

Twelfth Edition

# Business and Administrative Communication

*Kitty O. Locker | Jo Mackiewicz | Janine Cune | Donna Kingma*



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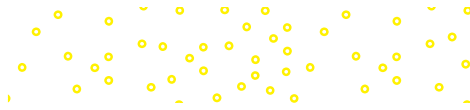
Twelfth Edition

# Business and Administrative Communication









## BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATION, TWELFTH EDITION

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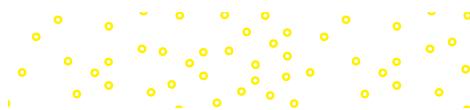
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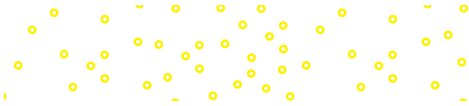
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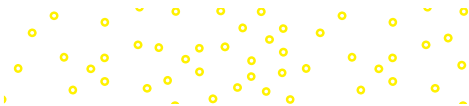
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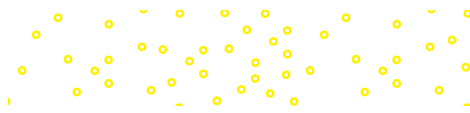




### **Dedication**

*In memory of Kitty Locker. We are honored to continue her legacy.  
For the instructors in the Advanced Communication program at Iowa State University.*



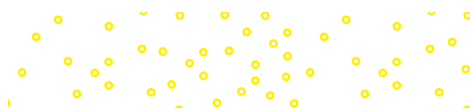


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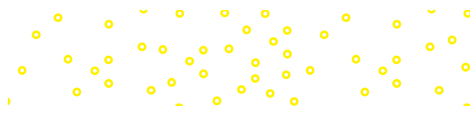
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## Business and Administrative Communication

*Business and Administrative Communication (BAC)* by Kitty Locker has long delivered a high standard of business communication pedagogy and resources. While staying true to its tradition, the 12th edition modernizes the chapter content and organization to make it more elegant and more relevant to students today. The result is students who are more engaged with the material and thus better prepared for the fast-paced, ever more digital business world. The foundation of this text is its rhetorical/situational approach to business communication, underscoring in each chapter the importance of analyzing each communicative situation in terms of audience, purpose, and context. This approach gives students the ability to choose the most applicable genre and to generate an effective business message no matter the situation. Because pedagogically strong exercises and instructor resources are vitally important to using a text effectively, the 12th edition includes new and updated exercises and instructor resources.

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### What's New?

As the new coauthors, we are excited to have our names follow those of Kitty Locker and Donna Kienzler on this 12th edition of *BAC*. We think you'll see that we have worked hard to update the content and flow, while staying true to the tradition of this text.

You'll find substantial changes from the 11th edition to this 12th edition. We have reorganized content, for example, grouping coverage of reports into one chapter. In the process of reorganizing, we greatly streamlined the text to eliminate redundancies and content not directly relevant to business communication. We think these two changes will help students learn the content more efficiently. Likewise, we substantially redesigned the textbook, paring down the visual design for a cleaner look and a more comfortable reading experience. For example, we eliminated all of the sidebar content and most of the icons. And, like past editors of *BAC*, we updated the cases, examples, and references so that the text remains relevant to its readers—both students and instructors. The following list delineates just **a few** of the specific changes that we made.

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#### CHAPTER 1

- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case focused on communication trouble at Netflix.
- Incorporated some content from the 11th edition's Chapter 4, such as a section on ethics.

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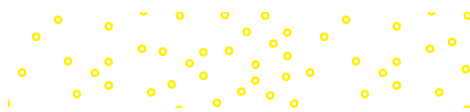
#### CHAPTER 2

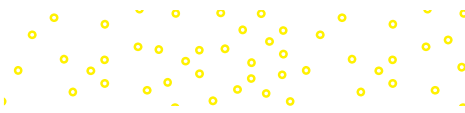
- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case focused on Wendy's successful use of Twitter to promote its brand.
- Added questions for analysis under "Analyzing Your Audience."
- Updated information on choosing appropriate channels to reach an audience.

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#### CHAPTER 3

- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case focused on Amazon's successful use of Amazon Prime to generate goodwill with its customers.
- Added a section on considering cultural differences with international audiences.





