COMMUNICATING FOR RESULTS

A Guide for Business and the Professions

Tenth Edition

Cheryl Hamilton

COMMUNICATING FOR RESULTS

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A Guide for Business and the Professions

Tenth Edition

Cheryl Hamilton

Tarrant County College—NE Campus

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Cheryl Hamilton

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To my many classroom, online, and seminar students for reading the materials, trying out the activities, and making such excellent suggestions.

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About the Author

CHERYL HAMILTON, an author well known for her writing style and award-winning teaching, understands the importance of oral and written communication as a lifelong skill. Also the author of two other texts—*The Essentials of Public Speaking* and *Communicating for Success*—she has conducted a number of research studies, including one published in the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*. Dr. Hamilton has presented more than 40 papers at professional conventions, including those sponsored by the National Communication Association, Southwest Educational Research Association, Western Communication Association, and Texas Speech Communication Association. She has conducted seminars for groups such as the National Property Management Association, Bell Helicopter Textron, U.S. Postal Department, North Central Regional Police Academy, and LTV Aerospace. A native of Illinois, Dr. Hamilton received her bachelor's degree from Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, Illinois; her master's degree from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana; and her doctoral degree from the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. She is a professor of speech communication at Tarrant County College—NE Campus, which is an urban college district with over 50,000 students on five campuses in and around Fort Worth, Texas. She is active in college affairs where she has served as chair of the faculty senate and president of the faculty association. Although she has taught more than ten different communication courses at both two-year and four-year colleges, her favorite courses remain business communication, public speaking, and fundamentals. Her love of teaching is shown by the numerous teaching awards she has received including the Chancellor's Award for Exemplary Teaching.

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Preface

Each year the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) conducts research to determine how employers across the nation rank the skills and qualities of potential employees. Year after year, written and oral communication skills are chosen as number one in importance. At the same time, NACE research published in *Job Outlook 2009* notes that communication skills are also selected "as the number one skill that is most-lacking in new college graduate hires" (p. 24).

From this report, then, we can see the key importance that both oral and written communication skills will play in your career success. For example, even though interviewing is an oral process, if the letter of application and resume you send are poorly written, you may make such a negative impression that you will not be invited to an actual interview. Or your written skills may result in an interview, but if your oral skills during the interview are less than impressive, you may not get a job offer. Oral and written communications are intertwined even in everyday events. For example, you may be good at face-to-face communication but alienate people with your written email messages.

As always, *Communicating for Results*, Tenth Edition, is directed at those who are interested in self-improvement. It is designed to introduce necessary communication skills to people with very little work experience, to improve the communication skills of entry-level managers and employees, and to serve as a reference book for experienced professionals who wish to refresh or update their oral and written communication skills. This text emphasizes important skills from four basic communication areas: interpersonal and organizational, interviewing and group, public communication, and written communication.

- *Interpersonal and organizational skills* include understanding organizational communication; improving communication and relationships with bosses, employees, and customers; handling conflict; improving listening; interpreting and using nonverbal communication; decreasing misunderstandings with others, both face-to-face and electronically; and overcoming obstacles to communication.
- *Interviewing and group skills* include preparing conventional, scannable, email, and online resumes; conducting or participating in interviews of various types; knowing what questions are unlawful in pre-employment interviews; conducting and participating in conferences; and making decisions in small groups.
- *Public communication skills* include giving individual or team presentations to employees, managers, and groups inside or outside the organization; using effective organization and delivery techniques for traditional and online presentations; preparing professional visual aids; and knowing how to manage presentation software. Written communication skills include important tips for any type of business writing as well as specific guidelines to polish your email messages, thank-you and follow-up letters, resumes, and informative and persuasive outlines and reports.

Although the chapters in this book may be read in any order, they are organized so that each chapter builds on the skills taught in those preceding it.

The skills are discussed practically and lend themselves to immediate application. In other words, what is read today can be applied at work tomorrow. Activities within the chapters (Awareness Checks) and at the end of chapters (Collaborative Learning Activities) suggest ways for you to practice new skills and techniques. The *Communicating for Results* online resources and Instructor's Resource Manual feature additional application activities, test questions, and more.

Communicating for Results, Tenth Edition not only features a skills orientation but also provides you with the theoretical basis for each skill discussed. It is my hope that you will find this book valuable and that you will add it to your personal library.

