

Twelfth Edition

# Communicating at Work

Strategies for Success in  
Business and the Professions

**Mc  
Graw  
Hill**  
Education

Ronald B. Adler  
Michelle Maresh-Fuehrer  
Jeanne Elmhurst  
Kristen Lucas



# Communicating at Work

Strategies for Success in  
Business and the Professions

Twelfth Edition

**Ronald B. Adler**

*Santa Barbara City College, Emeritus*

**Michelle M. Maresh-Fuehrer**

*Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi*

**Jeanne Elmhorst**

*Central New Mexico Community College*

**Kristen Lucas**

*University of Louisville*

**Mc  
Graw  
Hill**  
Education





COMMUNICATING AT WORK: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS IN BUSINESS  
AND THE PROFESSIONS, TWELFTH EDITION

Published by McGraw-Hill Education, 2 Penn Plaza, New York, NY, 10021. Copyright © 2019 by McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. Previous editions © 2013, 2010, and 2008. No part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written consent of McGraw-Hill Education, including, but not limited to, in any network or other electronic storage or transmission, or broadcast for distance learning.

Some ancillaries, including electronic and print components, may not be available to customers outside the United States.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 LWI/LWI 21 20 19 18

ISBN: 978-0-07-803696-5

MHID: 0-07-803696-8

Portfolio Manager: *Sarah Remington*

Product Developer: *Elizabeth Murphy*

Marketing Manager: *Laura Young*

Content Project Manager: *Lisa Brufodt*

Buyer: *Sandy Ludovissy*

Designer: *Egzon Shagiri*

Content Licensing Specialist: *DeAnna Dausener*

Cover Image: © *Ola Dusegard/Getty Images*

Compositor: *Lumina Datamatics*

All credits appearing at the end of the book are considered to be an extension of the copyright page.

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Names: Adler, Ronald B. (Ronald Brian), 1946- author.

Title: Communicating at work : strategies for success in business and the professions / Ronald B. Adler [and three others].

Description: Twelfth edition. | New York, NY : McGraw-Hill Education, [2019]

Identifiers: LCCN 2017045185 (print) | LCCN 2017050012 (ebook) | ISBN

9781260154030 (Online) | ISBN 9780078036965 (looseleaf) | ISBN

9781260154054 (softcover)

Subjects: LCSH: Business communication. | Interpersonal communication.

Classification: LCC HF5718 (ebook) | LCC HF5718 .A33 2019 (print) | DDC 658.4/5—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017045185>

The Internet addresses listed in the text were accurate at the time of publication. The inclusion of a website does not indicate an endorsement by the authors or McGraw-Hill Education, and McGraw-Hill Education does not guarantee the accuracy of the information presented at these sites.

# about the authors

**Ronald B. Adler** is professor emeritus at Santa Barbara City College. Throughout his career, he has specialized in the study of organizational and interpersonal communication. He is the author of *Confidence in Communication: A Guide to Assertive and Social Skills* and coauthor of *Understanding Human Communication, Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication*, as well as the widely used text *Looking Out/Looking In*. Professor Adler is a consultant for a number of corporate, professional, and government clients and leads workshops in such areas as conflict resolution, presentational speaking, team building, and interviewing.



Courtesy of Ronald B. Adler

**Michelle M. Maresh-Fuehrer** is Associate Professor of Public Relations at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, where she specializes in the areas of crisis communication, public relations, and social media. She is the author of *Creating Organizational Crisis Plans* and coauthor of *Public Relations Principles: Strategies for Professional Success*. Her work has also appeared in *Persuasion in Your Life*, *The Handbook of Crisis Communication*, *Computers in Human Behavior*, *Communication Teacher*, *Communication Education*, and the *American Communication Journal*. Professor Maresh-Fuehrer also works as a consultant for a variety of business and nonprofit organizations.



Courtesy of Michelle M. Maresh-Fuehrer

**Jeanne Elmhurst** is an instructor in communication studies at Central New Mexico Community College in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Her courses reflect the variety in the communication discipline: business and professional, public speaking, listening, intercultural, and interpersonal. Ms. Elmhurst lived and taught in Asia for three years, and she continues to find opportunities to travel, study, and volunteer in other countries. She enjoys designing and presenting communication training for business and not-for-profit clients.



Courtesy of Jeanne Elmhurst

**Kristen Lucas** is an assistant professor in the Department of Management at University of Louisville, where she directs the business communication program. She teaches courses, conducts research, and facilitates management training sessions on organizational communication, workplace dignity, and careers. Her research has appeared in *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, and *Journal of Applied Communication Research*.



Courtesy of Kristen Lucas



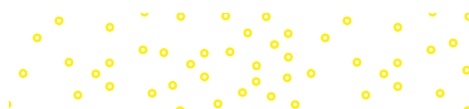
# McGraw-Hill Connect: An Overview

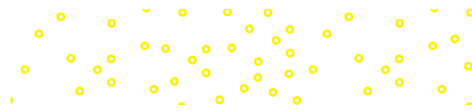
McGraw-Hill Connect offers full-semester access to comprehensive, reliable content and learning resources for the Business Communication course. Connect's deep integration with most learning management systems (LMS), including Blackboard and Desire2Learn (D2L), offers single sign-on and deep gradebook synchronization. Data from Assignment Results reports synchronize directly with many LMS, allowing scores to flow automatically from Connect into school-specific gradebooks, if required.

The following tools and services are available as part of Connect for the Business Communication course:

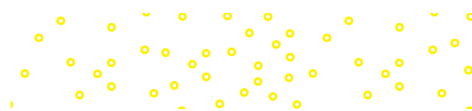
Tool	Instructional Context	Description
<b>SmartBook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SmartBook is an engaging and interactive reading experience for mastering fundamental Communication content.</li><li>• The metacognitive component confirms students' understanding of the material.</li><li>• Instructors can actively connect SmartBook assignments and results to higher-order classroom work and one-on-one student conferences.</li><li>• Students can track their own understanding and mastery of course concepts and identify gaps in their knowledge.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SmartBook is an adaptive reading experience designed to change the way students read and learn. It creates a personalized reading experience by highlighting the most impactful concepts a student needs to learn at that moment in time.</li><li>• SmartBook creates personalized learning plans based on student responses to content question probes and confidence scales, identifying the topics students are struggling with and providing learning resources to create personalized learning moments.</li><li>• SmartBook includes a variety of learning resources tied directly to key content areas to provide students with additional instruction and context. These resources include video and media clips, interactive slide content, mini-lectures, and image analyses.</li><li>• SmartBook Reports provide instructors with data to quantify success and identify problem areas that require attention in and out of the classroom.</li><li>• Students can access their own progress and concept mastery reports.</li></ul>
<b>Connect Insight for Instructors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connect Insight for Instructors is an analytics resource that produces quick feedback related to learner performance and learner engagement.</li><li>• It is designed as a dashboard for both quick check-ins and detailed performance and engagement views.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connect Insight for Instructors offers a series of visual data displays that provide analysis on five key insights:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How are my students doing?</li><li>• How is this one student doing?</li><li>• How is my section doing?</li><li>• How is this assignment doing?</li><li>• How are my assignments doing?</li></ul></li></ul>

(Continued)



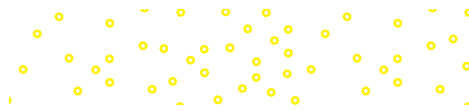


Tool	Instructional Context	Description
<b>Connect Insight for Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Connect Insight for Students is a powerful data analytics tool that provides at-a-glance visualizations to help students understand their performance on Connect assignments.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Connect Insight for Students offers details on each Connect assignment to students. When possible, it offers suggestions for the students on how they can improve scores. The data from this tool can help guide students to behaviors that will lead to better scores in the future.</li></ul>
<b>Video Speech Assignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Video Speech Assignment provides instructors with a comprehensive and efficient way of managing in-class and online speech assignments, including student self-reviews, peer reviews, and instructor grading.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The Video Speech Assignment tool allows instructors to easily and efficiently set up speech assignments for their course that can easily be shared and repurposed, as needed, throughout their use of Connect.</li><li>● Customizable rubrics and settings can be saved and shared, saving time and streamlining the speech assignment process from creation to assessment.</li><li>● Video Speech Assignment allows users—both students and instructors—to view videos during the assessment process. Feedback can be left within a customized rubric or as time-stamped comments within the video playback itself.</li></ul>
<b>Speech Preparation Tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Speech Preparation Tools provide students with additional support and include Topic Helper, Outline Tool, and access to third-party Internet sites such as EasyBib (for formatting citations) and Survey Monkey (to create audience-analysis questionnaires and surveys).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Speech Preparation Tools provide students with additional resources to help with the preparation and outlining of speeches, as well as with audience-analysis surveys.</li><li>● Instructors have the ability to make tools either available or unavailable to students.</li></ul>
<b>Instructor Reports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Instructor Reports provide data that may be useful for assessing programs or courses as part of the accreditation process.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Connect generates a number of powerful reports and charts that allow instructors to quickly review the performance of a given learner or an entire section.</li><li>● Instructors can run reports that span multiple sections and instructors, making this tool an ideal solution for individual professors, course coordinators, and department chairs.</li></ul>
<b>Student Reports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Student Reports allow students to review their performance for specific assignments or for the course.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Students can keep track of their performance and identify areas in which they are struggling.</li></ul>
<b>Pre- and Post-Tests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Instructors can generate their own pre- and post-tests from the test bank.</li><li>● Pre- and post-tests demonstrate what students already know before class begins and what they have learned by the end of class.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Instructors have access to two sets of pre- and post-tests (at two levels). Instructors can use these tests to create diagnostic and post-diagnostic exams via Connect.</li></ul>



(Continued)





Tool	Instructional Context	Description
<b>Tegrity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tegrity allows instructors to capture course material or lectures on video.</li><li>• Students can watch videos recorded by their instructor and learn course material at their own pace.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instructors can keep track of which students have watched the videos they post.</li><li>• Students can watch and review lectures by their instructor.</li><li>• Students can search each lecture for specific bites of information.</li></ul>
<b>Simple LMS Integration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connect seamlessly integrates with every learning management system.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students have automatic single sign-on.</li><li>• Connect assignment results sync to the LMS's gradebook.</li></ul>

## • Instructor's Guide to Connect for *Communicating at Work*

When you assign Connect, you can be confident—and have data to demonstrate—that your students, however diverse, are acquiring the skills, principles, and critical processes that are necessary for effective communication. This process allows you to focus on your highest course expectations.

### Tailored to You

Connect offers on-demand, single sign-on access to students—wherever they are and whenever they have time. With a single, one-time registration, students receive access to McGraw-Hill's trusted content.

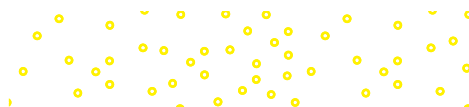
### Easy to Use

Connect seamlessly supports all major learning management systems with content, assignments, performance data, and LearnSmart, the leading adaptive learning system. With these tools you can quickly make assignments, produce reports, focus discussions, intervene on problem topics, and help at-risk students—as you need to and when you need to.

## • *Communicating at Work* SmartBook

### A Personalized and Adaptive Learning Experience

SmartBook with Learning Resources is the first and only adaptive reading and study experience designed to change the way students read and master key course concepts. As a student engages with SmartBook, the program creates a personalized learning path by highlighting the most impactful concepts the student needs to learn at that moment in time and by delivering a wealth of learning resources—videos, animations, and other interactive content. These rich, dynamic resources help students learn the material, retain more knowledge, and get better grades.



## Enhanced for the New Edition!

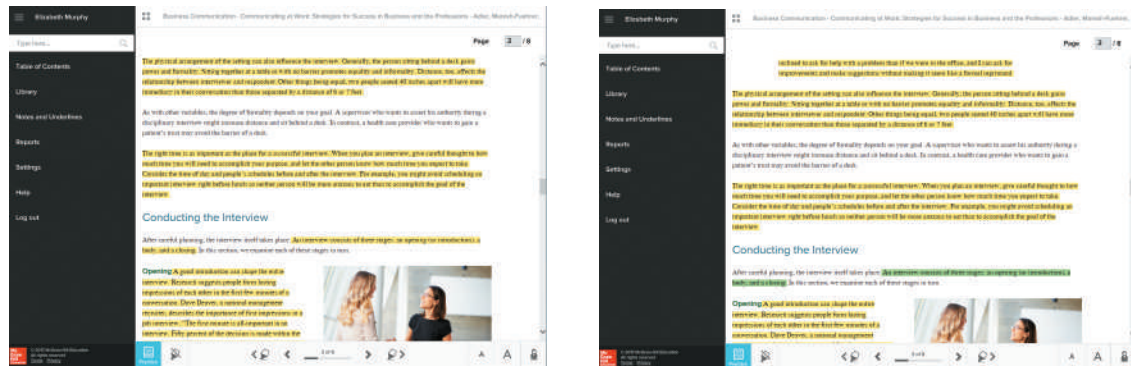
With a suite of new learning resources and question probes, as well as highlighting of key chapter concepts, SmartBook's intuitive technology optimizes students' study time by creating a personalized learning path for improved course performance and overall student success.

### eBook

Alongside SmartBook, the Connect eBook offers simple and easy access to reading materials on smartphones and tablets. Students can study on the go even when they do not have an Internet connection, highlight important sections, take notes, search for materials quickly, and read in class. Offline reading is available by downloading the eBook app on smartphones and tablets. Any notes and highlights created by students will subsequently be synced between devices when they reconnect. Unlike with SmartBook, there is no pre-highlighting, practice of key concepts, or reports on usage and performance available with the eBook.

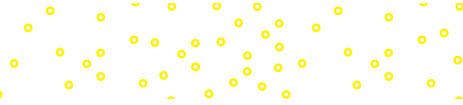
### Hundreds of Interactive Learning Resources


Presented in a range of interactive styles, *Communicating at Work* Learning Resources support students who may be struggling to master, or simply wish to review, the most important communication concepts. Designed to reinforce the most important chapter concepts, every Learning Resource is presented at the precise moment when it is needed. Whether it takes the form of a video, audio clip, or interactive mini-lesson, each of the 100-plus Learning Resources was designed to give students a lifelong foundation in strong communication skills.



SmartBook highlights the key concepts of every chapter, offering the student a high-impact learning experience (left). Here, highlighted text and an illustration together explain the interviewing process. Highlights change color (right) when a student has demonstrated his or her understanding of the concept.








No doubt you have attended a meeting where you thought something similar to "Why am I wasting my time on this?"

Not all meetings are necessary. As a leader, it is important to know when and when not to hold a meeting.

Video: When to Hold a Meeting 2/3



< BACK GIVE FEEDBACK CONTINUE >

## More Than 1,000 Targeted Question Probes

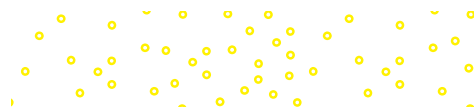
Class-tested at colleges and universities nationwide, a collection of engaging question probes—new and revised, more than 1,000 in all—give students the information on the introductory communication concepts they need to know, at every stage of the learning process, so that they can thrive in the course. Designed to gauge students' comprehension of the most important *Communicating at Work* chapter concepts, and presented in a variety of interactive styles to facilitate student engagement, targeted question probes give students immediate feedback on their understanding of the text. Each question probe identifies a student's familiarity with the instruction and points to areas where additional remediation is needed.

