BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION THIRD EDITION

PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS REQUIRES EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Organized around the transition from student to professional life, **Business and Professional Communication, Third Edition** gives readers the tools they need to move from interview candidate to team member to leader. Kelly M. Quintanilla and Shawn T. Wahl help students understand the role communication plays when successfully handling situations like job interviewing, providing feedback to supervisors, and working in teams. The fully updated **Third Edition** includes expanded coverage of making competent choices in new communication channels, increased emphasis on skill building for business writing and presentations, and the effective use of visual aids.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

- The new **chapter-opening narratives** introduce students to each chapter with a contemporary example drawn from the real world.
- The new ***Tools for Professional Excellence*** feature builds students' communication skills, offers career tips, and provides practical strategies for contexts related to business and professional communication, social media and technology.
- **Revised *Your Communication Interaction*** feature demonstrates how to make competent communication choices and select the appropriate communication channel (e.g., face-to-face communication, making phone calls, sending emails, and making communication decisions related to social media and technology).
- The new ***Action Items*** feature encourages students to apply chapter content to business and professional communication skills and contexts.
- The new ***Explore Questions*** encourage students to research and evaluate multiple industries, career opportunities, real-world workplace challenges, and more.
- The revised ***Executive Summary*** concisely reviews key concepts and skills at the end of every chapter to reinforce the students' understanding of the content.
- New ***Review Questions*** are included in every chapter as a learning tool to support mastery of chapter content.

> *"**Business and Professional Communication: KEYS for Workplace Excellence** provides real-world practical information for business and communication students alike. Any college student seeking a professional job after college should read this—if not for a class, then for their own personal benefit!"*
>
> *—Jennifer Millspaugh, Richland College*

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QUINTANILLA • WAHL **BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION** THIRD EDITION

SAGE

THIRD
EDITION

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

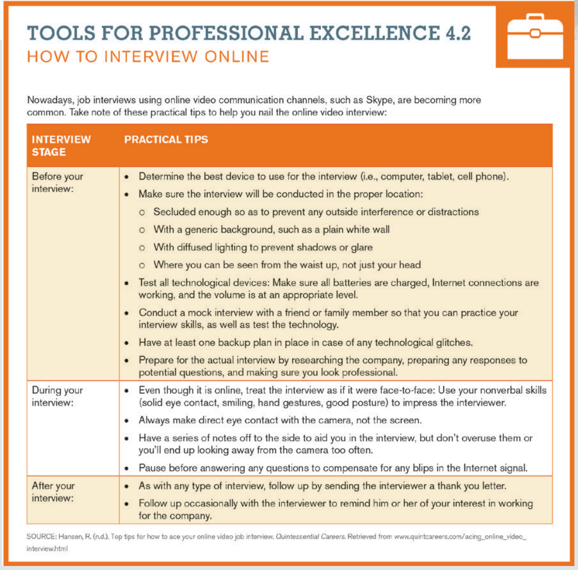
KEYS FOR WORKPLACE EXCELLENCE

KELLY M. QUINTANILLA • SHAWN T. WAHL

WHAT'S NEW TO THIS EDITION?

A greater emphasis on communication skills and development with enhanced coverage of digital technology in the workplace.

New **Tools for Professional Excellence** features offer skills-oriented practical advice for building communication competence and making the most of digital communication tools on topics such as video interviews, virtual meetings, LinkedIn, Google Docs, and effective use of presentation slides.



TOOLS FOR PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE 4.2

HOW TO INTERVIEW ONLINE

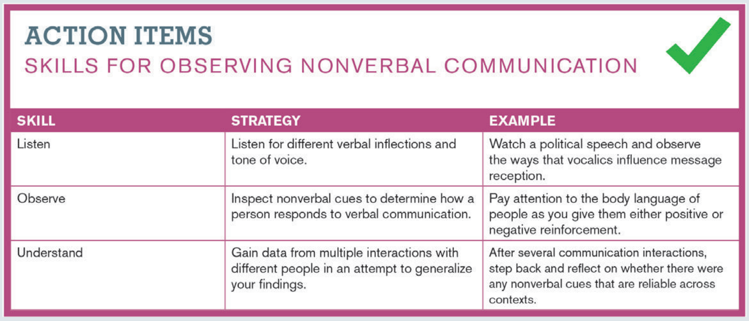
Nowadays, job interviews using online video communication channels, such as Skype, are becoming more common. Take note of these practical tips to help you nail the online video interview:

INTERVIEW STAGE	PRACTICAL TIPS
Before your interview:	• Determine the best device to use for the interview (i.e., computer, tablet, cell phone). • Make sure the interview will be conducted in the proper location: ○ Secluded enough so as to prevent any outside interference or distractions ○ With a generic background, such as a plain white wall ○ With diffused lighting to prevent shadows or glare ○ Where you can be seen from the waist up, not just your head • Test all technological devices: Make sure all batteries are charged, Internet connections are working, and the volume is at an appropriate level. • Conduct a mock interview with a friend or family member so that you can practice your interview skills, as well as test the technology. • Have at least one backup plan in place in case of any technological glitches. • Prepare for the actual interview by researching the company, preparing any responses to potential questions, and making sure you look professional.
During your interview:	• Even though it is online, treat the interview as if it were face-to-face: Use your nonverbal skills (solid eye contact, smiling, hand gestures, good posture) to impress the interviewer. • Always make direct eye contact with the camera, not the screen. • Have a series of notes off to the side to aid you in the interview, but don't overuse them or you'll end up looking away from the camera too often. • Pause before answering any questions to compensate for any blips in the Internet signal.
After your interview:	• As with any type of interview, follow up by sending the interviewer a thank you letter. • Follow up occasionally with the interviewer to remind him or her of your interest in working for the company.

SOURCE: Hansen, R. (n.d.). Top tips for how to ace your online video job interview. *Quintessential Careers.* Retrieved from www.quintcareers.com/acing_online_video_interview.html

Increased emphasis on the connection between effective communication skills and professional success.

Action Items boxes in each chapter provide strategies for applying chapter content to real life business and professional communication contexts.

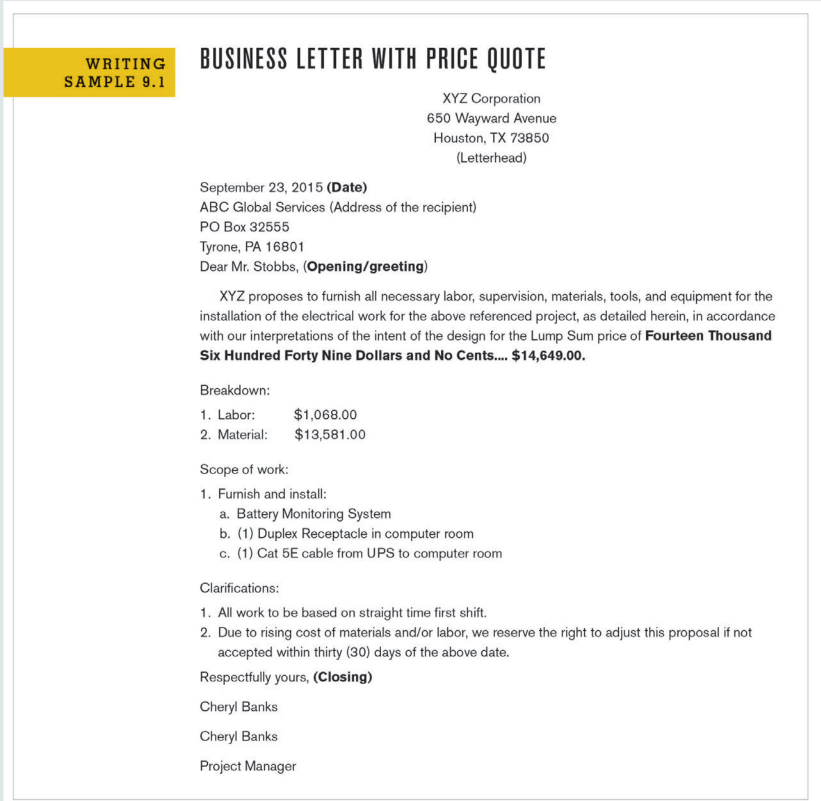


ACTION ITEMS

SKILLS FOR OBSERVING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

SKILL	STRATEGY	EXAMPLE
Listen	Listen for different verbal inflections and tone of voice.	Watch a political speech and observe the ways that vocalics influence message reception.
Observe	Inspect nonverbal cues to determine how a person responds to verbal communication.	Pay attention to the body language of people as you give them either positive or negative reinforcement.
Understand	Gain data from multiple interactions with different people in an attempt to generalize your findings.	After several communication interactions, step back and reflect on whether there were any nonverbal cues that are reliable across contexts.

New and revised annotated writing samples and speech samples to help students analyze effective written communication practices and build their own professional presentation skills.



WRITING SAMPLE 9.1

BUSINESS LETTER WITH PRICE QUOTE

XYZ Corporation
650 Wayward Avenue
Houston, TX 73850
(Letterhead)

September 23, 2015 **(Date)**
ABC Global Services (Address of the recipient)
PO Box 32555
Tyrone, PA 16801
Dear Mr. Stobbs, (**Opening/greeting**)

XYZ proposes to furnish all necessary labor, supervision, materials, tools, and equipment for the installation of the electrical work for the above referenced project, as detailed herein, in accordance with our interpretations of the intent of the design for the Lump Sum price of **Fourteen Thousand Six Hundred Forty Nine Dollars and No Cents.... $14,649.00.**

Breakdown:

1. Labor:	$1,068.00
2. Material:	$13,581.00

Scope of work:

1. Furnish and install:
   a. Battery Monitoring System
   b. (1) Duplex Receptacle in computer room
   c. (1) Cat 5E cable from UPS to computer room

Clarifications:

1. All work to be based on straight time first shift.
2. Due to rising cost of materials and/or labor, we reserve the right to adjust this proposal if not accepted within thirty (30) days of the above date.

Respectfully yours, **(Closing)**

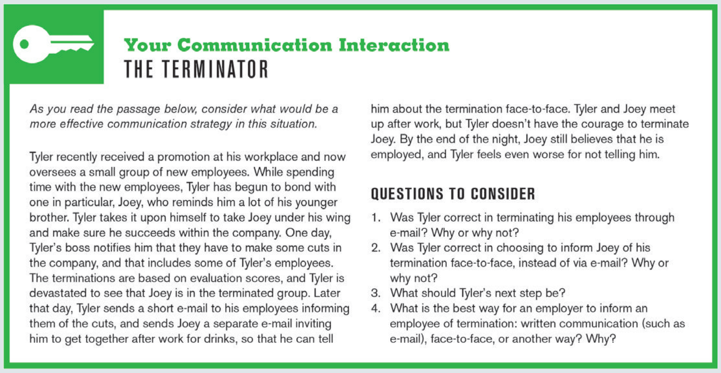
Cheryl Banks

Cheryl Banks

Project Manager

Enhanced coverage of communication choices.

Your Communication Interaction features have been revised to focus on making competent communication choices and selecting the appropriate communication channel.



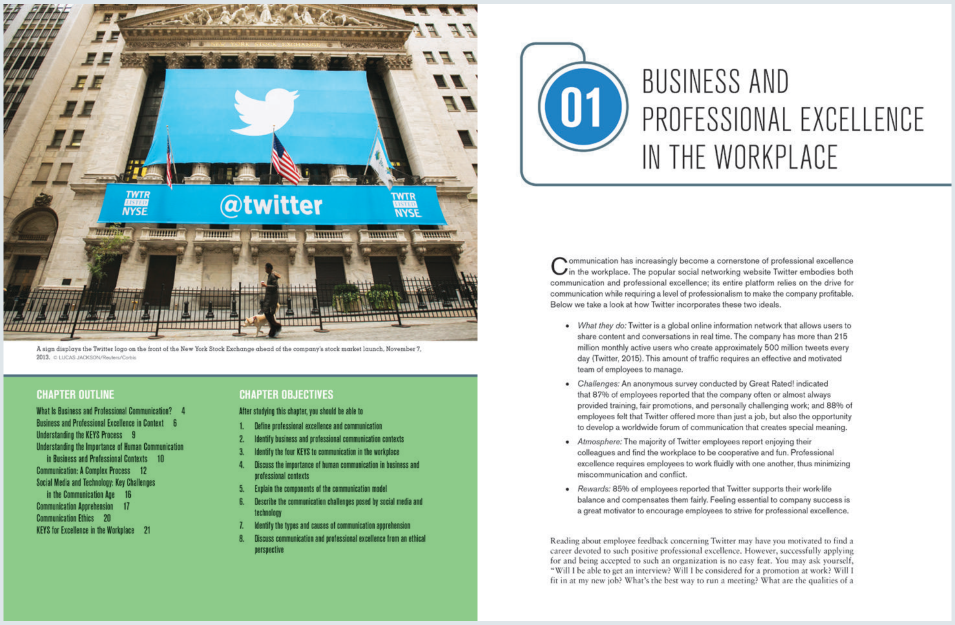
Your Communication Interaction
THE TERMINATOR

As you read the passage below, consider what would be a more effective communication strategy in this situation.