## CHAPTER 4

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- Moved some content from the 11th edition's Chapter 4 to the 12th edition's Chapters 1, 6, and 7.
- Updated the Beef Products Inc. “pink slime” case.

## CHAPTER 5

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- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case focused on the embarrassment generated by poor document design at the 2017 Academy Awards.
- Added numerous, current examples throughout the chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

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- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case focused on the way that McDonald's used cultural analysis and global agility to reinvent and rebrand McCafé as “The Corner.”
- Added an opening section on avoiding bias and stereotypes.
- Added sections on cultural awareness, intercultural competence, and global English.
- Revised and updated content throughout the chapter, including coverage of non-verbal communication, body language, personal space, and time.

## CHAPTER 7

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- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case about the way that Satya Nadella created a team-focused corporate culture at Microsoft.
- Added a new section on establishing ground rules for working in teams.
- Revised and updated sections on conflict resolution, effective meetings, and using technology in teams.

## CHAPTER 8

---

- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case on how individuals and organizations used social media to help inform people before and to raise money after Hurricane Harvey.
- Added new content about best practices for using email, text messages, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- Added new content on building goodwill using technology.
- Added a section on reasons to use technology to share messages.

## CHAPTER 9

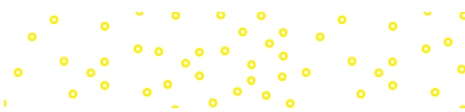
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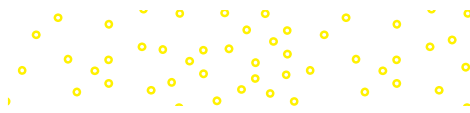
- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case focused on an unsuccessful public apology from United Airline's CEO, David Munoz.
- Expanded the section on apologies.
- Added a section on ethical issues and negative messages.

## CHAPTER 10

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- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case about Wikipedia's successful persuasive fund-raising messages.
- Used current research to update the chapter's examples.





## CHAPTER 11

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- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case about the consequences of lying on job-application materials.
- Merged content from the 11th edition's Chapters 12 and 13.

## CHAPTER 12

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- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case exemplifying a trend in interviewing: asking questions geared toward getting interviewees to “think on their feet.”
- Used current research to update the chapter's examples (from the 11th edition's Chapter 14).

## CHAPTER 13

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- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case about a graph that upended the reputation of glyphosate as a relatively safe herbicide.
- Added new content on best practices for creating maps and infographics.
- Used current research to update examples.
- Edited chapter exercises to reduce redundancy and to increase relevance and currency.
- Added numerous new examples in figures.

## CHAPTER 14

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- Merged relevant sections from the 11th edition's Chapters 15 and 17 to focus the chapter on proposals.
- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case about the National Science Foundation's call for papers after Hurricane Harvey. Applicants were competing for limited resources.
- Updated the section on proposal style.
- Added section on grant proposals.

## CHAPTER 15

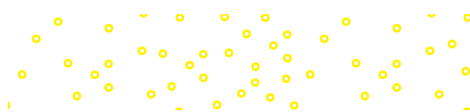
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- Merged relevant sections from the 11th edition's Chapters 15, 17, and 18 to focus the chapter on reports.
- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case about a collaborative report on STEM education, coauthored by the U.S. Department of Education and the American Institutes for Research.
- Used current research to update the chapter.
- Synthesized and updated end-of-chapter exercises.

## CHAPTER 16

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- Replaced the chapter-opening case with a new case about how an AI robot “earned” citizenship.
- Added new content on general versus specific purpose, the components of an introduction and a conclusion, and the “recency effect.”
- Added numerous new images to illustrate the chapter's points.





