Business Communication

BUILDING CRITICAL SKILLS

Kitty O. **Locker**
Stephen Kyo **Kaczmarek**

Sixth Edition

WHY 30 MODULAR CHAPTERS?

FREEDOM • FLEXIBILITY • FOCUSED CLASSROOM

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Kitty O. Locker
The Ohio State University

Stephen Kyo Kaczmarek
Columbus State Community College

McGraw-Hill
Irwin

The McGraw·Hill Companies

McGraw-Hill
Irwin

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As revision to the third edition of BCS neared completion, Dr. Kitty O. Locker passed away. She was a mentor for many years, and I will cherish all that she taught me. Kitty's contributions to teaching and to business communication are far too extensive for proper recognition here. So, it is simply on behalf of the students and colleagues whose lives she touched that I make this special dedication to my friend.

Kitty, you are missed.

Stephen Kyo Kaczmarek

To my husband, Bob Mills, with love.

—Kitty O. Locker

For my father, who always believed in me.

—Stephen Kyo Kaczmarek

About the Authors

Kitty O. Locker was an Associate Professor of English at The Ohio State University, where she taught courses in workplace discourse and research methods. She had taught as Assistant Professor at Texas A&M University and the University of Illinois at Urbana.

She received her BA from DePauw University and her MA and Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana.

She had also written *Business and Administrative Communication* (7th ed., McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2005) and *The Irwin Business Communication Handbook: Writing and Speaking in Business Classes* (1993), and co-edited *Conducting Research in Business Communication* (1988).

Her consulting clients included URS Greiner, Abbott Laboratories, the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association, AT&T, and the American Medical Association. She developed a complete writing improvement program for Joseph T. Ryerson, the nation's largest steel materials service center.

In 1994–95, she served as President of the Association for Business Communication (ABC). From 1997 to 2000, she edited ABC's *Journal of Business Communication*. She received ABC's Outstanding Researcher Award in 1992 and ABC's Meada Gibbs Outstanding Teacher Award in 1998.

Stephen Kyo Kaczmarek is a Professor of English at Columbus State Community College and a consultant to business and industry. He teaches courses in business communication, composition, creative writing, freshman experience, film and literature, globalization and culture, and public relations, and he co-advises the Phi Theta Kappa chapter at Columbus State. Steve has also taught at The Ohio State University and Ohio Dominican University. He received an MA in English and BAs in journalism and English from Ohio State.

Steve has presented papers at conferences of the Association for Business Communication (ABC), the College English Association of Ohio (CEAO), the Conference on College Composition and Communication, and the Northeast Modern Language Association. He has served on ABC's Two-Year College Committee and its Diversity Committee, as well as on the CEAO Executive Council. His freelance articles have appeared in a variety of print and web publications, and he is a book reviewer for The *Ohioana Quarterly* and *The Columbus Dispatch*.

Steve's consulting clients include Nationwide Insurance, The Ohio Historical Society, The Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums, The Ohio Museums Association, Red Capital Mortgage Group, United Energy Systems, The Thomas Moyer for Chief Justice of Ohio Campaign, and Van Meter and Associates. He also advises individual clients on job search and interviewing techniques and is a reader for the College Board's Advanced Placement Examination in English Language.

Prior to joining Columbus State, Steve managed staff development and information for the Franklin County, Ohio, Commissioners. He has received an Award of Excellence from the National Association of County Information Officers, as well as awards for his writing projects.

August 20, 2012

Dear Student:

Business Communication: Building Critical Skills helps you build the writing, speaking, and listening skills that are crucial for success in the 21st-century workplace.

As you read,

- Look for the answers to each module's questions. Check your memory with the **Instant Replays** and your understanding with the **Summary of Learning Objectives** at the end of the chapter.
- Note the terms in bold type and their definitions. Use the **rewind** and **fast forward** icons to go to discussions of terms.

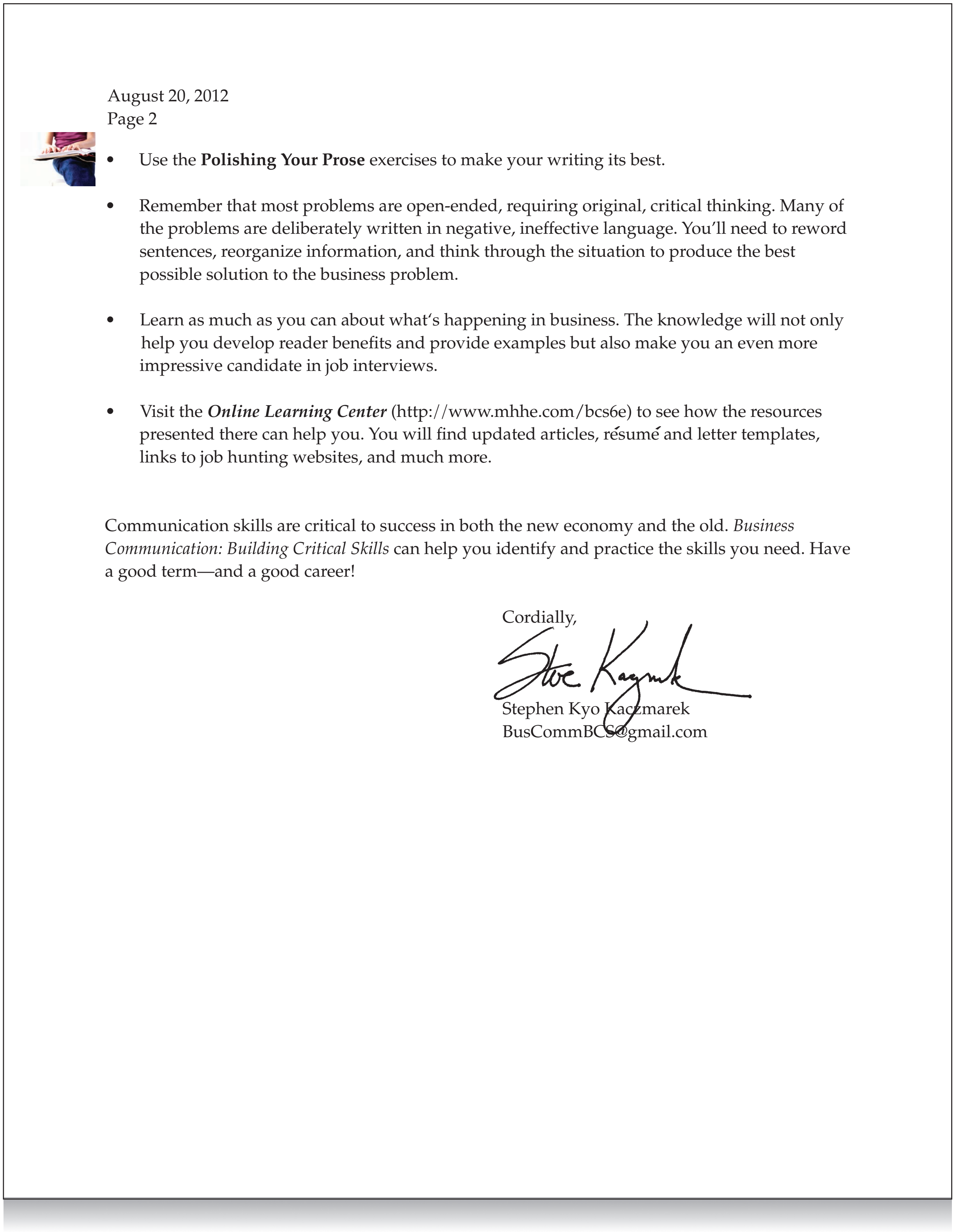
- Read the **Building a Critical Skill** boxes carefully. Practice the skills both in assignments and on your own. These skills will serve you well for the rest of your work life.
- Use items in the lists when you prepare your assignments or review for tests.

- Use the examples, especially the paired examples of effective and ineffective communication, as models to help you draft and revise. Comments in red ink signal problems in an example; comments in blue ink note things done well.

- Read the **Site to See** and **FYI** boxes in the margins to give you more resources on the Internet and interesting facts about business communication.

When you prepare an assignment,

- Review the PAIBOC questions in Module 1. Some assignments have "Hints" to help probe the problem. Some of the longer assignments have preliminary assignments analyzing the audience or developing reader benefits or subject lines. Use these to practice portions of longer documents.
- If you're writing a letter or memo, read the sample problems in Modules 10, 11, and 12 with a detailed analysis, strong and weak solutions, and a discussion of the solutions to see how to apply the principles in this book to your own writing.



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- Use the **Polishing Your Prose** exercises to make your writing its best.

- Remember that most problems are open-ended, requiring original, critical thinking. Many of the problems are deliberately written in negative, ineffective language. You'll need to reword sentences, reorganize information, and think through the situation to produce the best possible solution to the business problem.

- Learn as much as you can about what's happening in business. The knowledge will not only help you develop reader benefits and provide examples but also make you an even more impressive candidate in job interviews.

- Visit the ***Online Learning Center*** (http://www.mhhe.com/bcs6e) to see how the resources presented there can help you. You will find updated articles, résumé and letter templates, links to job hunting websites, and much more.

Communication skills are critical to success in both the new economy and the old. *Business Communication: Building Critical Skills* can help you identify and practice the skills you need. Have a good term—and a good career!

Cordially,

Stephen Kyo Kaczmarek
BusCommBCS@gmail.com

August 20, 2012

Dear Professor:

Business Communication: Building Critical Skills (*BCS*) is here to help make your job teaching business communication a little bit easier.

Its modular design makes adapting *BCS* to 5–, 8–, 10–, or 15–week courses simpler. And, with videos, new media tools, and supplements, it is easy to adapt to Internet courses. The features teachers and students find so useful are also here: anecdotes and examples, easy-to-follow lists, integrated coverage of international business communication, analyses of sample problems, and a wealth of in-class exercises and out-of-class assignments.

