

BUSINESS

Fourteenth Edition

COMMUNICATION

TODAY



Courtland L. Bovée • John V. Thill



Pearson

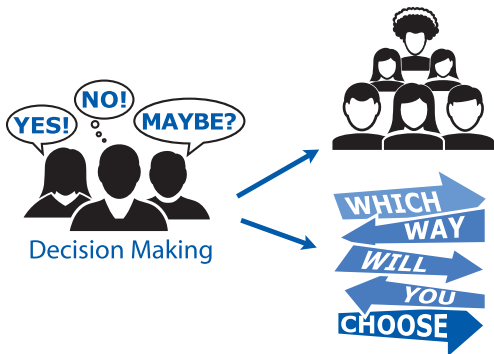
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Practice, Engage, Apply



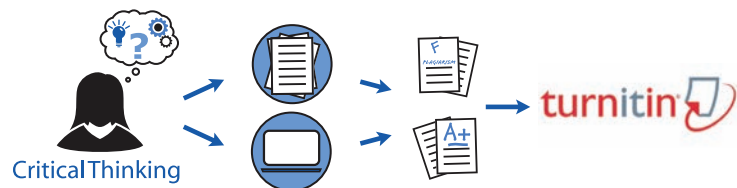
- **Personalize Learning with MyBCommLab**—MyBCommLab is an online homework, tutorial, and assessment program designed to work with this text to engage students and improve results. Within its structured environment, students practice what they learn, test their understanding, and pursue a personalized study plan that helps them better absorb course material and understand difficult concepts.

- **MediaShare for Business**—Consisting of a curated collection of business videos tagged to learning outcomes and 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. Instructors can also assign favorite YouTube clips or original content and employ MediaShare's powerful repository of tools to maximize student accountability and interactive learning, and provide contextualized feedback for students and teams who upload presentations, media, or business plans.



- **Branching, Decision-Making Simulations**—Put your students in the role of manager as they make a series of decisions based on a realistic business challenge. The simulations change and branch based on their decisions, creating various scenario paths. At the end of each simulation, students receive a grade and a detailed report of the choices they made with the associated consequences included.

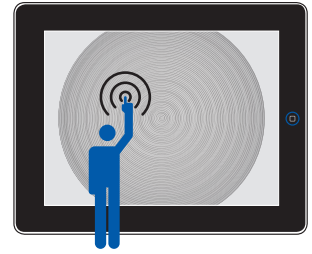
- **Writing Space**—Better writers make great learners who perform better in their courses. Designed to help you develop and assess concept mastery and critical thinking, the Writing Space offers a single place to create, track, and grade writing assignments, provide resources, and exchange meaningful, personalized feedback with students, quickly and easily. Thanks to auto-graded, assisted-graded, and create-your-own assignments, you decide your level of involvement in evaluating students' work. The auto-graded option allows you to assign writing in large classes without having to grade essays by hand. And because of integration with Turnitin®, Writing Space can check students' work for improper citation or plagiarism.



- **Dynamic Study Modules**—Helps students study effectively on their own by continuously assessing their activity and performance in real time. Here's how it works: students complete a set of questions with a unique answer format that also asks them to indicate their confidence level. Questions repeat until the student can answer them all correctly and confidently. Once completed, Dynamic Study Modules explain the concept using materials from the text. These are available as graded assignments prior to class, and accessible on smartphones, tablets, and computers.

with MyBCommLab[®]

- **Enhanced eText**—Keeps students engaged in learning on their own time, while helping them achieve greater conceptual understanding of course material. The worked examples bring learning to life, and algorithmic practice allows students to apply the very concepts they are reading about. Combining resources that illuminate content with accessible self-assessment, MyLab with Enhanced eText provides students with a complete digital learning experience—all in one place.



- **Reporting Dashboard**—View, analyze, and report learning outcomes clearly and easily, and get the information you need to keep your students on track throughout the course with the new Reporting Dashboard. Available via the MyLab Gradebook and fully mobile-ready, the Reporting Dashboard presents student performance data at the class, section, and program levels in an accessible, visual manner.

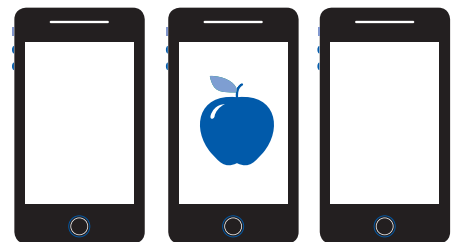
- **Quizzes and Tests**—Pre-built quizzes and tests allow you to quiz students without having to grade the assignments yourself.



- **Video Exercises**—These engaging videos explore a variety of business topics related to the theory students are learning in class. Quizzes assess students' comprehension of the concepts covered in each video.

- **Learning Catalytics™**—Is an interactive, student response tool that uses students' smartphones, tablets, or laptops to engage them in more sophisticated tasks and thinking. Now included with MyLab with eText, Learning Catalytics enables you to generate classroom discussion, guide your lecture, and promote peer-to-peer learning with real-time analytics. Instructors, you can:

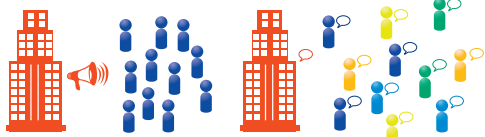
- Pose a variety of open-ended questions that help your students develop critical thinking skills
- Monitor responses to find out where students are struggling
- Use real-time data to adjust your instructional strategy and try other ways of engaging your students during class
- Manage student interactions by automatically grouping students for discussion, teamwork, and peer-to-peer learning



Giving Students the Skills and Insights They Need to Thrive in Today's Digital Business Environment

The essential skills of writing, listening, collaborating, and public speaking are as important as ever, but they're not enough to succeed in today's business world. As business communication continues to get rocked by waves of innovation—first digital media, then social media, now mobile communication, and watch out for the upcoming invasion of chatbots—the nature of communication is changing. And the changes go far deeper than the tools themselves.

In this exciting but complex new world, no other textbook can match the depth and range of coverage offered by *Business Communication Today*.



Conventional Promotion:
"We Talk, You Listen"

- Tendencies**
- Publication, broadcast
 - Lecture
 - Intrusion
 - Unidirectional
 - One to many; mass audience
 - Control
 - Low message frequency
 - Few channels
 - Information hoarding
 - Static
 - Hierarchical
 - Structured
 - Isolated
 - Planned
 - Resistive

The Social Model:
"Let's Have a Conversation"

- Tendencies**
- Conversion
 - Discussion
 - Permission
 - Bidirectional, multidirectional
 - One to one; many to many
 - Influence
 - High message frequency
 - Many channels
 - Information sharing
 - Dynamic
 - Egalitarian
 - Amorphous
 - Collaborative
 - Reactive
 - Responsive

Figure 1.7 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 new-media tools, and your experience will help you on the job.