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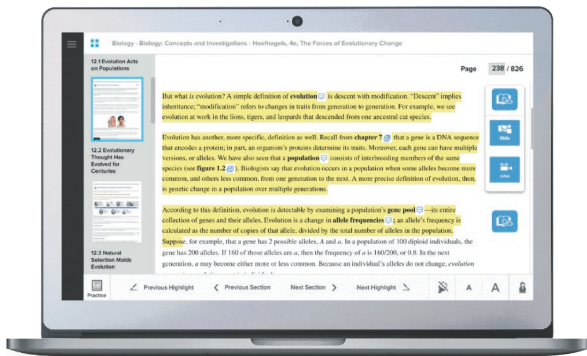
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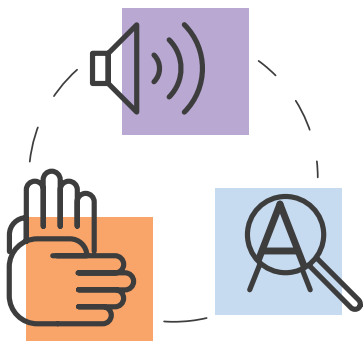
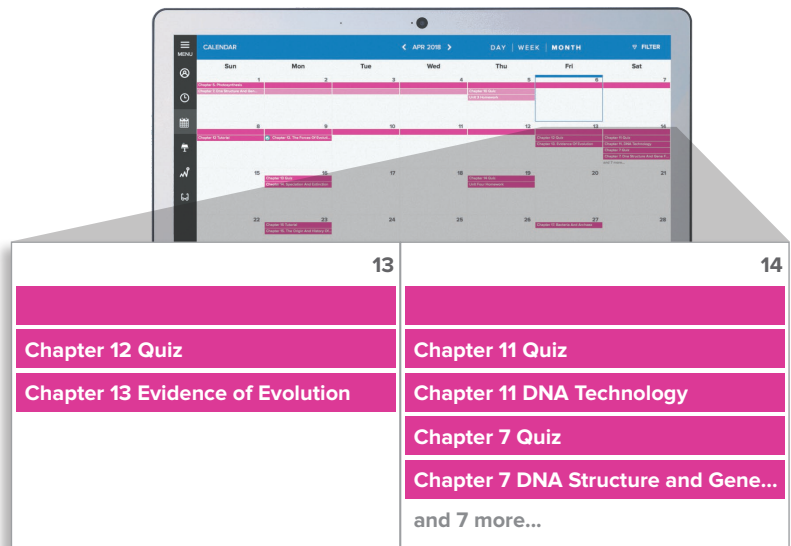
- Jordan Cunningham,  
Eastern Washington University

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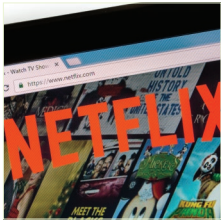
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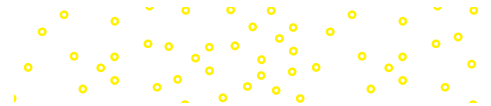
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Comma	596	<b>Name Index</b>	<b>619</b>
Dash	597	<b>Company Index</b>	<b>623</b>
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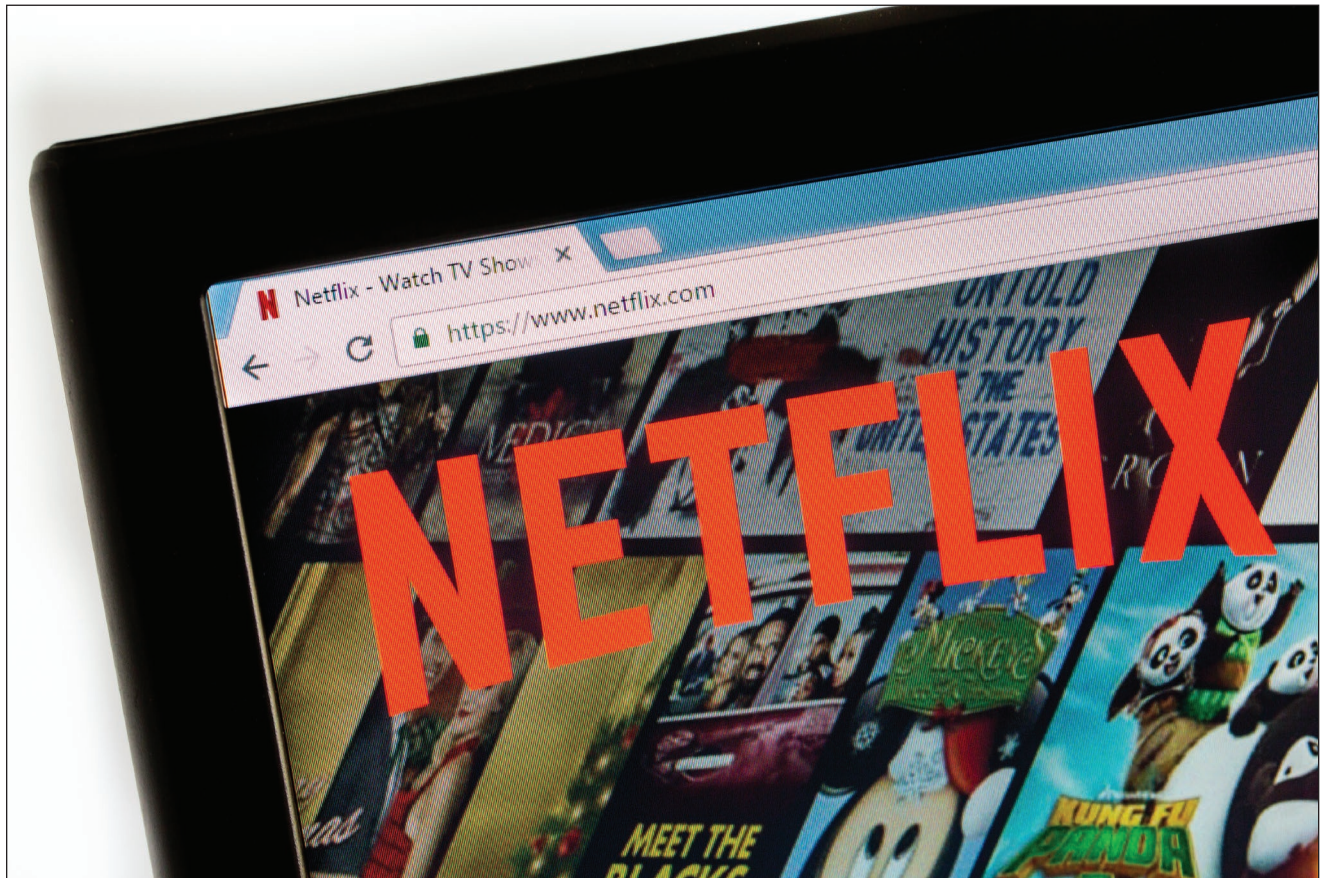
Twelfth Edition