Features of the New Edition

Technology takes a front seat in the Tenth Edition of *Communicating for Results*. Technology has changed so rapidly since the last edition that a complete revision was needed. Every chapter now includes multiple references to how technology in the Electronic Age affects communication as well as tips on how to use it more effectively. From the first chapter that begins with a case study on Facebook and other social media; to text messages, IM, blogs, Twitter, and email; to organization models, virtual teams, and sales; to the way technology has changed interviewing and problem-solving; to the role of technology in the preparation, presentation, and delivery of oral and written presentations.

In this Tenth Edition, written communication has moved into the text as Chapter 14 called Polishing Your Written Communication. This chapter features much needed advice on the do's and don'ts of effectively writing resumes, email messages, letters, and informative and persuasive presentation outlines and business reports. In addition to offering a more complete discussion of the importance of written communication skills, the appendix provides an easy-to-access place in the book to locate tips about and examples of written communication.

Three chapters received a complete revision in the Tenth Edition: Chapters 3, 11, and 12. Chapter 3, now called *Conflict, Culture, and Relationships*, provides new and expanded information on all three categories. The discussion of communication styles was revised based on 2011 research into Private, Dominant, Sociable, and Open styles. The Communication Styles Survey—Long Form is now included at the end of the chapter. Chapter 11, now called *Informative Presentations: Plan, Research, Organize, and Deliver*, combined and updated material from chapters 11 and 12 in the previous edition. Everything you need to know to plan, prepare, and deliver an informative presentation is together in a handy, easy-to-use chapter. Chapter 12, now called *Verbal and Visual Supporting Materials*, combines information from chapters 11 and 13 in the previous edition. New and expanded information including supporting materials used by "real" speakers and the latest research and advice on using visual aids and PowerPoint, make speaking success a certainty.

Newly revised features include the following:

- The **chapter-opening case studies,** which preview each chapter's content, have been updated with five new cases, highlighting communication issues related to Facebook, the University of Texas, Chesapeake, and more. Updated **Revisiting the Case Study boxes** throughout each chapter ask students to consider the case study scenario in light of the concepts discussed in the chapter.

- New and updated **It Really Works boxes** in each chapter still highlight a real-world executive's use of the skills presented in the book, and the Ethical Dilemma boxes, now called **Dilemmas in Communication**, ask readers to think critically about how they might handle questionable situations in the working world.
- New and updated **Collaborative Learning Activities** at the end of each chapter provide interesting and fun ways for students and seminar participants to apply the concepts in each chapter, thereby improving and cementing learning.
- Expanded coverage of **ethics** and **cross-cultural and gender communication**, both in the United States and internationally, includes a new Dilemmas in Communication case about the First Lady and the Queen and new and expanded information on cultural differences such as exchanging business cards as a ritual in Chapter 5.
- Chapter 7 highlights a new type of interview, the **Skype interview**.
- New examples of a **letter of application** and **sample resumes** are included in Chapter 8 and in Chapter 14 on written communication.
- Chapter 11 and Chapter 14 include, respectively, **a new informative speech** and **a new persuasive speech**.
- All chapters have been streamlined and some have been reorganized for clarity and ease of reading.

Additional Student and Instructor Resources

Communicating for Results is accompanied by a full suite of integrated materials that will make teaching and learning more efficient and effective. **Note to faculty:** If you want your students to have access to the online resources for this book, please be sure to order them for your course. The content in these resources can be bundled with every new copy of the text or ordered separately. If you do not order them, your students will not have access to the online resources. *Contact your local Wadsworth Cengage Learning sales representative for more details.*

- The **Speech Communication Coursemate for *Communicating for Results*** provides students with one-stop access to all the integrated technology resources that accompany the book. These resources include an enhanced eBook, a student workbook, Speech Builder Express™ 3.0, Speech Studio 2.0™, InfoTrac College Edition, interactive video activities, interactive versions of the Awareness Check quizzes and Checkpoint activities, web links, and self-assessments.
- The ***Communicating for Results* interactive video activities** feature the Communication Situation communication scenario clips presented in the text so students can see and hear how the skills they are studying can be used in various workplace circumstances. Students can answer the critical

thinking questions that accompany each video and then compare their answers to the author's. This online resource also features videos of the business informative and persuasive speeches referenced in the book. Each speech is accompanied by a transcript, a preparation outline and a speaking outline, note cards, the ability to time-stamp comments, and critical thinking questions. Also available in the interactive video activities are specially created **videos on organizational models (Chapter 2)** and **communication styles (Chapter 3)** that help bring challenging content to life.

