it is owned by another company)
- Brief history
- Products and services
- Industry position (whether the company is a leader or a minor player; whether it is an innovator or more of a follower)
- Key financial points (such as stock price and trends, if a public company)
- Growth prospects (whether the company is investing in its future through research and development; whether it is in a thriving industry)

Points to Learn About the Position

- Title
- Functions and responsibilities
- Qualifications and expectations
- Possible career paths
- Salary range
- Travel expectations and opportunities
- Relocation expectations and opportunities

LEARNING ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Interviewers expect you to know some basic information about the company and its industry.

You've already done some initial research to identify companies of interest, but when you're invited to an interview, it's time to dig a little deeper (see Table 14.3). Making this effort demonstrates your interest in the company, and it identifies you as a business professional who knows the importance of investigation and analysis.

In addition to learning about the company and the job opening, try to find out as much as you can about the managers who will be interviewing you, if you can get their names. Search LinkedIn in particular. As noted earlier, it's also perfectly acceptable to ask your recruiting contact at the company for the names and titles of the people who will be interviewing you. Think about ways to use whatever information you find during your interview. For example, if an interviewer lists membership in a particular professional organization, you might ask whether the organization is a good forum for people to learn about vital issues in the profession or industry. This question gives the interviewer an opportunity to talk about his or her own interests and experiences for a moment, which builds rapport and might reveal vital insights into the career path you are considering. Just make sure your questions are sincere and not uncomfortably personal.

MOBILE APP
The **CareerBuilder** app lets you search and apply for jobs from your phone or tablet.

THINKING AHEAD ABOUT QUESTIONS

Planning ahead for the interviewer's questions will help you handle them more confidently and successfully. In addition, you will want to prepare insightful questions of your own.

Planning for the Employer's Questions

You can expect to face a number of common questions in your interviews, so be sure to prepare for them.

Many general interview questions are "stock" queries you can expect to hear again and again during your interviews. Get ready to face variations of these six at the very least:

- **What is the hardest decision you've ever had to make?** Be prepared with a good example (that isn't too personal), explaining why the decision was difficult, how you made the choice you made, and what you learned from the experience. The STAR approach is perfect for this.

- **What is your greatest weakness?** This question seems to be a favorite of some interviewers, although it probably rarely yields definitive information as it's unlikely that many candidates will answer with a weakness that ruins their chances. Two effective approaches are answering with something that is minor and unrelated to the core responsibilities of the job or mentioning a shortcoming that you had in the past but took steps to remedy.[27] You can also mention a skill you plan to develop, without characterizing it as a weakness.
- **Where do you want to be five years from now?** This question tests (1) whether you've given thought to your long-term goals and (2) whether you're merely using this job as a stopover until something better comes along. While being truthful, frame your answer in a way that expresses your enthusiasm for the position and your desire to build a career with the company.[28]
- **What didn't you like about previous jobs you've held?** Answer this one carefully: The interviewer is trying to predict whether you'll be an unhappy or difficult employee.[29] Describe something that you didn't like in a way that puts you in a positive light, such as having limited opportunities to apply your skills or education. Avoid making negative comments about former employers or colleagues.
- **Tell me something about yourself.** One good strategy is to briefly share the "story of you" (see page 362)—quickly summarizing where you have been and where you would like to go—in a way that aligns your interests with the company's. Alternatively, you can focus on a specific skill you know is valuable to the company, share something relevant to business that you are passionate about, or offer a short summary of what colleagues or customers think about you.[30] Whatever tactic you choose, this is not the time to be shy or indecisive, so be ready with a confident, memorable answer.
- **How do you spend your free time?** This question can pop up late in an interview, after the interviewer has covered the major work-related questions and wants to get a better idea of what sort of person you are.[31] Prepare an answer that is honest and that puts you in a positive light, without revealing more than you are comfortable revealing or suggesting that you might not fit in the corporate culture. Sports, hobbies, reading, spending time with family, and volunteer work are all "safe" answers.

Continue your preparation by planning a brief answer to each question in Table 14.4 on the next page. Use the STAR approach (page 402) to frame your responses as mini-stories.

Look for ways to frame your responses as brief stories rather than as dry facts or statements.

Planning Questions of Your Own

Remember that an interview is a two-way conversation. By asking insightful questions, you can demonstrate your understanding of the organization, steer the discussion into areas that allow you to present your qualifications to best advantage, and verify for yourself whether this is a good opportunity. Plus, interviewers expect you to ask questions, and they tend to look negatively on candidates who don't have any questions to ask. For good questions that you can use as a starting point, see Table 14.5 on the next page.

Preparing questions of your own helps you understand the company and the position, and it sends an important signal that you are truly interested.

BOOSTING YOUR CONFIDENCE

The best way to build your confidence is to prepare thoroughly and address shortcomings as best you can. In other words, take action.

Interviewing is stressful for everyone, so some nervousness is natural. However, you can take steps to feel more confident. Start by reminding yourself that you have value to offer the employer and that the employer already thinks highly enough of you to invite you to an interview.

If some aspect of your appearance or background makes you uneasy, correct it if possible or offset it by emphasizing positive traits such as warmth, wit, intelligence, or charm. Instead of dwelling on your weaknesses, focus on your strengths. Instead of worrying about how you will perform in the interview, focus on how you can help the organization succeed. As with public speaking, the more prepared you are, the more confident you'll be.

TABLE 14.4 Twenty-Five Common Interview Questions

Questions About College
1. What courses in college did you like most? Least? Why?
2. Do you think your extracurricular activities in college were worth the time you spent on them? Why or why not?
3. When did you choose your college major? Did you ever change your major? If so, why?
4. Do you feel you did the best scholastic work you are capable of?
5. How has your college education prepared you for this position?
Questions About Employers and Jobs
6. Why did you leave your last job?
7. Why did you apply for this job opening?
8. Why did you choose your particular field of work?
9. What are the disadvantages of your chosen field?
10. What do you know about our company?
11. What do you think about how this industry operates today?
12. Why do you think you would like this particular type of job?
Questions About Work Experiences and Expectations
13. What was your biggest failure?
14. What is your biggest weakness?
15. Describe an experience in which you learned from one of your mistakes.
16. What motivates you? Why?
17. What do you think determines a person's progress in a good organization?
18. What have you done that shows initiative and willingness to work?
19. Why should we hire you?
Questions About Work Habits
20. Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?
21. What type of boss do you prefer?
22. Have you ever had any difficulty getting along with colleagues or supervisors? With instructors? With other students?
23. What would you do if you were given an unrealistic deadline for a task or project?
24. How do you feel about overtime work?
25. How do you handle stress or pressure on the job?

Sources: Based on "50 Most Common Interview Questions," Glassdoor, 25 March 2016, www.glassdoor.com; Alison Green, "The 10 Most Common Job Interview Questions," *U.S. News & World Report*, 27 April 2015, money.usnews.com; Carole Martin, "10 Most Common Interview Questions," Monster, accessed 14 May 2016, www.monster.com.

TABLE 14.5 Ten Questions to Consider Asking an Interviewer

Question	Reason for Asking
1. What are the job's major responsibilities?	A vague answer could mean that the responsibilities have not been clearly defined, which is almost guaranteed to cause frustration if you take the job.
2. What qualities do you want in the person who fills this position? OR What have past employees done to excel in this position?	This will help you go beyond the job description to understand what the company really wants.
3. How do you measure success for someone in this position?	A vague or incomplete answer could mean that the expectations you will face are unrealistic or ill defined.
4. What is the first problem that needs the attention of the person you hire?	Not only will this help you prepare, but it can also signal whether you're about to jump into a problematic situation.
5. How well do my qualifications align with the current and future needs of this positions?	This gives you the opportunities to address any unspoken concerns the interviewer might have.
6. Why is this job now vacant?	If the previous employee got promoted, that's a good sign. If the person quit, that might not be such a good sign.
7. What makes your organization different from others in the industry?	The answer will help you assess whether the company has a clear strategy to succeed in its industry and whether top managers communicate this to lower-level employees.
8. How would you define your organization's managerial philosophy?	You want to know whether the managerial philosophy is consistent with your own working values.
9. What is a typical workday like for you?	The interviewer's response can give you clues about daily life at the company.
10. What are the next steps in the selection process? What's the best way to follow up with you?	Knowing where the company is in the hiring process will give you clues about following up after the interview and possibly give you hints about where you stand.

Sources: Courtney Connley, "5 Things You Should Ask During Every Job Interview," *Black Enterprise*, June 2016, 29; Jacquelyn Smith and Natalie Walters, "The 29 Smartest Questions to Ask at the End of Every Job Interview," *Business Insider*, 28 January 2016, www.businessinsider.com; Heather Huhman, "5 Must-Ask Questions at Job Interviews," Glassdoor blog, 7 February 2012, www.glassdoor.com.

POLISHING YOUR INTERVIEW STYLE

Competence and confidence are the foundation of your interviewing style, and you can enhance them by giving the interviewer an impression of poise, good manners, and good judgment. You can develop a smooth style by staging mock interviews with a friend or using an interview simulator (see Figure 14.5). Record these mock interviews so you can evaluate yourself. Your college's career center may have computer-based systems for practicing interviews as well.

Staging mock interviews is a good way to hone your style and boost your confidence.

After each practice session, look for opportunities to improve. Make sure your answers are clear, concise, and on-topic. Have your mock interview partner critique your performance, or critique yourself if you're able to record your practice interviews, using the list of warning signs shown in Table 14.6 on the next page.

Evaluate the length and clarity of your answers, your nonverbal behavior, and the quality of your voice.

In addition to reviewing your answers, evaluate your nonverbal behavior, including your posture, eye contact, facial expressions, and hand gestures and movements. Do you come across as alert and upbeat or passive and withdrawn? Pay close attention to your speaking voice as well. If you tend to speak in a monotone, for instance, practice speaking in a livelier style, with more inflection and emphasis. And watch out for fillers such as *uh* and *um*. Many people start sentences with a filler without being conscious of doing so. Train yourself to pause silently for a moment instead as you gather your thoughts and plan what to say.

PRESENTING A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

Clothing and grooming are important elements of preparation because they reveal something about a candidate's personality, professionalism, and ability to sense the unspoken rules of a situation. Your research into various industries and professions should give you insight into expectations for business attire. If you're not sure what to wear, ask someone who works in the same industry, call the company's receptionist, or even visit the company at the end of the day and see what employees are wearing as they leave the office. However, if they are dressed extremely causally, plan to dress a notch or two above that. You don't need to spend a fortune on interview clothes, but your clothes must be clean, ironed, and appropriate. The following look will serve you well in just about any interview situation:[32]

Dress in a way that shows you understand the company's norms; a safe approach is to dress just a bit more formally than employees do.

- Hairstyle appropriate for the industry and the profession
- For more formal environments and for many professional or managerial positions, a conservative business suit (for women, that means no exposed midriffs, short skirts, or plunging necklines) in a dark solid color or a subtle pattern such as pinstripes; understated tie for men; coordinated blouse for women

Use style and grooming choices to send the signal that you are a serious professional.

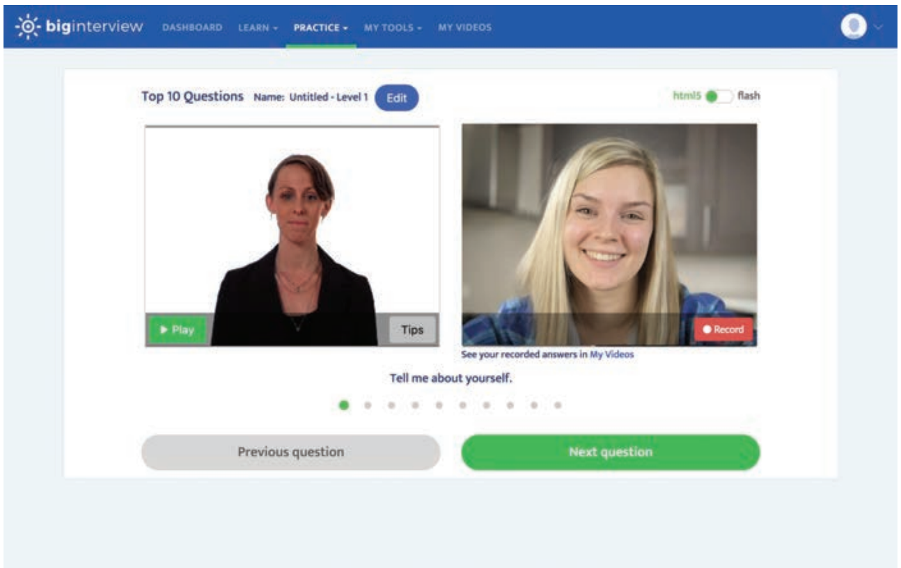

Figure 14.5 Interview Simulators
Job interview simulators can help you practice your responses to common interview questions and fine-tune your interviewing skills.
Source: Courtesy of Big Interview, https://biginterview.com/.

TABLE 14.6 Warning Signs: 25 Attributes Interviewers Don't Like to See

1. Poor personal appearance	13. Poor scholastic record
2. Overbearing, overaggressive, or conceited demeanor; a "superiority complex"; a know-it-all attitude	14. Unwillingness to start at the bottom; expecting too much too soon
3. Inability to express ideas clearly; poor voice, diction, or grammar	15. Tendency to make excuses
4. Lack of knowledge or experience	16. Evasive answers; hedging on unfavorable factors in record
5. Poor preparation for the interview	17. Lack of tact
6. Lack of interest in the job	18. Lack of maturity
7. Lack of planning for career; lack of purpose or goals	19. Lack of courtesy and common sense, including answering mobile phones, texting, or chewing gum during the interview
8. Lack of enthusiasm; passive and indifferent demeanor	20. Being critical of past or present employers
9. Lack of confidence and poise; appearance of being nervous and ill at ease	21. Lack of social skills
10. Insufficient evidence of achievement	22. Marked dislike for schoolwork
11. Failure to participate in extracurricular activities	23. Lack of vitality
12. Overemphasis on money; interest only in the best offer	24. Failure to look interviewer in the eye
	25. Limp, weak handshake

Sources: Donna Fuscaldo, "Seven Deadly Interview Sins," Glassdoor blog, 4 April 2012, www.glassdoor.com; "Employers Reveal Outrageous and Common Mistakes Candidates Made in Job Interviews, According to New CareerBuilder Survey," CareerBuilder.com, 12 January 2011, www.careerbuilder.com; *The Northwestern Endicott Report* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Placement Center).

REAL-TIME UPDATES

LEARN MORE BY WATCHING THIS PRESENTATION

Simple tips for a professional interview look

Not sure how to get the right look? Follow this advice. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

- For less formal environments, smart-looking "business casual," including a pressed shirt or blouse and nice slacks or a skirt
- Stylish but professional-looking shoes (no extreme high heels, exposed toes, or casual shoes)
- Clean hands and nicely trimmed fingernails
- Little or no perfume or cologne (some people are allergic and many people are put off by strong smells)
- Limited accessories
- Subtle makeup
- Exemplary personal hygiene

If you're not sure how formal a company is, bring a blazer that you can wear to dress up or carry to dress down. Whatever the style, remember that an interview is not the place to express your individuality or to let your inner rebel run wild. To be taken seriously, send a clear signal that you understand the business world and know how to adapt to it.

BEING READY WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Be ready to go as soon as you arrive at the interviewing site; don't fumble around for your résumé or your list of questions.

When you go to your interview, take a small notebook, a pen, a list of the questions you want to ask, several copies of your résumé (protected in a folder), an outline of what you have learned about the organization, and any past correspondence about the position. You may also want to take a small calendar, a transcript of your college grades, a list of references, and a portfolio containing samples of your work, performance reviews, and certificates of achievement.[33]

Be sure you know when and where the interview will be held. The worst way to start any interview is to be late. Verify the route and time required to get there, even if that means traveling there ahead of time. Plan to arrive early, but don't approach the reception desk until 5 minutes or so before your appointed time.[34] Chances are the interviewer won't be ready to receive you until the scheduled time.

If you have to wait for the interviewer, use this time to review the key messages about yourself that you want to get across in the interview. Conduct yourself professionally while waiting. Turn off your phone, show respect for everyone you encounter, and avoid chewing gum, eating, or drinking. Anything you do or say at this stage may get back to the interviewer, so make sure your best qualities show from the moment you enter the premises.

REAL-TIME UPDATES

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Details that can make or break a job interview

You can't control every variable, but it helps to be aware of the sometimes surprising factors that can influence who gets hired and who doesn't. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Interviewing for Success

At this point, you have a good sense of the overall process and know how to prepare for your interviews. The next step is to get familiar with the three stages of every interview: the warm-up, the question-and-answer session, and the close.

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain how to succeed in all three stages of an interview.

THE WARM-UP

The warm-up stage doesn't have any official time boundary, but generally speaking it is the first few minutes of the interview, as you meet the interviewer and settle into place. It might occur while you're walking from the lobby to a conference room or the interviewer's office and continue while you take your seats and move into a more formal conversation. Don't let your guard down if the interviewer engages in what feels like small talk; these exchanges are every bit as important as structured questions.

The first few minutes of the interview might feel like small talk, but the interviewer is forming an impression of you so respond with positive body language, a warm smile, and thoughtful answers.

Show positive body language and a warm smile to create a positive first impression. When the interviewer extends a hand, respond with a firm but not overpowering handshake. Repeat the interviewer's name when you're introduced ("It's a pleasure to meet you, Ms. Litton"). Wait until you're asked to be seated or the interviewer has taken a seat. Let the interviewer start the discussion, and be ready to answer one or two substantial questions right away. Here are some questions that you might hear during the warm-up stage:[35]

You might face substantial questions as soon as your interview starts, so make sure you are prepared and ready to go.

- Why do you want this job?
- Why do you want to work here?
- What do you know about us?
- Tell me a little about yourself.
- Why should we hire you?

You'll probably feel nervous and have the urge to race through your answers, but remember to breathe slowly and take a second to respond. After you move through the first couple of questions, you should start to feel more comfortable.

THE QUESTION-AND-ANSWER STAGE

The bulk of the interview is likely to be a series of questions in which the interviewer asks about your qualifications, discusses some of the points mentioned in your résumé, and asks how you have handled particular situations in the past (behavioral questions) or would handle them in the future (situational questions). You'll also be asking questions of your own.

Answering and Asking Questions

Let the interviewer lead the conversation and never answer a question before he or she has finished asking it. Not only is this type of interruption rude, but the last few words of the question might alter how you respond. As much as possible, avoid one-word yes-or-no answers. Look for opportunities to expand on an earlier positive response or explain a negative response. If you're asked a difficult or offbeat question, pause before responding. Think through the implications of the question. For instance, the recruiter may know that you can't answer a question and only wants to see whether you can construct a logical approach to solving a problem.

Listen carefully to questions before you answer.

Whenever you're asked whether you have any questions, or whenever doing so naturally fits the flow of the conversation, ask a question from the list you've prepared. Probe for what the company is looking for in its new employees so that you can show how you meet the firm's needs. Also try to zero in on any reservations that you sense the interviewer might have about you so that you can dispel them.

Listening to the Interviewer

Active listening (see Chapter 2) can help you gauge the interviewer's mood and uncover any unspoken concerns. Facial expressions, eye movements, gestures, and posture may tell you the real meaning of what is being said. Be especially aware of how your answers are

Paying attention to both verbal and nonverbal messages can help you turn the question-and-answer stage to your advantage.

received. Does the interviewer nod in agreement or smile to show approval? If so, you're making progress. If not, you might want to expand an answer or ask if you've understood the question correctly.

Handling Potentially Discriminatory Questions

Federal, state, and local laws prohibit employment discrimination based on a variety of factors, and well-trained interviewers know to avoid questions that could be used to discriminate in the hiring process.

Think about how you might respond if you were asked a potentially unlawful question.

Although it's less likely to happen in a firm with well-trained interviewers, you might encounter a question you consider discriminatory. A variety of federal, state, and local laws prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, age (at least if you're between 40 and 70), marital status, religion, national origin, or disability. Interview questions designed to elicit information on these topics are potentially illegal.[36] Table 14.7 compares some specific questions that employers are and are not allowed to ask during an employment interview.

If an interviewer asks a potentially unlawful question, consider your options before you respond. You can refuse to answer it, you can answer it and move on, or you can try to identify why the interviewer might have asked it.[37] For example, if an interviewer inappropriately asks whether you are married or have strong family ties in the area, he or she might be trying to figure out if you're willing to travel or relocate—both of which are acceptable questions. You could respond by asking whether there are concerns about travel or relocation.

Even if you do answer the question as it was asked, think hard before accepting a job offer from this company if you have alternatives. Was the off-limits question possibly accidental (it happens, particularly during casual exchanges over meals) and therefore not really a major concern? If you think it was intentional, would you want to work for an organization that condones illegal or discriminatory questions or that doesn't train its employees to avoid them?

If you believe an interviewer's questions to be unreasonable, unrelated to the job, or an attempt to discriminate, you have the option of filing a complaint with the EEOC or with the agency in your state that regulates fair employment practices.

THE CLOSE

MOBILE APP
The **Monster** mobile app offers helpful tips to help you prepare for your next job interviews.

Like the warm-up, the end of the interview is more important than its brief duration would indicate. These last few minutes are your final opportunity to emphasize your value to the organization and to correct any misconceptions the interviewer might have. Be aware that many interviewers will ask whether you have any more questions at this point, so save one or two from your list.

TABLE 14.7 Acceptable Versus Potentially Discriminatory Interview Questions

Interviewers May Ask This . . .	But Not This
What is your name?	What was your maiden name?
Are you over 18?	When were you born?
Did you graduate from high school?	When did you graduate from high school?
[Questions about race are not allowed.]	What is your race?
Can you perform [specific tasks]?	Do you have physical or mental disabilities?
[Questions about alcohol use are not allowed.]	Do you drink alcoholic beverages?
Are you currently using illegal drugs?	Have you ever been addicted to drugs in the past?
Would you be able to meet the job's requirement to frequently work weekends?	Would working on weekends conflict with your religion?
Do you have the legal right to work in the United States?	What country are you a citizen of?
Have you ever been convicted of a felony?	Have you ever been arrested?
This job requires that you speak Spanish. Do you?	What language did you speak in your home when you were growing up?

Sources: Dave Johnson, "Illegal Job Interview Questions," *CBS Money Watch*, 27 February 2012, www.cbsnews.com; "5 Illegal Interview Questions and How to Dodge Them," *Forbes*, 20 April 2012, www.forbes.com; Vivian Giang, "11 Common Interview Questions That Are Actually Illegal," *Business Insider*, 5 July 2013, www.businessinsider.com.

Concluding Gracefully

You can usually tell when the interviewer is moving to end to the interview. He or she may ask whether you have any more questions, check the time, summarize the discussion, or simply tell you that the allotted time for the interview is up. When you get the signal, be sure to thank the interviewer for the opportunity and express your interest in the organization. If you can do so comfortably, try to pin down what will happen next, but don't press for an immediate decision.

Conclude an interview with courtesy and enthusiasm; ask questions if you're not sure about what will happen next.

If this is your second or third interview, it may end with a job offer. If you have other offers or need time to think about this offer, it's perfectly acceptable to thank the interviewer for the offer and ask for some time to consider it. If no job offer is made, the interview team may not have reached a decision yet, but you may tactfully ask when you can expect to know the decision.

Discussing Salary

Before you reach the interview stage, you should have a salary range in mind based on the research you've done into the position. If you're asked about your salary requirements and aren't ready to name a figure, you can say that you would expect compensation in line with industry norms for someone with your experience.

Research salary ranges in your job, industry, and geographic region before you try to negotiate salary.

How far you can negotiate depends on several factors, including the market demand for your skills, the strength of the job market, the company's compensation policies, the company's financial health, and any other job offers you may be considering. If you're comparing offers, be sure to consider the entire compensation and benefits package. And remember that you're negotiating a business deal, not asking for personal favors, so focus on the unique value you can bring to the job. The more information you have, the stronger your position will be.

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY EXPLORING THIS INTERACTIVE WEBSITE
How much are you worth?

Find real-life salary ranges for a wide range of jobs. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

INTERVIEW NOTES

Maintain a notebook or simple database with information about each company, interviewers' answers to your questions, contact information for each interviewer, the status of follow-up communication, and upcoming interview appointments. Carefully organized notes will help you decide which company is the right fit for you when it comes time to choose from among the job offers you receive.

Keep careful notes during the job-search process so you don't miss deadlines or commit other mistakes.

Following Up After an Interview

5 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Identify the most common employment messages that follow an interview, and explain when you would use each one.

Staying in contact with a prospective employer after an interview shows that you really want the job and are motivated to get it. Doing so also gives you another chance to demonstrate your communication skills and sense of business etiquette. Following up brings your name to the interviewer's attention once again and reminds him or her that you're actively looking and waiting for the decision.

Whenever you hear from a company during the application or interview process, be sure to respond quickly, even if it's only to ask for more time. If a company doesn't hear back from you within 24 hours, it might move on to the next candidate.[38]

FOLLOW-UP MESSAGE

Send a follow-up message within two days of the interview, even if you feel you have little chance of getting the job. These messages are often referred to as "thank-you notes," but they give you an important opportunity to go beyond merely expressing your appreciation (see Figure 14.6 on the next page). You can use the message to reinforce the reasons you are a good choice for the position, modify any answers you gave during the interview if you realize you made a mistake or have changed your mind, and respond to any negatives that might have arisen in the interview.[39] Email is usually acceptable for follow-up messages, unless the interviewer has asked you to use other media.

A follow-up message is another chance to promote yourself to an employer.

Dear Ms. Reynolds:

The talk, the tour, watching commercials being filmed—I had a great time interviewing with you yesterday! That was nice of you to take so much time to show me around.

You guys are doing so many cool things there, and your tour convinced me that I would really enjoy working on the various film and TV productions you do there.

Again, thank you for the chat. I really believe you and I hit it off and would make a great team. Please let me know your decision as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Michael Espinosa
585 Montoya Road
Las Cruces, NM 88005
(505) 555-6208
espinosam@newm.com

Dear Ms. Reynolds:

After talking with you yesterday, touring your sets, and watching commercials being filmed, I remain enthusiastic about the possibility of joining your staff as a production assistant. Thanks for taking so much time to show me around.

During our meeting, I said I would prefer not to relocate, but I've reconsidered the matter. I would be pleased to relocate wherever you might need my skills in set decoration and prop design.

Now that you've explained the details of your operation, I feel quite strongly that I can make a contribution to the sorts of productions you are lining up. You can also count on me to be an energetic employee and a positive addition to your crew. I look forward to hearing your decision.

Sincerely,

Michael Espinosa
585 Montoya Road
Las Cruces, NM 88005
(505) 555-6208

Figure 14.6 Follow-Up Message
Use the follow-up message after an interview to express continued interest in the opportunity, to correct or expand on any information you provided in the interview, and to thank the interviewer for his or her time.
Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation.

MESSAGE OF INQUIRY

You can inquire about the hiring decision if you haven't heard by the promised date.

If you're not advised of the interviewer's decision by the promised date or within two weeks, you might make an inquiry. A message of inquiry (which can be handled by email if the interviewer has given you his or her email address) is particularly appropriate if you've received a job offer from a second firm and don't want to accept it before you have an answer from the first. The following example illustrates an effective approach:

> When we talked on April 7 about the fashion coordinator position in your Park Avenue showroom, you indicated that a decision would be made by May 1. I am still enthusiastic about the position and eager to know what conclusion you've reached.

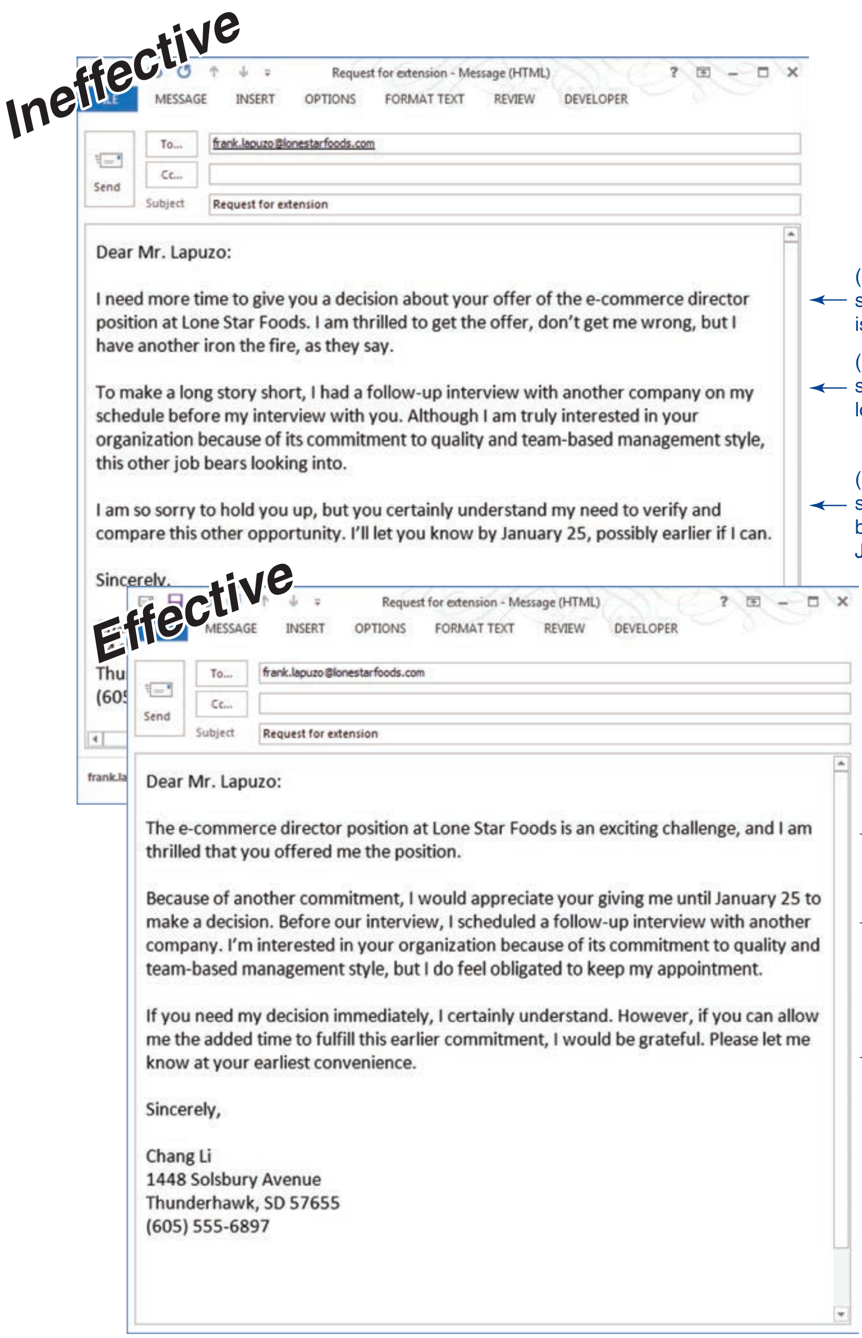
← Provides enough information to remind the reader about the previous discussion

To complicate matters, another firm has now offered me a position and has asked that I reply within the next two weeks. ← Introduces the sense of urgency

Would it be possible to hear your decision by Thursday, May 12? If you need more information from me before then, please let me know. ← Makes a courteous request for specific action

REQUEST FOR A TIME EXTENSION

If you receive a job offer while other interviews are still pending, you can ask the employer for a time extension. Open with a strong statement of your continued interest in the job, ask for more time to consider the offer, provide specific reasons for the request, and assure the reader that you will respond by a specific date (see Figure 14.7).



Ineffective

Request for extension - Message (HTML)

To... frank.lapuzo@lonestarfoods.com

Subject: Request for extension

Dear Mr. Lapuzo:

I need more time to give you a decision about your offer of the e-commerce director position at Lone Star Foods. I am thrilled to get the offer, don't get me wrong, but I have another iron the fire, as they say.

To make a long story short, I had a follow-up interview with another company on my schedule before my interview with you. Although I am truly interested in your organization because of its commitment to quality and team-based management style, this other job bears looking into.

I am so sorry to hold you up, but you certainly understand my need to verify and compare this other opportunity. I'll let you know by January 25, possibly earlier if I can.

Sincerely,

Thu

(60

(a) "I need" is a blunt and fairly offensive way to start any message, and particularly so when one is asking the reader to make an accommodation.

(b) "To make a long story short" only makes the story longer, and saying "this other job bears looking into" sounds self-centered.

(c) Apologizing isn't necessary under the circumstances, but the writer then commits a serious blunder by failing to ask for the extension to January 25.

Effective

Request for extension - Message (HTML)

To... frank.lapuzo@lonestarfoods.com

Subject: Request for extension

Dear Mr. Lapuzo:

The e-commerce director position at Lone Star Foods is an exciting challenge, and I am thrilled that you offered me the position.

Because of another commitment, I would appreciate your giving me until January 25 to make a decision. Before our interview, I scheduled a follow-up interview with another company. I'm interested in your organization because of its commitment to quality and team-based management style, but I do feel obligated to keep my appointment.

If you need my decision immediately, I certainly understand. However, if you can allow me the added time to fulfill this earlier commitment, I would be grateful. Please let me know at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Chang Li
1448 Solsbury Avenue
Thunderhawk, SD 57655
(605) 555-6897

(a) This positive opener confirms the writer's interest in the job and serves as buffer before the upcoming request.

(b) Phrasing this as the need to meet a prior commitment is a graceful way to communicate the idea of wanting to explore the other opportunity, without coming right out and saying so.

(c) The respectful close acknowledges that it might not be possible for the reader to accommodate the request for an extension. The conditional phrasing ("if you can") is a good way to make the request without coming across as demanding.

Figure 14.7 Request for a Time Extension

Needing more time to decide on a job offer is not uncommon, particularly for candidates with desirable credentials. However, make the request in a respectful and subtle way. The reader understands you are comparing opportunities and looking for the best offer, so you don't need to belabor this point.

Source: Windows 10, Microsoft Corporation.

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

Confirm important details when writing a letter of acceptance.

When you receive a job offer you want to accept, reply within five days. Begin by accepting the position and expressing thanks. Identify the job you're accepting. In the next paragraph, cover any necessary details. Conclude by saying that you look forward to reporting for work. As always, a positive letter should convey your enthusiasm and eagerness to cooperate:

> I'm delighted to accept the graphic design position in your advertising department at the salary of $3,875 per month.
>
> ← Confirms the specific terms of the offer with a good-news statement at the beginning
>
> I am enclosing the health insurance forms you asked me to complete and sign. I've already given notice to my current employer and will be able to start work on Monday, January 18.
>
> ← Covers miscellaneous details in the body
>
> The prospect of joining your firm is exciting. Thank you for giving me this opportunity, and I look forward to making a positive contribution.
>
> ← Closes with another reference to the good news and a look toward the future

Written acceptance of a job offer can be considered a legally binding contract, so make sure you intend to take the job.

Be aware that a job offer and a written acceptance of that offer can constitute a legally binding contract, for both you and the employer. Before you send an acceptance letter, be sure you want the job.

LETTER DECLINING A JOB OFFER

If you decide to decline a job offer, do so tactfully.

As you progress through your interviews, you may find that you need to write a letter declining a job offer. Use the techniques for negative messages (see Chapter 8): Open warmly, state the reasons for refusing the offer, decline the offer explicitly, and close on a pleasant note that expresses gratitude. By taking the time to write a sincere, tactful letter, you leave the door open for future contact:

> Thank you for your hospitality during my interview at your Durham facility last month. I'm flattered that you would offer me the systems analyst position that we talked about.
>
> ← Uses a buffer in the opening paragraph
>
> I was fortunate to receive two job offers during my search. Because my desire to work abroad can more readily be satisfied by another company, I have accepted that job offer.
>
> ← Precedes the bad news with tactfully phrased reasons for the applicant's unfavorable decision
>
> I deeply appreciate the time you spent talking with me. Thank you again for your consideration and kindness.
>
> ← Lets the reader down gently with a sincere and cordial ending

LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Letters of resignation should always be written in a gracious and professional tone that avoids criticism of your employer or your colleagues.