# Business and Administrative Communication





## Costly Miscommunications: Trouble at Netflix



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Poorly done business communications can have severe consequences. Netflix learned this lesson the hard way when it chose to split its DVD and streaming services. The poorly communicated plan led Netflix to suffer in the following ways:

- The loss of approximately 800,000 subscriptions.
- The loss of 77% of its stock value in four months.

- Internal restructuring that led to a never-materialized spin-off company, Qwikster.

- A significant loss of reputation and customer goodwill.

A large part of the issue was the means of delivery of the message. A poorly worded blog post failed to minimize the negatives of the message. Indeed, the blog post invited members to cancel their subscriptions in its closing line.

Further, the comments section of the blog post was filled with unhappy customer comments about the plan. As a result, the chief executive officer (CEO) wrote an apologetic blog post as well as co-authored a shareholder statement that reassured investors while revising projected domestic-customer subscriptions down by 1,000,000.

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# Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will know

- LO 1-1** What the benefits of good communication are.
- LO 1-2** Why you need to be able to communicate well.
- LO 1-3** What the costs of communication are.
- LO 1-4** What the costs of poor communication are.
- LO 1-5** What the basic criteria for effective messages are.
- LO 1-6** What role conventions play in business communication.
- LO 1-7** Why ethics are so important in business communication.
- LO 1-8** How corporate culture affects the business environment.
- LO 1-9** How to solve business communication problems.

Communication is a vital part of business. As you will see in this and later chapters, missteps in handling business communications can cost organizations millions, and even billions, of dollars.

The amount of business communication is staggering. The U.S. Postal Service processed 160 billion pieces of mail in 2012, more than half of which were business communications. Advertising mail accounted for 79.5 billion pieces; first-class mail accounted for 68.7 billion,<sup>1</sup> many of which were business communications such as bills and insurance documents. When you consider that most of your business communications are electronic or oral, you can start to imagine the staggering number of business communications that people compose, hear, and read.

More and more, communications—both professional and personal—are moving to electronic media.

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- According to the *Harvard Business Review*, “In the past decade the world has gone from a total of 12 billion emails a day to 247 billion.”<sup>2</sup>
  - In June 2014, people around the world sent 561 billion text messages.<sup>3</sup>
  - In 2017, Twitter passed 330 million monthly users.<sup>4</sup>
- 

Business depends on communication. People must communicate to plan products and services; hire, train, and motivate workers; coordinate manufacturing and delivery; persuade customers to buy; and bill them for the sale. Indeed, for many businesses and nonprofit and government organizations, the “product” is information or services rather than something tangible. Information and services are created and delivered by communication. In every organization, communication is the way people get work done.