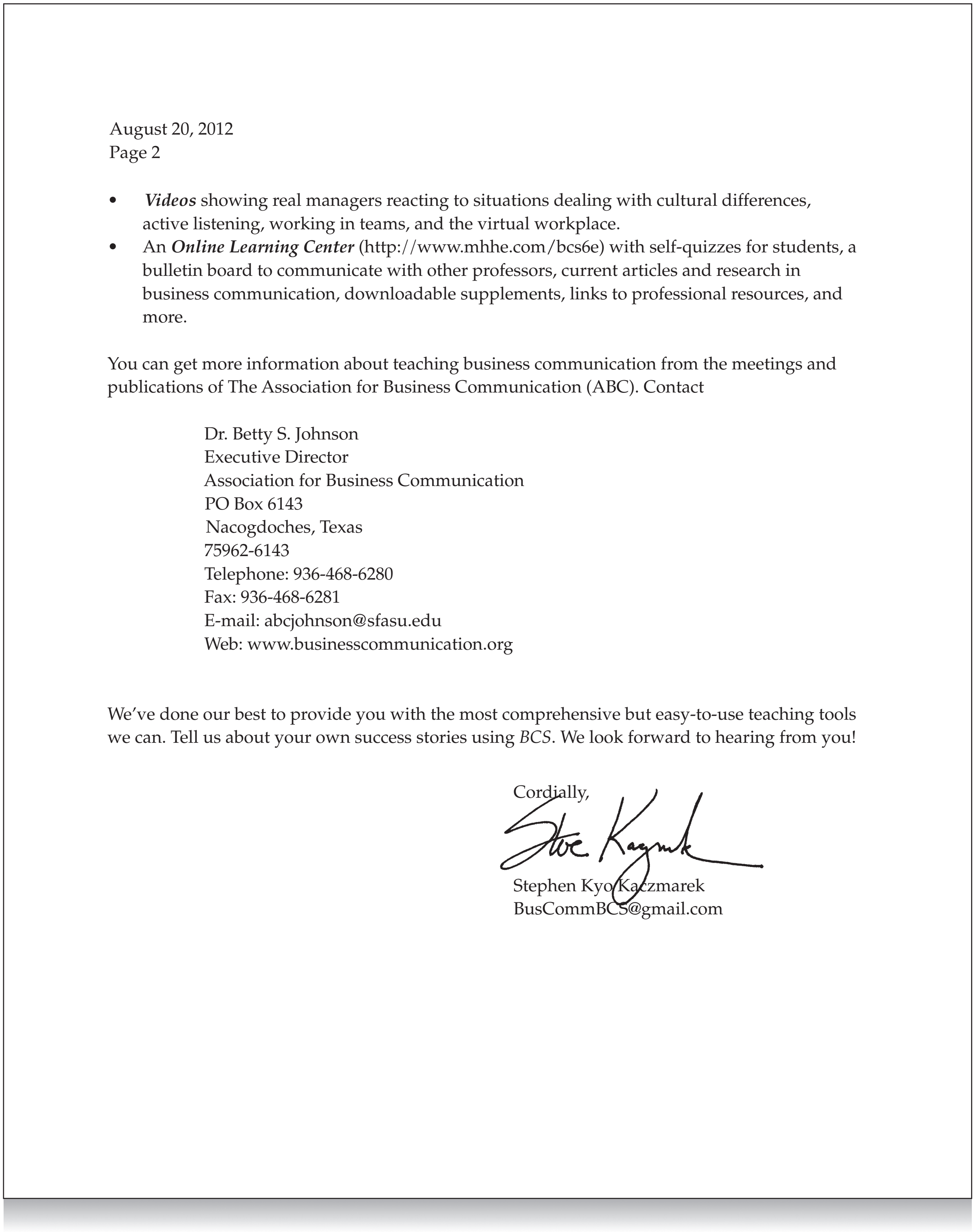
But *BCS* takes these features a step further. In each module you'll also find

- **Polishing Your Prose** boxes, featuring straightforward instructions to help students correct common writing errors, as well as exercises to test what they know.
- **Building a Critical Skill** boxes, showing students how to apply what they know in the business world.
- **Site to See** boxes that invite students to use the Internet to get timely information available in cyberspace.
- **Instant Replays** to reinforce concepts students are reading.
- **Fast Forward/Rewind** indicators to help students make connections between concepts in different modules.
- **FYI** boxes that provide some lighthearted information about business communication.

This sixth edition is thoroughly updated based on the latest research in business communication. You'll find many new problems and examples, new Polishing Your Prose exercises, and new Sites to See. Your students will benefit from timelines that identify the steps in planning, writing, and revising everything from seven-minute e-mail messages to memos taking six hours to reports taking 30 business days. Cases for Communicators at the end of each unit provide individual and group activities.

BCS also includes a comprehensive package of supplements to help you and your students.

- An ***Instructor's Resource Manual*** with sample syllabi, an overview of each module, suggested lecture topics, in-class exercises, examples, discussion and quiz questions, and solutions to problems.
- A ***Test Bank*** featuring hundreds of questions for use in quizzes, midterms, and final examinations—with answers. The *Test Bank* is in a computerized format (Mac or Windows) that allows you to create and edit your own tests.



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- ***Videos*** showing real managers reacting to situations dealing with cultural differences, active listening, working in teams, and the virtual workplace.
- An ***Online Learning Center*** (http://www.mhhe.com/bcs6e) with self-quizzes for students, a bulletin board to communicate with other professors, current articles and research in business communication, downloadable supplements, links to professional resources, and more.

You can get more information about teaching business communication from the meetings and publications of The Association for Business Communication (ABC). Contact

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We've done our best to provide you with the most comprehensive but easy-to-use teaching tools we can. Tell us about your own success stories using *BCS*. We look forward to hearing from you!

Cordially,

Stephen Kyo Kaczmarek
BusCommBCS@gmail.com

New and Improved Coverage in BCS6e!

We've listened to your feedback on what you like and what you want improved in *BCS,* keeping as much of the text intact as possible while also making sure *BCS6e* accurately reflects changes in the workplace and in the field of business communication. In particular, Module 13 has been renamed "E-Mail Messages, Web Writing, and Technology" and updated to include more discussion on using social networking tools, and Modules 27 and 28 integrate social media into job application documents. Throughout the book, you'll find hundreds of elements revised or all new, including FYIs, Sites to See, BCS boxes, Problems and Exercises, Polishing Your Prose exercises, and Cases for Communicators.

Module 1: This critical foundation module underscores the importance of excellent communication skills in the workplace. For this edition, it includes a new opener reflecting on the tough economic realities of today's workplace and how the ability to read and write well gives professionals an edge on the competition. There are also new FYIs on Carnegie Speech's language training for a global market; vital 21st-century job skills that include oral and written communication; the slow gains in reading skills among elementary and middle school students (the next wave of college students and young professionals); degrees of study and workplace success that correlate in surprising ways; a typo that may have caused stock market chaos; and the most literate cities in the United States. A new Site to See invites students to test their interpersonal skills, and the BCS box has been updated to include information on start-up companies and a new Apple photo. A new end-of-module problem and new Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 2: Revisions to the module opener reinforce the importance of audience analysis, and some elements have been moved to improve the flow of the module. New FYIs include discussions on an offensive ad by Nivea that failed to properly analyze its audience; errors by FEMA and subsequent messages that made problems worse for disaster victims; the travails of test takers and a talking pineapple; a politician's lack of awareness of how audiences might view his multimillion-dollar income; public criticism by P. J. Crowley that cost him his job; and the value of role-playing to achieve buy-in from audiences. The BCS box has been updated to note that Zappos was named by *CNN/Money* as one of the 100 Best Companies to Work For. A new end-of-module problem and all new Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 3: In an ever-shrinking world, this module's overview of the elements of diversity and culture that help shape the workplace becomes even more critical for 21st-century professionals. New FYIs in Module 3 focus on the rise of interracial marriages in the United States; the value of touch to staying healthy; self-definition by Millennials in the workplace; Nike's sexist Olympic T-shirt design; women now scoring higher than men on IQ tests; ads that present women and minorities offensively; Baby Boomers being targeted by con artists; and the lack of diversity in U.S. television and what is being done about it. A new Site to See offers reviews and links to apps that can make travel easier. New end-of-module problems and new Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 4: This module's revised opener notes that while the increased pace of the workplace has brought increased pressure to compose faster and faster, writers must still take care to compose effectively. New FYIs discuss how what constitutes revisions changes according to audience; Mortgage Resolution Partners' plan to keep more people in their homes; errant e-mails that terrified hundreds of employees into thinking they were fired; and tips from experts on overcoming procrastination. Site to See addresses have been updated, and a new Site to See invites visitors to take beginning and advanced Microsoft Word tutorials. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 5: The module opener has been revised to emphasize that the principles of good design still apply to ever-changing social media, and the BCS box has been updated to reference Google Docs. Two new FYIs discuss the importance of document design—the first being a Pew Charitable Trust study on how checking account documents are too confusing to follow, and the second on how large, multi-touch screens are part of the next wave of technological changes in how we use and format documents. Site to See addresses have been updated, and a new Site to See offers tips on using PowerPoint slides in presentations. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates to the module, and the new Case for Communicators for Unit 1 examines how poor proofreading caused financial headaches for Old Navy.

Module 6: Modules 6, 7, and 8 detail the cornerstones of good business communication: you-attitude, positive emphasis, and reader benefits. They are briefer than some of the earlier modules but are meant to be read as a collective. For Module 6, examples throughout have been updated to reflect more current dates. One new FYI features a study that found a link among prejudices, low intelligence, and social conservatism, while another notes the lack of you-attitude among employees at Goldman Sachs, who, among other things, referred to clients as "muppets." A new Site to See invites students to test their Emotional Intelligence. New end-of-module problems and new Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 7: Understanding the role of positive emphasis in business communication—and contrasting it with negative points of view—is vital to composing effective messages. Revisions to this module include FYIs on the disturbing findings that for the first time, most Americans do not believe today's young people will have better lives than their parents; the effect of optimism on both physical and financial health; the news that happier people make better workers; the role of resilience in helping people cope with stress and life's challenges; tips on making video apologies; and updates on failed apologies and on the happiest states in the United States. New end-of-module problems and new Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 8: Developing good reader benefits can challenge students, so new FYIs focus on creative and interesting ways that benefits affect people. These FYIs discuss how the intrinsic value of self-image may be more important to people than even money; how boutique grocery stores provide online shopping and home delivery benefits to customers; the correlation between more education and longer life expectancy; and the counterintuitive patterns of liars and cheaters being unfazed by potential consequences. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates to the module, and the new Case for Communicators for Unit 2 examines how poor proofreading resulted in embarrassment for *The New York Times.*