Tyler recently received a promotion at his workplace and now oversees a small group of new employees. While spending time with the new employees, Tyler has begun to bond with one in particular, Joey, who reminds him a lot of his younger brother. Tyler takes it upon himself to take Joey under his wing and make sure he succeeds within the company. One day, Tyler's boss notifies him that they have to make some cuts in the company, and that includes some of Tyler's employees. The terminations are based on evaluation scores, and Tyler is devastated to see that Joey is in the terminated group. Later that day, Tyler sends a short e-mail to his employees informing them of the cuts, and sends Joey a separate e-mail inviting him to get together after work for drinks, so that he can tell him about the termination face-to-face. Tyler and Joey meet up after work, but Tyler doesn't have the courage to terminate Joey. By the end of the night, Joey still believes that he is employed, and Tyler feels even worse for not telling him.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Was Tyler correct in terminating his employees through e-mail? Why or why not?
2. Was Tyler correct in choosing to inform Joey of his termination face-to-face, instead of via e-mail? Why or why not?
3. What should Tyler's next step be?
4. What is the best way for an employer to inform an employee of termination: written communication (such as e-mail), face-to-face, or another way? Why?



A sign displays the Twitter logo on the front of the New York Stock Exchange ahead of the company's stock market launch, November 7, 2013. © LUCAS JACKSON/Reuters/Corbis

CHAPTER OUTLINE

What Is Business and Professional Communication? 4
Business and Professional Excellence in Context 6
Understanding the KEYS Process 9
Understanding the Importance of Human Communication in Business and Professional Contexts 10
Communication: A Complex Process 12
Social Media and Technology: Key Challenges in the Communication Age 16
Communication Apprehension 17
Communication Ethics 20
KEYS for Excellence in the Workplace 21

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to

1. Define professional excellence and communication
2. Identify business and professional communication contexts
3. Identify the four KEYS to communication in the workplace
4. Discuss the importance of human communication in business and professional contexts
5. Explain the components of the communication model
6. Describe the communication challenges posed by social media and technology
7. Identify the types and causes of communication apprehension
8. Discuss communication and professional excellence from an ethical perspective

01
BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Communication has increasingly become a cornerstone of professional excellence in the workplace. The popular social networking website Twitter embodies both communication and professional excellence; its entire platform relies on the drive for communication while requiring a level of professionalism to make the company profitable. Below we take a look at how Twitter incorporates these two ideals.

- *What they do:* Twitter is a global online information network that allows users to share content and conversations in real time. The company has more than 215 million monthly active users who create approximately 500 million tweets every day (Twitter, 2015). This amount of traffic requires an effective and motivated team of employees to manage.
- *Challenges:* An anonymous survey conducted by Great Rated! indicated that 87% of employees reported that the company often or almost always provided training, fair promotions, and personally challenging work; and 88% of employees felt that Twitter offered more than just a job, but also the opportunity to develop a worldwide forum of communication that creates special meaning.
- *Atmosphere:* The majority of Twitter employees report enjoying their colleagues and find the workplace to be cooperative and fun. Professional excellence requires employees to work fluidly with one another, thus minimizing miscommunication and conflict.
- *Rewards:* 85% of employees reported that Twitter supports their work-life balance and compensates them fairly. Feeling essential to company success is a great motivator to encourage employees to strive for professional excellence.

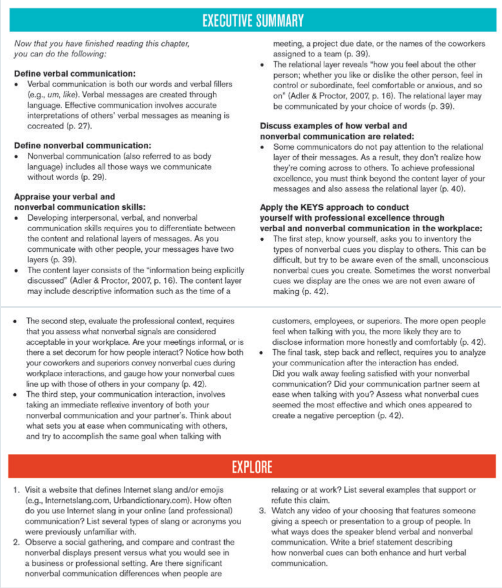
Reading about employee feedback concerning Twitter may have you motivated to find a career devoted to such positive professional excellence. However, successfully applying for and being accepted to such an organization is no easy feat. You may ask yourself, "Will I be able to get an interview? Will I be considered for a promotion at work? Will I fit in at my new job? What's the best way to run a meeting? What are the qualities of a

Updated chapter-opening narratives

introduce students to key topics with engaging contemporary examples drawn from the real world of business.

Increased opportunities for self-study.

Review questions at the end of every chapter help students check their comprehension of core content. New **Explore** questions encourage students to research and evaluate real world industries, career opportunities, workplace challenges, and more.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you can do the following:

Define verbal communication:
- Verbal communication is both our words and verbal fillers (e.g., *um, like*). Verbal messages are created through language. Effective communication involves accurate interpretations of others' verbal messages as meaning is cocreated (p. 27).

Define nonverbal communication:
- Nonverbal communication (also referred to as body language) includes all those ways we communicate without words (p. 29).

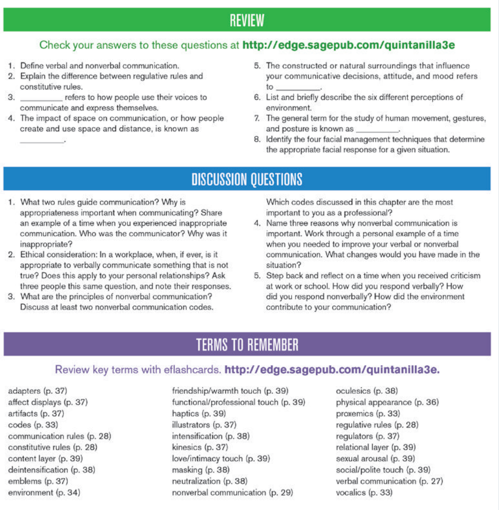
Appraise your verbal and nonverbal communication skills:
- Developing interpersonal, verbal, and nonverbal communication skills requires you to differentiate between the content and relational layers of messages. As you communicate with other people, your messages have two layers (p. 39).
- The content layer consists of the "information being explicitly discussed" (Adler & Proctor, 2007, p. 16). The content layer may include descriptive information such as the time of a meeting, a project due date, or the names of the coworkers assigned to a team (p. 39).
- The relational layer reveals "how you feel about the other person; whether you like or dislike the other person, feel in control or subordinate, feel comfortable or anxious, and so on" (Adler & Proctor, 2007, p. 16). The relational layer may be communicated by your choice of words (p. 39).

Discuss examples of how verbal and nonverbal communication are related:
- Some communicators do not pay attention to the relational layer of their messages. As a result, they don't realize how they're coming across to others. To achieve professional excellence, you must think beyond the content layer of your messages and also assess the relational layer (p. 40).

Apply the KEYS approach to conduct yourself with professional excellence through verbal and nonverbal communication in the workplace:
- The first step, know yourself, asks you to inventory the types of nonverbal cues you display to others. This can be difficult, but try to be aware even of the small, unconscious nonverbal cues you create. Sometimes the worst nonverbal cues we display are the ones we are not even aware of making (p. 42).
- The second step, evaluate the professional context, requires that you assess what nonverbal signals are considered acceptable in your workplace. Are your meetings informal, or is there a set decorum for how people interact? Notice how both your coworkers and superiors convey nonverbal cues during workplace interactions, and gauge how your nonverbal cues line up with those of others in your company (p. 42).
- The third step, your communication interaction, involves taking an immediate reflexive inventory of both your nonverbal communication and your partner's. Think about what sets you at ease when communicating with others, and try to accomplish the same goal when talking with customers, employees, or superiors. The more open people feel when talking with you, the more likely they are to disclose information more honestly and comfortably (p. 42).
- The final task, step back and reflect, requires you to analyze your communication after the interaction has ended. Did you walk away feeling satisfied with your nonverbal communication? Did your communication partner seem at ease when talking with you? Assess what nonverbal cues seemed the most effective and which ones appeared to create a negative perception (p. 42).

EXPLORE

1. Visit a website that defines Internet slang and/or emojis (e.g., Internetslang.com, Urbandictionary.com). How often do you use Internet slang in your online (and professional) communication? List several types of slang or acronyms you were previously unfamiliar with.
2. Observe a social gathering, and compare and contrast the nonverbal displays present versus what you would see in a business or professional setting. Are there significant nonverbal communication differences when people are relaxing or at work? List several examples that support or refute this claim.
3. Watch any video of your choosing that features someone giving a speech or presentation to a group of people. In what ways does the speaker blend verbal and nonverbal communication. Write a brief statement describing how nonverbal cues can both enhance and hurt verbal communication.



REVIEW

Check your answers to these questions at **http://edge.sagepub.com/quintanilla3e**

1. Define verbal and nonverbal communication.
2. Explain the difference between regulative rules and constitutive rules.
3. __________ refers to how people use their voices to communicate and express themselves.
4. The impact of space on communication, or how people create and use space and distance, is known as __________.
5. The constructed or natural surroundings that influence your communicative decisions, attitude, and mood refers to __________.
6. List and briefly describe the six different perceptions of environment.
7. The general term for the study of human movement, gestures, and posture is known as __________.
8. Identify the four facial management techniques that determine the appropriate facial response for a given situation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What two rules guide communication? Why is appropriateness important when communicating? Share an example of a time when you experienced inappropriate communication. Who was the communicator? Why was it inappropriate?
2. Ethical consideration: In a workplace, when, if ever, is it appropriate to verbally communicate something that is not true? Does this apply to your personal relationships? Ask three people this same question, and note their responses.
3. What are the principles of nonverbal communication? Discuss at least two nonverbal communication codes. Which codes discussed in this chapter are the most important to you as a professional?
4. Name three reasons why nonverbal communication is important. Work through a personal example of a time when you needed to improve your verbal or nonverbal communication. What changes would you have made in the situation?
5. Step back and reflect on a time when you received criticism at work or school. How did you respond verbally? How did you respond nonverbally? How did the environment contribute to your communication?

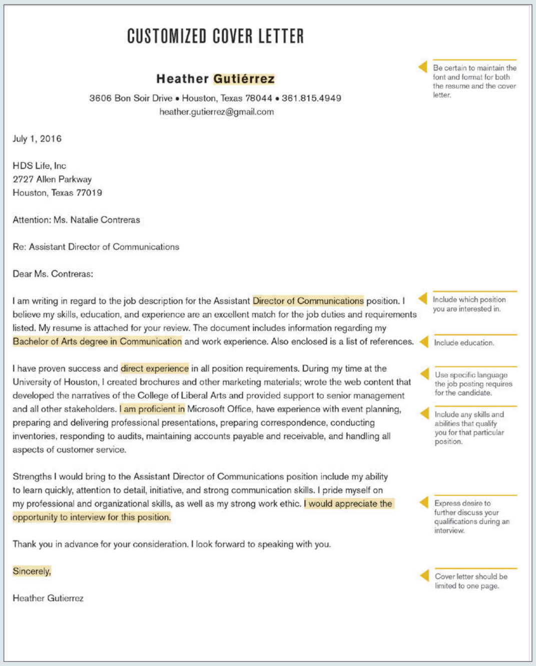
TERMS TO REMEMBER

Review key terms with eflashcards. **http://edge.sagepub.com/quintanilla3e.**

adapters (p. 37)
affect displays (p. 37)
artifacts (p. 37)
codes (p. 33)
communication rules (p. 28)
constitutive rules (p. 28)
content layer (p. 39)
deintensification (p. 38)
emblems (p. 37)
environment (p. 34)
friendship/warmth touch (p. 39)
functional/professional touch (p. 39)
haptics (p. 39)
illustrators (p. 37)
intensification (p. 38)
kinesics (p. 37)
love/intimacy touch (p. 39)
masking (p. 38)
neutralization (p. 38)
nonverbal communication (p. 29)
oculesics (p. 38)
physical appearance (p. 36)
proxemics (p. 33)
regulative rules (p. 28)
regulators (p. 37)
relational layer (p. 39)
sexual arousal (p. 39)
social/polite touch (p. 39)
verbal communication (p. 27)
vocalics (p. 33)

NEW WRITING SAMPLES

Annotated writing samples encourage analysis of effective written communication practices and offer professional writing tips for composing documents.