Communication takes many forms: face-to-face or phone conversations, informal meetings, presentations, email messages, letters, memos, reports, blogs, tweets, text messaging, social media, and websites. All of these methods are forms of **verbal communication**, or communication that uses words. **Nonverbal communication** does not use words. Pictures, computer graphics, and company logos are nonverbal. Interpersonal nonverbal signals include how people sit at meetings, how office spaces are used, and how long someone keeps a visitor waiting.

## Benefits of Good Communication Skills

LO 1-1

Good communication is worth every minute it takes and every penny it costs. Recently, the communication practices of 335 U.S. and Canadian companies with an average of 13,000 employees each and median annual revenues of \$1.8 billion were analyzed. The study found those companies that best communicated with their employees enjoyed “greater employee engagement and commitment, higher retention and productivity, and—ultimately—better financial performance . . .

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- They boasted a 19.4% higher market premium (the degree to which the company’s market value exceeds the cost of its assets).
  - They were 4.5 times more likely to report high levels of employee engagement.
  - They were 20% more likely to report lower turnover rates.”<sup>5</sup>
- 

Good communication skills also will benefit you. You may have wonderful ideas for your workplace, but unless you can communicate them to the relevant people, they will get you nowhere. In fact, many experts call communication skills—the ability to persuade, explain complex material, and adapt information to particular audiences—one of the most crucial skills of the new workplace, and a skill that is unlikely to be replaced by a computer.

Even in your first job, you’ll communicate. You’ll listen to instructions; you’ll ask questions; you may solve problems with other workers in teams. Even entry-level jobs require high-level skills in reasoning, mathematics, and communicating. As a result, communication ability consistently ranks first among the qualities that employers look for in college graduates.<sup>6</sup> Warren Buffett, chairman of Berkshire Hathaway and ranked among the world’s wealthiest people, told Columbia Business School students that they could increase their value 50% by learning communication skills, and that many of them did not yet have those skills.<sup>7</sup>

The National Commission on Writing surveyed 120 major corporations, employing nearly 8 million workers. Almost 70% of respondents said that at least two-thirds of their employees have specific writing responsibilities included in their position descriptions. These writing responsibilities include

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- Email (100% of employees).
  - Presentations with visuals, such as PowerPoint slides (100%).
  - Memos and correspondence (70%).
  - Formal reports (62%).
  - Technical reports (59%).
- 

Respondents also noted that communication functions were least likely to be outsourced.<sup>8</sup>

Because communication skills are so important, good communicators earn more. Research has shown that among people with two- or four-year degrees, workers in the top 20% of writing ability earn, on average, more than three times as much as workers whose writing falls into the worst 20%.<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Gitomer, business consultant and author of best-selling business books, says there are three secrets to getting known in the business world; all of them are communication skills: writing, e-zining (he reaches more than 130,000 subscribers each week), and speaking. He states, “Writing leads to wealth.”<sup>10</sup>

## “I’ll Never Have to Write Because . . .”

### LO 1-2

Despite the frequency of on-the-job writing and the importance of overall communication skills, college graduates often don’t demonstrate the necessary writing skills as they enter the workforce. A survey of employers conducted on behalf of the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that writing was one of the weakest skills of college graduates.<sup>11</sup> In another large survey, respondents noted that a lack of “effective business communication skills appears to be a major stumbling block among new [job] entrants—even at the college level.”<sup>12</sup>

Some students think that an administrative assistant will do their writing, that they can use form letters if they do have to write, that only technical skills matter, or that they’ll call or text rather than write. Each of these claims is fundamentally flawed.

Claim 1: An administrative assistant will do all my writing.

Reality: Because of automation and restructuring, job responsibilities in offices have changed. Today, many offices do not have typing pools. Most secretaries have become administrative assistants with their own complex tasks such as training, research, and database management for several managers. Managers are likely to take care of their own writing, data entry, and phone calls.

Claim 2: I’ll use form letters or templates when I need to write.