- The **Speech Builder Express 3.0 organization and outlining program** is an interactive web-based tool that coaches students through the speech organization and outlining process. By completing interactive sessions, students can prepare and save their outlines—including a plan for visual aids and a works cited section—formatted according to the principles presented in the text. Text models reinforce students' interactive practice.
- The **InfoTrac College Edition with InfoMarks** is a virtual library that features more than 18 million reliable, full-length articles from 5,000 academic and popular periodicals. These articles can be retrieved almost instantly. This resource also provides access to Info Marks—stable URLs that can be linked to articles, journals, and searches to save valuable time when doing research—and to the Info Write online resource center, where students can access grammar help, critical thinking guidelines, guides to writing research papers, and much more.
- The **Cengage Learning Interactive eBook** is a web-based version of *Communicating for Results* that offers ease of use and maximum flexibility for students who want to create their own learning experience. The interactive eBook includes advanced tools such as a hypertext index, bookmarking, easy highlighting, and faster searching, easy navigation, and a vibrant web-based format. Students get access to the enhanced eBook with the printed text, or they can just purchase access to the stand-alone enhanced eBook.
- **Speech Studio 2.0™** is an online program for the Public Speaking course. With Speech Studio 2.0, students upload recorded speeches, watch and assess their peers' speeches, and review their grades and instructor feedback. Instructors create assignments, comment on student speeches with a library of comments, and grade them with customizable, editable rubrics. Instructors also can choose to allow peer review. Grades flow into a light gradebook so that instructors can easily manage their course from within Speech Studio, or instructors can export the grades to a learning management system.

  Speech Studio 2.0 includes enhancements such as easy adding, deleting, and resetting of assignments; uploading additional assignment elements like outline and PowerPoint® slides; grading with weighted rubric criteria; enhanced peer review functionality; and a rubric editor.
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need, when you need it. Visit cengagebrain.com for details. **The Instructor's Resource Manual with Test Bank** by Samuel Todd Brand, Meridian Community College, features teaching tips, suggestions for online instruction, sample course outlines, lists of useful media resources, detailed chapter outlines, skill-building activities, forms and checklists, and an extensive test bank.

- The **Power Lecture CD-ROM** contains an electronic version of the Instructor's Resource Manual, Exam View® Computerized Testing, predesigned Microsoft PowerPoint presentations created by Ron Shope, Grace University, and JoinIn® classroom quizzing. The PowerPoint presentations contain text, images, and cued videos of student speeches and can be used as they are or customized to suit your course needs.
- **Special-Topic Instructor's Manuals** by Deanna Sellnow, University of Kentucky, are three brief manuals that provide instructor resources for teaching public speaking online, with a service-learning and problem-based learning approach that focuses on critical thinking and teamwork skills. Each manual includes course syllabi; icebreakers; information about learning cycles and learning styles; and public speaking basics such as coping with anxiety, outlining, and speaking ethically.
- **CourseCare** training and support. Get trained, get connected, and get the support you need for the seamless integration of digital resources into your course. This unparalleled technology service and training program provides robust online resources, peer-to-peer instruction, personalized training, and a customizable program you can count on. Visit cengagebrain.com/coursecare/ to sign up for online seminars, first day of class services, technical support, or personalized, face-to-face training. Our online and onsite trainings are frequently led by one of our Lead Teachers, faculty members who are experts in using Wadsworth Cengage Learning technology and can provide best practices and teaching tips.
- The **Flex-Text customization program** lets you create a text as unique as your course: quickly, simply, and affordably. As part of our Flex-Text program, you can add your personal touch to *Communicating for Results* with a course-specific cover and up to 32 pages of your own content, at no additional cost.

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Ft. Worth, Texas

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1

THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS:

AN INTRODUCTION

As you read chapter 1...

DEFINE
what is meant by *communication.*

IDENTIFY AND DESCRIBE
each element of the basic transactional model of communication.

PINPOINT
where in the model your main communication problems occur.

IDENTIFY
how Americans view the honesty and ethical standards of several professions, including your own and **summarize** what can be done to encourage ethical communication.