Tools, Techniques, and Insights for Communicating Successfully in a Mobile, Digital, Social World

COMPOSITIONAL MODES FOR DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

As you practice using various media and channels in this course, it's best to focus on the fundamentals of planning, writing, and completing messages, rather than on the specific details of any one medium or system.² Fortunately, the basic communication skills required usually transfer from one system to another. You can succeed with written communication in virtually all digital media by using one of nine *compositional modes*:

- **Conversations.** Messaging is a great example of a written medium that mimics spoken conversation. And just as you wouldn't read a report to someone sitting in your office, you wouldn't use conversational modes to exchange large volumes of information or to communicate with more than a few people at once.
- **Comments and critiques.** One of the most powerful aspects of social media is the ability for interested parties to express opinions and provide feedback, whether

EMBRACING THE BACKCHANNEL

Many business presentations these days involve more than just the spoken conversation between the speaker and his or her audience. Using Twitter and other digital media members often carry on their own parallel communication during a presentation, which the 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."²⁹ Chances are you've participated

Producing Business Videos

No matter what career path you pursue, chances are you'll have the need or opportunity to produce (or star in) a business video. 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 videos.

The three-step process adapts easily to video; professionals refer to the three steps as *preproduction*, *production*, and *postproduction* (see Figure 9.15). You can refer to one of these available on basic video production techniques for more detail, but here are a few things to consider in all three steps. (A note on terminology: digital video is recorded in a number of terms from film that don't make strict technical sense when used in any way, including *footage* to indicate any amount of recorded video.)

6 LEARNING OBJECTIVE Identify the most important considerations in the preproduction, production, and postproduction stages of producing basic business videos.

The process of creating videos is divided into preproduction, production, and postproduction.



Figure 8.2 Business Applications of Blogging

This Xerox blog illustrates the content, writing style, and features that make an effective, reader-friendly company blog. Source: Courtesy of Xerox Corporation.



Figure 2.3 Collaboration on Mobile Devices

Mobile connectivity is transforming collaboration activities, helping teams and work groups stay connected no matter where their work takes them. For example, this team was able to discuss and edit a press release using their tablets in different locations.

The Mobile Revolution

As much of a game changer as social media have been, some experts predict that mobile

THE RISE OF MOBILE AS A COMMUNICATION PLATFORM

Whether it's emailing, social networking, watching videos, or doing research, the percent-

HOW MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES ARE CHANGING BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

The rise of mobile communication has some obvious implications, such as the need

Writing Messages for Mobile Devices

One obvious adaptation to make for audiences using mobile devices is to modify the

DESIGNING MESSAGES FOR MOBILE DEVICES

In addition to making your content mobile-friendly using the writing tips in Chapter 4

DIGITAL + SOCIAL + MOBILE: TODAY'S COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT

Job-Search Strategies: Maximize Your Mobile

The mobile business communication revolution is changing the way employers recruit new talent and the way job candidates look for opportunities. Many companies have optimized

her career and the industry as a whole. Many of the tools you can use to build your personal brand are available as mobile apps, including blogging platforms, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Dozens of apps are available to help with various aspects

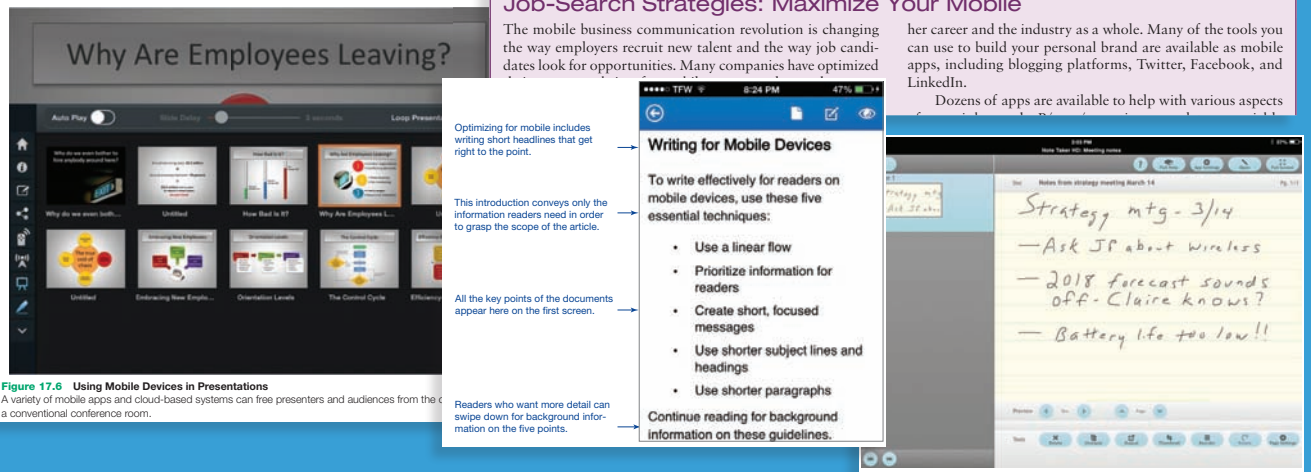


Figure 17.6 Using Mobile Devices in Presentations

A variety of mobile apps and cloud-based systems can free presenters and audiences from the constraints of a conventional conference room.

THE FUTURE OF COMMUNICATION

Communication Bots

The bots are back. Automated bots (short for *robots*) made a small way

THE FUTURE OF COMMUNICATION

The Internet of Things

The *Internet of Things (IoT)* refers to the billions of devices

now connected to the Internet

of having all these devices

data into vast information

ple and the physical world

simple sensors that can collect

parameters all the time

THE FUTURE OF COMMUNICATION

Real-Time Translation

If you've ever tried to converse in a language other than your

native tongue, you know how frustrating it can be. As a

listener, you often have to guess the meaning of words and

sentences. As a speaker, you often have to rephrase a written

instantly.

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 clues 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?

Intriguing Glimpses into the Future of Business Communication

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Business Communication Today

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data on File
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



ISBN 10: 0-13-456218-6
ISBN 13: 978-0-13-456218-6

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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Preface

Major Changes and Improvements in This Edition

Here are the major changes in the 14th Edition of *Business Communication Today*:

- Twelve new chapter-opening vignettes with accompanying end-of-chapter individual and team challenges:
 - Kaiser Permanente’s strategic approach to communicating with its diverse stakeholder groups (Chapter 3)
 - Wolff Orlis’s use of storytelling in business communication, including using an award-winning novelist as its chief storytelling officer (Chapter 4)
 - Type Together’s contemporary typeface designs, emphasizing readability in business documents and other messages (Chapter 6)
 - Slack’s workplace messaging system, which is changing the way many organizations communicate (Chapter 7)
 - Jill Duffy’s advice for handling the daily deluge of routine messages more productively (Chapter 10)
 - Strategyzer’s revolutionary alternative to the traditional annual report, now embraced by thousands of entrepreneurs (Chapter 13)
 - Warby Parker’s whimsical and audience-focused approach to annual reports (Chapter 14)
 - WPP’s use of web interactivity to create one of the most readable annual reports ever published (Chapter 15)
 - Gina Barnett’s “whole-body” public speaking advice, which can help all business professionals improve their onstage presence (Chapter 16)
 - Nancy Duarte’s timeless advice for creating audience-friendly presentation slides (Chapter 17)
 - Burning Glass’s application of artificial intelligence to the critical job-search challenge of matching employer needs and employee skill sets (Chapter 18)
 - VMWare’s enthusiastic embrace of social media to transform its approach to employee recruiting (Chapter 19)
- A new highlight box theme, *The Future of Communication*, giving students a glimpse into some fascinating technologies that could reshape the practice of business communication in the coming years: the Internet of Things, real-time translation, haptic communication, telepathy, virtual and augmented reality, gestural computing, smart communication bots, emotion recognition, and holograms
- More than 70 new or redesigned business communication examples and figures. The 14th Edition includes
 - 78 annotated model documents
 - 26 examples of mobile communication in business communication
 - 25 examples of social media in business communication
- Revised annotations for all the before/after model document pairs, making it easier for students to see the specific changes made to transform ineffective messages into effective ones
- Updated coverage of the advantages and disadvantages of teams (Chapter 2), overcoming resistance (Chapter 2), gender differences (Chapter 3), digital messaging