If you get a job offer while employed, you can maintain good relations with your current employer by writing a thoughtful letter of resignation to your immediate supervisor. Follow the advice for negative messages and make the letter sound positive, regardless of how you feel. Say something favorable about the organization, the people you work with, or what you've learned on the job. Then state your intention to leave and give the date of your last day on the job. Be sure you give your current employer at least two weeks' notice:

> My sincere thanks to you and to all the other Emblem Corporation employees for helping me learn so much about serving the public these past two years. You have given me untold help and encouragement.
>
> ← Uses an appreciative opening to serve as a buffer
>
> You may recall that when you first interviewed me, my goal was to become a customer relations supervisor. Because that opportunity has been offered to me by another organization, I am submitting my resignation. I will miss my friends and colleagues at Emblem, but I want to take advantage of this opportunity.
>
> ← States reasons before the bad news itself, using tactful phrasing to help keep the relationship friendly, should the writer later want letters of recommendation
>
> I would like to terminate my work here two weeks from today (June 13) but can arrange to work an additional week if you want me to train a replacement.
>
> ← Discusses necessary details in an extra paragraph
>
> My sincere thanks and best wishes to all of you.
>
> ← Tempers the disappointment with a cordial close

For more on interviewing and associated messages, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Chapter 14.

The Future of Communication: Blind Auditions

Most people like to think they are unbiased and capable of making fair, objectives decisions when it comes to judging or assessing others. Unfortunately, that is far from reality. Decades of research suggests that *unconscious* or *implicit bias* is universal and that attitudes and stereotypes affect decision making in ways that people aren't aware of. Even people who consciously go out of their way to avoid biased assumptions can be influenced by unconscious biases that have been accumulating since childhood.[40]

Implicit bias has been a longstanding concern in job interviews and hiring decisions. A case that opened many eyes to the problem involved classical musicians auditioning for symphony orchestras. In the 1970s, women made up only 5 percent of professional symphony musicians. Orchestras gradually moved to *blind auditions*, where the performer is hidden behind a curtain so the people evaluating them can hear but not see them—meaning they can't make judgments based on gender, age, appearances, or anything other than how well the musicians play. Within a decade, the ratio of women had risen to 25 percent.

The concept is now applied across a range of industries and professions. The GapJumpers system, for example, enables job applicants to take skill auditions anonymously. The employers sponsoring the auditions have no personal information about the applicants when they judge the scores—it is strictly about talent. Applicants who do well on blind auditions are then invited to participate in a more conventional interviewing process, at which point the employers learn who they are. GapJumpers' analysis indicates that more women and more community college graduates make it through to the second stage of interviewing than they do in a traditional selection process.[41]

WHAT'S YOUR PREDICTION?

Research current practices in blind auditions across professions. Is the technique catching on? Do you think variations on this method hold promise to reduce employment discrimination?

Chapter Review and Activities

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** to complete the problems marked with this icon ✪.

Learning Objectives: Check Your Progress

Objective 1: Explain the purposes of application letters, and describe how to apply the AIDA organizational approach to them.

An application letter has three purposes:

- Introduce your résumé
- Persuade an employer to read it
- Request an interview

Here's how to apply the AIDA model in an application letter:

- Get attention in the opening paragraph by showing how your skills could benefit the organization, by explaining how your qualifications fit the job, or by demonstrating an understanding of the organization's needs.
- Build interest and desire by adding several key points about your skills, experience, and personal qualities; invite the reader to see even more by reviewing your résumé.
- Motivate action by making your request easy to fulfill and by including all necessary contact information.

Objective 2: Describe the typical sequence of job interviews, the major types of interviews, and the attributes employers look for during an interview.

The sequence of interviews can be divided into two stages:

- During the *screening stage*, employers filter out unqualified (or uninterested) applicants and identify promising candidates.

- During the *selection stage*, they narrow the pool of applicants through a variety of interviewing methods, then extend an offer to the most appealing candidate.

You can distinguish interviews and interview questions in several ways:

- Format: *structured* (every candidate gets the same questions in the same order) versus *unstructured* (interviewers adapt the flow of questions based on candidates' answers)
- Number of people involved: *one-on-one*, *panel* (one candidate, multiple interviewers), and *group* (multiple candidates, one or more interviewers)
- Types of questions and interviews: *behavioral questions* (how the candidate handled situations in the past), *situational questions* (how the candidate would handle hypothetical questions), *case interviews* (the candidate is asked to solve a business problem), and *stress interviews* (the candidate is subjected to stressful questioning to gauge his or her response)

Employers look for two major qualities during an employment interview:

- Can this candidate handle the responsibilities of this position?
- Will this candidate fit in with our organizational culture and values?

Objective 3: List six tasks you need to complete to prepare for a successful job interview.

Complete these six tasks to prepare for a successful job interview:

- Finish the research you started when planning your résumé.
- Think ahead about questions you'll need to answer and questions you'll want to ask.
- Boost your confidence by focusing on your strengths and preparing thoroughly.
- Polish your interviewing style.
- Present a professional image with appropriate clothing and good grooming.
- Arrive on time and ready to begin.

Objective 4: Explain how to succeed in all three stages of an interview.

Interviews progress through three stages:

- During the *warm-up stage*, the interviewer meets the candidate and gets the conversation started; make a good first impression with positive body language and be alert and professional—even initial questions that feel like informal small talk are important.
- During the *question-and-answer stage*, listen carefully to every question and frame your responses using the STAR method; keep aligning your skills with the company's needs.
- During the *close*, you have your final opportunity to promote your value to the organization and counter any misconceptions the interviewer may have; have a question or two ready in case the interviewer asks.

Objective 5: Identify the most common employment messages that follow an interview, and explain when you would use each one.

Here are the types of messages you might send after an interview:

- Definitely send a follow-up message to show appreciation and emphasize your value to the company.
- Considering sending an inquiry if you haven't received the interviewer's decision by the date promised or within two weeks of the interview—especially if you've received a job offer from another firm.
- You can request a time extension if you need more time to consider an offer.
- Send a letter of acceptance after receiving a job offer you want to take.
- Send a tactful message declining any job offers you don't want to take.
- If you are currently employed, send a letter of resignation after you have accepted the offer of another job.

Test Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

14-1. How can you apply the AIDA model to an application letter? [LO-1]

14-2. What information or questions can you use when writing a follow-up message after submitting a résumé? [LO-1]

14-3. How does a structured interview differ from an unstructured interview? [LO-2]

14-4. What is the difference between behavioral and situational interview questions? [LO-2]

14-5. What is the STAR approach to answering interview questions? [LO-4]

Apply Your Knowledge

To review chapter content related to each question, refer to the indicated Learning Objective.

14-6. How can you distinguish yourself from other candidates in a screening interview and still keep your responses short and to the point? Explain. [LO-2]

14-7. How could use you the group interview format to distinguish yourself as a team player? [LO-2]

14-8. If you lack one important qualification for a job but have made it past the screening stage, how should you prepare to handle this issue during the next round of interviews? [LO-3]

14-9. What is an interviewer likely to conclude about you if you don't have any questions to ask during the interview? [LO-3]

14-10. Why is it important to distinguish unethical or illegal interview questions from acceptable questions? [LO-4]

Practice Your Skills

Activities

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information will be found in another chapter, as indicated.

14-11. Message Strategies: Employment Messages [**LO-1**] Revise this message so that it follows this chapter's guidelines.

I'm writing to let you know about my availability for the brand manager job you advertised. As you can see from my enclosed résumé, my background is perfect for the position. Even though I don't have any real job experience, my grades have been outstanding considering that I went to a top-ranked business school.

I did many things during my undergraduate years to prepare me for this job:

- Earned a 3.4 out of a 4.0 with a 3.8 in my business courses
- Elected representative to the student governing association
- Selected to receive the Lamar Franklin Award
- Worked to earn a portion of my tuition

I am sending my résumé to all the top firms, but I like yours better than any of the rest. Your reputation is tops in the industry, and I want to be associated with a business that can pridefully say it's the best.

If you wish for me to come in for an interview, I can come on a Friday afternoon or anytime on weekends when I don't have classes. Again, thanks for considering me for your brand manager position.

14-12. Message Strategies: Employment Messages [**LO-1**] Revise this message so that it follows this chapter's guidelines.

Did you receive my résumé? I sent it to you at least two months ago and haven't heard anything. I know you keep résumés on file, but I just want to be sure that you keep me in mind. I heard you are hiring health-care managers and certainly would like to be considered for one of those positions.

Since I last wrote you, I've worked in a variety of positions that have helped prepare me for management. To wit, I've become lunch manager at the restaurant where I work, which involved a raise in pay. I now manage a waitstaff of 12 and take the lunch receipts to the bank every day.

Of course, I'd much rather be working at a real job, and that's why I'm writing again. Is there anything else you would like to know about me or my background? I would really like to know more about your company. Is there any literature you could send me? If so, I would really appreciate it.

I think one reason I haven't been hired yet is that I don't want to leave Atlanta. So I hope when you think of me, it's for a position that wouldn't require moving. Thanks again for considering my application.

14-13. Career Management: Preparing for Interviews [**LO-2**] Google yourself, scour your social networking profiles, review your Twitter messages, and explore every other possible online source you can think of that might have something about you. If you find anything potentially embarrassing, remove it if possible. Write a summary of your search-and-destroy mission. (You can skip any embarrassing details in your report to your instructor!)

14-14. Career Management: Researching Target Employers [**LO-3**] Select a large company (one on which you can easily find information) where you might like to work. Use online sources to gather some preliminary research on the company; don't limit your search to the company's own website.

- What did you learn about this organization that would help you during an interview there?
- What sources did you use to obtain this information?
- Armed with this information, what aspects of your background do you think might appeal to this company's recruiters?
- If you choose to apply for a job with this company, what keywords would you include on your résumé? Why?

14-15. Career Management: Interviewing [**LO-3**] Prepare written answers to 10 of the questions listed in Table 14.4 on page 408.

14-16. Career Management: Interviewing [**LO-3**] Write a short email to your instructor discussing what you believe are your greatest strengths and weaknesses from an employment perspective. Next, explain how these strengths and weaknesses might be viewed by interviewers evaluating your qualifications.

14-17. Career Management: Interviewing; Collaboration: Team Projects [**LO-4**]**, Chapter 2** Divide the class into two groups. Half the class will be recruiters for a large department store chain that is looking to fill 15 manager-trainee positions. The other half of the class will be candidates for the job. The company is specifically looking for candidates who demonstrate these three qualities: initiative, dependability, and willingness to assume responsibility.

- Have each recruiter select and interview an applicant for 10 minutes.
- Have all the recruiters discuss how they assessed the applicant in each of the three desired qualities. What questions did they ask or what did they use as an indicator to determine whether the candidate possessed the quality?
- Have all the applicants discuss what they said to convince the recruiters that they possessed each of the three desired qualities.

14-18. Message Strategies: Employment Messages [**LO-5**] Revise this message so that it follows this chapter's guidelines.

Thank you for the really marvelous opportunity to meet you and your colleagues at Starret Engine Company. I really enjoyed touring your facilities and talking with all the people there. You have quite a crew! Some of the other companies I have visited have been so rigid and uptight that I can't imagine how I would fit in. It's a relief to run into a group of people who seem to enjoy their work as much as all of you do.

I know that you must be looking at many other candidates for this job, and I know that some of them will probably be more experienced than I am. But I do want to emphasize that my two-year hitch in the Navy involved a good deal of engineering work. I don't think I mentioned all my shipboard responsibilities during the interview.

Please give me a call within the next week to let me know your decision. You can usually find me at my dormitory in the evening after dinner (phone: 877-9080).

14-19. Message Strategies: Employment Messages [LO-5] Revise this message so that it follows this chapter's guidelines.

I have recently received a very attractive job offer from the Warrington Company. But before I let them know one way or another, I would like to consider any offer that your firm may extend. I was quite impressed with your company during my recent interview, and I am still very interested in a career there.

I don't mean to pressure you, but Warrington has asked for my decision within 10 days. Could you let me know by Tuesday whether you plan to offer me a position? That would give me enough time to compare the two offers.

14-20. Message Strategies: Employment Messages [LO-5] Revise this message so that it follows this chapter's guidelines.

I'm writing to say that I must decline your job offer. Another company has made me a more generous offer, and I have decided to accept. However, if things don't work out for me there, I will let you know. I sincerely appreciate your interest in me.

14-21. Message Strategies: Employment Messages, Communication Ethics: Resolving Ethical Dilemmas [LO-5], **Chapter 1** You have decided to accept a new position with a competitor of your company. Write a letter of resignation to your supervisor, announcing your decision. (Make up any information you need.) In an email message to your instructor, address the following questions:

- Will you notify your employer that you are joining a competing firm? Explain.
- Will you use the direct or indirect approach? Explain.
- Will you send your letter by email, place it on your supervisor's desk, or hand it to your supervisor personally?

Expand Your Skills

Critique the Professionals

Find an online video of a business professional being interviewed by a journalist. Using whatever medium your instructor requests, write a brief (no more than one page) assessment of the professional's performance and any tips you picked up that you could use in job interviews.

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online

Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search, at **websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com**, is a unique research tool designed specifically for business communication research. Use the Web Search function to find a website, video, article, podcast, or presentation that offers advice on successful interviewing techniques. Write a brief email message to your instructor or a post for your class blog, describing the item that you found and summarizing the career skills information you learned from it.

Cases

For all cases, feel free to use your creativity to make up any details you need in order to craft effective messages.

Application Letters

VIDEO SKILLS

14-22. Media Skills: Video; Message Strategies: Employment Messages [LO-1] With its encouragement of video applications and abandonment of traditional job postings, Zappos might be starting a mini trend toward a new style of employment application.

Your task: Identify a company where you would like to work and assume that it encourages candidates to submit video introductions. Plan, record, and produce a short video (no longer than three minutes) that you might submit to this employer. Don't worry too much about fancy production quality, but make sure your content and presentation match the company's style and brand image.

EMAIL SKILLS

14-23. Message Strategies: Employment Messages [LO-1] Use one of the websites listed in Table 13.1 on page 364 to find a job opening in your target profession. If you haven't narrowed down to one career field yet, choose a business job for which you will have at least some qualifications at the time of your graduation.

Your task: Write an email message that would serve as your application letter if you were to apply for this job. Base your message on your actual qualifications for the position, and be sure to "echo" the requirements listed in the job description. Include the job description in your email message when you submit it to your instructor.

MICROBLOGGING SKILLS

14-24. Message Strategies: Employment Messages [LO-1] If you want to know whether job candidates can express themselves clearly on Twitter, why not test them as part of the application process? That's exactly what the Minneapolis advertising agency Campbell Mithun does. Rather than having intern candidates use conventional application methods, the company asks them to tweet their applications in 13 messages.[42]

Your task: Find a job opening on Twitter by searching on any of the following hashtags: #hiring, #joblisting, or #nowhiring.[43] Next, write an "application letter" comprising 13 individual tweets (each 140 characters maximum). If your class is set up with private Twitter accounts, go ahead and send the tweets. Otherwise, email them to your instructor or post them on your class blog, as your instructor indicates.

EMAIL SKILLS

14-25. Message Strategies: Employment Messages [LO-1] Finding job openings that align perfectly with your professional interests is wonderful, but it doesn't always happen. Sometimes you have to widen your search and go after whatever opportunities happen to be available. Even when the opportunity is not ideal, however, you still need to approach the employer with enthusiasm and a focused, audience-centric message.

Your task: Find a job opening for which you will be qualified when you graduate (or close to being qualified, for the purposes of this activity), but make it one that is outside your primary field of interest. Write an email application letter for this opening, making a compelling case that you are the right candidate for this job.

Interviewing

BLOGGING SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

14-26. Career Management: Researching Target Employers [LO-3] Research is a critical element of the job-search process. With information in hand, you increase the chance of finding the right opportunity (and avoiding bad choices), and you impress interviewers in multiple ways by demonstrating initiative, curiosity, research and analysis skills, an appreciation for the complex challenges of running a business, and willingness to work to achieve results.

Your task: With a small team of classmates, use online job listings to identify an intriguing job opening that at least one member of the team would seriously consider pursuing as graduation approaches. (You'll find it helpful if the career is related to at least one team member's college major or on-the-job experience so that the team can benefit from some knowledge of the profession in question.) Next, research the company, its competitors, its markets, and this specific position to identify five questions that would (1) help the team member decide whether this is a good opportunity and (2) show an interviewer that you've really done your homework. Go beyond the basic and obvious questions to identify current, specific, and complex issues that only deep research can uncover. For example, is the company facing significant technical, financial, legal, or regulatory challenges that threaten its ability to grow or perhaps even survive in the long term? Or is the market evolving in a way that positions this particular company for dramatic growth? In a post for your class blog, list your five questions, identify how you uncovered the issue, and explain why each is significant.

TEAM SKILLS

14-27. Career Management: Interviewing [LO-4] Interviewing is a skill that can be improved through observation and practice.

Your task: You and all other members of your class are to write letters of application for an entry-level or management-trainee position that requires an engaging personality and intelligence but a minimum of specialized education or experience. Sign your letter with a fictitious name that conceals your identity. Next, polish (or create) a résumé that accurately identifies you and your educational and professional accomplishments.

Now, three members of the class who volunteer as interviewers divide up all the anonymously written application letters. Then each interviewer selects a candidate who seems the most convincing in his or her letter. At this time, the selected candidates identify themselves and give the interviewers their résumés.

Each interviewer then interviews his or her chosen candidate in front of the class, seeking to understand how the items on the résumé qualify the candidate for the job. At the end of the interviews, the class decides who gets the job and discusses why this candidate was successful. Afterward, retrieve your letter, sign it with the right name, and submit it to the instructor for credit.

TEAM SKILLS

14-28. Career Management: Interviewing [LO-4] Select a company in an industry in which you might like to work and then identify an interesting position within the company. Study the company and prepare for an interview with that company.

Your task: Working with a classmate, take turns interviewing each other for your chosen positions. Interviewers should take notes during the interview. When the interview is complete, critique each other's performance. (Interviewers should critique how well candidates prepared for the interview and answered the questions; interviewees should critique the quality of the questions asked.) Write a follow-up letter thanking your interviewer and submit the letter to your instructor.

Following Up After an Interview

LETTER-WRITING SKILLS

14-29. Message Strategies: Employment Messages [LO-5] Because of a mix-up in your job application scheduling, you accidentally applied for your third-choice job before going after the one you really wanted. What you want to do is work in retail marketing with the upscale department store Neiman Marcus in Dallas; what you have been offered is a job with Longhorn Leather and Lumber, 65 miles away in the small town of Commerce, Texas.

You review your notes. Your Longhorn interview was three weeks ago with the human resources manager, R. P. Bronson, who has just written to offer you the position. The store's address is 27 Sam Rayburn Drive, Commerce, TX 75428. Mr. Bronson notes that he can hold the position open for 10 days. You have an interview scheduled with Neiman Marcus next week, but it is unlikely that you will know the store's decision within this 10-day period.

Your task: Write to Mr. Bronson, requesting a reasonable delay in your consideration of his job offer.

LETTER-WRITING SKILLS/EMAIL SKILLS

14-30. Message Strategies: Employment Messages [LO-5] Fortunately for you, your interview with Neiman Marcus (see the previous case) went well, and you've just received a job offer from the company.

Your task: Write a letter to R. P. Bronson at Longhorn Leather and Lumber, declining his job offer, and write an email message to Clarissa Bartle at Neiman Marcus, accepting her job offer. Make up any information you need when accepting the Neiman Marcus offer.

LETTER-WRITING SKILLS

14-31. Message Strategies: Employment Messages (Letters of Resignation) [LO-5] Leaving a job is rarely stress free, but it's particularly difficult when you are parting ways with a mentor who played an important role in advancing your career. A half-dozen years into your career, you have benefited greatly from the advice, encouragement, and professional connections offered by your mentor, who also happens to be your current boss. She seemed to believe in your potential from the beginning and went out of her way on numerous occasions to help you. You returned the favor by becoming a stellar employee who has made important contributions to the success of the department your boss leads.

Unfortunately, you find yourself at a career impasse. You believe you are ready to move into a management position, but your company is not growing enough to create many opportunities. Worse yet, you joined the firm during a period of rapid expansion, so there are many eager and qualified internal candidates at your career level interested in the few managerial jobs that do become available. You fear it may be years before you get the chance to move up in the company. Through your online networking activities, you found an opportunity with a firm in another industry and have decided to pursue it.

Your task: You have a close relationship with your boss, so you will announce your intention to leave the company in a private, one-on-one conversation. However, you also recognize the need to write a formal letter of resignation, which you will hand to your boss during this meeting. This letter is addressed to your boss, but as formal business correspondence that will become part of your personnel file, it should not be a "personal" letter. Making up whatever details you need, write a brief letter of resignation.

Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

You can download the text of this assignment from **real-timeupdates.com/bce8**; select Student Assignments and then select Chapter 14. Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage.

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Vocabulary

Review Sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 in the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage. For the following items, indicate the correct word provided in parentheses.

14-32. Everyone (accept/except) Barbara King has registered for the company competition.

14-33. We need to find a new security (device/devise).

14-34. The Jennings are (loath/loathe) to admit that they are wrong.

14-35. The judge has ruled that this town cannot enforce such a local (ordinance/ordnance).

14-36. To stay on schedule, we must give (precedence/precedents) to the Marley project.

14-37. This month's balance is greater (than/then) last month's.

14-38. That decision lies with the director, (who's/whose) in charge of this department.

For the following items, correct any errors you find:

14-39. In this department, we see alot of mistakes like that.

14-40. In my judgement, you'll need to redo the cover.

14-41. He decided to reveal the information, irregardless of the consequences.

14-42. Why not go along when it is so easy to accomodate his demands?

14-43. When you say that, do you mean to infer that I'm being unfair?

14-44. She says that she finds this sort of ceremony embarassing.

14-45. All we have to do is try and get along with him for a few more days.

14-46. A friendly handshake should always preceed negotiations.

Level 2: Workplace Applications

The following items may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. Rewrite each sentence, correcting all errors. If a sentence has no errors, write "Correct" for that number.

14-47. An entrepreneur and their business, are so closely tied together that a bank will want to see how they handle their personal affairs, before granting a small business line of credit.

14-48. The companys' annual meeting will be held from 2–4 PM on May 3d in the Santa Fe room at the Marriott hotel.

14-49. Well over four hundred outstanding students from coast-to-coast, have realized their dreams of a college education thanks to the NASE Scholarship program.

14-50. If you're home is you're principle place of business you can deduct generally the cost of traveling from you're home, to any business destination.

14-51. Companies like McLeod USA sprung into being in the 1990's to provide cut rate phone services to small- and medium-size businesses in competition with the established baby bells.

14-52. Some question whether a 'new economy' exists and if so how it differs from the old economy?

14-53. When the music industry claimed by stealing intellectual property Napster were committing piracy Napster argued that it was'nt doing anything illegal or un-ethical.

14-54. The World Bank plays an important roll in todays fast changing closely-meshed global economy.

14-55. When it comes to consumer rights the F.D.A., F.T.C., and Agriculture department are concerned not only with safety but also accurate information.

14-56. Fujitsu, a $35 billion company with 160,000 employees, dominates the Japanese computer industry.

14-57. The fortune 500 ranks not only corporations by size but also offers brief company descriptions; along with industry statistics, and additional measures of corporate performance.

14-58. Having bought 55 companies over the past decade, plans to make ten to 15 new acquisitions each year are being made by Cisco Systems.

14-59. In 1984 Michael Dell decided to sell P.C.'s direct and built to order, before long everyone in the industry it seemed like was trying to imitate Dells' strategy.

14-60. Resulting in large cost savings for the company, American Express have reduced the number of field office's from 85 to 7 by using virtual teams.

14-61. In Europe and Asia, people were the first to use mobile phones to send text messages to other users; exchange email; read the morning news; surf websites; and to make purchases such as movie tickets and charge it to they're monthly phone bill.

Level 3: Document Critique

The following document may contain errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, number style, word division, and vocabulary. As your instructor indicates, photocopy this page and correct all errors using standard proofreading marks (see Appendix C) or download the document and make the corrections in your word-processing software.

Morgan Mitras
2397 Glencrest ridge, Fort Worth, TEX 76119
(817/ 226-1804)
February 2 2019:
Norton Acctg. Group
Ms Nancy Remington, Human Resources
3778 Parkway North
Indianapolis, Indiana 46205

Dear Ms. Remington—

With your companys' reputation for quality, customer service, employee empowerment, you'll will want to hire someone who is not only accurrate and efficient but also self motivated and results-oriented—someone who is able to make decisions as well as coperate with team members and clients. The ad you placed in the February 1st issue of The Wall Street Journal for someone to fill a financial management position really has me very excited and eager.

During my 3 years at Tandy corporation see attached résumé I've conducted internal auditing for accounts valued at $450 million dollars. Some of my many, countless accomplishments include

- Increasing both internal and client support for the auditing process
- I save the company over 2.5 million dollars when I discovered billing errors
- Suggest ways accounts receivable processes could be streamlined

In addition it might be that Norton Accounting may appreciate my ability to complete projects on time as well as keeping them under budget. One of my priorities is a position in which my expereince will be broaden: so any opportunity to travel would be welcomed by me!

I'll be in your area during the weak of February 20; I'll call your office on Feb. 8 to see whether we can arrange to meet. I hope you'll give me a chance, please.

Sincerely,

Morgan Mitras,

Applicant

MyLab Business Communication

Go to **www.pearson.com/mylab/business-communication** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

14-62. How can you prepare for a situational or behavioral interview if you have no experience with the job for which you are interviewing? [LO-2]

14-63. Why are the questions you ask during an interview as important as the answers you give to the interviewer's questions? [LO-3]

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A Format and Layout of Business Documents

The format and layout of business documents vary from country to country. In addition, many organizations develop their own variations of standard styles, adapting documents to the types of messages they send and the kinds of audiences they communicate with. The formats described here are the most common approaches used in U.S. business correspondence, but be sure to follow whatever practices are expected at your company.

First Impressions

Your documents tell readers a lot about you and about your company's professionalism. So all your documents must look neat, present a professional image, and be easy to read. Your audience's first impression of a document comes from the quality of its paper, the way it is customized, and its general appearance.

PAPER

To give a quality impression, businesspeople consider carefully the paper they use. Several aspects of paper contribute to the overall impression:

- **Weight.** Paper quality is judged by the weight of four reams (each a 500-sheet package) of letter-size paper. The weight most commonly used by U.S. business organizations is 20-pound paper, but 16- and 24-pound versions are also used.
- **Cotton content.** Paper quality is also judged by the percentage of cotton in the paper. Cotton doesn't yellow over time the way wood pulp does, plus it's both strong and soft. For letters and outside reports, use paper with a 25 percent cotton content. For memos and other internal documents, you can use a lighter-weight paper with lower cotton content. Airmail-weight paper may save money for international correspondence, but make sure it isn't too flimsy.[1]
- **Size.** In the United States, the standard paper size for business documents is 8½ by 11 inches. Standard legal documents are 8½ by 14 inches. Executives sometimes have heavier 7-by-10-inch paper on hand (with matching envelopes) for personal messages such as congratulations.[2] They may also have a box of note cards imprinted with their initials and a box of plain folded notes for condolences or for acknowledging formal invitations.
- **Color.** White is the standard color for business purposes, although neutral colors such as gray and ivory are sometimes used. Memos can be produced on pastel-colored paper to distinguish them from external correspondence. In addition, memos are sometimes produced on paper of various colors for routing to separate departments. Light-colored papers are appropriate, but bright or dark colors make reading difficult and may seem too frivolous.

CUSTOMIZATION

For letters to outsiders, U.S. businesses commonly use letterhead stationery, which may be either professionally printed or designed in-house using word-processing templates and graphics. Letterhead typically contains the company name, logo, address, telephone and fax numbers, general email address, website URL, and possibly one or more social media URLs.

In the United States, businesses always use letterhead for the first page of a letter. Successive pages are usually plain sheets of paper that match the letterhead in color and quality. Some companies use a specially printed second-page letterhead that bears only the company's name.

APPEARANCE

Nearly all business documents are produced using an ink-jet or laser printer; make sure to use a clean, high-quality printer. Certain documents, however, should be handwritten (such as a short informal memo or a note of condolence). Be sure to handwrite, print, or type the envelope to match the document. However, even a letter on the best-quality paper with the best-designed letterhead may look unprofessional if it's poorly produced. So pay close attention to all the factors affecting appearance, including the following:

- **Margins.** Business letters typically use 1-inch margins at the top, bottom, and sides of the page, although these parameters are sometimes adjusted to accommodate letterhead elements.
- **Justification.** For all routine business documents, all lines (body text and headings) should be left-justified.
- **Character spacing.** Use proper spacing between characters and after punctuation. For example, U.S. conventions include leaving one space after commas, semicolons, colons, and sentence-ending periods. Each letter in a person's initials is followed by a period and a

single space. However, abbreviations such as U.S.A. or MBA may or may not have periods, but they never have internal spaces.

- **Special symbols.** Take advantage of the many special symbols available with your computer's selection of fonts. In addition, see whether your company has a style guide for documents, which may include particular symbols you are expected to use.
- **Corrections.** Messy corrections are unacceptable in business documents. If you notice an error after printing a document with your word processor, correct the mistake and reprint. (With informal memos to members of your own team or department, the occasional small correction in pen or pencil is acceptable, but never in formal documents.)

Letters

All business letters have certain elements in common. Several of these elements appear in every letter; others appear only when desirable or appropriate. In addition, these letter parts are usually arranged in one of three basic formats.

STANDARD LETTER PARTS

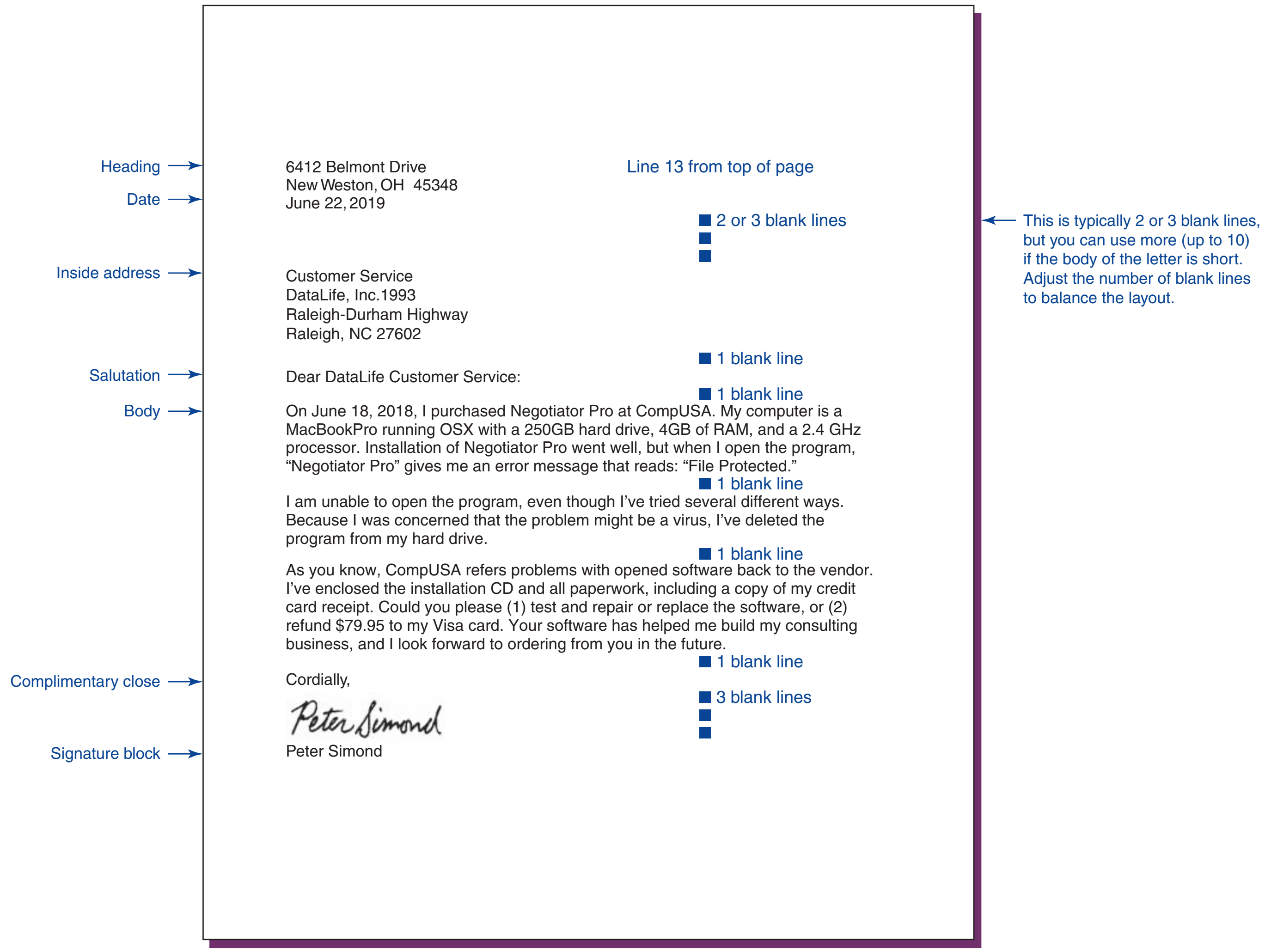
The letter in Figure A.1 shows the placement of standard letter parts. The writer of this business letter had no letterhead available but correctly included a heading. All business letters typically include these seven elements.

Heading

The elements of the letterhead make up the heading of a letter in most cases. If letterhead stationery is not available, the heading includes a return address (but no name) and starts 13 lines from the top of the page, which leaves a 2-inch top margin.

Date

If you're using letterhead, place the date at least one blank line beneath the lowest part of the letterhead. Without letterhead, place the date immediately below the return address. The standard method of writing the date in the United States uses the full name of the month (no abbreviations), followed by the day (in numerals, without *st*, *nd*, *rd*, or *th*), a comma, and then the year: July 31, 2019 (7/31/2019). Many other countries use other formats



6412 Belmont Drive
New Weston, OH 45348
June 22, 2019

Customer Service
DataLife, Inc.1993
Raleigh-Durham Highway
Raleigh, NC 27602

Dear DataLife Customer Service:

On June 18, 2018, I purchased Negotiator Pro at CompUSA. My computer is a MacBookPro running OSX with a 250GB hard drive, 4GB of RAM, and a 2.4 GHz processor. Installation of Negotiator Pro went well, but when I open the program, "Negotiator Pro" gives me an error message that reads: "File Protected."

I am unable to open the program, even though I've tried several different ways. Because I was concerned that the problem might be a virus, I've deleted the program from my hard drive.

As you know, CompUSA refers problems with opened software back to the vendor. I've enclosed the installation CD and all paperwork, including a copy of my credit card receipt. Could you please (1) test and repair or replace the software, or (2) refund $79.95 to my Visa card. Your software has helped me build my consulting business, and I look forward to ordering from you in the future.

Cordially,

Peter Simond

Peter Simond

Figure A.1 Standard Letter Parts

TABLE A.1 Common Date Forms

Convention	Order	Examples
U.S. standard	Month day year	July 31, 2019 7/31/2019 7-31-2019
Japan	Year month day	19/07/31
Europe (most countries)	Day month year	31 July 2019 31/07/19 31.07.19
International (ISO) format	Year month day	2019-07-31

(see Table A.1), which can create confusion in international correspondence. To avoid misinterpretation in such cases, spell out the month.[3]

Inside Address

The inside address identifies the recipient of the letter. For U.S. correspondence, begin the inside address at least one line below the date. Precede the addressee's name with a courtesy title, such as *Dr.*, *Mr.*, or *Ms.* The accepted courtesy title for women in business is *Ms.*, although a woman known to prefer the title *Miss* or *Mrs.* is always accommodated. If you don't know whether a person is a man or a woman (and you have no way of finding out), omit the courtesy title. For example, *Terry Smith* could be either a man or a woman. The first line of the inside address would be just *Terry Smith*, and the salutation would be *Dear Terry Smith*. The same is true if you know only a person's initials, as in *S. J. Adams*.