Module 9: While the formats for memos and letters remain unchanged, technology is influencing how such documents are created and sent. Thus, new FYIs reflect on cloud technology making it easier to store documents but with the added challenge of making sure formats remain intact; indecipherable handwriting on letters and packages thwarted by Post Office scanning equipment; and CEOs Mike Duke and Tom Barrack being embarrassed by the memos they sent to employees that went viral. Examples throughout this module have been updated to reflect current dates. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 10: This module has been renamed "Informative and Positive Messages" and all examples have been updated to reflect more current dates. In addition, FYIs now include the best out-of-office e-mail reply of all time; a movie trailer that uses a customer's rant to remind others of its no-talking/no-texting policy; chocolate, indeed, being able to change a person's mood for the better; customers tweeting complaints and how companies can better manage their image; the earliest appearance of the now-popular word “information”; and the effect of nearly 25% of the world workers’ depression on productivity. A new end-of-module problem and all new Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 11: New FYIs include how what most people would consider bad news actually helped shooting victim Petra Anderson; the surprising answer to who was behind a campaign to spread negative information about Google; the potential negative effect on reputation from working at home; types of “toxic” bosses in the workplace; workers wanting honesty from managers and supervisors; a gay instructor fired by Facebook for daring to give a chatty employee a look; Lego’s attempts to cater to girls; and the most educated employees also facing the most stress on the job. Sites to See addresses have been updated, and examples throughout this module reflect more current dates. A new end-of-module problem and all new Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 12: Though we’re surrounded by persuasive messages every day, understanding them and then creating our own effective ones require careful effort. For better flow in the discussion, some elements of this module have been moved, and new FYIs discuss online bullying persuading people to help the victims; former Xerox CEO Anne Mulcahy almost being persuaded by sexist salespeople to go somewhere else; “birthers” refusing to be persuaded by President Obama’s birth certificate; branding’s effect on persuading consumers; the “like me bias” in performance appraisals; and tips for writing effective sales letters. Revisions to existing FYIs involve product placement in James Bond movies, and Blockbuster Video CEO Jim Keyes’ public criticism of Netflix failing to persuade consumers. A new end-of-module problem and all new Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 13: Of all the modules in *BCS6e*, this one has been revised the most extensively, reflecting the rapid changes that come with our highly technological age. For starters, it has been renamed “E-Mail Messages, Web Writing, and Technology,” and the body copy has been tweaked to better integrate technology into the discussion while examples have been updated to reflect more current dates. In particular, the discussion on using social networking tools has been expanded, and a new photo coordinates with changes to Facebook’s current design. Some elements have been moved to improve the flow of the discussion. New FYIs discuss the ever-increasing use of smartphones for e-mail and web use; a cyber-stalking investment manager’s 1,600-word plea for another date; a study of more than 977 e-mail messages revealing that shorter subject lines attract more clicks; Pew Research Center’s findings that most Americans prefer vocal communication to texting, while a Nielsen survey shows that 13- to 17-year-olds send and receive 10 times as many texts as people ages 45 to 54; signs that the popularity of blogging among young people is waning; tips to use social networking in business; offensive tweets that got their authors in trouble; Latino and Hispanic Americans leading the way in embracing web technology; and a host of tips for better cell phone etiquette. An existing FYI includes more information on e-mail etiquette, and a new Site to See offers 20 tips on using Facebook in business. A new end-of-module problem and new Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates to the module, and the new Case for Communicators for Unit 3 examines the problems United Airlines faced when a computer glitch booked flights to Asia at an incorrect price.

Module 14: This module focuses on the nuts and bolts of using grammar and punctuation effectively. New FYIs reveal how 45% of employers surveyed say they are increasing training to improve grammar and other skills of employees; how CEO Kyle Wiens requires all job applicants to his companies to take a grammar test; and commentator Andy Rooney’s aversion to apostrophes. There is also an addition to an existing module regarding a cable TV charge of $16.4 million, and Site to See addresses have been updated. New end-of-module problems and new Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 15: Because choosing the right word is as much an art as it is a skill, new FYIs present examples of real-world applications—as well as misapplications: how U.S. presidents have managed to misspeak in public; what food label language might actually mean; idiomatic phrases that baffle non-native speakers of English; and the limitations of spell-checkers with common errors. The BCS box has been revised to challenge readers to think about the implications of a study that shows "mean" men do better in the workplace than nicer ones. New end-of-module problems and new Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 16: New FYIs in this module include the arrogant style of a college student seeking a summer job; missed opportunities for message revision that resulted in athletes being insulted or being dismissed from the field of play; buzzwords on LinkedIn that are overused; and venerable critic Roger Ebert's Facebook page being censored for posts during a heated exchange. An existing FYI has been updated to include the 2012 winners of a wacky warning label contest, and the BCS box caption has been updated to note Johnnetta B. Cole's current position as chair of the institute that bears her name. New end-of-module and new Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates to the module, and the new Case for Communicators for Unit 4 examines how a misspelling on a key road sign proved an embarrassment for the state of Ohio.

Module 17: This module features new FYIs on how listeners today need a shift in stimulation about every 20 minutes; how students learning foreign languages did better after training in listening skills; and how archetypes for bad listeners, including Preamblers, such as the hosts of CNN's *Crossfire* were called out by guest Jon Stewart for using the show as a platform to give speeches on their points of view. Site to See addresses and the caption for the photo of Elizabeth Gonzalez-Gann have also been updated.

Module 18: New FYIs to help students better understand how to be effective on work teams discuss the hidden costs of being on a team; how introverts may suffer from the effects of groupthink; how social networking media is making us lonelier; how to use hip hop as a team-building exercise; ways to keep "digital nomads" connected with the workplace; and how a diverse team of students presented a business plan at Florida Atlantic University. The existing FYI on bad bosses has been revised to include the results of two recent polls. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 19: A new module opener underscores how meetings are viewed by many employees, as well as the importance of choosing whether to hold a meeting in the first place. New FYIs focus on how many hours CEOs spend in meetings; using chocolate and other creative ways to keep meetings on track; tips to be an effective meeting participant; caveats for teleconferencing; companies, such as Nutrisystem, Symantec, and Herman Miller, that are holding annual meetings online; and Twist, an app from investor Bill Lee that helps track where meeting-goers are. One FYI has been revised to include information on using tablet PCs and other tools to make meetings more interactive, and Site to See addresses have been updated. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 20: New FYIs include Kathy Caprino's tips to avoid mistakes in speeches; gaffes by a university president; Microsoft's Kirill Tatarinov's quick recovery from a technical glitch during a presentation; a poetry recitation that went horribly wrong; Steve Carell's effective use of humor during a graduation speech; a criminal's conviction being upheld because of his silence; and the importance of rehearsing before a speech. A new Site to See showcases PowerPoint examples and other resources. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates to the module, and the new Case for Communicators for Unit 5 looks at the role of charisma in leadership and whether people can be trained to be more charismatic.

Module 21: This module on proposals and progress reports features new FYIs on how feasibility studies on sports arenas show they are money losers for taxpayers; the London Business School's John W. Mullins' advice on writing a good business plan; how people are using Twitter to submit business plans; how some successful businesses nevertheless had their business plans lose in-class competitions; the effect of discourse communities on sales proposals; and the results of Apple's annual Supplier and Responsibility Report. Site to See addresses have been updated, and new Sites to See include sample recommendation reports from the Centers for Disease Control, tips for writing proposals from the Small Business Association, the New York City school system's progress reports, and progress reports from the World Health Organization on the fight against HIV/AIDS. Examples throughout the module have been updated to reflect more current dates. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 22: Because research is so critical today, a new module opener stresses the importance of research to business and industry, as well as the need to make sure information resources are trustworthy. Minor tweaks have been made to the body copy. New FYIs include a discussion on Splunk, the first "Big Data" company to go public; how a Florida man convicted of murder got a new trial because a stenographer erased records inadvertently; unusual findings from research, such as how the more debt college students have, the higher their self-esteem; the high number of fake accounts on Facebook; estimates of how much data is consumed annually online; racist tweets that got two Olympians expelled from the London games; and the amount of money spent by corporations for employee training despite a lack of research on its effectiveness. New Sites to See include Survey Monkey and the Purdue OWL website. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 23: Some elements of this module have been reorganized to improve flow. New FYIs include reports from companies questioning the effectiveness of Facebook ads; how younger people are choosing to rent a wide variety of items rather than own them; a Georgetown University report that despite some college majors being more employable than others, research still shows a college degree is worth it; employers scouring credit reports on job applicants; "pink slime" and its effects on consumer perceptions; and how disorganization—not just in documents but in general—costs companies. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 24: The sample student report in this module has been revised to reflect more current dates. One new FYI discusses an innovative annual report from Austria Solar that uses light to make text on its otherwise blank pages visible. Another new FYI gives examples of how report data helps organizations to strategize. Orbitz, for instance, found that Apple users spend as much as 30% more per night on hotels than PC users. Site to See addresses have been updated, and new Sites to See include Graphis's Top 100 Annual Reports winners and a copy of NASA's Education Recommendation Report. A new Polishing Your Prose exercise rounds out the updates.

Module 25: A new module opener emphasizes the importance of charts, graphs, clip art, and other images in this increasingly visual age. New FYIs include technology that allows people to write using eye movements; tips for effective visual note taking; websites like Pinterest and Flickr that are changing the way we share information; how Ambassador Gary Locke became a hit in China for carrying his own bags and getting his own coffee; hidden messages in corporate logos; and the challenges from corporate branding on the 2012 Olympics. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates to the module, and the new Case for Communicators for Unit 6 looks at how waterless car washes are transforming that industry in the Middle East, as well as implications for such businesses in the United States.

Module 26: The module opener has been revised to discuss the challenges of finding a job in a bad economy as well as how getting started early and using social networking tools like LinkedIn and Facebook can help. Some elements have been reorganized to improve flow. New FYIs include revelations on how despite younger people embracing information technology, relatively few of them choose it as a career field; location being a major factor in job applicant trends; how unemployment is affecting college graduates and how many jobs that don't require degrees are going unfilled; the top master's degrees for income potential and which career requiring a graduate degree women find most satisfying; apps for people looking for a job; states making it illegal to bar the unemployed from applying for jobs; how employees in the middle of the income pack are vulnerable to downsizing; and how unemployment is affecting different generations. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 27: Revisions to the module opener note how technology may be changing how résumés look and are submitted, underscoring the need to adapt to the employer's expectations. Minor tweaks have been made to improve body copy. Examples throughout the module have been updated to reflect more current dates, and several examples now include social networking page addresses. New FYIs discuss a college student who sent a photo of Nicolas Cage instead of her résumé to a prospective employer; résumé gaffes like listing "phishing" as a hobby; how companies use tracking systems to check on applicants' social networking pages; the proliferation of lies on résumés; and how recruiters and others use Facebook and Google to screen applicants.

Module 28: The module opener reminds job applicants to use the process employers want, such as a brief e-mail message in lieu of a formal letter in some cases. Examples throughout the module have been updated to reflect more current dates. New FYIs include discussions on a 3,000-word rejection letter sent to job applicants that went viral, and debates among experts as to whether the job application letter is going away. New Sites to See provide job application letter examples from Virginia Polytechnic Institute, State University, and Monster. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 29: New FYIs in this module cover employers wanting Facebook passwords from applicants; UBS AG's stringent dress codes; leaving emotional baggage behind in job interviews; a survey that revealed 70% of hiring managers have experienced odd behavior from interviewees; unusual stress interview situations; how students coming from homes that appreciate in value are more likely to go to more expensive colleges; LinkedIn's compilation of worst questions asked of female job applicants; advice from Jason Fried for hiring managers to screen out applicants who ask "how" instead of "why" questions; and tips for making the most of virtual job interviews. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates.

Module 30: Revisions to this module's opener remind students to think in terms of careers rather than simply jobs, and to be self-reliant but not mercenary. New FYIs include Jenny Foss's advice on staying in touch with job interviewers through such resources as LinkedIn; planning carefully for career and early retirement; and how today's employees are more likely to have many short-term jobs in their careers than previous generations did. Examples throughout the module have been updated to reflect more current dates. New Polishing Your Prose exercises round out the updates to the module, and the new Case for Communicators for Unit 7 looks at how traditional Arts and Sciences programs at universities are starting to incorporate entrepreneurial and other job-related coursework into their curriculums.

