

THILL BOVÉE KELLER MORAN

# Excellence in Business Communication



SIXTH CANADIAN  
EDITION

6

# Excellence in Business Communication

**SIXTH CANADIAN EDITION**

## **John V. Thill**

Communication Specialists of America

## **Courtland L. Bovée**

Professor of Business Communication  
C. Allen Paul Distinguished Chair  
Grossmont College

## **Wendy I. Keller**

University Lecturer, Trainer and Career Coach

## **K.M. Moran**

Professor of Communications/ESL  
Conestoga College



ACQUISITIONS EDITOR: Keriann Mcgoogan  
MARKETING MANAGER: Euan White  
SENIOR CONTENT MANAGER: John Polanszky  
PROJECT MANAGER: Christina Veeren  
CONTENT DEVELOPER: Darryl Kamo  
MEDIA CONTENT DEVELOPER: Darryl Kamo  
MEDIA DEVELOPER: Tiffany Palmer

PRODUCTION SERVICES: Cenveo® Publisher Services  
PERMISSIONS PROJECT MANAGEMENT: Integra Publishing Services, Inc.  
PHOTO PERMISSIONS RESEARCH: Integra Publishing Services, Inc.  
TEXT PERMISSIONS RESEARCH: Integra Publishing Services, Inc.  
INTERIOR DESIGNER: Anthony Leung  
COVER DESIGNER: Anthony Leung  
COVER IMAGE: Peter Bernik/Shutterstock

---

Pearson Canada Inc., 26 Prince Andrew Place, North York, Ontario M3C 2H4.

**Copyright © 2019, 2015, 2011 Pearson Canada Inc. All rights reserved.**

Printed in the United States of America. This publication is protected by copyright, and permission should be obtained from the publisher prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise. For information regarding permissions, request forms, and the appropriate contacts, please contact Pearson Canada's Rights and Permissions Department by visiting [www.pearsoncanada.ca/contact-information/permissions-requests](http://www.pearsoncanada.ca/contact-information/permissions-requests).

Authorized adaptation from Excellence in Business Communication 12e © 2017, Pearson Education, Inc.

Attributions of third-party content appear on the appropriate page within the text.

PEARSON is an exclusive trademark owned by Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliates in the U.S. and/or other countries.

Microsoft and/or its respective suppliers make no representations about the suitability of the information contained in the documents and related graphics published as part of the services for any purpose. All such documents and related graphics are provided "as is" without warranty of any kind. Microsoft and/or its respective suppliers hereby disclaim all warranties and conditions with regard to this information, including all warranties and conditions of merchantability, whether express, implied or statutory, fitness for a particular purpose, title and non-infringement. In no event shall Microsoft and/or its respective suppliers be liable for any special, indirect or consequential damages or any damages whatsoever resulting from loss of use, data or profits, whether in an action of contract, negligence or other tortious action, arising out of or in connection with the use or performance of information available from the services. The documents and related graphics contained herein could include technical inaccuracies or typographical errors. Changes are periodically added to the information herein. Microsoft and/or its respective suppliers may make improvements and/or changes in the product(s) and/or the program(s) described herein at any time. Partial screenshots may be viewed in full within the software version specified.

Microsoft® Windows® and Microsoft Office® are registered trademarks of the Microsoft Corporation in the U.S.A. and other countries. This book is not sponsored or endorsed by or affiliated with the Microsoft Corporation.

Unless otherwise indicated herein, any third party trademarks that may appear in this work are the property of their respective owners and any references to third party trademarks, logos, or other trade dress are for demonstrative or descriptive purposes only. Such references are not intended to imply any sponsorship, endorsement, authorization, or promotion of Pearson Canada products by the owners of such marks, or any relationship between the owner and Pearson Canada or its affiliates, authors, licensees, or distributors.

If you purchased this book outside the United States or Canada, you should be aware that it has been imported without the approval of the publisher or the author.

978-0-13-431082-4

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

### Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Thill, John V., author

Excellence in business communication / John V. Thill, Communication Specialists of America, Courtland L. Bovée, Professor of Business Communication, C. Allen Paul Distinguished Chair, Grossmont College, Wendy I. Keller, University Lecturer, Trainer and Career Coach. K.M. Moran, Professor of Communications/ESL, Conestoga College. — Sixth Canadian edition.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 978-0-13-431082-4 (softcover)

I. Business communication—Case studies. I. Bovée, Courtland L., author  
II. Keller, Wendy I., 1959-, author III. Moran, Kathleen M., 1955-, author IV. Title.

HF5718.2.C3T45 2017

658.4'5

C2017-903384-0



# Brief Contents

## **Part I Understanding the Foundations of Business Communication 1**

- 1** Achieving Success through Effective Business Communication 1
- 2** Communicating in Teams and Mastering Listening and Nonverbal Communication 34
- 3** Communicating Interculturally 61

## **Part II Applying the Three-Step Writing Process 82**

- 4** Planning Business Messages 82
- 5** Writing Business Messages 113
- 6** Completing Business Messages 144

## **Part III Crafting Brief Messages 175**

- 7** Crafting Messages for Electronic Media 175
- 8** Writing Routine and Positive Messages 210
- 9** Writing Negative Messages 245
- 10** Writing Persuasive Messages 285

## **Part IV Preparing Reports and Oral Presentations 320**

- 11** Planning Reports and Proposals 320
- 12** Writing Reports and Proposals 367
- 13** Completing Reports and Proposals 415
- 14** Designing and Delivering Oral and Online Presentations 456

## **Part V Writing Employment Messages and Interviewing for Jobs 489**

- 15** Building Careers and Writing Résumés 489
- 16** Applying and Interviewing for Employment 528

- APPENDIX A** FORMAT AND LAYOUT OF BUSINESS DOCUMENTS 560
- APPENDIX B** DOCUMENTATION OF REPORT SOURCES 578

# Contents

Preface xi

## PART I UNDERSTANDING THE FOUNDATIONS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION 1

### CHAPTER 1

#### Achieving Success through Effective Business Communication 1

ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT WAVE 1

#### Achieving Career Success through Effective Communication 2

- The Communication Process 3
- What Employers Expect From You 4
- Characteristics of Effective Communication 7
- Communication in Organizational Settings 8

#### Understanding the Unique Challenges of Business Communication 11

- I. The Globalization of Business and the Increase in Workforce Diversity 11
- II. The Evolution of Organizational Structures 12
- III. The Growing Reliance on Teamwork 12
- IV. The Increasing Value of Business Information 13
- V. The Pervasiveness of Technology 13
- VI. The Need for Increased Cybersecurity and Protection of Privacy 13
- Barriers to Effective Communication 14

#### Communicating More Effectively on the Job 16

- Strategy 1: Improve Your Business Communication Skills 16
- Strategy 2: Minimize Distractions 16
- Strategy 3: Adopt an Audience-Centred Approach 17
- Strategy 4: Make Your Feedback Constructive 19
- Strategy 5: Be Sensitive to Business Etiquette 20
- Applying What You've Learned to the Communication Process 20

#### Using Technology to Improve Business Communication 21

- Understanding the Social Communication Model 21
- Keeping Technology in Perspective 23
- Guarding against Information Overload 23
- Using Technological Tools Productively 23
- Reconnecting with People Frequently 24

#### Making Ethical Communication Choices 24

- Distinguishing an Ethical Dilemma from an Ethical Lapse 25

Ensuring Ethical Communication 25

**PROMOTING WORKPLACE ETHICS Ethical Boundaries: Where Would You Draw the Line? 27**

Ensuring Legal Communication 28

Applying What You've Learned 28

### SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 29

#### ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION

TASKS AT WAVE 30

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 30

APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 31

RUNNING CASES 31

PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 32

EXERCISES 32

### CHAPTER 2

#### Communicating in Teams and Mastering Listening and Nonverbal Communication 34

ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT ROYAL BANK OF CANADA 34

#### Improving Your Performance in Teams 35

- Types of Teams 35
- Advantages and Disadvantages of Teams 36
- Characteristics of High Performing Teams 37
- Group Dynamics 37

#### Collaborating on Communication Efforts 41

- Guidelines for Collaborative Writing 41
- Technologies for Collaborative Writing 42
- Social Networks and Virtual Communities 43

#### Making Your Meetings More Productive 44

- Preparing for Meetings 44
- Leading and Participating in Meetings 45

#### ✓CHECKLIST IMPROVING FACE-TO-FACE AND VIRTUAL MEETING PRODUCTIVITY 48

Using Meeting Technologies 48

#### Improving Your Listening Skills 50

- Understanding the Listening Process 50
- Recognizing and Understanding Active Listening 51
- Overcoming Barriers to Effective Listening 52