Spell out and capitalize titles that precede a person's name, such as *Professor* or *General* (see Table A.2 on the next page for the proper forms of address). The person's organizational title, such as *Director*, may be included on this first line (if it is short) or on the line below; the name of a department may follow. In addresses and signature lines, don't forget to capitalize any professional title that follows a person's name:

Mr. Ray Johnson, Dean
Ms. Patricia T. Higgins
Assistant Vice President

However, professional titles not appearing in an address or signature line are capitalized only when they directly precede the name:

President Kenneth Johanson will deliver the speech.

Maria Morales, president of ABC Enterprises, will deliver the speech.

The Honorable Helen Masters, senator from Arizona, will deliver the speech.

If the name of a specific person is unavailable, you may address the letter to the department or to a specific position within the department. Also, be sure to spell out company names in full, unless the company itself uses abbreviations in its official name.

Other address information includes the treatment of buildings, house numbers, and compass directions (see Table A.3 on the next page). The following example shows all the information that may be included in the inside address and its proper order for U.S. correspondence:

Ms. Linda Coolidge, Vice President
Corporate Planning Department
Midwest Airlines
Kowalski Building, Suite 21-A
7279 Bristol Ave.
Toledo, OH 43617

Canadian addresses are similar, except that the name of the province is usually spelled out:

Dr. H. C. Armstrong
Research and Development
Commonwealth Mining Consortium
The Chelton Building, Suite 301
585 Second St. SW
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2P5

The order and layout of address information vary from country to country. So when addressing correspondence for other countries, carefully follow the format and information that appear in the company's letterhead. However, when you're sending mail from the United States, be sure that the name of the destination country appears on the last line of the address in capital letters. Use the English version of the country name so that your mail is routed from the United States to the right country. Then, to be sure your mail is routed correctly within the destination country, use the foreign spelling of the city name (using the characters

TABLE A.2 Forms of Address

Person	In Address	In Salutation
Personal Titles		
Man	Mr. [first & last name]	Dear Mr. [last name]:
Woman*	Ms. [first & last name]	Dear Ms. [last name]:
Two men (or more)	Mr. [first & last name] and Mr. [first & last name]	Dear Mr. [last name] and Mr. [last name] *or* Messrs. [last name] and [last name]:
Two women (or more)	Ms. [first & last name] and Ms. [first & last name]	Dear Ms. [last name] and Ms. [last name] *or* Mses. [last name] and [last name]:
One woman and one man	Ms. [first & last name] and Mr. [first & last name]	Dear Ms. [last name] and Mr. [last name]:
Couple (married with same last name)	Mr. [husband's first name] and Mrs. [wife's first name] [couple's last name]	Dear Mr. and Mrs. [last name]:
Couple (married with different last names)	Mr. [first & last name of husband] Ms. [first & last name of wife]	Dear Mr. [husband's last name] and Ms. [wife's last name]:
Couple (married professionals with same title and same last name)	[title in plural form] [husband's first name] and [wife's first name] [couple's last name]	Dear [title in plural form] [last name]:
Couple (married professionals with different titles and same last name)	[title] [first & last name of husband] and [title] [first & last name of wife]	Dear [title] and [title] [last name]:
Professional Titles		
President of a college or university	[title] [first & last name], President	Dear President [last name]:
Dean of a school or college	Dean [first & last name] *or* Dr., Mr., *or* Ms. [first & last name], Dean of [title]	Dear Dean [last name]: *or* Dear Dr., Mr., *or* Ms. [last name]:
Professor	Professor *or* Dr. [first & last name]	Dear Professor *or* Dr. [last name]:
Physician	[first & last name], M.D.	Dear Dr. [last name]:
Lawyer	Mr. *or* Ms. [first & last name], Attorney at Law	Dear Mr. *or* Ms. [last name]:
Military personnel	[full rank, first & last name, abbreviation of service designation] (add *Retired* if applicable)	Dear [rank] [last name]:
Company or corporation	[name of organization]	Ladies and Gentlemen: *or* Gentlemen and Ladies:
Governmental Titles		
President of the United States	The President	Dear Mr. *or* Madam President:
Senator of the United States	The Honorable [first & last name]	Dear Senator [last name]:
Cabinet member	The Honorable [first & last name]	Dear Mr. *or* Madam Secretary:
Attorney General	The Honorable [first & last name]	Dear Mr. *or* Madam Attorney General:
Mayor	The Honorable [first & last name], Mayor of [name of city]	Dear Mayor [last name]:
Judge	The Honorable [first & last name]	Dear Judge [last name]:

*Use *Mrs.* or *Miss* only if the recipient has specifically requested that you use one of these titles; otherwise *always* use *Ms.* in business correspondence. Also, never refer to a married woman by her husband's name (for example, Mrs. Robert Washington) unless she specifically requests that you do so.

TABLE A.3 Inside Address Information

Description	Example
Capitalize building names.	Empire State Building
Capitalize locations within buildings (apartments, suites, rooms).	Suite 1073
Use numerals for all house or building numbers, except the number one.	One Trinity Lane; 637 Adams Ave., Apt. 7
Spell out compass directions that fall within a street address.	1074 West Connover St.
Abbreviate compass directions that follow the street address.	783 Main St., N.E., Apt. 27

and diacritical marks that would be commonly used in the region). For example, the following address uses *Köln* instead of *Cologne*:

R. Veith, Director	Addressee
Eisfieren Glaswerk	Company name
Blaubachstrasse 13	Street address
Postfach 10 80 07	Post office road
D-5000 Köln I	District, city
GERMANY	Country

Be sure to use organizational titles correctly when addressing international correspondence. Job designations vary around the world. In England, for example, a managing director is often what a U.S. company would call its chief executive officer or president, and a British deputy is the equivalent of a vice president. In France, responsibilities are assigned to individuals without regard to title or organizational structure, and in China the title *project manager* has meaning, but the title *sales manager* may not.

In addition, be aware that businesspeople in some countries sign correspondence without their names typed below.

In Germany, for example, the belief is that employees represent the company, so it's inappropriate to emphasize personal names.[4]

REAL-TIME UPDATES
LEARN MORE BY VISITING THIS WEBSITE

Addressing international correspondence

The Universal Postal Union offers examples for most countries around the world. Go to **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Learn More in the Students section.

Salutation

In the salutation of your letter, follow the style of the first line of the inside address. If the first line is a person's name, the salutation is *Dear Mr.* or *Ms. Name*. The formality of the salutation depends on your relationship with the addressee. If in conversation you would say "Mary," your letter's salutation should be *Dear Mary*, followed by a colon. Otherwise, include the courtesy title and last name, followed by a colon. Presuming to write *Dear Lewis* instead of *Dear Professor Chang* demonstrates a disrespectful familiarity that the recipient will probably resent.

If the first line of the inside address is a position title such as *Director of Personnel*, then use *Dear Director*. If the addressee is unknown, use a polite description, such as *Dear Alumnus*, *Dear SPCA Supporter*, or *Dear Voter*. If the first line is plural (a department or company), then use *Ladies and Gentlemen* (look again at Table A.2). When you do not know whether you're writing to an individual or a group (for example, when writing a reference or a letter of recommendation), use *To whom it may concern*.

In the United States some letter writers use a "salutopening" on the salutation line. A salutopening omits *Dear* but includes the first few words of the opening paragraph along with the recipient's name. After this line, the sentence continues a double space below as part of the body of the letter, as in these examples:

Thank you, Mr. Brown, for your prompt payment of your bill.	Salutopening
Your payment of $88.13 was received on January 24, 2019.	Body

Whether your salutation is informal or formal, be especially careful that names are spelled correctly. A misspelled name is glaring evidence of carelessness, and it belies the personal interest you're trying to express.

Body

The body of the letter is your message. Almost all letters are single-spaced, with one blank line before and after the salutation or salutopening, between paragraphs, and before the complimentary close. The body may include indented lists, entire paragraphs indented for emphasis, and even subheadings. If it does, all similar elements should be treated in the same way. Your department or company may select a format to use for all letters.

Complimentary Close

The complimentary close begins on the second line below the body of the letter. Alternatives for wording are available, but the current trend seems to be toward one-word closes, such as *Sincerely* and *Cordially*. In any case, the complimentary close reflects the relationship between you and the person you're writing to. Avoid cute closes, such as *Yours for bigger profits*. If your audience doesn't know you well, your sense of humor may be misunderstood.

Signature Block

Leave three blank lines for a written signature below the complimentary close, and then include the sender's name (unless it appears in the letterhead). The person's title may appear on the same line as the name or on the line below:

Cordially,

Raymond Dunnigan
Director of Personnel

Your letterhead indicates that you're representing your company. However, if your letter is on plain paper or runs to a second page, you may want to emphasize that you're speaking legally for the company. The accepted way of doing that is to place the company's name in capital letters, a double space below the complimentary close, and then include the sender's name and title four lines below that:

Sincerely,
WENTWORTH INDUSTRIES

Helen B. Taylor
President

If your name could be taken for either a man's or a woman's, a courtesy title indicating gender should be included, with or without parentheses. Also, women who prefer a particular courtesy title should include it:

Mrs. Nancy Winters
(Ms.) Juana Flores
Ms. Pat Li
(Mr.) Jamie Saunders

ADDITIONAL LETTER PARTS

Letters vary greatly in subject matter and thus in the identifying information they need and the format they adopt. The letter in Figure A.2 shows how these additional parts should be arranged. The following elements may be used in any combination, depending on the requirements of the particular letter:

- **Addressee notation.** Letters that have a restricted readership or that must be handled in a special way should include such addressee notations as *PERSONAL*, *CONFIDENTIAL*, or *PLEASE FORWARD*. This sort of notation appears a double space above the inside address, in all-capital letters.
- **Attention line.** Although not commonly used today, an attention line can be used if you know only the last name of the person you're writing to. It can also direct a letter to a position title or department. Place the attention line on the first line of the inside address and put the company name on the second.[5] Match the address on the envelope with the style of the inside address. An attention line may take any of the following forms or variants of them:

  Attention Dr. McHenry
  Attention Director of Marketing
  Attention Marketing Department

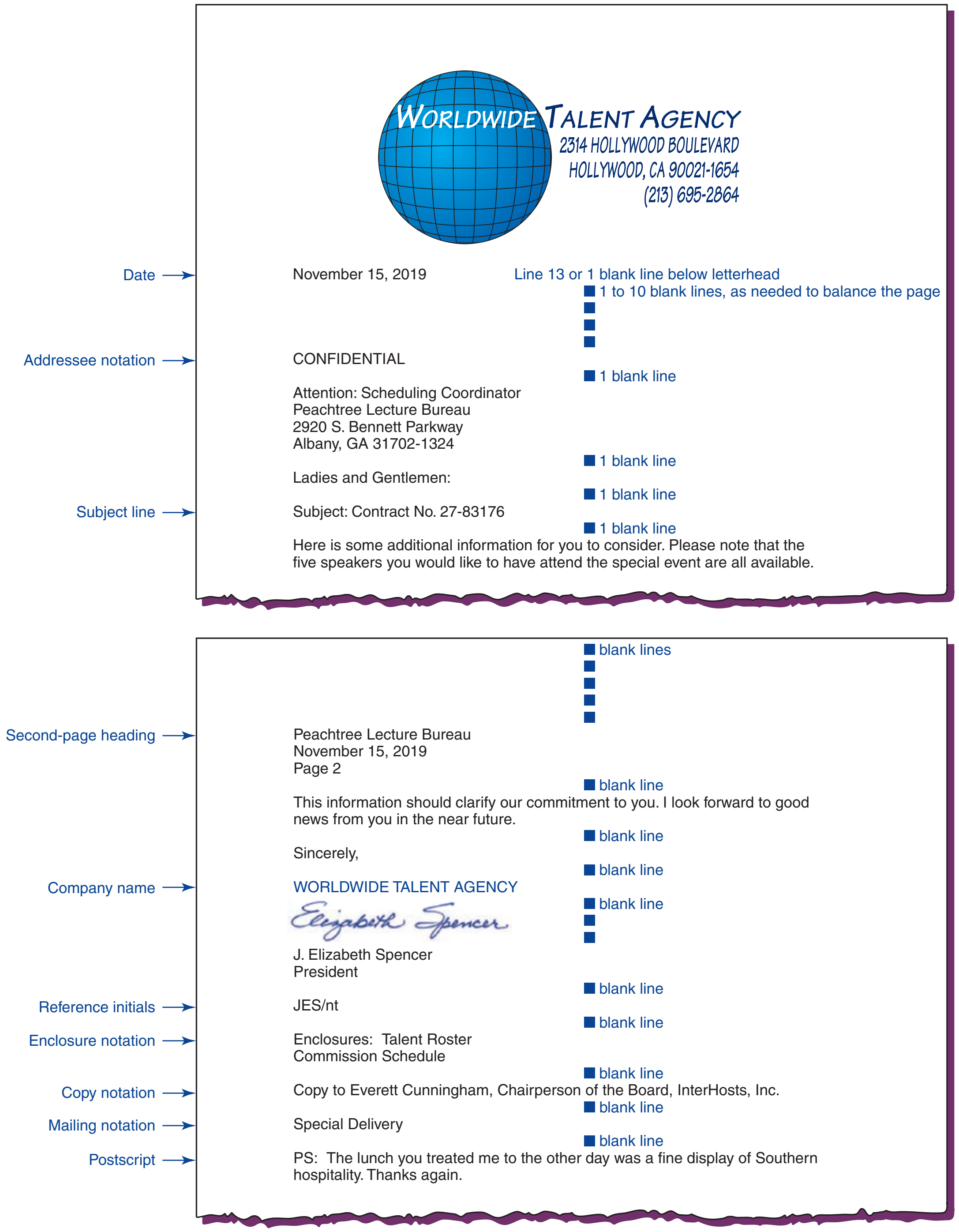
- **Subject line.** The subject line tells recipients at a glance what the letter is about (and indicates where to file the letter for future reference). It usually appears below the salutation, either against the left margin, indented (as a paragraph in the body), or centered. It can be placed above the salutation or at the very top of the page, and it can be underscored. Some businesses omit the word *Subject*, and some organizations replace it with *Re:* or *In re:* (meaning "concerning" or "in the matter of"). The subject line may take a variety of forms, including the following:

  Subject: RainMaster Sprinklers
  Re: About your February 1, 2019, order
  In re: Fall 2019 Sales Meeting
  Reference Order No. 27920

- **Second-page heading.** Use a second-page heading whenever an additional page is required. Some companies have second-page letterhead (with the company name and address on one line and in a smaller typeface). The heading bears the name (person or organization) from the first line of the inside address, the page number, the date, and perhaps a reference number. Leave two blank lines before the body. Make sure that at least two lines of a continued paragraph appear on the first and second pages. Never allow the closing lines to appear alone on a continued page. Precede the complimentary close or signature lines with at least two lines of the body. Also, don't hyphenate the last word on a page. All the following are acceptable forms for second-page headings:

  Ms. Melissa Baker
  May 10, 2019
  Page 2
  Ms. Melissa Baker, May 10, 2019, Page 2
  Ms. Melissa Baker-2-May 10, 2019

- **Company name.** If you include the company's name in the signature block, put it a double space below the complimentary close. You usually include the company's name in the signature block only when the writer is serving as the company's official spokesperson or when letterhead has not been used.
- **Reference initials.** When one person dictates a letter and another person produces it, optional *reference initials* show who helped prepare it. Place these initials at the left margin, a double space below the signature block, using one of the following forms: *RSR/sm*, *RSR:sm*, or *RSR:SM* (writer/preparer). See "JES/nt" in Figure A.2 for an example. When the signature block includes the writer's name, some companies use only the preparer's initials. When the writer and the signer are different people, you can include both their initials as well as the typist's: *JFS/RSR/sm* (signer/writer/preparer).


WORLDWIDE TALENT AGENCY
2314 HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD
HOLLYWOOD, CA 90021-1654
(213) 695-2864

November 15, 2019

CONFIDENTIAL

Attention: Scheduling Coordinator
Peachtree Lecture Bureau
2920 S. Bennett Parkway
Albany, GA 31702-1324

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Subject: Contract No. 27-83176

Here is some additional information for you to consider. Please note that the five speakers you would like to have attend the special event are all available.

Peachtree Lecture Bureau
November 15, 2019
Page 2

This information should clarify our commitment to you. I look forward to good news from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

WORLDWIDE TALENT AGENCY

Elizabeth Spencer

J. Elizabeth Spencer
President

JES/nt

Enclosures: Talent Roster
Commission Schedule

Copy to Everett Cunningham, Chairperson of the Board, InterHosts, Inc.

Special Delivery

PS: The lunch you treated me to the other day was a fine display of Southern hospitality. Thanks again.

Figure A.2 **Additional Letter Parts**

- **Enclosure notation.** Enclosure notations appear at the bottom of a letter, one or two lines below the reference initials. Some common forms include the following:

> Enclosure
>
> Enclosures (2)
>
> Enclosures: Résumé
Photograph
Brochure

- **Copy notation.** Copy notations may follow reference initials or enclosure notations. They indicate who's receiving a *courtesy copy* (*cc*). Recipients are listed in order of rank or (rank being equal) in alphabetical order. Among the forms used are the following:

> cc: David Wentworth, Vice President
>
> Copy to Hans Vogel
>
> 748 Chesterton Road
>
> Snohomish, WA 98290

- **Mailing notation.** You may place a mailing notation (such as *Special Delivery* or *Registered Mail*) at the bottom of the letter, after reference initials or enclosure notations (whichever is last) and before copy notations. Or you may place it at the top of the letter, either above the inside address on the left side or just below the date on the right side. For greater visibility, mailing notations may appear in capital letters.
- **Postscript.** A postscript is presented as an afterthought to the letter, a message that requires emphasis, or a personal note. It is usually the last thing on any letter and may be preceded by *P.S.*, *PS.*, *PS:*, or nothing at all. A second afterthought would be designated *P.P.S.* (post postscript).

LETTER FORMATS

A letter format is the way of arranging all the basic letter parts. Sometimes a company adopts a certain format as its policy; sometimes the individual letter writer or preparer is allowed to choose the most appropriate format. In the United States, three major letter formats are commonly used:

- **Block format.** Each letter part begins at the left margin. The main advantage is quick and efficient preparation (see Figure A.3).
- **Modified block format.** Same as block format, except that the date, complimentary close, and signature block start near the center of the page (see Figure A.4). The modified

Delauny Music
56 Commerce Circle • Davenport, IA 52806
(563) 555-4001•delaunymusic.net

June 21, 2019 — Line 13 or one line below letterhead
■ 1 to 10 blank lines, as needed to balance the page
■

Ms. Claudia Banks
122 River Heights Drive
Bettendorf, IA 52722

■ 1 blank line

Dear Ms. Banks:

■ 1 blank line

Thank you for your recent purchase. We wish you many years of satisfaction with your new Yamaha CG1 grand piano. The CG1 carries more than a century of Yamaha's heritage in design and production of world-class musical instruments and will give you many years of playing and listening pleasure.

■ 1 blank line

Our commitment to your satisfaction doesn't stop with your purchase, however. As a vital first step, please remember to call us sometime within three to eight months after your piano was delivered to take advantage of the Yamaha Servicebond℠ Assurance Program. This free service program includes a thorough evaluation and adjustment of the instrument after you've had some time to play your piano and your piano has had time to adapt to its environment.

■ 1 blank line

In addition to this important service appointment, a regular program of tuning is essential to ensure your piano's impeccable performance. Our piano specialists recommend four tunings during the first year and two tunings every year thereafter. As your local Yamaha dealer, we are ideally positioned to provide you with optimum service for both regular tuning and any maintenance or repair needs you may have.

■ 1 blank line

Sincerely,

■ 3 blank lines
■
■

Madeline Delauny

Madeline Delauny
Owner

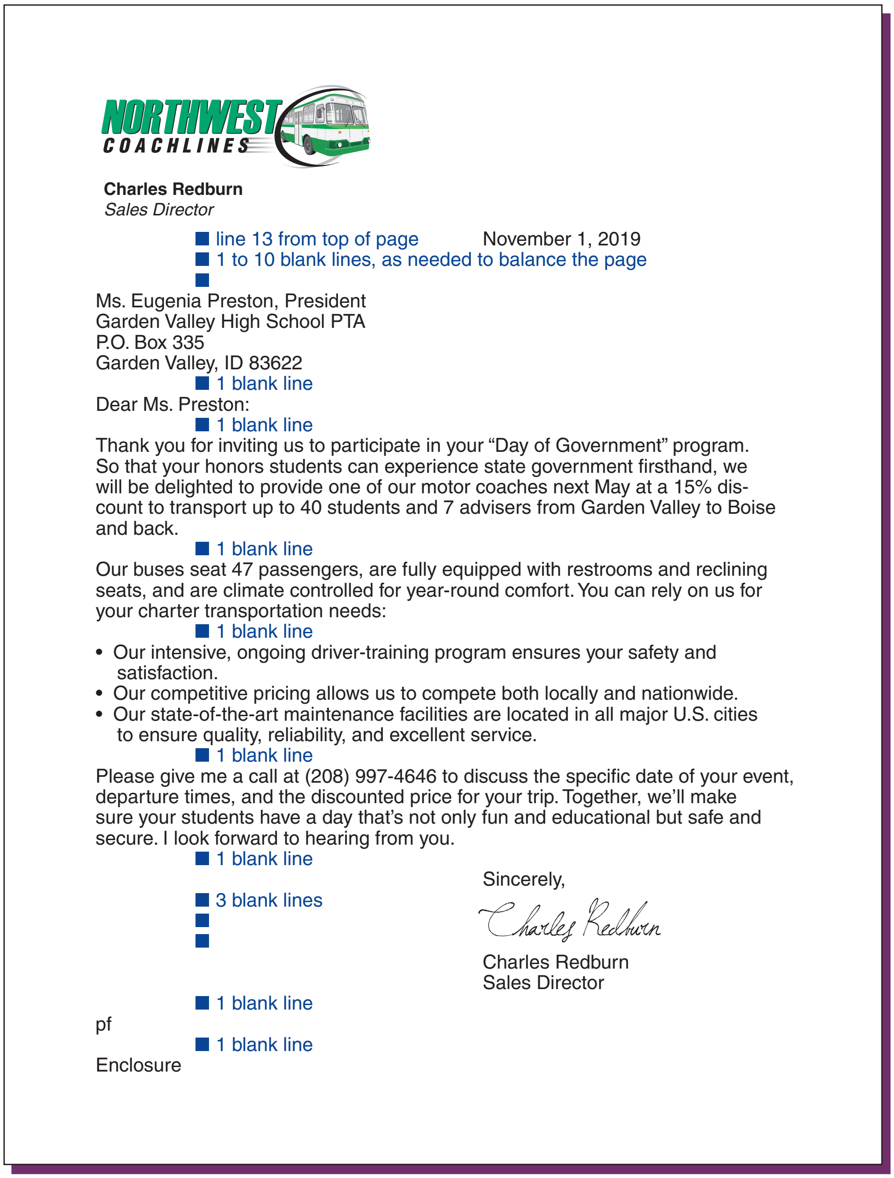
Figure A.3 **Block Letter Format**

block format does permit indentions as an option. This format mixes preparation speed with traditional placement of some letter parts. It also looks more balanced on the page than the block format does. (Note: The address and contact information in the left margin of this letter is part of this company's particular stationery design; other designs put this information at the top or bottom of the page.)

- **Simplified format.** Instead of using a salutation, this format often weaves the reader's name into the first line or two of the body and often includes a subject line in capital letters (see Figure A.5 on the next page). This format does not include a complimentary close, so your signature appears immediately below the body text. Because certain letter parts are eliminated, some line spacing is changed.

These three formats differ in the way paragraphs are indented, in the way letter parts are placed, and in some punctuation. However, the elements are always separated by at least one blank line, and the printed name is always separated from the line above by at least three blank lines to allow space for a signature. If paragraphs are indented, the indention is normally five spaces. The most common formats for intercultural business letters are the block style and the modified block style.

In addition to these three letter formats, letters may also be classified according to their style of punctuation. *Standard*, or *mixed*, *punctuation* uses a colon after the salutation (a comma if the letter is social or personal) and a comma after the complimentary close. *Open punctuation* uses no colon or comma after the salutation or the complimentary close. Although the most popular style in business



NORTHWEST COACHLINES

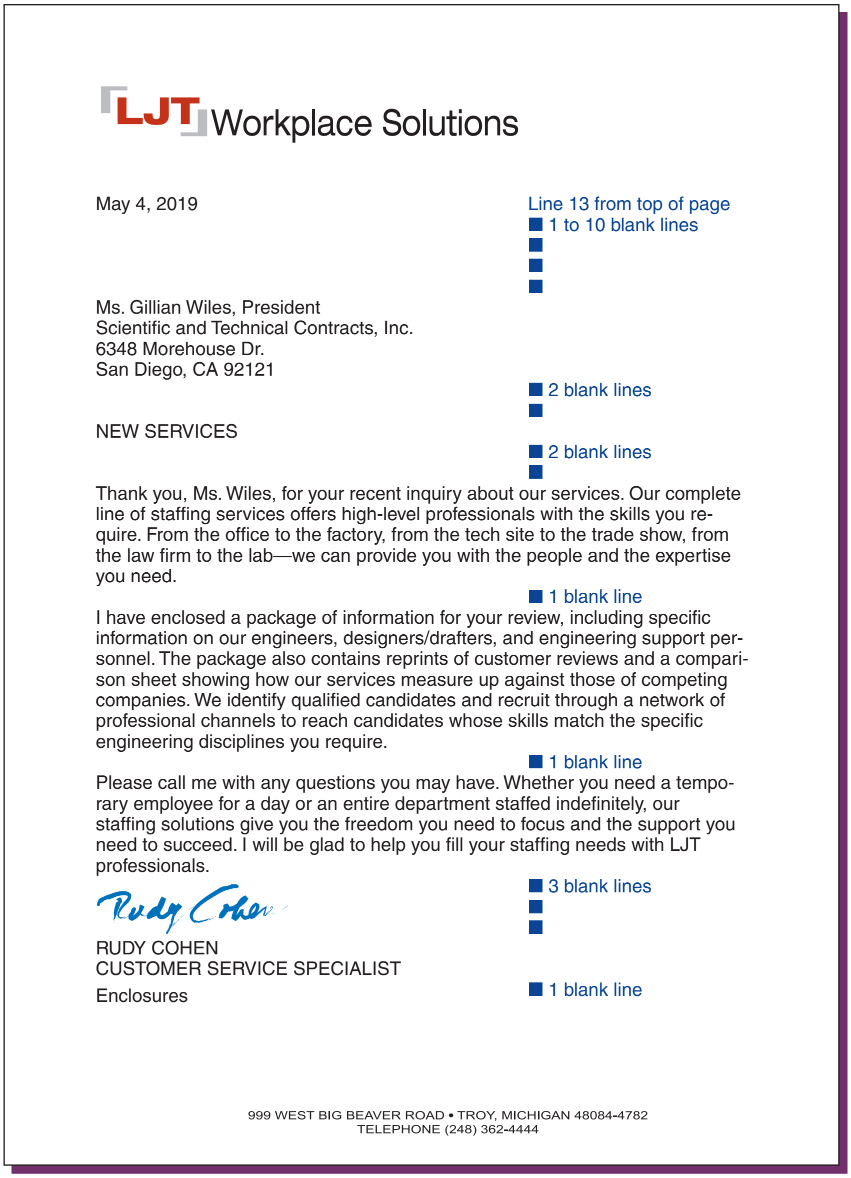
Charles Redburn
Sales Director

■ line 13 from top of page November 1, 2019
■ 1 to 10 blank lines, as needed to balance the page
■

Ms. Eugenia Preston, President
Garden Valley High School PTA
P.O. Box 335
Garden Valley, ID 83622
■ 1 blank line
Dear Ms. Preston:
■ 1 blank line
Thank you for inviting us to participate in your "Day of Government" program. So that your honors students can experience state government firsthand, we will be delighted to provide one of our motor coaches next May at a 15% discount to transport up to 40 students and 7 advisers from Garden Valley to Boise and back.
■ 1 blank line
Our buses seat 47 passengers, are fully equipped with restrooms and reclining seats, and are climate controlled for year-round comfort. You can rely on us for your charter transportation needs:
■ 1 blank line
- Our intensive, ongoing driver-training program ensures your safety and satisfaction.
- Our competitive pricing allows us to compete both locally and nationwide.
- Our state-of-the-art maintenance facilities are located in all major U.S. cities to ensure quality, reliability, and excellent service.

■ 1 blank line
Please give me a call at (208) 997-4646 to discuss the specific date of your event, departure times, and the discounted price for your trip. Together, we'll make sure your students have a day that's not only fun and educational but safe and secure. I look forward to hearing from you.
■ 1 blank line
Sincerely,
■ 3 blank lines
■
■
Charles Redburn
Charles Redburn
Sales Director
■ 1 blank line
pf
■ 1 blank line
Enclosure

Figure A.4 **Modified Block Letter Format**



LJT Workplace Solutions

May 4, 2019 — Line 13 from top of page
1 to 10 blank lines

Ms. Gillian Wiles, President
Scientific and Technical Contracts, Inc.
6348 Morehouse Dr.
San Diego, CA 92121

2 blank lines

NEW SERVICES

2 blank lines

Thank you, Ms. Wiles, for your recent inquiry about our services. Our complete line of staffing services offers high-level professionals with the skills you require. From the office to the factory, from the tech site to the trade show, from the law firm to the lab—we can provide you with the people and the expertise you need.

1 blank line

I have enclosed a package of information for your review, including specific information on our engineers, designers/drafters, and engineering support personnel. The package also contains reprints of customer reviews and a comparison sheet showing how our services measure up against those of competing companies. We identify qualified candidates and recruit through a network of professional channels to reach candidates whose skills match the specific engineering disciplines you require.

1 blank line

Please call me with any questions you may have. Whether you need a temporary employee for a day or an entire department staffed indefinitely, our staffing solutions give you the freedom you need to focus and the support you need to succeed. I will be glad to help you fill your staffing needs with LJT professionals.

3 blank lines

Rudy Cohen

RUDY COHEN
CUSTOMER SERVICE SPECIALIST

1 blank line

Enclosures

999 WEST BIG BEAVER ROAD • TROY, MICHIGAN 48084-4782
TELEPHONE (248) 362-4444

Figure A.5 Simplified Letter Format

communication is mixed punctuation, either style of punctuation may be used with block or modified block letter formats. Because the simplified letter format has no salutation or complimentary close, the style of punctuation is irrelevant.

Envelopes

For a first impression, the quality of the envelope is just as important as the quality of the stationery. Letterhead and envelopes should be of the same paper stock, have the same color ink, and be imprinted with the same address and logo. Most envelopes used by U.S. businesses are No. 10 envelopes 9½, which are sized for an 8½-by-11-inch piece of paper folded in thirds. Some occasions call for a smaller No. 6¾, envelope or for envelopes proportioned to fit special stationery. Figure A.6 shows the two most common sizes.

ADDRESSING THE ENVELOPE

No matter what size the envelope, the address is always single-spaced with all lines aligned on the left. The address on the envelope is in the same style as the inside address and presents the same information. The order to follow is from the smallest division to the largest:

1. Name and title of recipient
2. Name of department or subgroup
3. Name of organization
4. Name of building

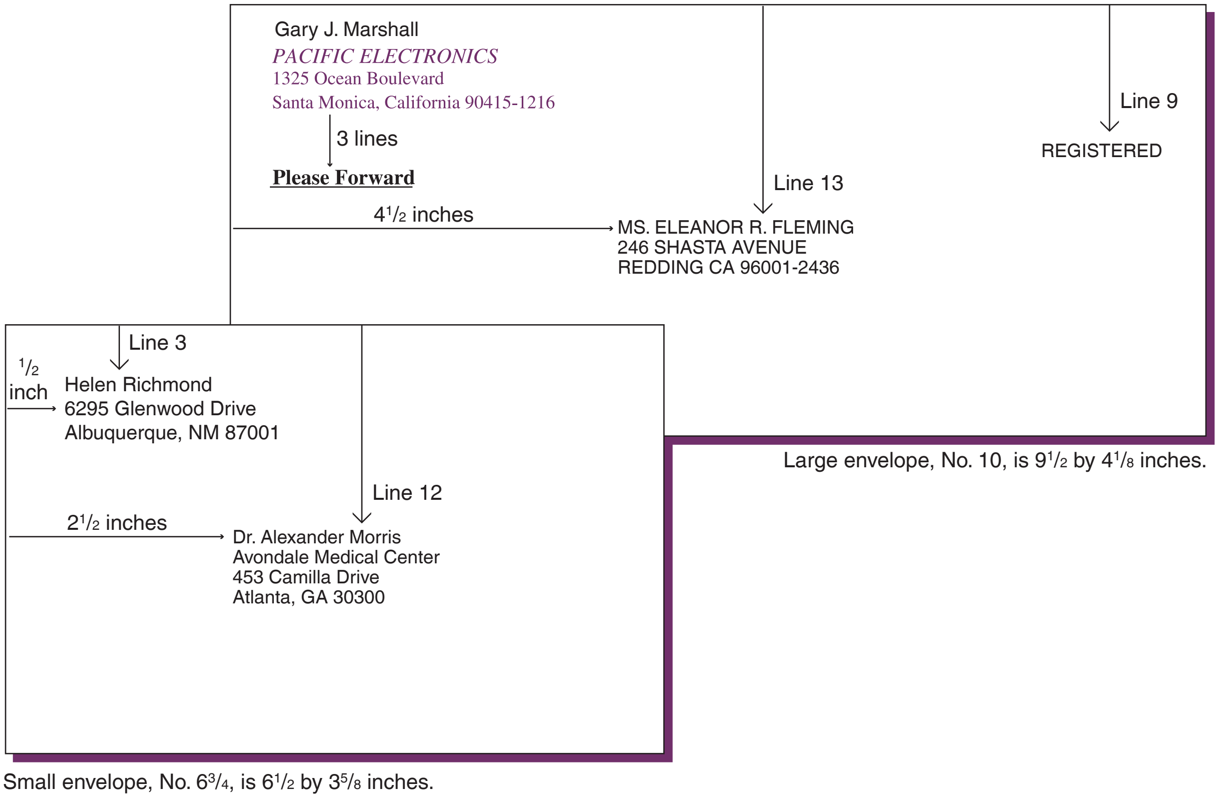


Figure A.6 **Prescribed Envelope Format**

5. Street address and suite number, or post office box number
6. City, state, or province, and zip code or postal code
7. Name of country (if the letter is being sent abroad)

Because the U.S. Postal Service uses optical scanners to sort mail, envelopes for quantity mailings, in particular, should be addressed in the prescribed format. Everything is in capital letters, no punctuation is included, and all mailing instructions of interest to the post office are placed above the address area (see Figure A.6). Canada Post requires a similar format, except that only the city is all in capitals, and the postal code is placed on the line below the name of the city. The post office scanners read addresses from the bottom up, so if a letter is to be sent to a post office box rather than to a street address, the street address should appear on the line above the box number. Figure A.6 also shows the proper spacing for addresses and return addresses.

The U.S. Postal Service and the Canada Post Corporation have published lists of two-letter mailing abbreviations for states, provinces, and territories (see Table A.4 on the next page). Postal authorities prefer no punctuation with these abbreviations. Quantity mailings should always follow post office requirements. For other letters, a reasonable compromise is to use traditional punctuation, uppercase and lowercase letters for names and street addresses, but two-letter state or province abbreviations, as shown here:

Mr. Kevin Kennedy
2107 E. Packer Dr.
Amarillo, TX 79108

Canadian postal codes are alphanumeric, with a three-character "area code" and a three-character "local code" separated by a single space (K2P 5A5). Zip and postal codes should be separated from state and province names by one space. Canadian postal codes may be treated the same or may be positioned alone on the bottom line of the address all by itself.