CASE STUDY

Facebook Falters

What role does communication play in the many successes and failures of various organizations? Let's take a look at one organization that has had phenomenal success and some failures: Facebook—a popular social networking site chronicled in the 2010 movie *The Social Network*. Mark Zuckerberg was a Harvard sophomore when he began operating Facebook for college and high school friends. Since then, the site has grown at an unbelievable rate, with 200 million active users in 2009; 845 million on December 31, 2011; and an expected 1 billion active users sometime in 2012 (Paul, 2012; Stone, 2009a). It was because of this rapid growth that Microsoft decided to invest $240 million for 1.6% ownership (Stone, 2009a, 2009b). According to Stone:

> Like other social networks, the site allows its users to create a profile page and forge online links with friends and acquaintances. It has distinguished itself from rivals, partly by imposing a Spartan design ethos and limiting how users can change the appearance of their profile pages. That has cut down on visual clutter and threats like spam, which plague rival social networks. In May 2007, Facebook revealed an initiative called Facebook Platform, inviting third-party software makers to create programs for the service and to make money on advertising alongside them. The announcement stimulated the creation of hundreds of new features or "social applications" on Facebook, from games to new music and photo sharing tools, which had the effect of further turbo-charging activity on the site.

It's not just people aged 18 to 24 years old who use Facebook either—the fastest-growing Facebook users are people over 40 (Rosenthal, 2011). Also, 425 million Facebook fans now use mobile devices to access the social network, and 80% of users are from outside the United States (Hempel, 2009; Paul, 2012). Still, it is a social networking site, and communicating relationships are all important; it is estimated that Facebook has helped create 100 billion online friendships resulting in 2.7 billion likes/comments and 250 million photos added every day (Paul, 2012). To meet the needs of so many people using the site for so many purposes, Facebook continues to experiment with new policies and features. Communicating these with all of the users has not been easy, and keeping them happy hasn't been easy either.

In 2006, Zuckerberg introduced a feature that is now highly used and even taken for granted by new users: the *news feed* "which allows users to see their friends' most recent online activities" (The Editors, 2009). Customer backlash was considerable, but the new feature stayed and customers were allowed to opt out if they wished. In 2007, users again became angry when a new feature called "Beacon" was implemented. According to Timothy Lee (The Editors, 2009), Beacon was "an ill-conceived advertising program that many users regarded as an invasion of privacy. ... Facebook was forced to beat a hasty retreat in the face of widespread outrage." Apparently, users didn't like the idea of their friends seeing the sites they visited and the purchases they made. A new approach called "Connect" takes care of the previous complaints that information was being shared without their knowledge because users have to "opt in" before any sharing occurs.

It's not just features that cause user outrage. Complaints numbered in the tens of thousands after May 2009, when Facebook "deleted a provision from its terms of service that said users could remove their content at any time, and added new language that said it would retain users' content after an account was terminated" (The Editors, 2009). This change seemed to say that Facebook would own materials users placed on their pages. As one blog noted, "never upload anything you don't feel comfortable giving away forever, because it's Facebook's now" (Stone & Stelter, 2009). Although

As you read this chapter...

See if you can: (a) explain what caused so many people to react so quickly, (b) determine at which point in the communication model this misunderstanding occurred, and (c) theorize whether and how this misunderstanding could have been prevented.

AP Photo/Paul Sakuma

Zuckerberg and other Facebook representatives did their best to assure users that there was a communication misunderstanding and that they had no intent of taking ownership of users' materials, it seemed that the only answer was to rescind the changes and go back to the previous terms of service, which Facebook did.

Even so, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) took an interest in these privacy issues and charged Facebook "with eight counts of violating its users' privacy that constituted 'unfair and deceptive' behavior" when it made users' profiles public by default (Raice & Angwin, 2011). The 20-year settlement with the FTC requires Facebook "to ask users for permission before changing the way their personal information is released" and to agree to a privacy audit every two years (p. B1). As Facebook goes public in 2012, it will be interesting to see whether users feel more secure or whether the seven million apps and integrated websites connected with Facebook (Raice, 2012) make the advantages of using Facebook outweigh any fears about lost privacy.

The chapter opener reminds us how important communication skills are to success in business and professional organizations. A 2011 survey of corporate recruiters from over 900 companies was conducted by the Graduate Management Admission Council (gmac.com). In the primary skills, knowledge, and experience category, 86% of these recruiters ranked communication skills (oral and written) as the number one hiring characteristic looked for in new 2011 MBA hires (Edgington, 2011, p. 15). Specifically, employers "want hires with better communication, listening, and presentation skills who can influence, sell, and manage" (p. 20).