#### ✓CHECKLIST OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING 53

#### Improving Your Nonverbal Communication Skills 53

Recognizing Nonverbal Communication 53

**SHARPENING YOUR CAREER SKILLS Developing Your Business Etiquette 55**

Using Nonverbal Communication Effectively 55

**SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 56**

**ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION TASKS AT ROYAL BANK OF CANADA 57**  
**TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 57**  
**APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 58**  
**RUNNING CASES 58**  
**PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 59**  
**EXERCISES 59**

**CHAPTER 3****Communicating Interculturally 61**

**ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT IBM 61**

**Understanding the Opportunities and Challenges of Intercultural Communication 62**

The Opportunities in a Global Marketplace 62  
 Advantages of a Multicultural Workforce 62  
 The Challenges of Intercultural Communication 63

**Developing Cultural Competency 64**

Understanding the Concept of Culture 64  
 Overcoming Ethnocentrism and Stereotyping 65  
 Recognizing Cultural Variations 66

**COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES Test Your Intercultural Knowledge 69**

**Improving Intercultural Communication Skills 69**

Studying Other Cultures 70  
 Studying Other Languages 72  
 Respecting Preferences for Communication Style 72  
 Writing Clearly 72  
 Speaking and Listening Carefully 76  
 Using Interpreters, Translators, and Translation Software 76  
 Helping Others Adapt to Your Culture 77

**✓CHECKLIST IMPROVING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS 77****SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 77**

**ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION TASKS AT IBM 78**  
**TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 79**  
**APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 79**  
**RUNNING CASES 79**  
**PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 80**  
**EXERCISES 80**

**PART II****APPLYING THE THREE-STEP WRITING PROCESS 82****CHAPTER 4****Planning Business Messages 82**

**ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT MARS DISCOVERY DISTRICT 82**

**Understanding the Three-Step Writing Process 83**

Optimizing Your Writing Time 84  
 Planning Effectively 84

**Step 1 in the Writing Process: Planning 85****Analyzing the Situation 85**

Defining Your Purpose 85  
 Developing an Audience Profile 86

**Gathering Information 87**

Uncovering Audience Needs 88  
 Providing Required Information 88

**Selecting the Right Medium 90**

Oral Media 91  
 Written Media 92  
 Visual Media 92  
 Electronic Media 93  
 Factors to Consider When Choosing Media 94

**PROMOTING WORKPLACE ETHICS How Much Information Is Enough? 96**

**Organizing Your Information 97**

Recognizing the Importance of Good Organization 97  
 Defining Your Main Idea 99  
 Limiting Your Scope 100  
 Choosing between Direct and Indirect Approaches 101  
 Outlining Your Content 103

**✓CHECKLIST PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES 107****SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 107**

**ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION TASKS AT MARS 108**  
**TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 108**  
**APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 109**  
**RUNNING CASES 109**  
**PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 110**  
**EXERCISES 110**

**CHAPTER 5****Writing Business Messages 113**

**ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT CREATIVE COMMONS 113**

**Adapting to Your Audience: Being Sensitive to Audience Needs 114**

Using the “You” Attitude 115  
 Maintaining Standards of Etiquette 116  
 Emphasizing the Positive 116  
 Using Bias-Free Language 119

**Adapting to Your Audience: Building Strong Relationships with Your Audience 120**

Establishing Your Credibility 120  
 Projecting the Company’s Image 122

**Adapting to Your Audience: Controlling Your Style and Tone 123**

Using a Conversational Tone 123  
 Using Plain Language 125  
 Selecting Active or Passive Voice 125

**Composing Your Message 127**

Choosing Precise Words 127  
 Using Functional and Content Words Correctly 128

**SHARPENING YOUR CAREER SKILLS Beating Writer’s Block: Ten Workable Ideas to Get Words Flowing 128**

Understanding Denotation and Connotation 129  
 Balancing Abstract and Concrete Words 129  
 Finding Words That Communicate Well 129

**Composing Your Message: Creating Effective Sentences 131**

- Choosing from the Four Types of Sentences 131
- Using Sentence Style to Emphasize Key Thoughts 132

**Composing Your Message: Crafting Unified, Coherent Paragraphs 133**

- Creating the Elements of the Paragraph 133
- Choosing the Best Way to Develop Each Paragraph 135

**Using Technology to Compose and Shape Your Messages 136****✓CHECKLIST WRITING BUSINESS MESSAGES 137****SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 137**

- ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION TASKS AT CREATIVE COMMONS 138**
- TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 138
- APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 139
- RUNNING CASES 139
- PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 140
- EXERCISES 140

**CHAPTER 6****Completing Business Messages 144**

- ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT FREE THE CHILDREN 144**

**Revising Your Message: Evaluating the First Draft 145**

- Evaluating Your Content, Organization, Style, and Tone 148
- Evaluating, Editing, and Revising the Work of Others 148

**Revising to Improve Readability 149**

- Varying Your Sentence Length 150
- Keeping Your Paragraphs Short 150
- Using Lists and Bullets to Clarify and Emphasize 150
- Adding Headings and Subheadings 152

**Editing for Clarity and Conciseness 153**

- Editing for Clarity 153
- Editing For Conciseness 155
- Using Technology to Revise Your Message 157

**✓CHECKLIST REVISING BUSINESS MESSAGES 158****Producing Your Message 160**

- Designing for Readability 160
- Designing Multimedia Documents 163
- Using Technology to Produce Your Message 164
- Formatting Formal Letters and Memos 165

**Proofreading Your Message 166****✓CHECKLIST PROOFING BUSINESS MESSAGES 167****Distributing Your Message 167**

- SHARPENING YOUR CAREER SKILLS Proofread Like a Pro to Create Perfect Documents 168**

**SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 169**

- ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION TASKS AT FREE THE CHILDREN 169**
- TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 170
- APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 170
- RUNNING CASES 170
- PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 171
- EXERCISES 172

**PART III  
CRAFTING BRIEF MESSAGES 175****CHAPTER 7****Crafting Messages for Electronic Media 175**

- ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT PETRO-CANADA 175**

**Electronic Media for Business Communication 176**

- Compositional Modes for Electronic Media 177
- Creating Content for Social Media 179

**Social Networking and Community Participation Sites 180**

- Social Networks 180
- User-Generated Content Sites 184
- Community Q&A Sites 185
- Community Participation Sites 185

**Email 185**

- Planning Email Messages 186
- Writing Email Messages 186
- Completing Email Messages 188

**✓CHECKLIST CREATING EFFECTIVE EMAIL MESSAGES 189****Instant Messaging and Text Messaging 189**

- Understanding the Benefits and Risks of IM 189
- Adapting the Three-Step Process for Successful IM 190

**✓CHECKLIST USING IM PRODUCTIVELY 191****Blogging and Microblogging 191**

- Understanding the Business Applications of Blogging 193
- BUSINESS COMMUNICATION 2.0 Let Social Media Work for You 195**
- Adapting the Three-Step Process for Successful Blogging 195
- Microblogging 197

**✓CHECKLIST BLOGGING FOR BUSINESS 198****Podcasting 198**

- Understanding the Business Applications of Podcasting 198
- Adapting the Three-Step Process for Successful Podcasting 199

**✓CHECKLIST PLANNING AND PRODUCING BUSINESS PODCASTS 200****SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 200**

- ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION TASKS AT PETRO-CANADA 201**
- TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 202
- APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 202
- RUNNING CASES 203
- PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 203
- EXERCISES 204

**CASES APPLYING THE THREE-STEP WRITING PROCESS TO CASES 206****CHAPTER 8****Writing Routine and Positive Messages 210**

- ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT INDIGO BOOKS AND MUSIC 210**

**Strategy for Routine Requests 211**

- Stating Your Request Up Front 211
- Explaining and Justifying Your Request 211
- Requesting Specific Action in a Courteous Close 212

**✓CHECKLIST WRITING ROUTINE REQUESTS 213**

**COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES** How Direct Is Too Direct? 213

**Common Examples of Routine Requests 214**

- Asking for Information and Action 214
- Asking for Recommendations 214
- Making Claims and Requesting Adjustments 216

**✓CHECKLIST MAKING CLAIMS AND REQUESTING ADJUSTMENTS 217****Strategy for Routine Replies and Positive Messages 217**

- Starting with the Main Idea 218
- Providing Necessary Details and Explanation 219
- Ending with a Courteous Close 219