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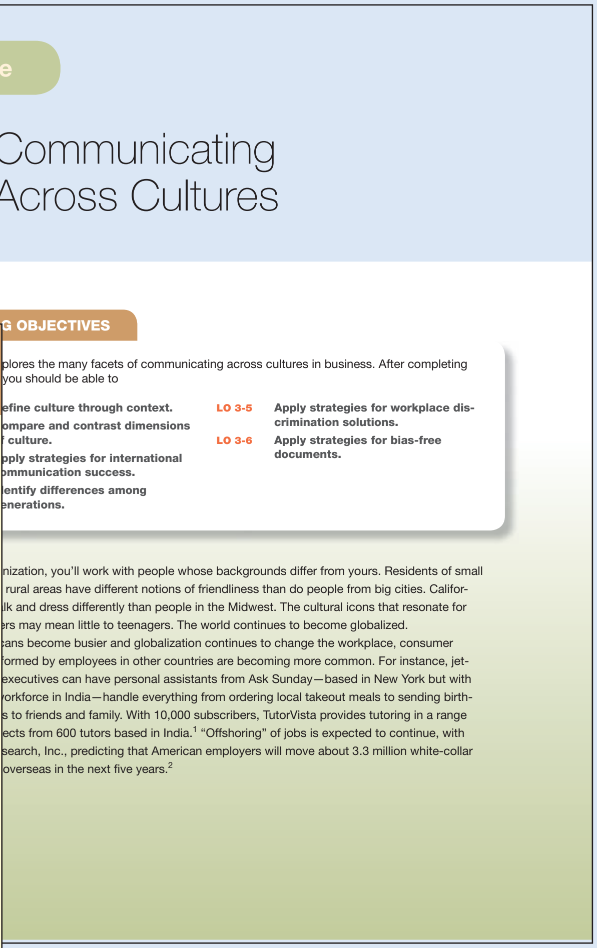
Guided Tour

The 6th edition of *Business Communication: Building Critical Skills* reinforces the essential skills of good communication. The contents consist not of chapters but of 30 skill-centered modules that can be taught in any order.

Please take a moment to page through the highlights of this 6th edition to see the helpful tools that reinforce this flexible approach to business communication education.

Module Openers

Modules open with short objectives that concisely convey the important concepts of the module. The module learning objectives map the topics and motivate students to learn the material. The module addresses each learning objective with a thorough coverage of each topic and teaches real-world skills important in business.



Module

3 Communicating Across Cultures

G OBJECTIVES

plores the many facets of communicating across cultures in business. After completing you should be able to

efine culture through context.

ompare and contrast dimensions f culture.

pply strategies for international ommunication success.

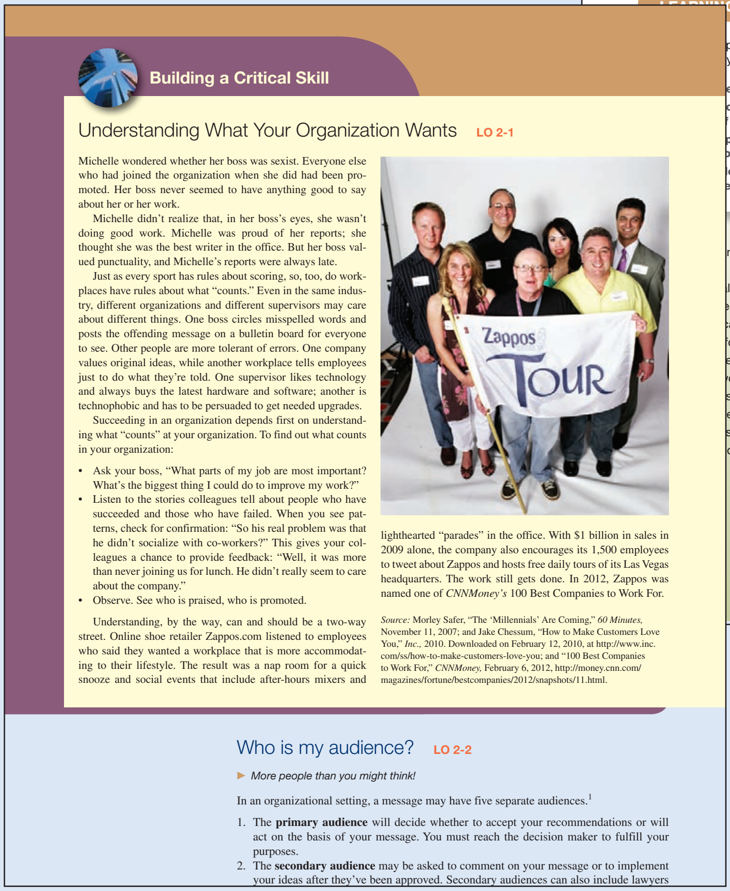
lentify differences among enerations.

LO 3-5 Apply strategies for workplace discrimination solutions.

LO 3-6 Apply strategies for bias-free documents.

nization, you'll work with people whose backgrounds differ from yours. Residents of small rural areas have different notions of friendliness than do people from big cities. Califorlk and dress differently than people in the Midwest. The cultural icons that resonate for ers may mean little to teenagers. The world continues to become globalized.

cans become busier and globalization continues to change the workplace, consumer formed by employees in other countries are becoming more common. For instance, jetexecutives can have personal assistants from Ask Sunday—based in New York but with orkforce in India—handle everything from ordering local takeout meals to sending births to friends and family. With 10,000 subscribers, TutorVista provides tutoring in a range ects from 600 tutors based in India.[1] "Offshoring" of jobs is expected to continue, with search, Inc., predicting that American employers will move about 3.3 million white-collar overseas in the next five years.[2]



Building a Critical Skill

Understanding What Your Organization Wants LO 2-1

Michelle wondered whether her boss was sexist. Everyone else who had joined the organization when she did had been promoted. Her boss never seemed to have anything good to say about her or her work.

Michelle didn't realize that, in her boss's eyes, she wasn't doing good work. Michelle was proud of her reports; she thought she was the best writer in the office. But her boss valued punctuality, and Michelle's reports were always late.

Just as every sport has rules about scoring, so, too, do workplaces have rules about what "counts." Even in the same industry, different organizations and different supervisors may care about different things. One boss circles misspelled words and posts the offending message on a bulletin board for everyone to see. Other people are more tolerant of errors. One company values original ideas, while another workplace tells employees just to do what they're told. One supervisor likes technology and always buys the latest hardware and software; another is technophobic and has to be persuaded to get needed upgrades.

Succeeding in an organization depends first on understanding what "counts" at your organization. To find out what counts in your organization:

- Ask your boss, "What parts of my job are most important? What's the biggest thing I could do to improve my work?"
- Listen to the stories colleagues tell about people who have succeeded and those who have failed. When you see patterns, check for confirmation: "So his real problem was that he didn't socialize with co-workers?" This gives your colleagues a chance to provide feedback: "Well, it was more than never joining us for lunch. He didn't really seem to care about the company."
- Observe. See who is praised, who is promoted.

Understanding, by the way, can and should be a two-way street. Online shoe retailer Zappos.com listened to employees who said they wanted a workplace that is more accommodating to their lifestyle. The result was a nap room for a quick snooze and social events that include after-hours mixers and lighthearted "parades" in the office. With $1 billion in sales in 2009 alone, the company also encourages its 1,500 employees to tweet about Zappos and hosts free daily tours of its Las Vegas headquarters. The work still gets done. In 2012, Zappos was named one of *CNNMoney's* 100 Best Companies to Work For.

Source: Morley Safer, "The 'Millennials' Are Coming," *60 Minutes,* November 11, 2007; and Jake Chessum, "How to Make Customers Love You," *Inc.,* 2010. Downloaded on February 12, 2010, at http://www.inc.com/ss/how-to-make-customers-love-you; and "100 Best Companies to Work For," *CNNMoney,* February 6, 2012, http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/bestcompanies/2012/snapshots/11.html.

Who is my audience? LO 2-2

▶ *More people than you might think!*

In an organizational setting, a message may have five separate audiences.[1]

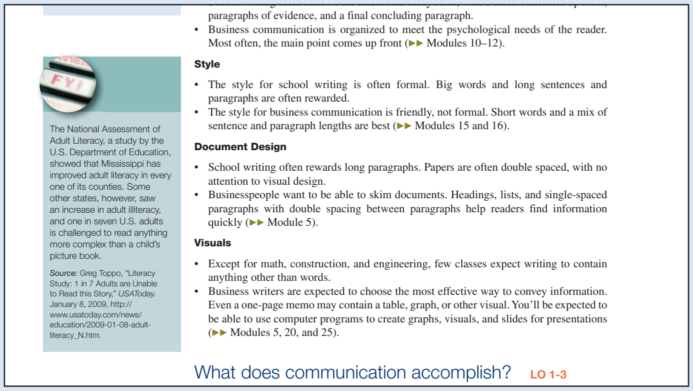
1. The **primary audience** will decide whether to accept your recommendations or will act on the basis of your message. You must reach the decision maker to fulfill your purposes.
2. The **secondary audience** may be asked to comment on your message or to implement your ideas after they've been approved. Secondary audiences can also include lawyers

Building a Critical Skill

Building a Critical Skill boxes explain 30 skills necessary for job success. Topics include Dealing with Discrimination, Leading by Listening, and Negotiating Salary and Benefits.

FYI

FYI sidebars in each module include fun factoids such as which messages busy executives notice, errors that spell-checkers won't catch, and even how students are being paid to study on company time.



paragraphs of evidence, and a final concluding paragraph.

- Business communication is organized to meet the psychological needs of the reader. Most often, the main point comes up front (▶▶ Modules 10–12).

Style

- The style for school writing is often formal. Big words and long sentences and paragraphs are often rewarded.
- The style for business communication is friendly, not formal. Short words and a mix of sentence and paragraph lengths are best (▶▶ Modules 15 and 16).

Document Design

- School writing often rewards long paragraphs. Papers are often double spaced, with no attention to visual design.
- Businesspeople want to be able to skim documents. Headings, lists, and single-spaced paragraphs with double spacing between paragraphs help readers find information quickly (▶▶ Module 5).

Visuals

- Except for math, construction, and engineering, few classes expect writing to contain anything other than words.
- Business writers are expected to choose the most effective way to convey information. Even a one-page memo may contain a table, graph, or other visual. You'll be expected to be able to use computer programs to create graphs, visuals, and slides for presentations (▶▶ Modules 5, 20, and 25).

FYI

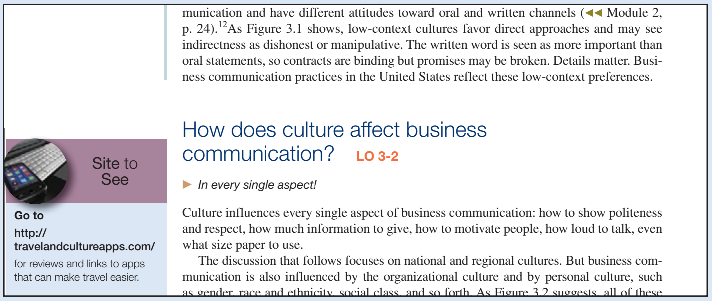
The National Assessment of Adult Literacy, a study by the U.S. Department of Education, showed that Mississippi has improved adult literacy in every one of its counties. Some other states, however, saw an increase in adult illiteracy, and one in seven U.S. adults is challenged to read anything more complex than a child's picture book.