(Chapter 7), the business communication uses of social networks (Chapter 8), content curation (Chapter 8), and effective and ethical apologies (Chapter 11)

- 24 New communication cases
- More than three dozen new end-of-chapter questions and exercises

Preparing the Next Generation of Professional Communicators with the Most Current and Most Comprehensive Text in the Field

Communication is the most valuable skill that graduates can bring into the workforce, and it is one of the six cornerstones of true professionalism emphasized in *Business Communication Today*. The business communication course is uniquely positioned to help students develop as professionals because it addresses such vital topics as respect, credibility, dependability, ethical decision making, and collaboration.

An essential part of being a professional is being conversant in the methods and practices of the contemporary workplace. To this end, *Business Communication Today* 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 (including a concise primer on producing digital business video). Each chapter adapts the fundamentals of effective writing to specific workplace challenges and media applications, so students will be better prepared to succeed from their first day on the job.

Although it stays on the leading edge of workplace practices and communication tools, *Business Communication Today* never loses sight of the fact that communication



is a human activity in the deepest sense. It emphasizes the importance of developing a strong sense of etiquette, recognizing ethical dilemmas, advancing ethical communication, and respecting the rights and needs of audience members at every stage of the writing process.

By integrating all the key skills and insights that students need in order to succeed in today's dynamic workplace, *Business Communication Today* is an unmatched resource for preparing the next generation of business professionals.

Why Business Communication Instructors Continue to Choose Bovée and Thill

- **Market-leading innovation.** For more than three decades, Bovée and Thill texts have pioneered coverage of emerging trends and their implications for business communication. Bovée and Thill were the first authors in the field to give in-depth coverage to digital media, social media, and mobile communication.
- **Up-to-date coverage that reflects today's business communication practices and employer expectations.** Technology, globalization, and other forces have dramatically changed the practice of business communication in recent years, even to the point of altering how people read and how messages should be constructed. To prepare students for today's workplace, a business communication course needs to address contemporary skills, issues, and concepts.
- **Practical advice informed by deep experience.** Beyond the research and presentation of new ideas and tools, Bovée and Thill are among the most active and widely followed users of social media in the entire field of business communication. They don't just write about new concepts; they have years of hands-on experience with social media, blogging, content curation, search technologies, and other important tools. They are active participants in more than 45 social media sites.



Scooped by [Bovée & Thill's Online Magazines for Business Communication](#)

Business Communication Instruction: How Students Can Learn More Through Online Media



From www.youtube.com - June 15, 7:58 PM

Business Communication Instruction: How Students Can Learn More "Learn More" media items (more than 60 in all) integrate Bovée & Thill textbooks with online materials.

- **Engaging coverage of real companies and contemporary issues in business communication.** Bovée and Thill texts emphasize companies and issues students already know about or are likely to find intriguing. For example, cases in recent editions have addressed Comic-Con, location-based social networking, employer restrictions on social media, the use of Twitter in the job-search process, video gaming, alternative energy, and the challenges of reading and writing on smartphones.
- **Integrated learning.** In sharp contrast to texts that tack on coverage of social media and other new topics, Bovée and Thill continually revise their coverage to fully integrate the skills and issues that are important in today's workplace. This integration is carried through chapter-opening vignettes, chapter content, model documents, end-of-chapter questions, communication cases, and test banks to make sure students practice the skills they'll need, not just read about them in some anecdotal fashion.
- **Added value with unique, free resources for instructors and students.** From the groundbreaking Real-Time Updates to *Business Communication Headline News* to videos specially prepared for instructors, Bovée and Thill adopters can take advantage of an unmatched array of free resources to enhance the classroom experience and keep course content fresh. Please see pages xxix–xxx for a complete list.

In-Depth Coverage of Digital, Social, and Mobile Media Topics in the 14th Edition

Business Communication Today offers in-depth coverage of new and emerging media skills and concepts. These tables show where you can find major areas of coverage, figures, and communication cases that expose students to professional use of social media, mobile media, and other new technologies.

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Extending the Value of Your Textbook with Free Multimedia Content

Business Communication Today's unique Real-Time Updates system automatically provides weekly content updates, including interactive websites, infographics, podcasts, PowerPoint presentations, online videos, and articles. You can subscribe to updates chapter by chapter, so you get only the material that applies to your current chapter. Visit real-timeupdates.com/bct14 to subscribe.

1 Read messages from the authors and access over 175 media items available only to instructors. (Students have access to their own messages, assignments, and media items.)

2 Click on any chapter to see the updates and media items for that chapter.

3 Scan headlines and click on any item of interest to read the article or download the media item. Every item is personally selected by the authors to complement the text and support in-class activities.

4 Media items are categorized by type so you can quickly find podcasts, videos, infographics, PowerPoints, and more.

5 Subscribe via RSS to individual chapters to get updates automatically for the chapter you're currently teaching.

For Instructors: Features and Resources to Enhance the Course Experience

TARGET AUDIENCE

Everyone who teaches business communication is motivated to help students master the fundamentals of professional communication while also preparing them for the broader expectations they'll encounter in today's workplace. As the field of business communication continues to expand and get more complex, however, balancing those two objectives continues to get more difficult. Basing your course on a textbook that hasn't kept up with contemporary business media and professional practices puts both you and your students at a distinct disadvantage, and yet you obviously can't ignore basic writing skills.

With its treatment of business communication in the broadest sense (including digital video and managerial issues such as crisis communication), *Business Communication Today* is ideal for comprehensive business communication and managerial communication courses in any curriculum, in any format—in class, online, or hybrid.

For courses with a particular emphasis on written communication, you may find the authors' 16-chapter text *Excellence in Business Communication* to be an optimal fit. And for introductory courses that emphasize business English, the 14-chapter *Business Communication Essentials* offers balanced coverage of basic business English, communication strategies, and cutting-edge technologies. Its compact organization is particularly well suited to quarter calendars as well as to longer courses in which an instructor wants to have time available to supplement the text with service projects, business plan development, or other special activities.

Colleges and universities vary in the prerequisites established for the business communication course, but we advise at least one course in English composition. Some coursework in business studies will also give students a better perspective on communication challenges in the workplace. However, we have taken special care not to assume students have any in-depth business experience, so *Business Communication Today* works quite well for those with limited work experience or business coursework.

A TOTAL TEACHING AND LEARNING SOLUTION

Business Communication Today has helped more than 2 million students master essential skills for succeeding in the workplace. This 14th Edition continues that tradition by offering an unmatched set of tools that simplify teaching, promote active learning, and stimulate critical thinking. These components work together at four levels to provide seamless coverage of vital knowledge and skills: previewing, developing, enhancing, and reinforcing.

Previewing

Each chapter provides clear learning objectives that prepare students for the material to come and provide a framework for the chapter content. New in this edition, each learning objective aligns with a major heading in the chapter, and this structure is carried through to the end-of-chapter and online activities, making it easier for instructors and students to gauge learning progress.