CUSTOMIZED COVER LETTER

Heather Gutiérrez
3606 Bon Soir Drive • Houston, Texas 78044 • 361.815.4949
heather.gutierrez@gmail.com

July 1, 2016

HDS Life, Inc
2727 Allen Parkway
Houston, Texas 77019

Attention: Ms. Natalie Contreras

Re: Assistant Director of Communications

Dear Ms. Contreras:

I am writing in regard to the job description for the Assistant Director of Communications position. I believe my skills, education, and experience are an excellent match for the job duties and requirements listed. My resume is attached for your review. The document includes information regarding my Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication and work experience. Also enclosed is a list of references.

I have proven success and direct experience in all position requirements. During my time at the University of Houston, I created brochures and other marketing materials; wrote the web content that developed the narratives of the College of Liberal Arts and provided support to senior management and all other stakeholders. I am proficient in Microsoft Office, have experience with event planning, preparing and delivering professional presentations, preparing correspondence, conducting inventories, responding to audits, maintaining accounts payable and receivable, and handling all aspects of customer service.

Strengths I would bring to the Assistant Director of Communications position include my ability to learn quickly, attention to detail, initiative, and strong communication skills. I pride myself on my professional and organizational skills, as well as my strong work ethic. I would appreciate the opportunity to interview for this position.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Heather Gutierrez

Be certain to maintain the font and format for both the resume and the cover letter.

Include which position you are interested in.

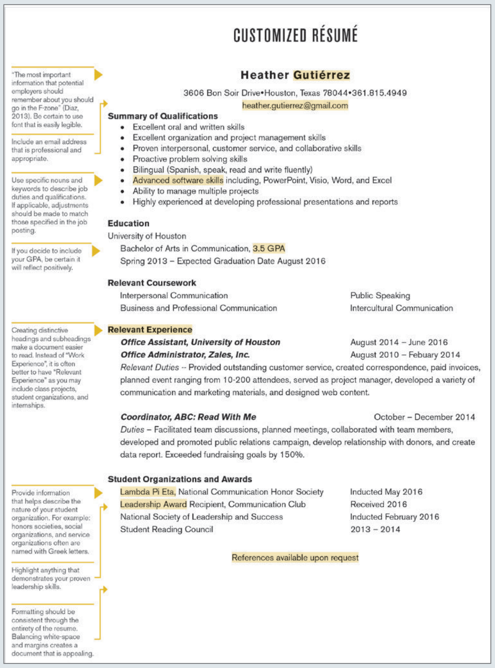
Include education.

Use specific language the job posting requires for the candidate.

Include any skills and abilities that qualify you for that particular position.

Express desire to further discuss your qualifications during an interview.

Cover letter should be limited to one page.



CUSTOMIZED RÉSUMÉ

Heather Gutiérrez
3606 Bon Soir Drive•Houston, Texas 78044•361.815.4949
heather.gutierrez@gmail.com

Summary of Qualifications

- Excellent oral and written skills
- Excellent organization and project management skills
- Proven interpersonal, customer service, and collaborative skills
- Proactive problem solving skills
- Bilingual (Spanish, speak, read and write fluently)
- Advanced software skills including, PowerPoint, Visio, Word, and Excel
- Ability to manage multiple projects
- Highly experienced at developing professional presentations and reports

Education

University of Houston
Bachelor of Arts in Communication, 3.5 GPA
Spring 2013 – Expected Graduation Date August 2016

Relevant Coursework

Interpersonal Communication
Business and Professional Communication
Public Speaking
Intercultural Communication

Relevant Experience

Office Assistant, University of Houston August 2014 – June 2016
Office Administrator, Zales, Inc. August 2010 – Febuary 2014
Relevant Duties -- Provided outstanding customer service, created correspondence, paid invoices, planned event ranging from 10-200 attendees, served as project manager, developed a variety of communication and marketing materials, and designed web content.

Coordinator, ABC: Read With Me October – December 2014
Duties – Facilitated team discussions, planned meetings, collaborated with team members, developed and promoted public relations campaign, develop relationship with donors, and create data report. Exceeded fundraising goals by 150%.

Student Organizations and Awards

Lambda Pi Eta, National Communication Honor Society	Inducted May 2016
Leadership Award Recipient, Communication Club	Received 2016
National Society of Leadership and Success	Inducted February 2016
Student Reading Council	2013 – 2014

References available upon request

"The most important information that potential employers should remember about you should go in the F-zone" (Diaz, 2013). Be certain to use font that is easily legible.

Include an email address that is professional and appropriate.

Use specific nouns and keywords to describe job duties and qualifications. If applicable, adjustments should be made to match those specified in the job posting.

If you decide to include your GPA, be certain it will reflect positively.

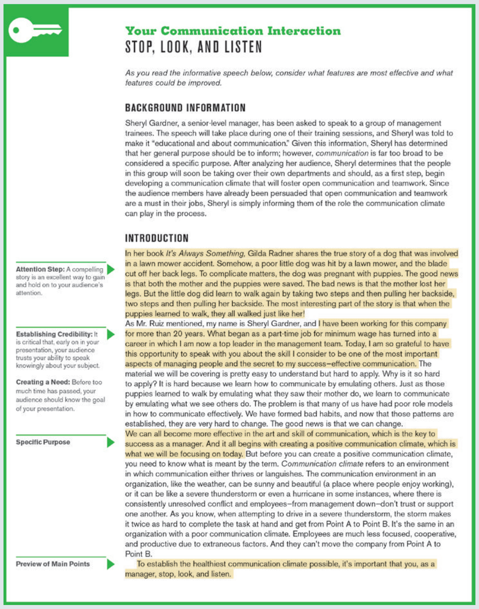
Creating distinctive headings and subheadings make a document easier to read. Instead of "Work Experience", it is often better to have "Relevant Experience" as you may include class projects, student organizations, and internships.

Provide information that helps describe the nature of your student organization. For example: honors societies, social organizations, and service organizations often are named with Greek letters.

Highlight anything that demonstrates your proven leadership skills.

Formatting should be consistent through the entirety of the resume. Balancing white-space and margins creates a document that is appealing.

ENHANCED SAMPLE PRESENTATIONS



Your Communication Interaction
STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN

As you read the informative speech below, consider what features are most effective and what features could be improved.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sheryl Gardner, a senior-level manager, has been asked to speak to a group of management trainees. The speech will take place during one of their training sessions, and Sheryl was told to make it "educational and about communication." Given this information, Sheryl has determined that her general purpose should be to inform; however, *communication* is far too broad to be considered a specific purpose. After analyzing her audience, Sheryl determines that the people in this group will soon be taking over their own departments and should, as a first step, begin developing a communication climate that will foster open communication and teamwork. Since the audience members have already been persuaded that open communication and teamwork are a must in their jobs, Sheryl is simply informing them of the role the communication climate can play in the process.

INTRODUCTION

In her book *It's Always Something,* Gilda Radner shares the true story of a dog that was involved in a lawn mower accident. Somehow, a poor little dog was hit by a lawn mower, and the blade cut off her back legs. To complicate matters, the dog was pregnant with puppies. The good news is that both the mother and the puppies were saved. The bad news is that the mother lost her legs. But the little dog did learn to walk again by taking two steps and then pulling her backside, two steps and then pulling her backside. The most interesting part of the story is that when the puppies learned to walk, they all walked just like her!

As Mr. Ruiz mentioned, my name is Sheryl Gardner, and I have been working for this company for more than 20 years. What began as a part-time job for minimum wage has turned into a career in which I am now a top leader in the management team. Today, I am so grateful to have this opportunity to speak with you about the skill I consider to be one of the most important aspects of managing people and the secret to my success–effective communication. The material we will be covering is pretty easy to understand but hard to apply. Why is it so hard to apply? It is hard because we learn how to communicate by emulating others. Just as those puppies learned to walk by emulating what they saw their mother do, we learn to communicate by emulating what we see others do. The problem is that many of us have had poor role models in how to communicate effectively. We have formed bad habits, and now that those patterns are established, they are very hard to change. The good news is that we can change.

We can all become more effective in the art and skill of communication, which is the key to success as a manager. And it all begins with creating a positive communication climate, which is what we will be focusing on today. But before you can create a positive communication climate, you need to know what is meant by the term. *Communication climate* refers to an environment in which communication either thrives or languishes. The communication environment in an organization, like the weather, can be sunny and beautiful (a place where people enjoy working), or it can be like a severe thunderstorm or even a hurricane in some instances, where there is consistently unresolved conflict and employees–from management down–don't trust or support one another. As you know, when attempting to drive in a severe thunderstorm, the storm makes it twice as hard to complete the task at hand and get from Point A to Point B. It's the same in an organization with a poor communication climate. Employees are much less focused, cooperative, and productive due to extraneous factors. And they can't move the company from Point A to Point B.

To establish the healthiest communication climate possible, it's important that you, as a manager, stop, look, and listen.

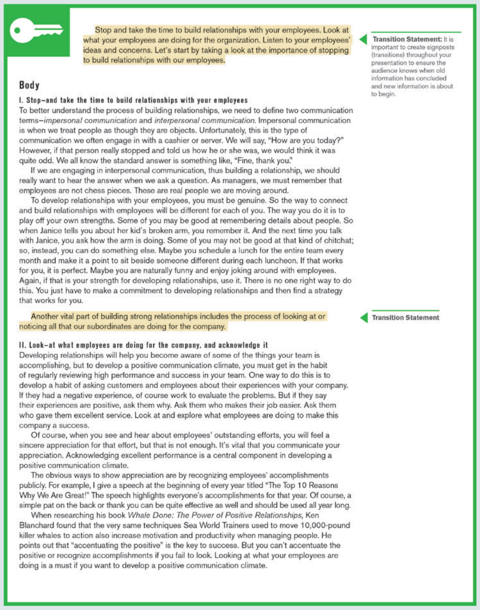
Attention Step: A compelling story is an excellent way to gain and hold on to your audience's attention.

Establishing Credibility: It is critical that, early on in your presentation, your audience trusts your ability to speak knowingly about your subject.

Creating a Need: Before too much time has passed, your audience should know the goal of your presentation.

Specific Purpose

Preview of Main Points



Stop and take the time to build relationships with your employees. Look at what your employees are doing for the organization. Listen to your employees' ideas and concerns. Let's start by taking a look at the importance of stopping to build relationships with our employees.

Transition Statement: It is important to create signposts (transitions) throughout your presentation to ensure the audience knows when old information has concluded and new information is about to begin.

Body

I. Stop–and take the time to build relationships with your employees

To better understand the process of building relationships, we need to define two communication terms–*impersonal communication* and *interpersonal communication.* Impersonal communication is when we treat people as though they are objects. Unfortunately, this is the type of communication we often engage in with a cashier or server. We will say, "How are you today?" However, if that person really stopped and told us how he or she was, we would think it was quite odd. We all know the standard answer is something like, "Fine, thank you."

If we are engaging in interpersonal communication, thus building a relationship, we should really want to hear the answer when we ask a question. As managers, we must remember that employees are not chess pieces. These are real people we are moving around.

To develop relationships with your employees, you must be genuine. So the way to connect and build relationships with employees will be different for each of you. The way you do it is to play off your own strengths. Some of you may be good at remembering details about people. So when Janice tells you about her kid's broken arm, you remember it. And the next time you talk with Janice, you ask how the arm is doing. Some of you may not be good at that kind of chitchat; so, instead, you can do something else. Maybe you schedule a lunch for the entire team every month and make it a point to sit beside someone different during each luncheon. If that works for you, it is perfect. Maybe you are naturally funny and enjoy joking around with employees. Again, if that is your strength for developing relationships, use it. There is no one right way to do this. You just have to make a commitment to developing relationships and then find a strategy that works for you.

Another vital part of building strong relationships includes the process of looking at or noticing all that our subordinates are doing for the company.

Transition Statement

II. Look–at what employees are doing for the company, and acknowledge it

Developing relationships will help you become aware of some of the things your team is accomplishing, but to develop a positive communication climate, you must get in the habit of regularly reviewing high performance and success in your team. One way to do this is to develop a habit of asking customers and employees about their experiences with your company. If they had a negative experience, of course work to evaluate the problems. But if they say their experiences are positive, ask them why. Ask them who makes their job easier. Ask them who gave them excellent service. Look at and explore what employees are doing to make this company a success.

Of course, when you see and hear about employees' outstanding efforts, you will feel a sincere appreciation for that effort, but that is not enough. It's vital that you communicate your appreciation. Acknowledging excellent performance is a central component in developing a positive communication climate.

The obvious ways to show appreciation are by recognizing employees' accomplishments publicly. For example, I give a speech at the beginning of every year titled "The Top 10 Reasons Why We Are Great!" The speech highlights everyone's accomplishments for that year. Of course, a simple pat on the back or thank you can be quite effective as well and should be used all year long.