Source: Greg Toppo, "Literacy Study: 1 in 7 Adults are Unable to Read this Story," *USAToday.* January 8, 2009, http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-01-08-adult-literacy_N.htm.

What does communication accomplish? LO 1-3

Site to See

Site to See boxes show websites that provide more information about topics in the modules. You'll find The Home for Abused Apostrophes, Word Games on the Web, How to Use Parliamentary Procedure, and Before and After Versions of PowerPoint Slides.



munication and have different attitudes toward oral and written channels (◀◀ Module 2, p. 24).[12] As Figure 3.1 shows, low-context cultures favor direct approaches and may see indirectness as dishonest or manipulative. The written word is seen as more important than oral statements, so contracts are binding but promises may be broken. Details matter. Business communication practices in the United States reflect these low-context preferences.

How does culture affect business communication? LO 3-2

▶ *In every single aspect!*

Culture influences every single aspect of business communication: how to show politeness and respect, how much information to give, how to motivate people, how loud to talk, even what size paper to use.

The discussion that follows focuses on national and regional cultures. But business communication is also influenced by the organizational culture and by personal culture, such as gender, race and ethnicity, social class, and so forth. As Figure 3.2 suggests, all of these

Site to See

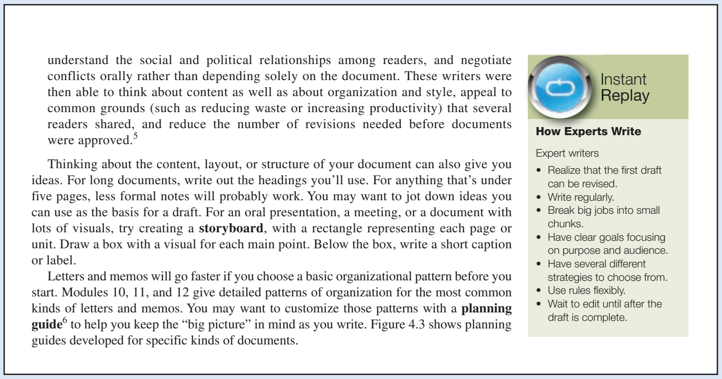
Go to

http://travelandcultureapps.com/

for reviews and links to apps that can make travel easier.

Instant Replay

Instant Replay sidebars in the margins of each module reinforce key concepts presented earlier in the module. Topics include Strategies for Active Listening, Guidelines for Page Design, Organizing Bad News to Superiors, Responding to Criticism, and How to Create a Summary of Qualifications for a Résumé.



> understand the social and political relationships among readers, and negotiate conflicts orally rather than depending solely on the document. These writers were then able to think about content as well as about organization and style, appeal to common grounds (such as reducing waste or increasing productivity) that several readers shared, and reduce the number of revisions needed before documents were approved.[5]

Thinking about the content, layout, or structure of your document can also give you ideas. For long documents, write out the headings you'll use. For anything that's under five pages, less formal notes will probably work. You may want to jot down ideas you can use as the basis for a draft. For an oral presentation, a meeting, or a document with lots of visuals, try creating a **storyboard**, with a rectangle representing each page or unit. Draw a box with a visual for each main point. Below the box, write a short caption or label.

Letters and memos will go faster if you choose a basic organizational pattern before you start. Modules 10, 11, and 12 give detailed patterns of organization for the most common kinds of letters and memos. You may want to customize those patterns with a **planning guide**[6] to help you keep the "big picture" in mind as you write. Figure 4.3 shows planning guides developed for specific kinds of documents.

Instant Replay

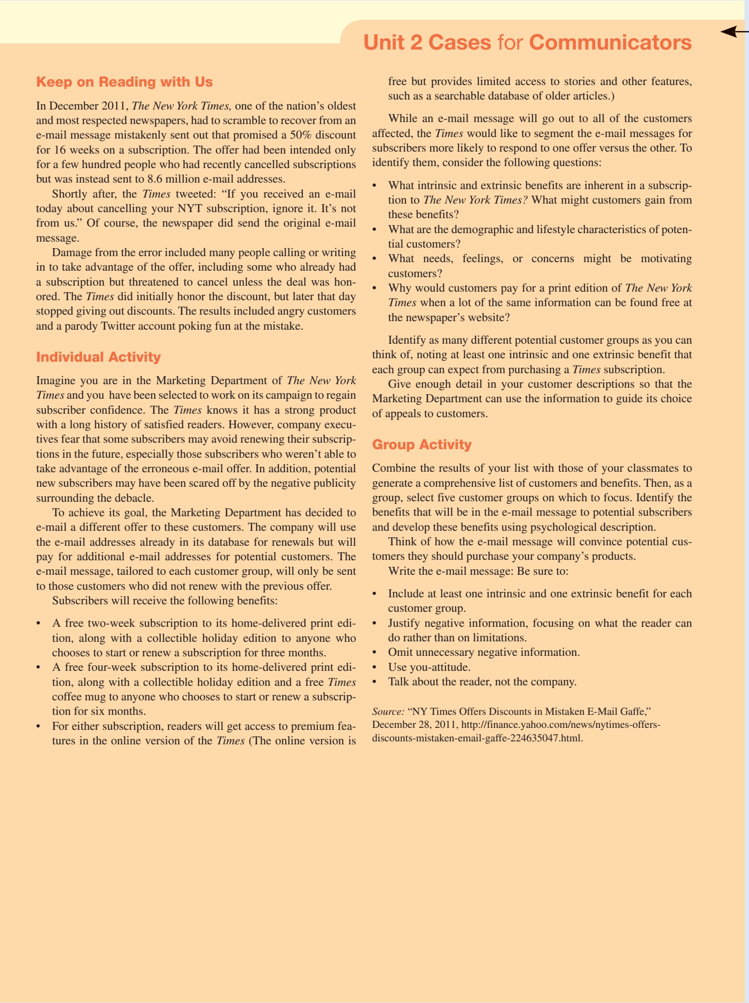
How Experts Write

Expert writers

- Realize that the first draft can be revised.
- Write regularly.
- Break big jobs into small chunks.
- Have clear goals focusing on purpose and audience.
- Have several different strategies to choose from.
- Use rules flexibly.
- Wait to edit until after the draft is complete.

Cases for Communicators

Unit-ending cases provide both individual and team activities to solve communication challenges faced by real-world companies and organizations. Topics include the costs of bad grammar, an alternative to banner ads on the web, and the role of improv in corporate training programs.



Unit 2 Cases for Communicators

Keep on Reading with Us

In December 2011, *The New York Times,* one of the nation's oldest and most respected newspapers, had to scramble to recover from an e-mail message mistakenly sent out that promised a 50% discount for 16 weeks on a subscription. The offer had been intended only for a few hundred people who had recently cancelled subscriptions but was instead sent to 8.6 million e-mail addresses.

Shortly after, the *Times* tweeted: "If you received an e-mail today about cancelling your NYT subscription, ignore it. It's not from us." Of course, the newspaper did send the original e-mail message.

Damage from the error included many people calling or writing in to take advantage of the offer, including some who already had a subscription but threatened to cancel unless the deal was honored. The *Times* did initially honor the discount, but later that day stopped giving out discounts. The results included angry customers and a parody Twitter account poking fun at the mistake.

Individual Activity

Imagine you are in the Marketing Department of *The New York Times* and you have been selected to work on its campaign to regain subscriber confidence. The *Times* knows it has a strong product with a long history of satisfied readers. However, company executives fear that some subscribers may avoid renewing their subscriptions in the future, especially those subscribers who weren't able to take advantage of the erroneous e-mail offer. In addition, potential new subscribers may have been scared off by the negative publicity surrounding the debacle.

To achieve its goal, the Marketing Department has decided to e-mail a different offer to these customers. The company will use the e-mail addresses already in its database for renewals but will pay for additional e-mail addresses for potential customers. The e-mail message, tailored to each customer group, will only be sent to those customers who did not renew with the previous offer.

Subscribers will receive the following benefits:

- A free two-week subscription to its home-delivered print edition, along with a collectible holiday edition to anyone who chooses to start or renew a subscription for three months.
- A free four-week subscription to its home-delivered print edition, along with a collectible holiday edition and a free *Times* coffee mug to anyone who chooses to start or renew a subscription for six months.
- For either subscription, readers will get access to premium features in the online version of the *Times* (The online version is free but provides limited access to stories and other features, such as a searchable database of older articles.)

While an e-mail message will go out to all of the customers affected, the *Times* would like to segment the e-mail messages for subscribers more likely to respond to one offer versus the other. To identify them, consider the following questions:

- What intrinsic and extrinsic benefits are inherent in a subscription to *The New York Times?* What might customers gain from these benefits?
- What are the demographic and lifestyle characteristics of potential customers?
- What needs, feelings, or concerns might be motivating customers?
- Why would customers pay for a print edition of *The New York Times* when a lot of the same information can be found free at the newspaper's website?

Identify as many different potential customer groups as you can think of, noting at least one intrinsic and one extrinsic benefit that each group can expect from purchasing a *Times* subscription.

Give enough detail in your customer descriptions so that the Marketing Department can use the information to guide its choice of appeals to customers.

Group Activity

Combine the results of your list with those of your classmates to generate a comprehensive list of customers and benefits. Then, as a group, select five customer groups on which to focus. Identify the benefits that will be in the e-mail message to potential subscribers and develop these benefits using psychological description.

Think of how the e-mail message will convince potential customers they should purchase your company's products.

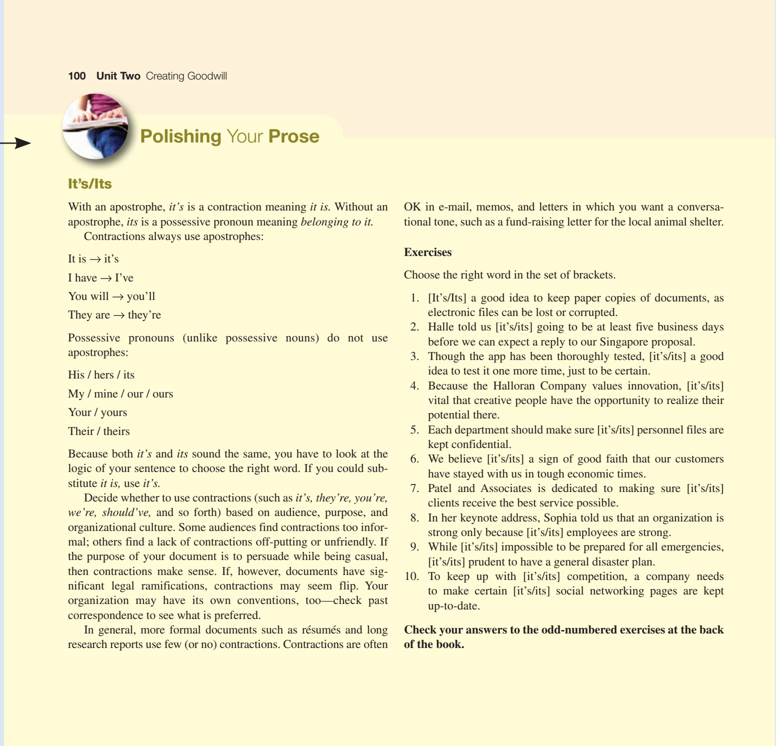
Write the e-mail message: Be sure to:

- Include at least one intrinsic and one extrinsic benefit for each customer group.
- Justify negative information, focusing on what the reader can do rather than on limitations.
- Omit unnecessary negative information.
- Use you-attitude.
- Talk about the reader, not the company.