## Focus on Practical Applications

A new Appendix V focuses on the types of crises businesses today often face and how communication plays a role in recovering from such crises. Special emphasis is placed on crisis prevention, including strategies for responding to specific types of conflicts, and on templates for writing. This edition also includes new coverage of effective leadership strategies. For example, in Chapter 7 a new case study profiles effective servant leadership, and all chapters feature Career Tip boxes advising students how to succeed and emerge as leaders in their chosen careers.

## Strong Emphasis on Ethical Communication and Cultural Diversity

This edition features updated coverage of cultural diversity, with a new emphasis on intergenerational communication and supporting colleagues with disabilities in the workplace. New topics include strategies to handle racial discrimination in the



workplace and a detailed discussion of problematic coworkers, workplace bullying, incivility on social media, and boundary enforcement. Culture at Work and Ethical Challenge boxes appear in every chapter, engaging students in thinking critically about topics of diversity and ethics in the workplace.

## Updated and Expanded Coverage of Evolving Communication Technologies

Integrated throughout the program, *Communicating at Work* offers instruction on using the latest mobile technologies to effectively conduct and participate in meetings and updated coverage of social media tools and the accepted etiquette for their use. This edition also includes enhanced and updated coverage of Internet job searches and applications, as well as online résumés and interviews.

## Boxed Features

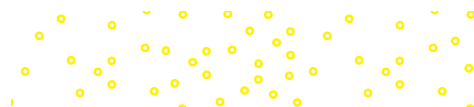
The twelfth edition of *Communicating at Work* includes a variety of boxed features to support students' learning and enhance their business communication skills.

- **Culture at Work** boxes highlight the ways in which culture applies to every aspect of business and professional communication. Topics covered include how teamwork differs in individualistic and collectivistic cultures and how presentations can be adapted for culturally diverse audiences.
- **Case Study** boxes present cases from the world of business and the professions and offer compelling examples of how the principles in the book operate in everyday life.
- **Career Tip** boxes give practical advice on how to be more successful in work-related situations. Topics include getting recognized by your bosses, practicing cubical etiquette, and seeing difference as advantage.
- **Technology Tip** boxes demonstrate how students can use a variety of communication tools to achieve their goals. Topics include how to make use of professional networking services, when it can be best to go offline, and how to work effectively in virtual teams.
- **Self-Assessment** boxes help students see how well they are applying communication concepts and identify their own strengths and weaknesses as communicators.
- **Ethical Challenge** boxes invite students to consider ways of incorporating ethical considerations into day-to-day work contexts.

## • Video Speech Assignment

Designed for use in face-to-face, real-time classrooms, as well as online courses, Video Speech Assignment allows you to evaluate your students' speeches using fully customizable rubrics. You can also create and manage peer review assignments and upload videos on behalf of students for optimal flexibility.

Students can access rubrics and leave comments when preparing self-reviews and peer reviews. They can easily upload a video of their speech from their hard drive or use Connect's built-in video recorder. Students can even attach and upload additional files or documents, such as a works-cited page or a PowerPoint presentation.



## Persuasive Speech

video author:  
**Erik Linstrum**

video title:  
**Linstrum**

description:  
No description given yet.

Click the slider in the video player to add a time-stamped comment as you view the video.

Evaluate the student

Question 1 / 31

Answer to: (select one)

see all questions

Gained attention and interest

Excellent (3) Good (4) Average (3) Fair (2) Poor (1) Rate (2)

- **Peer Review** Peer review assignments are easier than ever to create and manage with Video Speech Assignment. You can also customize privacy settings.
- **Speech Assignment** Connect Video Speech Assignment lets you customize the assignments, including self-reviews and peer reviews.
- **Feedback** Connect saves your frequently used comments, simplifying your efforts to provide feedback.

## • Data Analytics

Connect Insight provides at-a-glance analysis of five key insights, available at a moment's notice. The first and only analytics tool of its kind, Insight will tell you, in real time, how individual students or sections are doing (or how well your assignments have been received) so that you can take action early and keep struggling students from falling further behind.

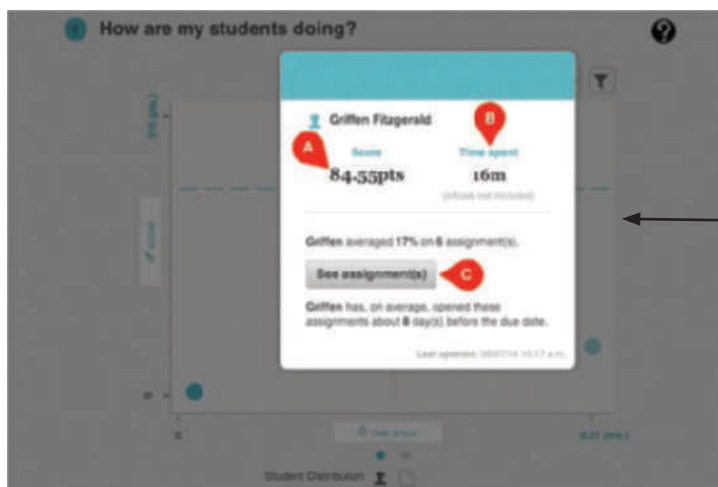
LearnSmart Instructor Reports allow instructors to quickly monitor students' activity, making it easy to identify which students are struggling and allowing you to provide immediate help to ensure those students stay enrolled in the course and improve their performance. The Instructor Reports also highlight the concepts and learning objectives that the class as a whole is having difficulty grasping. This essential information lets you know exactly which areas you should target for review during your limited class time.

Some key LearnSmart reports are listed here.

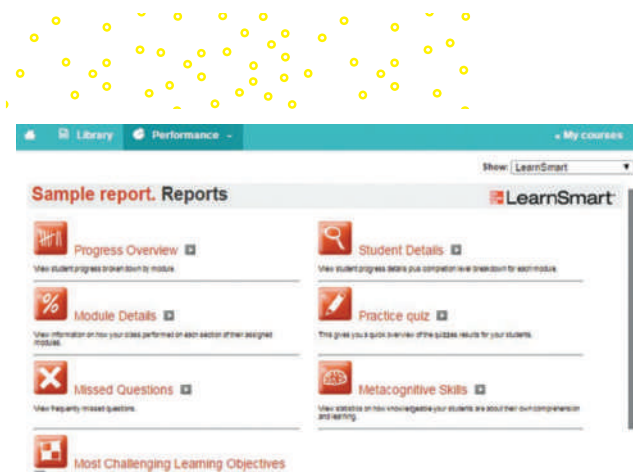
- **Progress Overview report.** View data on student progress for all LearnSmart modules, including how long students have spent working in the module, which modules they have used outside of any that were assigned, and how individual students are progressing through LearnSmart.



Instructors can see how many learners have completed an assignment, how long they spent on the task, and how they scored.



Instructors can see, at a glance, individual learner performance: Analytics showing learner investment in assignments, and success at completing them, help instructors identify, and aid, those who are at risk.



- **Missed Questions report.** Identify specific LearnSmart probes, organized by chapter, that are problematic for students.
- **Most Challenging Learning Objectives report.** Identify the specific topic areas that are challenging for your students. These reports are organized by chapter and include specific page references. Use this information to tailor your lecture time and assignments to cover areas that require additional remediation and practice.
- **Metacognitive Skills report.** View statistics showing how knowledgeable your students are about their own comprehension and learning.

## ● Classroom Preparation Tools

Whether they are used before, during, or after class, a suite of products is available to help instructors plan their lessons and to keep students building upon the foundations of the course.

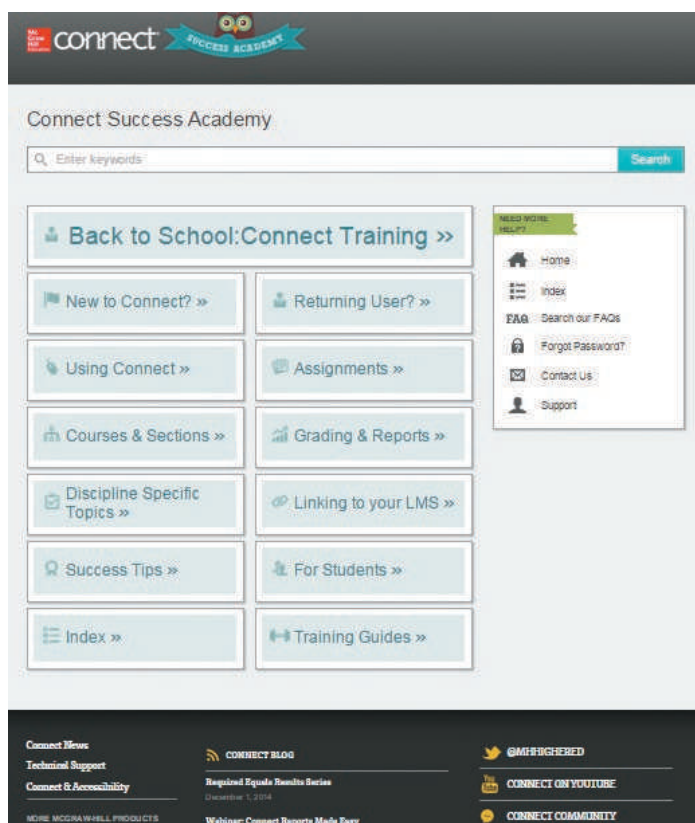
- **PowerPoint Slides** The PowerPoint presentations for *Communicating at Work* provide chapter highlights that help instructors create focused yet individualized lesson plans.
- **Test Bank** The *Communicating at Work* Test Bank is a collection of more than 1,000 examination questions based on the most important mass-communication concepts explored in the text; more than 100 of the questions are new or revised for this edition.
- **Instructor's Manual** Written by the author, this comprehensive guide to teaching from *Communicating at Work* contains lecture suggestions and resources for each chapter.

## ● Support to Ensure Success

- **Digital Success Academy.** The Digital Success Academy on Connect offers a wealth of training and course creation guidance for instructors and students alike. Instructor support is presented in easy-to-navigate, easy-to-complete sections. It includes the popular *Connect* video shorts, step-by-step *Click-Through Guides*, and *First Day of Class* materials that explain how to use both the Connect platform and its course-specific tools and features.
- **Implementation Team.** Our team of Implementation Consultants are dedicated to working online with instructors—one-on-one—to demonstrate how

the Connect platform works and to help incorporate Connect into a customer's specific course design and syllabus. Contact your Digital Learning Specialist to learn more.

- **Learning Specialists.** Learning Specialists are local resources who work closely with your McGraw-Hill learning technology consultants. They can provide face-to-face faculty support and training.
- **Digital Faculty Consultants.** Digital Faculty Consultants are experienced instructors who use Connect in their classrooms. These instructors are available to offer suggestions, advice, and training about how best to use Connect in your class. To request a Digital Faculty Consultant to speak with, please e-mail your McGraw-Hill learning technology consultant.
- **National Training Webinars.** McGraw-Hill offers an ongoing series of webinars for instructors to learn and master the Connect platform as well as its course-specific tools and features. We hope you will refer to our online schedule of national training webinars and sign up to learn more about Connect!



## Contact Our Customer Support Team

McGraw-Hill is dedicated to supporting instructors and students. To contact our customer support team, please call us at 800-331-5094 or visit us online at <http://mpss.mhhe.com/contact.php>





## • Changes to the Twelfth Edition: Highlights

### Chapter 1

Coverage of formal communication networks has been updated, including downward, upward, and horizontal communication. New Career Tips explain how to recover from a communication blunder and how to use LinkedIn effectively. A new Technology Tip helps students improve their LinkedIn profiles and manage their professional identities.

### Chapter 2

In the “Communication in a Diverse Society” section, two entirely new subsections cover the topics of sex and gender and military veterans. A revised and updated section covers the topic of disabilities in the workplace. A new Culture at Work box addresses the issue of race discrimination. New Career Tips help students build intergenerational relationships and provide guidance on disclosing disability status during an interview.

### Chapter 3

An updated section on analytical listening explains the role of an on-staff ombud to investigate and resolve workplace complaints. A new Ethical Challenge box broaches the issue of monitoring employees’ emotions. A revised Culture at Work box addresses cultural differences in listening. An updated Technology Tip explains best practices for listening to voice mail.

### Chapter 4

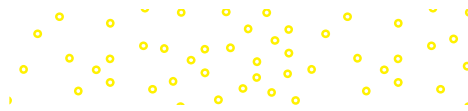
The section on assumptions about listening has been revised. Updated examples describe high-level versus low-level abstraction. The updated discussion of ethnocentrism as a psychological barrier to listening includes a new Self-Assessment that helps students to identify and recognize their biases. A new Case Study describes the cost of miscommunication. New Career Tips offer advice on reading nonverbal cues and practicing cubicle etiquette.

### Chapter 5

The revised discussion of building positive relationships considers the importance of fostering intergenerational relationships. A new Case Study covers the “holocracy” model, as applied by Zappos. A new section on using social media to praise employees and show appreciation includes a new Culture at Work box that explains how expectations for praise can vary by culture. New material describes when to adopt and when not to adopt multicomcommunicating behaviors. A new Technology Tip addresses ways to minimize cyber incivility in the workplace, and two new Case Studies illustrate the costs of such behavior. A revised discussion considers causes of conflict and ways to practice boundary enforcement.

### Chapter 6

The chapter now opens with coverage of types of interviews, including a new section on performance appraisal interviews. A new Technology Tip offers useful advice on conducting Internet job and internship searches. The discussion of pre-interview steps has been updated, including who to contact when you are interested in a field, how to clean up your online identity, and how to conduct background research on prospective employers. There is also updated coverage of reaching out to potential



employers, including an explanation of computer screening techniques and scannable résumés, as well as two new Career Tips on making a résumé that stands out and conducting research on a company's culture. Coverage of different interview formats has been revised, including a new section on preparing for the possibility of a video interview. The revised Table 6-1 covers the most common interviewee mistakes, and a new Ethical Challenge addresses ways to demonstrate ethical standards.

## Chapter 7

This chapter includes updated coverage of the nature of teams, including what makes a group a team and best practices for working in virtual teams; the situational leadership model, previously termed life-cycle theory; and power and influence in groups. The section on transformational leadership has been completely revised. A new Case Study on servant leadership profiles the CEO of Popeyes, Cheryl Bachelder. A new Technology Tip describes the use of apps to facilitate teamwork. A new Career Tip summarizes the hazards of sleep deprivation.

## Chapter 8

This chapter has been heavily revised to include an expanded section on virtual meetings and new information on applicable business presentations, such as webinars, press conferences, media interviews, and panel presentations. It also includes coverage of planning, conducting, and following up after a meeting; updated data and statistics on meetings, their costs, and their purpose; and coverage of information-sharing meetings and enrichment-based meetings. Two new Culture at Work boxes discuss collaboration in cyberspace and international business etiquette. Two new Career Tips focus on how to handle “time waster” meetings and how to take meeting minutes. A new Ethical Challenge addresses the issue of dealing with opposing viewpoints.

## Chapter 9

A new Career Tip advises students to connect with an audience through storytelling. The chapter also offers increased coverage of speaking to nonexperts. A new example illustrates the process of analyzing your knowledge on the subject on which you will speak.

## Chapter 10

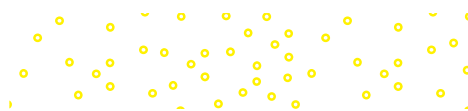
A new Culture at Work box discusses the concept of universal design. There is also new coverage of the use of infographics as visual aids, including an example of an effective infographic in Figure 10.1.