FOLDING TO FIT

The way a letter is folded also contributes to the recipient's overall impression of your organization's professionalism. When sending a standard-size piece of paper in a No. 10 envelope, fold it in thirds, with the bottom folded up first and the top folded down over it (see Figure A.7 on the next page); the open end should be at the top of the envelope and facing out. Fit smaller stationery neatly into the appropriate envelope simply by folding it in half or in thirds. When sending a standard-size letterhead in a No. 6¾ envelope, fold it in half from top to bottom and then in thirds from side to side.

TABLE A.4 Two-Letter Mailing Abbreviations for the United States and Canada

State/Territory/ Province	Abbreviation	State/Territory/ Province	Abbreviation	State/Territory/ Province	Abbreviation
United States		Maryland	MD	Tennessee	TN
Alabama	AL	Massachusetts	MA	Texas	TX
Alaska	AK	Michigan	MI	Utah	UT
American Samoa	AS	Minnesota	MN	Vermont	VT
Arizona	AZ	Mississippi	MS	Virginia	VA
Arkansas	AR	Missouri	MO	Virgin Islands	VI
California	CA	Montana	MT	Washington	WA
Canal Zone	CZ	Nebraska	NE	West Virginia	WV
Colorado	CO	Nevada	NV	Wisconsin	WI
Connecticut	CT	New Hampshire	NH	Wyoming	WY
Delaware	DE	New Jersey	NJ	**Canada**	
District of Columbia	DC	New Mexico	NM	Alberta	AB
Florida	FL	New York	NY	British Columbia	BC
Georgia	GA	North Carolina	NC	Manitoba	MB
Guam	GU	North Dakota	ND	New Brunswick	NB
Hawaii	HI	Northern Mariana	MP	Newfoundland and Labrador	NL
Idaho	ID	Ohio	OH	Northwest Territories	NT
Illinois	IL	Oklahoma	OK	Nova Scotia	NS
Indiana	IN	Oregon	OR	Nunavut	NU
Iowa	IA	Pennsylvania	PA	Ontario	ON
Kansas	KS	Puerto Rico	PR	Prince Edward Island	PE
Kentucky	KY	Rhode Island	RI	Quebec	QC
Louisiana	LA	South Carolina	SC	Saskatchewan	SK
Maine	ME	South Dakota	SD	Yukon Territory	YT

Sources: Based on data from Official USPS Abbreviations, USPS, https://www.usps.com/send/official-abbreviations.htm.

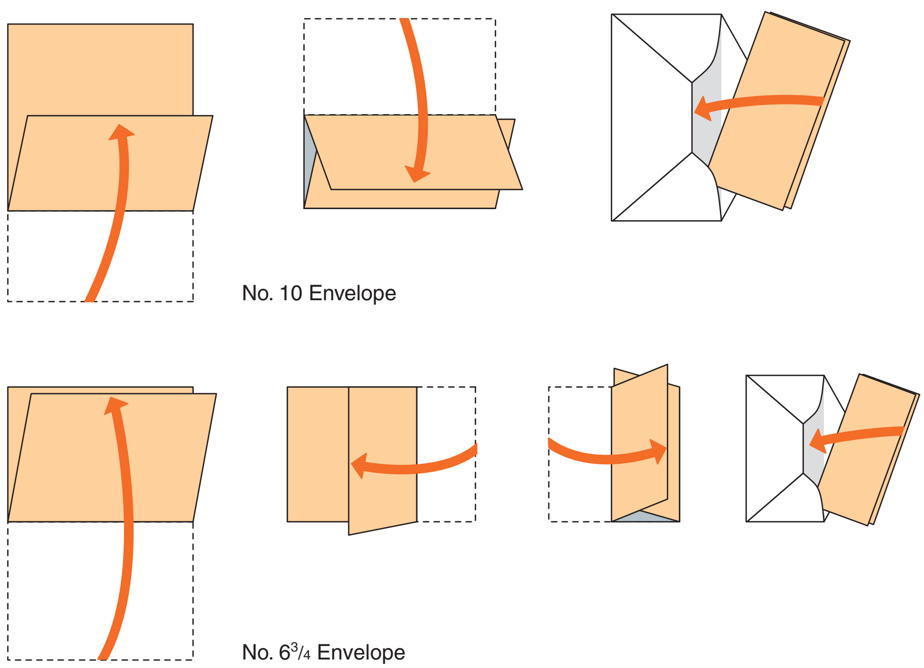


Figure A.7 Folding Standard-Size Letterhead

INTERNATIONAL MAIL

Postal service differs from country to country, so it's always a good idea to investigate the quality and availability of various services before sending messages and packages internationally. Also, compare the services offered by delivery companies such as UPS and FedEx to find the best rates and options for each destination and type of shipment. No matter which service you choose, be aware that international mail requires more planning than domestic mail. For example, for anything beyond simple letters, you generally need to prepare *customs forms* and possibly other documents, depending on the country of destination and the type of shipment. You are responsible for following the laws of the United States and any countries to which you send mail and packages.

To prepare your mail for international delivery, follow the instructions provided at the U.S. Postal Service website (www.usps.com). There you'll find complete information on the international services available through the USPS, along with advice on addressing and packaging mail, completing customs forms, and calculating postage rates and fees. The *International Mail Manual*, also available on this website, offers the latest information and regulations for both outbound and inbound international mail. For instance, you can select individual country names to see current information about restricted or prohibited items and materials, required customs forms, and rates for various classes of service.[6] Various countries have specific and often extensive lists of items that may not be sent by mail at all or that must be sent using particular postal service options.

Memos

Digital media have replaced most internal printed memos in many companies, but you may have occasion to send printed memos from time to time. These can be simple announcements or messages, or they can be short reports using the memo format.

On your document, include a title such as MEMO or INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE (all in capitals) centered at the top of the page or aligned with the left margin. Also at the top, include the words *To*, *From*, *Date*, and *Subject*—followed by the appropriate information—with a blank line between as shown here:

MEMO

TO:
FROM:
DATE:
SUBJECT:

Sometimes the heading is organized like this:

MEMO

TO:	FROM:
DATE:	SUBJECT:

The following guidelines will help you effectively format specific memo elements:

- **Addressees.** When sending a memo to a long list of people, include the notation *See distribution list* or *See below* in the *To* position at the top; then list the names at the end of the memo. Arrange this list alphabetically, except when high-ranking officials deserve more prominent placement. You can also address memos to groups of people—*All Sales Representatives*, *Production Group*, *New Product Team*.
- **Courtesy titles.** You need not use courtesy titles anywhere in a memo; first initials and last names, first names, or even initials alone are often sufficient. However, use a courtesy title if you would use one in a face-to-face encounter with the person.
- **Subject line.** The subject line of a memo helps busy colleagues quickly find out what your memo is about, so take care to make it concise and compelling.
- **Body.** Start the body of the memo on the second or third line below the heading. Like the body of a letter, it's usually single-spaced with blank lines between paragraphs. Indenting paragraphs is optional. Handle lists, important passages, and subheadings as you do in letters.
- **Second page.** If the memo carries over to a second page, head the second page just as you head the second page of a letter.
- **Writer's initials.** Unlike a letter, a memo doesn't require a complimentary close or a signature because your name is already prominent at the top. However, you may initial the memo—either beside the name appearing at the top of the memo or at the bottom of the memo.
- **Other elements.** Treat elements such as reference initials and copy notations just as you would in a letter. One difference between letters and memos is that while letters use the term *enclosure* to refer to other pieces included with the letter, memos usually use the word *attachment*.

Memos may be delivered by hand, by the post office (when the recipient works at a different location), or through interoffice mail. Interoffice mail may require the use of special reusable envelopes that have spaces for the recipient's name and department or room number; the name of the previous recipient is simply crossed out. If a regular envelope is used, the words *Interoffice Mail* appear where the stamp normally goes, so that it won't accidentally be stamped and mailed with the rest of the office correspondence.

Informal, routine, or brief reports for distribution within a company are often presented in memo form. Don't include report parts such as a table of contents and appendixes, but write the body of the memo report just as carefully as you'd write a formal report.

Reports

Enhance the effectiveness of your reports by paying careful attention to their appearance and layout. Follow whatever guidelines your organization prefers, always being neat and consistent throughout. If it's up to you to decide formatting questions, the following conventions may help you decide how to handle margins, headings, and page numbers.

MARGINS

All margins on a report page should be at least 1 inch wide. The top, left, and right margins are usually the same, but the bottom margins can be 1½ times deeper. Some special pages also have deeper top margins. Set top margins as deep as 2 inches for pages that contain major titles: prefatory parts (such as the table of contents or the executive summary), supplementary parts (such as the reference notes or bibliography), and textual parts (such as the first page of the text or the first page of each chapter).

If you're going to bind your report at the left or at the top, add half an inch to the margin on the bound edge (see Figure A.8): The space taken by the binding on left-bound reports makes the center point of the text a quarter inch to the right of the center of the paper. Be sure to center headings between the margins, not between the edges of the paper.

HEADINGS

If you don't have a template supplied by your employer, choose a design for headings and subheadings that clearly distinguishes the various levels in the hierarchy. The first-level headings should be the most prominent, on down to the lowest-level subheading.

PAGE NUMBERS

Every page in a report is counted; however, not all pages show numbers. The first page of the report, normally the title page, is unnumbered. All other pages in the prefatory section are numbered with a lowercase roman numeral, beginning with *ii* and continuing with *iii*, *iv*, *v*, and so on. Start numbering again with arabic numerals (1, 2, and so on) starting at the first page of the body.

You have many options for placing and formatting the page numbers, although these choices are usually made for you in a template. If you're not using a standard company template, position the page number where it is easy to see as the reader flips through the report. If the report will be stapled or otherwise bound along the left side, for instance, the best place for the page number is the upper right or lower right corner.

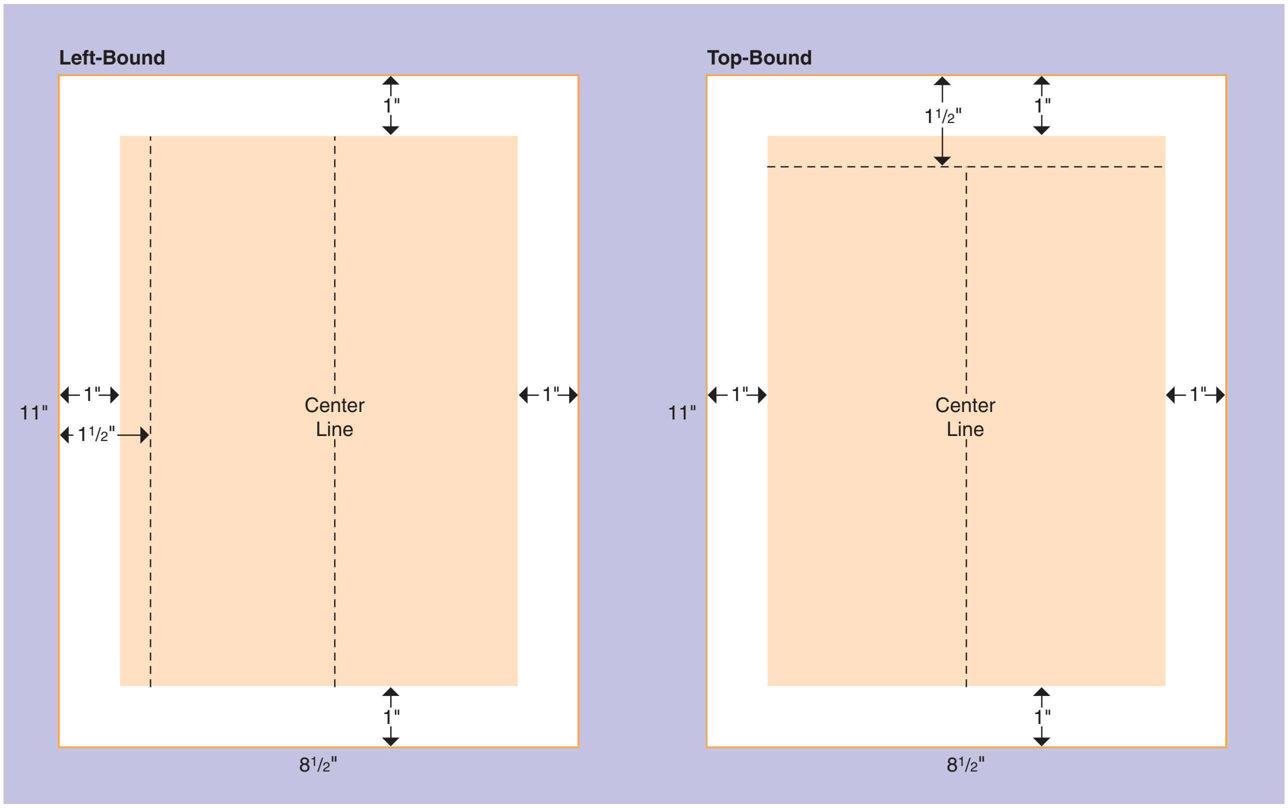


Figure A.8 Margins for Formal Reports

Endnotes

1. Mary A. De Vries, *Internationally Yours: Writing and Communicating Successfully in Today's Global Marketplace* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), 9.
2. Patricia A. Dreyfus, "Paper That's Letter Perfect," *Money*, May 1985, 184.
3. Linda Driskill, *Business and Managerial Communication: New Perspectives* (Orlando, Fla.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), 470.
4. Lennie Copeland and Lewis Griggs, *Going International: How to Make Friends and Deal Effectively in the Global Marketplace*, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 1985), 24–27.
5. De Vries, *Internationally Yours*, 8.
6. U.S. Postal Service, *International Mail Manual*, 3 April 2017, www.usps.gov.

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B Documentation of Report Sources

By providing information about your sources, you improve your own credibility as well as the credibility of the facts and opinions you present. Documentation gives readers the means for checking your findings and pursuing the subject further. Also, documenting your report is the accepted way to give credit to the people whose work you have drawn from.

What style should you use to document your report? Experts recommend various forms, depending on your field or discipline. Moreover, your employer or client may use a form different from those the experts suggest. Don't let this discrepancy confuse you. If your employer specifies a form, use it; the standardized form is easier for colleagues to understand. However, if the choice of form is left to you, adopt one of the styles described here. Whatever style you choose, be consistent within any given report, using the same order, punctuation, and format from one reference citation or bibliography entry to the next.

A wide variety of style manuals provide detailed information on documentation. These publications explain the three most commonly used styles:

- American Psychological Association, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association,* 6th ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2013). Details the author-date system, which is preferred in the social sciences and often in the natural sciences as well.
- *The Chicago Manual of Style,* 17th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017). Often referred to only as "*Chicago*" and widely used in the publishing industry; provides detailed treatment of source documentation and many other aspects of document preparation.
- *MLA Handbook*, 8th ed. (New York: Modern Language Association, 2016). Provides the citation guidelines most often used in the liberal arts and humanities.

For more information on these three guides, visit **real-timeupdates.com/bce8** and select Appendix B. Although many schemes have been proposed for organizing the information in source notes, all of them break the information into parts: (1) information about the author (name), (2) information about the work (title, edition, volume number), (3) information about the publication (place, publisher), (4) information about the date, and (5) information about location, including relevant page ranges.

The following sections summarize the major conventions for documenting sources in three styles: *The Chicago Manual of Style (Chicago),* the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA), and the *MLA Handbook* (MLA).

Chicago Humanities Style

Chicago recommends two types of documentation systems. The *documentary-note,* or *humanities,* style gives bibliographic citations in notes—either footnotes (when printed at the bottom of a page) or endnotes (when printed at the end of the report). The humanities system is often used in literature, history, and the arts. The other system recommended by *Chicago* is the *author-date* system, which cites the author's last name and the date of publication in the text, usually in parentheses, reserving full documentation for the reference list (or bibliography). For the purpose of comparing styles, this section concentrates on the humanities system, which is described in detail in *Chicago*.

IN-TEXT CITATION—*CHICAGO* HUMANITIES STYLE

To document report sources in text, the humanities system relies on superscripts—arabic numerals placed just above the line of type at the end of the reference:

> Toward the end of his speech, Myers sounded a note of caution, saying that even though the economy is expected to grow, it could easily slow a bit.[10]

The superscript lets the reader know how to look for source information in either a footnote or an endnote (see Figure B.1 on the next page). Some readers prefer footnotes so that they can simply glance at the bottom of the page for information. Others prefer endnotes so that they can read the text without a clutter of notes on the page. Also, endnotes relieve the writer from worrying about how long each note will be and how much space it will take away from the page. Both footnotes and endnotes can be handled automatically by today's word-processing software.

For the reader's convenience, you can use footnotes for *content notes* (which may supplement your main text with asides about a particular issue or event, provide a cross-reference to another section of your report, or direct the reader to a related source). Then you can use endnotes for *source notes* (which document direct quotations,

NOTES

Journal article with volume and issue numbers	1. Jonathan Clifton, "Beyond Taxonomies of Influence," *Journal of Business Communication* 46, no. 1 (2009): 57–79.
Brochure	2. BestTemp Staffing Services, *An Employer's Guide to Staffing Services,* 2d ed. (Denver: BestTemp Information Center, 2018), 31.
Newspaper article, no author	3. "Might Be Harder Than It Looks," *Los Angeles Times,* January 30 2013, sec. A, p. 22.
Annual report	4. The Walt Disney Company, *2017 Annual Report* (Burbank, Calif.: The Walt Disney Company, 2018), 48.
Magazine article	5. Kerry A. Dolan, "A Whole New Crop" *Forbes*, June 2, 2019, 72–75.
Television broadcast	6. Daniel Han, "Trade Wars Heating Up Around the Globe," *CNN Headline News* (Atlanta: CNN, March 5, 2016).
Website content	7. "Curves Fitness." *Curves*, accessed 5 May 2017. www.curves.com/fitness.
Book, component parts	8. Sonja Kuntz, "Moving Beyond Benefits," in *Our Changing Workforce,* ed. Randolf Jacobson 213–27 (New York: Citadel Press, 2001).
Unpublished dissertation or thesis	9. George H. Morales, "The Economic Pressures on Industrialized Nations in a Global Economy" (Ph.D. diss., University of San Diego, 2001), 32–47.
Paper presented at a meeting	10. Charles Myers, "HMOs in Today's Environment" (paper presented at the Conference on Medical Insurance Solutions, Chicago, Ill., August 2018), 16–17.
Blog post	11. Seth Godin, "The Self-Healing Letter of Complaint," *Seth's Blog*, 4 May 2017, http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2017/05/the-self-healing-letter-of-complaint.html.
Interview	12. Georgia Stainer, general manager, Day Cable and Communications, interview by author, Topeka, Kan., March 2, 2017.
Newspaper article, one author	13. Evelyn Standish, "Global Market Crushes OPEC's Delicate Balance of Interests," *Wall Street Journal,* January 19, 2016, sec. A, p. 1.
Book, two authors	14. Miriam Toller and Jay Fielding, *Global Business for Smaller Companies* (Rocklin, Calif.: Prima Publishing, 2001), 102–3.
Government publication	15. U.S. Department of Defense, *Stretching Research Dollars: Survival Advice for Universities and Government Labs* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2002), 126.
Online video	16. Adam Grant, "The Surprising Habits of Original Thinkers," TED video, filmed February 2016; available from www.ted.com/talks/adam_grant_the_surprising_habits_of_original_thinkers.

Figure B.1 Sample Endnotes–*Chicago* Humanities Style
(Note: This is a collection of sample entries, not a page from an actual report; dates shown may not reflect actual sources. Also, *Chicago* doesn't specify blank lines between entries; that was done here for clarity.)

paraphrased passages, and visual aids). Consider which type of note is most common in your report, and then choose whether to present these notes all as endnotes or all as footnotes. Regardless of the method you choose for referencing textual information in your report, notes for visual aids (both content notes and source notes) are placed on the same page as the visual.

BIBLIOGRAPHY—*CHICAGO* HUMANITIES STYLE

The humanities system may or may not be accompanied by a bibliography (because the notes give all the necessary bibliographic information). However, endnotes are arranged in order of appearance in the text, so an alphabetical bibliography can be valuable to your readers. The bibliography may be titled *Bibliography, Reference List, Sources, Works Cited* (if you include only those sources you actually cited in your report), or *Works Consulted* (if you include uncited sources as well). This list of sources may also serve as a reading list for those who want to pursue the subject of your report further, so you may want to annotate each entry— that is, comment on the subject matter and viewpoint of the source, as well as on its usefulness to readers. Annotations may be written in either complete or incomplete sentences. A bibliography may also be more manageable if you subdivide it into categories (a classified bibliography), either by type of reference (such as books, articles, and unpublished material) or by subject matter (such as government regulations, market forces, and so on).

Source type	BIBLIOGRAPHY
Blog post (usually not included in Chicago-style bibliography unless you cite the blog frequently)	Godin, Seth. "The Self-Healing Letter of Complaint," *Seth's Blog*, May 4, 2017, http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2017/05/the-self-healing-letter-of-complaint.html.
Brochure	BestTemp Staffing Services. *An Employer's Guide to Staffing Services.* 2d ed. Denver: BestTemp Information Center, 2018.
Journal article with volume and issue numbers	Clifton, Jonathan. "Beyond Taxonomies of Influence." *Journal of Business Communication* 46, no. 1 (2009): 57–79.
Magazine article	Dolan, Kerry A. "A Whole New Crop," *Forbes*, June 2, 2019, 72–75.
Online video	Grant, Adam. "The Surprising Habits of Original Thinkers." Filmed February 2016. TED video, 15:25. Posted April 2016. www.ted.com/talks/adam_grant_the_surprising_habits_of_original_thinkers.
Television broadcast	Han, Daniel. "Trade Wars Heating Up Around the Globe." *CNN Headline News.* Atlanta: CNN, 5 March 2016.
Website content	"Curves Fitness." *Curves*, accessed May 5, 2017. www.curves.com/fitness.
Book, component parts	Kuntz, Sonja. "Moving Beyond Benefits." In *Our Changing Workforce*, edited by Randolf Jacobson. New York: Citadel Press, 2001.
Newspaper article, no author	"Might Be Harder Than It Looks." *Los Angeles Times,* January 30, 2015, sec. A, p. 22.
Unpublished dissertation or thesis	Morales, George H. "The Economic Pressures on Industrialized Nations in a Global Economy." Ph.D. diss., University of San Diego, 2001.
Paper presented at a meeting	Myers, Charles. "HMOs in Today's Environment." Paper presented at the Conference on Medical Insurance Solutions, Chicago, Ill., August 2018.
Interview	Stainer, Georgia, general manager, Day Cable and Communications. Interview by author. Topeka, Kan., 2 March 2017.
Newspaper article, one author	Standish, Evelyn. "Global Market Crushes OPEC's Delicate Balance of Interests." *Wall Street Journal,* January 19, 2016, sec. A, p. 1.
Book, two authors	Toller, Miriam, and Jay Fielding. *Global Business for Smaller Companies.* Rocklin, Calif.: Prima Publishing, 2001.
Government publication	U.S. Department of Defense. *Stretching Research Dollars: Survival Advice for Universities and Government Labs.* Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2016.
Annual report	The Walt Disney Company, *2017 Annual Report,* Burbank, Calif.: The Walt Disney Company, 2018.

Figure B.2 Sample Bibliography–*Chicago* Humanities Style
(Note: This is a collection of sample entries, not a page from an actual report; dates shown may not reflect actual sources. Also, *Chicago* doesn't specify blank lines between entries; that was done here for clarity.)

Following are the major conventions for developing a bibliography according to *Chicago* style (see Figure B.2):

- Exclude any page numbers that may be cited in source notes, except for journals, periodicals, newspapers, and book chapter page ranges.
- Alphabetize entries by the last name of the lead author (listing last name first). The names of second and succeeding authors are listed in normal order. Entries without an author name are alphabetized by the first important word in the title.
- Format entries as hanging indents (indent the second and succeeding lines three to five spaces).
- Arrange entries in the following general order: (1) author name, (2) title information, (3) publication information, (4) date, (5) periodical page range.
- Use quotation marks around the titles of articles from magazines, newspapers, and journals. Capitalize the first and last words, as well as all other important words (except prepositions, articles, and coordinating conjunctions).
- Use italics to set off the names of books, newspapers, journals, and other complete publications. Capitalize the first and last words, as well as all other important words.
- For journal articles, include the volume number and the issue number (if necessary). Include the year of publication inside parentheses and follow with a colon and the page range of the article: *Journal of Business Communication* 46, no. 1 (2009): 57–79. (In this source, the volume is 46, the number is 1, and the page range is 57–79.)

- Use brackets to identify all electronic references: [Online database] or [CD-ROM].
- Explain how electronic references can be reached if it's not obvious from the URL.
- Give the access date for online references: Accessed August 23, 2018.

APA Style

The American Psychological Association (APA) recommends the author-date system of documentation, which is popular in the physical, natural, and social sciences. When using this system, you simply insert the author's last name and the year of publication within parentheses following the text discussion of the material cited. Include a page number if you use a direct quotation. This approach briefly identifies the source so that readers can locate complete information in the alphabetical reference list at the end of the report. The author-date system is both brief and clear, saving readers time and effort.

IN-TEXT CITATION—APA STYLE

To document report sources in text using APA style, insert the author's surname and the date of publication at the end of a statement. Enclose this information in parentheses. If the author's name is referred to in the text itself, then the name can be omitted from parenthetical material.

> Some experts recommend both translation and back-translation when dealing with any non-English-speaking culture (Clifton, 2013).
> Toller and Fielding (2015) make a strong case for small companies succeeding in global business.

Personal communications and interviews conducted by the author would not be listed in the reference list. Such citations appear in the text only.

> Increasing the role of cable companies is high on the list of Georgia Stainer, general manager at Day Cable and Communications (personal communication, March 2, 2015).

LIST OF REFERENCES—APA STYLE

For APA style, list only those works actually cited in the text (so you would not include works for background or for further reading). Following are the major conventions for developing a reference list according to APA style (see Figure B.3):

- Format entries as hanging indents.
- List all author names in reverse order (last name first), and use only initials for the first and middle names.
- Arrange entries in the following general order: (1) author name, (2) date, (3) title information, (4) publication information, (5) periodical page range.
- Follow the author name with the date of publication in parentheses.
- List titles of articles from magazines, newspapers, and journals without underlines or quotation marks. Capitalize only the first word of the title, any proper nouns, and the first word to follow an internal colon. Italicize titles of books, capitalizing only the first word, any proper nouns, and the first word to follow a colon.
- Italicize titles of magazines, newspapers, journals, and other complete publications. Capitalize all the important words in the title.
- For journal articles, include the volume number (in italics) and, if necessary, the issue number (in parentheses). Finally, include the page range of the article: *Journal of Business Communication, 46*(1), 57-79. (In this example, the volume is 46, the number is 1, and the page range is 57-79.)
- Include personal communications (such as letters, memos, emails, and conversations) only in text, not in reference lists.
- Electronic references include author, date of publication, title of article, name of publication (if one), volume, and the URL.
- For electronic references, indicate the actual year of publication.
- For web pages with extremely long URLs, use your best judgment to determine which URL from the site to use. For example, rather than giving the long URL of a specific news release, you can provide the URL of the "Media relations" webpage.
- APA citation guidelines for social media are still evolving. For the latest information, visit the APA Style Blog (**blog.apastyle.org**).
- For online journals or periodicals that assign a digital object identifier (DOI), include that instead of a conventional URL. If no DOI is available, include the URL of the publication's home page.

MLA Style

The style recommended by the Modern Language Association of America is used widely in the humanities, especially in the study of language and literature. Like APA style, MLA style uses brief parenthetical citations in the text. However, instead of including author name and year, MLA citations include author name and page reference.

IN-TEXT CITATION—MLA STYLE

To document report sources in text using MLA style, insert the author's last name and a page reference inside parentheses following the cited material: (Matthews 63). If the author's name is mentioned in the text reference, the name can be omitted from the parenthetical citation: (63). The citation indicates that the reference came from page 63 of a work by Matthews. With the author's name, readers can find complete publication information in the alphabetically arranged list of works cited that comes at the end of the report.

REFERENCES

Blog post	Godin, S. (2017, May 4). The self-healing letter of complaint." *Seth's Blog*. Retrieved from sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2017/05/the-self-healing-letter-of-complaint.html.
Brochure	BestTemp Staffing Services. (2018). *An employer's guide to staffing services* (2nd ed.) [Brochure]. Denver, CO: BestTemp Information Center.
Journal article with volume and issue numbers	Clifton, J. (2009). Beyond taxonomies of influence. *Journal of Business Communication, 46*(1), 57.
Magazine article	Dolan, K. A. (2019, June 2). A whole new crop. *Forbes*, 72–75.
Online video	Grant, A. (2016, April 26). The surprising habits of original thinkers [Video file]. Retrieved from www.ted.com/talks/adam_grant_the_surprising_habits_of_original_thinkers.
Television broadcast	Han, D. (2016, March 5). Trade wars heating up around the globe. *CNN Headline News* [Television broadcast]. Atlanta, GA: CNN.
Website content	Curves (2017). *Curves Fitness*. Retrieved from www.curves.com/fitness.
Book, component parts	Kuntz, S. (2001). Moving beyond benefits. In Randolph Jacobson (Ed.), *Our changing workforce* (pp. 213–227). New York, NY: Citadel Press.
Newspaper article, no author	Might be harder than it looks. (2013, January 30). *Los Angeles Times,* p. A22.
Unpublished dissertation or thesis	Morales, G. H. (2001). *The economic pressures on industrialized nations in a global economy*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of San Diego.
Paper presented at a meeting	Myers, C. (2018, August). *HMOs in today's environment*. Paper presented at the Conference on Medical Insurance Solutions, Chicago, IL.
Interview	*Cited in text only, not in the list of references.*
Newspaper article, one author	Standish, E. (2002, January 19). Global market crushes OPEC's delicate balance of interests. *Wall Street Journal*, p. A1.
Book, two authors	Toller, M., & Fielding, J. (2001). *Global business for smaller companies*. Rocklin, CA: Prima Publishing.
Government publication	U.S. Department of Defense. (2016). *Stretching research dollars: Survival advice for universities and government labs*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
Annual report	The Walt Disney Company. (2018). *2017 Annual report,* Burbank, CA: The Walt Disney Company.

Figure B.3 Sample References–APA Style
(Note: This is a collection of sample references, not a page from an actual report; dates shown may not reflect actual sources. Also, it is single-spaced as is the norm for business reports; APA references are double-spaced in academic reports.)

> Some experts recommend both translation and back-translation when dealing with any non-English-speaking culture (Clifton 57).
>
> Toller and Fielding make a strong case for small companies succeeding in global business (102-03).

The *MLA Handbook* offers advice on handling multiple authors, multiple works by a single author, and other details of in-text references.

LIST OF WORKS CITED—MLA STYLE

In MLA style, all the research sources that were cited are gathered in a section titled Works Cited, with that title centered at the top of the page. Alphabetize entries by the author's last name or the title of the work if there is no author.

In the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook*, the MLA significantly changed its approach to citation guidelines. In response to the proliferation of new media formats in recent years, the handbook no longer provides specific citation guidelines for every conceivable type of media item. Instead, it offers general guidelines that you can adapt to each item you need to cite.

The MLA approach is built on three principles:

- Include the basic identifiers common to most sources, such as author name(s), the title of the work, and the date of publication or access.
- Recognize that there can be multiple "right" ways to document a source, depending on the circumstances.
- If you have any doubt about what to include, do what is best for your readers. For example, if the readers of a report are likely to retrieve the materials to continue their own research, you'll need to provide more information than if you are simply giving credit to the authors of the materials you used.

Each entry can have up to nine parts if they are relevant to the project's and readers' needs, although most on-the-job reports won't need that many:

- **Author name(s).** Start with the lead author's name in reverse order (last name first), using either full first name or initials, followed by a period. If the source has two authors, list the second author's name in regular order. If the source has three or more authors, reverse the first name, then follow it with a comma and *et al* ("and others"). If no author name is available, such as with many corporate or governmental publications, begin the citation with the title of the work and use the organization's name as the publisher. An exception to this rule is if one organization wrote the piece and another published it, in which case list the former as the author.
- **Title of source.** Use the full title of the source, including any subtitles. Capitalize every word except articles, prepositions, coordinating conjunctions, and the *to* in infinitives, and put a period at the end of the title. If the source is one of multiple items in a *container* (see next bullet), such as an article within a magazine or on a website, put quotation marks around the title. If it is not part of a larger entity (as is the case with book, for example), put the title in italics. This distinction applies to audio and video material as well. The title of a podcast channel, for instance, is set in italics, whereas the title of an individual podcast episode from that channel is enclosed in quotation marks. For email messages, use the subject line of the message as the title, enclosed in quotation marks and capitalized as above. For tweets, use the entire tweet, enclosed in quotation marks, and apply whatever capitalization and punctuation appear in the original.
- **Title of container.** The MLA uses *container* to refer to any entity that contains multiple sources. Books, periodicals, television series, and websites are all containers, for example. Capitalize container titles as described under source titles, and put a period at the end of them. If a source is embedded in more than one container, such as an article in a journal (container 1), which you found in an online database (container 2), include information for all the containers.
- **Other contributors.** If other named individuals were involved in the creation and production of the source, such as editors or translators, include their role(s) and name(s) next, such as "Edited by Josie Waler."
- **Version.** If a source has been released in multiple versions, such as the various editions of a book, indicate that next. The third edition of a book would be denoted as "3rd ed." followed by a comma.
- **Number.** If the source is part of a numbered sequence and this information is relevant to the project and important to readers, include that as well. Academic journals, for example, are typically identified by volume (usually corresponding to an entire year) and number (corresponding to one issue).
- **Publisher.** The publisher is the organization primarily responsible for producing the source material. This could be a book publisher, the owner of a website, or the production company behind a TV series. If you are citing an article found on Apple's website, for example, Apple is the name of the publisher.
- **Publication and access dates.** Include the date or dates most meaningful to readers in the context of the project. Use the day-month-year style, and include the time if that is relevant. You can abbreviate months to save space. Periodicals, books, tweets, and email messages all have specific publication dates. Website content and blog posts may or may not show a date. If an online source is undated, use "Accessed" followed by the date.
- **Location.** This can refer to the specific location within a source or the source's location within a container. For print sources, this usually involves page numbers, such as the pages you referenced from a book or the location of a magazine article within an issue. Use "p." to denote a single page and "pp." to denote a range of pages. For online sources, the location is usually the URL where the item can be found. How much of the URL to include is a matter of judgment, based on how long the URL is, whether your readers will want to access the source, and whether your document is print or digital. If the URL is extremely long, you might want to use the URL of the website's homepage. Many publishers now provide digital object identifiers (DOIs), which are more stable than URLs. If a DOI is available, use it instead.

If other information will help the reader or clarify the source of your information, include it as well. For example, if you used information you heard in a lecture, add "Lecture" at the end of the entry. If your source was a transcript of a podcast or video, add "Transcript."

Figure B.4 shows a variety of items in MLA citation format. Bear in mind, however, that given the flexibility the MLA now embraces, some of these entries could be configured differently for various contexts and still be correct.