Source: "NY Times Offers Discounts in Mistaken E-Mail Gaffe," December 28, 2011, http://finance.yahoo.com/news/nytimes-offers-discounts-mistaken-email-gaffe-224635047.html.

Polishing Your Prose

Polishing Your Prose exercises conclude each module. They may be assigned in any order throughout the term. Students can do the odd-numbered exercises for practice and check the answers at the end of the book. Answers to even-numbered exercises, which can be assigned for homework or used for quizzes, are included in the *Instructor's Resource Manual.*



100 Unit Two Creating Goodwill

Polishing Your Prose

It's/Its

With an apostrophe, *it's* is a contraction meaning *it is.* Without an apostrophe, *its* is a possessive pronoun meaning *belonging to it.*

Contractions always use apostrophes:

It is → it's

I have → I've

You will → you'll

They are → they're

Possessive pronouns (unlike possessive nouns) do not use apostrophes:

His / hers / its

My / mine / our / ours

Your / yours

Their / theirs

Because both *it's* and *its* sound the same, you have to look at the logic of your sentence to choose the right word. If you could substitute *it is,* use *it's.*

Decide whether to use contractions (such as *it's, they're, you're, we're, should've,* and so forth) based on audience, purpose, and organizational culture. Some audiences find contractions too informal; others find a lack of contractions off-putting or unfriendly. If the purpose of your document is to persuade while being casual, then contractions make sense. If, however, documents have significant legal ramifications, contractions may seem flip. Your organization may have its own conventions, too—check past correspondence to see what is preferred.

In general, more formal documents such as résumés and long research reports use few (or no) contractions. Contractions are often OK in e-mail, memos, and letters in which you want a conversational tone, such as a fund-raising letter for the local animal shelter.

Exercises

Choose the right word in the set of brackets.

1. [It's/Its] a good idea to keep paper copies of documents, as electronic files can be lost or corrupted.
2. Halle told us [it's/its] going to be at least five business days before we can expect a reply to our Singapore proposal.
3. Though the app has been thoroughly tested, [it's/its] a good idea to test it one more time, just to be certain.
4. Because the Halloran Company values innovation, [it's/its] vital that creative people have the opportunity to realize their potential there.
5. Each department should make sure [it's/its] personnel files are kept confidential.
6. We believe [it's/its] a sign of good faith that our customers have stayed with us in tough economic times.
7. Patel and Associates is dedicated to making sure [it's/its] clients receive the best service possible.
8. In her keynote address, Sophia told us that an organization is strong only because [it's/its] employees are strong.
9. While [it's/its] impossible to be prepared for all emergencies, [it's/its] prudent to have a general disaster plan.
10. To keep up with [it's/its] competition, a company needs to make certain [it's/its] social networking pages are kept up-to-date.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises at the back of the book.

Support Materials

Business Communication: Building Critical Skills, 6e, includes a variety of resources to help instructors prepare and present the material in this textbook more effectively.

Instructor's Manual

This is one of the few textbooks for which the authors write the *Instructor's Manual.* This ensures that the instructor materials represent the textbook's content and support instructor needs. Each chapter includes the learning objectives, module overview, key lecture points, teaching tips, in-class exercises, thumbnail images of corresponding PowerPoint slides, and answers to textbook assignments.

Test Bank and EZ Test

Prepared by the author, the test bank includes more than 1,800 true/false, multiple-choice, short-answer, and fill-in-the blank questions. Each question identifies the answer, difficulty level, and Bloom's Taxonomy level coding. Each test question is also tagged to the learning objective it covers in the chapters and the AACSB Learning Standard it falls under.

EZ Test Online

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PowerPoint Presentation Slides

Each PowerPoint file has more than two dozen slides relating to the chapter, including two or more graphics from the textbook and notes offering tips for using the slides. The PowerPoint slides have been prepared by the authors, allowing seamless integration between the slides and the *Instructor's Manual.*

Assurance of Learning Ready

Many educational institutions today are focused on the notion of *assurance of learning,* an important element of some accreditation standards. *Business Communication: Building Critical Skills* is designed specifically to support your assurance of learning initiatives with a simple, yet powerful solution.

Each test bank question for *Business Communication: Building Critical Skills* maps to a specific chapter learning outcome/objective listed in the text. You can use our test bank software, EZ Test, and EZ Test Online, or in *Connect Business Communication* you can easily query for learning outcomes/objectives that directly relate to the learning objectives for your course. You can then use the reporting features of EZ Test to aggregate student results in a similar fashion, making the collection and presentation of assurance of learning data simple and easy.

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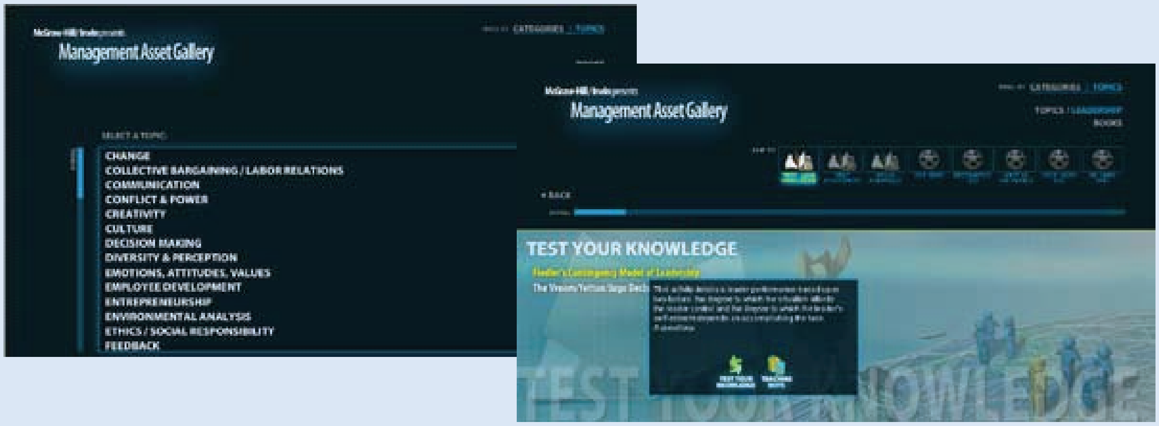
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Building Blocks for Effective Messages

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Module

1 Business Communication, Management, and Success

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Module 1 explores with you the importance of communication in the business world. After completing the module, you should be able to

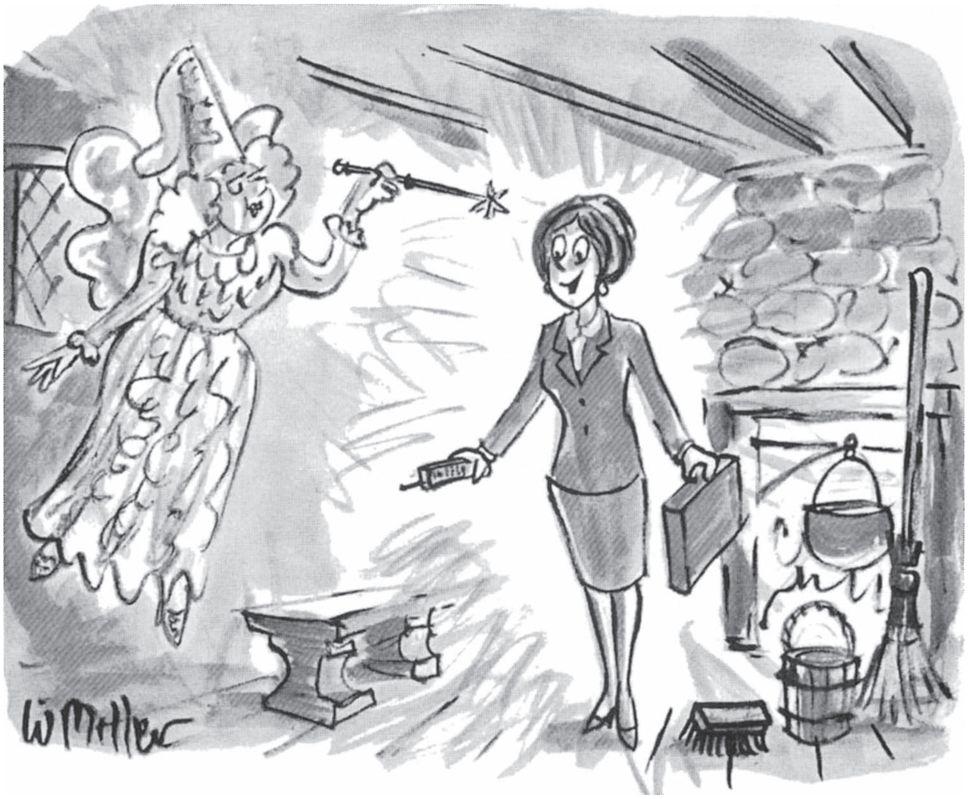
LO 1-1	**Recognize myths about on-the-job writing.**
LO 1-2	**Distinguish business communication from other school writing.**
LO 1-3	**Explain accomplishments through communication.**
LO 1-4	**Understand costs for business communication.**
LO 1-5	**Define criteria for effective messages.**
LO 1-6	**Apply strategies for communication analysis.**
LO 1-7	**Apply strategies for creative thinking.**

If a word could sum up life in the early 21st century, it would be "change."

Changes to politics, diversity, education, technology, fuel costs, and business practices have altered the pace and quality of our lives. While change is ever constant, the scope of change over the past decade has been startling. Consider how with a cell phone and Internet connection, one person now can run a business globally or how workers can be employed from overseas or from the local labor pool. More students are going to college than ever before, millions of American workers are becoming eligible to retire, and millions of new workers are entering the job market—some with very different expectations than those of previous generations.

Americans, and indeed much of the world's population, also felt the stunning economic turbulence that erupted in the first decade of the 21st century. Foreclosures soared, unemployment rose past 10%, and foreign-born workers with H-1B visas found themselves heading back to their home countries for greener pastures.[1]

Unless you have a fairy godmother, you'll need to know how to communicate.



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As this book goes to press, the U.S. economy continues to improve, but for millions of Americans struggling to make ends meet, the improvements have yet to affect their day-to-day lives. At least one thing is clear, though: workers with high-level skills and education continue to have the best chance of weathering the economic turbulence.