**✓CHECKLIST WRITING ROUTINE REPLIES AND POSITIVE MESSAGES 220****Common Examples of Routine Replies and Positive Messages 220**

- Answering Requests for Information and Action 220
- Granting Claims and Requests for Adjustment 221

**✓CHECKLIST GRANTING CLAIMS AND ADJUSTMENT REQUESTS 225**

- Providing Recommendations 225
- Sharing Routine Information 226
- Announcing Good News 227
- Fostering Goodwill 229

**✓CHECKLIST SENDING GOODWILL MESSAGES 232****SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 233**

**ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION TASKS AT INDIGO BOOKS AND MUSIC 233**

- TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 234
- APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 234
- RUNNING CASES 235
- PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 235
- EXERCISES 236

**CASES APPLYING THE THREE-STEP WRITING PROCESS TO CASES 238**

**CHAPTER 9****Writing Negative Messages 245**

**ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT MAPLE LEAF FOODS 245**

**Using the Three-Step Writing Process for Negative Messages 246**

- Step 1: Planning a Negative Message 246
- Step 2: Writing a Negative Message 248
- Step 3: Completing a Negative Message 249

**Using the Direct Approach for Negative Messages 249**

- Opening with a Clear Statement of the Bad News 249
- Providing Reasons and Additional Information 250
- Closing on a Positive Note 251

**Using the Indirect Approach for Negative Messages 251**

- Opening with a Buffer 252
- Providing Reasons and Additional Information 252
- Continuing with a Clear Statement of the Bad News 254
- Closing on a Respectful Note 255

**Maintaining High Standards of Ethics and Etiquette 255****✓CHECKLIST CREATING NEGATIVE MESSAGES 257****Sending Negative Messages on Routine Business Matters 257**

- Making Negative Announcements on Routine Business Matters 258
- Rejecting Suggestions and Proposals 258
- Refusing Routine Requests 258
- Handling Bad News about Transactions 260

**✓CHECKLIST HANDLING BAD NEWS ABOUT TRANSACTIONS 262**

- Refusing Claims and Requests for Adjustment 262

**✓CHECKLIST REFUSING CLAIMS 264****Sending Negative Organizational News 264**

- Communicating Under Normal Circumstances 264
- Communicating in a Crisis 266

**BUSINESS COMMUNICATION 2.0 We're under Attack! Responding to Rumours and Criticism in a Social Media Environment 268**

**Sending Negative Employment Messages 269**

- Refusing Requests for Employee References and Recommendation Letters 269
- Refusing Social Networking Recommendation Requests 270
- Rejecting Job Applications 271
- Giving Negative Performance Reviews 271
- Terminating Employment 273

**✓CHECKLIST WRITING NEGATIVE EMPLOYMENT MESSAGES 274****SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 274**

**ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION TASKS AT MAPLE LEAF FOODS 275**

- TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 276
- APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 276
- RUNNING CASES 276
- PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 277
- EXERCISES 277

**CASES APPLYING THE THREE-STEP WRITING PROCESS TO CASES 279**

**CHAPTER 10****Writing Persuasive Messages 285**

**ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT FUTURPRENEUR CANADA 285**

**Using the Three-Step Writing Process for Persuasive Messages 286**

- Step 1: Planning a Persuasive Message 286
- Step 2: Writing a Persuasive Message 290
- Step 3: Completing a Persuasive Message 291

**Developing Persuasive Business Messages 292**

- Strategies for Persuasive Business Messages 292



**✓CHECKLIST DEVELOPING PERSUASIVE MESSAGES 297**

Common Examples of Persuasive Business Messages 297

**Developing Marketing and Sales Messages 300**

Assessing Audience Needs 301

Analyzing Your Competition 301

Determining Key Selling Points and Benefits 301

Anticipating Purchase Objections 302

Applying AIDA or a Similar Model 303

Writing Promotional Messages for Social Media 307

Maintaining High Standards of Ethics, Legal

Compliance, and Etiquette 308

**PROMOTING WORKPLACE ETHICS Selling Ethically**

Online 309

**SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 310****ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION****TASKS AT FUTURPRENEUR 310**

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 311

APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 311

RUNNING CASES 312

PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 312

EXERCISES 313

**CASES APPLYING THE THREE-STEP WRITING PROCESS TO CASES 314****PART IV  
PREPARING REPORTS AND  
ORAL PRESENTATIONS 320****CHAPTER 11****Planning Reports and Proposals 320****ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT DELL INC. 320****Applying the Three-Step Writing Process to Reports and Proposals 321**

Analyzing the Situation 322

Gathering Information 324

Selecting the Right Medium 324

Organizing Your Information 326

**✓CHECKLIST ADAPTING THE THREE-STEP WRITING PROCESS TO INFORMATIONAL AND ANALYTICAL REPORTS 328****Supporting Your Messages with Reliable Information 328**

Planning Your Research 329

Being an Ethical Researcher 330

Locating Data and Information 330

Using Your Research Results 332

**Conducting Secondary Research 335**

Finding Information at a Library 335

Finding Information Online 335

Documenting Your Sources 340

**Conducting Primary Research 340**

Conducting Surveys 341

Conducting Interviews 343

**✓CHECKLIST CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE INFORMATION INTERVIEWS 345****Planning Informational Reports 345**

Organizing Informational Reports 345

**SHARPENING YOUR CAREER SKILLS Creating an Effective Business Plan 347**

Organizing Website Content 349

**Planning Analytical Reports 351**

Focusing on Conclusions 352

Focusing on Recommendations 352

Focusing on Logical Arguments 353

**Planning Proposals 357****SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 359****ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION TASKS AT DELL INC. 360**

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 362

APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 362

RUNNING CASES 363

PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 363

EXERCISES 364

**CHAPTER 12****Writing Reports and Proposals 367****ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT FEDEX 367****Composing Reports and Proposals 368**

Adapting to Your Audience 368

Drafting Report Content 369

Creating Report Effectiveness 372

Drafting Proposal Content 377

Establishing a Time Perspective 381

Helping Readers Find Their Way 381

**✓CHECKLIST COMPOSING BUSINESS REPORTS AND PROPOSALS 383**

Using Technology to Craft Reports and Proposals 383

**Writing for Websites and Wikis 384**

Drafting Website Content 384

Collaborating on Wikis 385

**Illustrating Your Reports with Effective Visuals 386**

Understanding Visual Design Principles 386

Understanding the Ethics of Visual

Communication 389

Identifying Points to Illustrate 389

Selecting the Right Type of Visual 390

**Producing and Integrating Visuals 401**

Creating Visuals 401

Integrating Visuals with Text 402

**✓CHECKLIST CREATING EFFECTIVE VISUALS 404**

Verifying the Quality and Integrity of

Your Visuals 404

**PROMOTING WORKPLACE ETHICS Ethical Communication and Distorting the Data 405****SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 406****ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION TASKS AT FEDEX 406**

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 408

APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 408

RUNNING CASES 408

PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 409

EXERCISES 410

**CASES APPLYING THE THREE-STEP WRITING PROCESS TO CASES 412**

**CHAPTER 13****Completing Reports and Proposals 415**

**ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION 415**

**Revising Reports and Proposals 416**

**Producing Formal Reports 417**

REPORT WRITER'S NOTEBOOK **Analyzing**

a **Formal Report 418**

Prefatory Parts 433

Text of the Report 437

Supplementary Parts 438

**Producing Formal Proposals 439**

Prefatory Parts 440

Text of the Proposal 440

**Proofreading Reports and Proposals 444**

**Distributing Reports And Proposals 445**

✓**CHECKLIST COMPLETING FORMAL REPORTS AND PROPOSALS 446**

**SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 446**

**ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION TASKS AT THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION 447**

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 448

APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 448

RUNNING CASES 448

PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 449

EXERCISES 449

**CASES APPLYING THE THREE-STEP WRITING PROCESS TO CASES 450**

**CHAPTER 14****Designing and Delivering Oral and Online Presentations 456**

**ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT TELEFILM CANADA 456**

**Building Your Career with Presentations 457**

**Planning a Presentation 457**

Analyzing the Situation 457

Selecting the Right Medium 459

Organizing Your Presentation 460

**Developing and Writing a Presentation 465**

Adapting to Your Audience 465

Composing Your Presentation 465

**Enhancing Your Presentation with Effective Visuals 469**

Choosing Structured or Free-Form Slides 470

Designing Effective Slides 471

**Completing a Presentation 476**

Finalizing Slides 476

Creating Effective Handouts 476

✓**CHECKLIST ENHANCING PRESENTATIONS WITH VISUALS 478**

Choosing Your Presentation Method 479

Practising Your Delivery 479

**Delivering a Presentation 480**

Overcoming Anxiety 480

Handling Questions Responsively 481

Embracing the Backchannel 482

Giving Presentations Online 483

**SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES 484**

**ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION TASKS AT TELEFILM CANADA 484**

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 485

APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 485

RUNNING CASES 485

PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 486

EXERCISES 487

**PART V****WRITING EMPLOYMENT MESSAGES AND INTERVIEWING FOR JOBS 489****CHAPTER 15****Building Careers and Writing Résumés 489**

**ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT TIM HORTONS 489**

**Building a Career with Your Communication Skills 490**

Understanding the Dynamic Workplace 490

Adapting to a Changing Job Market 492

**COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES Looking for Work around the World 494**

Building an Employment Portfolio 495

**Finding the Ideal Opportunity in Today's Job Market 496**

Determine the Story of You 497

Learn to Think Like an Employer 497

Research Industries and Companies

of Interest 497

Translate Your General Potential into a Specific Solution for Each Employer 498

Take the Initiative to Find Opportunities 499

Build a Network 499

Seek Career Counselling 501

Be Professional and Check for

Mistakes 501

**Planning a Résumé 502**

Analyze Your Purpose and Audience 502

Gather Pertinent Information 503

Select the Best Medium 503

Organize Your Résumé Around

Your Strengths 503

Address Areas of Concern 507

**Writing a Résumé 507**

Keep Your Résumé Honest 508

Adapt Your Résumé to Your

Audience 508

Compose Your Résumé 508

**Completing a Résumé 514**

Revise Your Résumé 514

Produce Your Résumé 514

Proofread Your Résumé 519

Distribute Your Résumé 519

✓**CHECKLIST WRITING AN EFFECTIVE RÉSUMÉ** 520

**SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES** 521

**ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION**

**TASKS AT TIM HORTONS** 521

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 523

APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 523

RUNNING CASES 523

PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 524

EXERCISES 525

**CASES APPLYING THE THREE-STEP WRITING PROCESS TO CASES** 526

**CHAPTER 16**

**Applying and Interviewing for Employment** 528

**ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT GOOGLE** 528

**Submitting Your Résumé** 529

Writing Application Letters 529

✓**CHECKLIST WRITING APPLICATION LETTERS** 534

Following Up After Submitting a Résumé 534

**Understanding the Interviewing Process** 535

The Typical Sequence of Interviews 535

Common Types of Interviews 536

Interview Media 537

What Employers Look for in an Interview 538

Pre-employment Testing and Background

Checks 538

**Preparing for a Job Interview** 539

I. Learn about the Organization and Your Interviewers 539

II. Think Ahead about Questions 539

III. Bolster Your Confidence 542

IV. Polish Your Interview Style 543

V. Present a Professional Image 544

VI. Be Ready When You Arrive 544

✓**CHECKLIST PLANNING FOR A SUCCESSFUL JOB INTERVIEW** 545

**Interviewing for Success** 545

I. The Warm-Up 546

II. The Question-and-Answer Stage 546

**SHARPENING YOUR CAREER SKILLS Don't Talk Yourself Right Out of a Job** 547

III. The Close 548

Interview Notes 548

✓**CHECKLIST MAKING A POSITIVE IMPRESSION IN JOB INTERVIEWS** 549

**Following Up After the Interview** 549

Thank-You Message 549

Message of Inquiry 550

Request for a Time Extension 551

Letter of Acceptance 551

Letter Declining a Job Offer 552

Letter of Resignation 552

✓**CHECKLIST WRITING FOLLOW-UP MESSAGES** 553

**SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES** 553

**ON THE JOB PERFORMING COMMUNICATION**

**TASKS AT GOOGLE** 554

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE 555

APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 555

RUNNING CASES 555

PRACTISE YOUR KNOWLEDGE 556

EXERCISES 557

**CASES PREPARING DIFFERENT TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT MESSAGES** 558

**APPENDIX A**

**FORMAT AND LAYOUT OF BUSINESS DOCUMENTS** 560

**First Impressions** 560

Paper 560

Customization 560

Appearance 560

**Letters** 561

Standard Letter Parts 561

Additional Letter Parts 567

Letter Formats 569

**Envelopes** 570

Addressing the Envelope 571

Folding to Fit 574

International Mail 574

**Memos** 575

**Reports** 576

Margins 576

Headings 577

Page Numbers 577

**APPENDIX B**

**DOCUMENTATION OF REPORT SOURCES** 578

**Chicago Humanities Style** 578

In-Text Citation—*Chicago* Humanities Style 578

Bibliography—*Chicago* Humanities Style 579

**APA Style** 581

In-Text Citation—APA Style 581

List of References—APA Style 581

**MLA Style** 583

In-Text Citation—MLA Style 583

List of Works Cited—MLA Style 583

**Endnotes** 585

**Name Index** 598

**Subject Index** 600

# Preface

*Excellence in Business Communication* has long provided instructors and students with the most current communication strategies and practices used in today's workplace. This sixth Canadian edition includes up-to-date model documents that reflect the entire spectrum of print and electronic communication media. Students entering today's workforce are expected to use a wide range of tools, from instant messaging to blogging to podcasting, and *Excellence in Business Communication* provides the hands-on experience they need to meet employer expectations.

The text offers a set of tools that simplifies teaching, promotes active learning, and stimulates critical thinking. These components work together at four levels to provide seamless coverage of vital knowledge and skills:

- **Previewing.** Each chapter prepares students with clear learning objectives and a brief, compelling vignette featuring current professional practice.
- **Developing.** Chapter content develops and explains concepts with a concise, carefully organized presentation of textual and visual material. The three-step process of planning, writing, and completing is reinforced throughout the text in examples ranging from email messages to blogs to formal reports.
- **Enhancing.** Contemporary examples, many accompanied by the three-step diagram adapted to each message, show students the specific elements that contribute to successful messages.
- **Reinforcing.** Numerous realistic exercises and activities let students practise vital skills and put their new-found knowledge to immediate use. Communication cases encourage students to think about contemporary business issues as they put their skills to use in a variety of media, including blogging and podcasting.

## Why This Edition?

Business communications continue to evolve in response to changes in the global economy, corporate structures, workforce, technology, and management of information. To continue to provide value for readers,

textbooks and support materials need to be updated and reflect best practices in these changing environments. The sixth Canadian edition builds on the comprehensive approach of the previous edition and focuses on practices in the following areas:

- Social media questions, activities, and cases using examples from Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other media outlets;
- Technologies for collaborative writing, including groupware, social networks, and virtual communities;
- Developing cultural competency;
- Diversity in organizations;
- Social media and the impact on networking and job searching;
- Cases featuring email, instant messaging, social networking, blogging, websites, voicemail, and podcasting; and
- Vignettes on innovative companies to highlight their market strategies for success.

Enhancements include the following:

- More discussion about the unique challenges of business communication;
- Delving further into the characteristics of high-performing teams and the role of leadership;
- The role of active listening in effective business communications, including discussions of emotional intelligence and “feeding forward”;
- The do's and don'ts of sharing using technology and the protection of information;
- Updates to the effective use of technology and social media across business to consumer (B2C) and business to business (B2B) environments;
- Best practices for giving presentations, including storytelling and the management of questions;
- Discussion of “personal branding” and social media presence as part of a job search or career development strategy;
- How to network with confidence—making a memorable, positive impact; and
- Updates to reflect changes introduced in the new, eighth edition of the *MLA Handbook*.

## Key Features of the Text

Each chapter of *Excellence in Business Communication* includes a number of tools designed to guide students through the process of developing their communication skills and preparing them for the business world.

**Learning Objectives** are listed on the first page of each chapter. This “roadmap” shows what will be covered and what is especially important. Each Learning Objective is repeated in the margin where the material is first covered. The Learning Objectives are summarized at the end of the chapter.

**On the Job** opens each chapter with a brief story about communications within a real company, such as Royal Bank of Canada, Maple Leaf Foods, and Indigo Books and Music. The chapter itself demonstrates why these communication skills are important to real companies and shows how to apply them. Each chapter ends with the follow-up **On the Job: Performing Communication Tasks** at the featured company. These tasks expand on the chapter’s concepts and help students practise real-world decision making.

The **three-step writing process**—planning, writing, and completing—is outlined in Chapters 4 to 6. This process is also highlighted throughout the chapters with selected sample documents and with the end-of-chapter cases.

**Sample documents** provide models in media, ranging from printed letters to instant messaging. The **annotations** that accompany every model document help students understand how to apply the principles discussed in the chapter.