After the learning objectives, a compelling Communication Close-Up vignette featuring a successful professional role model shows students how the material they will encounter in the chapter is put to use in actual business situations.

Developing

Chapter content develops, explains, and elaborates on concepts with a carefully organized presentation of textual and visual material. The three-step process of planning, writing, and completing is clearly explained and reinforced throughout the course. Some texts introduce a writing process model and then rarely, if ever, discuss it again, giving students few opportunities to practice it and leaving them to wonder just how important

the process really is. *Business Communication Today* adapts the three-step process to every category of messages in every medium, from traditional letters and reports to email, blogs, IM, podcasts, wikis, and online videos.

Enhancing

Contemporary examples show students the specific elements that contribute to—or detract from—successful messages. *Business Communication Today* has an unmatched portfolio of realistic examples for students to emulate. In addition, Real-Time Updates—Learn More connects students with dozens of carefully selected online media elements that provide examples and insights from successful professionals.

Business Communication Today also extends students' awareness beyond the functional aspects of communication, with thorough and well-integrated coverage of business etiquette and ethics—vital issues that some texts raise briefly and then quickly forget. In light of employer concerns about the etiquette shortcomings of today's new hires and the continuing struggles with business ethics, we integrate ethics and etiquette throughout the book and give students numerous opportunities to ponder ethical dilemmas and practice communication etiquette.

Reinforcing

Hundreds of realistic exercises and activities help students practice vital skills and put newfound knowledge to immediate use. Unique features include downloadable Word documents, podcasts, PowerPoint presentations for students to analyze, and the innovative Bovée and Thill wiki simulator. Interactive Document Makeovers, pioneered by Bovée and Thill, let students experience firsthand the elements that make a document successful, giving them the insights they need in order to analyze and improve their own business messages. More than 140 communication cases, featuring dozens of real companies, encourage students to think about contemporary business issues as they put their skills to use in a variety of media, including blogging, social networking, and podcasting.

At every stage of the learning experience, *Business Communication Today* provides the tools instructors and students need to succeed.

Features that Help Students Build Essential Knowledge and Skills	Previewing	Developing	Enhancing	Reinforcing
Learning objectives (beginning of chapter)	•			
Communication Close-up (beginning of chapter)	•			
Concise presentations of fundamentals (within chapter)		•		
Managerial and strategic perspectives on key topics (within chapter)		•		
Three-step writing process discussion and diagrams (within chapter)		•		
Real-life examples (within chapter)			•	
Annotated model documents (within chapter)			•	
Highlight boxes (within chapter)			•	
Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage (end of book)			•	
Learn More media resources (online)			•	
MyBCommLab (online)			•	•
Real-Time Updates (online)			•	•
Marginal notes for quick review (within chapter)				•
Checklists (within chapter)				•
Communication Challenges (end of chapter)				•
Quick Learning Guide (end of chapter)				•
Test Your Knowledge questions (end of chapter)				•
Apply Your Knowledge questions (end of chapter)				•

(continued)

Features that Help Students Build Essential Knowledge and Skills	Previewing	Developing	Enhancing	Reinforcing
Practice Your Skills activities and exercises (end of chapter)				•
Expand Your Skills web activities (end of chapter/online)				•
Bovée and Thill wiki simulator (online)				•
Cases (following Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, and 19)				•
Document Makeovers (online)				•

FULL SUPPORT FOR AACSB LEARNING STANDARDS

The American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) is a not-for-profit corporation of educational institutions, corporations, and other organizations devoted to the promotion and improvement of higher education in business administration and accounting. A collegiate institution offering degrees in business administration or accounting may volunteer for AACSB accreditation review. The AACSB makes initial accreditation decisions and conducts periodic reviews to promote continuous quality improvement in management education. Pearson Education is a proud member of the AACSB and is pleased to provide advice to help you apply AACSB Learning Standards.

Curriculum quality is one of the most important criteria for AACSB accreditation. Although no specific courses are required, the AACSB expects a curriculum to include learning experiences in the following areas:

- Written and oral communication
- Ethical understanding and reasoning
- Analytical thinking
- Information technology
- Interpersonal relations and teamwork
- Diverse and multicultural work environments
- Reflective thinking
- Application of knowledge

Throughout *Business Communication Today*, you'll find student exercises and activities that support the achievement of these important goals, and the questions in the accompanying test bank are tagged with the appropriate AACSB category.

UNMATCHED COVERAGE OF ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

The Bovée and Thill series continues to lead the field with unmatched coverage of communication technologies, reflecting the expectations and opportunities in today's workplace:

- Applicant tracking systems
- Assistive technologies
- Automated reputation analysis
- Backchannel
- Blogs
- Cloud computing
- Community Q&A websites
- Computer animation
- Content curation
- Crowdsourcing
- Crowdspeaking
- Data visualization
- Digital documents (PDFs)
- Digital whiteboards
- Email
- Emoticons
- Emotion recognition software
- Enterprise instant messaging
- E-portfolios
- Extranets
- Gamification
- Geographic information systems
- Gestural computing
- Graphics software
- Groupware and shared online workspaces
- Haptic communication
- Holograms
- Infographics
- Information architecture
- Instant messaging
- Intellectual property rights
- Interactivity
- Internet of Things
- Internet telephony (Skype)
- Interview simulators
- Intranets
- Knowledge management systems
- Linked and embedded documents
- Location-based social networking
- Microblogs
- Mobile business apps
- Multimedia documents
- Multimedia presentations
- Multimedia résumés

- Newsfeeds
- Online brainstorming systems
- Online research techniques
- Online survey tools
- Online video
- Podcasts
- PowerPoint animation
- Really Simple Syndication (RSS)
- Real-time translation
- Screencasts
- Search and metasearch engines
- Search engine optimization (SEO)
- Security and privacy concerns in digital media
- Sentiment analysis
- Smart communication bots
- Social bookmarking
- Social commerce
- Social media
- Social media résumés
- Social networking
- Tagging
- Teleconferencing and telepresence
- Telepathy
- Text messaging
- Translation software
- User-generated content
- Video interviews
- Video résumés
- Videoconferencing
- Virtual and augmented reality
- Virtual communities
- Virtual meetings
- Virtual whiteboards
- Web content management systems
- Webcasts
- Web directories
- Website accessibility
- Wikis
- Workforce analytics
- Workplace messaging systems

COURSE PLANNING GUIDE

Although *Business Communication Today* follows a conventional sequence of topics, it is structured so that you can address topics in whatever order best suits your needs. For instance, if you want to begin by reviewing grammar, sentence structure, and other writing fundamentals, you can ask students to read Chapter 5, Writing Business Messages, and then the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage. Conversely, if you want to begin with employment-related communication, you can start with the Prologue, Building a Career with Your Communication Skills, followed by Chapters 18 and 19.

The following table suggests a sequence and a schedule for covering the chapters in the textbook, with time allocations based on the total number of class hours available.