For instance, at the same time there were more than 600,000 job openings in education and health services, there were only 67,000 openings in construction. A lack of talent caused many jobs in the former—which typically require a higher level of education—to go unfilled.[2]

Of course, no one is immune to the problems. There are plenty of skilled employees who are unemployed or underemployed. Data suggest that college graduates under the age of 25 and with bachelor's degrees are facing one of the bleakest job markets in years.[3] But you increase your chances of success with the more you know and the more you can do. In particular, "soft skills," such as communication skills, become even more important as prospective employers scrutinize job applications.

Many Americans are challenged, however, by their level of English-language literacy. The last large-scale study of U.S. literacy by the National Endowment for the Arts, for instance, found that more American adults are not even reading one book a year, and the number of adults with bachelor's degrees deemed proficient in reading prose dropped from 40% to 31% in a decade.[4] A literacy study funded by the Pew Charitable Trust found that more than half of graduating students at four-year colleges and 75% at two-year colleges lack the literacy to handle complex, real-life tasks, such as analyzing news stories and understanding credit card offers.[5]

Work requires communication. People 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. For many business, nonprofit, community, and government organizations, the "product" is information or a service rather than something tangible. Information and services are created and delivered by communication. In every organization, communication is the way people get their points across, get work done, and get recognized for their contributions.

Carnegie Speech is among companies providing English language training in an age of globalization, in this case to pilots who are non-native speakers of English. Beyond reading and writing, pilots must be able to pronounce words sufficiently so there is no confusion with the control tower. The potential for disaster is great enough that the United Nations issued new recommendations to improve English-language acquisition, citing past accidents where the lack of proficiency in English was a factor.

Source: Joe Sharkey, "English Skills a Concern as Global Aviation Grows," *The New York Times,* May 21, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/22/business/english-skills-a-concern-as-global-aviation-grows.html?_r=1.

Communication takes many forms. **Verbal communication,** or communication that uses words, includes

- Face-to-face or phone conversations
- Meetings
- Text, e-mail, and voice-mail messages
- Letters and memos
- Reports

Nonverbal communication does not use words. Examples include

- Pictures
- Company logos
- Gestures and body language
- Who sits where at a meeting
- How long someone keeps a visitor waiting

Even in your first job, you'll communicate. You'll read information; you'll listen to instructions; you'll ask questions; you may solve problems with other workers in teams. In a manufacturing company, hourly workers travel to a potential customer to make oral sales presentations. In an insurance company, clerks answer customers' letters. 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.[6]

A National Association of Colleges and Employers survey revealed that the ability to work in a team structure and to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization topped the list of skills employers want in job candidates. The findings dovetail with those of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, which found that 99% of people surveyed felt that success in the global economy depends on developing critical thinking and analytical skills, with 88% of those surveyed feeling that schools should also focus on teaching such skills as communication. Of the 14 skill sets offered for ranking, reading comprehension rated the highest in importance.

Sources: "Job Outlook: The Candidate Skills/Qualities Employers Want," The National Association of Colleges and Employers, October 26, 2011, http://www.naceweb.org/s10262011/candidate_skills_employer_qualities/; and "Beyond the Three Rs: Voter Attitudes Toward 21st Century Skills (Key Findings)," November 23, 2007, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/p21_pollreport_2pg.pdf.

Experts predict that globalization will continue to revolutionize business and industry throughout the upcoming years, transforming economies in the process. Here, workers inspect a tanker at Hyundai Heavy industries, Inc., a South Korean manufacturer of industrial robots, construction equipment, and electric and electronic systems that is also the world's largest shipbuilder. For companies with an eye toward being global leaders, effective communication is vital, whether to ensure smooth operations, cultivate strong relationships with diverse clients, or increase market share in a competitive environment. Of course, organizations with more local aspirations benefit from effective communication, too!

Communication affects all levels of work. Training specialists Brad Humphrey and Jeff Stokes identify communication skills as being among the most important for modern supervisors.[7] Andrew Posner, a career counselor, advises that employees looking to make a career change need such "transferable skills" as the ability to "analyze, write, persuade, and manage."[8]

Employers clearly want employees who communicate well, yet a staggering 40 million people in the United States alone have limited literacy skills, including some college graduates.[9] According to one report by the College Board's National Commission on Writing, states spend more than $220 million annually on remedial writing training for their employees, and corporations may spend $3.1 billion to fix problems from writing deficiencies; two-thirds of private-sector employers surveyed said writing was an important responsibility for employees.[10]

Because writing skills are so valuable, good writers earn more. Linguist Stephen Reder has found 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%.[11]

The conclusion is simple: Good communication skills are vital in today's workplace. Technology, especially through e-mail, instant messaging, and cell phones, is making the globe a smaller and busier place, one where messages must be understood immediately. Traditional paper messages flourish, even as electronic channels expand our ability to reach more people. The better an employee's communication skills are, the better his or her chance for success.

For U.S. elementary and middle school students, significant gains in math and science on standardized tests have been offset by only modest gains in reading skills. In 1992, for instance, 29% of fourth-grade students were proficient in reading, but nearly 20 years later, that number had risen only five percentage points. There were no gains at all from 2008 to 2009.

Source: Sam Dillon, "Since 1990s, U.S. Students' Math Has Sharpened, But Reading Lags," *The New York Times,* November 1, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/02/education/us-students-math-skills-sharpen-but-reading-lags.html.

Will I really have to write? LO 1-1

▶ *Yes. A lot.*

Claims that people can get by without writing are flawed.

Claim 1: Secretaries will do all my writing.

Reality: Because of automation and restructuring, secretaries and administrative assistants are likely to handle 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.[12]

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

Reality: A **form letter** is a prewritten fill-in-the-blank letter designed to fit standard situations. Using a form letter is OK if it's a good letter. But form letters cover only routine situations. The higher you rise, the more frequently you'll face situations that aren't routine and 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 e-mail messages, speak to small groups, and write paper documents. People who do these things well are more likely to be promoted beyond the entry level.

Claim 4: I'll just pick up the phone.

Reality: Important phone calls require follow-up letters, memos, or e-mail messages. 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," says a manager at one company, "it didn't happen." Writing is an essential way to make yourself visible, to let your accomplishments be known.

Don't I know enough about communication? LO 1-2

▶ *Business communication differs from other school writing.*

Although both business communication and other school writing demand standard edited English, in other ways the two are very different.

Some research has found less correlation between college majors and success in the workplace than might be expected. A study by Payscale, Inc., for instance, found that history majors who pursued business careers earned as much on average as those who majored in business. Much to the chagrin of his father, CNN's Ted Turner majored in Classics, and Michael Eisner, former head of The Walt Disney Company and at one time the highest-paid executive in the U.S., graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in English. George Brown College found that "most employers cite communication skills as the most important skill

(*continued*)

(*continued*)

for a candidate to possess," even though many people, such as Millennial students surveyed, believe experience is more important.

Source: Zac Bissonnette, "Your College Major May Not Be as Important as You Think," *The New York Times,* November 3, 2010, http://thechoice.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/11/03/major/.

Purpose

- The purpose of school writing is usually to show that you have learned the course material and to demonstrate your intelligence.
- The purpose of business communication is to meet an organizational need. No one will pay you to write something that he or she already knows.

Audience

- The audiences for school writing are limited: usually just the instructor and the other students. The real audience is "an educated person." Even if the instructor disagrees with your views, if they are well-supported, the paper can earn a good grade. The instructor is paid, in part, to read your papers and will read them even if they are boring.
- The audiences for business communication include people both inside and outside the organization (▶▶ Module 2). Real audiences pay attention to messages only if they seem important, relevant, and interesting.

Information

- Information in school writing may be new to you but is rarely new to your instructor.
- Information in business communication is usually new to your reader. (If it isn't, you have to work extra hard to make it interesting.)

Organization

- School writing often follows the traditional essay form, with a thesis statement up front, paragraphs of evidence, and a final concluding paragraph.
- Business communication is organized to meet the psychological needs of the reader. Most often, the main point comes up front (▶▶ Modules 10–12).

Style

- The style for school writing is often formal. Big words and long sentences and paragraphs are often rewarded.
- The style for business communication is friendly, not formal. Short words and a mix of sentence and paragraph lengths are best (▶▶ Modules 15 and 16).

Document Design

- School writing often rewards long paragraphs. Papers are often double spaced, with no attention to visual design.
- Businesspeople want to be able to skim documents. Headings, lists, and single-spaced paragraphs with double spacing between paragraphs help readers find information quickly (▶▶ Module 5).

Visuals

- Except for math, construction, and engineering, few classes expect writing to contain anything other than words.
- Business writers are expected to choose the most effective way to convey information. Even a one-page memo may contain a table, graph, or other visual. You'll be expected to be able to use computer programs to create graphs, visuals, and slides for presentations (▶▶ Modules 5, 20, and 25).

Site to See

Go to

www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_36.htm

to test your interpersonal skills.

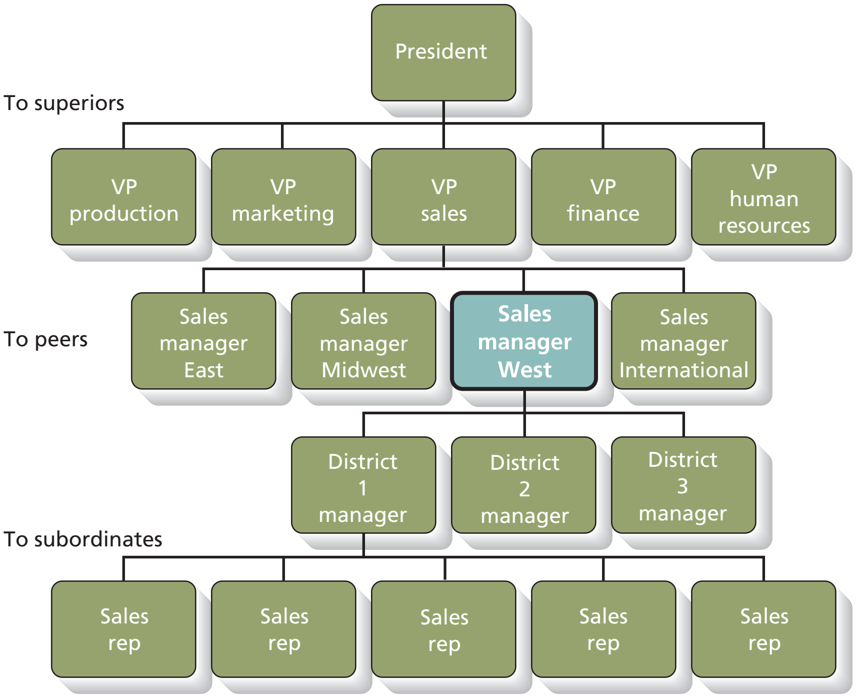
The National Assessment of Adult Literacy, a study by the U.S. Department of Education, showed that Mississippi has improved adult literacy in every one of its counties. Some other states, however, saw an increase in adult illiteracy, and one in seven U.S. adults is challenged to read anything more complex than a child's picture book.