Communication skills are important in entry-level jobs as well. According to *Job Outlook 2011,* compiled by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2010), verbal communication skills ranked *first* as the most important quality or skill that employers look for in new hires—"more important than written communication abilities and all other skills" (p. 25). The most recent survey—*Job Outlook 2012*—reports that verbal communication ranks *second* just behind team skills as the most important skill for job candidates (2011, p. 28). The ability to communicate verbally ranked 4.59 on a 5-point scale; the ability to work in teams ranked 4.60. As you can see, regardless of the exact ranking, verbal communication skills are crucial to your success in the workplace.

Despite evidence that communication skills are necessary for success in the workplace, individuals from new hires to managers continue to have problems in this area. In fact, a survey of 150 executives from 1,000 large companies found that "14 percent of each 40-hour workweek is wasted because of poor communication between staff and managers—amounting to a stunning seven weeks a year" (Thomas, 1999, p. 1). Fortunately, communication is a skill that can be learned. If you are new to the workforce, the best place to begin is to understand how communication works and the major causes of communication errors that you are likely to experience; if you have work experience, all you probably need is a refresher. This text is designed to help you both.

COMMUNICATION DEFINED

When business and professional people are asked to define *communication*, they often respond with something like this: "Communication is the process of transferring thoughts and ideas from one person to another." On the surface, this definition sounds good. It acknowledges that communication

DILEMMAS IN COMMUNICATION

Should the Miami Marlin's Manager Be Held Accountable for His Comments?

In April 2012, the recently hired manager for the Miami Marlins, Ozzie Guillen, experienced the consequences of his words. In an interview with *Time* magazine, Guillen mentioned that he loved and respected Fidel Castro because "A lot of people have wanted to kill Fidel Castro for the last 60 years, but that (expletive) is still here" (Ortiz, 2012). Although a respected manager with a World Series win in 2005, this wasn't the first time Guillen experienced trouble for something he said; however, it is "The biggest mistake in my life so far," said Ozzie during a news conference during which he apologized to the Marlins fans many of whom are Cuban Americans (Kepner, 2012, p. B14). Although his apology seemed very sincere, it wasn't enough for some Miami politicians and residents, who called for him to be fired. Instead, the Marlins placed him on a five-game suspension, which was supported by Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig, who said that comments like Guillen's "have no place in our game" (Wine, 2012). Whether Guillen's apology will be accepted by the Marlins fans remains to be seen.

QUESTIONS

What do you think? Which two elements in the basic transaction model (beginning on page 6) explain most of Guillen's problems? Would you label this sports dilemma as a communication, ethical, or cultural problem? Why?

is a process (which means that it is ongoing), and it includes the idea of communicating our thoughts and ideas to others. However, the words *transferring* and *from one person to another* inaccurately imply that person A takes knowledge from his or her head and simply pours (transfers) it into the head of person B. Obviously, communication is not so simple.

A more accurate definition of communication can be found by looking at its original meaning. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary,* 6th ed. (2007) lists the Latin root of *communicate* as *communicare*, which means "to impart, share; make common." According to this definition, when people communicate, they express their ideas and feelings in a way that is understandable (common) to each of them. Each person has a direct effect on the other person and on subsequent communication. Therefore, **communication** is the *process of people sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings with each other in commonly understandable ways.*

MODELS OF COMMUNICATION: AN OVERVIEW

Whether you are communicating with one person, a small group, or many people, misunderstandings often arise. The key to success is being able to identify the cause for these misunderstandings and figuring out how to keep them from occurring again. This is where communication models prove so helpful—they allow us to pinpoint where in the communication process misunderstandings occur so that we can correct them.

Communication models have evolved from the early one-way models (such as that of Shannon and Weaver, 1949), to circular models (such as that of Schramm, 1955), to today's more accurate transactional models (first introduced by Barnlund, 1970).