Chapter/Section Number and Title		Hours Devoted to Each Chapter/Section		
		30-Hour Course	45-Hour Course	60-Hour Course
Prologue	Building a Career with Your Communication Skills	1	1	1
1	Professional Communication in a Digital, Social, Mobile World	1	1	1
2	Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, and Business Etiquette	1	1	2
3	Communication Challenges in a Diverse, Global Marketplace	1	2	3
4	Planning Business Messages	2	3	4
5	Writing Business Messages	2	3	4
6	Completing Business Messages	2	3	4
	Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage	1	2	2
A	Format and Layout of Business Documents	1	1	1
7	Digital Media	1	2	3
8	Social Media	1	2	3
9	Visual Media	1	1	2
10	Writing Routine and Positive Messages	2	2	3
11	Writing Negative Messages	2	2	3
12	Writing Persuasive Messages	2	2	3
13	Finding, Evaluating, and Processing Information	1	2	3
14	Planning Reports and Proposals	1	2	3
15	Writing and Completing Reports and Proposals	1	2	3
B	Documentation of Report Sources	1	1	2
16	Developing Presentations in a Social Media Environment	1	3	3

(continued)

Chapter/Section Number and Title	Hours Devoted to Each Chapter/Section		
	30-Hour Course	45-Hour Course	60-Hour Course
17 Enhancing Presentations with Slides and Other Visuals	1	1	1
18 Building Careers and Writing Résumés	2	3	3
19 Applying and Interviewing for Employment	1	3	3

INSTRUCTOR RESOURCES AND SUPPORT OPTIONS

Business Communication Today is backed by an unmatched selection of resources for instructors and students, many of which were pioneered by the authors and remain unique in the field.

Online Communities and Media Resources

Instructors are welcome to take advantage of the many free online resources provided by Bovée and Thill:

- Sponsorship of Teaching Business Communication instructors' communities (open to all) and Bovée & Thill's Inner Circle for Business Communication (for adopters only) on LinkedIn and Facebook
- Instructor tips and techniques in Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Blog and Twitter feed
- The Bovée & Thill channel on YouTube, with videos that offer advice on teaching the new elements of business communication
- The unique Real-Time Updates content-updating service (see page xxiv)
- The popular Business Communication Headline News service (see page xxix–xxx)
- A variety of videos and PowerPoint presentations on SlideShare
- More than 500 infographics, videos, articles, podcasts, and PowerPoints on Business Communication Pictorial Gallery on Pinterest
- The Ultimate Guide to Resources for Teaching Business Communication

We also invite you to peruse Bovée & Thill's Online Magazines for Business Communication on Scoop.it:

- Business Communication 2.0: Social Media and Digital Communication
- Teaching a Modern Business Communication Course
- How the Mobile Revolution Is Changing Business Communication
- Teaching Business Communication and Workplace Issues
- Teaching Business Communication and Interpersonal Communication
- Teaching Business Presentations in a Business Communication Course
- Teaching Business Communication and Employment
- Teaching Visual Communication in a Business Communication Course
- Exclusive Teaching Resources for Business Communication Instructors

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

Business Communication Headline News

Stay on top of hot topics, important trends, and new technologies with Business Communication Headline News (bchn.businesscommunicationnetwork.com), the most comprehensive business communication site on the Internet. Every weekday during the school year, we offer fresh lecture content and provide a wide range of research and teaching tools on the website, including a custom web search function that we created expressly for business communication research.

Take advantage of the newsfeeds to get late-breaking news in headlines with concise summaries. You can scan incoming items in a matter of seconds and simply click through to read the full articles that interest you. All articles and accompanying multimedia resources are categorized by topic and chapter for easy retrieval at any time.

This free service for adopters offers numerous ways to enhance lectures and student activities:

- Keep current with the latest information and trends in the field
- Easily update your lecture notes with fresh material
- Create visuals for your classroom presentations
- Supplement your lectures with cutting-edge handouts
- Gather podcasts, online video, and other new media examples to use in the classroom
- Enhance your research projects with the newest data
- Compare best practices from other instructors
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of your teaching by reading about new teaching tips and techniques

At the website, you also get free access to these powerful instructional resources:

- **Business Communication Web Search**, featuring a revolutionary approach to searching developed by the authors that automatically formats more than 325 specific types of online search requests. The tool uses a simple and intuitive interface engineered to help business communication instructors find precisely what they want, whether it's PowerPoint files, PDF files, Microsoft Word documents, Excel files, videos, podcasts, or more.
- **Real-Time Updates** are newsfeeds and content updates tied directly to specific points throughout the text. Each content update is classified by the type of media featured: interactive website, infographic, article, video, podcast, PowerPoint, or PDF. Additional sections on the site include Instructor Messages and Instructor Media (both password protected), Student Messages, and Student Assignments.

You can subscribe to Business Communication Headline News and get delivery by email, RSS newsreader, mobile phone, instant messenger, MP3, Twitter, Facebook, and a host of other options.

Bovée & Thill Business Communication Blog

The Bovée & Thill Business Communication Blog (blog.businesscommunicationnetwork.com/) offers original articles that help instructors focus their teaching to help students learn more efficiently and effectively. Articles discuss a wide variety of topics, including new topics instructors should be teaching their students, resources instructors can use in their classes, solutions to common teaching challenges, and great examples and activities instructors can use in class.

Authors' Email Hotline for Faculty

Integrity, excellence, and responsiveness are our hallmarks. That means providing you with textbooks that are academically sound, creative, timely, and sensitive to instructor and student needs. As an adopter of *Business Communication Today*, you are invited to use our Email Hotline (hotline@boveeandthillbusinesscommunicationblog.com) if you ever have a question or concern related to the text or its supplements.

Instructor's Resource Center

At the Instructor Resource Center, www.pearsonhighered.com/irc, instructors can access a variety of digital and presentation resources available with this text in downloadable format. As a registered faculty member, you can download resource files and receive immediate access and instructions for installing course management content on your campus server.

If you ever need assistance, our dedicated technical support team is ready to help with the media supplements that accompany this text. Visit support.pearson.com/getsupport for answers to frequently asked questions and toll-free user support phone numbers.

The following supplements are available to adopting instructors (for detailed descriptions, please visit www.pearsonhighered.com/educator):

- Instructor's Resource Manual
- Test Bank
- TestGen® Computerized Test Bank (and various conversions)
- PowerPoint Presentations

For Students: How This Course Will Help You

No matter what profession you want to pursue, the ability to communicate will be an essential skill—and a skill that employers expect you to have when you enter the workforce. This course introduces you to the fundamental principles of business communication and gives you the opportunity to develop your communication skills. You'll discover how business communication differs from personal and social communication, and you'll see how today's companies are using blogs, social networks, podcasts, virtual worlds, wikis, and other technologies. You'll learn a simple three-step writing process that works for all types of writing and speaking projects, both in college and on the job. Along the way, you'll gain valuable insights into ethics, etiquette, listening, teamwork, and nonverbal communication. Plus, you'll learn effective strategies for the many types of communication challenges you'll face on the job, from routine messages about transactions to complex reports and websites.