## Chapter 11

A new Career Tip suggests ways to anticipate customers' questions. A new section focuses on answering premature questions later in a presentation. A new Ethical Challenge addresses the proper etiquette for walking out of a presentation.

## Chapter 12

A new Case Study illustrates the use of training to retain employees. A new Career Tip offers advice on persevering through presentations after mistakes or unexpected issues occur. A new section on webinars explains how to organize, design, and conduct these presentations effectively. The section on press conferences is entirely new to this edition.





## **Appendix II**

This appendix includes new sections on writing news releases and media advisories, with templates provided for each type of document.

## **Appendix III**

This completely new appendix covers problem-solving communication in the workplace.

## **Appendix V**

This completely new appendix on crisis communication covers the various types of crises that businesses today often face, focusing on how communication plays a role in recovering from such crises. The appendix includes an example of a statement from a spokesperson, highlighting effective crisis response strategies.

# acknowledgments

We are grateful for the suggestions from colleagues whose thoughts helped guide us in preparing this new edition:

Gretchen Arthur, Lansing Community College	Gordon McLean, Florida State College at Jacksonville
Allen R. Bean, Southeast Community College	Jorge D. Mota, San Jacinto College, Central Campus
Graham D. Bodie, Louisiana State University	Angela Niedermeyer, Austin Community College
Carol Brennan, South Plains College	Denise Oles-Acevedo, Iowa State University
Robert N. Burns, Salt Lake Community College	Jan Poppenga, Southeast Community College
Katherine M. Castle, University of Nebraska–Lincoln	Christina Ross, Tarrant County College Northwest
Carolyn Clark, Salt Lake Community College	Michael J. Scrivens, Finger Lakes Community College
Kandice N. Diaz, El Paso Community College	Leonard Semas, Western Nevada College
Cyndi Dunn, Sierra Community College	Katherine Taylor, University of Louisville
Brandy Fair, Grayson College	Blair Thompson, Western Kentucky University
Richard I. Falvo, El Paso Community College	C. Erik Timmerman, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee
Stacy Gresell, Lone Star College–CyFair	Susan Tomasovic, George Mason University
Daria S. Heinemann, Florida State College at Jacksonville	J. D. Wallace, Abilene Christian University
Pamela Hopkins, East Carolina University	Robert Zetocha, Southeast Community College
Mary S. Lynch, Waukesha County Technical College	

We would like to express our gratitude to the McGraw-Hill team whose suggestions, feedback, and encouragement helped shape this edition of *Communicating at Work*: Elizabeth Murphy, Lisa Bruflodt, DeAnna Dausener, Betty Chen, and Sarah Remington.

A special thanks also to Vicki Rowland and Jill Hobbs, the talented copyeditors whom we were fortunate to have contribute to this edition. We are also appreciative of Nancy Huebner and Lisa Pinto for their assistance early in the development of this edition.

Finally, we thank our colleagues, students, families, and friends for their support. We would like to express a special note of gratitude to Mariela K. Navarro for her contributions to the research-gathering process.





**part one** Basics of Business and Professional Communication  
Strategic Case: Sundown Bakery 2

---

- 1** Communicating at Work 4
- 2** Communication, Culture, and Work 30

**part two** Personal Skills  
Strategic Case: Omnicom Marketing 60

---

- 3** Listening 62
- 4** Verbal and Nonverbal Messages 80
- 5** Interpersonal Skills and Success 116
- 6** Principles of Interviewing 152

**part three** Working in Groups  
Strategic Case: Museum of Springfield 196

---

- 7** Leading and Working in Teams 198
- 8** Effective Meetings 226

**part four** Making Effective Presentations  
Strategic Case: Fresh Air Sports 252

---

- 9** Developing and Organizing the Presentation 254
- 10** Verbal and Visual Support in Presentations 294
- 11** Delivering the Presentation 324
- 12** Types of Business Presentations 348

Appendix I: Interviewing Materials 390  
Appendix II: Business Writing 400  
Appendix III: Problem-Solving Communication 425  
Appendix IV: Sample Presentations 432  
Appendix V: Crisis Communication 443  
Glossary 447  
Index 454





# contents

## part one

### Basics of Business and Professional Communication Strategic Case: Sundown Bakery 2



#### 1 Communicating at Work 4

##### Communication and Career Success 5

##### The Nature of Communication 7

Communication Principles 7

Basics of the Communication Model 9

Communication Channels 10

##### Communicating in and beyond Organizations 13

Formal Communication Networks 13

Informal Communication Networks 17

Personal Networking 19

##### Ethical Dimensions of Communication 22

Master the Chapter 25

Review Points 25

Key Terms 25

Activities 25

References 27



#### 2 Communication, Culture, and Work 30

##### The Nature of Culture 32 Communication in a Diverse Society 33

Race and Ethnicity 34

Social Class 35

Generational Differences 35

Regional Differences 37

Disabilities 38

Sex and Gender 39

Military Veterans 41

##### Cultural Differences in International Business 41

Customs and Behavior 41

Fundamental Dimensions of Cultural Diversity 45

##### Diversity and Ethical Issues 49

##### Communicating across Diversity 50

Become Culturally Literate 51

Develop Constructive Attitudes 51

Adapt Your Behavior 52

Master the Chapter 53

Review Points 53

Key Terms 53

Activities 53

References 55

## part two

### Personal Skills Strategic Case: Omnicom Marketing 60



#### 3 Listening 62

##### Listening at Work 63

The Importance of Listening 63

Assumptions about Listening 64

##### Barriers to Effective Listening 66

- Environmental Barriers 66
- Physiological Barriers 66
- Psychological Barriers 67

## **Listening Styles 69**

- Relational Listening 69
- Analytical Listening 69
- Task-Oriented Listening 69
- Critical Listening 70

## **Listening More Effectively 70**

- Listening to Understand 70
- Listening to Evaluate 74

Master the Chapter 76

*Review Points* 76

*Key Terms* 76

*Activities* 76

*References* 78

©Wavebreakmedia/  
Shutterstock.com RF



## **4 Verbal and Nonverbal Messages 80**

### **Verbal Messages 82**

- Clarity and Ambiguity 82
- Inflammatory Language 88
- Language and Identity Management 90
- Feminine and Masculine Language Use 91

### **Nonverbal Communication 94**

- Characteristics of Nonverbal Communication 95
- Types of Nonverbal Communication 97
- Improving Nonverbal Effectiveness 104

Master the Chapter 108

*Review Points* 108

*Key Terms* 108

*Activities* 108

*References* 112

©Dean Drobot/  
Shutterstock.com RF



## **5 Interpersonal Skills and Success 116**

### **Interpersonal Skills and Success 117**

- Building Positive Relationships 117
- Affirming Dignity 118
- Enhancing Organizational Climate 119

### **Sharing Feedback 119**

- Giving Praise 119
- Raising Difficult Issues 121
- Offering and Responding to Criticism 124

### **Dealing with Difficult People and Situations 128**

- Incivility 129
- Workplace Bullying 130
- Sexual Harassment 133
- Problematic Communication 135

### **Managing Conflict 136**

- Causes of Conflict 136
- Approaches to Conflict 137
- Handling Conflicts Constructively 140

Master the Chapter 145

*Review Points* 145

*Key Terms* 146

*Activities* 146

*References* 148

©LWA/Larry Williams/  
Blend Images RF



## **6 Principles of Interviewing 152**

### **Types of Interviews 154**

- The Information-Gathering Interview 154
- The Career Research Interview 155



- The Employment Interview 160
- The Performance Appraisal Interview 178

## **Interviewing Strategies 181**

- Planning the Interview 181
- Conducting the Interview 183

## **The Ethics of Interviewing 189**

- Obligations of the Interviewer 189
- Obligations of the Respondent 190

Master the Chapter 191

*Review Points* 191

*Key Terms* 191

*Activities* 192

*References* 194

- Promote Desirable Norms 215
- Promote an Optimal Level of Cohesiveness 217
- Avoid Excessive Conformity 219

Master the Chapter 221

*Review Points* 221

*Key Terms* 221

*Activities* 221

*References* 223

©Rawpixel.com/  
Shutterstock.com RF



## **8 Effective Meetings 226**

## **part three**

## **Working in Groups Strategic Case: Museum of Springfield 196**

©Rawpixel.com/  
Shutterstock.com RF



## **7 Leading and Working in Teams 198**

## **The Nature of Teams 200**

- Characteristics of Workgroups 200
- What Makes a Group a Team? 202
- Virtual Teams 203

## **Leadership and Influence in Teams 204**

- Perspectives on Leadership 204
- Leader–Member Exchange 207
- Becoming a Leader 208
- Power and Influence of Members 209

## **Effective Communication in Teams 212**

- Fill Functional Roles 212
- Recognize Both Team and Personal Goals 212

## **Types of Meetings 227**

- Information-Sharing Meetings 228
- Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Meetings 228
- Ritual Activities 228

## **Virtual Meetings 229**

- Conference Calls 229
- Web Conferences 230
- Video Conferences 230
- Collaborative Technologies 230

## **Planning a Meeting 231**

- When to Hold a Meeting 231
- Setting an Agenda 234
- Pre-Meeting Work 236

## **Conducting the Meeting 237**

- Setting the Tone 237
- Conducting Business 238
- Concluding the Meeting 244
- Following Up the Meeting 245

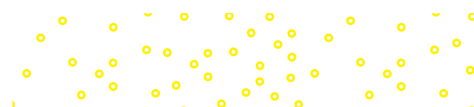
Master the Chapter 247

*Review Points* 247

*Key Terms* 248

*Activities* 248

*References* 249



## part four

### **Making Effective Presentations Strategic Case: Fresh Air Sports 252**

©Stockbyte/  
Getty Images RF



### **9 Developing and Organizing the Presentation 254**

#### **Analyzing the Situation 257**

- Analyzing the Audience 257
- Analyzing Yourself as the Speaker 261
- Analyzing the Occasion 263

#### **Setting Your Goal and Developing the Thesis 264**

- General and Specific Goals 265
- Developing the Thesis 267

#### **Organizing the Body 268**

- Brainstorming Ideas 268
- Basic Organizational Plan 268
- Identify Main Points and Subpoints 270
- Choose the Best Organizational  
Pattern 271
- Rules for Main Points 278

#### **Planning the Introduction and the Conclusion 280**

- Functions of the Introduction 281
- Types of Opening Statements 282
- Functions of the Conclusion 285
- Types of Closing Statements 286

#### **Adding Transitions 286**

- Functions of Transitions 287
- Characteristics of Effective Transitions 288

Master the Chapter 289

*Review Points* 289

*Key Terms* 289

*Activities* 290

*References* 292

©Charts and Table/  
Shutterstock.com RF



### **10 Verbal and Visual Support in Presentations 294**

#### **Functions of Supporting Material 295**

- Clarity 296
- Interest 296
- Proof 297

#### **Verbal Support 297**

- Definitions 297
- Examples 298
- Stories 299
- Statistics 301
- Comparisons 303
- Quotations 304
- Citing Your Sources 304

#### **Visual Aids 305**

- Types of Visual Aids 306
- Media for Presenting Visual Aids 312
- Presentation Software 314
- Guidelines for Using Visual Aids 317

Master the Chapter 320

*Review Points* 320

*Key Terms* 320

*Activities* 320

*References* 322





## 11 Delivering the Presentation 324

### Types of Delivery 325

- Manuscript Presentations 326
- Memorized Presentations 326
- Extemporaneous Presentations 327
- Impromptu Presentations 328

### Guidelines for Delivery 329

- Visual Elements 329
- Verbal Elements 333
- Vocal Elements 335

### Question-and-Answer Sessions 336

- When to Answer Questions 336
- How to Manage Questions 338

### Speaking with Confidence 340

- Accept a Moderate Amount of Nervousness 341
- Speak More Often 341
- Rehearse Your Presentation 342
- Focus on Your Topic and the Audience 342
- Think Rationally about Your Presentation 342

### Master the Chapter 344

*Review Points 344*

*Key Terms 344*

*Activities 345*

*References 347*



## 12 Types of Business Presentations 348

### Informative Presentations 349

- Briefings 349
- Reports 351

Training 354

Webinars 359

Press Conferences 361

### Persuasive Presentations 362

- Types of Persuasive Presentations 363
- Strategies for Ethical Persuasion 367

### Group Presentations 376

- Approaches to Organizing a Group Presentation 377
- Introductions, Conclusions, and Transitions in Group Presentations 377
- Delivering a Group Presentation 378

### Special-Occasion Speaking 378

- Welcoming a Guest or Group 379
- Introducing Another Speaker 379
- Honoring a Person or an Institution 381
- Giving a Toast 381
- Presenting an Award 382
- Accepting an Award 383

Master the Chapter 384

*Review Points 384*

*Key Terms 385*

*Activities 386*

*References 387*

### Appendix I: Interviewing Materials 390

### Appendix II: Business Writing 400

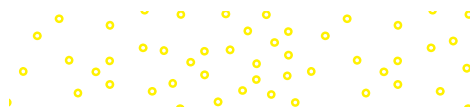
### Appendix III: Problem-Solving Communication 425

### Appendix IV: Sample Presentations 432

### Appendix V: Crisis Communication 443

Glossary 447

Index 454



# Communicating at Work

**Strategies for Success in  
Business and the Professions**



# PART ONE



©Ingram Publishing RF

## STRATEGIC CASE

### Sundown Bakery

When Carol Teinchek and Bruce Marshall first started Sundown Bakery, the business was fairly simple: Carol ran the shop up front, while Bruce ran the bakery and ordered supplies. When the business began to grow, Carol hired two part-time clerks to help out in the shop. Marina had moved to the country two years earlier from El Salvador, and Kim was a newly arrived Korean working his way through college. Bruce hired Maurice, a French Canadian, as an assistant.

The ovens were soon running 24 hours a day, supervised by Maurice, who was now master baker, and two assistants on each of three shifts. Marina and Kim supervised the shop because Carol was usually too busy managing general sales distribution to spend much time with customers. Bruce still spent 3 or 4 hours a day in the bakery whenever he could get out of his office, but he devoted most of that time to coordinating production and solving problems with Maurice.

Over the next year, Sundown expanded from its original location, adding two new shops as well as two kiosks in local malls. Carol and Bruce hired an operations manager, Hans Mikelson, formerly a regional manager of a national chain of coffee shops. Hans had plenty of new ideas about how to operate an expanding business: He launched a website, added an extensive range of drinks and meal items to the menu, and instituted two dress codes—one for all counter help and another for kitchen employees. He also put together an employee manual to streamline the process of orienting new employees. Hans announced all of these changes by memos, which store managers distributed to the employees.

Sundown's expanding size led to a change in the company. The "family feeling" that had been so strong when Sundown was a small operation became less noticeable. The new employees barely knew Bruce and Carol; as a result, there was less give-and-take of ideas between the owners and workers.

Hans's memos on the dress code and the employee manual created a crisis. Old-time employees were furious about receiving orders from "the bureaucrats," as management came to be called. Bruce and Carol recognized the problem and wanted to keep the lines of communication open, but they weren't sure how to do so. "I'm just a baker," Bruce confessed in exasperation. "I don't know how to run a big company."

Another set of challenges grew out of the changing character of the employees. In the original location alone, Sundown now employed workers from seven different countries. José, who was born in Brazil, confessed to Bruce that he felt uncomfortable being managed by Carol. "It's nothing personal," he said, "but where I come from, a man doesn't take orders from a woman." The Sundown employees profile was different in other ways as well: Two of the assistant bakers were openly gay; one of the sales clerks got around by wheelchair.