Reality: A form letter is designed to cover only routine situations, many of which are computerized or outsourced. Also, the higher you rise, the more frequently you’ll face situations that aren’t routine, that demand creative solutions.

Claim 3: I’m being hired as an accountant, not a writer.

Reality: Almost every entry-level professional or managerial job requires you to write email messages, speak to small groups, write documents, and present your work for annual reviews. People who do these things well are likely to be promoted beyond the entry level. Employees in jobs as diverse as firefighters, security professionals, and construction project managers all are being told to polish their writing and speaking skills.<sup>13</sup>

Claim 4: I’ll just pick up the phone.

Reality: Important phone calls require follow-up letters or emails. People in organizations put things in writing to make themselves visible, to create a record, to convey complex data, to make things convenient for the reader, to save money, and to convey their own messages more effectively. “If it isn’t in writing, it didn’t happen” is a maxim at many companies. Writing is an essential way to record agreements, to make yourself visible, and to let your accomplishments be known.

## Communicating on the Job

Communication—oral, nonverbal, and written—goes to both internal and external audiences. **Internal audiences** are other people in the same organization: subordinates, superiors, and peers. **External audiences** are people outside the organization: customers, suppliers, distributors, unions, stockholders, potential employees, trade associations, special interest groups, government agencies, the press, and the general public.

People in organizations produce a large variety of documents. Figures 1.1 and 1.2 list a few of the specific documents produced at Ryerson, a company that fabricates and sells steel, aluminum, other metals, and plastics to a wide variety of industrial clients and has sales offices across the United States, Canada, and China.

All of the documents in Figures 1.1 and 1.2 have one or more of the three basic purposes of organizational writing: to inform, to request or persuade, and to build

**Figure 1.1** Internal Documents Produced in One Organization

Document	Description of document	Purpose(s) of document
Transmittal	Memo accompanying document, telling why it's being forwarded to the receiver	Inform; persuade reader to read document; build image and goodwill
Monthly or quarterly report	Report summarizing profitability, productivity, and problems during period; used to plan activity for next month or quarter	Inform; build image and goodwill (report is accurate, complete; writer understands company)
Policy and procedure bulletin	Statement of company policies and instructions (e.g., how to enter orders, how to run fire drills)	Inform; build image and goodwill (procedures are reasonable)
Request to deviate from policy and procedure bulletin	Persuasive message arguing that another approach is better for a specific situation than the standard approach	Persuade; build image and goodwill (request is reasonable; writer seeks good of company)
Performance appraisal	Evaluation of an employee's performance	Inform; persuade employee to improve
Memo of congratulations	Congratulations to employees who have won awards, been promoted	Build goodwill

**Figure 1.2** External Documents Produced in One Organization

Document	Description of document	Purpose(s) of document
Quotation	Letter giving price for a specific product or service	Inform; build goodwill (price is reasonable)
Claims adjustment	Letter granting or denying customer request to be given credit for defective goods or service	Inform; build goodwill
Job description	Description of qualifications and duties of job; used for performance appraisals, salaries, and hiring	Inform; persuade good candidates to apply; build goodwill (job duties match level, pay)
10-K report	Report filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission detailing financial information	Inform
Annual report	Report to stockholders summarizing financial information for year	Inform; persuade stockholders to retain stock and others to buy; build goodwill (company is a good corporate citizen)
Thank-you letter	Letter to suppliers, customers, or other people who have helped individuals or the company	Build goodwill

goodwill. In fact, most messages have multiple purposes. When you answer a question, for instance, you're informing, but you also want to build goodwill by suggesting that you're competent and perceptive and that your answer is correct and complete.

## The Cost of Communication

Writing costs money. The annual Social Security statements cost \$70 million a year to mail, even with huge economies of scale.<sup>14</sup> The cost does not include employee time in the writing and processing, a major expense.

LO 1-3



Business communication involves paper documents, electronic communications, and interpersonal abilities.

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Document cycling processes also increase costs. In many organizations, all external documents must be approved before they go out. *ISO 9000 Quality Systems Handbook* requires approval procedures of both internal and external documents.<sup>15</sup> A major document may *cycle* from writer to superior to writer to another superior to writer again 10 or more times before final approval. Longer documents can involve large teams of people and take months to write.