One of four types of **themed boxes** appears in each chapter, giving valuable tips for the workplace:

- **Sharpening Your Career Skills** gives tips on improving writing and speaking techniques.
- **Business Communication 2.0** provides help with business communications and technological tools.
- **Communicating Across Cultures** offers advice on communicating successfully in the global business world.
- **Promoting Workplace Ethics** examines important ethical issues that face today’s employees.

**Checklists** summarize key points and help students organize their work on communication projects.

**Tips for Success** give important advice from experts in the field on the chapter’s topic. Real people; real experience.

**Key Points**, highlighted in the margin, emphasize important details from the text and are good tools for reviewing concepts.

Practice is the best way to grasp new business communication techniques and processes. End-of-chapter exercises and cases will help students develop and improve their communication skills.

- **Test Your Knowledge** provides questions that review the chapter topics.
- **Apply Your Knowledge** offers exercises that encourage students to consider the information and apply it to business decisions.
- **Running Cases** present realistic business situations encountered by Noreen and Kwong as they work toward their career goals. Working through these case studies will help students deal with on-the-job tasks.
- **Practise Your Knowledge** provides documents for critique and revision.
- **Exercises** give additional tasks to work through, including teamwork exercises and ethical situations.
- **Cases**, at the end of specific chapters, offer additional opportunities to apply the three-step writing process in work-related situations. Icons highlight cases that use specific media skills—email, blogging, instant messaging, podcasting—as well as “Portfolio Builder” cases, where the projects may be suitable for students’ employment portfolios.



| MyLab | Business Communication.

MyLab Business Communication is an online homework and tutorial assessment solution designed to help students master concepts, study, and prepare for class. MyLab Business Communication provides students with a better way to practise writing skills and grammar content outside of class, helping them become polished communicators. Log on to [www.pearson.com/mylab](http://www.pearson.com/mylab) to access the following interactive tools:

- Relevant video series and exercises
- Study plan
- Interactive flashcards
- Model documents
- Grammar diagnostics

**PEARSON eTEXT.** The Pearson eText gives students access to their textbook anytime, anywhere. In addition to note taking, highlighting, and bookmarking, the Pearson eText offers interactive and sharing features. Instructors can share their comments or highlights, and

students can add their own, creating a tight community of learners within the class.

## Instructor Supplements

**COMPUTERIZED TEST BANK.** Pearson's computerized test banks allow instructors to filter and select questions to create quizzes, tests, or homework. Instructors can revise questions or add their own and may be able to choose print or online options. These questions are also available in Microsoft Word format.

The following additional instructor supplements are available for download from a password-protected section of Pearson Canada's online catalogue (<http://catalogue.pearsoned.ca/>). Navigate to your book's catalogue page to view a list of supplements that are available. See your local sales representative for details and access.

- The Instructor's Manual provides chapter outlines, suggests solutions to the exercises, and supplies formatted letters for the cases in the letter-writing chapters. Additional resources include diagnostic tests of English skills and supplementary grammar exercises.
- PowerPoint Presentations cover the key concepts in each chapter.

**LEARNING SOLUTIONS MANAGERS.** Pearson's Learning Solutions Managers work with faculty and campus course designers to ensure that Pearson technology products, assessment tools, and online course materials are tailored to meet your specific needs. This highly qualified team is dedicated to helping schools take full advantage of a wide range of educational resources by assisting in the integration of a variety of instructional materials and media formats. Your local Pearson Canada sales representative can provide you with more details on this service program.

## Acknowledgments for the Sixth Canadian Edition

The delivery of an effective textbook requires an understanding of the needs and preferences of instructors and students who will be using the material to facilitate learning. Every aspect must be reviewed for relevance, accuracy, and consistency. This effort would not be possible without the help of a dedicated and thoughtful publishing team.

We are grateful to Jennifer Sutton for presenting us with the opportunity to contribute to the sixth Canadian edition of *Excellence in Business Communication*. We are honoured to work with Pearson Canada staff on this comprehensive text: Acquisition Editor Keriann McGoogan; Senior Content Manager John Polanszky; and Developmental Editors Patti Sayle and Darryl Kamo, who were always patient and available (even at late hours) to share their experience and help us get to production. Thanks also to our Project Managers Colleen Wormald, Christina Veeren, and Revathi Viswanathan; our Copy Editor, Susan Broadhurst; and our Proofreader, Audrey Dorsch, who ensured that all production details of the book were met.

So many others dedicated their time and energy to the production of this edition. We extend sincere thanks for their important contributions.

And, finally, thank you to our families and friends, who have let us put them on hold while we dug in to the world of business communication and hopefully came up with a product that will satisfy our most valued customers, the students and instructors of continued learning.

Wendy Keller

Kathleen Moran

# **Excellence in Business Communication**

# 1

## Achieving Success through Effective Business Communication

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES** After studying this chapter, you will be able to

- 1 Explain why effective communication is important to your success in today's business environment
- 2 Identify eight communication skills that successful employers expect from their employees
- 3 Describe the five characteristics of effective business communication
- 4 Discuss six factors that make business communication unique
- 5 Describe five strategies for communicating more effectively on the job
- 6 Explain five strategies for using communication technology successfully
- 7 Discuss the importance of ethics in business communication, and differentiate between an ethical dilemma and an ethical lapse

**MyLab Business Communication** Visit MyLab Business Communication to access a variety of online resources directly related to this chapter's content.

### ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT **WAVE**



Tetra Images/Alamy Stock Photo

The ability of Wave to harness the power of digital communication is a key ingredient in the company's success.

### Enhancing Value with Social Media

[www.waveapps.com](http://www.waveapps.com)

Ranked ninth in Deloitte's Technology Fast 50 list (2016) and awarded the title of Best Free Accounting Software for Businesses by Business News Daily (2017), Wave (formerly Wave Accounting) continues to make great strides in the accounting services sector, attracting more than 2.3 million users around the world to date. The company's success is based on filling a market niche, listening to user needs, and harnessing social media to add value to customer relationships.

Started by James Lochrie and Kirk Simpson in 2010, Wave has identified small-business owners, freelancers, and entrepreneurs as needing an alternative to spreadsheets and "shoebox accounting" for managing their finances. Their product is a free, easy-to-use cloud-based accounting software with features that include unlimited invoicing and account tracking, automatic data backup, secure collaboration, and bank and credit card linking. Business and personal dashboards using charts and other graphical displays help users view their income and expenses at a glance. The system can be accessed on any computer: Mac, Windows, or Linux. In late 2016/early 2017 the company released its Android and iPhone apps and added a lending feature, further demonstrating their responsiveness to market needs and customer challenges.

Wave's appeal is not only the free software. Their team of 130+ employees includes a vice president of community, content, and communications, as well as a community



manager and customer advocate, whose focus is to develop company–user relationships through social media. The Wave blog describes product enhancements, educates users on software features, and spotlights the success of Wave customers. Guest bloggers such as small-business owners add value to the site through posts titled “5 Things I Wish I Had Known Early in My Business” and “5 Ways to Grow Your Online Community.” The online conversation is extended through Facebook and Twitter, where users can find help, get the latest company news, and see Wave’s

employees having fun at company events and participating in trade shows.

The rapid growth of social media has merged isolated conversations into a global phenomenon that has permanently changed the nature of business communication. Wave is one of the millions of companies around the world using social media to supplement or even replace traditional forms of customer communication. How would you use social media to help a company enhance its online profile? What technologies would you select to keep the conversation going?<sup>1</sup>

## Achieving Career Success through Effective Communication

### 1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Explain why effective communication is important to your success in today’s business environment.

Your career success depends on effective communication.

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

Strong communication skills give you an advantage in the job market.

Communication is vital to every company’s success.

Improving your communication skills may be the single most important step you can take in your career. You can have the greatest ideas in the world, but they’re no 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.

Whether exchanging emails, posting entries on a blog, giving a formal presentation, or chatting with co-workers at lunch, you are engaging in **communication**, the process of transferring information from a sender to a receiver. The essence of communication is sharing—providing data, information, and insights in an exchange that benefits both you and the people with whom you are communicating.<sup>2</sup> However, communication is considered *effective* only when others understand your message correctly and respond to it in the way you want. Effective communication helps you manage your workflow, improves business relationships, enhances your professional image, and provides a variety of other important benefits:

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

Effective communication is at the centre of virtually every aspect of business because it connects the company with all its **stakeholders**—the groups that your company affects in some way and who themselves have some influence on your company. For example, as a customer or an employee of a particular business, you are a stakeholder. Other stakeholders include government regulators,

who create guidelines that businesses must observe, and the media, which report on business and influence public opinion.