Carol, Bruce, and Hans know that good products alone aren't enough to guarantee Sundown Bakery's continuing success. They need to improve the quality of communication among the growing team who make and sell their products.

# Basics of Business and Professional Communication

**As you read the chapters in this unit, consider the following questions:**

## chapter 1

1. Apply the Communication Model (see Figure 1.1) to analyze Hans's communication to employees regarding the employee manual and uniforms. Consider the impact of the sender, message, decoding, feedback, context, and probable sources of noise. Which elements seem to contribute most to the apparent lack of shared understanding?
2. Identify the changes that have occurred in the communication channels between employees and management as Sundown Bakery has grown. Suggest alternative communication strategies that might have reduced employee resentment. Explain why these channels could help improve management's communication about workplace changes. How might an organization's culture affect its choice of communication channels?
3. Identify the instrumental, relational, and identity messages that employees seem to have received from management as Sundown's business grew. Which functions of downward communication do you notice? Can you find examples of upward and horizontal communication in this case study? How could Sundown improve its upward communication flow?
4. How have Sundown's formal and informal communication networks changed as the company expanded? In which ways have both the formal and informal networks contributed to Sundown's growing pains? In which ways can these networks be used to improve the relationships between management and employees?

## chapter 2

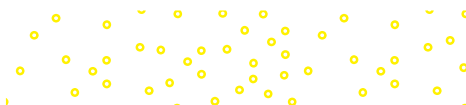
1. How do the changes in the demographic makeup of Sundown Bakery reflect transformation of the larger workforce as described in Communication in a Diverse Society on pp. 33–41?
2. Reflect on the six parts of the Customs and Behavior section, pp. 41–45. Cite a specific instance or predict the impact of three of these customs and behaviors in this workplace.
3. Consider the following hidden dimensions of culture as you describe the impact of culture on communication within the company: high- and low-context styles, individualism and collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity, and long-term orientation.
4. Using the guidelines on pp. 50–52 (Communicating across Diversity), which specific advice would you give to Sundown's management team about how to communicate most effectively in the face of the company's growth?



©PhotoAlto/James Hardy/  
Alamy Stock Photo RF

# Chapter One

## Communicating at Work





## chapter outline

### Communication and Career Success

#### The Nature of Communication

Communication Principles

Basics of the Communication Model

Communication Channels

#### Communicating in and beyond Organizations

Formal Communication Networks

Informal Communication Networks

Personal Networking

#### Ethical Dimensions of Communication

## chapter objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Explain the role of communication in career success, providing examples to support your claims.
2. Apply the key principles of communication, knowledge of the basic elements of the communication model, and considerations of effective communication channel use to a specific situation, showing how each one affects the outcome of the interaction.
3. Describe how formal and informal communication networks operate in a given situation in your career field; then create a strategic plan of personal networking to accomplish your goals within an organization.
4. Apply the concepts of ethical communication discussed here to one or more ethically challenging situations.

## • Communication and Career Success

The next time you look for job postings online, read the help wanted section of the newspaper, or check out internship opportunities at your college's career services office, look a little closer. No matter which type of position you are seeking—from an entry-level job to a highly technical professional position—chances are you will see “excellent communication skills” listed as a job requirement.

Regardless of which occupations they pursue, people spend a staggering amount of time communicating on the job. Engineers spend most of their professional lives speaking and listening, mostly in one-to-one and small group settings.<sup>1</sup> Accountants may crunch numbers, but they also need to communicate effectively to serve their clients. That is why certified public accountants (CPAs) and the firms that hire them consistently cite effective communication as essential for career success.<sup>2</sup> One study, based on responses from more than 1,000 employees at *Fortune* 1000 companies, found that workers send and receive an average of 178 messages each day via telephone, e-mail, faxes, text messages, blogs, instant messages, and face-to-face

communication.<sup>3</sup> Some experts have estimated that the average business executive spends 75 to 80 percent of his or her time communicating—more than 45 minutes of every hour.<sup>4</sup>

When it comes to communication, quality matters in almost every career<sup>5</sup>—not just those traditionally regarded as people oriented. On-the-job communication skills can even make the difference between life and death. The Los Angeles Police Department cited “bad communication” as one of the most common reasons for errors in shooting by its officers.<sup>6</sup> Communication skills are also essential for doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals.<sup>7</sup> In one study, “poor communication” was identified as the root of more than 60 percent of reported medical errors—including errors leading to death, serious physical injury, and psychological trauma.<sup>8</sup> A survey by a major hospital accreditation group found communication woes to be among the leading sources of medical errors, causing as many as 98,000 deaths each year.<sup>9</sup> Research published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and elsewhere suggests there is a significant difference between the communication skills of physicians who have no malpractice claims against them and doctors with previous claims.<sup>10</sup>

## Recovering from a Communication Blunder

Communication plays an important role in business. Miscommunication in the workplace is stressful and costly. The results of a study conducted by Joseph Grenny and David Maxfield, authors of *Crucial Conversations* and cofounders of VitalSmarts, a Twenty-Eighty, Inc. company, indicate that 83% of employees

have witnessed their colleagues say something that has had a catastrophic impact on their careers, reputations, and businesses.

To recover from most common blunders: *acknowledge* how others feel, *admit* when you have made a mistake, and express *sincere* regret.

Source: Adapted from “The Top Five One-Sentence Career Killers” *VitalSmarts*. (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.vitalsmarts.com>

Communication skills are essential to personal career success. Employees in technical careers who have effective communication skills earn more money than their counterparts who are weak communicators.<sup>11</sup> A survey of corporate recruiters revealed that effective communication skills and the ability to work with others are the main factors contributing to job success. People with MBAs reported that the skills they valued most were the ability to work with others, listening, the ability to influence others, and communicating with diplomacy and tact.<sup>12</sup> William Schaffer, an international business development manager for computer giant Sun Microsystems, made this point most emphatically: “If there’s one skill that’s required for success in this industry, it’s communication skills.”<sup>13</sup> Executive coach and pharmaceutical recruiter Jim Richman echoed this sentiment: “If I give any advice, it is that you can never do enough training around your overall communication skills.”<sup>14</sup> Table 1-1 summarizes the results of one annual survey in which employers list the skills and qualities for their ideal candidate. Communication skills always are near the top of the list.<sup>15</sup>

Many people fail to realize the full extent of the role of communication in career success. One survey revealed that students were half as likely as employers to recognize the key role that communication skills play in becoming an effective professional.<sup>16</sup> Just as disturbing was the finding that students are more likely than employers to believe they are good communicators. In other words, many students underestimate the importance of good communication while overstating their own abilities. That is not a recipe for success.

Because communication skills are an essential ingredient in professional and organizational accomplishment, this book is dedicated to helping you hone your talents in this important area.

**Table 1-1**

**Top Qualities/Skills Employers Seek on a Candidate’s Résumé**

1. Leadership
2. Ability to work in a team
3. Communication skills (written)
4. Problem-solving skills
5. Communication skills (verbal)

Source: *Job Outlook 2016*, National Association of Colleges and Employers.

## • The Nature of Communication

Communication looks simple and almost effortless, especially when it goes smoothly. But every communicative exchange is affected by principles that are not always apparent. Understanding this process better can help you make strategic choices that help achieve both personal and organizational goals.

### Communication Principles

A more sophisticated understanding of how communication operates begins with some fundamental principles.

**Communication Is Unavoidable** A fundamental axiom of communication is “One cannot not communicate.”<sup>17</sup> As you will learn in Chapter 4, facial expression, posture, gesture, clothing, and a host of other behaviors offer cues about our attitudes. The notion that we are always communicating means we send messages even by our absence. Failing to show up at an event or leaving the room suggests meaning to others. Because communication is unavoidable, it is essential to consider the unintentional messages you send.

**Communication Is Strategic** Almost all communication is aimed at achieving goals. On the job, the most obvious type is **instrumental communication**, or messages aimed at accomplishing the task at hand. Your manager is communicating instrumentally when she says, “I need that report by noon,” and you are pursuing instrumental goals when you ask, “How long does the report need to be?” People are not always direct in their communication about instrumental goals. Saying, “Wow—look at the time!” could be an implicit message designed to accomplish the task of ending a conversation. Furthermore, in a negotiation, your “final offer” may actually be a bargaining ploy to get a better deal.

A second set of goals involves **relational communication**, or messages that shape and reflect the way people regard one another. Building positive relationships is not just about being sociable; a positive climate in the workplace also helps us accomplish instrumental goals. Conversely, a negative relationship can make it difficult, or even impossible, to accomplish the task at hand.

Virtually all messages contain both instrumental and relational dimensions. When a customer service representative asks, “How can I help you?” the instrumental nature of this question is obvious. But the *way* the question is asked shapes the tenor of the relationship between the rep and the customer—rushed or deliberate, sincere or phony, friendly or unfriendly.<sup>18</sup>

A third, less obvious reason we communicate involves **identity management**, which is the practice of presenting yourself in ways that produce a preferred image and distinctive sense of self. To understand this concept, list 10 words or phrases that describe the way you would like others to see you on the job. Your list probably includes terms such as *competent*, *trustworthy*, and *efficient*. (Be sure to complete your own list before reading on.) Taken together, the attributes on this list (and many others) make up the professional identity you want to create. Next, think about the ways you communicate, both verbally and nonverbally, to get others to accept your identity. If being calm under pressure is part



©Yellow Dog Productions/The Image Bank/Getty Images



of your preferred identity, what do you say or do to project that quality? If you want others to see you as knowledgeable, how do you communicate to create that impression?

As these examples show, communication is often *strategic*; in other words, we intentionally craft messages for the purpose of achieving instrumental, relational, and identity goals. However, we do not always realize that we are being strategic in our communication. Think about the last time you met a new person. You probably did not have the following thoughts running through your mind: “Must look confident and friendly! Firm handshake! Direct eye contact! Remember to smile!” While many of these behaviors are performed subconsciously, crafting a thoughtful strategy to achieve your goals can boost the odds you will succeed.

The authors of this book suggest a variety of communication strategies you can use to achieve your goals and the goals of the organizations with which you are involved. Many of these strategies focus on specific work-related contexts, such as interviews, meetings, and presentations. Others will be useful in almost every professional context where you want to enhance your professional identity, manage relationships, and get the job done most effectively.

At first, the notion of strategic communication might seem unethical. In reality, communicating purposefully is not necessarily dishonest. For example, organizational spokespersons must be strategic in how they phrase their messages when communicating with the public during a crisis event. If family members are grieving over the loss of a loved one due to a workplace accident, a spokesperson may strategically choose to acknowledge that they are hurting, rather than saying, “I know how you feel.” The guidelines on pp. 22–24 show that it is possible to be strategic while still respecting others’ rights and needs.

**Communication Is Irreversible** At one time or another, everyone has wished they could take back words they regretted uttering. Unfortunately, this is not possible. Our words and deeds are recorded in others’ memories, and we cannot erase them. As the old saying goes, people may forgive, but they do not forget. In fact, the more vigorously you try to erase an act, the more vividly it may stand out.

**Communication Is a Process** It is not accurate to talk about an “act” of communication, as if sending or receiving a message were an isolated event. Rather, every communication event needs to be examined as part of its communication context. As an example, suppose your boss responds to your request for a raise by saying, “I was going to ask you to take a *cut* in pay!” How would you react? The answer probably depends on several factors: Is your boss a joker or a serious person? How does the comment fit into the history of your relationship—have your boss’s remarks been critical or supportive in the past? How does the message fit with ones you have received from other people? What kind of mood are you in today? All these questions show that the meaning of a message depends in part on what has happened before the message. Each message is part of a process: It does not occur in isolation.

**Communication Is Not a Panacea** *Panacea* comes from the Greek word *panakeia*, meaning “all-healing.” Just as alchemists during the Renaissance believed there was an elixir that would give eternal life, some individuals today believe that communication is a cure-all for all problems. Although communication can certainly smooth out the bumps and straighten the road to success, misunderstandings and ill feelings may still occur.<sup>19</sup> Even effective communication cannot solve all problems. In some situations, the parties may understand one another perfectly yet still disagree. These limitations are important to understand as you begin to study communication on the job. Boosting your communication skills may increase your effectiveness, but improvements in those skills will not be a remedy for every situation that you encounter.

## Derogatory E-mails Lead to Firings

Three employees of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission learned the hard way that digital gossip can be costly. They were fired after supervisors found they had used the state's e-mail system to disparage and ridicule coworkers. The culprits referred to colleagues by offensive nicknames, such as Monster, Psycho, Stoned Intern, Roid Rage, Extreme Makeover, Where's My Car?, and Albino. A representative message read,

"Where's My Car and Psycho are talking about food—a match made in stoner/fatty heaven!"

The workers called their e-mails harmless office chatter. "It was just talk, water cooler chat," one protested. An administrative law judge disagreed, characterizing their messages as "misconduct" that disqualified them for unemployment insurance benefits.

Source: Foley, R. J., "Email Exchanges Gets Three Iowa Civil Rights Investigators Fired," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, August 22, 2011.

## Basics of the Communication Model

No matter what the setting is or how many people are involved, all communication consists of the same elements. Understanding those elements can help explain what happens when one person tries to express an idea to others. It can also offer clues about why some of these attempts succeed and others fail.

The communication process begins with a **sender**, the person who transmits a **message**.<sup>20</sup> Some messages are deliberate, whereas others (such as sighs and yawns) may be unintentional. The sender must choose specific words or nonverbal methods to send an intentional message. This activity is called **encoding**. The **channel** (sometimes called the *medium*) is the method used to deliver a message. You will read much more about channels in the next section.

Even when a message reaches its intended receiver intact, there is no guarantee it will be understood as the sender intended it to be.<sup>21</sup> The **receiver** must still attach meaning to the words or behavior. Receivers actively interpret and respond to the messages they have received, both unintentionally and intentionally. The process of a receiver attaching meaning to a message—such as when a teacher interprets a student's yawn as meaning the student is bored by the lecture—is called **decoding**.

Misunderstandings often arise because messages can be decoded, or interpreted, in more than one way. Consider a situation when a customer responds to a slip-up by saying, "Don't worry about it." Perhaps the literal statement is accurate: "There's absolutely no need to worry." Or perhaps the customer means, "It isn't perfect, but I can tolerate the mistake." The customer could also be annoyed yet not want to say bluntly, "I'm really unhappy." In the coming chapters, you will learn a variety of strategies for reaching a shared understanding in these situations.

The receiver's discernible response to a sender's message is called **feedback**. Some feedback is nonverbal—smiles, sighs, frowns, and so on. Sometimes it is verbal, as when you react to a colleague's ideas with questions or comments. Feedback can also be written, as when you respond by writing an e-mail to your coworker. In many cases, the lack of a message is a type of feedback. Failure to answer a letter or to return a phone call, for example, can suggest how a receiver feels about the sender.

Even though we have described sending and receiving as discrete roles, communication is actually a two-way process. Especially when communication is instantaneous—in face-to-face settings, phone conversations, and online chat—people are simultaneously senders and receivers. Imagine pitching an idea (sending a message) to your manager (receiver). While listening to your idea, your manager frowns (sending feedback), and you immediately attempt to adjust your communication (receiver). Both of you are sending and

receiving messages at the same time. Because sending and receiving are simultaneous and connected, these two roles are combined into the “communicator” positions represented on both sides of the model pictured in Figure 1.1.