Few courses can offer the three-for-the-price-of-one value you get from a business communication class. Check out these benefits:

- **In your other classes.** The communication skills you learn in this class can help you in every other course you take in college. From simple homework assignments to complicated team projects to class presentations, you'll be able to communicate more effectively with less time and effort.
- **During your job search.** You can reduce the stress of searching for a job and stand out from the competition. Every activity in the job-search process relies on communication. The better you can communicate, the more successful you'll be at landing interesting and rewarding work.
- **On the job.** After you get that great job, the time and energy you have invested in this course will continue to yield benefits year after year. As you tackle each project and every new challenge, influential company leaders—the people who decide how quickly you'll get promoted and how much you'll earn—will be paying close attention to how well you communicate. They will observe your interactions with colleagues, customers, and business partners. They'll take note of how well you can collect data, find the essential ideas buried under mountains of information, and convey those points to other people. They'll observe your ability to adapt to different audiences and circumstances. They'll be watching when you encounter tough situations that require careful attention to ethics and etiquette. The good news: Every insight you gain and every skill you develop in this course will help you shine in your career.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

Although this course explores a wide range of message types and seems to cover quite a lot of territory, the underlying structure of the course is actually rather simple. You'll learn a few basic concepts, identify some key skills to use and procedures to follow—and then practice, practice, practice. Whether you're writing a blog posting in response to one of the real-company cases or drafting your own résumé, you'll be practicing the same skills again and again. With feedback and reinforcement from your instructor and your classmates, your confidence will grow and the work will become easier and more enjoyable.

The following sections offer advice on approaching each assignment, using your textbook, and taking advantage of some other helpful resources.

APPROACHING EACH ASSIGNMENT

In the spirit of practice and improvement, you will have a number of writing (and possibly speaking) assignments throughout this course. These suggestions will help you produce better results with less effort:

- **First, don't panic!** If the thought of writing a report or giving a speech sends a chill up your spine, you're not alone. Everybody feels that way when first learning business communication skills, and even experienced professionals can feel nervous

about major projects. Keeping three points in mind will help. First, every project can be broken down into a series of small, manageable tasks. Don't let a big project overwhelm you; it's nothing more than a bunch of smaller tasks. Second, remind yourself that you have the skills you need in order to accomplish each task. As you move through the course, the assignments are carefully designed to match the skills you've developed up to that point. Third, if you feel panic creeping up on you, take a break and regain your perspective.

- **Focus on one task at a time.** A common mistake writers make is trying to organize and express their ideas while simultaneously worrying about audience reactions, grammar, spelling, formatting, page design, and a dozen other factors. Fight the temptation to do everything at once; otherwise, your frustration will soar and your productivity will plummet. In particular, don't worry about grammar, spelling, and word choices during your first draft. Concentrate on the organization of your ideas first, then the way you express those ideas, and then the presentation and production of your messages. Following the three-step writing process is an ideal way to focus on one task at a time in a logical sequence.
- **Give yourself plenty of time.** As with every other school project, putting things off to the last minute creates unnecessary stress. Writing and speaking projects in particular are much easier if you tackle them in small stages with breaks in between, rather than trying to get everything done in one frantic blast. Moreover, there will be instances when you simply get stuck on a project, and the best thing to do is walk away and give your mind a break. If you allow room for breaks in your schedule, you'll minimize the frustration and spend less time overall on your homework, too.
- **Step back and assess each project before you start.** The writing and speaking projects you'll have in this course cover a wide range of communication scenarios, and it's essential that you adapt your approach to each new challenge. Resist the urge to dive in and start writing without a plan. Ponder the assignment for a while, consider the various approaches you might take, and think carefully about your objectives before you start writing. Nothing is more frustrating than getting stuck halfway through because you're not sure what you're trying to say or you've wandered off track. Spend a little time planning, and you'll spend a lot less time writing.
- **Use the three-step writing process.** Those essential planning tasks are the first step in the three-step writing process, which you'll learn about in Chapter 4 and use throughout the course. This process has been developed and refined by professional writers with decades of experience and thousands of projects ranging from short blog posts to 500-page textbooks. It works, so take advantage of it.
- **Learn from the examples and model documents.** This textbook offers dozens of realistic examples of business messages, many with notes along the sides that explain strong and weak points. Study these and any other examples that your instructor provides. Learn what works and what doesn't, then apply these lessons to your own writing.
- **Learn from experience.** Finally, learn from the feedback you get from your instructor and from other students. Don't take the criticism personally; your instructor and your classmates are commenting about the work, not about you. View every bit of feedback as an opportunity to improve.

Using This Textbook Package

This book and its accompanying online resources introduce you to the key concepts in business communication while helping you develop essential skills. As you read each chapter, start by studying the learning objectives. They will help you identify the most important concepts in the chapter and give you a feel for what you'll be learning. Each learning objective corresponds to one major heading within the chapter, so you can easily find the information it relates to. After the learning objectives, a compelling Communication Close-Up vignette featuring a successful company or professional shows you how the material you will encounter in the chapter is put to use in actual business situations.

At the end of each chapter, the Summary of Learning Objectives gives you the chance to quickly verify your grasp of important concepts. Following that, you'll see two sets of

questions that will help you test and apply your knowledge, and two sets of projects that will help you practice and expand your skills. Nine chapters also feature communication cases, which are more involved projects that require you to plan and complete a variety of messages and documents. All these activities are tagged by learning objective, so if you have any questions about the concepts you need to apply, just revisit that part of the chapter.

Several chapters have activities with downloadable media such as presentations and podcasts; if your instructor assigns these elements, follow the instructions in the text to locate the correct files.

In addition to the 19 chapters of the text itself, here are some special features that will help you succeed in the course and on the job:

- **Prologue: Building a Career with Your Communication Skills.** This section (immediately following this Preface) helps 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.
- **Handbook.** The Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage (see page 601) is a convenient reference of essential business English.
- **Real-Time Updates.** You can use this unique newsfeed service to make sure you're always kept up to date on important topics. Plus, at strategic points in every chapter, you will be directed to the Real-Time Updates website to get the latest information about specific subjects. To sign up, visit real-timeupdates.com/bct14.
- **Business Communication Web Search.** With our unique web search approach, you can quickly format more than 325 specific types of online searches. This tool uses a simple and intuitive interface engineered to help you find precisely what you want, whether it's PowerPoint files, PDF files, Microsoft Word documents, Excel files, videos, podcasts, videos, or social bookmarks. Check it out at websearch.businesscommunicationnetwork.com.

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 electronic 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.

Acknowledgments

The 14th Edition of *Business Communication Today* reflects the professional experience of a large team of contributors and advisors. We express our thanks to the many individuals whose valuable suggestions and constructive comments influenced the success of this book.

REVIEWERS OF MODEL DOCUMENTS

Thank you to these professors for their thoughtful reviews of model documents: Zenobein Adams, Cleveland State University and Cuyahoga Community College; Judy



Bello, Lander University; Scott Buechler, Elon University; Herb Brown, Appalachian State University; Terry Engebretsen, Idaho State University; Linda Gregory, Seminole State College of Florida; Kathleen Norris, Loyola Marymount University; Elisabeth Power, Saint Martin's University; Joanne M. Slutsky, University at Buffalo; Melvin Charles Washington, Howard University; and Gail Yosh, Montclair State University.