If you want to improve efficiency, quality, responsiveness, or innovation, you'll do so with the help of strong communication skills. Conversely, without effective communication, people misunderstand one another and misinterpret information. At every stage of your career, communication is the way you'll succeed, and as you rise in your organization, you'll use more communication channels, such as blogs, videos, and Twitter, to reach your stakeholders.

## THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Communication doesn't occur haphazardly. Nor does it happen all at once. It is more than a single act. Communication is a dynamic, transactional, or two-way, process that can be broken into eight steps, as shown in Figure 1–1. However, be aware that this is a simplified model; real-life communication is usually more complicated. Both sender and receiver might be talking at the same time, or the receiver might be trying to talk on the phone with one person while instant messaging with another, or the receiver may ignore the sender's request for feedback, and so on.

1. **The sender has an idea.** You conceive an idea and want to share it. The potential success of your communication effort starts here. Its effectiveness depends on the nature of the idea, the composition of the audience and your relationship to these people, and your motivation for wanting to share the idea. For example, if an idea will benefit your department or company and your motivation is to make a contribution, the communication process is off to a strong start. In comparison, if the idea is poorly conceived (perhaps you haven't considered the financial impact of a proposal) or your motivation is suspect (perhaps you're more interested in making an impression on your boss than really contributing), the communication will be more difficult and possibly unsuccessful.
2. **The sender encodes the idea in a message.** When you put your idea into a message (words, images, or a combination of both) that your receiver will understand, you are **encoding** it. Much of the focus of this course is on developing the skills needed to successfully encode your ideas into effective messages. Encoding can fail for a number of reasons, including poor word choices that confuse or anger the audience, imagery that evokes unintended emotional responses, and cultural differences that result in the same words and images meaning different things to different people.
3. **The sender produces the message in a medium.** With the appropriate message to express your idea, you now need some way to send that message to your intended audience. Media for transmitting messages can be

Senders and receivers connect through an eight-step process.

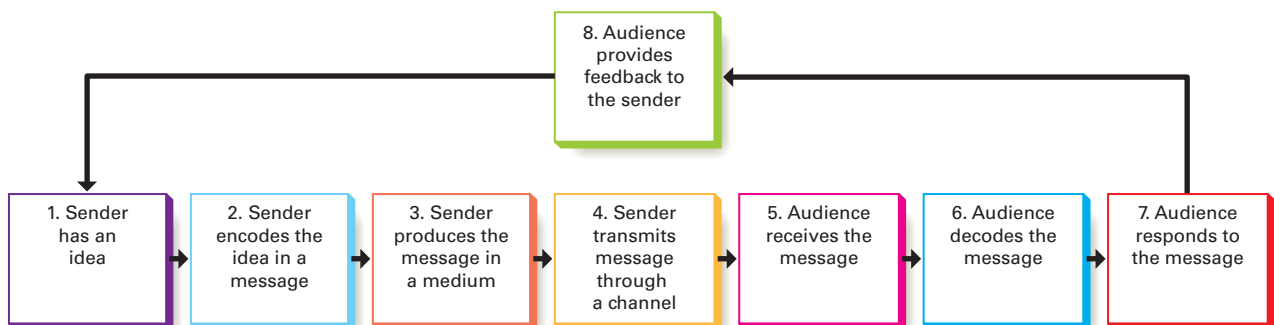


Figure 1–1 The Communication Process

divided into oral, written, and visual, as well as electronic forms of these three. As an experienced user of communication media, you already know that this step requires careful decision making and at least some level of technical skill. Misguided media choices or insufficient technical skill can undermine the best intentions. For instance, a desire to keep everyone informed of every important detail in a project can lead to email overload—and a breakdown in communication as people struggle to keep track of all the messages and the inevitable response threads. In contrast, many companies now find that a blog is a much better way to keep teams informed because this medium can dramatically reduce the number of messages required.

4. **The sender transmits the message through a channel.** Just as technology continues to multiply the number of media options at your disposal, it also continues to provide new **communication channels** you can use to transmit your messages. The distinction between medium and channel can get a bit murky, but think of medium as the *form* a message takes and channel as the system used to *deliver* the message. The channel can be a face-to-face conversation, the Internet, another company—any system capable of delivering messages.
5. **The audience receives the message.** If your message does not meet any obstacles, such as an unintended email deletion, it arrives at your intended audience. However, mere arrival at the destination is not a guarantee that the message will be noticed or understood correctly. For example, if you're giving a speech, your listeners have to be able to hear you, and they have to pay attention. You have no guarantee that your message will actually get through. In fact, one of the biggest challenges you'll face as a communicator in today's crowded business environment is cutting through the clutter and noise in whatever medium you choose.
6. **The audience decodes the message.** If the message is actually received, the audience must then absorb and understand it, a step known as **decoding**. If obstacles do not block the process, the receiver interprets your message correctly; that is, the receiver assigns the same meaning to your words as you intended and responds in the way you desire.
7. **The audience responds to the message.** By crafting messages in ways that show the benefits of responding, senders can increase the chances that recipients will respond in positive ways. However, 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 audience provides feedback to the sender.** After decoding your message, the audience has the option of responding in some way. This **feedback** enables you to evaluate the effectiveness of your message: feedback often initiates another cycle through the process, which can continue until both parties are satisfied with the result. Successful communicators place considerable value on feedback, not only as a way to measure effectiveness but also as a way to learn.

## WHAT EMPLOYERS EXPECT FROM YOU

### 2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Identify eight communication skills that successful employers expect from their employees.

No matter how good you are at accounting, law, science, or whatever professional specialty you pursue, most companies expect you to be competent at a wide range of communication tasks. Employers spend millions of dollars on communication training every year, but they expect you to come prepared with basic skills, so you can take full advantage of the learning opportunities they

make available to you. Check the Employability Skills 2000+ chart, prepared by the Conference Board of Canada (Figure 1–2), for the skills you need to achieve career success.

To stand out from your competition in the job market, improving your communication skills might be the single most important step you take. In fact, employers start judging your ability to communicate before you even show up for your first interview (e.g., résumés, phone messages, profiles on social media, etc.), and the process of evaluation never really stops. Improving your communication skills helps ensure that others will recognize and reward your talents and contributions. Fortunately, the specific skills that employers expect from you are the very skills that will help you advance in your career:

Employers are constantly evaluating your communication skills.

- 1. Organizing ideas and information logically and completely.** You'll often be required to find, process, and organize substantial amounts of raw data and random information so others can easily grasp its significance. Communications that highlight, clarify, and summarize the most important information are more effective than those that include huge amounts of data without any purpose or focus.
- 2. Expressing and presenting ideas and information coherently and persuasively.** Whenever you're asked to offer an opinion or recommendation, you'll be expected to back it up with solid evidence. However, organizing your evidence well is not all you will need to do; you'll also need to convince your audience with compelling arguments that are accurate and ethical.
- 3. Listening to others effectively.** Effective listening is not as easy as you might think. Amidst all the distractions on the job, you'll need to use specific skills to detect the real meaning behind the words.
- 4. Communicating effectively with people from diverse backgrounds and experiences.** You'll often be called on to communicate with people who differ from you in gender, ethnic background, age, profession, technical ability, and so on.

#### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

“Make sure your soft skills (communication, teamwork, problem solving) are on par with your technical abilities, as employers look for well-rounded individuals who will integrate well into their companies.”

Paul Hébert, senior advisor, strategic communications, at Acart Communications

- 5. Using communication technologies effectively and efficiently.** You're already familiar with email, instant messaging (IM), and online research. Increasingly, employers will also expect you to use web conferencing, electronic presentations, and a variety of other technological tools.
- 6. Following accepted standards of grammar, spelling, and other aspects of high-quality writing and speaking.** You and your friends are probably comfortable with informal communication that doesn't put a high value on precision and correctness. However, to be successful in business, you will need to focus on the quality of your communication efforts. Particularly with audiences who don't know you well, careless writing and disregard for accepted standards reflect poorly on both you and your company. Rather than giving you the benefit of the doubt, many people will assume that you either don't know how to communicate or don't care enough to communicate well.
- 7. Communicating in a civilized manner that reflects contemporary expectations of business etiquette.** Even when the pressure is on, you'll be expected to communicate with courtesy and respect in a manner that is appropriate to the situation.

### Employability Skills 2000+

**The skills you need to enter, stay in, and progress in the world of work—whether you work on your own or as a part of a team.**

These skills can also be applied and used beyond the workplace in a range of daily activities.