WORKS CITED

Blog post	Godin, Seth. "The Self-Healing Letter of Complaint." *Seth's Blog*, 4 May 2017, sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2017/05/the-self-healing-letter-of-complaint.html.
Brochure	*An Employer's Guide to Staffing Services*. 2d ed. BestTemp Staffing Services, 2016.
Journal article with volume and issue numbers	Clifton, Jonathan. "Beyond Taxonomies of Influence." *Journal of Business Communication* vol. 46, no. 1, 2009, pp. 57–79.
Magazine article	Dolan, Kerry A. "A Whole New Crop." *Forbes*, 2 June 2017, 72–75.
Online video	Grant, Adam. "The Surprising Habits of Original Thinkers." TED. April 2016. Lecture.
Television broadcast	Han, Daniel. "Trade Wars Heating Up Around the Globe." *CNN Headline News*. CNN. 5 Mar. 2016.
Website content	"Curves Fitness." *Curves*, www.curves.com/fitness. Accessed 5 May 2017.
Book, component parts	Kuntz, Sonja. "Moving Beyond Benefits." *Our Changing Workforce*. Edited by Randolf Jacobson. Citadel Press, 2015, pp. 213–27.
Newspaper article, no author	"Might Be Harder Than It Looks." *Los Angeles Times,* 30 Jan. 2015, A22.
Unpublished dissertation or thesis	Morales, George H. "The Economic Pressures on Industrialized Nations in a Global Economy." Dissertation. University of San Diego, 2001.
Paper presented at a meeting	Myers, Charles. "HMOs in Today's Environment." Conference on Medical Insurance Solutions. Chicago. 13 Aug. 2018. Lecture..
Interview	Stainer, Georgia, general manager, Day Cable and Communications. Telephone interview. 2 Mar. 2017.
Tweet	@StanleyNeimeyer21. "Uber under Federal scrutiny for allegedly using Greyball software tool to deceive regulators." *Twitter*, 5 May 2017, 4:34 p.m., twitter.com/JessNeimeyer21/status/176782308736737282.
Book, two authors	Toller, Miriam, and Jay Fielding. *Global Business for Smaller Companies*. Prima Publishing, 2001.
Government publication, separate author and publisher	United States Department of Defense. *Stretching Research Dollars: Survival Advice for Universities and Government Labs*. GPO, 2016.
Annual report	Walt Disney Company, *2017 Annual Report*. Walt Disney Company, 2018.

Figure B.4 Sample Works Cited–MLA Style
(Note: This is a collection of sample references, not a page from an actual report; dates shown may not reflect actual sources. Also, it is single-spaced as is the norm for business reports; MLA works cited are double-spaced in academic reports.)

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C Correction Symbols

Instructors often use these short, easy-to-remember correction symbols and abbreviations when evaluating students' writing. You can use them as well to understand your instructor's suggestions and to revise and proofread your own letters, memos, and reports. Refer to the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage (page 453) for further information.

Content and Style

Acc	Accuracy. Check to be sure information is correct.
ACE	Avoid copying examples.
ACP	Avoid copying problems.
Adp	Adapt. Tailor message to reader.
App	Follow proper organizational approach. (Refer to Chapter 4.)
Assign	Assignment. Review instructions for assignment.
AV	Active verb. Substitute active for passive.
Awk	Awkward phrasing. Rewrite.
BC	Be consistent.
BMS	Be more sincere.
Chop	Choppy sentences. Use longer sentences and more transitional phrases.
Con	Condense. Use fewer words.
CT	Conversational tone. Avoid using overly formal language.
Depers	Depersonalize. Avoid attributing credit or blame to any individual or group.
Dev	Develop. Provide greater detail.
Dir	Direct. Use direct approach; get to the point.
Emph	Emphasize. Develop this point more fully.
EW	Explanation weak. Check logic; provide more proof.
Fl	Flattery. Avoid insincere compliments.
FS	Figure of speech. Find a more accurate expression.
GNF	Good news first. Use direct order.
GRF	Give reasons first. Use indirect order.
GW	Goodwill. Put more emphasis on expressions of goodwill.
H/E	Honesty/ethics. Revise statement to reflect good business practices.
Imp	Imply. Avoid being direct.
Inc	Incomplete. Develop further.
Jar	Jargon. Use less specialized language.
Log	Logic. Check development of argument.
Neg	Negative. Use more positive approach or expression.
Obv	Obvious. Do not state point in such detail.
OC	Overconfident. Adopt humbler language.
OM	Omission.
Org	Organization. Strengthen outline.
OS	Off the subject. Close with point on main subject.
Par	Parallel. Use same structure.
Pom	Pompous. Rephrase in down-to-earth terms.
PV	Point of view. Make statement from reader's perspective rather than your own.
RB	Reader benefit. Explain what reader stands to gain.
Red	Redundant. Reduce number of times this point is made.
Ref	Reference. Cite source of information.
Rep	Repetitive. Provide different expression.
RS	Resale. Reassure reader that he or she has made a good choice.
SA	Service attitude. Put more emphasis on helping reader.
Sin	Sincerity. Avoid sounding glib or uncaring.
SL	Stereotyped language. Focus on individual's characteristics instead of on false generalizations.
Spec	Specific. Provide more specific statement.

SPM	Sales promotion material. Tell reader about related goods or services.
Stet	Let stand in original form.
Sub	Subordinate. Make this point less important.
SX	Sexist. Avoid language that contributes to gender stereotypes.
Tone	Tone needs improvement.
Trans	Transition. Show connection between points.
UAE	Use action ending. Close by stating what reader should do next.
UAS	Use appropriate salutation.
UAV	Use active voice.
Unc	Unclear. Rewrite to clarify meaning.
UPV	Use passive voice.
USS	Use shorter sentences.
V	Variety. Use different expression or sentence pattern.
W	Wordy. Eliminate unnecessary words.
WC	Word choice. Find a more appropriate word.
YA	"You" attitude. Rewrite to emphasize reader's needs.

Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

Ab	Abbreviation. Avoid abbreviations in most cases; use correct abbreviation.
Adj	Adjective. Use adjective instead.
Adv	Adverb. Use adverb instead.
Agr	Agreement. Make subject and verb or noun and pronoun agree.
Ap	Appearance. Improve appearance.
Apos	Apostrophe. Check use of apostrophe.
Art	Article. Use correct article.
BC	Be consistent.
Cap	Capitalize.
Case	Use cases correctly.
CoAdj	Coordinate adjective. Insert comma between coordinate adjectives; delete comma between adjective and compound noun.
CS	Comma splice. Use period or semicolon to separate clauses.
DM	Dangling modifier. Rewrite so that modifier clearly relates to subject of sentence.
Exp	Expletive. Avoid expletive beginnings, such as it is, there are, there is, this is, and these are.
F	Format. Improve layout of document.
Frag	Fragment. Rewrite as complete sentence.
Gram	Grammar. Correct grammatical error.
HCA	Hyphenate compound adjective.
lc	Lowercase. Do not use capital letter.
M	Margins. Improve frame around document
MM	Misplaced modifier. Place modifier close to word it modifies.
NRC	Nonrestrictive clause (or phrase). Separate from rest of sentence with commas.
P	Punctuation. Use correct punctuation.
Par	Parallel. Use same structure.
PH	Place higher. Move up on page.
PL	Place lower. Move down on page.
Prep	Preposition. Use correct preposition.
RC	Restrictive clause (or phrase). Remove commas that separate clause from rest of sentence.
RO	Run-on sentence. Separate two sentences with comma and coordinating conjunction or with semicolon.
SC	Serial comma. Add comma before and or or.
Sp	Spelling error. Consult dictionary.
S-V	Subject-verb pair. Do not separate with comma.
Syl	Syllabification. Divide word between syllables.
WD	Word division. Check dictionary for proper end-of-line hyphenation.
WW	Wrong word. Replace with another word.

Proofreading Marks

Symbol	Meaning	Symbol Used in Context	Corrected Copy
	Align horizontally	meaningful result	meaningful result
	Align vertically	1. Power cable 2. Keyboard	1. Power cable 2. Keyboard
bf	Boldface	Recommendations bf	**Recommendations**
	Capitalize	Pepsico, Inc.	PepsiCo, Inc.
	Center	Awards Banquet	Awards Banquet
	Close up space	self- confidence	self-confidence
	Delete	har~~r~~assment ~~and abuse~~	harassment
ds	Double-space	text in first line text in second line ds	text in first line text in second line
	Insert	u and white t~~i~~rquoise shirts	turquoise and white shirts
	Insert apostrophe	our teams goals	our team's goals
	Insert comma	a, b and c	a, b, and c
	Insert hyphen	third quarter sales	third-quarter sales
	Insert period	Harrigan et al	Harrigan et al.
	Insert quotation marks	This team isn't cooperating.	This "team" isn't cooperating.
#	Insert space	# # realestate testcase	real estate test case
ital	Italics	Quarterly Report ital	*Quarterly Report*
	Lowercase	TULSA, South of here	Tulsa, south of here
	Move down	Sincerely,	Sincerely,
	Move left	Attention: Security	Attention: Security
	Move right	February 2, 2019	February 2, 2019
	Move up	THIRD-QUARTER SALES	THIRD-QUARTER SALES
STET	Restore	staff talked ~~openly and frankly~~ STET	staff talked openly
	Run lines together	Manager, Distribution	Manager, Distribution
ss	Single space	text in first line text in second line ss	text in first line text in second line
	Spell out	COD	cash on delivery
SP	Spell out	SP Assn. of Biochem. Engrs.	Association of Biochemical Engineers
	Start new line	Marla Fenton, Manager, Distri- bution	Marla Fenton, Manager, Distribution
	Start new paragraph	The solution is easy to determine but difficult to implement in a competitive environment like the one we now face.	The solution is easy to determine but difficult to implement in a competitive environment like the one we now face.
	Transpose	airy, light, casaul tone	light, airy, casual tone

Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

The rules of grammar, mechanics, and usage provide the guidance every professional needs in order to communicate successfully with colleagues, customers, and other audiences. Understanding and following these rules helps you in two important ways. First, the rules determine how meaning is encoded and decoded in the communication process. If you don't encode your messages using the same rules your readers or listeners use to decode them, chances are your audiences will not extract your intended meaning from your messages. Without a firm grasp of the basics of grammar, mechanics, and usage, you risk being misunderstood, damaging your company's image, losing money for your company, and possibly even losing your job. In other words, if you want to get your point across, you need to follow the rules of grammar, mechanics, and usage. Second, apart from transferring meaning successfully, following the rules tells your audience that you respect the conventions and expectations of the business community.

You can think of *grammar* as the agreed-upon structure of a language, the way that individual words are formed and the manner in which those words are then combined to form meaningful sentences. *Mechanics* are style and formatting issues such as capitalization, spelling, and the use of numbers and symbols. *Usage* involves the accepted and expected way in which specific words are used by a particular community of people—in this case, the community of businesspeople who use English. This handbook can help you improve your knowledge and awareness in all three areas. It is divided into the following sections:

- **Diagnostic Test of English Skills.** Testing your current knowledge of grammar, mechanics, and usage helps you find out where your strengths and weaknesses lie. This test offers 50 items taken from the topics included in this handbook.
- **Assessment of English Skills.** After completing the diagnostic test, use the assessment form to highlight the areas you most need to review.
- **Essentials of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage with Practice Sessions.** This section helps you quickly review the basics. You can study the things you've probably already learned but may have forgotten about grammar, punctuation, mechanics (including capitalization, abbreviation, number style, and word division), and vocabulary (including frequently confused words, frequently misused words, frequently misspelled words, and transitional words and phrases). Practice sessions throughout this section help you test yourself and reinforce what you learn. Use this essential review not only to study and improve your English skills but also as a reference for any questions you may have during this course.

Diagnostic Test of English Skills

Use this test to determine whether you need more practice with grammar, punctuation, mechanics, or vocabulary. When you've answered all the questions, ask your instructor for an answer sheet so that you can score the test. On the Assessment of English Skills form (page 455), record the number of questions you answered incorrectly in each section.

The following choices apply to items 1–5. Write in each blank the letter of the choice that best describes the part of speech that is underlined.

A. noun
B. pronoun
C. verb
D. adjective
E. adverb
F. preposition
G. conjunction
H. article

_____ **1.** The new branch location will be decided <u>by</u> next week.
_____ **2.** We must hire only <u>qualified</u>, ambitious graduates.
_____ **3.** After their <u>presentation</u>, I was still undecided.
_____ **4.** See <u>me</u> after the meeting.
_____ **5.** Margaret, pressed for time, turned in <u>unusually</u> sloppy work.

In the blanks for items 6–15, write the letter of the word or phrase that best completes each sentence.

_____ **6.** (A. Russ's, B. Russ') laptop was stolen last week.
_____ **7.** Speaking only for (A. me, B. myself), I think the new policy is discriminatory.
_____ **8.** Of the five candidates we interviewed yesterday, (A. who, B. whom) do you believe is the best choice?
_____ **9.** India has increased (A. it's, B. its) imports of corn and rice.
_____**10.** Even if you don't agree with the change, I would advise against (A. flouting, B. flaunting) the new policy.

_____11. If the IT department can't (A. lie, B. lay) the fiber-optic cable by March 1, the plant will not open on schedule.
_____12. Starbucks (A. is, B. are) opening five new stores in San Diego in the next year.
_____13. The number of women-owned small businesses (A. has, B. have) increased sharply in the past two decades.
_____14. Greg and Bernyce worked (A. good, B. well) together.
_____15. They distributed the supplies (A. among, B. between) the six staff members.

The following choices apply to items 16–20. Identify the structural problem in each of these sentences.

A. sentence fragment
B. comma splice
C. misplaced modifier
D. fused sentence
E. lack of parallelism
F. unclear antecedent

_____16. The number of employees who took the buyout offer was much higher than expected, now the entire company is understaffed.
_____17. The leader in Internet-only banking.
_____18. Diamond doesn't actually sell financial products rather it acts as an intermediary.
_____19. Helen's proposal is for not only the present but also for the future.
_____20. When purchasing luxury products, quality is more important than price for consumers.

For items 21–30, circle the letter of the preferred choice in each of the following groups of sentences.

21. A. What do you think of the ad slogan "Have it your way?"
B. What do you think of the ad slogan "Have it your way"?
22. A. Send copies to Jackie Cross, Uniline, Brad Nardi, Peale & Associates, and Tom Griesbaum, MatchMakers.
B. Send copies to Jackie Cross, Uniline; Brad Nardi, Peale & Associates; and Tom Griesbaum, MatchMakers.
23. A. They've recorded 22 complaints since yesterday, all of them from long-time employees.
B. They've recorded 22 complaints since yesterday; all of them from long-time employees.
24. A. We are looking for two qualities in applicants: experience with computers and an interest in people.
B. We are looking for two qualities in applicants; experience with computers and an interest in people.
25. A. At the Center for the Blind the clients we serve have lost vision, due to a wide variety of causes.
B. At the Center for the Blind, the clients we serve have lost vision due to a wide variety of causes.
26. A. Replace your standard light bulbs with new, compact fluorescent bulbs.
B. Replace your standard light bulbs with new, compact, fluorescent bulbs.
C. Replace your standard light bulbs with new compact fluorescent bulbs.
27. A. Blue Cross of California may have changed its name to Anthem Blue Cross but the company still has the same commitment to California.
B. Blue Cross of California may have changed its name to Anthem Blue Cross, but the company still has the same commitment to California.
28. A. Only eight banks in this country—maybe nine can handle transactions of this magnitude.
B. Only eight banks in this country—maybe nine—can handle transactions of this magnitude.
29. A. Instead of focusing on high-growth companies, we targeted mature businesses with only one or two people handling the decision making.
B. Instead of focusing on high growth companies, we targeted mature businesses with only one or two people handling the decision-making.
30. A. According to board president Damian Cabaza "having a crisis communication plan is a high priority."
B. According to board president Damian Cabaza, "Having a crisis communication plan is a high priority."

For items 31–40, select the best choice from among those provided.

31. A. At her previous employer, Mary-Anne worked in Marketing Communications and Human Resources.
B. At her previous employer, Mary-Anne worked in marketing communications and human resources.
32. A. By fall, we'll have a dozen locations between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers.
B. By Fall, we'll have a dozen locations between the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.
33. A. The Board applauded President Donlan upon her reelection for a fifth term.
B. The board applauded president Donlan upon her reelection for a fifth term.
C. The board applauded President Donlan upon her reelection for a fifth term.
34. A. If you want to travel to France, you need to be au courant with the business practices.
B. If you want to travel to France, you need to be "au courant" with the business practices.
35. A. As the company's CEO, Thomas Spurgeon handles all dealings with the FDA.
B. As the company's C.E.O., Thomas Spurgeon handles all dealings with the F.D.A.
36. A. The maximum speed limit in most states is 65 mph.
B. The maximum speed limit in most states is 65 m.p.h.

37. **A.** Sales of graphic novels increased nine percent between 2008 and 2009.
    B. Sales of graphic novels increased 9 percent between 2008 and 2009.
38. **A.** Our store is open daily from nine a.m. to seven p.m.
    B. Our store is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
39. **A.** The organizing meeting is scheduled for July 27, and the event will be held in January 2020.
    B. The organizing meeting is scheduled for July 27th, and the event will be held in January, 2020.
40. **A.** We need six desks, eight file cabinets, and 12 trashcans.
    B. We need 6 desks, 8 file cabinets, and 12 trashcans.

For items 41–50, write in each blank the letter of the word that best completes each sentence.

_____**41.** Will having a degree (A. affect, B. effect) my chances for promotion?
_____**42.** Try not to (A. loose, B. lose) this key; we will charge you a fee to replace it.
_____**43.** I don't want to discuss my (A. personal, B. personnel) problems in front of anyone.
_____**44.** Let us help you choose the right tie to (A. complement, B. compliment) your look.
_____**45.** The repairman's whistling (A. aggravated, B. irritated) all of us in accounting.
_____**46.** The bank agreed to (A. loan, B. lend) the Smiths $20,000 for their start-up.
_____**47.** The credit card company is (A. liable, B. likely) to increase your interest rate if you miss a payment.
_____**48.** The airline tries to (A. accommodate, B. accomodate) disabled passengers.
_____**49.** Every company needs a policy regarding sexual (A. harrassment, B. harassment).
_____**50.** Use your best (A. judgment, B. judgement) in selecting a service provider.

Assessment of English Skills

In the space provided, record the number of questions you answered incorrectly.

Questions	Skills Area	Number of Incorrect Answers
1–5	Parts of speech	_________
6–15	Usage	_________
16–20	Sentence structure	_________
21–30	Punctuation	_________
31–40	Mechanics	_________
41–50	Vocabulary	_________

If you had more than two incorrect answers in any of the skills areas, focus on those areas in the appropriate sections of this handbook.

Essentials of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage

The following sentence looks innocent, but is it really?

> We sell tuxedos as well as rent.

You sell tuxedos, but it's highly unlikely that you sell rent—which is what this sentence says. Whatever you're selling, some people will ignore your message because of a blunder like this. The following sentence has a similar problem:

> Vice President Eldon Neale told his chief engineer that he would no longer be with Avix, Inc., as of June 30.

Is Eldon or the engineer leaving? No matter which side the facts are on, the sentence can be read the other way. Now look at this sentence:

> The year before we budgeted more for advertising sales were up.

Confused? Perhaps this is what the writer meant:

> The year before, we budgeted more for advertising. Sales were up.

Or maybe the writer meant this:

> The year before we budgeted more for advertising, sales were up.

These examples show that even short, simple sentences can be misunderstood because of errors on the part of the writer. As you've learned in numerous courses over your schooling, an English sentence consists of the parts of speech combined with punctuation, mechanics, and vocabulary to convey meaning. Making a point of brushing up on your grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and vocabulary skills will help ensure that you create clear, effective business messages.

1.0 Grammar

Grammar is the study of how words come together to form sentences. Categorized by meaning, form, and function, English words fall into various parts of speech: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, articles, and interjections. You will communicate more clearly if you understand how each of these parts of speech operates in a sentence.

1.1 NOUNS

A **noun** names a person, a place, a thing, or an idea. Anything you can see or detect with one of your senses has a noun to name it. Some things you can't see or sense are also nouns—ions, for example, or space. So are things that exist as ideas, such as accuracy and height. (You can see that something is accurate or that a building is tall, but you can't see the idea of accuracy or the idea of height.) These names for ideas are known as **abstract nouns**. The simplest nouns are the names of things you can see or touch: *car*, *building*, *cloud*, *brick*; these are termed **concrete nouns**. A few nouns, such as *algorithm*, *software*, and *code*, are difficult to categorize as either abstract or concrete but can reasonably be considered concrete even though they don't have a physical presence.

1.1.1 Proper Nouns and Common Nouns

So far, all the examples of nouns have been **common nouns**, referring to general classes of things. The word *building* refers to a whole class of structures. Common nouns such as *building* are not capitalized.

If you want to talk about one particular building, however, you might refer to the Glazier Building. The name is capitalized, indicating that *Glazier Building* is a **proper noun**.

Here are three sets of common and proper nouns for comparison:

Common	Proper
city	Kansas City
company	Blaisden Company
store	Books Galore

1.1.2 Nouns as Subject and Object

Nouns may be used in sentences as subjects or objects. That is, the person, place, thing, or idea that is being or doing (the subject) is represented by a noun. So is the person, place, idea, or thing that is being acted on (the object). In the following sentence, the nouns are underlined:

The <u>web designer</u> created the <u>homepage</u>.

The web designer (subject) is acting in a way that affects the homepage (object). The following sentence is more complicated:

The <u>installer</u> delivered the <u>carpet</u> to the <u>customer</u>.

Installer is the subject. *Carpet* is the object of the main part of the sentence (acted on by the installer), and *customer* is the object of the phrase *to the customer*. Nevertheless, both *carpet* and *customer* are objects.

1.1.3 Plural Nouns

Nouns can be either singular or plural. The usual way to make a plural noun is to add *s* or *es* to the singular form of the word:

Singular	Plural
file	files
tax	taxes
cargo	cargoes

Many nouns have other ways of forming the plural. Some plurals involve a change in a vowel (*mouse/mice*, *goose/geese*, *woman/women*), the addition of *en* or *ren* (*ox/oxen*, *child/children*), the change from *y* to *ies* (*city/cities, specialty/specialties*), or the change from *f* to *v* (*knife/knives, half/halves;* some exceptions: *fifes*, *roofs*). Some words of Latin origin offer a choice of plurals (*phenomena/phenomenons*, *indexes/indices*, *appendixes/appendices*). It's always a good idea to consult a dictionary if you are unsure of the correct or preferred plural spelling of a word.

The plurals of compound nouns are usually formed by adding *s* or *es* to the main word of the compound (*fathers-in-law, editors-in-chief, attorneys-at-law*).

Some nouns are the same whether singular or plural (*sleep*, *deer*, *moose*). Some nouns are plural in form but singular in use (*ethics, measles*). Some nouns are used in the plural only (*scissors, trousers*).

Letters, numbers, and words used as words are sometimes made plural by adding an apostrophe and an *s* (*A's*, *Ph.D.'s*, *I's*). However, if no confusion would be created by leaving off the apostrophe, it is common practice to just add the *s* (*1990s*, *RFPs*, *DVDs*).

1.1.4 Possessive Nouns

A noun becomes possessive when it's used to show the ownership of something. Then you add *'s* to the word:

the man's car	the woman's apartment

However, ownership does not need to be legal:

the secretary's desk	the company's assets

Also, ownership may be nothing more than an automatic association:

a day's work	the job's prestige

An exception to the rule about adding *'s* to make a noun possessive occurs when the word is singular and already has two "s" sounds at the end. In cases like the following, an apostrophe is all that's needed:

crisis' dimensions	Mr. Moses' application

When the noun has only one "s" sound at the end, however, retain the *'s*:

Chris's book	Carolyn Nuss's office

With compound (hyphenated) nouns, add *'s* to the last word:

Compound Noun	**Possessive Noun**
mother-in-law	mother-in-law's
mayor-elect	mayor-elect's

To form the possessive of plural nouns, just begin by following the same rule as with singular nouns: add *'s*. However, if the plural noun already ends in an *s* (as most do), drop the one you've added, leaving only the apostrophe:

the clients' complaints	employees' benefits

To denote joint possession by two or more proper nouns, add the *'s* to the last name only (*Moody*, *Nation*, and *Smith's* ad agency). To denote individual possession by two or more persons, add an *'s* to each proper noun (*Moody's*, *Nation's*, and *Smith's* ad agencies).

1.1.5 Collective Nouns

Collective nouns encompass a group of people or objects: *crowd*, *jury*, *committee*, *team*, *audience*, *family*, *couple*, *herd*, *class*. They are often treated as singular nouns. (For more on collective nouns, see Section 1.3.4, Subject–Verb Agreement.)

Practice Session: Nouns

Underline the preferred choice within each set of parentheses in the following sentences.

1. We are moving company headquarters to New York (*City, city*).
2. The historic Bradbury (*Building, building*) is the site of the press conference; the (*Building, building*) is located in downtown Los Angeles.
3. During the conference, our staff will be staying at the Hyatt, Hilton, and Marriott (*hotels', hotels*).
4. Accuracy requires that you cross your (*ts, t*'s) and dot your (*is, i*'s).
5. The industry has been on a downward spiral since the early (*1990's, 1990s*).
6. The new (*shelfs, shelves*) will be installed on Friday.
7. Our (*specialtys, specialties*) are unparalleled service and premium brands.
8. As a result of several Internet-related (*cases, case's*), the copyright laws are under scrutiny.
9. Before a job interview, you should learn about the (*company's, companies'*) mission statement.
10. Sending the newsletter to the printer is the (*editor's-in-chief, editor-in-chief 's*) responsibility.
11. All the downtown (*business', businesses', businesses's*) signs must be repainted.
12. Because the (*passenger's, passengers'*) luggage had been damaged, they had to file claims with the airline.
13. Dealing with angry customers is all in a (*days, day's, days'*) work for Mr. Jemas.
14. Its large airport is one of (*Dallases, Dallas', Dallas's*) main appeals for industrial firms.
15. We were skeptical of (*Jone's, Jones', Jones's*) plan.

1.2 PRONOUNS

A **pronoun** is a word that stands for a noun; it saves repeating the noun:

> Employees have some choice of weeks for vacation, but *they* must notify the HR office of *their* preference by March 1.

The pronouns *they* and *their* stand in for the noun *employees*. The noun that a pronoun stands for is called the **antecedent** of the pronoun; *employees* is the antecedent of *they* and *their*.

When the antecedent is plural, the pronoun that stands in for it has to be plural; *they* and *their* are plural pronouns because *employees* is plural. Likewise, when the antecedent is singular, the pronoun has to be singular:

> We thought the contract had expired, but we soon learned that *it* had not.

However, you should be aware that expectations are changing regarding the use of *they* (and its variants *their*, *them*, and *themselves*) as singular pronouns, and these evolving expectations will be a source of uncertainty for some time to come. The problem stems from the fact that English does not have a gender-neutral singular pronoun to refer to people. In the past, many writers defaulted to *he* and its variants in order to be grammatically correct, even though doing so created situations in which the language was sexist. The solutions of using *he or she* or switching back and forth between *he* and *she* in a document can be awkward, particularly in paragraphs that require multiple pronouns based on the same antecedent.

In response to this need for a gender-neutral pronoun, many linguists and some style guides now consider it grammatically acceptable to use *they* and *their* to refer to a singular noun, as in this sentence:

> Any employee seeking a promotional opportunity must check with *their* supervisor first to make sure all performance reviews are up to date.

Using *their* in this case neatly avoids the problems of sexist and awkward language and will probably become even more widely accepted in the coming years. However, some readers still continue to view it as a grammatical error and an instance of careless writing, which creates a dilemma for business communicators.

The simplest solution is often to rewrite sentences in order to make all the affected nouns and pronouns plural:

> *All employees* seeking *promotional opportunities* must check with *their supervisors* first to make sure all performance reviews are up to date.

If rewriting the sentence isn't feasible, you have to decide whether using *they* or one of its variants will diminish your credibility in the eyes of your readers. Using *he or she* is still perfectly acceptable, although it can feel overly formal in some contexts.

(Note that even as the usage of *they* evolves, the rule of matching singular pronouns with singular nouns and plural pronouns with plural nouns stays intact. The change taking place is that *they* is gradually becoming both a singular and plural term, depending on context, just as *you* can be singular or plural.)

1.2.1 Multiple Antecedents

Sometimes a pronoun has a double (or even a triple) antecedent:

> Kathryn Boettcher and Luis Gutierrez went beyond *their* sales quotas for January.

If taken alone, *Kathryn Boettcher* is a singular antecedent. So is *Luis Gutierrez*. However, when together they are the plural antecedent of a pronoun, so the pronoun has to be plural. Thus the pronoun is *their* instead of *her* or *his*.

1.2.2 Unclear Antecedents

In some sentences the pronoun's antecedent is unclear:

> Sandy Wright sent Jane Brougham *her* production figures for the previous year. *She* thought they were too low.

To which person does the pronoun *her* refer? Someone who knew Sandy and Jane and knew their business relationship might be able to figure out the antecedent for *her*. Even with such an advantage, however, a reader might receive the wrong meaning. Also, it would be nearly impossible for any reader to know which name is the antecedent of *she*.

The best way to clarify an ambiguous pronoun is usually to rewrite the sentence, repeating nouns when needed for clarity:

> Sandy Wright sent her production figures for the previous year to Jane Brougham. Jane thought they were too low.

The noun needs to be repeated only when the antecedent is unclear.

1.2.3 Pronoun Classes

Personal pronouns consist of *I*, *you*, *we/us*, *he/him*, *she/her*, *it*, and *they/them*.

Compound personal pronouns are created by adding *self* or *selves* to simple personal pronouns: *myself, ourselves, yourself*, *yourselves*, *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, *themselves*. Compound personal pronouns are used either *intensively*, to emphasize the identity of the noun or pronoun (I *myself* have seen the demonstration), or *reflexively*, to indicate that the subject is the receiver of his or her own action (I promised *myself* I'd finish by noon). Compound personal pronouns are used incorrectly if they appear in a sentence without their antecedent:

> Walter, Virginia, and *I* (not *myself*) are the top salespeople.
>
> You need to tell *her* (not *herself*) about the mixup.

Relative pronouns refer to nouns (or groups of words used as nouns) in the main clause and are used to introduce clauses:

> Purina is the brand *that* most dog owners purchase.

The relative pronouns are *which*, *who*, *whom*, *whose*, and *what*. Other words used as relative pronouns include *that*, *whoever*, *whomever*, *whatever*, and *whichever*.

Interrogative pronouns are those used for asking questions: *who, whom, whose, which,* and *what*.

Demonstrative pronouns point out particular persons, places, or things:

> *That* is my desk. *This* can't be correct.

The demonstrative pronouns are *this, these, that*, and *those*.

Indefinite pronouns refer to persons or things not specifically identified. They include *anyone*, *someone*, *everyone*, *everybody*, *somebody*, *either*, *neither*, *one*, *none*, *all*, *both*, *each*, *another*, *any*, *many*, and similar words.

1.2.4 Case of Pronouns

The case of a pronoun tells whether it's acting or acted upon:

> *She* sells an average of five packages each week.

In this sentence, *she* is doing the selling. Because *she* is acting, *she* is said to be in the **nominative case.** Now consider what happens when the pronoun is acted upon:

> After six months, Ms. Browning promoted *her*.

In this sentence, the pronoun *her* is acted upon and is thus said to be in the **objective case.**

Contrast the nominative and objective pronouns in this list:

Nominative	**Objective**
I	me
we	us
he	him
she	her
they	them
who	whom
whoever	whomever

Objective pronouns may be used as either the object of a verb (such as *promoted*) or the object of a preposition (such as *with*):

Rob worked with *them* until the order was filled.

In this example, *them* is the object of the preposition *with* because Rob acted upon—worked with—them. Here's a sentence with three pronouns, the first one nominative, the second the object of a verb, and the third the object of a preposition:

He paid *us* as soon as the check came from *them*.

He is nominative; *us* is objective because it's the object of the verb *paid*; *them* is objective because it's the object of the preposition *from*.

Every writer sometimes wonders whether to use *who* or *whom*:

(*Who*, *Whom*) will you hire?

Because this sentence is a question, it's difficult to see that *whom* is the object of the verb *hire*. You can figure out which pronoun to use if you rearrange the question and temporarily try *she* and *her* in place of *who* and *whom:* "Will you hire *she*?" or "Will you hire *her*?" *Her* and *whom* are both objective, so the correct choice is "Whom will you hire?" Here's a different example:

(*Who*, *Whom*) logged so much travel time?

Turning the question into a statement, you get:

He logged so much travel time.

Therefore, the correct statement is:

Who logged so much travel time?

1.2.5 Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns work like possessive nouns—they show ownership or automatic association:

her job	their preferences
his account	its equipment

However, possessive pronouns are different from possessive nouns in the way they are written. Possessive pronouns never have an apostrophe:

Possessive Noun	**Possessive Pronoun**
the woman's estate	her estate
Roger Franklin's plans	his plans
the shareholders' feelings	their feelings
the vacuum cleaner's attachments	its attachments

The word *its* is the possessive of *it*. Like all other possessive pronouns, *its* has no apostrophe. Some people confuse *its* with *it's*, the contraction of *it is*. (Contractions are discussed in Section 2.9, Apostrophes.)

1.2.6 Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

Like nouns, pronouns can be singular or plural. Pronouns must agree in number with their antecedents—a singular antecedent requires a singular pronoun:

The president of the board tendered *his* resignation.

Multiple antecedents require a plural pronoun:

The members of the board tendered *their* resignations.

A pronoun referring to singular antecedents connected by *or* or *nor* should be singular:

Neither Sean nor Terry made his quota.

But a pronoun referring to a plural and a singular antecedent connected by *or* or *nor* should be plural:

Neither Sean nor the twins made *their* quotas.

Formal English prefers the nominative case after the linking verb *to be:*

It is *I*.	That is *he*.

However, for general usage it's perfectly acceptable to use the more natural "It's me" and "That's him."

Practice Session: Pronouns

Underline the preferred choice within each set of parentheses in the following sentences.

1. Just between you and (*I, me*), I don't think we will make the deadline.
2. The final speaker at the luncheon was (*she, her*).
3. When you are finished, give the report to (*he, him*).
4. (*We, Us*) telemarketers have a tarnished reputation.
5. The company is sending the marketing communications staff—Mary-Ann, Alan, and (*I, me, myself*)—to the conference.
6. The company will issue (*their, its*) annual report next month.
7. Anyone who hasn't yet turned in (*their, his or her*) questionnaire should do so by tomorrow.
8. (*Who, Whom*) shall I say called?
9. To (*who, whom*) should I address the letter?
10. (*Who, Whom*) will they hire?
11. We need more people like (*she, her*) in our department.
12. When dealing with an angry customer, try to calm (*him, him or her, them*) down.
13. It was either Sarah or Charlene who left (*her, their*) briefcase on the train.
14. The company needs to update (*its, it's*) website.
15. (*Who, Whom*) do you think will be given the promotion?
16. Be sure to include (*your, you're*) e-mail address on the form.
17. Each brand should have (*its, their*) own trademark.
18. The "dynamic duo"—Bruce and (*I, me*)—are in charge of next week's office party.
19. The supervisor thanked the team members for (*their, they're*) support.
20. The pharmaceutical giant agreed to take (*their, its*) diet drug off the market.

1.3 VERBS

A **verb** describes an action or acts as a link between a subject and words that define or describe that subject:

> They all *quit* in disgust.
>
> Working conditions *were* substandard.

The English language is full of **action verbs**. Here are a few you'll often run across in the business world:

verify	perform	fulfill
hire	succeed	send
leave	improve	receive
accept	develop	pay

You could undoubtedly list many more.

The most common linking verbs are all the forms of *to be*: I *am*, *was*, or *will be*; you *are*, *were*, or *will be*. Other words that can serve as linking verbs include *seem*, *become*, *appear*, *prove*, *look*, *remain*, *feel*, *taste*, *smell*, *sound*, *resemble*, *turn*, and *grow*:

> It *seemed* a good plan at the time.
>
> She *sounds* impressive at a meeting.
>
> The time *grows* near for us to make a decision.

These verbs link what comes before them in the sentence with what comes after; no action is involved. (See Section 1.7.5 for a fuller discussion of linking verbs.)

An **auxiliary verb** is one that helps another verb and is used for showing tense, voice, and so on. A verb with its helpers is called a **verb phrase**. Verbs used as auxiliaries include *do*, *did*, *have*, *may*, *can*, *must*, *shall*, *might*, *could*, *would*, and *should*.

1.3.1 Verb Tenses

English has three simple verb tenses: present, past, and future.

Present:	Our branches in Hawaii *stock* other items.
Past:	We *stocked* Purquil pens for a short time.
Future:	Rotex Tire Stores *will stock* your line of tires when you begin a program of effective national advertising.

With most verbs (the regular ones), the past tense ends in *ed*, and the future tense always has *will* or *shall* in front of it. But the present tense is more complex, depending on the subject:

	First Person	Second Person	Third Person
Singular	I stock	you stock	he/she/it stocks
Plural	we stock	you stock	they stock

The basic form, *stock*, takes an additional *s* when *he*, *she*, or *it* precedes it. (See Section 1.3.4 for more on subject–verb agreement.)