REVIEWERS OF PREVIOUS EDITIONS

Thank you to the following professors: Lydia E. Anderson, Fresno City College; Victoria Austin, Las Positas College; Faridah Awang, Eastern Kentucky University; Jeanette Baldrige, University of Maine at Augusta; Diana Baran, Henry Ford Community College; JoAnne Barbieri, Atlantic Cape Community College; Kristina Beckman, John Jay College; Judy Bello, Lander University; Carol Bibby, Triton College; Nancy Bizal, University of Southern Indiana; Yvonne Block, College of Lake County; Edna Boroski, Trident Technical College; Nelvia M. Brady, Trinity Christian College; Arlene Broeker, Lincoln University; David Brooks, Indiana University Southeast; Carol Brown, South Puget Sound Community College; Domenic Bruni, University of Wisconsin; Jeff Bruns, Bacone College; Gertrude L. Burge, University of Nebraska; Sharon Burton, Brookhaven College; Robert Cabral, Oxnard College; Dorothy Campbell, Brevard Community College; Linda Carr, University of West Alabama; Alvaro Carreras Jr., Florida International University; Sharon Carson, St. Philip's College; Rick Carter, Seattle University; Dacia Charlesworth, Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne; Jean Chenu, Genesee Community College; Connie Clark, Lane Community College; Alvin Clarke, Iowa State University; Jerrie Cleaver, Central Texas College; Clare Coleman, Temple University; Michael P. Collins, Northern Arizona University; M. Cotton, North Central Missouri College; Pat Cowherd, Campbellsville University; Pat Cuchens, University of Houston–Clear Lake; Walt Dabek, Post University; Cathy Daly, California State University–Sacramento; Linda Davis, Copiah–Lincoln Community College; Christine R. Day, Eastern Michigan University; Harjit Dosanjh, North Seattle Community College; Amy Drees, Defiance College; Cynthia Drexel, Western State College of Colorado; Lou Dunham, Spokane Falls Community College; Donna Everett, Morehead State University; Donna Falconer, Anoka–Ramsey Community College; Kate Ferguson Marsters, Gannon University; Darlynn Fink, Clarion University of Pennsylvania; Bobbi Fisher, University of Nebraska–Omaha; Laura Fitzwater, Community College of Philadelphia; Lynda K. Fuller, Wilmington University; Matthew Gainous, Ogeechee Technical College; Yolande Gardner, Lawson State Community College; Gina Genova, University of California–Santa Barbara; Lonny Gilbert, Central State University; Camille Girardi-Levy, Siena College; Nancy Goehring, Monterey Peninsula College; Dawn Goellner, Bethel College; Robert Goldberg, Prince George's Community College; Jeffrey Goldberg, MassBay Community College; Helen Grattan, Des Moines Area Community College; Barbara Grayson, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff; Deborah Griffin, University of Houston–Clear Lake; Alice Griswold, Clarke College; Bonnie Grossman, College of Charleston; Lisa Gueldenzoph, North Carolina A&T State University; Wally Guyot, Fort Hays State University; Valerie Harrison, Cuyamaca College; Tim Hartge, The University of Michigan–Dearborn; Richard Heiens, University of South Carolina–Aiken; Maureece Heinert, Sinte Gleska University; Leighanne Heisel, University of Missouri–St. Louis; Gary Helfand, University of Hawaii–West Oahu; Cynthia Herrera, Orlando Culinary Academy; Kathy Hill, Sam Houston State University; Pashia Hogan, Northeast State Tech Community College; Sarah Holmes, New England Institute of Technology; Ruth Hopkins Zajdel, Ohio University–Chillicothe; Sheila Hostetler, Orange Coast College; Michael Hricik, Westmoreland County Community College; Rebecca Hsiao, East Los Angeles College; Mary Ann Hurd, Sauk Valley Community College; Pat Hurley, Leeward Community College; Harold Hurry, Sam Houston State University; Marcia James, University of Wisconsin–Whitewater; Frank Jaster, Tulane University; Jonatan Jelen, Parsons The New School For Design; Irene Joannette Gallio, Western Nevada Community College; Edgar Dunson Johnson III,

Augusta State University; Mark Johnson, Rhodes State College; Joanne Kapp, Siena College; Jeanette A. Karjala, Winona State University; Christy L. Kinnion, Lenior Community College; Deborah Kitchin, City College of San Francisco; Lisa Kirby, North Carolina Wesleyan College; Claudia Kirkpatrick, Carnegie Mellon University; Betty Kleen, Nicholls State University; Fran Kranz, Oakland University; Jana Langemach, University of Nebraska–Lincoln; Joan Lantry, Jefferson Community College; Kim Laux, Saginaw Valley State University; Kathryn J. Lee, University of Cincinnati; Anita Leffel, The University of Texas, San Antonio; Ruth Levy, Westchester Community College; Nancy Linger, Moraine Park Technical College; Jere Littlejohn, University of Mississippi; Dana Loewy, California State University–Fullerton; Jennifer Loney, Portland State University; Susan Long, Portland Community College; Sue Loomis, Maine Maritime Academy; Thomas Lowderbaugh, University of Maryland–College Park; Jayne Lowery, Jackson State Community College; Lloyd Matzner, University of Houston–Downtown; Ron McNeel, New Mexico State University at Alamogordo; Dr. Bill McPherson, Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Phyllis Mercer, Texas Woman’s University; Donna Meyerholz, Trinidad State Junior College; Annie Laurie I. Meyers, Northampton Community College; Catherine “Kay” Michael, St. Edward’s University; Kathleen Miller, University of Delaware; Gay Mills, Amarillo College; Julie Mullis, Wilkes Community College; Pamela Mulvey, Olney Central College; Jimidene Murphey, Clarendon College; Cindy Murphy, Southeastern Community College; Dipali Murti-Hali, California State University–Stanislaus; Shelley Myatt, University of Central Oklahoma; Cora Newcomb, Technical College of the Lowcountry; Ron Newman, Crafton Hills College; Linda Nitsch, Chadron State College; Leah Noonan, Laramie County Community College; Mabry O’Donnell, Marietta College; Diana Oltman, Central Washington University; Ranu Paik, Santa Monica College; Lauren Paisley, Genesee Community College; Patricia Palermo, Drew University; John Parrish, Tarrant County College; Diane Paul, TVI Community College; John T. Pauli, University of Alaska–Anchorage; Michael Pennell, University of Rhode Island; Sylvia Beaver Perez, Nyack College; Melinda Phillabaum, Indiana University; Ralph Phillips, Geneva College; Laura Pohopien, Cal Poly Pomona; Diane Powell, Utah Valley State College; Christine Pye, California Lutheran University; Norma Pygon, Triton College; Dave Rambow, Wayland Baptist University; Richard David Ramsey, Southeastern Louisiana University; Charles Riley, Tarrant County College–Northwest Campus; Jim Rucker, Fort Hays State University; Dr. Suzan Russell, Lehman College; Danielle Scane, Orange Coast College; Calvin Scheidt, Tidewater Community College; Nancy Schneider, University of Maine at Augusta; Brian Sheridan, Mercyhurst College; Melinda Shirey, Fresno City College; Bob Shirilla, Colorado State University; Joyce Simmons, Florida State University; Gordon J. Simpson, SUNY Cobleskill; Peggy Simpson, Dominican University; Eunice Smith, Bismarck State College; Jeff Smith, University of Southern California; Lorraine M. Smith, Fresno City College; Harvey Solganick, LeTourneau University–Dallas campus; Stephen Soucy, Santa Monica College; Linda Spargo, University of Mississippi; W. Dees Stallings, Park University; Sally Stanton, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; Mark Steinbach, Austin Community College; Angelique Stevens, Monroe Community College; Steven Stovall, Wilmington College; Alden Talbot, Weber State University; Michele Taylor, Ogeechee Technical College; Wilma Thomason, Mid-South Community College; Ed Thompson, Jefferson Community College; Ann E. Tippet, Monroe Community College; Lori Townsend, Niagara County Community College; Lani Uyeno, Leeward Community College; Wendy Van Hatten, Western Iowa Tech Community College; Jay Wagers, Richmond Community College; John Waltman, Eastern Michigan University; Jie Wang, University of Illinois at Chicago; Chris Ward, The University of Findlay; Dorothy Warren, Middle Tennessee State University; Glenda Waterman, Concordia University; Kellie Welch, Jefferson Community College; Bradley S. Wesner, Nova Southeastern University; Mathew Williams, Clover Park Technical College; Beth Williams, Stark State College of Technology; Brian Wilson, College of Marin; and Sandra D. Young, Orangeburg–Calhoun Technical College.