One-Way Model

Figure 1.1 shows a **one-way model**, in which communication is viewed as a linear process going from person A (the *sender* who *encodes* the message) and ending with person B (the *receiver* who *decodes,* or interprets, the message). The model also shows that communication occurs in the presence of internal

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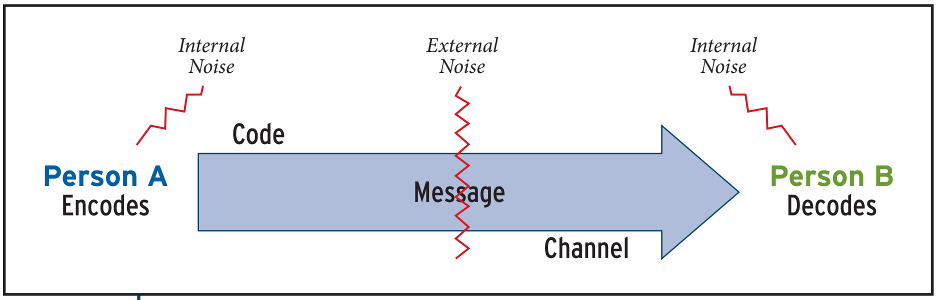
Internal Noise
External Noise
Internal Noise
Code
Person A Encodes
Message
Channel
Person B Decodes

FIGURE 1.1 One-way model

and external *noise* and that the message is carried by *code* (verbal, vocal, and nonverbal symbols) traveling through a *channel* (such as a text message or telephone). Notice that there is no response or *feedback* included with this model—thus it is one-way.

Circular Model

Figure 1.2 shows the **circular model**, in which communication is viewed as a circular or interactive process beginning with the sender, who communicates a message to a receiver who interprets it and sends a reply back to the sender. Although this model includes *feedback*, it implies that communication occurs in a step-by-step process, which rarely happens. Notice the addition of *frame of reference* (individual experience and background) indicated by the picture frames.

Transaction Model

Figure 1.3 shows the more complete **transaction model**, in which communication is viewed as a simultaneous, transactional process between senders and receivers. It is *simultaneous* because the persons involved in the communication

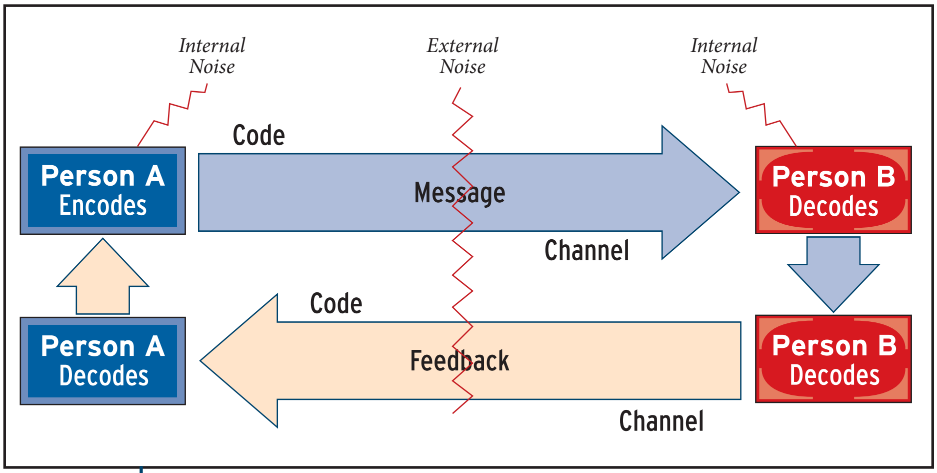
Internal Noise
External Noise
Internal Noise
Code
Person A Encodes
Message
Channel
Person B Decodes
Code
Person A Decodes
Feedback
Person B Decodes
Channel

FIGURE 1.2 Circular model

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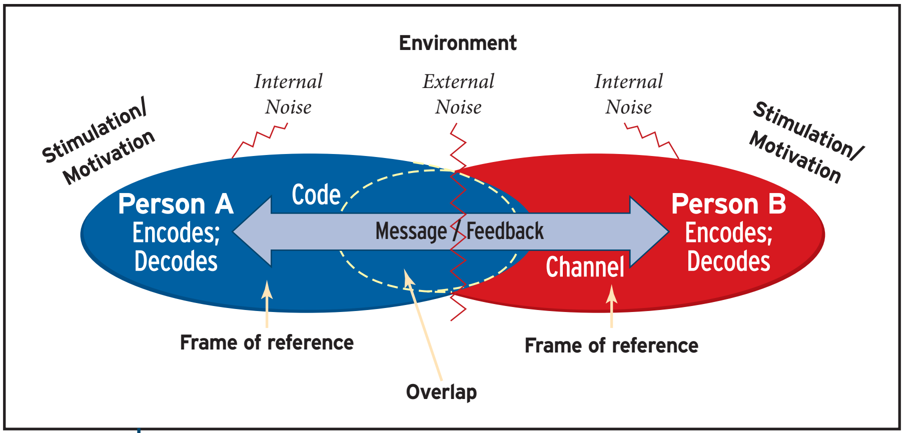

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FIGURE 1.3 Transaction model

may be sending and receiving at the same time; it is *transactional* because both persons are responsible for creating meaning and both influence and are influenced by the other. Notice the addition of *environment* and *stimulus/ motivation,* which may also affect understanding.