When researching his book *Whale Done: The Power of Positive Relationships,* Ken Blanchard found that the very same techniques Sea World Trainers used to move 10,000-pound killer whales to action also increase motivation and productivity when managing people. He points out that "accentuating the positive" is the key to success. But you can't accentuate the positive or recognize accomplishments if you fail to look. Looking at what your employees are doing is a must if you want to develop a positive communication climate.

Sample informative and persuasive presentations have been annotated to emphasize useful presentation strategies and highlight effective organization.

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BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

KEYS FOR WORKPLACE EXCELLENCE

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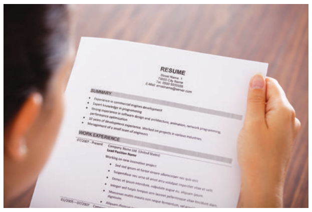

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PREFACE

New look, new edition, a new journey for this book. We are thrilled to share the third edition with you!

As instructors, we must answer many questions when planning a business and professional communication course. First, we must address the broader conceptual questions, such as "What do we want our students to learn?" "How can this information be applied to their current and future professional lives?" "How can we make this material meaningful, useful, and interesting to students with a variety of professional goals and interests?" "How can all the important information, skills, and competencies relevant to business and professional communication be covered in one term?"

Next, we must address the nuts-and-bolts questions that emerge about how to organize so much information and how to translate it into accessible language for students. Instructors often grapple with questions such as "Should I require both an individual and team presentation?" "How much time should I put in the schedule for mock interviews?" "How much attention should be given to résumé development?" "How can this course be delivered online?"

We considered many of the same questions and challenges as we made decisions about what content to cover in this text. **Our mission** in writing this book was to focus on the research and competencies related to business and professional communication so that it can easily be covered in one term across delivery formats (e.g., traditional, online, hybrid). Further, we wanted to provide a book that speaks directly to the student as a developing professional by focusing on the actual experiences—from the job search to developing workplace relations to managing the challenges of coworker bullies, difficult clients, burnout, and the like. We also wanted to provide a text that is adaptable to a variety of instructional needs—for our colleagues who may need the flexibility to emphasize individual presentations and for others who may focus more on team presentations, not include oral communication at all, or deliver the course online. We recognize the diversity from one college or university to the next.

In response to our goal of focusing directly on the individual student experience related to the development of business and professional excellence, we developed an **organizing feature** (the KEYS process described below), which we believe will help instructors guide students and developing professionals in a variety of professional contexts. The KEYS process fosters the primary theme of this text—one that encourages students, regardless of industry or career, to strive for **professional excellence.** In this text, we provide 14 tightly focused chapters in which the best material—drawn from the research bases of communication, business, leadership, psychology, education, and other disciplines—is explored with relevance to the KEYS process. This book doesn't attempt to cover the entire business and professional world—we've made difficult choices regarding the content, based on our years of communication consulting in the business world, teaching communication in higher education, and experimenting with texts written by our friends and colleagues across the nation. What we ended up with represents the cutting-edge work in the field, including research from a variety of methods as well as popular literature, human resources, corporate consulting, and leadership coaching. **Our goal is to connect students across industries and academic disciplines to both theory and practice by applying information regarding**

business and professional communication directly to professional life *inside* and *outside* the workplace—without overwhelming them.

We believe that one of the strengths of this text is that it addresses the challenges we face in today's workplace. In addition to our experience as teacher-scholars in communication, we have worked as consultants designing training and development programs for organizations in a variety of industries. Although all these organizations face similar communication challenges, other textbooks merely mention the problems and rarely address solutions. *Business and Professional Communication: KEYS for Workplace Excellence* not only examines workplace problems (e.g., difficult people, negative impacts of technology, and work-life balance), but also provides students with a communication process that helps them solve problems and continue their professional journeys.

ORGANIZING FEATURE: KEYS FOR WORKPLACE EXCELLENCE

We believe that developing an organizing feature lends clarity to a textbook. Further, such a feature helps students apply material directly to their lives. The **organizing feature** running throughout the text is KEYS, a process designed to develop students' critical thinking skills and make them more reflexive communicators with the ability to adapt and continually improve.

The KEYS Process includes the following four phases: Know yourself, Evaluate the professional context, Your communication interaction, and Step back and reflect.

Know yourself
Challenging students to actively assess their skills as communicators and then develop strategies to utilize their strengths and develop their weaknesses

Evaluate the professional context
Teaching students to proactively address the needs of their audience and understand the constraints of the professional communication context, as well as developing their skills for communicating with a variety of audiences and contexts

Your communication interaction
Asking students to monitor their own verbal and nonverbal communication in addition to the audience within each interaction

Step back and reflect
Examining the effectiveness of verbal and nonverbal messages they convey to others and the overall success of various communication interactions and then taking what they've learned and starting the KEYS process again; developing the ability to continually adapt and improve using a personalized communication inventory

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK: STRATEGIES FOR EXCELLING IN THE WORKPLACE AT EVERY STAGE

The book is organized into five distinct parts. Part I provides an overview of the foundations and key concepts important to the study of business and professional communication and introduces students to central principles related to verbal and nonverbal communication and listening. The next three parts correspond with the stages of experience that come with entering the workplace for the first time, developing in the workplace, and excelling in the workplace. **Each chapter includes cutting-edge research, skills, and tips that will help students to advance in the workplace at every stage of their career by honing their communication skills.** Throughout the text, we connect important issues such as cultural diversity, cultural competence, mutual respect, gender, ethnicity and race, religion, people with disabilities, and more to the business and professional context. With each phase of development, students will gain interpersonal competency, enhance their organizational ability, and refine their presentational skills. Finally, Part V, *Surviving in the Workplace,* encourages students to develop strategies for balancing work and life through communication, a topic not covered in most business and professional communication textbooks.

FEATURES OF THE TEXTBOOK

We provide several unique pedagogical features to help students understand and apply the concepts and theories introduced in the text. These features help reinforce the book's themes and promote critical thinking in readers:

- **Chapter outlines** detail the organization of each chapter, whereas **chapter objectives** help students prioritize information so that they can learn more efficiently.
- Themes from the narratives appear throughout each chapter and are applied to and evaluated with the KEYS feature in a summary section, called **KEYS for Workplace Excellence,** that appears at the end of each chapter.
- The KEYS organizing theme is also highlighted in four distinct instructional features: **Know Yourself** features self-assessments and inventories for readers to use to hone their communication skills; **Evaluate the Professional Context** encourages application of knowledge to a variety of professional contexts and situations; **Your Communication Interaction** focuses on making competent communication choices and selecting the appropriate communication channel, from calling a face-to-face meeting to using social media and technology; and **Step Back and Reflect** presents challenges and dilemmas in business and professional contexts, promoting analysis of what went wrong in specific business and professional situations. All box features contain discussion questions to promote critical thinking and classroom discussion.
- Communication ethics is emphasized in all chapters with a feature called **Ethical Connection**, which connects the topic to an ethical perspective—because it's the foundation of business and professional excellence.
- All chapters also include a feature called **Executive Summary**, designed to promote reading comprehension and serve as a guide to help connect chapter concepts to the chapter objectives.
- We include **Discussion Questions** that instructors may use as a means of generating class discussions about chapter content, as assignments, or as thought-provokers for students to consider on their own time.
- Complete **References** to the research base cited within the text appear at the end of the book and are organized by chapter. Students may find these references useful as they complete assignments or conduct their own research projects. Instructors may use the references to gather additional material for their own research or to supplement instruction.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

- **New chapter-opening narratives** introduce each chapter with a contemporary example drawn from the real world to engage students' interest in a new topic. In all chapters, opening narratives are ripped-from-the-headlines news content representing actual events and real experiences across business and professional contexts.
- **New Tools for Professional Excellence** features focus on communication skills development, career tips, and practical strategies for contexts related to business and professional communication, social media, and technology.
- **Revised Your Communication Interaction** features focus on making competent communication choices and selecting the appropriate communication channel (e.g., face-to-face communication, making phone calls, sending e-mails, making communication decisions related to social media and technology).
- **New Action Items** features encourage students to apply chapter content to business and professional communication skills and contexts.
- **Revised Executive Summary** features concisely review key concepts and skills at the end of every chapter.
- **New Explore questions** encourage students to research and evaluate real-world industries, career opportunities, workplace challenges, and more.
- **New Review questions** are included in every chapter as a learning tool to support mastery of chapter content.

ANCILLARIES

Additional ancillary materials further support and enhance the learning goals of *Business and Professional Communication: KEYS for Workplace Excellence, Third Edition*.

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- Chapter-specific **learning objectives** reinforce the most important material

- Access to full-text **SAGE journal articles** that have been carefully selected to support and expand on the concepts presented in each chapter

SAGE edge for Instructors supports teaching by making it easy to integrate quality content and create a rich learning environment for students.

- **Test banks** provide a diverse range of prewritten options as well as the opportunity to edit any question and/or insert personalized questions to effectively assess students' progress and understanding
- Chapter-specific **learning objectives** reinforce the most important material
- Editable, chapter-specific **PowerPoint® slides** offer complete flexibility for creating a multimedia presentation for the course
- **Lecture notes** summarize key concepts by chapter to ease preparation for lectures and class discussions
- **Tables and figures** from the book are available in an easily downloadable format for use in papers, handouts, and presentations
- **Sample course syllabi** for semester and quarter courses provide suggested models for structuring one's course
- **Discussion questions** help launch classroom interaction by prompting students to engage with the materials and by reinforcing important content
- Carefully selected full-text **SAGE journal articles** support and expand on the concepts presented in each chapter to encourage students to think critically
- **Chapter exercises** for individual or group projects provide lively and stimulating ideas for use in and out of class to reinforce active learning
- **Video and multimedia links** include original SAGE videos that appeal to students with different learning styles
- A **course cartridge** provides easy LMS integration

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PART I

Beginning Communication Principles

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NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE
TWTR LISTED NYSE
@twitter
TWTR LISTED NYSE

A sign displays the Twitter logo on the front of the New York Stock Exchange ahead of the company's stock market launch, November 7, 2013. © LUCAS JACKSON/Reuters/Corbis

CHAPTER OUTLINE

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CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to

1. Define professional excellence and communication
2. Identify business and professional communication contexts
3. Identify the four KEYS to communication in the workplace
4. Discuss the importance of human communication in business and professional contexts
5. Explain the components of the communication model
6. Describe the communication challenges posed by social media and technology
7. Identify the types and causes of communication apprehension
8. Discuss communication and professional excellence from an ethical perspective

01

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Communication has increasingly become a cornerstone of professional excellence in the workplace. The popular social-networking website Twitter embodies both communication and professional excellence; its entire platform relies on the drive for communication while requiring a level of professionalism to make the company profitable. Below we take a look at how Twitter incorporates these two ideals.

- *What they do:* Twitter is a global online information network that allows users to share content and conversations in real time. The company has more than 215 million monthly active users who create approximately 500 million tweets every day (Twitter, 2015). This amount of traffic requires an effective and motivated team of employees to manage.
- *Challenges:* An anonymous survey conducted by Great Rated! indicated that 87% of employees reported that the company often or almost always provided training, fair promotions, and personally challenging work; and 88% of employees felt that Twitter offered more than just a job, but also the opportunity to develop a worldwide forum of communication that creates special meaning.
- *Atmosphere:* The majority of Twitter employees report enjoying their colleagues and find the workplace to be cooperative and fun. Professional excellence requires employees to work fluidly with one another, thus minimizing miscommunication and conflict.
- *Rewards:* 85% of employees reported that Twitter supports their work-life balance and compensates them fairly. Feeling essential to company success is a great motivator to encourage employees to strive for professional excellence.

Reading about employee feedback concerning Twitter may have you motivated to find a career devoted to such positive professional excellence. However, successfully applying to and being accepted at such an organization is no easy feat. You may ask yourself, “Will I be able to get an interview? Will I be considered for a promotion at work? Will I fit in at my new job? What's the best way to run a meeting? What are the qualities of a professional presentation? How should I respond to negative coworkers?" The preceding questions are commonly asked by people entering the workplace for the first time, as well as by people changing job titles, duties, or careers. It seems that regardless of the position or the industry in which you desire to work, there is one thing that will make or break the experience: communication. So welcome to the world of business and professional communication. As you study business and professional communication over the course of this semester, we encourage you, regardless of your major, to take these principles and objectives to heart. After all, communication is the key to professional excellence, and professional excellence is the key to success.