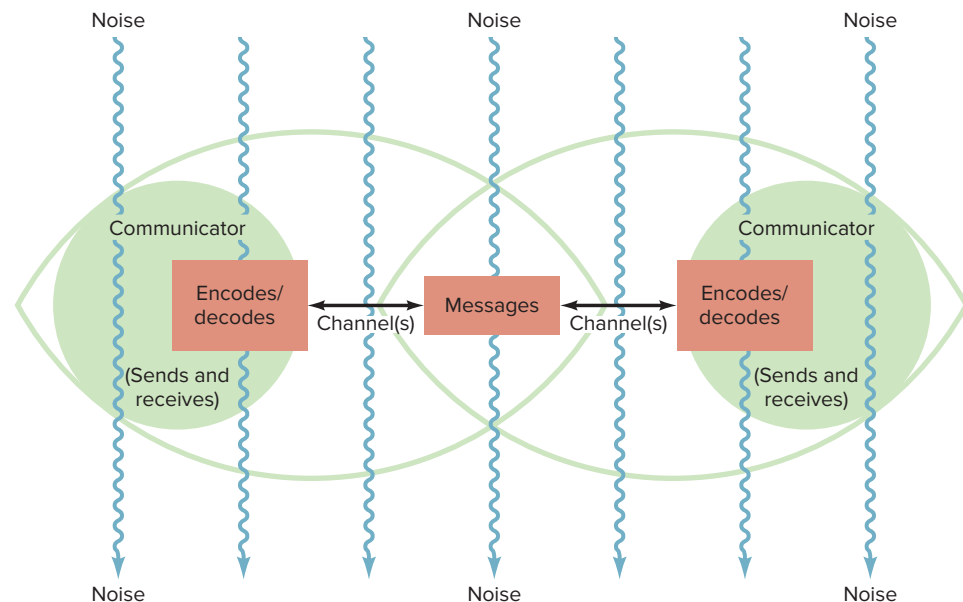
Once you understand that receiving and sending are simultaneous and connected, you start to recognize that successful communication is not something active senders do to passive receivers. Rather, it is a collaborative process in which the participants create a shared understanding through the exchange of messages. In other words, communication is not something we do *to* others, but rather a process we do *with* them. An effective way to build shared meaning is to practice other-orientation—that is, to try to understand the other person’s viewpoint, whether or not we agree with it. Feedback helps us in this process of building shared meaning.

One of the greatest barriers to effective communication is **noise**—factors that interfere with the exchange of messages. The most obvious type of noise is *environmental*, or based on the communicators’ surroundings. The babble of voices in the next room, the annoying ring of someone’s cell phone in a meeting, and a smelly cigar are all examples of environmental noise. A second type of noise is *physiological*—physical issues such as hearing disorders, illnesses, disabilities, and other factors that make it difficult to send or receive messages. To appreciate the impact of physiological noise, recall how tough it is to process messages when you are recovering from a late-night study session or have a headache. The third type of noise is *psychological*—forces within the sender or the receiver that interfere with understanding, such as egotism, defensiveness, assumptions, stereotypes, biases, prejudices, hostility, preoccupation, and fear. If you were thinking strategically about communicating with someone at work, what steps could you take to reduce the amount of noise in your environment before delivering your message?

## Communication Channels

As a business communicator, the channel you choose to deliver your message can have a big influence on your effectiveness. Should you express your ideas in a phone call? Put them into a text message or e-mail? Send them via fax or in hard copy? Or should you express yourself in person? Deciding which communication channel to use is not a trivial matter; communication researchers have extensively studied which factors lead to

**FIGURE 1.1**  
Communication  
Model



good channel choice.<sup>22</sup> To select the best channel, you should consider several aspects related to the communication.

**Consider Channel Characteristics** New technologies have given businesspeople a wider range of choices for communication than ever before. It was not that long ago when the choices were in-person communication, telephone call, fax, pager message, or written memo. Today, other options include e-mail message, voice mail, instant messaging, video conferencing, web conferencing, social media, cell phone call, texting, and more. One way to start evaluating these choices is to consider each how channel's different characteristics match up with your communication goals.

- *Richness.* Richness refers to the amount of information that can be transmitted using a given channel. Three aspects determine the richness of a channel: (1) whether it can handle many types of cues at once, (2) whether it allows for quick feedback from both senders and receivers, and (3) whether it allows for a personal focus.<sup>23</sup> Ideally, when announcing an important decision that may affect employees (e.g., the acquisition of another company), you would select a rich channel to convey this information. Face-to-face communication would likely be preferred in such a situation because it allows for the communication and decoding of verbal and nonverbal cues, simultaneous feedback, and a personal focus. In contrast, lean channels carry much less information. While a lean e-mail channel is a good choice for exchanging information efficiently, it is not as effective when factors such as tone and emotion are important. Even the inclusion of emoticons such as “smiley faces” may not prevent e-mail misunderstandings.<sup>24</sup>
- *Speed.* Speed of the channel refers to how quickly the exchange of messages occurs. High-speed or instantaneous channels support **synchronous communication**; they include face-to-face conversations, video chat, and telephone conversations. A key benefit of synchronous channels is that no time lag separates the transmission and reception of messages, so immediate feedback is possible. That is, you can respond to questions as soon as they arise and rephrase or elaborate as necessary. If you need a price quote *now*, or if you need to discuss a complex idea that will need elaboration, a high-speed channel is probably the best choice. Nevertheless, high-speed, synchronous communication is not always desirable. Another option is **asynchronous communication**, which occurs through channels such as e-mail, interoffice memos, and voice mail. In these “low-speed” channels, there is a lag between the transmission and reception of messages. These channels can be effective for less urgent requests. In addition, if you want to avoid a knee-jerk reaction and encourage careful thought, you might be better off choosing an asynchronous method to deliver your message.
- *Control.* Control refers to the degree to which you can manage the communication process. Of course, because communication is a two-way process, you can never have complete control over it. Even so, different channels offer different types of control. In written channels (such as e-mail and social media posts), you can exert more control over how you encode a message because you will be able to write, proofread, and edit it as many times as you need until you get it exactly the way you want. If you have something highly sensitive to say, this might be a good channel to choose. But there are also some trade-offs to this kind of channel. Even though you might spend hours drafting a memo, letter, or report, the recipient may scan it superficially or not read it at all. In contrast, in a face-to-face channel, you have much more control over the receiver's attention. You can reduce noise, interpret nonverbal signals of understanding, or even explicitly ask the sender to pay more attention to your message.

**Consider the Desired Tone of Your Message** In general, channels that utilize oral communication—face-to-face, telephone, video conference—are best for communicating messages that have a personal dimension. One corporate manager, whose company spends more than \$4 million annually on employee travel, makes the case for face-to-face contact: “Nothing takes the place of a handshake, going to lunch, seeing their eyes.”<sup>25</sup> These types of channels are also best for ideas that have a strong need for visual support, in the form of a demonstration, photos or slides, and so on. Spoken communication is also especially useful when immediate feedback is needed, such as in question-and-answer sessions or as a quick reply to your ideas.

Written communication works well when you want your message to have a relatively formal tone. Writing is almost always the best medium when you must choose your words carefully. Writing is also better than speaking when you want to convey complicated ideas that are likely to require much study and thought on the part of the receiver. Likewise, it is smart to put your message in writing when you want it to be the final word, with no feedback or discussion. Finally, writing is the best option for *any* message if you want a record of that communication. In business and the professions, sending confirming letters and e-mails is common practice, as is keeping meeting minutes. These steps guarantee that what is said will be a matter of record, with the documentation being useful in case of later misunderstandings or disputes and in case anyone wants to review the history of an issue. Handwritten notes of thanks or sympathy also express thoughtfulness and add a personal touch that is lost in many electronic messages.

**Consider the Organization’s Culture** Besides message-related considerations, the culture of the organization in which you work may favor some communication channels over others.<sup>26</sup> For example, Microsoft Corporation is so e-mail intensive that some voice mail greetings include the directive, “If you’re from Microsoft, please try to send electronic mail.” In other organizations, voice mail is the preferred channel. Kirk Froggatt, a vice president at Silicon Graphics, offers one explanation: “There’s something fundamentally more personal about voice mail. You can get the tone of voice, the passion. People like that.”<sup>27</sup> A recent study even indicated that employees who followed corporate norms for e-mail and instant messaging received higher performance evaluations.<sup>28</sup> Along with an organization’s overall preference for certain channels, it is important to consider the preferences of particular departments or even individuals. For example, the computer support staff members in some organizations respond to e-mails, while in other companies a phone call to the help desk is the best way to get a quick response. If you know a coworker or your boss responds only to face-to-face reminders, your best bet is to use that approach.

**Consider Using Multiple Channels** In some cases, it is wise to send a message using more than one channel. For example, you could:

- Distribute a written text or outline that parallels your presentation.
- Follow a letter, fax, or e-mail message with a phone call, or call first and then write.
- Send a report or proposal, and then make appointments with your readers to discuss it.

This redundancy capitalizes on the diverse strengths of the various channels and boosts the odds of getting your desired message across. One study revealed that following up a face-to-face exchange with an e-mail that included supplemental information was more persuasive than the single-channel approach. The dual-channel approach also enhanced the sender’s credibility.<sup>29</sup>

Sometimes channel selection involves trade-offs. For example, face-to-face communication is rich and fast, and it allows you to have much control over the receiver’s attention. It also has the potential to create personal bonds that are more difficult to forge

## The Virtues of Going Offline

Today's array of communication technologies makes it possible to be connected to others on a nearly around-the-clock basis. This 24/7 connectivity has led to a dramatic growth in teleworking and telecommuting—flexible work arrangements in which employees do their jobs outside the office. Along with their benefits, however, the technologies that keep workers connected have a downside. When your boss, colleagues, and customers can reach you at any time, you can become too distracted to tackle necessary parts of your job.

Communication researchers have discovered that remote workers have developed two strategies for

reducing contact and thereby increasing their efficiency.<sup>30</sup> The first simply involves disconnecting from time to time—logging off the computer, forwarding the phone call to voice mail, or simply ignoring incoming messages. The researchers labeled the second strategy *dissimulation*. With this approach, teleworkers discourage contact by disguising their activities—for example, changing their instant message status to “in a meeting” or posting a fake “out of the office” message online.

It's important to note that these strategies are typically used not to avoid work but rather to get more done. Too much connectivity is similar to many aspects of life: More is not always better.

through other types of communication. Unfortunately, personal contacts can be difficult to schedule, even when people work in the same building. A cross-town trip for a half-hour meeting can consume most of the morning or afternoon.

Ultimately, the question is not which communication channel to use, but when to use each one most effectively.<sup>31</sup> Knowing how to choose the optimal channel can have a strong impact on your career. In one survey, managers who were identified as “media sensitive”—those who carefully matched the channel to the message—were almost twice as likely to receive top ratings in their performance reviews when compared with less-media-sensitive peers.<sup>32</sup> Table 1-2 presents some guidelines that will help you decide how to deliver your message most effectively.

## • Communicating in and beyond Organizations

For most of us, work is collaborative. Whether the people we work with are in adjacent cubicles or on the other side of the world, we are members of **communication networks**—patterns of contact created by the flow of messages among communicators through time and space.<sup>33</sup> Two kinds of networks exist: formal and informal.

## Formal Communication Networks

**Formal communication networks** are systems designed by management that dictate who should communicate with whom to get a job done. In small organizations, these “chain of command” networks are so simple they may hardly be noticeable. In larger organizations, they become more intricate. The most common way of describing formal communication networks is with **organizational charts** like the one in Figure 1.2. Organizational charts are more than just a bureaucrat's toy: They provide clear guidelines indicating who is responsible for a given task and which employees are responsible for others' performance. They also depict optimal flows of communication, including downward, upward, and horizontal communication.

**Downward Communication** **Downward communication**, sometimes referred to as top-down communication, occurs whenever leaders or managers send messages to

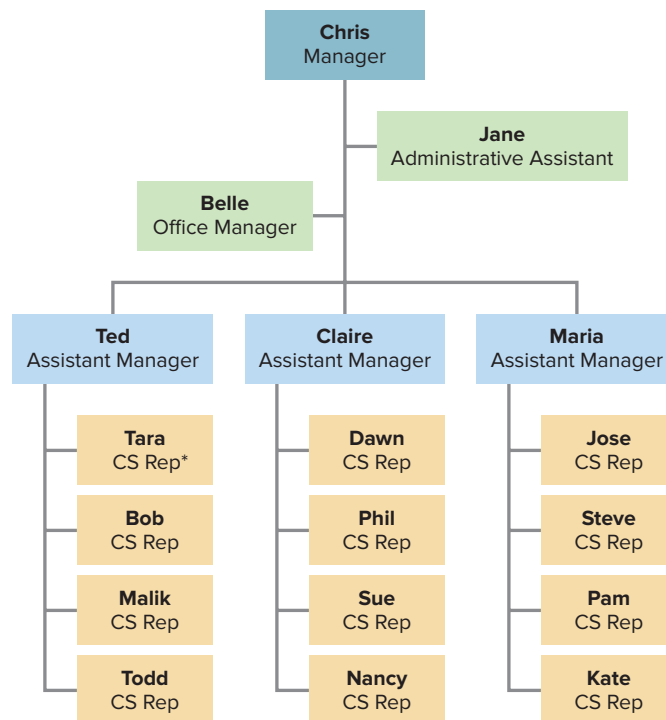


**Table 1-2****Considerations in Choosing a Communication Channel**

	Richness	Speed	Control over Message	Control over Attention	Tone	Level of Detail
<b>Face-to-Face</b>	High	Synchronous	Low	High	Personal	Moderate
<b>Telephone Teleconferencing and Videoconferencing</b>	Moderate	Synchronous	Low	Moderate	Personal	Moderate
<b>Voice Mail</b>	Moderate	Asynchronous	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Low
<b>E-mail</b>	Low	Asynchronous	High	Low	Impersonal-Moderate	High
<b>Instant Messaging</b>	Low	Asynchronous but potentially quick	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low
<b>Text Messaging</b>	Low	Asynchronous but potentially quick	High	Low	Impersonal-Moderate	Low
<b>Hard Copy (e.g., handwritten or typed message)</b>	Low	Asynchronous	High	Low	Depends on writer's style	High

**FIGURE 1.2**

A Formal  
Communication  
Network

**Organizational Chart**

\*CS Rep = Customer Service Representative



their lower-level employees. Downward communication is usually one-directional; in other words; the higher-level communicator does not invite a response from the lower-level recipient.<sup>34</sup>

Examples of downward communication include explaining an organization's mission or vision, assigning directives or giving job instructions, and providing feedback. Business communication experts John Anderson and Dale Level have identified five benefits of effective downward communication:

- Better coordination
- Improved individual performance
- Improved morale
- Improved consumer relations
- Improved industrial relations<sup>35</sup>

Most managers would agree—at least in principle—that downward communication is important. It is hard to argue with the need for giving instructions, describing procedures, explaining rationales, and so on. Like their bosses, employees recognize the importance of downward communication. A study at General Electric (GE) revealed that “clear communication between boss and worker” was the most important factor in job satisfaction for most people. GE was so impressed with the findings of this study that it launched a program to encourage managers to communicate more, and more directly, with their employees, including holding informal meetings to encourage interaction.<sup>36</sup>

The desire for feedback is probably so strong among most employees because supervisors rarely provide enough of it. As two leading researchers put it: “The frequent complaint . . . by the individual is that he [sic] does not know where he stands with his superiors.”<sup>37</sup> Many companies do take a more enlightened approach to feedback. Ed Carlson, former president of United Airlines, is generally credited with turning the company from a loser into a winner during his tenure. Part of his success was due to his emphasis on keeping United's employees—all of them—aware of how the company was doing. “Nothing is worse for morale than a lack of information down in the ranks,” he said. “I call it NETMA—Nobody Ever Tells Me Anything—and I have tried hard to minimize that problem.”<sup>38</sup> True to his word, Carlson passed along to the field staff information on United's operations that was previously considered too important to circulate.