---

<b>Fundamental Skills</b> The skills needed as a base for further development	<b>Personal Management Skills</b> The personal skills, attitudes and behaviours that drive one's potential for growth	<b>Teamwork Skills</b> The skills and attributes needed to contribute productively
<p><i>You will be better prepared to progress in the world of work when you can:</i></p> <p><b>Communicate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read and understand information presented in a variety of forms (e.g., words, graphs, charts, diagrams)</li> <li>• write and speak so others pay attention and understand</li> <li>• listen and ask questions to understand and appreciate the points of view of others</li> <li>• share information using a range of information and communications technologies (e.g., voice, e-mail, computers)</li> <li>• use relevant scientific, technological and mathematical knowledge and skills to explain or clarify ideas</li> </ul> <p><b>Manage Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• locate, gather and organize information using appropriate technology and information systems</li> <li>• access, analyze and apply knowledge and skills from various disciplines (e.g., the arts, languages, science, technology, mathematics, social sciences, and the humanities)</li> </ul> <p><b>Use Numbers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• decide what needs to be measured or calculated</li> <li>• observe and record data using appropriate methods, tools and technology</li> <li>• make estimates and verify calculations</li> </ul> <p><b>Think &amp; Solve Problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assess situations and identify problems</li> <li>• seek different points of view and evaluate them based on facts</li> <li>• recognize the human, interpersonal, technical, scientific and mathematical dimensions of a problem</li> <li>• identify the root cause of a problem</li> <li>• be creative and innovative in exploring possible solutions</li> <li>• readily use science, technology and mathematics as ways to think, gain and share knowledge, solve problems and make decisions</li> <li>• evaluate solutions to make recommendations or decisions</li> <li>• implement solutions</li> <li>• check to see if a solution works, and act on opportunities for improvement</li> </ul>	<p><i>You will be able to offer yourself greater possibilities for achievement when you can:</i></p> <p><b>Demonstrate Positive Attitudes &amp; Behaviours</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feel good about yourself and be confident</li> <li>• deal with people, problems and situations with honesty, integrity and personal ethics</li> <li>• recognize your own and other people's good efforts</li> <li>• take care of your personal health</li> <li>• show interest, initiative and effort</li> </ul> <p><b>Be Responsible</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set goals and priorities balancing work and personal life</li> <li>• plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals</li> <li>• assess, weigh and manage risk</li> <li>• be accountable for your actions and the actions of your group</li> <li>• be socially responsible and contribute to your community</li> </ul> <p><b>Be Adaptable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work independently or as a part of a team</li> <li>• carry out multiple tasks or projects</li> <li>• be innovative and resourceful: identify and suggest alternative ways to achieve goals and get the job done</li> <li>• be open and respond constructively to change</li> <li>• learn from your mistakes and accept feedback</li> <li>• cope with uncertainty</li> </ul> <p><b>Learn Continuously</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be willing to continuously learn and grow</li> <li>• assess personal strengths and areas for development</li> <li>• set your own learning goals</li> <li>• identify and access learning sources and opportunities</li> <li>• plan for and achieve your learning goals</li> </ul> <p><b>Work Safely</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be aware of personal and group health and safety practices and procedures, and act in accordance with these</li> </ul>	<p><i>You will be better prepared to add value to the outcomes of a task, project or team when you can:</i></p> <p><b>Work with Others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand and work within the dynamics of a group</li> <li>• ensure that a team's purpose and objectives are clear</li> <li>• be flexible: respect, be open to and supportive of the thoughts, opinions and contributions of others in a group</li> <li>• recognize and respect people's diversity, individual differences and perspectives</li> <li>• accept and provide feedback in a constructive and considerate manner</li> <li>• contribute to a team by sharing information and expertise</li> <li>• lead or support when appropriate, motivating a group for high performance</li> <li>• understand the role of conflict in a group to reach solutions</li> <li>• manage and resolve conflict when appropriate</li> </ul> <p><b>Participate in Projects &amp; Tasks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plan, design or carry out a project or task from start to finish with well-defined objectives and outcomes</li> <li>• develop a plan, seek feedback, test, revise and implement</li> <li>• work to agreed quality standards and specifications</li> <li>• select and use appropriate tools and technology for a task or project</li> <li>• adapt to changing requirements and information</li> <li>• continuously monitor the success of a project or task and identify ways to improve</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">  <p>The Conference Board of Canada</p> <p>255 Smyth Road, Ottawa                      ON K1H 8M7 Canada                      Tel. (613) 526-3280                      Fax (613) 526-4857                      Internet: <a href="http://www.conferenceboard.ca/education">www.conferenceboard.ca/education</a></p> </div>

**Figure 1–2** Employability Skills 2000+ Chart

Download this pamphlet from [www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx) and use it as a reference throughout your schooling and career. Where do you stand now in regard to the three skill areas? Where do you need to improve your skills? How do you plan to do this?

Courtesy: The Conference Board of Canada.

### 8. Communicating ethically, even when choices aren't crystal clear.

Whether you're simply reporting on the status of a project or responding to a complicated, large-scale crisis, you're certain to encounter situations that call for you to make sound ethical choices. (See "Promoting Workplace Ethics: Ethical Boundaries—Where Would You Draw the Line?" later on in the chapter.) You'll have the opportunity to practise all these skills throughout this course—but don't stop there. Successful professionals continue to hone communication skills throughout their careers. For example, the Canadian Centre for Ethics and Corporate Policy is a nonprofit organization that provides company leaders who recognize the value of promoting the application of ethical decision making with an opportunity to exchange best practices.<sup>3</sup>

## CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Having the best ideas that will help your company run productively isn't enough; you must express those ideas clearly and persuasively. Employers demand oral and written communication skills from all job candidates, from seasonal and entry-level workers to management employees.

To make your messages effective, make them practical, factual, concise, clear about expectations, and persuasive:<sup>4</sup>

- 1. Provide practical information.** Give recipients useful information, whether it's to help them perform a desired action or understand a new company policy.
- 2. Give facts rather than 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.
- 3. Present information in a concise, efficient manner.** Highlight the most important information, rather than forcing your reader to determine the key points. Most business professionals find themselves wading through a flood of data and information. Messages that clarify and summarize are more effective than those that do not. In today's time-pressured business environment, clear and concise messages are highly valued.
- 4. Clarify expectations and responsibilities.** Write messages to generate a specific response from a specific audience. Clearly state what you expect from audience members or what you can do for them. You will see many examples in this book with action requests.
- 5. Offer compelling, persuasive arguments and recommendations.** Show your readers precisely how they will benefit from responding to your message the way you want them to. Including reader benefits is the key to persuading employers, colleagues, customers, or clients to adopt a plan of action or purchase a product.

Keep these five important characteristics in mind as you review Figures 1–3 and 1–4. Both emails appear to be well constructed at first glance, but Figure 1–3 is far less effective, as explained in the margin comments. It shows the negative impact that poorly conceived messages can have on an audience. In contrast, Figure 1–4 shows how an effective message can help everyone work more efficiently (in this case, by helping them prepare effectively for an important meeting).

### 3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Describe the five characteristics of effective business communication.



#### SUMMER WILDERNESS CAMP OPPORTUNITIES

Camp Nippising is seeking enthusiastic people with a passion for working with kids and a love of the outdoors.

*Applicants will have*

- Camping experience
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Standard First Aid with Heartsaver CPR
- Lifeguard certificate

Yellow Dog Productions/The Image Bank/Getty Images

Most companies want employees who can communicate effectively, from entry- to high-level positions. What sorts of jobs have you held that required you to communicate with co-workers and with customers or clients? What were your specific communication tasks, both oral and written?