THE BASIC TRANSACTION MODEL EXPANDED

To help you more accurately assess your own communication strengths and weaknesses, let's look at the transaction model in more detail. The transaction model shown in Figure 1.3 includes the following basic elements: person A/ person B, stimulation and motivation, encoding and decoding, frames of reference, code, channel, feedback, environment, and noise. As you read, think about which of these communication elements cause you the most difficulty at work, at home, and with friends.

Person A/Person B

Either person A or person B in the transaction model could be the **sender** (the source of the message) or the **receiver** (the interpreter of the message). Actually, during most of their communication, they will both send and receive simultaneously. When conversations really get rolling, it can be difficult to determine at any one moment who is the sender and who is the receiver. However, to simplify our discussion of the model, we will continue to use the terms *sender* and *receiver.*

Stimulus and Motivation

Two things must happen before the sender even wants to send a message. First, the sender must be **stimulated**—an internal or external stimulus triggers a thought, which in turn triggers the desire to communicate. Here is an example: A publications supervisor, while briefing new personnel on basic

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procedures for lettering signs, suddenly remembers that he has not ordered the media equipment needed for the next day's briefing. He tells the new workers to take a 5-minute break, hurries to his office, and calls the media secretary. The supervisor's communication with the secretary was triggered by an *internal stimulus.*

An *external stimulus* can also trigger the desire to communicate. Meetings and professional gatherings that are filled with awkward silences are missing the external stimuli needed to start relaxed communication. For example, a sales representative who is promoting a new book at a convention is careful to arrange for appropriate external stimuli, such as drinks, appetizers, soft music, and the author of the book—all in a suite with a breathtaking view of the city. Carefully planned business meetings might include such external stimuli as coffee, a progress chart, or an outside consultant.

However, a stimulus alone is not enough to trigger communication. The second requirement for sending a message is sufficient **motivation**. Think of the times when a manager or leader has asked a question and some of the people present were fairly sure they knew the answer (were stimulated) but did not respond. Why not? Probably because they were not sufficiently motivated—that is, they saw no personal benefit in answering. Or perhaps they saw greater benefit in not answering if they feared giving an incorrect answer. In contrast, if they suspected that their promotions could be influenced by the amount of their participation, they might be motivated to answer the question even though they felt some anxiety.

The importance of these two steps—stimulation and motivation—cannot be overlooked. Potential customers will rarely listen carefully to a sales presentation if the stimulus is absent, and they certainly won't buy unless they can see how they will benefit (motivation). The key to being a good salesperson lies in knowing how to stimulate and motivate the customer to buy. Good speakers are also aware of these two steps. In the introduction to an oral presentation, a good business speaker first gets the audience's attention (stimulation to listen) and then shows them how the presentation will be valuable to them personally (motivation to continue listening).

Encoding and Decoding

After being stimulated and motivated to communicate, the sender must decide how best to convey a message to the specific receiver. The process of putting a message into the form in which it will be communicated is **encoding**. For example, when a manager finds it necessary to give a negative critique to an employee, he or she should think about how to encode the message: What type of words should be used—mild or firm? What volume should be used—loud or soft? Would a frown or a smile achieve the best result? What specific examples would help the employee understand? Email messages should receive the same careful encoding—for example, is my message clear and does it project the desired tone? Because senders encode messages before communicating them, the sender is often referred to as the *encoder.*

When the encoder's message is picked up, the receiver tries to make sense out of it—that is, to decode it. **Decoding** is the process the receiver goes through in trying to interpret the exact meaning of a message. Because receivers decode messages, they are often referred to as *decoders*. For example, when an employee receives a negative critique from a supervisor, the employee may consider certain questions when decoding: How serious a mistake have I made? Is the boss serious or just joking? Am I going to lose my job or promotion? Email is even more difficult to decode, isn't it? Have you ever received an email or text message that made you instantly angry or completely confused? Weinstein (2009) warns that companies can lose close to a half million dollars because of "inefficiencies and misunderstandings caused by email messages" (p. 9). *Note:* If you would like to improve your use of email, see "Email" in Chapter 6 and "Writing Successful Email Messages" in Chapter 14.