REVIEWERS OF DOCUMENT MAKEOVERS

We sincerely thank the following reviewers for their assistance with the Document Makeover feature: Lisa Barley, Eastern Michigan University; Marcia Bordman, Gallaudet University; Jean Bush-Bacelis, Eastern Michigan University; Bobbye Davis, Southern Louisiana University; Cynthia Drexel, Western State College of Colorado; Kenneth Gibbs, Worcester State College; Ellen Leathers, Bradley University; Diana McKowen, Indiana University; Bobbie Nicholson, Mars Hill College; Andrew Smith, Holyoke Community College; Jay Stubblefield, North Carolina Wesleyan College; and Dawn Wallace, Southeastern Louisiana University.

MYLAB CONTRIBUTORS

George Bernard, Seminole State College of Florida; Gina L. Genova, University of California, Santa Barbara; Nancy Nygaard, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee; Storm Russo, Valencia College; and Susan C. Schanne, Eastern Michigan University.

PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We extend a heartfelt thanks to our many friends, acquaintances, and business associates who provided materials or agreed to be interviewed so that we could bring the real world into the classroom.

A very special acknowledgment goes to George Dovel, whose superb writing skills, distinguished background, and wealth of business experience assured this project of clarity and completeness. Also, recognition and thanks to Jackie Estrada for her outstanding skills and excellent attention to details. Her creation of the “Peak Performance Grammar and Mechanics” material is especially noteworthy.

We also feel it is important to acknowledge and thank the Association for Business Communication, an organization whose meetings and publications provide a valuable forum for the exchange of ideas and for professional growth.

In addition, we thank Susan Schanne of Eastern Michigan University, Christine Laursen of Red Rocks Community College, and Laura A. LeDoux of Fullerton College for their assistance in preparing supplements for this new edition.

We extend our warmest appreciation to the devoted professionals at Pearson Higher Education for their commitment to producing high-value, student-focused texts, including Donna Battista, Vice President, Business Publishing; Stephanie Wall, Director of Portfolio Management; Daniel Tylman, Portfolio Manager; Ashley Santora, Managing Producer, Business; Linda Albelli, Editorial Assistant; Jeff Holcomb, Director of Production, Business; Becky Brown, Product Marketer; and Lenny Ann Kucenski, Field Marketing Manager. We are also grateful to Nicole Suddeth and Julie Kidd of SPi Global.

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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.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

Even as the U.S. economy recovers from the Great Recession and employment levels improve, you're likely to encounter some challenges as you start or continue with your business career. As companies around the world try to gain competitive advantages and cost efficiencies, employment patterns will vary from industry to industry and region to region.

The ups and downs of the economic cycle are not the only dynamic elements that will affect your career, however. The nature of employment itself is changing, with a growing number of independent workers and loosely structured *virtual organizations* that engage these workers for individual projects or short-term contracts, rather than hiring employees. In fact, one recent study predicted that independent workers will outnumber conventional employees in the United States by 2020.¹

This new model of work offers some compelling advantages for workers and companies alike. Companies can lower their fixed costs, adapt more easily to economic fluctuations and competitive moves, and get access to specialized talent for specific project needs.² Workers can benefit from the freedom to choose the clients and projects that interest them the most, the flexibility to work as much or as little as they want, and (thanks to advances in communication technology) access to compelling work even if they live far from major employment centers such as New York City or California's Silicon Valley.³

On the other hand, this new approach also presents some significant challenges for all parties. These flexibilities and freedoms can create more complexity for workers and managers, diminished loyalties on both sides, uncertainty about the future, issues with skill development and training, and problems with accountability and liability.⁴ Many of these challenges involve communication, making solid communication skills more important than ever.

These changes could affect you even if you pursue traditional employment throughout your career. Within organizations, you're likely to work with a combination of "inside" employees and "outside" contractors, which can affect the dynamics of the workplace. And the availability of more independent workers in the talent marketplace gives employers more options and more leverage, so full-time employees may find themselves competing against freelancers, at least indirectly.

As you navigate this uncertain future, keep two vital 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



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

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.

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:⁵

- **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



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

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.
- **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 lifelong 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, machines, people, ideas, figures, 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.

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.	_____	_____	_____	_____

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 well begin to recognize a pattern of skills. Which of them might be valuable to potential employers?

Next, look at 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.

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, look for volunteer projects, temporary jobs, freelance work, or internships that will help expand your experience base and skill set.⁶ You can look for freelance projects on Craigslist and numerous other websites; some of these jobs have only nominal pay, but they do provide an opportunity for you to display your skills. 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. You can create a *print portfolio* and an *e-portfolio*; both can help with your career effort. A print portfolio gives you something tangible to bring to interviews, and it lets you collect project results that might not be easy to show online, such as a handsomely bound report. An e-portfolio is a multimedia presentation of your skills and experiences.⁷ Think of it as a website that contains 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. The portfolio can be burned on a CD or DVD for physical distribution or, more commonly, it can be posted online—whether on a personal website, your college’s site (if student pages are available), or a specialized portfolio hosting site such as Behance. To see a selection of student e-portfolios from colleges around the United States, go to real-timeupdates.com/bct14, 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 7). 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, the performance emphasis of BMW, or the luxury emphasis of Cadillac. 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.

As you plan the next stage of your career, start managing your personal brand deliberately. The branding specialist Mohammed Al-Tae defines personal branding succinctly as “a way of clarifying and communicating what makes you different and special.”⁸

You will have multiple opportunities to plan and refine your personal brand during this course. For example, Chapter 8 offers tips on business applications of social media, which are key to personal branding, and Chapters 18 and 19 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:⁹

- **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 18 offers more on this personal brand-building approach.
- **Clarify your professional theme.** Volvos, BMWs, and Cadillacs can all get you from point A to point B in safety, comfort, and style, but each brand emphasizes some attributes more than others to create a specific image in the minds of potential buyers. Similarly, you want to be seen as something more than just an accountant, a supervisor, a salesperson. What will your theme be? Brilliant strategist? Hard-nosed, get-it-done tactician? Technical guru? Problem solver? Creative genius? Inspirational leader?
- **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 18. 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!

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Understanding the Foundations of Business Communication

CHAPTER **1** Professional Communication in a Digital, Social, Mobile World

CHAPTER **2** Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, and Business Etiquette

CHAPTER **3** Communication Challenges in a Diverse, Global Marketplace

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. Improve your skills in such vital areas as team interaction, etiquette, listening, and nonverbal communication. 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.