**Upward Communication** Messages flowing from the lower levels of hierarchy to upper levels are labeled **upward communication**. Almost every organization *claims* to seek upward messages, but many supervisors are not as open to employee opinions as they purport themselves to be. In some organizations, questioning the boss can be a recipe for professional suicide. “The disconnect between rhetoric and reality is why Scott Adams [creator of the *Dilbert* comic strip] is a millionaire,” says management expert Warren Bennis.<sup>39</sup>

Businesses that truly are open to upward communication can profit from the opinions of employees.<sup>40</sup> Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart, the largest retailer in the United States, claimed that “our best ideas come from clerks and stockboys.”<sup>41</sup> Industry observers credit the dramatic turnaround of Mattel Corporation to CEO John Abernethy's openness to employee suggestions.<sup>42</sup> As the following Career Tip suggests, getting recognized by your supervisor can pave the way to career advancement.

Upward communication can convey what employees are doing, which unsolved problems they are facing, how areas might be improved, and how employees feel about one another and the workplace.<sup>43</sup> These messages can benefit both lower-level employees (subordinates) and upper-level management (superiors)—which explains why the most

## Getting Recognized by Your Bosses

According to Muriel Solomon, “The big secret to getting recognized is to give creative thinking a priority.” She and other career advisors suggest that you can showcase your talent, create interest in your work, and display your potential in several ways:

- **Present proposals to your boss.** Learn the history of a challenge, and then develop a specific plan to address it that shows creativity and understanding of the company’s needs. Do not wait for someone to recognize you or choose you for a prime assignment.
- **Volunteer to participate on committees, to chair a committee, or to sponsor a workshop, hearing, or sports event.** Create opportunities to enlarge your working relationships with people at many levels of your organization. Prepare concise summaries and submit reports to your boss.
- **Get your thoughts printed.** Contribute quality writing to company publications, department

newsletters, or association or professional journals. Distribute copies to your manager, and post on bulletin boards and company blogs.

- **Use thoughtful gestures to build bridges.** Devote 5 minutes per day to raising your visibility by thanking people who worked on your project, calling or sending thank-you notes to the supervisors of those who helped you (with a blind copy to the one whose help you received), and feeding your gratitude into the grapevine.
- **Be ready to share a story about your accomplishments.** Without bragging, be prepared to weave your accomplishments (be sure to include recent ones) into an interesting story you can tell whenever the opportunity arises: “Something like that happened to us last week. . . .”

Sources: Klaus, P., *The Hard Truth About Soft Skills*. New York, NY: Collins Business, 2007; Solomon, M., *Getting Praised, Raised and Recognized*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1993.

satisfied employees feel free to express dissent to their bosses.<sup>44</sup> Bennis emphasizes the critical role that upward communication plays in the success of an organization:

The longer I study effective leaders, the more I am convinced of the underappreciated importance of effective followers. What makes a good follower? The single most important characteristic may well be a willingness to tell the truth. In a world of growing complexity, leaders are increasingly dependent on their subordinates for good information, whether the leaders want to [be] or not. Followers who tell the truth, and leaders who listen, are an unbeatable combination.<sup>45</sup>

Despite its importance, upward communication is not always easy. Being frank with superiors can be both important and risky, especially when the news is not what the boss wants to hear.<sup>46</sup> One executive gives an example:

In my first C.E.O. job, a young woman who worked for me walked in one day and said, “Do you know that the gossip in the office is that the way for a woman to get ahead is to wear frilly spring dresses?” And I just looked at her and asked, “Where did this come from?” She said, “Well, you said, ‘pretty dress’ to four women who happened to be dressed that way. And so now it’s considered policy.”<sup>47</sup>

Some organizations have developed systems to promote upward communication in the face of potential challenges. Pillsbury Corporation employees can voice their messages on an anonymous voice mail system. An independent company creates transcripts of all calls and forwards them to Pillsbury’s CEO.<sup>48</sup>

Most of the responsibility for improving upward communication rests with managers. One recent study showed the likelihood of reporting bad news was highest when employees trusted supervisors and when there was a history in the organization of leaders resolving problems.<sup>49</sup> They can begin the process by announcing their willingness to hear from

subordinates. A number of vehicles can be used to facilitate upward messages—an open-door policy, grievance procedures, periodic interviews, group meetings, and the suggestion box, to name a few. Nevertheless, formal channels are not the only way to promote upward messages. In fact, informal contacts are often the most effective approach. Chats during breaks, in the elevator, or at social gatherings can sometimes tell more than planned sessions. Even so, no method will be effective unless a manager is sincerely interested in hearing from subordinates and genuinely values their ideas. Just talking about the desirability of upward communication is not enough; employees have to see evidence of a willingness to hear upward messages—both good and bad—before they will really open up.

**Horizontal Communication** A third type of organizational interaction is **horizontal communication** (sometimes called *lateral communication*). This type of communication occurs between people, divisions, or departments that would be considered on an equal level in the organizational hierarchy. Communications occurring among office workers in the same department, coworkers on a construction project, and teachers at a middle school are all examples of horizontal communication.

Horizontal communication serves five purposes:<sup>50</sup>

- *Task coordination*: “Let’s get together this afternoon and set up a production schedule.”
- *Problem solving*: “It takes three days for my department to get reports from yours. How can we speed things up?”
- *Sharing information*: “I just found out a big convention is coming to town next week, so we ought to get ready for lots of business.”
- *Conflict resolution*: “I’ve heard you were complaining about my work to the boss. If you’re not happy, I wish you would tell me first.”
- *Building rapport*: “I appreciate the way you got that rush job done on time. I’d like to say thanks by buying you lunch.”

Top-performing organizations encourage people from different areas to get together and share ideas. At Hewlett-Packard, Worldwide Personnel Manager Barbara Waugh and her colleagues spent five years improving horizontal communication. “My role is to create mirrors that show the whole what the parts are doing—through coffee talks and small meetings, through building a network, through bringing people together who have similar or complementary ideas.”<sup>51</sup>

Despite the importance of horizontal communication, several forces may discourage communication among peers.<sup>52</sup> *Rivalry* is one such factor. People who feel threatened by one another are not likely to be cooperative. This sense of threat can stem from competition for a promotion, a raise, or another scarce resource. Another challenge is the *specialization* required for people with different technical specialties to understand one another. A communication professor and a geographic information science professor may find it difficult to collaborate because of their individual specialties, despite being peers in the hierarchy of a university setting. *Information overload* may also discourage employees from reaching out to others in different areas. A simple *lack of motivation* is another problem. Finally, *physical barriers*, such as having offices scattered throughout different buildings, can interfere with horizontal connections.

## Informal Communication Networks

So far, we have focused on networks within organizations that are created by management. Alongside the formal networks, every organization also has **informal communication networks**—patterns of interaction based on friendships, shared personal or career interests, and proximity. One business writer described the value of informal networks:



©Sydney Shaffer/Photodisc/Getty Images RF

A firm's organizational chart will tell you about authority. It doesn't always show how things get done or created. You know the rules, but you don't know the ropes. For that, you need a map to the network, the corresponding informal structure that is usually invisible.<sup>53</sup>

Informal relationships within organizations operate in ways that have little to do with the formal relationships laid out in organizational charts.<sup>54</sup> Figure 1.3 shows how the actual flow of information in one firm is quite different from its formal structure. Moreover, beyond any sort of organizational connection, people are connected with one another through informal personal networks—with friends, neighbors, family members, and all sorts of other relationships.

Some informal networks arise because of personal interests. Two colleagues who are avid basketball fans or share a fascination with rare books are more likely to swap information about work than coworkers who have no such bonds. Personal friendships create connections that can lead to increased communication. Finally, physical proximity increases the chances for interaction. Shared office space or frequent meetings around the copying machine make it more likely that people will exchange information.

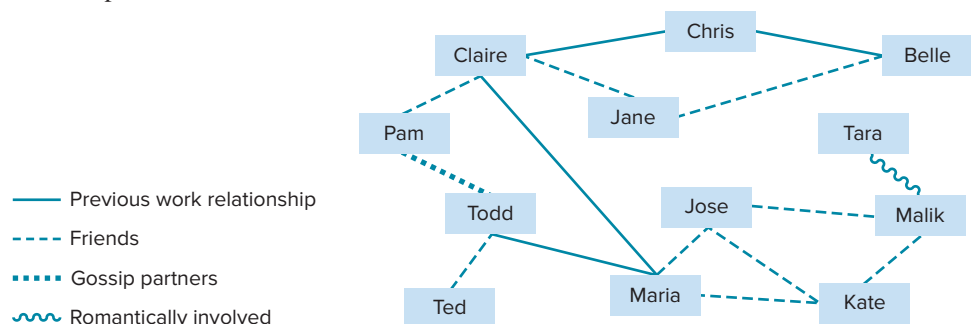
Informal networks are often a source of important job-related information, organizational resources, career advice, and social connections that help workers successfully navigate their careers. When someone is excluded from that network—even unintentionally—he or she is placed at a major disadvantage. For example, research has shown that women often are cut off from informal communication networks, and this isolation has a real impact on their ultimate career success.<sup>55</sup> The difference is even more pronounced for minority women, who face “concrete walls” that isolate them from informal relationships with superiors and peers.<sup>56</sup> It is important to identify the informal networks in your organization and try to get as involved as possible—especially if you are a woman or a minority.

**Functions of Informal Networks within Organizations** Not all informal messages are idle rumors. Informal communication can serve several useful functions:

- *Confirming formal messages:* “The boss is really serious this time about cutting down on overnight travel. I heard him yelling about it when I walked past his office.”
- *Expanding on formal messages:* “The invitation to the office party says ‘casual dress,’ but don’t make it too informal.”
- *Expediting official messages:* You might learn about openings within an organization from people in your network long before the vacancies are published.
- *Contradicting official messages:* You might learn from a friend in accounting that the deadline for purchases on this year’s budget is not as firm as it sounded in the comptroller’s recent memo.

**FIGURE 1.3**  
An Informal  
Communication  
Network

Source: Adapted from Orbe, M. P., & Bruess, C. J., *Contemporary Issues in Interpersonal Communication*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007.



- *Circumventing formal channels:* Your tennis partner who works in duplicating might sneak in an occasional rush job for you instead of putting it at the end of the line.

Many companies elevate informal communication to an official policy by encouraging open, unstructured contacts between people from various parts of the organization. Some observers consider informal contacts to be the primary means of communication within an organization. In one survey, 57 percent of the respondents said that communicating with informal contacts is “the only way to find out what’s really happening” in their organizations.<sup>57</sup> A decade of research shows engineers and scientists are five times more likely to turn to a person for information than to impersonal sources such as databases or files.<sup>58</sup>

Writing in *Harvard Business Review*, David Krackhardt and Jeffrey Hanson capture the difference between formal and informal networks: “If the formal organization is the skeleton of a company, the informal [organization] is the central nervous system.”<sup>59</sup> Like the human nervous system, informal networks are faster and often more dependable than formal channels.<sup>60</sup> They also provide a shortcut for (and sometimes a way around) the slower and more cumbersome formal channels, making innovation easier.<sup>61</sup> This fact helps explain why organizational decision makers tend to base their decisions on verbal information from trusted associates.<sup>62</sup> Smart communicators do not just rely on informal contacts with peers for information, but rather take advantage of sources throughout the organization. One study revealed that general managers spent a great deal of time with people who were not direct subordinates, superiors, or peers—people with whom, according to the official chain of command, they had no need to deal. Although many of these people—administrative assistants, lower-level subordinates, and supervisors with little power—seemed relatively unimportant to outsiders, successful managers all seemed to cultivate such contacts.<sup>63</sup>

Enlightened organizations do everything possible to encourage constructive, informal interactions. Siemens leaves overhead projectors and empty pads of paper in its factory lunchrooms to facilitate informal meetings.<sup>64</sup> Corning Glass deliberately installed escalators in its new engineering building to boost the kind of face-to-face contacts that are less likely to occur in elevators. 3M sponsors clubs for any group of employees that requests them, realizing that this sort of employee interaction is likely to encourage new ideas that will help the company. Other firms organize their floor plans to mingle workers from different departments in the same office, convinced that people who rub elbows will swap ideas and see themselves as part of a company-wide team.

Informal networks do not just operate within organizations. Friends, neighbors, and community members increase their effectiveness by sharing information with one another. In some cities, chambers of commerce host networking events to encourage ties among community businesses. Even without these organized contacts, most people are surprised to realize just how many people they know who can offer useful information.

## Personal Networking

While all of us have personal contacts, **networking**, as the term is typically used, has a strategic dimension that goes beyond being sociable. It is the process of deliberately meeting people and maintaining contacts to give and receive career information, advice, and leads. Some professionals attend face-to-face mixer events to expand their social network, while others choose to network at sites like LinkedIn, which are designed expressly for business purposes.

People with highly developed personal networks tend to be more successful in their careers.<sup>65</sup> Over their lifetimes, they earn more raises, are promoted more often, and are generally more satisfied with their jobs. With better networks, people have greater access to career sponsorship, resources, and information. Membership in just one network, however, probably will not accomplish these goals. Instead, the key is to have a wide and diverse network that incorporates all kinds of people. As you explore and expand your network, keep the following tips in mind.<sup>66</sup>



## Your Elevator Speech

Often the chance to present yourself and your ideas lasts less than a minute. You meet a prospective customer at a party. You run into your boss on the street. You are introduced to a potential employer in a hallway. Whether networking opportunities like these turn out well may depend on your foresight and preparation.

When the opportunity arises, you can make a good impression by delivering what is called an “elevator speech.” (This type of communication gets its name because it should be brief enough to deliver in the length of an elevator ride.) Elevator speeches can accomplish a variety of goals. Besides serving as introductions, they can be a tool for seeking help, establishing a relationship, gaining visibility, marketing yourself or your organization, getting feedback, expanding your personal network, and doing an end-run around someone who is blocking your progress.

Improve your skill at presenting yourself briefly and effectively by planning and delivering an elevator speech to your classmates. Your speech should contain four parts and take less than a minute to deliver.

1. State your name and your current job title or position. “Hi. I’m Claire Yoder. I’m a senior, graduating in December.”

2. Describe some personal strengths or distinguishing information.

“I’m completing my accounting major this semester with a 3.8 GPA, and I’ve developed additional skills in tax preparation through volunteer work with Tax-Help USA.”

3. Depending on your audience, state what you can do for others *or* ask for their help.

“If you or someone you know needs help with tax preparation, I can help,” *or* “If you know of any openings in accounting, I’d like to hear about them.”

4. Indicate how the person can get in touch with you or how you plan to contact this person. “Here’s my card with my e-mail address. I’d like to hear from you.”

While modesty is a virtue, do not be bashful about presenting yourself as an interesting and competent person. Whether or not you want to, you are always presenting yourself to others. Brevity and sincerity are the keys to an effective elevator speech. Do not overwhelm your audience with information; present enough to make sure you create a positive impression and, ideally, to be asked for more information.