Let us introduce ourselves as your coauthors. We approach this project with years of experience teaching basic communication courses such as public speaking, business and professional communication, interviewing, teamwork and leadership, organizational communication, and public relations. Balanced with our teaching experience and expert knowledge in the communication field are years of professional consulting and real-world experience in a variety of industries, including retail, manufacturing, shipping, health care, government, education, and more. We know firsthand the communication challenges you will face and the communication skills you will need to succeed. Based on our teaching and professional experience, we wrote this book for you, the student as developing professional.

When designing this text, we talked to professors and students alike, trying to get a sense of their needs. Two themes emerged from those conversations. First, instructors and professors are frustrated because students do not read their books. As a result, class discussions, exam scores, and student learning suffer. On the flip side, students are frustrated because they find most books extremely expensive and full of information they deem unimportant. Repeatedly, students asked, "Why can't professors just put the stuff I need to know on a PowerPoint slide?" Our goal when writing this text is to address both problems/needs. We have tried to develop a text that speaks directly to you as a student who desires success after graduation. We realize that those of you taking this class and reading this text are interested in different professions and are in different stages of your professional lives. Given the array of professional journeys taking place in the lives of you, the readers, we have included topics that will be valuable to everyone. The topic areas of the text will focus on *beginning communication principles*, *entering the workplace, developing in the workplace, excelling in the workplace, presenting in the workplace,* and *surviving in the workplace*. We explore the experiences you will face as you transition from student to professional and, eventually, to leader. You will come to understand the role of communication in successfully handling situations such as interviewing for jobs, providing feedback to supervisors, and working in teams. As an additional feature, this text not only discusses the greatest challenges we all face in the modern workplace but also provides communication strategies for overcoming those challenges. Issues such as excelling under the pressure of increasingly competitive customer service demands, managing emotions when dealing with irate customers, overcoming stress and burnout, and managing difficult people are just a few of the topics covered. We hope that this approach will engage you as both a student and a reader.

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WHAT IS BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION?

Although many of these subjects will be expanded upon in later chapters, these are some of the core principles that will set the foundation for your study of business and professional communication.

INTERVIEWING

Obviously your first step into the business world will involve landing a job. *Interviewing* is the process of making yourself available to employers in a formal setting and in the best possible light. Although the main goal of interviewing is to get a job, it also gives you the opportunity to determine whether the particular job is right for you. Interviewing is a two-way street; you should also use this time to make sure that an organization meets your needs as a professional and that the organizational culture will allow you to thrive. Knowing how to prepare for an interview, anticipating questions, dressing appropriately, providing credible and effective answers, and following up after an interview are all critical aspects of being a competent interview participant.

When you hear the word *professional*, who or what comes to mind? Do a suit and a tie equate to professional excellence, or is it something more? ©iStockphoto.com/shironosov

RELATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Although you may be an effective communicator in interpersonal settings, you need to know how to apply relational communication to the business and professional world. Communication initiation, maintenance, and even disengagement are all necessary skills to possess for workplace relationships. You will be tasked with forming effective relationships with your coworkers, supervisors, customers, vendors, and subordinates. Much of your communication will challenge you to balance small talk, self-disclosure, task delegation, and many other functions that are essential in the workplace. Also, when business relationships turn sour or costly, you must know how to end the relationship with minimal tension and negative consequences.

MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

The new media have opened numerous new channels for communication professionals. Computer-mediated communication offers convenience and timely access to pertinent information, and it connects communicators across the globe via screen taps and mouse clicks. However, as a communication professional you must be aware of the inherent drawbacks of mediated communication. Be aware that traditional public speaking skills don't always translate as effectively (e.g., video or telephone conferences) and must be altered to fit the situation at hand.

PRESENTATIONAL SPEAKING

Public speaking is one of the most feared—but also most important—functions of business and professional communication. This textbook will introduce you to various types of business presentations, including informative, persuasive, and public presentations. You will learn how to research and prepare your presentation, how to analyze your audience (as well as who your *target* audience should be), and how to create memorable and effective introductions and conclusions that will stick in the mind of your audience. You will learn about the balance of having excellent content while also delivering it to the audience in an engaging way. Also, you will learn about many of the multimedia presentation aids available to you, as well as when (and if) visual aids are appropriate for your presentation.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTS

Effective professional communication asks you to be not only a great communicator and speaker, but also an effective writer. Although the type of written communication you engage in can vary greatly depending on your profession, there are certain universal skills you should always have. You must know how to structure the information, select the right style/tone/language, and determine what length is appropriate to cover all the important information while also being short enough to keep the readers' attention. You must learn how to cultivate and maintain credibility, and use appropriate grammar and punctuation to emphasize professionalism. This may seem like a daunting to-do list, but through study and practice you will be able to create professional, engaging, and effective written communication for your business or organization.

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE IN CONTEXT

Professional excellence in the workplace is depicted in a variety of movies and popular television sitcoms. Do you think shows like *Parks and Recreation* that feature characters like Amy Poehler as Leslie Knope (pictured here) truly reflect what is experienced in business and professional contexts? Colleen Hayes/NBC Universal/Getty Images

The text's driving theme is professional excellence. To demonstrate excellence as a professional, you must demonstrate excellence as a communicator. Excellence does not equate to merely communicating a message effectively or simply demonstrating communication competencies. Professional excellence means being recognized for your skills as a communicator and serving as a role model to others. Before you begin your journey with this important topic, it is important to understand some fundamental areas of communication, such as verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and listening. Additionally, it's important to understand the business and professional contexts that will receive specific attention in this book. The business and professional contexts you will explore are beginning communication principles (i.e., verbal and nonverbal communication and listening), the job-seeking process, workplace culture and diversity, interpersonal communication, team communication, communication and technology, written communication, leadership, presenting as a professional, and work-life balance. These are the contexts that will no doubt shape your experience as a professional. Keep in mind that communication is at the core of the business and professional contexts you will study in this course. Let's take a look at each one in more detail.

VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Chapter 2 explores the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication as the foundation of beginning principles needed to guide your study of business and professional communication across contexts. Verbal communication is both our words and our verbal fillers (e.g., *um*, *like*). Verbal messages are created through language. Effective communication involves accurate interpretations of others' verbal messages as meaning is cocreated. Further, nonverbal communication (sometimes referred to as body language) includes all those ways we communicate without words.

LISTENING

Chapter 3 connects listening to your study of business and professional communication. Effective listening is central to fostering interpersonal relationships with coworkers, leaders, and clients. Effective listening can impact one's relationship satisfaction and can be a determining factor in whether someone is an effective communicator. Listening, in addition to other communication abilities, is a likely predictor of who gets promoted or who receives other relevant rewards such as status and power. In all, listening is a beginning communication skill or basic principle important to your study of business and professional communication. You will learn the importance of listening across business and professional contexts using the KEYS process.

The handshake is an important example of nonverbal communication experienced in many business and professional situations. © iStockphoto.com/skynesher

RÉSUMÉS, INTERVIEWS, AND NEGOTIATIONS

The context you will study in Chapter 4 is job seeking. Our approach is to provide the information you'll need to conduct a comprehensive job search and know yourself in terms of professional goals and the type of work environment you desire. Job seeking is one context in which business and professional excellence is critical to your success.

GETTING TO KNOW THE DIVERSE WORKPLACE

Once you've landed the job, you'll enter a diverse workplace context. You will no doubt have coworkers whose views of the world and ways of living are different from yours. Further, it can take time to learn the organizational culture in terms of your role and how you fit in. As Chapter 5 explores, getting to know the diverse workplace goes beyond new employee orientation. The diverse workplace context requires professional excellence fostered by cultural competence, perception checking, and mutual respect.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AT WORK

Central to your personal and professional growth in any career are the relationships and overall rapport you'll have with your boss, coworkers, and clients. Chapter 6 reviews the importance of interpersonal communication in common business and professional encounters. Interpersonal communication (also referred to as people skills) helps you build relationships in your personal and professional life, but these skills also can help you to survive many challenges (e.g., conflict, difficult coworkers and clients).

STRENGTHENING TEAMS AND CONDUCTING MEETINGS

Another common experience for professionals across industries is working in a team context. You've probably heard other people use terms such as *team player*, *team skills*, and *team building* in reference to job performance. Working in a team context can be both a

Where would you begin to search for jobs in the industry or profession in which you're interested? Goodshoot/Goodshoot/Thinkstock

rewarding and an exhausting experience for any professional. Chapter 7 pays specific attention to the team context you'll likely encounter in your professional life, as well as strategies that foster professional excellence in team communication. This chapter also focuses on the skills needed to run effective meetings, a primary tool for team communication.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE WORKPLACE

Technology in business and professional contexts is central to communication, planning, marketing, networking, organization, research, and the like. Technology allows you to communicate faster than in years past with the use of e-mail, personal digital assistants, and a host of other devices designed to make the exchange of information in business instant rather than delayed. Chapter 8 examines the impact of communication and technology on business and professional contexts, including the role of social media as a professional tool and a professional barrier. As technology enables you to excel at work with faster information exchange and interaction, it's important to be aware of the problems and misunderstandings that can occur as the result of various technology-based communication channels.

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WRITING

Chapter 9 examines written communication as it connects to professional excellence. As you enter business and professional contexts that require you to use written communication, it is important for you to make decisions that will ensure professional excellence. Written communication can challenge professionals in a variety of contexts. How do I select the correct format to get the message out? Is it appropriate for me to send this document via e-mail? What tone should I strive for in this message? These are only a few of the questions about written communication that you may encounter in your career.

LEADERSHIP AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Chapter 10 reviews the role of leadership in business and professional contexts. In order to excel as a leader, you must understand what leadership is and get to know what style of leader you are and if your style works best in the business and professional context in which you're working. Further, this chapter explores the challenges leaders experience, as well as strategies for leading difficult people and managing workplace conflict.

PRESENTATIONS

As a professional, you will enter situations that require you to give presentations. The presentation context arises in many forms (e.g., informative, persuasive, motivational, and team presentations). Chapters 11, 12, and 13 explore the presentation skills essential to your professional success. When you're faced with an opportunity to give a formal presentation, pitch a product, present research findings, run a meeting, conduct a morning huddle, acknowledge outstanding employees, or motivate your team in difficult times, view that speaking situation as a chance to communicate professional excellence.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Chapter 14 looks at how the various experiences in your professional and personal life can be in conflict with one another. This tension can present quite a challenge, which can lead to stress and burnout. We emphasize the importance of work-life balance, explore the triggers that cause imbalance, and present communication strategies that enable you to sustain professional excellence and foster meaningful and successful relationships in your personal life.

Present in each of these contexts is the KEYS process.

As much as anyone wants to be successful professionally, it's important to think about personal and family life, too. Unfortunately, maintaining balance can be difficult. © iStockphoto.com/aprott

UNDERSTANDING THE KEYS PROCESS

You will learn to demonstrate professional excellence by using KEYS, a communication process designed to enhance your ability to critically assess and then improve your communication skills. By following the KEYS process, you will learn to utilize your communication strengths and develop your weaknesses, deliver audience-centered messages, understand the communication context, and reflect on your communication with the intention and ability to improve continually.

Effective business and professional communication is central to your success when entering the workplace for the first time, developing your skills at a job you already have, excelling in your career, or managing challenges that may come your way. But you may be wondering, "How can I master this multifaceted, multidimensional skill? How can I make sense of all this information and really make it useful in my career so that I get something practical out of it, something that can enhance my business and professional communication skills and improve my life?" The "how" you are looking for is available to you in this course. Studying communication will enhance your skills as a professional. Doing well in this course will afford you the tools needed for professional excellence. Furthermore, making the KEYS process a part of your communication interactions will continue your development long after this course ends.

What is the KEYS process? The KEYS process (see Figure 1.1) is central to your development as a professional, meaning that we encourage you to personalize it as you continue to expand your understanding of business and professional communication. KEYS is an acronym for **K**now yourself, **E**valuate the professional context, **Y**our communication interaction, and **S**tep back and reflect.

The organizing feature of this text is the KEYS process, which is designed to develop critical thinking skills and make you a more reflexive communicator with the ability to adapt and continually improve. What we strive for in this book is a balance of theory and practice—an approach that emphasizes skill development based on knowledge and understanding. Review Figure 1.1 to familiarize yourself with the KEYS process. We will use this feature to personally engage, prepare, and improve human communication in the variety of situations we all have encountered or will encounter in our lives as professionals, regardless of industry.