In addition to the three simple tenses, the three **perfect tenses** are created by adding forms of the auxiliary verb *have*. The present perfect tense uses the past participle (regularly the past tense) of the main verb, *stocked*, and adds the present-tense *have* or *has* to the front of it:

> (I, we, you, they) *have stocked*.
> (He, she, it) *has stocked*.

The past perfect tense uses the past participle of the main verb, *stocked*, and adds the past-tense *had* to the front of it:

> (I, you, he, she, it, we, they) *had stocked*.

The future perfect tense also uses the past participle of the main verb, *stocked*, but adds the future-tense *will have:*

(I, you, he, she, it, we, they) *will have stocked*.

Verbs should be kept in the same tense when the actions occur at the same time:

When the payroll checks *came in*, everyone *showed up* for work.

We *have found* that everyone *has pitched* in to help.

When the actions occur at different times, you may change tense accordingly:

The shipment *came* last Wednesday, so if another one *comes* in today, please return it.

The new employee *had been* ill at ease, but now she *has become* a full-fledged member of the team.

1.3.2 Irregular Verbs

Many verbs don't follow some of the standard patterns for verb tenses. The most irregular of these verbs is *to be:*

Tense	Singular	Plural
Present:	I *am*	we *are*
	you *are*	you *are*
	he, she, it *is*	they *are*
Past:	I *was*	we *were*
	you *were*	you *were*
	he, she, it *was*	they *were*

The future tense of *to be* is formed in the same way that the future tense of a regular verb is formed.

The perfect tenses of *to be* are also formed as they would be for a regular verb, except that the past participle is a special form, *been*, instead of just the past tense:

Present perfect:	you have been
Past perfect:	you had been
Future perfect:	you will have been

Here's a sampling of other irregular verbs:

Present	Past	Past Participle
begin	began	begun
shrink	shrank	shrunk
know	knew	known
rise	rose	risen
become	became	become
go	went	gone
do	did	done

Dictionaries list the various forms of other irregular verbs.

1.3.3 Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Many people are confused by three particular sets of verbs:

lie/lay	sit/set	rise/raise

Using these verbs correctly is much easier when you learn the difference between transitive and intransitive verbs.

Transitive verbs require a receiver; they "transfer" their action to an object. **Intransitive verbs** do not have a receiver for their action. Some intransitive verbs are complete in themselves and need no help from other words (prices *dropped*; we *won*). Other intransitive words must be "completed" by a noun or adjective called a **complement**. Complements occur with linking verbs.

Here are some sample uses of transitive and intransitive verbs:

Intransitive	Transitive
We should include in our new offices a place to *lie* down for a nap.	The workers will be here on Monday to *lay* new carpeting.
Even the way an interviewee *sits* is important.	That crate is full of stemware, so *set* it down carefully.
Salaries at Compu-Link, Inc., *rise* swiftly.	They *raise* their level of production every year.

The workers *lay* carpeting, you *set down* the crate, they *raise* production; each action is transferred to something. In the intransitive sentences, a person *lies down*, an interviewee *sits*, and salaries *rise* without affecting anything else. Intransitive sentences are complete with only a subject and a verb; transitive sentences are not complete unless they also include an object; or something to transfer the action to.

Tenses are a confusing element of the lie/lay problem:

Present	Past	Past Participle
I *lie*	I *lay*	I *have lain*
I *lay* (something down)	I *laid* (something down)	I *have laid* (something down)

The past tense of *lie* and the present tense of *lay* look and sound alike, even though they're different verbs.

1.3.4 Subject-Verb Agreement

Whether regular or irregular, every verb must agree with its subject, both in person (first, second, or third) and in number (single or plural).

	First Person	Second Person	Third Person
Singular	I *am*	you *are*	he/she/it *is*
	I *write*	you *write*	he/she/it *writes*
Plural	we *are*	you *are*	they *are*
	we *write*	you *write*	they *write*

In a simple sentence, making a verb agree with its subject is a straightforward task:

> Hector Ruiz *is* a strong competitor. (third-person singular)
>
> We *write* to you every month. (first-person plural)

Confusion sometimes arises when sentences are a bit more complicated. For example, be sure to avoid agreement problems when words come between the subject and verb. In the following examples, the verb appears in italics, and its subject is underlined:

> The <u>analysis</u> of existing documents *takes* a full week.

Even though *documents* is a plural, the verb is in the singular form. That's because the subject of the sentence is *analysis*, a singular noun. The phrase *of existing documents* can be disregarded. Here is another example:

> The <u>answers</u> for this exercise *are* in the study guide.

Take away the phrase *for this exercise* and you are left with the plural subject *answers*. Therefore, the verb takes the plural form.

Verb agreement is also complicated when the subject is a collective noun or pronoun or when the subject may be considered either singular or plural. In such cases, you often have to analyze the surrounding sentence to determine which verb form to use:

> The <u>staff</u> *is* quartered in the warehouse.
>
> The <u>staff</u> *are* at their desks in the warehouse.
>
> The <u>computers</u> and the <u>staff</u> *are* in the warehouse.
>
> Neither the staff nor the <u>computers</u> *are* in the warehouse.
>
> <u>Every</u> computer *is* in the warehouse.
>
> Many a <u>computer</u> *is* in the warehouse.

Did you notice that words such as *every* use the singular verb form? In addition, when an *either/or* or a *neither/nor* phrase combines singular and plural nouns, the verb takes the form that matches the noun closest to it.

In the business world, some subjects require extra attention. Company names, for example, are considered singular and therefore take a singular verb in most cases—even if they contain plural words:

> Stater Brothers *offers* convenient grocery shopping.

In addition, quantities are sometimes considered singular and sometimes plural. If a quantity refers to a total amount, it takes a singular verb; if a quantity refers to individual, countable units, it takes a plural verb:

> Three hours *is* a long time.
>
> The eight dollars we collected for the fund *are* tacked on the bulletin board.

Fractions may also be singular or plural, depending on the noun that accompanies them:

> One-third of the warehouse *is* devoted to this product line.
>
> One-third of the products *are* defective.

To decide whether to use a singular or plural verb with subjects such as *number* and *variety*, follow this simple rule: If the subject is preceded by *a*, use a plural verb:

> *A* number of products *are* being displayed at the trade show.

If the subject is preceded by *the*, use a singular verb:

> *The* variety of products on display *is* mind-boggling.

For a related discussion, see Section 1.7.1, Longer Sentences.

1.3.5 Voice of Verbs

Verbs have two voices, active and passive. When the subject comes first, the verb is in **active voice**; when the object comes first, the verb is in **passive voice**:

Active:	The buyer *paid* a large amount.
Passive:	A large amount *was paid* by the buyer.

The passive voice uses a form of the verb *to be*, which adds words to a sentence. In the example, the passive-voice sentence uses eight words, whereas the active-voice sentence uses only six to say the same thing. The words *was* and *by* are unnecessary to convey the meaning of the sentence. In fact, extra words usually clog meaning. So be sure to opt for the active voice when you have a choice.

At times, however, you have no choice:

> Several items *have been taken*, but so far we don't know who took them.

The passive voice becomes necessary when you don't know (or don't want to say) who performed the action; the active voice is bolder and more direct.

1.3.6 Mood of Verbs

Verbs can express one of three moods: indicative, imperative, or subjunctive. The **indicative mood** is used to make a statement or to ask a question:

> The secretary mailed a letter to each supplier.
>
> Did the secretary mail a letter to each supplier?

Use the **imperative mood** when you wish to command or request:

> Please mail a letter to each supplier.

With the imperative mood, the subject is the understood *you*.

The **subjunctive mood** is used to express doubt or a wish or a condition contrary to fact:

> If I *were* you, I wouldn't send that email.

The subjunctive is also used to express a suggestion or a request:

> I asked that Rosario *be* [not *is*] present at the meeting.

1.3.7 Verbals

Verbals are verbs that are modified to function as other parts of speech. They include infinitives, gerunds, and participles.

Infinitives are formed by placing a *to* in front of the verb (*to go*, *to purchase*, *to work*). They function as nouns. Although many of us were taught that it is "incorrect" to split an infinitive—that is, to place an adverb between the *to* and the verb—that rule is not a hard and fast one. In some cases, the adverb is best placed in the middle of the infinitive to avoid awkward constructions or ambiguous meaning:

> Production of steel is expected to *moderately exceed* domestic use.

Gerunds are verbals formed by adding *ing* to a verb (*going, having, working*). Like infinitives, they function as nouns. Gerunds and gerund phrases take a singular verb:

> *Borrowing* from banks *is* preferable to getting venture capital.

Participles are verb forms used as adjectives. The present participle ends in *ing* and generally describes action going on at the same time as other action:

> *Checking* the schedule, the contractor was pleased with progress on the project.

The **past participle** is usually the same form as the past tense and generally indicates completed action:

> When *completed*, the project will occupy six city blocks.

The **perfect participle** is formed by adding *having* to the past participle:

> *Having completed* the project, the contractor submitted his last invoice.

Practice Session: Verbs

Underline the preferred choice within each set of parentheses in the following sentences.

1. When Hastings (*come, comes, came*) in, tell him I (*want, wanted*) to see him.
2. Even though Sheila (*knowed, knew*) the right password, she typed it incorrectly.
3. The presentation had not yet (*began, begun*) when Charles arrived.
4. What I always say is, let sleeping dogs (*lay, lie*).
5. The workers (*lay, laid*) the tile in the executive bathroom yesterday.
6. This is where the president of the board (*sits, sets*) during meetings.
7. Just (*sit, set*) the boxes down over there.
8. Do you think management will (*raise, rise*) prices across the board next week?
9. A list of promotions (*was, were*) posted on the company intranet.
10. The supervisor of the assembly-line workers (*is, are*) being replaced.
11. The committee (*is, are*) considering the proposal today.
12. The board and the committee (*is, are*) having a joint meeting on June 25.
13. Neither the board nor the committee (*is, are*) expected to approve the proposal.
14. Every member of the board (*is, are*) going to make a statement.
15. Katten and Associates (*represent, represents*) clients in the entertainment industry.
16. Five hours (*is, are*) all I can give you to get the project done.
17. Half of the vacant lots (*is, are*) already sold.
18. Half of the hall (*is, are*) reserved for the luncheon.

19. Mario suggested that the public relations department (*send, sends*) out a news release about the merger.
20. If I (*was, were*) CEO, I'd fire the whole accounting staff.

1.4 ADJECTIVES

An **adjective** modifies (tells something about) a noun or pronoun. Each of the following phrases says more about the noun or pronoun than the noun or pronoun would say alone:

an *efficient* staff	a *heavy* price
brisk trade	*light* web traffic

Adjectives modify nouns more often than they modify pronouns. When adjectives do modify pronouns, however, the sentence usually has a linking verb:

They were *attentive*.	It looked *appropriate*.
He seems *interested*.	You are *skillful*.

1.4.1 Types of Adjectives

Adjectives serve a variety of purposes. **Descriptive adjectives** express some quality belonging to the modified item (*tall*, *successful*, *green*). **Limiting** or **definitive adjectives**, on the other hand, point out the modified item or limit its meaning without expressing a quality. Types include:

- Numeral adjectives (*one*, *fifty*, *second*)
- Articles (*a*, *an*, *the*)
- Pronominal adjectives: pronouns used as adjectives (*his* desk, *each* employee)
- Demonstrative adjectives: *this*, *these*, *that*, *those* (*these* tires, *that* invoice)

Proper adjectives are derived from proper nouns:

Chinese customs	*Orwellian* overtones

Predicate adjectives complete the meaning of the predicate and are introduced by linking verbs:

The location is *perfect*.	Prices are *high*.

1.4.2 Comparative Degree

Most adjectives can take three forms: simple, comparative, and superlative. The simple form modifies a single noun or pronoun. Use the comparative form when comparing two items. When comparing three or more items, use the superlative form:

Simple	Comparative	Superlative
hard	harder	hardest
safe	safer	safest
dry	drier	driest

The comparative form adds *er* to the simple form, and the superlative form adds *est*. (The *y* at the end of a word changes to *i* before the *er* or *est* is added.)

A small number of adjectives are irregular, including these:

Simple	Comparative	Superlative
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
little	less	least

When the simple form of an adjective has two or more syllables, you usually add *more* to form the comparative and *most* to form the superlative:

Simple	Comparative	Superlative
useful	more useful	most useful
exhausting	more exhausting	most exhausting
expensive	more expensive	most expensive

The most common exceptions are two-syllable adjectives that end in *y:*

Simple	Comparative	Superlative
happy	happier	happiest
costly	costlier	costliest

If you choose this option, change the *y* to *i* and tack *er* or *est* onto the end. (Note that when *more*, *most*, or any other adjective is used to modify another adjective, it becomes an adverb. See Section 1.5.2.)

Some adjectives cannot be used to make comparisons because they themselves indicate the extreme. For example, if something is perfect, nothing can be more perfect. If something is unique or ultimate, nothing can be more unique or more ultimate.

1.4.3 Hyphenated Adjectives

Many adjectives used in the business world are actually combinations of words: *up-to-date* report, *last-minute* effort, *fifth-floor* suite, *well-built* engine. As you can see, they are hyphenated when they come before the noun they modify. However, when such word combinations come after the noun they modify, they are not hyphenated. In the following example, the adjectives appear in italics and the nouns they modify are underlined:

> The report is *up to date* because of our team's *last-minute* efforts.

Hyphens are not used when part of the combination is a word ending in *ly* (because that word is usually not an adjective). Hyphens are also omitted from word combinations that are used so frequently that readers are used to seeing the words together:

> We live in a *rapidly shrinking* world.
>
> Our *highly motivated* employees will be well paid.
>
> Please consider renewing your *credit card* account.
>
> Send those figures to our *data processing* department.
>
> Our new intern is a *high school* student.

1.5 ADVERBS

An **adverb** modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb:

Modifying a verb:	Our marketing department works *efficiently*.
Modifying an adjective:	She was not dependable, although she was *highly* intelligent.
Modifying another adverb:	When signing new clients, he moved *extremely* cautiously.

An adverb can be a single word (*clearly*), a phrase (*very clearly*), or a clause (*because it was clear*).

1.5.1 Types of Adverbs

Simple adverbs are simple modifiers:

> The door opened *automatically*.
>
> The order arrived *yesterday*.
>
> Top companies were *there*.

Interrogative adverbs ask a question:

> *Where* have you been?

Conjunctive adverbs connect clauses:

> The boardroom isn't available for the meeting; *however*, the conference room should be clear.
>
> We met all our sales goals for April; *therefore*, all sales reps will get a bonus.

Words frequently used as conjunctive adverbs include *however*, *nevertheless*, *therefore*, *similarly*, *thus*, and *meanwhile*.

Negative adverbs include *not*, *never*, *seldom*, *rarely*, *scarcely*, *hardly*, and similar words. Negative adverbs are powerful words and therefore do not need any help in conveying a negative thought. Avoid using double negatives like these:

> I don't want no mistakes.
> (Correct: "I don't want any mistakes," or "I want no mistakes.")
>
> They couldn't hardly read the report.
> (Correct: "They could hardly read the report," or "They couldn't read the report.")
>
> They scarcely noticed neither one.
> (Correct: "They scarcely noticed either one," or "They noticed neither one.")

1.5.2 Adverb-Adjective Confusion

Many adverbs are adjectives turned into adverbs by adding *ly*: *highly*, *extremely*, *officially*, *closely*, *really*. In addition, many words can be adjectives or adverbs with no change in spelling, depending on their usage in a particular sentence:

The *early* bird gets the worm. [adjective]	We arrived *early*. [adverb]
It was a *hard* decision. [adjective]	He hit the wall *hard*. [adverb]
I enjoy *most* forms of jazz. [adjective]	My finances are my *most* important problem. [adverb]

Because of this situation, some adverbs are difficult to distinguish from adjectives. For example, in the following sentences, is the underlined word an adverb or an adjective?

> They worked <u>well</u>.
>
> The baby is <u>well</u>.

In the first sentence, *well* is an adverb modifying the verb *worked*. In the second sentence, *well* is an adjective modifying the noun *baby*. You may find it helpful to remember that a *linking verb* (such as *is* in "The baby is well") connects an adjective to the noun it modifies. In contrast, an *action verb* is modified by an adverb:

Adjective	Adverb
He is a *good* worker. (What kind of worker is he?)	He works *well*. (How does he work?)
It is a *real* computer. (What kind of computer is it?)	It *really* is a computer. (To what extent is it a computer?)
The traffic is *slow*. (What quality does the traffic have?)	The traffic moves *slowly*. (How does the traffic move?)
This food tastes *bad* without salt. (What quality does the food have?)	This food *badly* needs salt. (How much is it needed?)

1.5.3 Comparative Degree

Like adjectives, adverbs can be used to compare items. Generally, the basic adverb is combined with *more* or *most*, just as long adjectives are. However, some adverbs have one-word comparative forms:

One Item	Two Items	Three Items
quickly	more quickly	most quickly
sincerely	less sincerely	least sincerely
fast	faster	fastest
well	better	best

Practice Session: Adjectives and Adverbs

Underline the preferred choice within each set of parentheses in the following sentences.

1. I always choose the (*less, least*) expensive brand.
2. Which would be (*better, best*), the store brand or the generic brand?
3. This audit couldn't have come at a (*worse, worst*) time.
4. When it comes to data analysis, Claire is (*more competent, competenter*) than Alexander.
5. The ad agency's campaign for our new vitamin supplement is (*unique, very unique, most unique*), to say the least.
6. A corporation can benefit from a (*well written, well-written*) annual report.
7. The chairman's introductory message to the annual report was (*well written, well-written*).
8. Even a (*beautifully written, beautifully-written*) report can be hampered by poor design and production.
9. According to Bank of America, the number of mortgage applications from (low-income, low income) consumers has tripled in the past year.
10. We decided that Angela's analysis was (*good, well*) enough to submit to the board of directors.
11. Harrison and Martinez work (*good, well*) together.
12. We are (*real, really*) excited about next week's product launch.
13. Could this project be moving any more (*slow, slowly*) through the bureaucratic system?
14. We (*could hardly, couldn't hardly*) wait to see how the brochure had turned out.
15. Today TeKTech is (*more heavy, more heavily, most heavily*) involved in nanotechnology, compared to five years ago.

1.6 OTHER PARTS OF SPEECH

Nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs carry most of the meaning in a sentence. Four other parts of speech link them together in sentences: prepositions, conjunctions, articles, and interjections.

1.6.1 Prepositions

A **preposition** is a word or group of words that describes a relationship between other words in a sentence. A simple preposition is made up of one word: *of*, *in*, *by*, *above*, *below*. A *compound preposition* is made up of two prepositions: *out of*, *from among*, *except for*, *because of*.

A **prepositional phrase** is a group of words introduced by a preposition that functions as an adjective (an adjectival phrase) or as an adverb (adverbial phrase) by telling more about a pronoun, noun, or verb:

> The shipment will be here *by next Friday*.
>
> Put the mail *in the out-bin*.

Prepositional phrases should be placed as close as possible to the element they are modifying:

> Shopping *on the Internet* can be confusing for the uninitiated. (*not* Shopping can be confusing for the uninitiated *on the Internet*.)

Some prepositions are closely linked with a verb. When using phrases such as *look up* and *wipe out*, keep them intact and do not insert anything between the verb and the preposition.

You may have been told that it is unacceptable to put a preposition at the end of a sentence. However, that is not a hard-and-fast rule, and trying to follow it can sometimes be a challenge. You can end a sentence with a preposition as along as the sentence sounds natural and if rewording the sentence would create awkward wording:

> I couldn't tell what they were interested in.
>
> What did she attribute it to?
>
> What are you looking for?

Avoid using unnecessary prepositions. In the following examples, the prepositions in parentheses should be omitted:

> All (of) the staff members were present.
>
> I almost fell off (of) my chair with surprise.
>
> Where was Mr. Steuben going (to)?
>
> They couldn't help (from) wondering.

The opposite problem is failing to include a preposition when you should. Consider these two sentences:

> Sales were over $100,000 for Linda and Bill.
>
> Sales were over $100,000 for Linda and for Bill.

The first sentence indicates that Linda and Bill had combined sales over $100,000; the second, that Linda and Bill each had sales over $100,000, for a combined total in excess of $200,000. The preposition *for* is critical here.

When the same preposition can be used for two or more words in a sentence without affecting the meaning, only the last preposition is required:

> We are familiar (with) and satisfied with your company's products.

But when different prepositions are normally used with the words, all the prepositions must be included:

> We are familiar with and interested in your company's products.

Some prepositions have come to be used in a particular way with certain other parts of speech. Here is a partial list of some prepositions that are commonly used with certain words:

according to	independent of
agree to (a proposal)	inferior to
agree with (a person)	plan to
buy from	prefer to
capable of	prior to
comply with	reason with
conform to	responsible for
differ from (things)	similar to
differ with (person)	talk to (without interaction)
different from	talk with (with interaction)
get from (receive)	wait for (person or thing)
get off (dismount)	wait on (like a waiter)

If you are unsure of the correct idiomatic expression, check a dictionary.

Some verb-preposition idioms vary depending on the situation: You agree *to* a proposal but *with* a person, *on* a price, or *in* principle. You argue *about* something, *with* a person, and *for* or *against* a proposition. You compare one item *to* another to show their similarities; you compare one item *with* another to show differences.

Here are some other examples of preposition usage that have given writers trouble:

among/between: *Among* is used to refer to three or more (Circulate the memo *among* the staff); *between* is used to refer to two (Put the copy machine *between* Judy and Dan).

as if/like: *As if* is used before a clause (It seems *as if* we should be doing something); *like* is used before a noun or pronoun (He seems *like* a nice guy).

have/of: *Have* is a verb used in verb phrases (They should *have* checked first); *of* is a preposition and is never used in such cases.

in/into: *In* is used to refer to a static position (The file is *in* the cabinet); *into* is used to refer to movement toward a position (Put the file *into* the cabinet).

1.6.2 Conjunctions

Conjunctions connect the parts of a sentence: words, phrases, and clauses. A **coordinating conjunction** connects two words, phrases, or clauses of equal rank. The simple coordinating conjunctions include *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *yet*, and *so*. **Correlative conjunctions** are coordinating conjunctions used in pairs: *both/and*, *either/or*, *neither/nor*, *not only/but also*. Constructions with correlative conjunctions should be parallel, with the same part of speech following each element of the conjunction:

> The purchase was *not only* expensive *but also* unnecessary.
>
> The purchase *not only was* expensive *but also was* unnecessary.

Conjunctive adverbs are adverbs used to connect or show relationships between clauses. They include *however*, *nevertheless*, *consequently*, *moreover*, and *as a result*.

A **subordinate conjunction** connects two clauses of unequal rank; it joins a dependent (subordinate) clause to the independent clause on which it depends (for more on dependent and independent clauses, see Section 1.7.1). Subordinate conjunctions include *as*, *if*, *because*, *although*, *while*, *before*, *since*, *that*, *until*, *unless*, *when*, *where*, and *whether*.

1.6.3 Articles and Interjections

Only three **articles** exist in English: *the*, *a*, and *an*. These words are used, like adjectives, to specify which item you are talking about. *The* is called the *definite article* because it indicates a specific noun; *a* and *an* are called the *indefinite articles* because they are less specific about what they are referring to.

If a word begins with a vowel (soft) sound, use *an;* otherwise, use *a*. It's *a history*, not *an history*, *a hypothesis*, not *an hypothesis*. Use *an* with an "h" word only if it is a soft "h," as in *honor* and *hour*. Use *an* with words that are pronounced with a soft vowel sound even if they are spelled beginning with a consonant (usually in the case of abbreviations): *an SEC application, an MP3 file*. Use *a* with words that begin with vowels if they are pronounced with a hard sound: *a university, a Usenet account*.

Repeat an article if adjectives modify different nouns: *The red house and the white house are mine*. Do not repeat an article if all adjectives modify the same noun: *The red and white house is mine*.

Interjections are words that express no solid information, only emotion:

Wow!	Well, well!
Oh, no!	Good!

Such purely emotional language has its place in private life and advertising copy, but it only weakens the effect of most business writing.

Practice Session: Prepositions, Conjunctions, Articles, and Interjections

Circle the letter of the preferred choice in each pair of sentences.

1. A. If we want to have the project done next week, we'll need those balance sheets by Wednesday.
B. If we want to have the project done next week, by Wednesday we'll need those balance sheets.

2. A. From where did that information come?
B. Where did that information come from?

3. A. Please look up the shipping rates for packages to France.
B. Please look the shipping rates up for packages to France.

4. A. You need to indicate the type job you're seeking.
B. You need to indicate the type of job you're seeking.

5. A. Michael got the actuarial data off of the Internet.
B. Michael got the actuarial data off the Internet.

6. A. When the meeting is over, Michelle will prepare the minutes.
B. When the meeting is over with, Michelle will prepare the minutes.

7. A. Sharon is familiar and knowledgeable about HTML coding.
B. Sharon is familiar with and knowledgeable about HTML coding.

8. A. We'll be deciding among the four applicants this afternoon.
B. We'll be deciding between the four applicants this afternoon.

9. A. Because Marshall isn't here, it looks like the conference call will have to be canceled.
B. Because Marshall isn't here, it looks as if the conference call will have to be canceled.

10. A. I would have had the memo done sooner, but my computer crashed.
B. I would of had the memo done sooner, but my computer crashed.

11. A. When we have the survey results, we can put them in the report.
B. When we have the survey results, we can put them into the report.

12. A. If you agree with the settlement, I can prepare the final papers.
B. If you agree to the settlement, I can prepare the final papers.

13. A. It is important that you provide not only your name but also your address and telephone number.
B. It is important that you provide not only your name but also address and telephone number.

14. A. The conference will be held in either March or July.
B. The conference will be held either in March or July.

15. A. Please prepare an RFP for the construction job.
B. Please prepare a RFP for the construction job.

1.7 SENTENCES

Sentences are constructed with the major building blocks, the parts of speech. Take, for example, this simple two-word sentence:

> Money talks.

It consists of a noun (*money*) and a verb (*talks*). When used in this way, the noun works as the first requirement for a sentence, the **subject**, and the verb works as the second requirement, the **predicate**. Without a subject (who or what does something) and a predicate (the doing of it), you have merely a collection of words, not a sentence.

1.7.1 Longer Sentences

More complicated sentences have more complicated subjects and predicates, but they still have a simple subject and a predicate verb. In the following examples, the subject is underlined once, the predicate verb twice:

> Marex and Contron enjoy higher earnings each quarter.

Marex [and] *Contron* do something; *enjoy* is what they do.

> My interview, coming minutes after my freeway accident, did not impress or move anyone.

Interview is what did something. What did it do? It *did* [not] *impress* [or] *move*.

> In terms of usable space, a steel warehouse, with its extremely long span of roof unsupported by pillars, makes more sense.

Warehouse is what *makes*.

These three sentences demonstrate several things. First, in all three sentences, the simple subject and predicate verb are the "bare bones" of the sentence, the parts that carry the core idea of the sentence. When trying to find the subject and predicate verb, disregard all prepositional phrases, modifiers, conjunctions, and articles.

Second, in the third sentence, the verb is singular (*makes*) because the subject is singular (*warehouse*). Even though the plural noun *pillars* is closer to the verb, *warehouse* is the subject. So *warehouse* determines whether the verb is singular or plural. Subject and predicate must agree.

Third, the subject in the first sentence is compound (*Marex* [and] *Contron*). A compound subject, when connected by *and*, requires a plural verb (*enjoy*). Also, the second sentence shows how compound predicates can occur (*did* [not] *impress* [or] *move*).

Fourth, the second sentence incorporates a group of words—*coming minutes after my freeway accident*—containing a form of a verb (*coming*) and a noun (*accident*). Yet, this group of words is not a complete sentence for two reasons:

- **Not all nouns are subjects:** *Accident* is not the subject of *coming*.
- **Not all verbs are predicates:** A verb that ends in *ing* can never be the predicate of a sentence (unless preceded by a form of *to be*, as in *was coming*).

Because they don't contain a subject and a predicate, the words *coming minutes after my freeway accident* (called a **phrase**) can't be written as a sentence. That is, the phrase cannot stand alone; it cannot begin with a capital letter and end with a period. So a phrase must always be just one part of a sentence.

Sometimes a sentence incorporates two or more groups of words that do contain a subject and a predicate; these word groups are called **clauses**:

> My interview, because it came minutes after my freeway accident, did not impress or move anyone.

The **independent clause** is the portion of the sentence that could stand alone without revision:

> My interview did not impress or move anyone.

The other part of the sentence could stand alone only by removing *because*:

> (because) It came minutes after my freeway accident.

This part of the sentence is known as a **dependent clause**; although it has a subject and a predicate (just as an independent clause does), it's linked to the main part of the sentence by a word (*because*) showing its dependence.

In summary, the two types of clauses—dependent and independent—both have a subject and a predicate. Dependent clauses, however, do not bear the main meaning of the sentence and are therefore linked to an independent clause. Nor can phrases stand alone, because they lack both a subject and a predicate. Only independent clauses can be written as sentences without revision.

1.7.2 Types of Sentences

Sentences come in four main types, depending on the extent to which they contain clauses. A **simple sentence** has one subject and one predicate; in short, it has one main independent clause:

> Boeing is the world's largest aerospace company.

A **compound sentence** consists of two independent clauses connected by a coordinating conjunction (*and*, *or*, *but*, etc.) or a semicolon:

> Airbus outsold Boeing for several years, but Boeing has recently regained the lead.

A **complex sentence** consists of an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses:

> Boeing is betting [independent clause] that airlines will begin using moderately smaller planes to fly passengers between smaller cities [dependent clause introduced by *that*].

A **compound-complex sentence** has two main clauses, at least one of which contains a subordinate (dependent clause):

> Boeing is betting [independent clause] that airlines will begin using moderately smaller planes to fly passengers between smaller cities [dependent clause], and it anticipates that new airports will be developed to meet passenger needs [independent clause].

1.7.3 Sentence Fragments

An incomplete sentence (a phrase or a dependent clause) that is written as though it were a complete sentence is called a **fragment**. Consider the following sentence fragments:

> Marilyn Sanders, having had pilferage problems in her store for the past year. Refuses to accept the results of our investigation.

This serious error can easily be corrected by putting the two fragments together:

> Marilyn Sanders, having had pilferage problems in her store for the past year, refuses to accept the results of our investigation.

The actual details of a situation will determine the best way for you to remedy a fragment problem.

The ban on fragments has one exception. Some advertising copy contains sentence fragments, written knowingly to convey a certain rhythm. However, advertising is the only area of business in which fragments are acceptable.

1.7.4 Fused Sentences and Comma Splices

Just as there can be too little in a group of words to make it a sentence, there can also be too much:

> All our mail is run through a postage meter every afternoon someone picks it up.

This example contains two sentences, not one, but the two have been blended so that it's hard to tell where one ends and the next begins. Is the mail run through a meter every afternoon? If so, the sentences should read:

> All our mail is run through a postage meter every afternoon. Someone picks it up.

Perhaps the mail is run through a meter at some other time (morning, for example) and is picked up every afternoon:

> All our mail is run through a postage meter. Every afternoon someone picks it up.

The order of words is the same in all three cases; sentence division makes all the difference. Either of the last two cases is grammatically correct. The choice depends on the facts of the situation.

Sometimes these so-called **fused sentences** have a more obvious point of separation:

> Several large orders arrived within a few days of one another, too many came in for us to process by the end of the month.

Here, the comma has been put between two independent clauses in an attempt to link them. When a lowly comma separates two complete sentences, the result is called a **comma splice**. A comma splice can be remedied in one of three ways:

- **Replace the comma with a period and capitalize the next word:** "... one another. Too many ..."
- **Replace the comma with a semicolon and do not capitalize the next word:** "... one another; too many ..." This remedy works only when the two sentences have closely related meanings.
- **Change one of the sentences so that it becomes a phrase or a dependent clause.** This remedy often produces the best writing, but it takes more work.

The third alternative can be carried out in several ways. One is to begin the sentence with a subordinating conjunction:

> Whenever several large orders arrived within a few days of one another, too many came in for us to process by the end of the month.

Another way is to remove part of the subject or the predicate verb from one of the independent clauses, thereby creating a phrase:

> Several large orders arrived within a few days of one another, too many for us to process by the end of the month.

Finally, you can change one of the predicate verbs to its *ing* form:

> Several large orders arrived within a few days of one another, too many coming in for us to process by the end of the month.

In many cases, simply adding a coordinating conjunction can separate fused sentences or remedy a comma splice:

> You can fire them, or you can make better use of their abilities.
>
> Margaret drew up the designs, and Matt carried them out.
>
> We will have three strong months, but after that sales will taper off.

Be careful with coordinating conjunctions: Use them only to join simple sentences that express similar ideas.

Also, because they say relatively little about the relationship between the two clauses they join, avoid using coordinating conjunctions too often: *and* is merely an addition sign; *but* is just a turn signal; *or* only points to an alternative. Subordinating conjunctions such as *because* and *whenever* tell the reader a lot more.

1.7.5 Sentences with Linking Verbs

Linking verbs were discussed briefly in the section on verbs (Section 1.3). Here, you can see more fully the way they function in a sentence. The following is a model of any sentence with a linking verb:

> A *(verb)* B.

Although words such as *seems* and *feels* can also be linking verbs, let's assume that the verb is a form of *to be:*

> A *is* B.

In such a sentence, A and B are always nouns, pronouns, or adjectives. When one is a noun and the other is a pronoun, or when both are nouns, the sentence says that one is the same as the other:

> She is president.
>
> Rachel is president.
>
> She is forceful.

Recall from Section 1.3.3 that the noun or adjective that follows the linking verb is called a *complement*. When it is a noun or noun phrase, the complement is called a *predicate nominative*, when the complement is an adjective, it is referred to as a *predicate adjective*.

1.7.6 Misplaced Modifiers

The position of a modifier in a sentence is important. The movement of *only* changes the meaning in the following sentences:

> Only we are obliged to supply those items specified in your contract.
>
> We are obliged only to supply those items specified in your contract.
>
> We are obliged to supply only those items specified in your contract.
>
> We are obliged to supply those items specified only in your contract.

In any particular set of circumstances, only one of those sentences would be accurate. The others would very likely cause problems. To prevent misunderstanding, place such modifiers as close as possible to the noun or verb they modify.

For similar reasons, whole phrases that are modifiers must be placed near the right noun or verb. Mistakes in placement create ludicrous meanings:

> Antia Information Systems bought new computer chairs for the programmers with more comfortable seats.

The anatomy of programmers is not normally a concern of business writers. Obviously, the comfort of the chairs was the issue:

> Antia Information Systems bought programmers the new computer chairs with more comfortable seats.

Here is another example:

> I asked him to file all the letters in the cabinet that had been answered.

In this ridiculous sentence, the cabinet has been answered, even though no cabinet in history is known to have asked a question. *That had been answered* is too far from *letters* and too close to *cabinet*. Here's an improvement:

> I asked him to file in the cabinet all the letters that had been answered.

The term **dangling modifier** is often used to refer to a clause or phrase that because of its position in the sentence seems to modify a word that it is not meant to modify. For instance:

> Lying motionless, coworkers rushed to Barry's aid.

Readers expect an introductory phrase to modify the subject of the main clause. But in this case it wasn't the *coworkers* who were lying motionless but rather *Barry* who was in this situation. Like this example, most instances of dangling modifiers occur at the beginning of sentences. The source of some danglers is a passive construction:

> To find the needed information, the whole book had to be read.

In such cases, switching to the active voice can usually remedy the problem:

> To find the needed information, you will need to read the whole book.