Frame of Reference

Inaccurate encoding and decoding can be responsible for some of our major communication breakdowns. These breakdowns occur because we use our own background and experience—our **frame of reference**—to encode and decode messages. Each person's frame of reference includes educational background, race, cultural values, gender, life experiences, attitudes, and personality. Haney (1986) was the first to suggest that we should think of our frames of reference as an invisible window. Everything we see, touch, taste, smell, and hear takes place through our particular window. Some windows have a large frame that gives a broad view of what is going on outside them; others have a small frame that limits what can be observed. Some windows have clear glass, which allows for accurate viewing; others have thick or tinted glass that distorts images.

Unless the backgrounds and experiences of the sender and receiver are identical, their messages may not be accurately encoded or decoded. In fact, as the transaction model in Figure 1.3 indicates, it is only when our frames of reference overlap that we can expect real understanding to occur. Here are some examples of misunderstanding caused by frame of reference differences:

- Nike withdrew its flame logo used on one of its basketball shoes when it received complaints from offended customers that the graphic resembled the Arabic script for *Allah*, the word for *God* (Ricks, 2006).
- Alka-Seltzer had problems with customers knowing how many tablets to take until the popular slogan, "Plop, plop, fizz, fizz, oh what a relief it is" clarified that point in an entertaining manner—sales doubled (Luntz, 2007).
- An elderly patient, who was a successful businessperson for over 40 years, had difficulty paying attention to a health-care professional who was using Elderspeak—calling elderly adults *sweetie* or *honey*, using baby talk, and using "we" inappropriately ("Are we ready to take our medicine?"). Although the health-care professional thought she was showing compassion, Elderspeak was interpreted as a sign of disrespect by this patient—as it is by many elderly adults, who get angry and depressed when hearing it (Berman et. al., 2008).
- A new purchaser for overseas accounts received an urgent message on May 1 from a Dutch associate in Amsterdam requesting information needed "before closing time on 6/5." Feeling pleased with herself, the

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purchaser faxed the information three weeks early, on May 10. To her surprise, the Dutch office expressed anger and asked that she be taken off their account. The Dutch associate had really asked for information by May 6; Europeans usually write the day before the month (adapted from Ferraro, 1998, pp. 163, 172).

No Identical Frames of Reference Based on what we have discussed so far, do you think it is it possible for any two people to have exactly the same frame of reference? If you said no, you are correct. Even identical twins have different personalities and react differently to the same experiences.

Managers and employees certainly have different frames of reference. In a now famous study (Bormann et al., 1969), managers and employees were asked to rank a list of morale factors according to their importance to employees. The managers rated appreciation of work done, a feeling of being "in on things," and sympathetic help on personal problems as eighth, ninth, and tenth in importance to employees. The employees, however, ranked these three factors as first, second, and third.

Frame-of-reference differences definitely play a role in international business confusion as well. Consider Figure 1.4, which lists the top 10 cultural values

AMERICAN (U.S.), JAPANESE, VIETNAMESE		
American (U.S.)	Japanese	Vietnamese
1. Enjoying life	1. Being healthy	1. Having deep respect for parents and grandparents
2. Being a good person	2. Avoiding war	2. Taking care of my parents when they get old
3. Having a personally fulfilling life	3. Treating human life as precious	3. Treating human life as precious
4. Having love	4. Having close, supportive friends	4. Following my conscience and doing right
5. Having someone I can really talk to	5. Having a world free of war	5. Not dishonoring my family
6. Choosing my own goals	6. Making friends	6. Fulfilling family obligations
7. Being true to myself	7. Having someone I can really talk to	7. Being employed
8. Finding a mate with good qualities	8. Having a positive outlook on life	8. Being healthy
9. Having wisdom	9. Enjoying life	9. Being responsible
10. Being independent and self-reliant	10. Having love	10. Having a secure job

FIGURE 1.4 Differences in cultural values.

Source: Roy D'Andrade (2008). *A study of personal & cultural values: Americans, Japanese, & Vietnamese.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, p. 63. Reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.

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