Large organizations handle so much paper that even small changes to their communication practices amount to millions of dollars. Xerox Global Services Europe touts contractual annual savings of up to 1 million euros for organizations with 4,000 or more employees who switch to its printing services.<sup>16</sup> The Federal Electronics Challenge developed a list of formatting guidelines to reduce paper waste and increase savings.<sup>17</sup>

Another significant cost of communication is email storage. In addition to their exponential increase in frequency, emails also are growing in size. Many more of them also come with attachments. And businesses are storing much of this huge load on their servers. But the cost of the hardware is only some of the storage cost; a larger cost is administering and maintaining the archives. These costs include downtime when storage systems crash and time spent retrieving lost or corrupted messages.<sup>18</sup>

## Costs of Poor Communication

### LO 1-4

Poor communication can cost billions of dollars.

- Hurricane Katrina caused billions of dollars of damage—damage that was worsened by horrendous miscommunications between federal, state, and private relief organizations. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) claimed it was days before the relief agency knew about the thousands of people stranded in the New Orleans Convention Center. The lack of coordination and communication caused by these systems put even more lives at risk by delaying assistance where it was most needed. Some rescuers in helicopters were unable to communicate with rescuers in boats. Some National Guard units actually used runners to communicate. State and local agency teams received conflicting messages, which led to confusion.<sup>19</sup> The massive communication problems led to an entire chapter on communication in the U.S. House of Representatives report on the Hurricane Katrina disaster.
- Internal and external communication problems contributed greatly to delays in Boeing's 787 Dreamliner, delays that cost Boeing billions in penalties and caused some customers to switch their orders to Airbus.<sup>20</sup>
- GlaxoSmithKline was fined \$3 billion, the largest payment ever by a drug company, for failing to communicate accurately safety data on some of its popular drugs and for misdirecting the use of others.<sup>21</sup>
- British Petroleum agreed to a \$4 billion fine for its role in the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. That sum is in addition to the \$36.5 billion BP already had spent, or committed to spend, in additional fines, cleanup costs, and settlements to individuals and businesses. According to the presidential commission, inadequate communication among British Petroleum, Halliburton, and Transocean, as well as within their own companies, was a contributing factor in BP's massive oil spill, which caused extensive damage, as well as fatalities, in the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>22</sup>

Costs of poor communication are not just financial. People died in the explosion of British Petroleum's oil well. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, inaccurate media reports of looting convinced some residents to stay to protect their property instead of evacuating; false reports of shootings at helicopters resulted in some states refusing to send trained emergency workers.

Not all communication costs are so dramatic, however. When communication isn't as good as it could be, you and your organization pay a price in wasted time, wasted effort, lost goodwill, and legal problems.

## Wasted Time

Bad writing takes longer to read as we struggle to understand what we're reading. How quickly we can comprehend written material is determined by the difficulty of the subject matter and by the document's organization and writing style.

Second, bad writing needs to be rewritten. Poorly written documents frequently cycle to others for help, thus wasting time of people other than the original writer.

Third, ineffective communication may obscure ideas so that discussions and decisions are needlessly drawn out.

Fourth, unclear or incomplete messages may require the receiver to gather more information. Some receivers may not bother to do so, leading to wrong decisions or a refusal to act.

## Wasted Efforts

Ineffective messages don't get results. A receiver who has to guess what the sender means may guess wrong. A reader who finds a letter or email unconvincing or insulting simply won't do what the message asks.

Like many business projects, the *Mars Climate Orbiter* involved a wide range of people in a range of locations. The programmers who wrote the software that controlled the spacecraft's engines worked in Great Britain and used metric measurements in their calculations, while the engineers who made the satellite's engines worked in the United States and used English measurements. Both teams assumed they were using the same measurement standards, neither team made any attempt to check, and no one else caught the error. With that failure, NASA lost a \$125 million satellite and years of effort, while gaining a major public embarrassment.<sup>23</sup>

## Lost Goodwill

Whatever the literal content of the words, every communication serves either to build or to undermine the image the audience has of the communicator.

Part of building a good image is taking the time to write correctly. Even organizations that have adopted casual dress still expect writing to appear professional and to be free from typos and grammatical errors.



Communication failures increased the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Source: USCG



One example of wasted effort arising from communication problems occurred when the *Mars Climate Orbiter* spacecraft lost contact with NASA mission control just after it arrived at Mars. A subsequent investigation revealed the main problem was a minor software-programming error caused by communication errors.

Source: NASA