Source: Wallace, M., “The Elevator Speech: It’s There For You,” *Law Library Resource Exchange*, July 1, 1998. Retrieved from <http://www.llrx.com>

**View Everyone as a Networking Prospect** Consider the members of all the networks to which you already belong: family members, friends, neighbors, social acquaintances, fellow workers, members of your religious community, professionals (e.g., doctors, dentists, accountants, attorneys), and school contacts (e.g., faculty, fellow students, counselors). Beyond the people you already know, almost everyone you meet has the potential to be a source of useful information. The passenger seated next to you on a plane or train might be acquainted with people who can help you. The neighbor who chats with you at a block party might have the knowledge or skill to help you solve a problem. Within an organization, the best informants are often people you might overlook. Administrative assistants are exposed to most of the information addressed to their managers, and they usually serve as **gatekeepers** who can give or deny access to them. Custodial and maintenance people travel around the building and, in their rounds, see and hear many interesting things.

**Be Sensitive to Personal and Cultural Factors** While everyone you meet is a potential networking prospect, it is important to think of each person as an individual. Some may welcome the chance to share information, whereas others may object to more than occasional contacts. It is also important to recognize that culture plays a role in networking practices.

**Treat Your Contacts with Gratitude and Respect** Do not make the mistake of equating networking with being dishonest or exploitive. As long as you

## Using LinkedIn Effectively

The social networking website LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>) has been called “Facebook for professionals.” More than 467 million members around the world use this service to advance their careers. When used appropriately, LinkedIn can help you manage your professional identity, expand your network of contacts, and enhance career opportunities. The following guidelines can help you use LinkedIn effectively.

### Improve Your Profile

- Upload a professional photo to your profile to increase your chances of being found and receiving messages.
- Include your education to establish credibility and help you connect with alumni and friends.
- Include your title, company name, and time period. Make sure this information is up-to-date. If you are in transition or unemployed, use a title that describes what you wish to pursue.
- Maintain a list of at least five relevant skills in order of your strengths.
- Add your location.
- Write a summary of at least 40 words that showcases your personality and tells a story of your experience, interests, and goals.

### Manage Your Professional Identity

- Use LinkedIn for professional messages only. Do not link your page to your Facebook or Twitter identity if you use those tools to share nonprofessional information.

- Use LinkedIn’s multimedia capabilities to showcase your work (and yourself).
- Request 360-degree feedback from professors, colleagues, supervisors, and clients who can comment on your work, attitude, skills, achievements, professionalism, and integrity.
- Proofread everything you post.
- Use status updates to share industry-relevant content to show that you are in-the-know.

### Learn from Others

- Join, contribute to, and use groups. Begin by searching for groups in your career field. Focus on trends, glean advice, and garner news and tips particular to your field. Connect with national and international groups as well as local groups to explore employment, training, and networking opportunities virtually and in person. When you understand the culture of different groups, contribute your knowledge, links to pertinent articles, upcoming events, or book reviews.
- Use the Answers Forum to discover which types of questions others are asking and to learn from the answers. Browse by topic and subtopic (e.g., résumé writing, start-ups and small business, nonprofit, work–life balance, mentoring, finance) or by language.

Sources: Fisher, C., “5 Steps to Improve Your LinkedIn Profile in Minutes,” August 3, 2016. Retrieved from <https://blog.linkedin.com>). About us. Retrieved from <https://press.linkedin.com/about-linkedin>; Serdula, D. (n.d.) LinkedIn makeover: Professional secrets to a powerful LinkedIn profile. Retrieved from <http://www.linkedin-makeover.com/blog>

express a genuine desire for information openly, there is nothing to be ashamed of. Furthermore, seeking information does not mean you have to stop enjoying others’ company for social reasons. When others do give you information, be sure to express your appreciation. At the very least, a sincere “thank you” is in order. Even better, let your networking contacts know exactly *how* the information they gave you was helpful.

**Help Others** Do not just be an information-seeker. Whenever possible, make an effort to put people who will benefit from contact in touch with one another: “You’re looking for a new bookkeeper? I know someone who might be right for you!” Besides being the right thing to do, helping others will earn you a reputation for generosity that can serve you well.<sup>67</sup>

**Get Referrals to Secondary Sources** The benefits of personal networks do not stop with your personal acquaintances. Each person you know has his or her own connections, some of whom could be useful to you. Researchers have demonstrated the “small world” phenomenon: A study on the “six degrees of separation” hypothesis involving more than



45,000 messages and more than 150 countries has demonstrated that the average number of links separating any two people in the world is indeed a half-dozen.<sup>68</sup> You can apply this principle to your own information by only seeking people removed from your personal network by one degree: If you ask 10 people for referrals and each of them knows 10 others who might be able to help, you have the potential to obtain support from 100 information-givers.

Secondary sources are so valuable that some online networking group sites exist to help users find the contacts they need. Having a network of people who can refer you to others can be especially helpful in today's workforce, where people often stay in their jobs for only a year or two.

**Seek a Mentor** A mentor is a person who acts as a guide, trainer, coach, and counselor; who teaches you the informal rules of an organization or a field; and who imparts the types of wisdom that come from firsthand experience. Many organizations have formal programs that match new employees with experienced ones. Other mentor-protégé relationships develop informally and unofficially. However you find one, a mentor can be invaluable. This is especially true for women, minorities, and people trying to break into nontraditional fields where “good old boy” networks can be hard to penetrate.<sup>69</sup>

A successful mentoring relationship is not a one-time affair. Instead, it passes through several stages.<sup>70</sup> In the initial phase, the parties get to know each other and gain confidence in their mutual commitment to the relationship. After the initial stage, a period of cultivation occurs in which the mentor guides his or her protégé through a series of conversations and tasks with the goal of building knowledge, confidence, and skill. By the third phase of the relationship, the protégé can function mostly on his or her own, with occasional guidance from the mentor. Finally, the fourth stage involves either separation or a redefinition of the relationship as one of peers. Not all mentoring relationships are quite so involved or long-lasting as this description suggests. Nevertheless, whether they are relatively brief or ongoing, they can provide great value and satisfaction for both mentor and protégé.

Whatever the relationship, some rules guide mentoring relationships.<sup>71</sup> Look for someone with a position in a field that interests you. Do not be bashful about aiming high: You may be surprised by successful people's willingness to give back by helping aspiring newcomers. Approach your mentor professionally, showing you are serious about growing in your career. See The Career Research Interview on pp. 155–160 for guidelines on how to handle this process.

Once you have found a mentor, show respect for his or her time by keeping most of your contacts to regularly scheduled times. Be sure to follow up on your mentor's suggestions about reading, checking websites, and attending activities.

Realize that a mentoring relationship should be primarily professional. If you have serious personal problems, turn to a counselor. A mentor may be able to help you with some personal problems as they affect your work life, but a mentor should not become an emotional crutch. Also remember that any personal insights that mentors and protégés share should be kept confidential. Finally, do not expect a mentor to grant you special favors, intervene on your behalf with your boss, or boost your chances for promotion. The advice you receive should be reward enough.

**Network throughout Your Career** Networking is not just for job-seekers. Indeed, it can be just as important once you start climbing the career ladder. In an era when changing jobs and even changing careers is common, expanding your options is always a smart move.

## • Ethical Dimensions of Communication

Some cynics have noted that the trouble with business ethics is that the phrase is an oxymoron. Despite this attitude, there is a growing recognition that behaving ethically is an

### Guanxi: Networking Chinese-Style

Any savvy businessperson in China knows the value of *guanxi* (pronounced “gwan-shee”)—the web of social relationships that help get a job done through the granting of favors. It takes *guanxi* to get a good job, find a good apartment, overcome bureaucratic hurdles, and line up suppliers and distributors. In other words, it is required to accomplish almost any transaction. As one observer put it, “In the West, relationships grow out of deals. In China, deals grow out of relationships.”<sup>72</sup>

It may be tempting to think of *guanxi* as the Chinese equivalent of Western networking, but the concept has far more cultural and practical significance. The unwritten code of *guanxi* is rooted in the Chinese national character, reflecting the Confucian emphasis on loyalty, obligation, order, and social harmony.

*Guanxi* operates on three levels.<sup>73</sup> The strongest bond is with immediate family. In relationships linked by blood and marriage, higher-status members are obligated to perform favors for their lower-status relatives. In return, lower-status family members are obliged to demonstrate fierce loyalty. To a lesser extent, *guanxi* connects extended family members, friends, neighbors, classmates, and people with other strong commonalities.

Unlike the closest form of *guanxi*, obligations in these relationships are usually reciprocal; receiving help creates an obligation to return the favor. The least powerful level of *guanxi* is between people who know one another but have no strong relational history. At this level, *guanxi* is similar to networking connections in the West. These relationships lack the history, trust, and power of stronger bonds.

Developing *guanxi* can be challenging for foreigners who want to do business in China, but it is not impossible. One strategy is to rely on intermediaries to make initial connections. This practice is widespread among native Chinese, so a foreigner will not stand out for using it. Once introduced, be prepared to socialize. Even more so than in the West, important business is often conducted outside of the workplace. When socializing, look for the chance to emphasize commonalities—business experiences, education, and mutual acquaintances are a few examples. After enough trust has developed to seek favors, be indirect. As you will read in the next chapter, Asian cultures consider oblique, “high-context” communication as a sign of sensitivity and skill. Finally, remember that *guanxi* is reciprocal. Accepting help from others obliges you to assist them in the future.

essential part of being an effective, promotable employee. Scandalous business practices have led to the downfall of major corporations like Enron and WorldCom and have cost others millions of dollars. As a result of these ethical lapses, sensitivity to the need to communicate in a principled way has grown, and several hundred corporations and organizations now include an ethics officer in their organizational chart who reports directly to the chairperson.<sup>74</sup> Employees share this concern for ethics. One survey of 800 recent MBA graduates revealed that almost all of them were willing to forgo some money to work for an organization with a better reputation for corporate social responsibility (CSR) and ethics.<sup>75</sup>

Behaving ethically is not always easy. On a personal level, you are likely to face conflicts between what you believe is right and what is practical. For instance, you might have to deal with a customer or colleague whose business or approval you want, but who is behaving badly—perhaps making sexist or racist remarks. After a trip together, coworkers may turn in inflated expenses and expect you to do the same. Your team might be under pressure to finish a project when you recognize shortcuts are creating potential safety issues. Besides personal challenges, sooner or later you are likely to experience situations like these where others in your organization behave in ethically questionable ways. Do you speak up when a colleague makes promises to clients that you know the company cannot keep? Should you challenge your boss when he or she treats other employees unfairly or illegally?

It has been said that ethics centers on a sense of responsibility for someone other than yourself.<sup>76</sup> A blanket obligation to communicate ethically can be too vague to be helpful in specific situations. Five philosophical principles offer guidelines that can help

# ETHICAL challenge

## Ethical Communication Choices

Descriptions for seven guidelines for judging ethical communication are provided in the text:

- Utilitarian approach
- Rights approach
- Fairness or justice approach
- Common-good approach
- Virtue approach
- Professional ethic
- Publicity test

Outline the range of ways you could handle each of the following situations. Use two or more of the ethical guidelines to compare courses of action, and then decide on a course of action you believe to be both principled and realistic. Justify your decision.

1. A coworker tells you he is about to buy an expensive car that will strain his budget to the maximum. You recently learned he is slated to be laid off at the end of the month but were told to keep this information in strictest confidence. What do you do?
2. Your friend is applying for a job and has given you as a reference. A questionnaire sent by the employer

asks if there is any reason you cannot recommend the applicant. You know that your friend is struggling with an alcohol problem, which led to dismissal from a previous job. Do you mention this problem on the reference form? If so, how?

3. Your manager calls you into her office and praises you for doing excellent work on a recent project. She suggests that this level of performance is likely to earn you a promotion and a raise. In truth, a colleague made a far greater contribution to the project. How do you respond to your manager's praise?
4. As part of your job, you learn that some damaged equipment can be repaired for \$15,000. Your supervisor tells you to claim the damage is much greater so the insurance company will pay closer to \$100,000. What do you do?
5. While you are entertaining a customer, he makes a blatantly offensive joke. How do you respond?

Sources: Adapted from Richardson, J. E. (Ed.), *Business Ethics 03/04* (15th ed.). Guilford, CT: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2003; Soeken, D., "On Witnessing a Fraud," in J. E. Richardson (Ed.), *Business Ethics 07/08* (19th ed.). Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2008.

you decide how to behave in a principled manner.<sup>77</sup> There is no single "right" approach to ethics; these competing ethical perspectives often lead to conflicting actions. For example, what one group perceives as "virtuous" might not bring good to the greatest number; likewise, what one group considers moral might be considered immoral by another group. When faced with a decision about how to communicate ethically, it is helpful to ponder the situation from several viewpoints before proceeding.

*Utilitarian approach (Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill):* Does this action provide the greatest good for the greatest number?

*Rights approach (Immanuel Kant):* Does this action respect the moral rights (truth, privacy, noninjury, promises) of everyone?

*Fairness or justice approach (Aristotle, John Rawls):* Is this action fair and free of discrimination or favoritism?

*Common-good approach (Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, John Rawls):* Does the action further the common or community good?

*Virtue approach:* Does this action promote the development of moral virtue (character) in me and my community?

Two additional guidelines can help you evaluate whether you are behaving ethically:

*Professional ethic:* How would an impartial jury of your professional peers judge this action?

*Publicity test:* Would you be comfortable having the public learn about your behavior in the broadcast or print media?<sup>78</sup>

# MASTER the chapter

## review points

- Communication is important for career success.
- Communication is unavoidable, strategic, and irreversible. It is a process that involves instrumental and relational communication and identity management. It is not a panacea that will solve all problems.
- The communication model demonstrates how senders and receivers encode and decode messages in the process of developing a shared meaning. To improve communication, consider the characteristics of various channels, the desired tone of the message, the organization's culture, and the use of multiple channels.
- Noise can interfere with exchange of a message. This type of distraction can be environmental, physiological, or psychological in nature and can be present in the sender, receiver, message, or channel. Good communicators reduce noise as much as possible.
- Formal communication networks (organizational charts) represent management's view of organizational relationships: upward, downward, and horizontal/lateral.
- Informal networks, based on proximity, shared interests, or friendships, serve to confirm, expand, expedite, contradict, or circumvent formal communication.
- Effective communicators cultivate and use personal networking for career success.
- Professional success necessitates an understanding of and ability to apply various ethical frameworks (utilitarian, rights, fairness/justice, common good, virtue, professional ethic, publicity test) to consistently make principled decisions around ethical challenges.

## key terms

asynchronous communication 11

channel 9

communication networks 13

decoding 9

downward communication 13

encoding 9

feedback 9

formal communication networks 13

gatekeeper 20

horizontal (lateral) communication 17

identity management 7

informal communication networks 17

instrumental communication 7

message 9

networking 19

noise 10

organizational charts 13

receiver 9

relational communication 7

sender 9

synchronous communication 11

upward communication 15

## activities

### 1. Invitation to Insight

Keep a log of your work-related (or school-related) communication over a three-day period. Include who you have communicated with (superior, subordinate, peer, external) and your level of satisfaction with the communication.

Based on your findings, analyze the following:

- a. How much time you spend communicating.
- b. With whom you communicate. (Identify each example as downward, upward, or horizontal flow of communication.)

- c. Which channels of communication you tend to use most frequently.
- d. Your level of satisfaction.
- e. Areas where improving your communication skills would be desirable.