FIGURE 1.1
KEYS TO COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Know yourself
Challenging students to actively assess their skills as communicators and then develop strategies to utilize their strengths and develop their weaknesses

Evaluate the professional context
Teaching students to proactively address the needs of their audience and understand the constraints of the professional communication context, as well as developing their skills for communicating with a variety of audiences and contexts

Your communication interaction
Asking students to monitor their own verbal and nonverbal communication in addition to the audience within each interaction

Step back and reflect
Examining the effectiveness of verbal and nonverbal messages they convey to others and the overall success of various communication interactions and then taking what they've learned and starting the KEYS process again; developing the ability to continually adapt and improve using a personalized communication inventory

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL CONTEXTS

As you begin your study, it's important to define what communication means. Communication has been defined in many ways, but here's the definition we prefer: **Human communication** is the process of understanding our experiences and the experiences of others through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages (Edwards, Edwards, Wahl, & Myers, 2016; Ivy & Wahl, 2014; Regenbogen et al., 2012). People come to understand that communication in everyday experiences is the essential process and skill that helps them make sense of things in both personal and professional contexts.

Even if you have some reservations about your communication skills, you probably consider yourself to be a good communicator and good listener. Most people do. After all, it's difficult to admit being bad at something you do all day, every day for your entire life. Because communication is so much a part of our everyday lives, we think of communication as a simple process. Communicating comes so naturally to us that we rarely feel the need to give communication a second thought. When was the last time you really stopped and examined your communication skills? Do you stop and examine your communication regularly? Most people don't.

In some cases, people who fail to reflect on their communication skills trudge through life thinking they are great communicators when they are, in actuality, dreadful communicators. They exemplify a behavior called **communication bravado**—perceiving their communication as effective, while those around them perceive it as ineffective (Quintanilla &

Mallard, 2008). Ineffective communicators view communication as simply talking—but truly effective communicators know it is far more complicated than that.

Do you take your communication skills for granted? Are you suffering from communication bravado? Let us assure you that you do indeed have some weaknesses in your communication and listening, simply because everyone does. However, understanding why communication is important and how the communication process works is the first step in overcoming those weaknesses and starting on the road to professional excellence.

In addition, there are several important ways in which the key areas of human communication as a whole influence and are essential for effective communication in the workplace.

ROLE-TAKING

The critical functions of human communication (sending and receiving messages, offering feedback, identifying the "role" of different communicators) must also be applied to the context of business communication. For example, car salespeople must basically give sales "presentations" to any potential buyers who visit their car lot. Much of their success is determined by how well they can tailor their message depending on the individual needs of many different customers. If a customer gives verbal or nonverbal cues expressing concern about the fuel efficiency of their prospective vehicle, the salesperson must modify the message to emphasize each car's gas mileage as a major selling point. This dynamic aspect of role-taking and feedback keeps the transaction flowing.

PREVIOUS COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCES

The way people respond initially to new business transactions depends greatly on their previous communication experiences in similar situations. Using the previous example, have you experienced buying a new vehicle or making another major purchase (house, major appliance, business)? Depending on whether that experience was positive or negative, it helps form the basis for how you communicate in similar transactions in the future. Therefore, from a business standpoint, your initial communication impression is of critical importance.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Depending on your physical location, your communication approach can alter significantly (Ivy & Wahl, 2014). For example, your communication with a classmate will

ACTION ITEMS

COMMUNICATION EXCELLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

SKILL	STRATEGY	APPLICATION
Sales	Allow online shopping for customers.	Retail outlet Target allows customers to order in-store items from home for added convenience.
Customer service	Use social media to reach out directly to consumers.	Electronics retailer Best Buy responds directly to customer concerns and complaints via their Facebook and Twitter pages.
Public relations	Use nontraditional media platforms to reach the target audience.	Fast-food corporation McDonald's uses a YouTube channel to show customers exactly how their products are made.

likely be much more informal than your communication with a professor. Similarly, the channel of communication can also affect communication. Many people feel comfortable taking a more aggressive or assertive tone when using e-mail than when engaging in face-to-face communication.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The way we communicate, with whom we communicate, and what we communicate are almost always influenced by culture (Wahl & Scholl, 2014). Culture is an ongoing social institution that has its own set of behavioral rules. For our discussion, *organizational culture* influences how we (as members of a business or professional organization) frame our communication with others both within and outside that organization. For example, the communication that takes place in a board meeting of lawyers will feature a different set of decorum, rules, and *norms* when compared with a brainstorming session among creative writers for a small company. To be a competent communicator in your organization, you must be dynamic in adhering to the rules and norms of different communication situations.

COMMUNICATION RELATIONSHIPS

The perceived social hierarchy between communicators, whether they be strangers or intimates, significantly influences the nature of the communication interaction. The way you would communicate with a customer would differ from the way you communicate with a coworker, which would also differ from how you communicate with your supervisor. Organizational structures require that you be fluid in switching your communication strategies depending on your relationship with the other communicator(s). This includes not only your initial communication, but also the type of feedback you give and the amount of appropriate self-disclosure the sender and receiver provide one another.

Regardless of your major or the career path you eventually follow, effective communication will be essential to your success in the workplace (Gray, 2010). Your fellow students understand the value and importance of communication in their careers. Of 116 students surveyed at a southwestern university, 97% agreed that communication is a valuable skill and 88% saw themselves using oral presentation skills in their careers (Mallard & Quintanilla, 2007). Further support for the importance of communication in your professional careers comes from business and industry focus groups. You'll notice that all the competencies listed in the "Tools for Professional Excellence" box below are connected to your study of business and professional communication in this course.

COMMUNICATION: A COMPLEX PROCESS

Communication is a complex process that consists of a number of elements, all of which are in play every time you communicate (see Figure 1.2). Those who demonstrate professional excellence consider these elements every time they communicate. By the end of this semester, so will you. Let's examine each of these elements in more detail.

SENDER AND RECEIVER

We stated earlier that, speaking practically, communication involves sending and receiving messages. So it should be no surprise that you take on the roles of sender and receiver when you communicate. When you are acting as the sender, you **encode** your messages with verbal and nonverbal cues to help others understand what you mean. When the receivers of your messages respond or **decode** your message, you find out if your message was successfully transferred. In one sense, this exchange of message

TOOLS FOR PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE 1.1

SKILLS YOU NEED FOR YOUR CAREER (BASED ON A 2015 BLOOMBERG SURVEY OF JOB RECRUITERS)

When thinking about your future career path consider the skills and attributes that recruiters really desire:

DESIRABILITY	SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES
More Common/Less Desired	• Initiative/risk-taking • Decision making • Global mindset • Entrepreneurship • Quantitative skills • Motivation/drive
Less Common/Less Desired	• Industry-related work experience • Adaptability
Less Common/More Desired	• Strategic thinking • Creative problem-solving • Leadership skills • Communication skills
More Common/More Desired	• Analytical thinking • Ability to work collaboratively

SOURCE: Levy, F., & Rodkin, J. (2015). The Bloomberg recruiter report: Job skills companies want but can't get. *Bloomberg*. Adapted from http://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2015-job-skills-report

and response is a cocreation of meaning, in that both parties play a role in cocreating a meaningful exchange. Although the person initiating the exchange (the sender) can't control how the listener (or receiver) interprets the message, the goal is for the listener to understand the meaning of the message as the sender intended it.

The respective roles of sender and receiver in communication seem fairly clear-cut, but in truth, communication is experienced in a more holistic manner—not as senders and receivers but as communicators. Consider an example: You run into a friend, Pat, while walking to class. Pat says, "Hey, how's it going?" You return the greeting and begin to tell Pat about your plans for the weekend (you are attending a cousin's wedding). At some point during the story you are telling (how your cousin met her fiancé), you notice Pat checking his wristwatch. You cut off your story and say goodbye, and each of you walks to class. In one view of this example, you and Pat switch off as senders and receivers: Pat sends you a greeting, which you receive; you send Pat an explanation of your weekend plans and a story, which Pat receives; then Pat sends you a nonverbal cue that time is short, which you receive by ending the encounter. In another view of this example, you and Pat are both communicators, as you simultaneously send and receive messages.

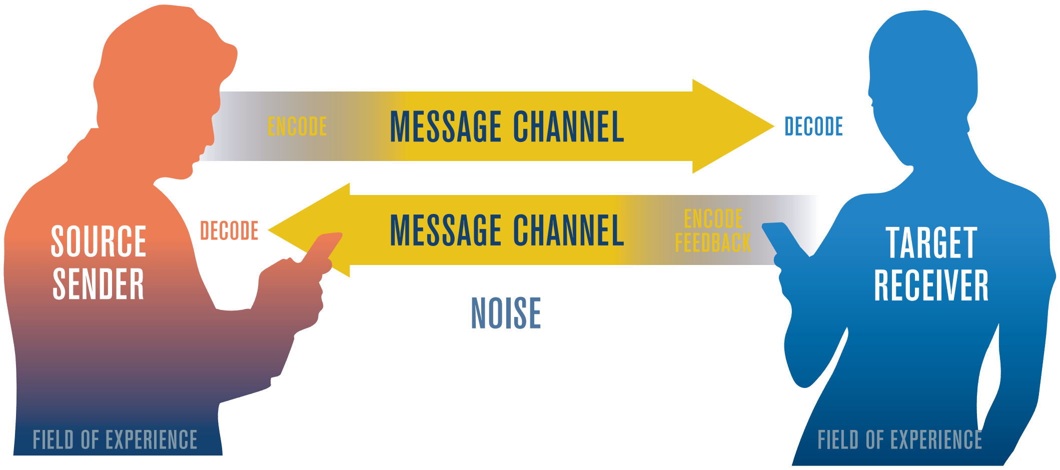

FIGURE 1.2
INTERACTION MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

MESSAGE AND FEEDBACK

Implicit in the preceding discussion of senders and receivers is that a message is communicated. One principle from the field of communication suggests that you cannot *not* communicate.

To say that you cannot *not* communicate is *not* to say that everything is communication. Rather, it means that messages have both a verbal and a nonverbal component. In the previous example, Pat did not say anything verbally, but he did send a message nonverbally when he checked his watch. What was his message? That is not clear. He may have been giving a nonverbal cue that your wedding story was too long. He may have had an appointment and needed to be on his way. Only Pat knows for sure. The point is, regardless of whether or not Pat intended to provide a message, he did, and you responded in accordance with the meaning you took from that message.

Also included in the communication model is feedback. In the model, you will see that feedback is sent from the receiver to the sender. However, since the distinction between sender and receiver is in many ways arbitrary, feedback is the same as the message. The notion of feedback reminds us, as communicators, to look for cues from the other person or persons with whom we are communicating.

CHANNEL

The channel is simply the method by which you send your message. With all the technology available today, deciding which channel to use can be a daunting task. When you advance in your career and move into a leadership position, you'll have to evaluate the merits of various communication channels daily. Given the message, should you meet with members of your team one-on-one or call a meeting? Is it better to send a memo or an e-mail? Should you call, or should you text? Each communication channel brings with it a variety of strengths and weaknesses that will be discussed in a later chapter.

CONTEXT

Always and everywhere, communication is contextual. **Context** refers to the location, time, and occasion where communication occurs. Developing professional excellence means beginning to assess your communication context and use that information when developing your message. For instance, consider the context of the business and professional communication course. Virtually everyone in the course is there because they have to be. As a result, if you give a speech in this course, your audience may not be interested in or knowledgeable about the topic you select; you might need to educate them and take conscious steps to capture their interest. However, if you are giving a speech to a group of employees about their cost-of-living and merit raises, they will be hanging on your every word.

Professionals send and receive verbal and nonverbal messages in a variety of contexts. ©iStockphoto.com/59911120

NOISE

Noise is part of the communication context. **Noise** can be either external or internal. **External noise** includes distractions such as audible talking during a meeting, ruffling of papers, or a cell phone going off in the next cubicle. For our purposes, the definition of external noise is extended to include any external factor that could interfere with a communicator's ability to focus on the message. In a meeting, external noise might also include a team member sending text messages with the sound on or whispering while your boss is talking.

Internal noise encompasses any internal condition or state that interferes with the communicator's ability to focus on the message. If your meeting starts at 11:00 a.m., your team members may be looking forward to lunch; if you hold an emergency meeting at 6:00 a.m., your team may be tired. Being hungry or tired creates internal noise. Developing professional excellence includes learning to consider things such

Your Communication Interaction

ANNOYING COWORKERS

As you read the passage below, consider what would be a more effective communication strategy in this situation.