1.7.7 Parallelism

Two or more sentence elements that have the same relation to another element should be in the same form. Otherwise, the reader is forced to work harder to understand the meaning of the sentence. When a series consists of phrases or clauses, the same part of speech (preposition, gerund, etc.) should introduce them. Do not mix infinitives with participles or adjectives with nouns. Here are some examples of nonparallel elements:

> Andersen is hiring managers, programmers, and people who work in accounting. [nouns not parallel]
>
> Andersen earns income by auditing, consulting, and by bookkeeping. [prepositional phrases not parallel]
>
> Andersen's goals are to win new clients, keeping old clients happy, and finding new enterprises. [infinitive mixed with gerunds]

Practice Session: Sentences

Circle the letter of the preferred choice in each group of sentences.

1. A. Cyberterrorism—orchestrated attacks on a company's information systems for political or economic purposes—is a very real threat.
   B. Cyberterrorism—orchestrated attacks on a company's information systems for political or economic purposes—are a very real threat.
2. A. Email, phone calls, and IM messages, each one a distraction, interrupts employees when they work.
   B. Email, phone calls, and IM messages, each one a distraction, interrupt employees when they work.
3. A. About 35 percent of major U.S. companies keep tabs on workers. Because they want to protect valuable company information.
   B. About 35 percent of major U.S. companies keep tabs on workers because they want to protect valuable company information.
   C. About 35 percent of major U.S. companies keep tabs on workers; because they want to protect valuable company information.
4. A. Despite its small size and relative isolation in the Arctic Circle. Finland once led the pack in mobile phone technology and its applications.
   B. Despite its small size and relative isolation in the Arctic Circle; Finland once led the pack in mobile phone technology and its applications.
   C. Despite its small size and relative isolation in the Arctic Circle, Finland once led the pack in mobile phone technology and its applications.
5. A. Many employees erroneously believe that their email and voicemail messages are private they're surprised when email ends up in places where they did not intend it to go.
   B. Many employees erroneously believe that their email and voicemail messages are private, they're surprised when email ends up in places where they did not intend it to go.
   C. Many employees erroneously believe that their email and voicemail messages are private, so they're surprised when email ends up in places where they did not intend it to go.
6. A. Each day people in the United States treat themselves to more than 3 million Krispy Kreme doughnuts, they buy more than 11,000 dozen of those doughnuts every hour.
   B. Each day people in the United States treat themselves to more than 3 million Krispy Kreme doughnuts, buying more than 11,000 dozen of those doughnuts every hour.
7. A. The procedure for making Krispy Kreme doughnuts takes about an hour, the manufacturing process begins long before local stores crank up their production lines.
   B. The procedure for making Krispy Kreme doughnuts takes about an hour; the manufacturing process begins long before local stores crank up their production lines.
   C. The procedure for making Krispy Kreme doughnuts takes about an hour. But the manufacturing process begins long before local stores crank up their production lines.
8. A. After blending the ingredients, the doughnut mix is stored in Krispy Kreme's warehouse for a week.
   B. After blending the ingredients, Krispy Kreme's warehouse is used to store the doughnut mix for a week.
   C. After the ingredients have been blended, the doughnut mix is stored in Krispy Kreme's warehouse for a week.
9. A. Using computer-aided design, our engineers customize every bike to meet the rider's size and component preferences.
   B. Our engineers customize every bike with computer-aided design to meet the rider's size and component preferences.
10. A. Catering to its customers, about 2,000 bikes are built annually by Green Gear Cycling.
    B. Catering to its customers, about 2,000 bikes are built by Green Gear Cycling annually.
    C. Catering to its customers, Green Gear Cycling builds about 2,000 bikes annually.

2.0 Punctuation

On the highway, signs tell you when to slow down or stop, where to turn, and when to merge. In similar fashion, punctuation helps readers negotiate your prose. The proper use of punctuation keeps readers from losing track of your meaning.

2.1 PERIODS

Use a period (1) to end any sentence that is not a question, (2) with certain abbreviations, and (3) between dollars and cents in an amount of money.

2.2 QUESTION MARKS

Use a question mark after any direct question that requests an answer:

> Are you planning to enclose a check, or shall we bill you?

Don't use a question mark with commands phrased as questions for the sake of politeness:

> Will you send us a check today.

A question mark should precede quotation marks, parentheses, and brackets if it is part of the quoted or parenthetical material; otherwise, it should follow:

> This issue of *Inc*. has an article titled "What's Your Entrepreneurial IQ?"
>
> Have you read the article "Five Principles of Guerrilla Marketing"?

Do not use the question mark with indirect questions or with requests:

> Mr. Antonelli asked whether anyone had seen Nathalia lately.

Do not use a comma or a period with a question mark; the question mark takes the place of these punctuation marks.

2.3 EXCLAMATION POINTS

Use exclamation points after highly emotional language. Because business writing almost never calls for emotional language, you will seldom use exclamation points.

2.4 SEMICOLONS

Semicolons have three main uses. One is to separate two closely related independent clauses:

> The outline for the report is due within a week; the report itself is due at the end of the month.

A semicolon should also be used instead of a comma when the items in a series have commas within them:

> Our previous meetings were on November 10, 2017; February 20, 2018; and April 29, 2019.

Finally, a semicolon should be used to separate independent clauses when the second one begins with a conjunctive adverb such as *however*, *therefore*, or *nevertheless* or a phrase such as *for example* or *in that case:*

> Our supplier has been out of part D712 for 10 weeks; however, we have found another source that can ship the part right away.
>
> His test scores were quite low; on the other hand, he has a lot of relevant experience.

Section 4.4 provides more information on using transitional words and phrases.

Semicolons should always be placed outside parentheses:

> Events Northwest has the contract for this year's convention (August 23–28); we haven't awarded the contract for next year yet.

2.5 COLONS

Use a colon after the salutation in a business letter. You should also use a colon at the end of a sentence or phrase introducing a list or (sometimes) a quotation:

> Our study included the three most critical problems: insufficient capital, incompetent management, and inappropriate location.

A colon should not be used when the list, quotation, or idea is a direct object of the verb or preposition. This rule applies whether the list is set off or run in:

> We are able to supply
>
> staples
wood screws
nails
toggle bolts
>
> This shipment includes 9 DVDs, 12 CDs, and 4 USB flash drives.

Another way you can use a colon is to separate the main clause and another sentence element when the second explains, illustrates, or amplifies the first:

> Management was unprepared for the union representatives' demands: this fact alone accounts for their arguing well into the night.

However, in contemporary usage, such clauses are frequently separated by a semicolon.

Like semicolons, colons should always be placed outside parentheses:

> He has an expensive list of new demands (none of which is covered in the purchase agreement): new carpeting, network cabling, and a new security system.

Practice Session: Punctuation 1

Circle the letter of the preferred choice in the following groups of sentences.

1. A. She asked me whether we should increase our insurance coverage?
B. She asked me whether we should increase our insurance coverage.

2. A. Would you please let me know when the copier is free.
B. Would you please let me know when the copier is free?
3. A. You may find some value in this seminar!
B. You may find some value in this seminar.
4. A. The officers of the board of directors are John Rogers, president, Robin Doug Donlan, vice president for programming, Bill Pittman, vice president for operations, and Mary Sturhann, secretary.
B. The officers of the board of directors are John Rogers, president; Robin Doug Donlan, vice president for programming; Bill Pittman, vice president for operations; and Mary Sturhann, secretary.
C. The officers of the board of directors are John Rogers, president; Robin Doug Donlan, vice president for programming; Bill Pittman, vice president for operations, and Mary Sturhann, secretary.
5. A. Edward Jones is the best brokerage house in America; it has more offices than any other brokerage house.
B. Edward Jones is the best brokerage house in America, it has more offices than any other brokerage house.
6. A. One of the SEC's top priorities is to crack down on insider trading, however it readily admits that it has not been very successful to date.
B. One of the SEC's top priorities is to crack down on insider trading; however, it readily admits that it has not been very successful to date.
7. A. To keep on top of financial news, you should consult three newspapers aimed specifically at investors: *The Wall Street Journal*, *Investor's Business Daily*, and *Barron's*.
B. To keep on top of financial news, you should consult three newspapers aimed specifically at investors; such as, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Investor's Business Daily*, and *Barron's*.
C. To keep on top of financial news, you should consult three newspapers aimed specifically at investors; such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *Investor's Business Daily*, and *Barron's*.
8. A. I wonder if it is appropriate to call John's clients while he is on vacation.
B. I wonder if it is appropriate to call John's clients while he is on vacation?
9. A. The three basic concepts that guide accountants are: the fundamental accounting equation, double-entry bookkeeping, and the matching principle.
B. The three basic concepts that guide accountants are the fundamental accounting equation, double-entry bookkeeping, and the matching principle.
C. The three basic concepts that guide accountants are the fundamental accounting equation; double-entry bookkeeping; and the matching principle.
10. A. Accountants are guided by three basic concepts, the fundamental accounting equation, double-entry bookkeeping, and the matching principle.
B. Accountants are guided by three basic concepts: the fundamental accounting equation; double-entry bookkeeping; and the matching principle.
C. Accountants are guided by three basic concepts: the fundamental accounting equation, double-entry bookkeeping, and the matching principle.

2.6 COMMAS

Commas have many uses; the most common is to separate items in a series:

> He took the job, learned it well, worked hard, and succeeded.
>
> Put paper, pencils, and paper clips on the requisition list.

Company style may dictate omitting the final comma in a series. However, if you have a choice, use the final comma; it's often necessary to prevent misunderstanding.

A second place to use a comma is between independent clauses that are joined by a coordinating conjunction (*and*, *but*, or *or*):

> She spoke to the sales staff, and he spoke to the production staff.
>
> I was advised to proceed, and I did.

A third use for the comma is to separate a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence from an independent clause:

> Because of our lead in the market, we may be able to risk introducing a new product.

However, a dependent clause at the end of a sentence is separated from the independent clause by a comma only when the dependent clause is unnecessary to the main meaning of the sentence:

> We may be able to introduce a new product, although it may involve some risk.

A fourth use for the comma is after an introductory phrase or word:

> Starting with this amount of capital, we can survive in the red for one year.
>
> Through more careful planning, we may be able to serve more people.
>
> Yes, you may proceed as originally planned.

However, with short introductory prepositional phrases and some one-syllable words (such as *hence* and *thus*), the comma is often omitted:

> Before January 1 we must complete the inventory.
>
> Thus we may not need to hire anyone.
>
> In July we will complete the move to Tulsa.

Fifth, paired commas are used to set off nonrestrictive clauses and phrases. A **restrictive clause** is one that cannot be omitted without altering the meaning of the main clause, whereas a **nonrestrictive clause** can be:

> The *Time* magazine website, which is produced by Steve Conley, has won several design awards. [nonrestrictive: the material set off by commas could be omitted]
>
> The website that is produced by Steve Conley has won several design awards. [restrictive: no commas are used before and after *that is produced by Steve Conley* because this information is necessary to the meaning of the sentence—it specifies which website]

A sixth use for commas is to set off appositive words and phrases. (An **appositive** has the same meaning as the word it is in apposition to.) Like nonrestrictive clauses, appositives can be dropped without changing or obscuring the meaning of the sentence:

> Conley, a freelance designer, also produces the websites for several nonprofit corporations.

Seventh, commas are used between adjectives modifying the same noun (coordinate adjectives):

> She left Monday for a long, difficult recruiting trip.

To test the appropriateness of such a comma, try reversing the order of the adjectives: *a difficult, long recruiting trip*. If the order cannot be reversed, leave out the comma (a *good old friend* isn't the same as an *old good friend*). A comma should not be used when one of the adjectives is part of the noun. Compare these two phrases:

> a distinguished, well-known figure
>
> a distinguished public figure

The adjective-noun combination of *public* and *figure* has been used together so often that it has come to be considered a single thing: *public figure*. So no comma is required.

Eighth, commas are used both before and after the year in sentences that include month, day, and year:

> It will be sent by December 15, 2020, from our Cincinnati plant.

Some companies use the European style: 15 December 2020. No commas should be used in that case. Nor is a comma needed when only the month and year are present (December 2020).

Ninth, commas are used to set off a variety of parenthetical words and phrases within sentences, including state names, dates, abbreviations, transitional expressions, and contrasted elements:

> They were, in fact, prepared to submit a bid.
>
> Habermacher, Inc., went public in 1999.
>
> Our goal was increased profits, not increased market share.
>
> Service, then, is our main concern.
>
> The factory was completed in Chattanooga, Tennessee, just three weeks ago.
>
> Joanne Dubiik, M.D., has applied for a loan from First Savings.
>
> I started work here on March 1, 2003, and soon received my first promotion.

Tenth, a comma is used to separate a quotation from the rest of the sentence:

> Your warranty reads, "These conditions remain in effect for one year from date of purchase."

However, the comma is left out when the quotation as a whole is built into the structure of the sentence:

> He hurried off with an angry "Look where you're going."

Finally, a comma should be used whenever it's needed to avoid confusion or an unintended meaning. Compare the following:

> Ever since they have planned new ventures more carefully.
>
> Ever since, they have planned new ventures more carefully.

2.7 DASHES

Use dashes to surround a comment that is a sudden turn in thought:

> Membership in the IBSA—it's expensive but worth it—may be obtained by applying to our New York office.

A dash can also be used to emphasize a parenthetical word or phrase:

> Third-quarter profits—in excess of $2 million—are up sharply.

Finally, use dashes to set off a phrase that contains commas:

> All our offices—Milwaukee, New Orleans, and Phoenix—have sent representatives.

Don't confuse a dash with a hyphen. A dash separates and emphasizes words, phrases, and clauses more strongly than commas or parentheses can; a hyphen ties two words so tightly that they almost become one word.

When using a computer, use the em dash symbol. When typing a dash in email, type two hyphens with no space before, between, or after.

A second type of dash, the en dash, can be produced with computer word processing and page-layout programs. This kind of dash is shorter than the regular dash and longer than a hyphen. It is reserved almost exclusively for indicating "to" or "through" with numbers such as dates and pages: *2019–2020*, *pages 30–44*.

2.8 HYPHENS

Hyphens are mainly used in three ways. The first is to separate the parts of compound words beginning with such prefixes as *self-*, *ex-*, *quasi-*, and *all-*:

self-assured	quasi-official
ex-wife	all-important

However, do not use hyphens in words that have prefixes such as *pro*, *anti*, *non*, *re*, *pre*, *un*, *inter*, and *extra*:

prolabor	nonunion
antifascist	interdepartmental

Exceptions occur when (1) the prefix occurs before a proper noun or (2) the vowel at the end of the prefix is the same as the first letter of the root word:

pro-Republican	anti-American
anti-inflammatory	extra-atmospheric

When in doubt, consult your dictionary.

Hyphens are used in some types of spelled-out numbers. For instance, they are used to separate the parts of a spelled-out number from *twenty-one* to *ninety-nine* and for spelled-out fractions: *two-thirds*, *one-sixth* (although some style guides say not to hyphenate fractions used as nouns).

Certain compound nouns are formed by using hyphens: *secretary-treasurer*, *city-state*. Check your dictionary for compounds you're unsure about.

Hyphens are also used in some compound adjectives, which are adjectives made up of two or more words. Specifically, you should use hyphens in compound adjectives that come before the noun:

an interest-bearing account	well-informed executives

However, you need not hyphenate when the adjective follows a linking verb:

> This account is interest bearing.
>
> Their executives are well informed.

You can shorten sentences that list similar hyphenated words by dropping the common part from all but the last word:

> Check the costs of first-, second-, and third-class postage.

Finally, hyphens may be used to divide words at the end of a typed line. Such hyphenation is best avoided, but when you have to divide words at the end of a line, do so correctly (see Section 3.5). Dictionaries show how words are divided into syllables.

2.9 APOSTROPHES

Use an apostrophe in the possessive form of noun (but not in a pronoun):

> On his desk was a reply to Bette *Ainsley's* application for the *manager's* position.

Apostrophes are also used in place of the missing letter(s) of a contraction:

Whole Words	Contraction
we will	we'll
do not	don't
they are	they're

2.10 QUOTATION MARKS

Use quotation marks to surround words that are repeated exactly as they were said or written:

> The collection letter ended by saying, "This is your third and final notice."

Remember: (1) When the quoted material is a complete sentence, the first word is capitalized. (2) The final comma or period goes inside the closing quotation marks.

Quotation marks are also used to set off the title of a newspaper story, magazine article, or book chapter:

> You should read "Legal Aspects of the Collection Letter" in *Today's Credit*.

Quotation marks may also be used to indicate special treatment for words or phrases, such as terms that you're using in an unusual or ironic way:

> Our management "team" spends more time squabbling than working to solve company problems.

When you are defining a word, put the definition in quotation marks:

> The abbreviation *etc.* means "and so forth."

When using quotation marks, take care to insert the closing marks as well as the opening ones.

Although periods and commas go inside any quotation marks, colons and semicolons generally go outside them. A question mark goes inside the quotation marks only if the quotation is a question:

> All that day we wondered, "Is he with us?"

If the quotation is not a question but the entire sentence is, the question mark goes outside:

> What did she mean by "You will hear from me"?

For quotes within quotes, use single quotation marks within double:

> As David Pottruck, former co-CEO of Charles Schwab, told it, "I assembled about 100 managers at the base of the Golden Gate Bridge and gave them jackets emblazoned with the phrase 'Crossing the Chasm' and then led them across the bridge."

Otherwise, do not use single quotation marks for anything, including titles of works—that's British style.

2.11 PARENTHESES AND BRACKETS

Use parentheses to surround comments that are entirely incidental or to supply additional information:

> Our figures do not match yours, although (if my calculations are correct) they are closer than we thought.
>
> Sally Wagner (no relation to our own John Wagner) was just promoted to general manager of the Detroit office.

Parentheses are used in legal documents to surround figures in arabic numerals that follow the same amount in words:

> Remittance will be one thousand two hundred dollars ($1,200).

Be careful to put punctuation marks (period, comma, and so on) outside the parentheses unless they are part of the statement in parentheses. And keep in mind that parentheses have both an opening and a closing mark; both should always be used, even when setting off listed items within text: *(1)*, not *1)*.

Brackets are used for notation, comment, explanation, or correction within quoted material:

> In the interview, multimillionaire Bob Buford said, "One of my major influences was Peter [Drucker], who encourages people and helps them believe in themselves."

Brackets are also used for parenthetical material that falls within parentheses:

> Drucker's magnum opus (*Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* [Harper & Row, 1979]) has influenced generations of entrepreneurs.

2.12 ELLIPSES

Use ellipsis points, or three evenly spaced periods, to indicate that material has been left out of a direct quotation. Use them only in direct quotations and only at the point where material was left out. In the following example, the first sentence is quoted in the second:

> The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 276.39 points, or 2.6%, during the week to 10,292.31.
>
> According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 276.39 points . . . to 10,292.31."

The number of dots in ellipses is not optional; always use three. Occasionally, the points of an ellipsis come at the end of a sentence, where they seem to grow a fourth dot. Don't be fooled: One of the dots is a period. Ellipsis points should always be preceded and followed by a space.

Avoid using ellipses to represent a pause in your writing; use a dash for that purpose:

> At first we had planned to leave for the conference on Wednesday—but then we changed our minds. [not *on Wednesday . . . but then*]

2.12.1 Practice Session: Punctuation 2

Circle the letter of the preferred choice in each group of sentences.

1. A. Capital One uses data mining to predict what customers might buy, and how the company can sell those products to them.
   B. Capital One uses data mining to predict what customers might buy and how the company can sell those products to them.
2. A. During the three-year lawsuit, pressure built to settle out of court.
   B. During the three-year lawsuit pressure built to settle out of court.
3. A. The music store, which had been in the Harper family for three generations, was finally sold to a conglomerate.
   B. The music store which had been in the Harper family for three generations was finally sold to a conglomerate.
4. A. After the fire, Hanson resolved to build a bigger better bottling plant.
   B. After the fire, Hanson resolved to build a bigger, better bottling plant.
5. A. Wild Oats, a chain of natural food grocery stores, uses kiosks to deliver nutrition information to customers.
   B. Wild Oats; a chain of natural food grocery stores; uses kiosks to deliver nutrition information to customers.
6. A. Management consultant Peter Drucker said "The aim of marketing is to know the customer so well that the product or service sells itself.
   B. Management consultant Peter Drucker said, "The aim of marketing is to know the customer so well that the product or service sells itself."
7. A. Companies use a wide variety of techniques-contests, displays, and giveaways, to name a few-to sell you things.
   B. Companies use a wide variety of techniques—contests, displays, and giveaways, to name a few—to sell you things.
   C. Companies use a wide variety of techniques—contests, displays, and giveaways to name a few—to sell you things.
8. A. Self-insurance plans are not subject to state regulation or premium taxes.
   B. Self insurance plans are not subject to state regulation or premium taxes.
   C. Selfinsurance plans are not subject to state regulation or premium taxes.
9. A. Because ours is a non-profit corporation, we don't pay federal taxes.
   B. Because ours is a nonprofit corporation, we don't pay federal taxes.
10. A. The decision-making process depends on a buyer's culture, social class, and self-image.
    B. The decision-making process depends on a buyer's culture, social class, and self image.
    C. The decision making process depends on a buyer's culture, social class, and self-image.
11. A. Situation factors also play a role in consumer decision-making.
    B. Situation factors also play a role in consumer decision making.
12. A. Did you read the article "Citi Will Return $7 Billion to Investors"?
    B. Did you read the article "Citi Will Return $7 Billion to Investors?"
    C. Did you read the article "Citi Will Return $7 Billion to Investors?".
13. A. An insider at Arthur Andersen said that "the fall of the accounting giant stemmed from a series of poor management decisions made over decades."
    B. An insider at Arthur Andersen said that, "The fall of the accounting giant stemmed from a series of poor management decisions made over decades."
14. A. Have you read Jason Zein's article "Measuring the Internet?"
    B. Have you read Jason Zein's article "Measuring the Internet"?
15. A. According to Jamba Juice founder Kirk Peron, "jamba" is a West African word meaning *to celebrate*.
    B. According to Jamba Juice founder Kirk Peron, *jamba* is a West African word meaning "to celebrate."
    C. According to Jamba Juice founder Kirk Peron, "jamba" is a West African word meaning to celebrate.

3.0 Mechanics

The most obvious and least tolerable mistakes that a business writer makes are probably those related to grammar and punctuation. However, a number of small details, known as writing mechanics, demonstrate the writer's polish and reflect on the company's professionalism.

When it comes to mechanics, also called *style*, many of the "rules" are not hard and fast. Publications and organizations vary in their preferred styles for capitalization, abbreviations, numbers, italics, and so on. Here, we'll try to differentiate between practices that are generally accepted and those that can vary. When you are writing materials for a specific company or organization, find out the preferred style (such as *The Chicago Manual of Style* or *Webster's Style Manual*). Otherwise, choose a respected style guide. The key to style is consistency: If you spell out the word *percent* in one part of a document, don't use the percent sign in a similar context elsewhere in the same document.

3.1 CAPITALIZATION

With capitalization, you can follow either an "up" style (when in doubt, capitalize: *Federal Government, Board of Directors*) or a "down" style (when in doubt, use lowercase: *federal government, board of directors*). The trend over the past few decades has been toward the down style. Your best bet is to get a good style manual and consult it when you have a capitalization question. Following are some rules that most style guides agree on.

Capital letters are used at the beginning of certain word groups:

- Complete sentence: Before hanging up, he said, "We'll meet here on Wednesday at noon."
- Formal statement following a colon: She has a favorite motto: Where there's a will, there's a way.
- Phrase used as sentence: Absolutely not!
- Quoted sentence embedded in another sentence: Scott said, "Nobody was here during lunch hour except me."
- List of items set off from text:

> Three preliminary steps are involved:
>
> Design review
> Budgeting
> Scheduling

Capitalize proper adjectives and proper nouns (the names of particular persons, places, and things):

> Darrell Greene lived in a Victorian mansion.
>
> We sent Ms. Larson an application form, informing her that not all applicants are interviewed.
>
> Let's consider opening a branch in the West, perhaps at the west end of Tucson, Arizona.
>
> As office buildings go, the Kinney Building is a pleasant setting for TDG Office Equipment.
>
> We are going to have to cancel our plans for hiring French and German sales reps.

Larson's name is capitalized because she is a particular applicant, whereas the general term *applicant* is left uncapitalized. Likewise, *West* is capitalized when it refers to a particular place but not when it means a direction. In the same way, *office* and *building* are not capitalized when they are general terms (common nouns), but they are capitalized when they are part of the title of a particular office or building (proper nouns). Some proper adjectives are lowercased when they are part of terms that have come into common use, such as *french fries* and *roman numerals*.

Titles within families or companies as well as professional titles may also be capitalized:

> I turned down Uncle David when he offered me a job.
>
> I wouldn't be comfortable working for one of my relatives.
>
> We've never had a president quite like President Sweeney.

People's titles are capitalized when they are used in addressing a person, especially in a formal context. They are not usually capitalized, however, when they are used merely to identify the person:

> Address the letter to Chairperson Anna Palmer.
>
> I wish to thank Chairperson Anna Palmer for her assistance.
>
> Anna Palmer, chairperson of the board, took the podium.

Also capitalize titles if they are used by themselves in addressing a person:

> Thank you, Doctor, for your donation.

Always capitalize the first word of the salutation and complimentary close of a letter:

> *Dear* Mr. Andrews: *Yours* truly,

The names of organizations are capitalized, of course; so are the official names of their departments and divisions. However, do not use capitals when referring in general terms to a department or division, especially one in another organization:

> Route this memo to Personnel.
>
> Larry Tien was transferred to the Microchip Division.
>
> Will you be enrolled in the Psychology Department?
>
> Someone from the personnel department at EnerTech stopped by the booth.

Capitalization is unnecessary when using a word like *company*, *corporation*, or *university* alone:

> The corporation plans to issue 50,000 shares of common stock.

Likewise, the names of specific products are capitalized, although the names of general product types are not:

Apple Inc.	Xerox machine
Tide laundry detergent	

When it comes to government terminology, here are some guides to capitalization: (1) Lowercase *federal* unless it is part of an agency name; (2) capitalize names of courts, departments, bureaus, offices, and agencies but lowercase such references as *the bureau* and *the department* when the full name is not used; (3) lowercase the titles of government officers unless they precede a specific person's name: *the secretary of state*, *the senator*, *the ambassador*, *the governor, and the mayor* but *Mayor Gonzalez* (Note: style guides vary on whether to capitalize *president* when referring to the president of the United States without including the person's name); (4) capitalize the names of laws and acts: *the Sherman Antitrust Act*, *the Civil Rights Act*; (5) capitalize the names of political parties but lowercase the word *party: Democratic party*, *Libertarian party*.

When writing about two or more geographic features of the same type, it is now accepted practice to capitalize the common noun in addition to the proper nouns, regardless of word order:

Lakes Ontario and Huron

Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers

Corson and Ravenna Avenues

The names of languages, races, and ethnic groups are capitalized: Japanese, Caucasian, Hispanic. But racial terms that denote only skin color are not capitalized: black, white.

When referring to the titles of books, articles, magazines, newspapers, reports, movies, and so on, you should capitalize the first and last words and all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs, and capitalize prepositions and conjunctions with five letters or more. Except for the first and last words, do not capitalize articles:

Economics During the Great War

"An Investigation into the Market for Long-Distance Services"

"What Successes Are Made Of"

When *the* is part of the official name of a newspaper or magazine, it should be treated this way too:

The Wall Street Journal

Style guides vary in their recommendations regarding capitalization of hyphenated words in titles. A general guide is to capitalize the second word in a temporary compound (a compound that is hyphenated for grammatical reasons and not spelling reasons), such as *Law-Abiding Citizen*, but to lowercase the word if the term is always hyphenated, such as *Son-in-law*).

References to specific pages, paragraphs, lines, and the like are not capitalized: *page 73, line 3*. However, in most other numbered or lettered references, the identifying term is capitalized:

Chapter 4	Serial No. 382-2203	Item B-11

Finally, the names of academic degrees are capitalized when they follow a person's name but are not capitalized when used in a general sense:

I received a bachelor of science degree.

Thomas Whitelaw, Doctor of Philosophy, will attend.

Similarly, general courses of study are not capitalized, but the names of specific classes are:

She studied accounting as an undergraduate.

She is enrolled in Accounting 201.

3.2 UNDERSCORES AND ITALICS

Usually a line typed underneath a word or phrase either provides emphasis or indicates the title of a book, magazine, or newspaper. If possible, use italics instead of an underscore. Italics (or underlining) should also be used for defining terms and for discussing words as words:

In this report, *net sales* refers to after-tax sales dollars.

Also use italics to set off foreign words, unless the words have become a common part of English:

Marcy joked that the R&D lab should appoint its own *advocatus diaboli*.

Chris uses a laissez-faire [no italic] management style.

3.3 ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations are used heavily in tables, charts, lists, and forms. They're used sparingly in prose. Here are some abbreviation situations to watch for:

- In most cases do not use periods with acronyms (words formed from the initial letter or letters of parts of a term): *CEO, CD-ROM, YWCA, and FDA*.

- Use periods with abbreviations such as *Mr.*, *Ms.*, *Sr.*, *Jr.*, *a.m.*, *p.m.*, *B.C.*, and *A.D.*
- The trend is away from using periods with such units of measure as *mph*, *mm*, and *lb*.
- Use periods with such Latin abbreviations as *e.g.*, *i.e.*, *et al.*, and *etc*. However, style guides recommend that you avoid using these Latin forms and instead use their English equivalents *(for example, that is, and others*, and *and so on*, respectively). If you must use these abbreviations, such as in parenthetical expressions or footnotes, do not put them in italics.
- Some companies have abbreviations as part of their names *(&, Co., Inc., Ltd.)*. When you refer to such firms by name, be sure to double-check the preferred spelling, including spacing: *AT&T*; *Barnes & Noble*; *Carson Pirie Scott & Company*; *PepsiCo*; *Kate Spade, Inc.*; *National Data Corporation*; *Siemens Corp.*; *Glaxo Wellcome PLC*; *US Airways*; *U.S. Business Reporter*.
- Most style guides recommend that you spell out *United States* as a noun and reserve *U.S.* as an adjective preceding the noun modified.

One way to handle an abbreviation that you want to use throughout a document is to spell it out the first time you use it, follow it with the abbreviation in parentheses, and then use the abbreviation in the remainder of the document.

3.4 NUMBERS

Numbers may be correctly handled many ways in business writing, so follow company style. In the absence of a set style, however, generally spell out all numbers from one to nine and use arabic numerals for the rest.

There are some exceptions to this general rule. For example, never begin a sentence with a numeral:

> Twenty of us produced 641 units per week in the first 12 weeks of the year.

Use numerals for the numbers one through nine if they're in the same list as larger numbers:

> Our weekly quota rose from 9 to 15 to 27.

Use numerals for percentages, time of day (except with o'clock), dates, and (in general) dollar amounts:

> Our division is responsible for 7 percent of total sales.
>
> The meeting is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on August 2.
>
> Add $3 for postage and handling.

When using numerals for time, be consistent: It should be *between 10:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.*, not *between 10 a.m. and 4:30 p.m*. Expressions such as *4:00 o'clock* and *7 a.m. in the morning* are redundant.

Use a comma in numbers expressing thousands (1,257), unless your company specifies another style. When dealing with numbers in the millions and billions, combine words and figures: 7.3 million, 2 billion.

When writing dollar amounts, use a decimal point only if cents are included. In lists of two or more dollar amounts, use the decimal point either for all or for none:

> He sent two checks, one for $67.92 and one for $90.00.

When two numbers fall next to each other in a sentence, use figures for the number that is largest, most difficult to spell, or part of a physical measurement; use words for the other:

> I have learned to manage a classroom of 30 twelve-year-olds.
>
> She won a bonus for selling 24 thirty-volume sets.
>
> You'll need twenty 3-inch bolts.

In addresses, all street numbers except One are in numerals. So are suite and room numbers and zip codes. For street names that are numbered, practice varies so widely that you should use the form specified on an organization's letterhead or in a reliable directory. All the following examples are correct:

One Fifth Avenue	297 Ninth Street
1839 44th Street	11026 West 78 Place

Telephone numbers are always expressed in numerals. Parentheses may separate the area code from the rest of the number, but a slash or a hyphen may be used instead, especially if the entire phone number is enclosed in parentheses:

382-8329	(602/382-8329)	602-382-8329

Percentages are always expressed in numerals. The word *percent* is used in most cases, but % may be used in tables, forms, and statistical writing.

Ages are usually expressed in words—except when a parenthetical reference to age follows someone's name:

> Mrs. Margaret Sanderson is seventy-two.
>
> Mrs. Margaret Sanderson, 72, swims daily.

Also, ages expressed in years and months are treated like physical measurements that combine two units of measure: *5 years, 6 months*.

Physical measurements such as distance, weight, and volume are also often expressed in numerals: *9 kilometers*, *5 feet 3 inches*, *7 pounds 10 ounces*.

Decimal numbers are always written in numerals. In most cases, add a zero to the left of the decimal point if the number is less than one and does not already start with a zero:

1.38	.07	0.2

In a series of related decimal numbers with at least one number greater than one, make sure that all numbers smaller than one have a zero to the left of the decimal point: 1.20, 0.21, 0.09.

Simple fractions are written in words, but more complicated fractions are expressed in figures or, if easier to read, in figures and words:

two-thirds	9/32	2 hundredths

When typing ordinal numbers, such as *3rd edition* or *21st century*, your word processing program may automatically make the letters *rd* (or *st*, *th*, or *nd*) into a superscript. Do yourself a favor and turn that formatting function off, as these superscripts should not be used in regular prose or even in bibliographies.

3.5 WORD DIVISION

In general, avoid dividing words at the end of lines. When you must do so, follow these rules:

- Don't divide one-syllable words (such as *since*, *walked*, and *thought*), abbreviations (*mgr.*), contractions (*isn't*), or numbers expressed in numerals (*117,500*).
- Divide words between syllables, as specified in a dictionary or word-division manual.
- Make sure that at least three letters of the divided words are moved to the second line: *sin-cerely* instead of *sincere-ly*.
- Do not end a page or more than three consecutive lines with hyphens.
- Leave syllables consisting of a single vowel at the end of the first line (*impedi-ment* instead of *imped-iment*), except when the single vowel is part of a suffix such as *-able*, *-ible*, *-ical*, or *-ity* (*re-spons-ible* instead of *re-sponsi-ble*).
- Divide between double letters (*tomor-row*), except when the root word ends in double letters (*call-ing* instead of *cal-ling*).
- Wherever possible, divide hyphenated words at the hyphen only: instead of *anti-inde-pendence*, use *anti-independence*.
- Whenever possible, do not break URLs or email addresses. If you have to break a long URL or email address, do not insert a hyphen at the end of the first line. If you have to break near a period that falls inside the URL, position the period at the beginning of the next line so that it isn't interpreted as a sentence-ending period.

Practice Session: Mechanics

Circle the letter of the preferred choice in each of the following groups of sentences.

1. A. When you are in New York City for the Sales meeting, be sure to visit the Chrysler Building.
   B. When you are in New York city for the sales meeting, be sure to visit the Chrysler building.
   C. When you are in New York City for the sales meeting, be sure to visit the Chrysler Building.
2. A. We plan to expand our national operations to the west as well as the south.
   B. We plan to expand our national operations to the West as well as the South.
   C. We plan to expand our national operations to the west as well as the South.
3. A. Lee Marrs, who is President of Lee Marrs Designs, has been chosen to revamp our website.
   B. Lee Marrs, who is president of Lee Marrs Designs, has been chosen to revamp our website.
   C. Lee Marrs, who is President of Lee Marrs Designs, has been chosen to revamp our Website.
4. A. There's one thing we know for sure: Having a good idea doesn't guarantee success.
   B. There's one thing we know for sure: having a good idea doesn't guarantee success.
5. A. Be sure to order manila envelopes in all sizes: 9″, 12″, 11″, 14″, etc.
   B. Be sure to order manila envelopes in all sizes: 9″, 12″, 11″, 14″ and etc.
6. A. The traditional trading period for U.S. stock exchanges is 9:30 a.m. to 4 o'clock p.m.
   B. The traditional trading period for U.S. stock exchanges is 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
   C. The traditional trading period for U.S. stock exchanges is 9:30 a.m to 4:00 p.m.
7. A. The number of members on the board of directors has been reduced from 13 to nine.
   B. The number of members on the board of directors has been reduced from 13 to 9.
8. A. The CDs are priced at $15, $12.95, and $11.00.
   B. The CDs are priced at $15.00, $12.95, and $11.00.
   C. The CDs are priced at $15, $12.95, and $11.