## 2. Invitation to Insight

Think about a situation you have experienced in which communication went wrong. Diagnose the problem by finding the parts of the communication process that contributed to the trouble. Suggest a remedy for each problem you identify.

- a. Sender: Did the wrong person send the message?
- b. Encoding: Did the sender use words or nonverbal cues that were confusing, inappropriate, or irrelevant?
- c. Message: Was the message too short or too long? Were there too many messages? Was the timing wrong?
- d. Channel: Was the most appropriate channel chosen?
- e. Receiver: Was there no receiver at all? Was the message poorly formulated for the person(s) at whom it was aimed? Was it received by the wrong person?
- f. Decoding: Did the receiver read in meanings that were not intended?
- g. Feedback: How did the feedback affect the sender? Did the feedback help or hinder shared understanding?
- h. Noise: In which ways did environmental, physiological, or psychological noise distort the message? Provide specific examples.

## 3. Invitation to Insight

Learn about upward communication in the workplace by asking several employees which types of information they share with their supervisors. Which types of information do they avoid sharing with their supervisors? How does the organization encourage or discourage accurate upward communication?

## 4. Skill Builder

Develop your skill at cultivating informal communication networks by following these instructions:

- a. Choose one of the following information goals, or identify a school-related or work-related goal of your own.
  1. Decide which instructors and/or courses in an academic department of your institution are worth seeking out and which you might want to avoid.
  2. Identify the qualities that would help you get the job of your dreams.
  3. Locate an organization where you could gain job experience as a volunteer or intern.
- b. Identify the people who can help you acquire the information you are seeking. Locate people from a variety of positions within the organization so you will gain a complete perspective. For each person, decide which channel you could use to begin to develop your network.

## 5. Skill Builder

With your group members, formulate a hypothetical context for each of the following messages. Then use the information on pp. 10–13 to decide which communication channel would be best for each message. Use the criteria from Table 1-2 to explain your choice.

- a. Informing your supervisor about difficulties with a coworker.
- b. Asking for a few days of leave from work to attend a special reunion.
- c. Training a new employee to operate a complicated computer program.
- d. Notifying the manager of a local business that you have not received the refund you were promised.
- e. Reminding your busy boss about a long-overdue reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses.
- f. Apologizing to a customer for a mistake your company made.
- g. Getting your boss's reaction to the idea of giving you more responsibility.

## 6. Invitation to Insight

Ask a few of your acquaintances to describe an ethical dilemma they have encountered in the workplace or in their personal lives. How did they handle the situation? Which factors influenced them?



With a group of classmates, determine which ethical perspectives your informants seemed to rely on as they decided how to act. Apply various

ethical perspectives to the same situations. Would you have followed the same course of action your informants did? Why or why not?



For further review, go to the LearnSmart study module for this chapter.

## references

1. See, for example, Darling, A. L., & Dannels, D. P. (2003). Practicing engineers talk about the importance of talk: A report on the role of oral communication in the workplace. *Communication Education*, 52, 1–16.
2. Gray, E. F. (2010). Specific oral communication skills desired in new accountancy graduates. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 73, 40–67.
3. Ginsberg, S. (1997, May 5). So many messages and so little time. *Business Outlook*, p. C1.
4. See, for example, Petofi, A. (1988). The graphic revolution in computers. In E. Cornish (Ed.), *Careers tomorrow: The outlook for work in a changing world*. Bethesda, MD: World Future Society.
5. Morreale, S. P., & Pearson, J. C. (2008). Why communication education is important: The centrality of the discipline in the 21st century. *Communication Education*, 57, 224–240.
6. Harper's index. (1994, December). *Harper's*, p. 13.
7. Mauksch, L. B., Dugdale, D. C., Dodson, S., & Epstein, R. (2008). Relationship, communication, and efficiency in the medical encounter. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 168, 1387–1395; Holmes, F. (2007). If you listen, the patient will tell you the diagnosis. *International Journal of Listening*, 21, 156–161.
8. Joint Commission. (2006). *Sentinel event statistics*. Retrieved from <http://www.jointcommission.org/SentinelEvents/Statistics>
9. Joint Commission. (2004). *Sentinel event data: Root causes by event type*. Retrieved from [http://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/se\\_root\\_cause\\_event\\_type\\_2004\\_2Q2011.pdf](http://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/se_root_cause_event_type_2004_2Q2011.pdf)
10. Levinson, W., Roter, D., & Mullooly, J. P. (1997). Physician-patient communication: The relationship with malpractice claims among primary care physicians and surgeons. *Journal of American Medical Association*, 277, 553–559. See also Rodriguez, H. P., Rodday, A. C., Marshall, R. E., Nelson, K. L., Rogers, W. H., & Safran, D. G. (2008). Relation of patients' experiences with individual physicians to malpractice risk. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 20, 5–12.
11. Calandra, B. (2002, September 16). Toward a silver-tongued scientist. *The Scientist*, 16, 42.
12. Graduate Management Admissions Council. *Corporate recruiters survey 2006*. Retrieved from <http://www.gmac.com/NR/rdonlyres/6838813E-4238-4B78-9C3D-F4AC11592BA6/0/CorpRecSurvey06SurveyReport.pdf>. See also Alsop, R. (2007, September 17). Recruiter's top schools. *Wall Street Journal* online.
13. Schaffer, William, *Santa Barbara News-Press*, August 22, 1999, J1.
14. Calandra, B. (2002, September 16). Toward a silver-tongued scientist. *The Scientist*, 16, 42.
15. National Association of Colleges and Employers. *Job Outlook 2016*. Retrieved from <http://www.naceweb.org/s11182015/employers-look-for-in-new-hires.aspx>
16. Polk-Lepson Research Group. (2010). *Professionalism in the workplace*. Retrieved from <http://www.ycp.edu/media/yorkwebsite/cpe/York-College-Professionalism-in-the-Workplace-Poll-2010.pdf>
17. Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J. H., & Jackson, D. D. (1967). *Pragmatics of human communication*. New York, NY: Norton.
18. Ibid.
19. See, for example, Byron, K. (2008). Carrying too heavy a load? The communication and miscommunication of emotion by email. *Academy of Management Review*, 33, 309–327.
20. The earliest form of this model was created by Shannon, C. E., & Weaver, W. (1949). *The mathematical theory of communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. The following discussion reflects changes in the theoretical understanding of communication. See, for example, Adler, R. B., Rosenfeld, L. B., & Proctor, R. F. (2012). *Interplay: The process of interpersonal communication*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

21. Powers, W. G., & Witt, P. L. (2008). Expanding the theoretical framework of communication fidelity. *Communication Quarterly*, 56, 247–267.
22. See, for example, Flaherty, L. M., Pearce, K. J., & Rubin, R. B. (1998). Internet and face-to-face communication: Not functional alternatives. *Communication Quarterly*, 46, 250–268; Sheer, V. C., & Chen, L. (2004). Improving media richness theory: A study of interaction goals, message valence, and task complexity in manager-subordinate communication. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 18, 76–93; and Turner, J. W., & Reinsch, N. L. (2007). The business communicator as presence allocator: Multicommunicating, equivocality, and status at work. *Journal of Business Communication*, 44, 36–58.
23. Daft, R. L. (2008). *The leadership experience* (4th ed.). Mason, OH: Thomson South-Western.
24. Byron, K. (2008). Carrying too heavy a load? The communication and miscommunication of emotion by email. *Academy of Management Review*, 33, 309–327.
25. Bryant, A (2000, October 23). Fare rage. *Newsweek*, 46.
26. See, for example, Baxter, L. A. (1993). Talking things through and putting it in writing: Two codes of communication in an academic institution. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 21, 313–323.
27. Mitchell, J. J. (1996, July 21). Why can't we all get along? E-mail vs. voice mail culture should provide a clue. *San Jose Mercury News*, 6E.
28. Turner, J. W., Grube, J., Tinsley, C., Lee, C., & O'Pell, C. (2006). Exploring the dominant media: How does media use reflect organizational norms and affect performance? *Journal of Business Communication*, 43, 220–250.
29. Stephens, K. K., Sørnes, J. O., Rice, R. E., Browning, L. D., & Sætre, A. S. (2008). Discrete, sequential, and follow-up use of information and communication technology by experienced ICT users. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 22, 197–231.
30. Leonardi, P. M., Treem, J. W., & Jackson, M. H. (2010). The connectivity paradox: Using technology to both decrease and increase perceptions of distance in distributed work arrangements. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 38, 85–105.
31. Renischn, L., & Turner, J. W. (2006, July). Ari, r u there? Reorienting business communication for a technological era. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 20, 339–356.
32. Lengel, R. J., & Daft, R. L. (1998). The selection of communication media as an executive skill. *Academy of Management Executive*, 2, 225–232.
33. Monge, P. R., & Contractor, N. S. (2003). *Theories of communication networks*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
34. Boundless (2016, May 26). Downward Communication. *Boundless Management*. Retrieved from <https://www.boundless.com/management/textbooks/boundless-management-textbook/communication-11/management-and-communication-83/downward-communication-397-847/>
35. Anderson, J. & Level, D. (1980). The impact of certain types of downward communication on job performance. *Journal of Business Communication*, 17(4), 51–59.
36. Managers' shoptalk. (1985, February). *Working Woman*, p. 22.
37. Katz, D., & Kahn, R. (1978). *The social psychology of organization*, 2nd ed. New York, NY: Wiley.
38. Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R. H., Jr. (1982). *In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
39. Silverstein, S. (1999, January 10). Corporate communications gap keeps executives, lower ranks in the dark. *Los Angeles Times*.
40. See, for example, Kassing, J. W. (2000). Investigating the relationship between superior-subordinate relationship quality and employee dissent. *Communication Research Reports*, 17, 58–70.
41. Schuster, L. (1982, April 20). Wal-Mart chief's enthusiastic approach infects employees, keeps retailer growing. *Wall Street Journal*, p. 21.
42. Rice, F. (1991, June 3). Champions of communication. *Fortune*, pp. 111–120.
43. Adapted from Katz, D., & Kahn, R. (1978). *The social psychology of organizations* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Wiley.
44. Kassing, J. W. (2000). Investigating the relationship between superior-subordinate relationship quality and employee dissent. *Communication Research Reports*, 17, 58–70.
45. Bennis, W. G. (1993). *An invented life: Reflections on leadership and change*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
46. Dansereau, F., & Markham, S. E. (1987). Superior-subordinate communication: Multiple levels of analysis. In F. M. Jablin, L. L. Putnam, K. H. Roberts, & L. W. Porter (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational communication*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
47. Bryant, A. (2011, June 27). A sitting duck can't catch a moving turkey. *New York Times*.
48. Petzinger, T., Jr. (1996, September 27). Two executives cook up way to make Pillsbury listen. *Wall Street Journal*, p. B1.
49. Keil, M., Tiwana, M., Sainsbury, R., & Sneha, S. (2010). Toward a theory of whistleblowing intentions: A benefit-to-cost differential perspective. *Decision Sciences*, 41, 787–812.



50. Goldhaber, G. (1993). *Organizational communication* (6th ed.). Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown.
51. Mieszkowski, K. (1998, December). Change-Barbara Waugh. *Fast Company*, 20, 146–154.
52. Adapted from Goldhaber, G. (1993). *Organizational communication* (6th ed.). Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown.
53. Ferguson, T. W. (1997, May 19). Who's mentoring whom? *Forbes*, 252.
54. See, for example, Doloff, P. G. (1999, February). Beyond the org chart. *Across the Board*, pp. 43–47.
55. Gregory, M. (2009). Inside the locker room: Male homosociability in the advertising industry. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16, 323–347.
56. Bell, E. L. J. E., & Nkomo, S. M. (2001). *Our separate ways: Black and white women and the struggle for professional identity*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
57. Did you hear it through the grapevine? (1994, October). *Training & Development*, p. 20.
58. See Cross, R., & Parker, A. (2004). *The hidden power of social networks: Understanding how work really gets done in organizations*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
59. Krackhardt, D., & Hanson, J. R. (1993, July). Informal networks: The company behind the chart. *Harvard Business Review*, 71, 104–111.
60. Kanter, R. M. (1989, November/December). The new managerial work. *Harvard Business Review*, 67, 85–92.
61. Bush, J. B., Jr., & Frohman, A. L. (1991). Communication in a 'network' organization. *Organizational Dynamics*, 20, 23–36.
62. Eisenberg, E. M., & Goodall, H. E., Jr. (1993). *Organizational communication: Balancing creativity and constraint*. New York: St. Martin's.
63. Murray, T. J. (1987, August). How to stay lean and mean. *Business Month*, pp. 29–32.
64. Jackson, M. (1998, January 7). Study shows workplace goofing off often pays off for the employer. *Santa Barbara News-Press*, p. B8.
65. Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Liden, R. C. (2001). A social capital theory of career success. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44, 219–237.
66. For more advice on networking, see R. E. Kelley interviewed by Webber, A. M. (2000). Are you a star at work? In *Fast Company career guide*. New York, NY: Fast Company Media Group.
67. Feely, T. H. (2000). Testing a communication network model of employee turnover based on centrality. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 28, 262–277. See also Network inside your organization. (2000). In *Fast Company career guide* (p. 13). New York, NY: Fast Company Media Group.
68. Dodds, P. S., Muhamad, R., & Watts, D. J. (2003). An experimental study of search in global social networks. *Science*, 301, 827–829.
69. Lyness, K. S., & Thompson, D. E. (2000). Climbing the corporate ladder: Do female and male executives follow the same route? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85, 86–101. See also Gregory, M. (2009). Inside the locker room: Male homosociability in the advertising industry. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16, 323–347.
70. Kram, K. E. (1983). Phases of the mentoring relationship. *Academy of Management Journal*, 12, 608–625.
71. Gardenswartz, L., & Rowe, A. (1997, January). Starting a mentoring program? *Managing Diversity*, 6, 1–2. See also Advancing Women. (2006). *Mentoring process*. Retrieved from [http://www.advancingwomen.com/wk\\_mentprocess.html](http://www.advancingwomen.com/wk_mentprocess.html)
72. Vanhonacker, W. R. (2004, September). Guanxi networks in China. *China Business Review*, 31, 48–53.
73. Zhang, Y., & Zhang, Z. (2006). Guanxi and organizational dynamics in China: A link between individual and organizational levels. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 67, 375–392.
74. Driscoll, D. M., et al. (1997, June). Who says ethics are nice? *Across the Board*, 34, 47–50.
75. Montgomery, M. D., & Ramus, C. (2003, May). Corporate social responsibility reputation effects on MBA job choice. *Graduate School of Business Research Paper #1805*, Stanford, CA. Retrieved from <https://gsbapps.stanford.edu/researchpapers/library/RP1805.pdf>
76. Roberts, C. R. (2005, May 16). He argues for ethics. *Tacoma News Tribune*. Retrieved from <http://elibrary.bigchalk.com>
77. Velasquez, M., Ande, C., Shanks, S. J. T., & Meyer, M. J. (2012). Thinking ethically: A framework for moral decision making. In J. E. Richardson (Ed.), *Business ethics 11/12*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
78. O'Connor, P. J., & Godar, S. H. (1999). How not to make ethical decisions: Guidelines from management textbooks. *Teaching Business Ethics*, 3, 69–86. See also Tinsley, D. B. (2005). Ethics can be gauged by three rules. In J. E. Richardson (Ed.), *Business ethics 05/06*. Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin.



©cybrain/Shutterstock.com RF

## Chapter Two

# Communication, Culture, and Work