Doug just began a new job at a software company. He loves his new workplace, except for a few obnoxious coworkers. These particular coworkers continually leave food and trash lying around, play loud music in the middle of the workday, and tell inappropriate jokes in front of the other employees, all to the point that Doug's ability to get work done has deteriorated. Doug has tried asking the employees to quiet down, to no avail, and is now considering bringing his concerns to the head of the company, who is rarely in the office. Doug decides to send the head of the company an e-mail in which he lets out all of his frustration.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Was sending an e-mail the best way for Doug to express his feelings about his coworkers, or could he have used a different communication channel?
2. What are some things Doug should keep in mind the next time he communicates in the workplace using e-mail?
3. What are some situations where e-mail is the ideal form of communication?

as context and noise when making decisions about your communication interactions. Remember that both internal and external noise are doing more than just preventing you from focusing on the message. That is, both types of noise can also interfere with your understanding of the message. You can be focused on a message and still not understand.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY: KEY CHALLENGES IN THE COMMUNICATION AGE

Although new technologies such as smartphones, social networking, and Skype can make communication a more convenient task, these new channels of communication create their own sets of problems if not used effectively (Edwards et al., 2016). Simply because you have the ability to communicate with different people and cultures across the globe does not mean you are ready to work with these people if you lack training and cultural sensitivity. Also, when relying almost exclusively on computer-mediated communication for business and professional interactions, you run the risk of letting your face-to-face communication skills suffer. Another issue is that constant availability and connection with your work life can lead to stress, burnout, and information overload if you do not "unplug" from work from time to time. Here are some common challenges to business communication in the information age.

- **Knowing when to use computer-mediated communication or face-to-face communication can be challenging.** A common problem now is that we have almost too many choices available to us for communicating with others. E-mail, texting, and instant messaging have become the de facto choice of communication for many people, but what about those who are not as connected to their smartphones or computers? There are still many "traditional" communicators who prefer the intimacy of face-to-face interactions and find e-mail or text interactions to be dismissive or insulting.

  By this same reasoning, new media are inhibited in their ability to transmit nonverbal cues of intimacy and familiarity. How many times have you read a text message and not been able to decipher if the text is a joke, sarcastic, or completely serious? These types of miscommunications happen continually, and they have the potential to unintentionally ruin business relationships.

  So when is it appropriate to use face-to-face or computer-mediated communication? Current literature suggests that new media are appropriate for sending routine and simple information, but face-to-face communication is better for complex, urgent, or controversial messages. Keep in mind there is no "one size fits all" approach to choosing the appropriate communication channel. Your continued study and application of business and communication are what will ultimately allow you to make the right decisions about what communication channels to use.

- **Practicing cultural sensitivity can be difficult.** As business and commerce increasingly take place on a global scale, the ability to communicate with cultural sensitivity cannot be overstated. Many businesses rely on global exposure for success, and part of that success involves communicating with individuals who can be quite different from you. For intercultural communication competence, you must be an active learner of values, language systems, and cultural communication norms.

  Intercultural communication involves the communication between and among individuals and groups across national and ethnic boundaries (Wahl & Scholl, 2014). Understanding and effectively engaging in this type of communication can put you head-over-heels above other professionals in your organization. For the most part, your personal cultural background determines the way you communicate—how personal beliefs influence what you say, what language you use, and even your nonverbal gestures. These in turn will alter how others respond to your communication. For example, a common job interview or negotiation strategy in the United States is to make consistent eye contact with your communication partner. However, in many Asian cultures, prolonged eye contact can be construed as a sign of disrespect, or even belligerence. This lack of cultural awareness could easily disrupt business negotiations across cultures.

What experiences have you had speaking into a microphone? Did using a microphone increase your communication apprehension? ©iStockphoto.com/Sean_Warren

- **Information overload can negatively affect your work and health.** The price we pay for convenience and immediacy with computer-mediated communication is the difficulty of disconnecting from it. Constant connectivity can sometimes be abused by making yourselves or others constantly available. Have you ever had a day off from work ruined because your boss e-mailed new work after business hours? All the digital media you use for convenience, work, and enjoyment (smartphone, social media, e-mail) can result in *information overload*, which exposes you to more messages than you can process. Research has shown that a growing number of employees are feeling overwhelmed by the seemingly endless flow of e-mail and text messages, and feeling pressured to respond to messages as soon as they receive them (Edwards et al., 2016; Ivy & Wahl, 2014; Wahl & Scholl, 2014). Remember that although being connected is important and sometimes essential to business communication, it is also equally important to give yourself an avenue to step away from constant digital interaction.

COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

Effective communication skills are essential if you want to excel in leadership. Put simply, to move up the ladder of success, you must develop your communication skills. Unfortunately, communication apprehension is a very real problem that stops many talented individuals from achieving professional excellence. What is communication apprehension?

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

According to James C. McCroskey (1982), one of the leading researchers in the communication discipline, communication apprehension is "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (p. 137). You can understand your own communication apprehension by thinking about your communication in particular situations. What types of communication situations increase your apprehension? According to McCroskey (1984), there are at least four types of communication apprehension:

- **Trait communication apprehension** means that one possesses a "shy trait." In general, shy people tend not to raise their hands in class a lot, avoid certain social situations, and feel extremely anxious about giving a professional presentation.
- **Context-based communication apprehension** describes a fear of communicating in certain contexts. A fear of public speaking is a great example of context communication apprehension. For example, a student may not be nervous about meeting new people or participating in small groups, but presenting a speech in front of the class promotes a high degree of apprehension.
- **Audience-based communication apprehension** explains a person's fear of speaking to certain people or groups. For example, a person may feel comfortable speaking in front of friends in his or her social circle, but speaking in front of colleagues at work makes him or her extremely nervous.
- **Situational communication apprehension** refers to apprehension to communicate in specific sets of circumstances; everyone at some point in their lives is going to feel apprehensive about communicating something. Think of a person you might want to impress, such as a boss or an interviewer. In general, you are an outgoing person and don't mind presenting in front of people, but someone you want to impress may promote an uneasy or anxious feeling.

CAUSES OF COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

Now that we've reviewed the different types of communication apprehension, let's take a look at some of the causes. Communication scholar Michael Beatty (1988) lists eight causes of communication apprehension. Review the list that follows to see if any of the causes resonate with you personally:

- *Novelty:* If the type of communication situation, such as giving a speech or running a meeting, is not something you do every day, it can create apprehension until you become familiar with this task or situation.
- *Formality:* Preparing and organizing something to be in the spotlight can promote the feeling of formality that makes you nervous or apprehensive.
- *Subordinate status:* If someone in charge of you, such as a manager at work, is evaluating your presentation, his or her higher status and evaluation can cause anxiety.
- *Peer evaluation:* How are my coworkers going to respond to me? This question addresses concerns you may have about your peers evaluating you. These concerns can in turn cause apprehension.
- *Dissimilarity:* Sometimes you may feel different from the audience. Having nothing in common with the audience causes anxiety.
- *Conspicuousness:* Feeling as though you are in the spotlight and all eyes are on you can certainly cause anxiety.
- *Lack of attention:* When you feel as though a listener or the audience is bored and uninterested in your message or presentation, you may begin to feel apprehension.
- *Prior history:* Many people have had a bad experience during a communication interaction, such as an interview, a presentation, or a meeting. This negative experience can create anxiety the next time you find yourself in a similar situation.

As you can see, there are many different types and causes of communication apprehension. Identifying the types and causes of your communication apprehension is important, but not nearly as important as learning the skills that will reduce those fears.

Know Yourself:
PERSONAL REPORT OF COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

As you read the index below and answer the questions, think about how this knowledge can help you be a better communicator.

PERSONAL REPORT OF COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION (PRCA-24)

The PRCA-24 is the instrument most widely used to measure communication apprehension. The measure permits one to obtain subscores on the contexts of public speaking, dyadic interaction, small groups, and large groups.

This instrument is composed of 24 statements concerning feelings about communicating with others. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you *strongly disagree* = 1; *disagree* = 2; are *neutral* = 3; *agree* = 4; or *strongly agree* = 5.

______1. I dislike participating in group discussions.
______2. Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussions.
______3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.
______4. I like to get involved in group discussions.
______5. Engaging in a group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.
______6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.
______7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.
______8. Usually, I am comfortable when I have to participate in a meeting.
______9. I am very calm and relaxed when I am called on to express an opinion at a meeting.
_____10. I am afraid to express myself at meetings.
_____11. Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.
_____12. I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.
_____13. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.
_____14. I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.
_____15. Ordinarily, I am very tense and nervous in conversations.
_____16. Ordinarily, I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.
_____17. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.
_____18. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.
_____19. I have no fear of giving a speech.
_____20. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.
_____21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
_____22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
_____23. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
_____24. While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.

SCORING:

Group discussion: 18 – (scores for Items 2, 4, and 6) + (scores for Items 1, 3, and 5)

Meetings: 18 – (scores for Items 8, 9, and 12) + (scores for Items 7, 10, and 11)

Interpersonal: 18 – (scores for Items 14, 16, and 17) + (scores for Items 13, 15, and 18)

Public speaking: 18 – (scores for Items 19, 21, and 23) + (scores for Items 20, 22, and 24)

Group discussion score: _____

Meetings score: _____

Interpersonal score: _____

Public speaking score: _____

To obtain your total score for the PRCA, simply add your subscores together: _____

Scores can range from 24 to 120. Scores below 51 represent people who have very low communication apprehension. Scores between 51 and 80 represent people with average communication apprehension. Scores above 80 represent people who have high levels of trait communication apprehension.

Step Back and Reflect:
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout this text, you will be given opportunities to step back and reflect on other people's communication interactions. But in this first exercise, we would like you to step back and reflect on your own communication. Read the questions below. When it comes to both your written and your verbal communication, can you always answer yes to these questions? Can you think of examples for which you could not answer yes?

Lying: Are you telling the truth?

Secrets: Are you respecting the boundary placed around information by avoiding disclosure to others?

Integrity: Are you discerning right from wrong and explaining your reasoning for your decision? In other words, are you vocal about the ethics driving your decision (e.g., care and love, financial, respect for individual rights, equal for all)?

Aggressive communication: Are you communicating with others without aggression and abuse of power? Are you communicating with others in a dignified and respectful manner? Are you communicating with mutual respect and open dialogue?

Plagiarism (cheating): Are you communicating information that is authentic and not plagiarized? Is the source of information being credited appropriately?

STEP BACK AND REFLECT

1. Have you ever taken part in any of these communication behaviors?
2. If so, did you consider them unethical? Why or why not?
3. Did you consider them unprofessional? Why or why not?

COMMUNICATION ETHICS

With professional excellence as our goal, we believe that ethical behavior must serve as a foundation for people to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. Central to professional excellence is communication ethics. Ethics is the general term for the discussion, determination, and deliberation processes that attempt to decide what is right or wrong, what others should or should not do, and what is considered appropriate in our individual, communal, and professional lives (By, Burnes, & Oswick, 2012; Japp, Meister, & Japp, 2005; Johannesen, Valde, & Whedbee, 2008). What considerations or factors help shape our ethical decisions as professionals? Ethical considerations are the variety of factors important for us to consider in any scenario in which we're making a decision, conducting an evaluation, or making a selection (Bok, 1989, 1999; Carter, 1996; Japp et al., 2005; Mathenge, 2011; Tannen, 1998). Ethical considerations vary from person to person, and it is not always as simple as the black-and-white world of right and wrong. For example, you may experience ethical dilemmas, situations that do not seem to present clear choices between right and wrong or good and evil. If you are asked to do something illegal, then it may be easy to make a decision. "No, I will not do something illegal." But what if it is not illegal? What if everyone else does it? What if it is just bending the rules a little bit? The questions in the "Step Back and Reflect" box are ones that ethical communicators must always consider.

Many ethical considerations are connected to our values and virtues. Values are moral principles or rules that determine ethical behaviors. Values are often articulated in *should* or *should-not* statements. Sometimes values are presented as statements of what a group believes or as lists of rules people intend to honor. Many readers of this text will take jobs in industries that ask all employees to support organizational values, specific principles or guidelines such as safety, teamwork, integrity, or ownership that are typically outlined in support of any given organizational mission or goal. For example, some health care systems and private education institutions ask employees to support certain religious values. Regardless of industry, organizational values address both the experience of the people working for the company and the experience of customers with service and product quality. To minimize ethical dilemmas in your professional career, seek employment with organizations that share your values.

Once you've been promoted or elected into a particular position of leadership, you may think, "That's it—job over; I've arrived." We emphasize that leadership is a skill, one that needs to be developed and maintained throughout life. Think about the qualities of excellent leaders. Ethics should be among those qualities. And like all other leadership skills, your ethics must be developed and continually maintained. Although not every reader of this book is currently in a leadership position, has the goal of becoming a CEO, or even wants to become a leader, the KEYS process with communication ethics at the foundation drives excellence in professional situations.

KEYS FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

We opened this chapter with attention to how the popular social-networking website Twitter embodies communication and professional excellence by considering employees' feedback about their experiences at work. We defined human communication and provided a practical communication model. We defined professional excellence: being recognized for your skills as a communicator, serving as a role model to those around you, recognizing your strengths and developing your weaknesses, being audience centered, understanding the context, and possessing the ability to adapt and continually improve.

Taking part in something as common as office gossip is an ethical consideration. Is the gossip true? Does it show respect for boundaries? What does it say about your integrity? Creatas Images/Creatas/Thinkstock

ETHICAL CONNECTION

TOM'S LACK OF COMMUNICATION

As you read this passage and answer the questions, consider how the way you communicate has an ethical dimension.