9. **A.** Twenty people have signed up for the spreadsheet software class, but there is room for 25.
   B. 20 people have signed up for the spreadsheet software class, but there is room for 25.
10. **A.** The best way to divide the word *sincerely* is "sin-cerely."
    B. The best way to divide the word *sincerely* is "sincere-ly."

4.0 Vocabulary

Using the right word in the right place is a crucial skill in business communication. However, many pitfalls await the unwary.

4.1 FREQUENTLY CONFUSED WORDS

Because the following sets of words sound similar, be careful not to use one when you mean to use the other:

Word	Meaning
accede	to comply with
exceed	to go beyond
accept	to take
except	to exclude
access	admittance
excess	too much
advice	suggestion
advise	to suggest
affect	to influence
effect	a result
allot	to distribute
a lot	much or many
all ready	completely prepared
already	completed earlier
born	given birth to
borne	carried
capital	money; chief city
capitol	a government building
cite	to quote
sight	a view
site	a location
complement	complete amount; to go well with
compliment	expression of esteem; to flatter
corespondent	party in a divorce suit
correspondent	letter writer
council	a panel of people
counsel	advice; a lawyer

Word	Meaning
defer	to put off until later
differ	to be different
device	a mechanism
devise	to plan
die	to stop living; a tool
dye	to color
discreet	careful
discrete	separate
envelop	to surround
envelope	a covering for a letter
forth	forward
fourth	number four
holey	full of holes
holy	sacred
wholly	completely
human	of people
humane	kindly
incidence	frequency
incidents	events
instance	example
instants	moments
interstate	between states
intrastate	within a state
its	indicates possession
it's	contracted form of "it is"
later	afterward
latter	the second of two
lead	a metal; to guide
led	guided
lean	to rest at an angle
lien	a claim
levee	embankment
levy	tax
loath	reluctant
loathe	to hate
loose	free; not tight
lose	to mislay
material	substance
materiel	equipment
miner	mineworker
minor	underage person
moral	virtuous; a lesson
morale	sense of well-being

Word	Meaning
ordinance	law
ordnance	weapons
overdo	to do in excess
overdue	past due
peace	lack of conflict
piece	a fragment
pedal	a foot lever
peddle	to sell
persecute	to torment
prosecute	to sue
personal	private
personnel	employees
precedence	priority
precedents	previous events
principal	sum of money; chief; main
principle	general rule
rap	to knock
wrap	to cover
residence	home
residents	inhabitants
right	correct
rite	ceremony
write	to form words on a surface
role	a part to play
roll	to tumble; a list
root	part of a plant
rout	to defeat
route	a traveler's way
shear	to cut
sheer	thin, steep
stationary	immovable
stationery	paper
than	as compared with
then	at that time
their	belonging to them
there	in that place
they're	they are
to	a preposition
too	excessively; also
two	the number
waive	to set aside
wave	a swell of water; a gesture
weather	atmospheric conditions
whether	if
who's	contraction of "who is" or "who has"
whose	possessive form of "who"

In the preceding list, only enough of each word's meaning is given to help you distinguish between the words in each group. Several meanings are left out entirely. For more complete definitions, consult a dictionary.

Practice Session: Confused Words

In the following sentences, underline the preferred choice within each set of parentheses.

1. If our bid is (*accepted, excepted*), we will begin the project in November.
2. This website offers some great (*advice, advise*) on setting up a new business.
3. How will the accounting scandal (*affect, effect*) Arthur Andersen's future?
4. Most of the costs of the project will be (*born, borne*) by the contractor.
5. In preparing the budget, we have to decide where best to invest our (*capital, capitol*).
6. Be sure to (*cite, site*) the sources for your data when you prepare your report.
7. The acquisition of LPC Group should (*compliment*, *complement*) our other holdings.
8. Leo sought the (*council, counsel*) of his attorney before signing the contract.
9. I didn't have to be told to be (*discrete, discreet*) about the sexual harassment case.
10. When Jennings Hardware got behind in its debts, one of the creditors placed a (*lean, lien*) on its building.
11. Mr. Hathaway was (*loath, loathe*) to fire Elizabeth, but he had no choice.
12. To comply with local zoning (*ordinances, ordnances*), we had to replace our sign.
13. As a teenager, Gary Sassaman used to (*pedal, peddle*) newspapers in downtown Pittsburgh.
14. Business owners along El Cajon Boulevard have vowed to (*persecute, prosecute*) anyone caught painting graffiti on their buildings.
15. We don't know of any (*precedence, precedents*) for the exponential growth of sales for this kind of product.
16. The (*principle, principal*) reason for closing down operations was obsolete production equipment that was too expensive to replace.
17. It's hard to say what (*role, roll*) the downturn in the economy played in the failure of Seven Hills Distribution.
18. Sunbeam employees were shocked by new CEO Al Dunlap's (*shear, sheer*) ruthlessness in axing jobs and slashing costs.

19. Now that our area code has changed, we will need to order new (*stationary, stationery*).

20. The Rodriguez brothers couldn't decide (*weather, whether*) to form a partnership or establish a corporation.

4.2 FREQUENTLY MISUSED WORDS

The following words tend to be misused for reasons other than their sound. Reference books (including the *Random House College Dictionary*, revised edition; Follett's *Modern American Usage*; and Fowler's *Modern English Usage*) can help you with similar questions of usage:

a lot: When the writer means "many," *a lot* is always two separate words, never one.

aggravate/irritate: *Aggravate* means "to make things worse." Sitting in the smoke-filled room *aggravated* his sinus condition. *Irritate* means "to annoy." Her constant questions *irritated* [not *aggravated*] me.

anticipate/expect: *Anticipate* means "to prepare for": Macy's *anticipated* increased demand for athletic shoes in spring by ordering in November. In formal usage, it is incorrect to use *anticipate* for *expect*: I *expected* (not *anticipated*) a better response to our presentation than we actually got.

compose/comprise: The whole comprises the parts:

> The company's distribution division *comprises* four departments.

The following usage is incorrect:

> The company's distribution division *is comprised of* four departments.

In that construction, *is composed of* or *consists of* would be preferable. It might be helpful to think of *comprise* as meaning "encompasses" or "contains."

continual/continuous: *Continual* refers to ongoing actions that have breaks:

> Her *continual* complaining will accomplish little in the long run.

Continuous refers to ongoing actions without interruptions or breaks:

> A *continuous* stream of paper came out of the fax machine.

convince/persuade: One is *convinced* of a fact or that something is true; one is *persuaded* by someone else to do something. The use of *to* with *convince* is unidiomatic—you don't convince someone to do something, you persuade them to do it.

correspond with: Use this phrase when you are talking about exchanging letters. Use *correspond to* when you mean "similar to." Use either *correspond with* or *correspond to* when you mean "relate to."

dilemma/problem: Technically, a *dilemma* is a situation in which one must choose between two undesirable alternatives. It shouldn't be used when no choice is actually involved.

disinterested: This word means "fair, unbiased, having no favorites, impartial." If you mean "bored" or "not interested," use *uninterested*.

etc.: This abbreviated form of the Latin phrase *et cetera* means "and so on" or "and so forth," so it is never correct to write *and etc*. The current tendency among business writers is to use English rather than Latin.

flaunt/flout: To *flaunt* is to be ostentatious or boastful; to *flout* is to mock or scoff at.

impact: Avoid using *impact* as a verb when *influence* or *affect* is meant.

imply/infer: Both refer to hints. Their great difference lies in who is acting. The writer *implies*, the reader *infers*, sees between the lines.

its/their: Use *its* to indicate possession by a singular entity such as a company, not *their*. "HP released its quarterly results" is correct; "HP released their quarterly results" is not.

lay: This word is a transitive verb. Never use it for the intransitive *lie*. (See Section 1.3.3.)

lend/loan: *Lend* is a verb; *loan* is a noun. Usage such as "Can you loan me $5?" is therefore incorrect.

less/fewer: Use *less* for uncountable quantities (such as amounts of water, air, sugar, and oil). Use *fewer* for countable quantities (such as numbers of jars, saws, words, pages, and humans). The same distinction applies to *much* and *little* (uncountable) versus *many* and *few* (countable).

liable/likely: *Liable* means "responsible for": I will hold you *liable* if this deal doesn't go through. It is incorrect to use *liable* for "possible": Anything is *likely* (not *liable*) to happen.

literally: *Literally* means "actually" or "precisely"; it is often misused to mean "almost" or "virtually." It is usually best left out entirely or replaced with *figuratively*.

many/much: See *less/fewer*.

regardless: The *less* suffix is the negative part. No word needs two negative parts, so don't add *ir* (a negative prefix) to the beginning. There is no such word as *irregardless*.

try: Always follow with *to*, never *and*.

verbal: People in the business community who are careful with language frown on those who use *verbal* to mean "spoken" or "oral." Many others do say "verbal agreement." Strictly speaking, *verbal* means "of words" and therefore includes both spoken and written words. Follow company usage in this matter.

Practice Session: Misused Words

In the following sentences, underline the preferred choice within each set of parentheses.

1. My boss told me that I still have (*a lot*, *alot*) to learn.
2. The U.S. Congress corresponds (*to*, *with*) the British Parliament.
3. I tried to convince my coworkers to sign up for the stress reduction program, but they all seemed (*uninterested*, *disinterested*).
4. When you say that the books have some discrepancies, are you (*inferring*, *implying*) that our accountant is embezzling from us?
5. From the auditor's silent stare, Margaret (*implied*, *inferred*) that the man was not amused by her jokes.
6. The report came out to (*less*, *fewer*) pages than we had originally anticipated.
7. Mr. Martens was treating Heather (*like*, *as if*) she had done something wrong.
8. You have to finish the job, (*irregardless*, *regardless*) of your loathing for it.
9. When talking to customers on the phone, try (*and*, *to*) be as pleasant as possible.
10. When making (*an oral*, *a verbal*) presentation, it's a good idea to make eye contact with your audience.

4.3 FREQUENTLY MISSPELLED WORDS

All of us, even the world's best spellers, sometimes have to check a dictionary for the spelling of some words. People who have never memorized the spelling of commonly used words must look up so many that they grow exasperated and give up on spelling words correctly.

Don't expect perfection and don't surrender. If you can memorize the spelling of just the words listed here, you'll need the dictionary far less often and you'll write with more confidence:

absence
absorption
accessible
accommodate
accumulate
achieve
advantageous
affiliated
aggressive
alignment
aluminum
ambience
analyze
apparent
appropriate
argument

asphalt
assistant
asterisk
auditor

bankruptcy
believable
brilliant
bulletin

calendar
campaign
category
ceiling
changeable
clientele
collateral
committee
comparative
competitor
concede
congratulations
connoisseur
consensus
convenient
convertible
corroborate
criticism

definitely
description
desirable
dilemma
disappear
disappoint
disbursement
discrepancy
dissatisfied
dissipate

eligible
embarrassing
endorsement
exaggerate
exceed
exhaust
existence
extraordinary

fallacy
familiar
flexible
fluctuation
forty

gesture
grievous

haphazard
harassment
holiday

illegible
immigrant
incidentally
indelible
independent
indispensable
insistent
intermediary
irresistible

jewelry
judgment
judicial

labeling
legitimate
leisure
license
litigation

maintenance
mathematics
mediocre
minimum

necessary
negligence
negotiable
newsstand
noticeable

occurrence
omission

parallel
pastime
peaceable
permanent
perseverance
persistent
personnel
persuade
possesses
precede
predictable
preferred
privilege
procedure
proceed
pronunciation
psychology
pursue

questionnaire

receive
recommend
repetition
rescind
rhythmical
ridiculous

salable
secretary
seize
separate
sincerely
succeed
suddenness

superintendent
supersede
surprise

tangible
tariff
technique
tenant
truly

unanimous
until

vacillate
vacuum
vicious

Practice Session: Misspelled Words

In the following sentences, underline the preferred choice within each set of parentheses.

1. We try to (*accomodate, accommodate*) any reasonable request from our customers.
2. You will need to (*analyse, analyze*) the sales data to determine which products to phase out.
3. Because the weather in Chicago is so (*changable, changeable*), the conference reception has a backup indoor venue.
4. The board reached a (*concensus, consensus*) on the new CEO.
5. It will be (*embarassing, embarrassing*) for the company if this information leaks out.
6. The auditors discovered the (*existance, existence*) of hidden accounts in foreign banks.
7. Every company should have a written sexual (*harassment, harrassment*) policy.
8. In today's book business, (*independant, independent*) publishers are having a tough time finding distribution.
9. Use your best (*judgment, judgement*) when choosing the paper for our new stationery.
10. The cost of a business (*licence, license, liscence*) varies from city to city.
11. With all the turmoil (*occuring, occurring*) in the stock market, we've decided to shift our investments toward real estate.
12. The marketing survey found that consumers (*prefered, preferred*) brand-name dog food over generic brands.
13. Because her cost-cutting measures saved the company millions of dollars, Carolyn Kelly (*received, recieved*) a raise and a promotion.
14. Please send (*separate, seperate*) invoices for the two projects.
15. My supervisor didn't need to be so (*vicious, viscious*) in his critique of my performance.

4.4 TRANSITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES

The following sentences don't communicate as well as they could because they lack a transitional word or phrase:

> Production delays are inevitable. Our current lag time in filling orders is one month.

A semicolon between the two sentences would signal a close relationship between their meanings, but it wouldn't even hint at what that relationship is. Here are the sentences again, now linked by means of a semicolon, with a space for a transitional word or phrase:

> Production delays are inevitable; ________, our current lag time in filling orders is one month.

Now read the sentence with *nevertheless* in the blank space. Then try *therefore*, *incidentally*, *in fact*, and *at any rate* in the blank. Each substitution changes the meaning of the sentence.

Here are some transitional words (conjunctive adverbs) that will help you write more clearly:

accordingly	however	moreover
anyway	incidentally	otherwise
consequently	likewise	still
finally	meanwhile	therefore
furthermore		

The following transitional phrases are used in the same way:

as a result	in the second place
for example	on the other hand
in fact	to the contrary
in other words	

When one of these words or phrases joins two independent clauses, it should be preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma:

> The consultant recommended a complete reorganization; moreover, she suggested that we drop several products.

Practice Session Answers

Answers for Nouns: 1. City 2. Building, building 3. hotels 4. *t*'s, *i*'s 5. 1990s 6. shelves 7. specialties 8. cases 9. company's 10. editor-in-chief's 11. businesses' 12. passengers' 13. day's 14. Dallas's 15. Jones's

Answers for Pronouns: 1. me 2. she 3. him 4. We 5. me 6. its 7. his or her 8. Who 9. whom 10. Whom 11. her 12. him or her 13. her 14. its 15. Who 16. your 17. its 18. I 19. their 20. its

Answers for Verbs: 1. comes, want 2. knew 3. begun 4. lie 5. laid 6. sits 7. set 8. raise 9. was 10. is 11. is 12. are 13. is 14. is 15. represents 16. is 17. are 18. is 19. send 20. were

Answers for Adjectives and Adverbs: 1. least 2. better 3. worse 4. more competent 5. unique 6. well-written 7. well written 8. beautifully written 9. low-income 10. good 11. well 12. really 13. slowly 14. could hardly 15. more heavily

Answers for Prepositions, Conjunctions, Articles, and Interjections: 1. a 2. b 3. a 4. b 5. b 6. a 7. b 8. a 9. b 10. a 11. b 12. b 13. a 14. a 15. a

Answers for Sentences: 1. a 2. b 3. b 4. c 5. c 6. b 7. c 8. c 9. a 10. c

Answers for Punctuation 1: 1. b 2. a 3. b 4. b 5. a 6. b 7. a 8. a 9. b 10. c

Answers for Punctuation 2: 1. b 2. a 3. a 4. b 5. a 6. b 7. b 8. a 9. b 10. a 11. b 12. a 13. a 14. b 15. b

Answers for Mechanics: 1. c 2. b 3. b 4. a 5. a 6. c 7. b 8. b 9. a 10. a

Answers for Confused Words: 1. accepted 2. advice 3. affect 4. borne 5. capital 6. cite 7. complement 8. counsel 9. discreet 10. lien 11. loath 12. ordinances 13. peddle 14. prosecute 15. precedents 16. principal 17. role 18. sheer 19. stationery 20. whether

Answers for Misused Words: 1. a lot 2. to 3. uninterested 4. implying 5. inferred 6. fewer 7. as if 8. regardless 9. to 10. an oral

Answers for Misspelled Words: 1. accommodate 2. analyze 3. changeable 4. consensus 5. embarrassing 6. existence 7. harassment 8. independent 9. judgment 10. license 11. occurring 12. preferred 13. received 14. separate 15. vicious

Answer Key

ANSWER KEY TO THE LEVEL 1 SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

Chapter 1: Self-Assessment—Nouns

For the following items, common nouns are underlined, and proper nouns are boxed.

1-33. Give the balance sheet to $\boxed{\text{Melissa}}$. (1.1.1)

1-34. After three years of declining sales, the board fired the CEO and hired a replacement from $\boxed{\text{Google}}$. (1.1.1)

1-35. $\boxed{\text{Tarnower Corporation}}$ donates a portion of its profits to charity every year. (1.1.1)

1-36. Which aluminum bolts are packaged? (1.1.1)

1-37. Please send the $\boxed{\text{Joneses}}$ a dozen of the following: stopwatches, canteens, headbands, and wristbands. (1.1.1)

For the following items, subjects are underlined, and objects are boxed.

1-38. The technician has already repaired the $\boxed{\text{machine}}$ for the $\boxed{\text{client}}$. (1.1.2)

1-39. An attorney will talk to the $\boxed{\text{group}}$ about $\boxed{\text{incorporation}}$. (1.1.2)

1-40. After her $\boxed{\text{vacation}}$, the buyer prepared a third-quarter $\boxed{\text{budget}}$. (1.1.2)

1-41. More than 90 percent of the research staff has contributed to the new $\boxed{\text{wiki}}$. (1.1.2)

1-42. Accuracy overrides $\boxed{\text{speed}}$ in $\boxed{\text{importance}}$. (1.1.2)

For the following items, incorrect plurals and possessives are underlined, and the correct forms are shown in bold.

1-43. Make sure that all copys **copies** include the new addresses. (1.1.2)

1-44. Ask Jennings to collect all employee's **employees'** donations for the Red Cross drive. (1.1.4)

1-45. Charlie now has two son-in-laws **sons-in-law** to help him with his two online business's **businesses**. (1.1.3, 1.1.4)

1-46. Avoid using too many parenthesises **parentheses** when writing your reports. (1.1.3)

1-47. Follow President Nesses **Ness's** rules about what constitutes a weeks **week's** work. (1.1.4)

Chapter 2: Self-Assessment—Pronouns

For the following items, the correct pronouns are shown in bold.

2-25. To **whom** will you send your merchandise? (1.2)

2-26. Have you given **them** a list of parts? (1.2)

2-27. The main office sent the invoice to **them** on December 5. (1.2)

2-28. The company settled **its** accounts before the end of the year. (1.2)

2-29. **Whose** umbrella is this? (1.2)

For the following items, the correct pronouns are boxed.

2-30. The sales staff is preparing guidelines for (*their*, $\boxed{\textit{its}}$) clients. (1.2.5)

2-31. Few of the sales representatives turn in ($\boxed{\textit{their}}$, *its*) reports on time. (1.2.5)

2-32. The board of directors has chosen (*their*, $\boxed{\textit{its}}$) officers. (1.2.5)

2-33. Johnstone and Koseff have told (*his*, $\boxed{\textit{their}}$) clients about the new program. (1.2.1)

2-34. Each manager plans to expand (*his, their*, $\boxed{\textit{his or her}}$) sphere of control next year. (1.2.3)

2-35. Has everyone supplied (*his, their*, $\boxed{\textit{his or her}}$) Social Security number? (1.2.3)

2-36. After giving every employee (*his, their*, $\boxed{\textit{a}}$) raise, George told ($\boxed{\textit{them}}$, *they, all*) about the increased workload. (1.2.3, 1.2.4)

2-37. Cherise and Tim have opposite ideas about how to achieve company goals. ($\boxed{\textit{Who}}$, *Whom*) do you think will win the debate? (1.2.4)

2-38. City Securities has just announced (*who*, $\boxed{\textit{whom}}$) it will hire as CEO. (1.2.4)

2-39. Either of the new products would readily find (*their*, $\boxed{\textit{its}}$) niche in the marketplace. (1.2.5)

Chapter 3: Self-Assessment—Verbs

3-53. have become (1.3.1)
3-54. knew (1.3.1)
3-55. has moved (1.3.1)
3-56. will do (1.3.1)
3-57. will have returned (1.3.1)
3-58. Leslie Cartwright will write the report. (1.3.5)
3-59. I failed to record the transaction. (1.3.5)
3-60. Has the claims department notified you of your rights? (1.3.5)
3-61. We depend on their services for our operation. (1.3.5)
3-62. The customer returned the damaged equipment before we even located a repair facility. (1.3.5)
3-63. Everyone upstairs (*receive*/$\boxed{\textit{receives}}$) mail before we do. (1.3.4)
3-64. Neither the main office nor the branches (*is*/$\boxed{\textit{are}}$) blameless. (1.3.4)
3-65. C&B Sales ($\boxed{\textit{is}}$/*are*) listed in the directory. (1.3.4)
3-66. When measuring shelves, 7 inches ($\boxed{\textit{is}}$/*are*) significant. (1.3.4)
3-67. About 90 percent of the employees ($\boxed{\text{plan}}$ /plans) to come to the company picnic. (1.3.4)

Chapter 4: Self-Assessment—Adjectives

4-60. greater (1.4.1)
4-61. perfect (1.4.1)
4-62. most interesting *OR* least interesting (1.4.1)
4-63. better (1.4.1)
4-64. hardest (1.4.1)
4-65. A highly placed source revealed Dotson's last-ditch efforts to cover up the mistake. (1.4.2)
4-66. Please send an extra-large dust cover for my photocopier. (1.4.2)
4-67. A top-secret document was taken from the president's office last night. (1.4.2)
4-68. A 30-year-old person should know better. (1.4.2)
4-69. If I write a large-scale report, I want to know that it will be read by upper-level management. (1.4.2)
4-70. The two companies are engaged in an all-out, no-holds-barred struggle for dominance. (1.4)
4-71. A tiny metal shaving is responsible for the problem. (1.4)
4-72. She came to the office with a bruised, swollen knee. (1.4)
4-73. A chipped, cracked sheet of glass is useless to us. (1.4)
4-74. You'll receive our usual cheerful, prompt service. (1.4)

Chapter 5: Self-Assessment—Adverbs

5-70. good (1.5)
5-71. surely (1.5)
5-72. sick (1.5)
5-73. well (1.5)
5-74. good (1.5)
5-75. faster (1.5.2)
5-76. most recently (1.5.2)
5-77. more happily *OR* less happily (1.5.2)
5-78. better (1.5.2)
5-79. most logically *OR* least logically (1.5.2)
5-80. He doesn't seem to have any. *OR* He seems to have none. (1.5.1)
5-81. That machine is scarcely ever used. *OR* That machine is never used. (1.5.1)
5-82. They can't get any replacement parts until Thursday. *OR* They can get no replacement parts until Thursday. (1.5.1)
5-83. It wasn't any different from the first event we promoted. *OR* It was no different from the first event we promoted. (1.5.1)
5-84. We've looked for it, and it doesn't seem to be anywhere. *OR* It seems to be nowhere. (1.5.1)

Chapter 6: Self-Assessment—Prepositions and Conjunctions

6-48. Where was your argument leading? ~~to~~ (1.6.1)
6-49. I wish he would get off ~~of~~ the phone. (1.6.1)
6-50. This is a project ~~into which~~ you can sink your teeth into. (1.6.1)
6-51. U.S. Mercantile must become aware of and sensitive to its customers' concerns. (1.6.1)
6-52. We are responsible for aircraft safety in the air, in the hangars, and on the runways. (1.6.1)
6-53. Dr. Namaguchi will be talking to the marketing class, but she has no time for questions. (1.6.1)
6-54. Matters like this are decided after thorough discussion among all seven department managers. (1.6.1)
6-55. We can't wait for their decision much longer. (1.6.1)
6-56. Their computer is similar to ours. (1.6.1)
6-57. This model is different from the one we ordered. (1.6.1)
6-58. She is active ~~in~~ not only in a civic group but also in an athletic organization. *OR* She is active in not only a civic group but ~~in~~ also an athletic organization. (1.6.2)
6-59. That is either a mistake or ~~was~~ an intentional omission. (1.6.2)

6-60. The question is whether to set up a booth at the convention or ~~be~~ to host a hospitality suite. (1.6.2)
6-61. We are doing better ~~in~~ both in overall sales and in profits. *OR* in both overall sales and ~~in~~ profits. (1.6.2)
6-62. She had neither the preferred educational background nor ~~did she have~~ the suitable experience. (1.6.2)

Chapter 7: Self-Assessment— Periods, Question Marks, and Exclamation Points

7-45. Dr. Eleanor H. Hutton has requested information on TaskMasters, Inc. (2.1)
7-46. That qualifies us as a rapidly growing new company, don't you think? (2.2)
7-47. Our president, Daniel Gruber, is a CPA. On your behalf, I asked him why he started the company. (2.1)
7-48. In the past three years, we have experienced phenomenal growth of 800 percent. *OR* ! (2.1, 2.3)
7-49. Contact me at 1358 N. Parsons Avenue, Tulsa, OK 74204. (2.1)
7-50. Jack asked, "Why does he want to know? Maybe he plans to become a competitor." *OR* ! (2.1, 2.2, 2.3)
7-51. The debt load fluctuates with the movement of the U.S. prime rate. (2.1)
7-52. I can't believe we could have missed such a promising opportunity! *OR* . (2.3)
7-53. Is consumer loyalty extinct? Yes and No. (2.2, 2.1)
7-54. Johnson and Kane, Inc., has gone out of business. What a surprise. *OR* ! (2.1, 2.3)
7-55. Will you please send us a check today so that we can settle your account. (2.1)
7-56. Ms. Jasmine R. Capp will be our new CEO, beginning January 20, 2019. (2.1)
7-57. The rag doll originally sold for $1,098, but we have lowered the price to a mere $599. (2.1)
7-58. Will you be able to make the presentation at the conference, or should we find someone else? (2.2)
7-59. So I ask you, "When will we admit defeat?" Never! (2.2, 2.3)

Chapter 8: Self-Assessment— Semicolons, Colons, and Commas

8-42. This letter looks good; that one doesn't. (2.4)
8-43. I want to make one thing perfectly clear: Neither of you will be promoted if sales figures don't improve. (2.5)
8-44. The Zurich airport has been snowed in; therefore, I won't be able to meet with you before January 4. (2.4)
8-45. His motivation was obvious: to get Meg fired. (2.5)
8-46. Only two firms have responded to our survey: J. J. Perkins and Tucker & Tucker. (2.5)
8-47. Send a copy to Mary Kent, Marketing Director; Robert Bache, Comptroller; and Dennis Mann, Sales Director. (2.4)
8-48. Please be sure to interview these employees next week: Henry Gold, Doris Hatch, and George Iosupovich. (2.5)
8-49. We have observed your hard work; because of it, we are promoting you to manager of your department. (2.4)
8-50. You shipped three items on June 7; however, we received only one of them. (2.4)
8-51. The convention kit includes the following: response cards, giveaways, brochures, and a display rack. (2.5)
8-52. The workers wanted an immediate wage increase; they had not had a raise in nearly two years. (2.4)
8-53. This, then, is our goal for 2020: increase sales 35 percent. (2.5)
8-54. His writing skills are excellent; however, he still needs to polish his management style. (2.4)
8-55. We would like to address three issues: efficiency, profitability, and market penetration. (2.5)
8-56. Remember this rule: When in doubt, leave it out. (2.5)

Chapter 9: Self-Assessment— Commas

9-47. Please send us four cases of filters, two cases of wing nuts, and a bale of rags. (2.6)
9-48. Your analysis, however, does not account for returns. (2.6)
9-49. As a matter of fact, she has seen the figures. (2.6)
9-50. Before May 7, 2015, they wouldn't have minded either. (2.6)
9-51. After Martha has gone, talk to me about promoting her. (2.6)
9-52. Stoneridge, Inc., will go public on September 9, 2020. (2.6)
9-53. We want the new copier, not the old model. (2.6)
9-54. "Talk to me," Sandra said, "before you change a thing." (2.6)
9-55. Because of a previous engagement, Dr. Stoeve will not be able to attend. (2.6)
9-56. The company started attracting attention during the long, hard recession of the mid-1970s. (2.6)
9-57. You can reach me at this address: 717 Darby Place, Scottsdale, Arizona 85251. (2.6)

9-58. Transfer the documents from Fargo, North Dakota, to Boise, Idaho. (2.6)
9-59. Sam O'Neill, the designated representative, is gone today. (2.6)
9-60. With your help, we will soon begin. (2.6)
9-61. She may hire two new representatives, or she may postpone filling those territories until spring. (2.6)

Chapter 10: Self-Assessment—Dashes and Hyphens

10-48. Three qualities—speed, accuracy, and reliability—are desirable in any applicant to the data entry department. (2.7)
10-49. A highly placed source explained the top-secret negotiations. (2.8)
10-50. The file on Marian Gephardt—yes, we finally found it—reveals a history of late payments. (2.7)
10-51. They're selling a well-designed machine. (2.8)
10-52. A bottle-green sports jacket is hard to find. (2.8)
10-53. Argentina, Brazil, Mexico—these are the countries we hope to concentrate on. (2.7)
10-54. Only two sites—maybe three—offer the things we need. (2.7)
10-55. How many owner-operators are in the industry? (2.8)
10-56. Your ever-faithful assistant deserves—without a doubt—a substantial raise. (2.8, 2.7)
10-57. Myrna Talefiero is this organization's president-elect. (2.8)
10-58. Stealth, secrecy, and surprise—those are the elements that will give us a competitive edge. (2.7)
10-59. The charts are well-placed on each page—unlike the running heads and footers. (2.8, 2.7)
10-60. We got our small-business loan—an enormous advantage. (2.8, 2.7)
10-61. Ron Franklin—do you remember him?—will be in town Monday. (2.7)
10-62. Your devil-may-care attitude affects everyone involved in the decision-making process. (2.8)

Chapter 11: Self-Assessment—Quotation Marks, Parentheses, Ellipses, Underscores, and Italics

11-30. Be sure to read "How to Sell by Listening" in this month's issue of *Fortune*. (2.10, 3.2)
11-31. Her response (see the attached memo) is disturbing. (2.11)
11-32. *Contact* is an overused word. (3.2)
11-33. We will operate with a skeleton staff during the holiday break (December 21 through January 2). (2.11)
11-34. "The SBP's next conference," the bulletin noted, "will be held in Minneapolis." (2.10)
11-35. Sara O'Rourke (a reporter from *The Wall Street Journal*) will be here on Thursday. (2.11, 3.2)
11-36. I don't care *why* you didn't fill my order; I want to know *when* you'll fill it. (3.2)
11-37. The term *up in the air* means "undecided." (2.10, 3.2)
11-38. Her assistant (the one who just had the baby) won't be back for four weeks. (2.11)
11-39. "Ask not what your country can do for you . . . " is the beginning of a famous quotation from John F. Kennedy. (2.10, 2.12)
11-40. Whom do you think *Time* magazine will select as its Person of the Year? (3.2)
11-41. Do you remember who said "And away we go"? (2.10)
11-42. Refinements in robotics may prove profitable. (More detail about this technology appears in Appendix A.) (2.11)
11-43. The resignation letter begins, "Since I'll never regain your respect . . . " and goes on to explain why that's true. (2.10, 2.12)
11-44. You must help her distinguish between *i.e.* (which means "that is") and *e.g.* (which means "for example"). (2.10, 3.2)

Chapter 12: Self-Assessment—Capitals and Abbreviations

12-27. Dr. Paul Hansen is joining our staff. (3.1)
12-28. New Caressa skin cream should be in a position to dominate that market. (3.1)
12-29. Send this report to ~~Mister~~ Mr. H. K. Danforth, ~~rural route~~RR 1, Warrensburg, NY 12885. (3.1, 3.3)
12-30. You are responsible for training my new assistant to operate the Xerox machine. (3.1)
12-31. She received her ~~master of business administration~~MBA degree from the University of Michigan. (3.1, 3.3)
12-32. The building is located on the corner of Madison and Center Streets. (3.1)
12-33. Call me tomorrow at 8 a.m. ~~morning, pacific standard time~~PST, and I'll have the information you need. (3.3)
12-34. When Jones becomes CEO next month, we'll need your input ASAP. (3.1, 3.3)
12-35. Address it to Art Bowers, Chief of Production. (3.1)
12-36. Please RSVP to Sony ~~corp.~~Corporation just as soon as you know your schedule. (3.1, 3.3)

12-37. The IT department will begin work on ~~feb.~~February 2, just one ~~wk.~~week from today. (3.3)

12-38. You are to meet him on Friday at the UN building in NYC. (3.3)

12-39. Whenever you can come, Professor, our employees will greatly enjoy your presentation. (3.1)

12-40. At 50 per box, our standard contract forms are $9.00 a box, and our warranty forms are $7.95 a box. (3.3)

12-41. We plan to establish a sales office on the West Coast. (3.1)

Chapter 13: Self-Assessment—Numbers

13-25. We need to hire ~~one~~1 office manager, ~~four~~4 accountants, and ~~twelve~~12 programmer-analysts. (3.4)

13-26. The market for this product is nearly ~~six~~6 million people in our region alone. (3.4)

13-27. Make sure that all 1,835 pages are on my desk no later than ~~nine o'clock~~9:00 a.m. (*OR* nine o'clock in the morning.) (3.4)

13-28. In 2014, ~~was the year that~~José Guiterez sold more than $50,000~~thousand dollars~~ worth of stock. (3.4)

13-29. Our deadline is ~~4/7~~April 7, but we won't be ready before ~~4/11~~April 11. (3.4)

13-30. ~~95~~Ninety-five percent of our customers are men. (3.4)

13-31. More than ~~1/2~~half the U.S. population is female. (3.4)

13-32. Cecile Simmons, ~~thirty-eight~~38, is the first woman in this company to be promoted to management. (3.4)

13-33. Last year, I wrote 20 ~~15-~~fifteen-page reports, and Michelle wrote 24 three-page reports. (3.4)

13-34. Of the 15 applicants, ~~seven~~7 are qualified. (3.4)

13-35. Our blinds should measure 38 inches wide by 64-1/2~~and one half~~ inches long by 7/16 inches deep. (3.4)

13-36. Deliver the couch to ~~seven eighty three~~783 Fountain Road, Suite ~~three~~3, Procter Valley, CA 92074. (3.4)

13-37. Here are the corrected figures: 42.70% agree, 23.25% disagree, 34.00% are undecided, and the error is 0.05%. (3.4)

13-38. You have to agree that 50~~,000,000~~ million U.S. citizens cannot be wrong. (3.4)

13-39. We need a set of shelves 10 feet, ~~eight~~8 inches long. (3.4)

Chapter 14: Self-Assessment—Vocabulary

14-32. except (4.1)

14-33. device (4.1)

14-34. loath (4.1)

14-35. ordinance (4.1)

14-36. precedence (4.1)

14-37. than (4.1)

14-38. who's (4.1)

14-39. In this department, we see a lot of mistakes like that. (4.2)

14-40. In my judgment, you'll need to redo the cover. (4.3)

14-41. He decided to reveal the information regardless of the consequences. (4.2)

14-42. Why not go along when it is so easy to accommodate his demands? (4.3)

14-43. When you say that, do you mean to imply that I'm being unfair? (4.2)

14-44. She says that she finds this sort of ceremony embarrassing. (4.3)

14-45. All we have to do is try to get along with him for a few more days. (4.2)

14-46. A friendly handshake should always precede negotiations. (4.3)

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Index

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