Source: Greg Toppo, "Literacy Study: 1 in 7 Adults are Unable to Read this Story," *USAToday.* January 8, 2009, http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-01-08-adult-literacy_N.htm.

What does communication accomplish? LO 1-3

▶ *Management happens through communication.*

According to Henry Mintzberg, managers have three basic jobs: to collect and convey information, to make decisions, and to promote interpersonal unity—that is, to make people want to work together to achieve organizational goals.[13] All of these jobs happen through communication. Effective managers are able to use a wide variety of media and

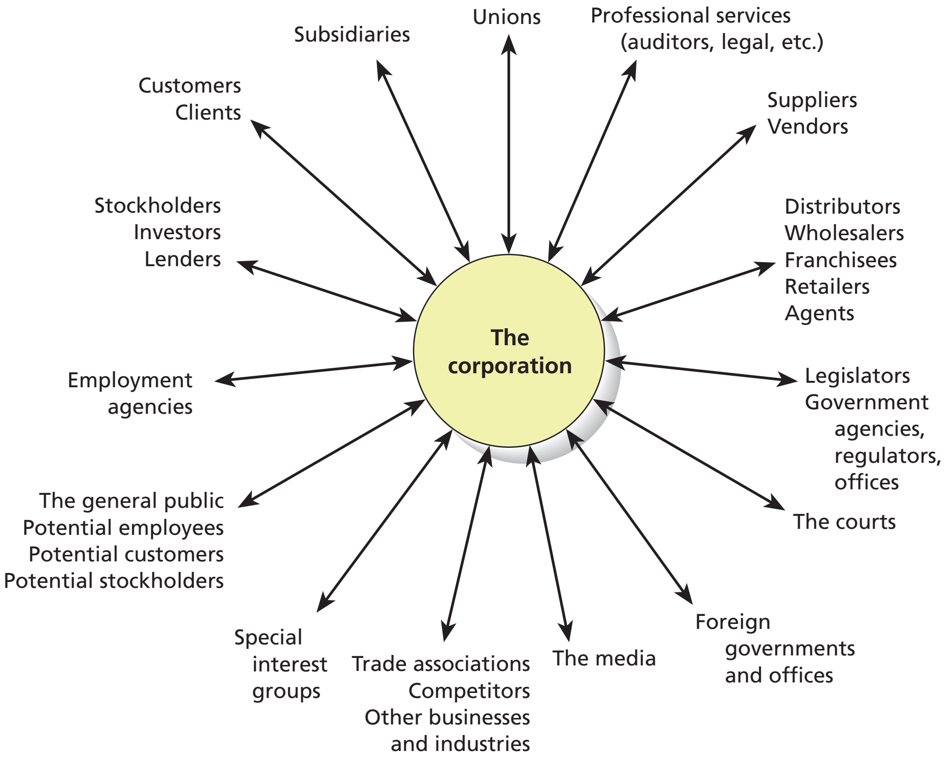


President
To superiors
VP production
VP marketing
VP sales
VP finance
VP human resources
To peers
Sales manager East
Sales manager Midwest
Sales manager West
Sales manager International
District 1 manager
District 2 manager
District 3 manager
To subordinates
Sales rep
Sales rep
Sales rep
Sales rep
Sales rep

Figure 1.1 The Internal Audiences of the Sales Manager—West

strategies to communicate. They know how to interpret comments from informal channels such as the company grapevine; they can speak effectively in small groups and in formal presentations; they write well.

Communication—oral, nonverbal, and written—goes to both internal and external audiences. **Internal audiences** (Figure 1.1) are other people in the same organization: subordinates, superiors, peers. **External audiences** (Figure 1.2) are people outside the organization: customers, suppliers, unions, stockholders, potential employees, government agencies, the press, and the general public.



Subsidiaries
Unions
Professional services (auditors, legal, etc.)
Customers Clients
Suppliers Vendors
Stockholders Investors Lenders
Distributors Wholesalers Franchisees Retailers Agents
The corporation
Employment agencies
Legislators Government agencies, regulators, offices
The general public Potential employees Potential customers Potential stockholders
The courts
Special interest groups
Trade associations Competitors Other businesses and industries
The media
Foreign governments and offices

Figure 1.2 The Corporation's External Audiences

Source: Daphne A. Jameson.

The Importance of Listening, Speaking, and Interpersonal Communication

Informal listening, speaking, and working in groups are just as important as writing formal documents and giving formal oral presentations. As a newcomer in an organization, you'll need to listen to others both to find out what you're supposed to do and to learn about the organization's values and culture. Informal chitchat, both about yesterday's game and about what's happening at work, connects you to the **grapevine,** an informal source of company information. You may be asked to speak to small groups, either inside or outside your organization.[14] Networking with others in your office and in town and working with others in workgroups will be crucial to your success.

Site to See

Go to

www.teslamotors.com

Word-of-mouth rather than traditional advertising has fueled sales of Tesla Motors' electric cars.

The Purposes of Messages in Organizations

Messages in organizations have one or more of **three basic purposes:** to inform, to request or persuade, and to build goodwill. When you **inform,** you explain something or tell readers something. When you **request or persuade,** you want the reader to act. The word *request* suggests that the action will be easy or routine; *persuade* suggests that you will have to motivate and convince the reader to act. When you **build goodwill,** you create a good image of yourself and of your organization—the kind of image that makes people want to do business with you.

Most messages have multiple purposes.

- When you answer a question, 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.
- In a claims adjustment, whether your answer is yes or no, you want to suggest that the reader's claim has been given careful consideration and that the decision is fair, businesslike, and justified.
- To persuade, a résumé gives information to prove that you're qualified for the job and uses layout to emphasize your strong points and build a good image of you.

Instant Replay

Internal and External Audiences

Internal Audiences

Are other people in the same organization: subordinates, superiors, peers.

External Audiences

Are people outside the organization: customers, suppliers, unions, stockholders, potential employees, government agencies, the press, and the general public.

How much does correspondence cost? LO 1-4

▶ *$21.15 a page—even more if it doesn't work.*

Writing costs money. Besides the cost of paper, computers, and software, there is the major expense: employees' time. A consultant who surveyed employees in seven industries found that to prepare a one-page letter, most of them spent 54 minutes planning, composing, and revising the letter. According to the most recent figures from the U.S. Labor Department, employers paid an average of $23.50 per hour per employee for wages and benefits. At that rate, an employer would pay $21.15 for an employee's time spent writing a typical letter.[15] One company in Minneapolis sends out 3,000 original letters a day—worth more than $66,000 at the average rate. A first-class stamp on each letter would add another $1,000 to the company's daily expenses.

In many organizations, all external documents must be approved before they go out. A document may **cycle** from writer to superior to writer to another superior to writer again three or four or many more times before it is finally approved. The cycling process increases the cost of correspondence.

Longer documents can involve large teams of people and take months to write. An engineering firm that relies on military contracts for its business calculates that it spends $500,000 to put together an average proposal and $1 million to write a large proposal.[16]

Poor correspondence costs even more. When writing isn't as good as it could be, you and your organization pay a price in wasted time, wasted efforts, and lost goodwill.

The international nonprofit organization ProLiteracy estimates that $60 billion is lost annually by American businesses due to issues stemming from illiteracy.

Source: Robert Roy Britt, "14 Percent of U.S. Adults Can't Read," *Livescience,* January 10, 2009, downloaded at http://www.livescience.com/culture/090110-illiterate-adults.html.

Bad writing wastes time by

- Taking more time to read.
- Requiring more time to revise and causing more rounds of revision.
- Confusing ideas so that discussions and decisions are needlessly drawn out.
- Delaying action while the reader asks for more information or tries to figure out the meaning.

Ineffective messages don't get results. A reader who has to guess what the writer means may guess wrong. A reader who finds a letter or memo unconvincing or insulting simply won't do what the message asks. Thus, second and third and fourth requests are necessary.

Whatever the literal content of the words, every letter, memo, and report serves either to enhance or to damage the image the reader has of the writer. Poor messages damage business relationships.

Good communication is worth every minute it takes and every penny it costs. For instance, the consulting firm Watson Wyatt Worldwide conducted research showing greater returns to shareholders in companies with the most effective programs for communicating with their employees. Those companies also enjoyed lower employee turnover and a 30% increase in their stocks' market value.[17]

A typo may have led to the Wall Street chaos in 2010 that ultimately cost investors billions of dollars. At heart was a $16 million trade in Procter & Gamble stock, but someone entered it as $16 billion instead. In just 15 minutes, the Dow Jones average sank more than 700 points, losing nearly 1,000 points before finally stabilizing at a loss of 347 points.

Source: David Louie, "Typo May Have Been Cause of Market Meltdown," *ABC Channel 7 News,* May 7, 2010, http://abclocal.go.com/kgo/story?section=news/business&id=7427822.

What makes a message effective? LO 1-5

▶ *Good messages meet five criteria.*

Good business and administrative writing

- **Is clear.** The meaning the reader gets is the meaning the writer intended. The reader doesn't have to guess.
- **Is complete.** All of the reader's questions are answered. The reader has enough information to evaluate the message and act on it.
- **Is correct.** All of the information in the message is accurate. The message is free from errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar, word order, and sentence structure.
- **Saves the reader's time.** The style, organization, and visual impact of the message help the reader to read, understand, and act on the information as quickly as possible.
- **Builds goodwill.** The message presents a positive image of the writer and his or her organization. It treats the reader as a person, not a number. It cements a good relationship between the writer and the reader (▶▶ Modules 6–8).

Whether a message meets these five criteria depends on **the interactions among the writer, the audience, the purposes of the message, and the situation.** No single set of words will work in all possible situations.

Better writing helps you to

- **Save time.** Reduce reading time, since comprehension is easier. Eliminate the time now taken to rewrite badly written materials. Reduce the time taken asking writers, "What did you mean?"
- **Make your efforts more effective.** Increase the number of requests that are answered positively and promptly—on the first request. Present your points—to other people in your organization; to clients, customers, and suppliers; to government agencies; to the public—more forcefully.
- **Communicate your points more clearly.** Reduce the misunderstandings that occur when the reader has to supply missing or unclear information. Make the issues clear, so that disagreements can surface and be resolved more quickly.
- **Build goodwill.** Build a positive image of your organization. Build an image of yourself as a knowledgeable, intelligent, capable person.

Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) determined that Washington, D.C., is the most literate city in the United States with a population greater than 250,000, followed by Seattle, Minneapolis, Atlanta, and Boston. While Seattle often tops many lists of literate cities, the CCSU study included web traffic with more traditional factors as education level, bookstore number, library access, and periodical readership. The study's author, John W. Miller, found no correlation between literacy and a city's wealth.

Source: John Metcalf, "America's Most Literate Cities Not Necessarily the Wealthiest," *The Atlantic,* January 26, 2012, http://www.theatlanticcities.com/arts-and-lifestyle/2012/01/americas-most-literate-cities-not-necessarily-wealthiest/1063/#.