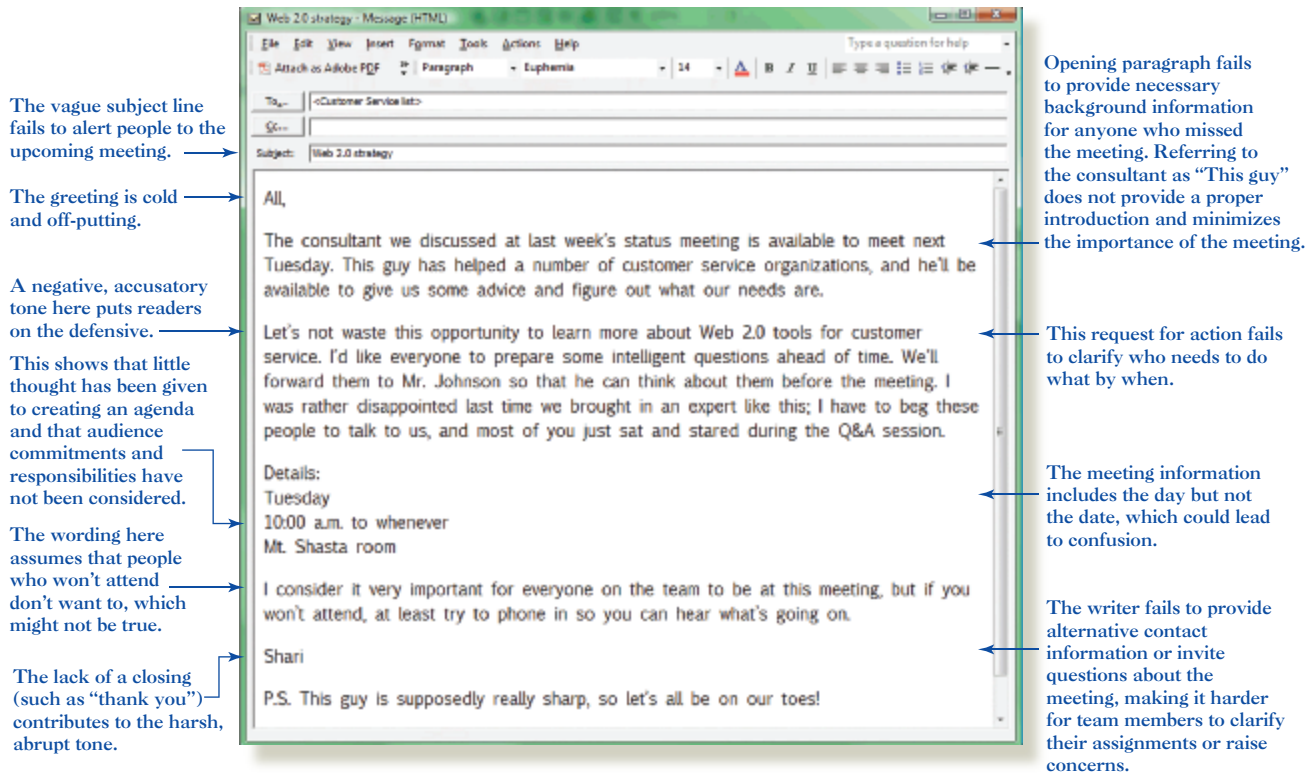


Figure 1-3 Ineffective Communication

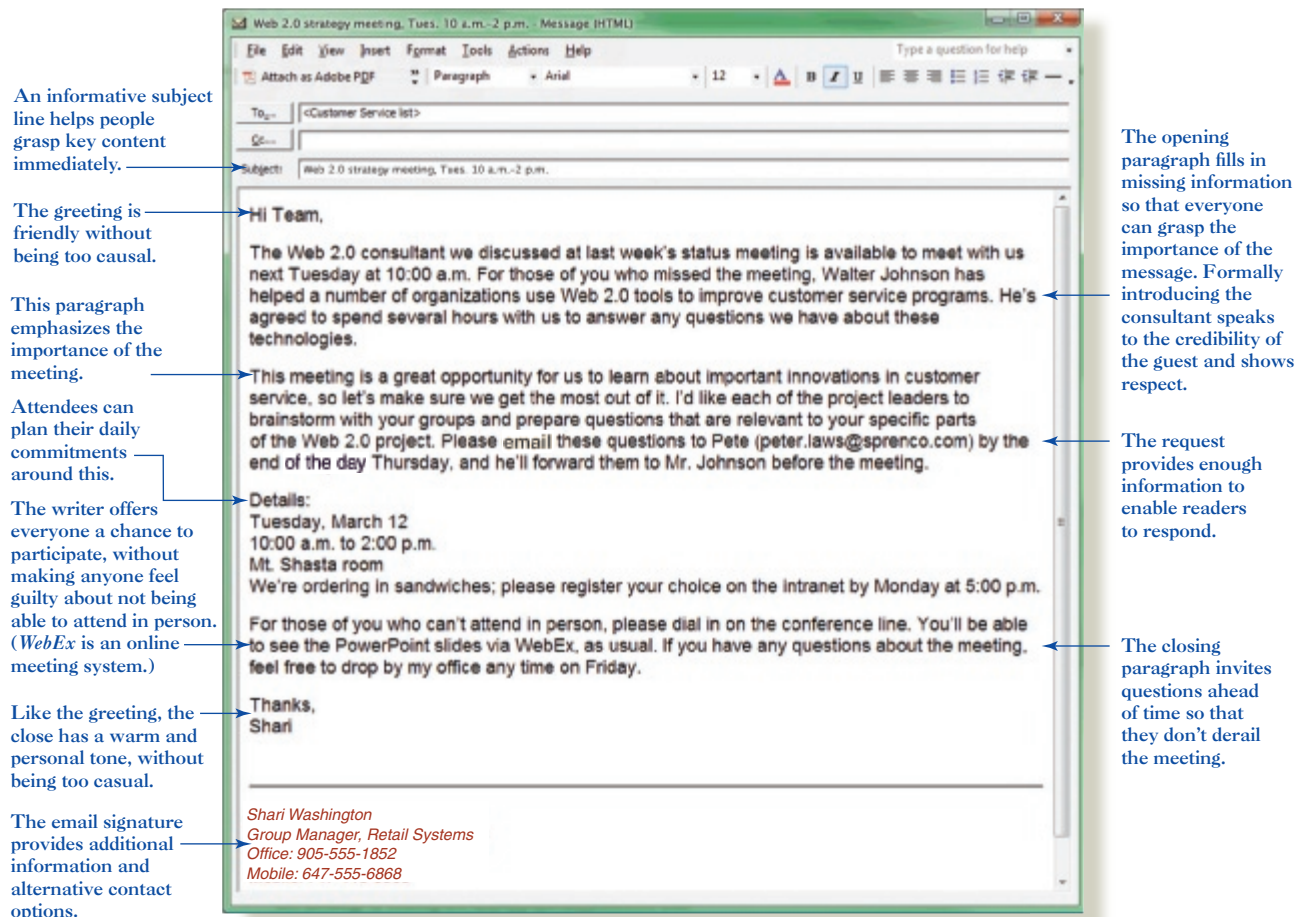
## COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL SETTINGS

No matter what your level in the organization, you have an important communication role.

In every part of the business organization, communication provides the vital link between people and information. When you join a company, you become a key element in its communication chain. Whether you're a high-level manager or an entry-level employee, you have information that others need to perform their jobs, and others have information that is crucial to you. You exchange information with people inside your organization, called **internal communication**, and you exchange information and ideas with others outside your organization, called **external communication**. This information travels over both *formal* and *informal* channels.

Communicating internally is essential for effective functioning. As an employee, you are in a position to observe first-hand attitudes and behaviours that your supervisors and co-workers cannot see: a customer's reaction to a product display, a supplier's brief hesitation before agreeing to a delivery date, or a slowdown in the flow of customers. Managers and co-workers need such minute information in order to do their jobs. If you don't pass that information along, nobody will—because nobody else knows. Communicating freely helps employees develop a clear sense of the organization's mission and helps managers identify and react quickly to potential problems.

Like internal communication, external communication is essential for conducting business smoothly. Companies constantly exchange messages with customers, vendors, distributors, competitors, investors, journalists, and community representatives. Whether by letter, Web, phone, email, or video, good communication is the first step in creating a favourable impression. Extremely careful planning is required for messages such as statements to the press, letters to investors, advertisements, and price announcements. Therefore, such documents are



**Figure 1-4** Effective Communication

often drafted by marketing, legal, and/or public relations teams—whose sole job is creating and managing the flow of formal messages to outsiders.

**FORMAL COMMUNICATION NETWORK** The **formal communication network** is typically shown as an organizational chart, such as the one in Figure 1-5. Such charts summarize the lines of authority; each box represents a link in the chain of command, and each line represents a formal **channel**, or route, for the transmission of official messages. Information may travel down, up, and across an organization's formal hierarchy.

- **Downward flow.** Organizational decisions are often made at the top and then flow down to the people who will carry them out. Most of what filters downward is geared toward helping employees do their jobs and carry out company objectives. From top to bottom, each person must understand each message, apply it, and pass it along.
- **Upward flow.** To solve problems and make intelligent decisions, managers must learn what's going on in the organization. Because they must delegate work to be efficient, executives depend on lower-level employees to furnish them with accurate, timely reports on problems, emerging trends, opportunities for improvement, grievances, and performance. Typically, documents generated for high-level or outside readers or sensitive or complex messages are approved by superiors before being sent out.

Information flows up, down, and across the formal hierarchy.