Tom is a recent college graduate who landed a job as an information technology manager at a computer manufacturing plant. Tom never really enjoyed talking to new people, so he made sure his degree involved working with computers so that he could minimize his interactions with coworkers. However, once he began his new job, it became obvious that a great deal of his work involved interacting with other people. Because Tom disliked communicating with his coworkers, he was often perceived as grumpy and unfriendly. Management made several attempts to coach Tom on his communication skills, but he refused to make any effort to work well with others. His lack of communication led to technical problems going unaddressed and sabotaged the company's team-based working environment. Tom was eventually fired from his position and attempted to find another job that did not require him to interact with other employees.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is the ethical issue with Tom refusing to communicate with his coworkers?
2. Is Tom wrong to assume that there are many jobs out there that do not require communication skills?
3. What could Tom have done differently to save his job at that particular company?
4. How could Tom use the KEYS process to train himself to be a better communicator?

Next, we situated our topic of study within the workplace as a communication context and discussed communication apprehension as a common obstacle for professionals. We introduced the KEYS process as a way for professionals to develop their communication. *Know yourself* means actively assessing your skills as a communicator and then developing strategies to utilize your strengths and develop your weaknesses. *Evaluate the professional context* entails proactively addressing the needs of your audience and understanding the constraints of the communication situation, as well as developing your skills for communicating with a variety of audiences and situations. *Your communication interaction* requires you to monitor your own verbal and nonverbal cues, in addition to the cues from the audience within each communication interaction. *Step back and reflect* encourages you to examine the effectiveness of verbal and nonverbal messages you convey to others and the overall success of various communication interactions and then take what you've learned and start the process again, developing the ability to adapt and improve continually.

Know yourself

Evaluate the professional context

Your communication interaction with others

Step back and reflect

This introductory chapter has provided you with an understanding of some of the basic terminology and the importance of communication excellence. In the second chapter, we explore some of the most important verbal and nonverbal skills needed to enter the workplace or, put simply, how to put the KEYS process into action.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should be able to:

Define professional excellence and communication:

- Professional excellence means being recognized for your skills as a communicator and serving as a role model to others (p. 6).
- Human communication is the process of understanding our experiences and the experiences of others through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages (p. 10).
- Regardless of your major or the career path you eventually follow, effective communication will be essential to your success in the workplace (p. 12).

Identify business and professional communication contexts:

- The business and professional contexts you will explore are beginning communication principles (i.e., verbal and nonverbal communication and listening), the job-seeking process, workplace culture and diversity, interpersonal communication, team communication, communication and technology, written communication, leadership, presenting as a professional, and work-life balance (p. 6).

Identify the four KEYS to communication in the workplace:

- *Know yourself:* challenging people to assess their skills as communicators actively and then develop strategies to utilize their strengths and develop their weaknesses (p. 10).
- *Evaluate the professional context:* teaching people to address the needs of their audience proactively and understand the constraints of the professional communication context, as well as developing their skills for communicating with a variety of audiences and contexts (p. 10).
- *Your communication interaction:* asking people to monitor their own verbal and nonverbal cues in addition to the cues of the audience within each communication interaction (p. 10).
- *Step back and reflect:* examining the effectiveness of verbal and nonverbal messages we convey to others and the overall success of various communication interactions and then taking what we've learned and starting the process again; developing the ability to adapt and improve continually (p. 10).

Discuss the importance of human communication in business and professional contexts:

- Role-taking and feedback are critical to the success of business and professional communication (p. 11).
- Communicators are affected by their previous communication experiences (p. 11).
- Physical surroundings and communication channels influence communicators (p. 11).
- Communication is altered by cultural influences (p. 12).
- Communicators are influenced by the perceived relationship between them (p. 12).

Explain the components of the communication model:

- The person initiating the exchange is the sender, while the person listening to the exchange is the receiver (p. 12).
- Generally speaking, the process of sending and receiving communication is that a message is communicated (p. 12).
- When you are acting as the sender, you encode your messages with verbal and nonverbal cues to help others understand what you mean (p. 12).
- When the receiver of your message responds or decodes your message, you find out if your message was successfully transferred (p. 13).
- Feedback is communication sent from the receiver back to the sender (p. 14).
- The channel is the method by which you send your message (e.g., voice, phone, e-mail) (p. 14).
- Context refers to the location, time, and occasion where communication occurs (p. 15).
- Noise can be either external or internal. External noise includes distractions such as audible talking during a meeting, ruffling of papers, or a cell phone going off in the next cubicle. Internal noise encompasses any internal condition or state that interferes with the communicator's ability to focus on the message (p. 15).

Describe the communication challenges posed by social media and technology:

- Knowing when to use computer-mediated communication or face-to-face communication can be challenging. A common problem now is that we have almost too many choices available to us for communicating with others (p. 16).
- Practicing cultural sensitivity can be difficult. As business and commerce increasingly take place on a global scale, the ability to communicate with cultural sensitivity cannot be overstated (p. 16).
- Information overload can negatively affect your work and health. The price we pay for convenience and immediacy with computer-mediated communication is the difficulty of disconnecting from it (p. 17).

Identify the types and causes of communication apprehension:

- Trait communication apprehension means that one possesses a "shy trait." In general, shy people tend not to raise their hands in class a lot, avoid certain social situations, and feel extremely anxious about giving a professional presentation (p. 18).
- Context-based communication apprehension describes a fear of communicating in certain contexts (p. 18).
- Audience-based communication apprehension explains a person's fear of speaking to certain people or groups (p. 18).
- Situational communication apprehension refers to apprehension to communicate in specific sets of circumstances; everyone at some point in their lives is going to feel apprehensive about communicating something (p. 18).
- Causes of communication apprehension include novelty (when the type of communication is not something you do every day), formality (when a communication is being prepared that will be in the spotlight), peer evaluation (when concerns arise about how coworkers will respond), and prior history (when a prior bad experience in a communication interaction causes anxiety in similar situations), among others (p. 18).

Discuss communication and professional excellence from an ethical perspective:

- Ethics is the general term for the discussion, determination, and deliberation processes that attempt to decide what is right or wrong, what others should or should not do, and what is considered appropriate in our individual, communal, and professional lives (p. 20).
- Ethical considerations are the variety of factors important for us to consider in any scenario in which we're making a decision, conducting an evaluation, or making a selection (p. 20).
- Ethical dilemmas are situations that do not seem to present clear choices between right and wrong or good and evil (p. 20).

EXPLORE

1. Visit any of the websites for major social media companies (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.). Under the "About Us" section, read the company mission statement and goals for the organization. Do you believe the company communicates professional excellence to its audience? Write a brief statement either agreeing or disagreeing with this question.
2. Break into small groups and create a bulleted list of what your team believes embodies professional excellence in communication. Compare your list with those of other groups in the class. Are there any practices that are universal across all groups?
3. Select any company or organization, and write a brief summary of its best communication practices. How can you apply these practices to your study of communication and to your professional career?

REVIEW

Check your answers to these questions at **http://edge.sagepub.com/quintanilla3e.**

1. Define human communication.
2. Perceiving your communication as effective while those around you perceive it as ineffective is known as __________.
3. Identify the four steps of the KEYS process.
4. The __________ is the method by which you send your message.
5. __________ refers to the location, time, and occasion where communication occurs.
6. Define communication apprehension.
7. __________ is the general term for the discussion, determination, and deliberation processes that attempt to decide what is right or wrong, what others should or should not do, and what is considered appropriate in our individual, communal, and professional lives.
8. __________ are principles or guidelines that support an organizational mission or goal.

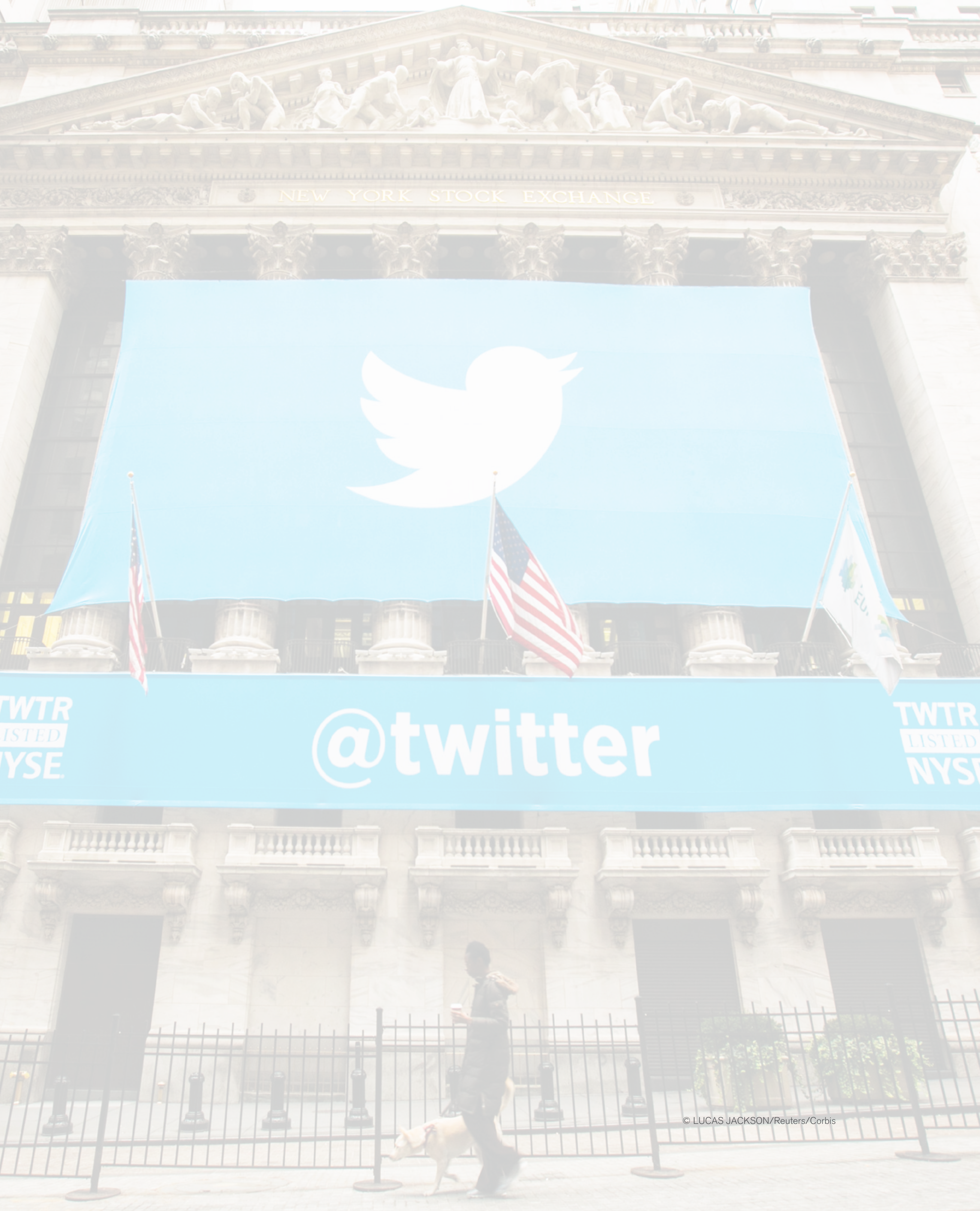
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the contexts for business and professional excellence?
2. Why is it important to study communication?
3. Why must a speaker consider all the elements in the communication model for communication with excellence?
4. Discuss the KEYS process introduced in this chapter. What are the four KEYS features?
5. Work through a personal example—something you either encountered in the past or are presently experiencing—to help you make sense of the KEYS process. Does it help you get more familiar with the situation? Are there changes you need to make considering this particular situation?

TERMS TO REMEMBER

Review key terms with eFlashcards. **http://edge.sagepub.com/quintanilla3e.**

audience-based communication apprehension (p. 18)
channel (p. 14)
communication apprehension (p. 17)
communication bravado (p. 10)
context (p. 15)
context-based communication apprehension (p. 18)
decode (p. 12)
encode (p. 12)
ethical considerations (p. 20)
ethical dilemmas (p. 20)
ethics (p. 20)
external noise (p. 15)
feedback (p. 14)
human communication (p. 10)
internal noise (p. 15)
interpersonal communication (p. 7)
message (p. 14)
noise (p. 15)
organizational values (p. 20)
professional excellence (p. 6)
receiver (p. 13)
sender (p. 13)
situational communication apprehension (p. 18)
trait communication apprehension (p. 18)
values (p. 20)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First Name
Last Name
Your Email
Re-enter Email
New Password
Birthday
Female
Male
Sign Up
Turkcell
16:48
24%
facebook
Email or phone number
Password
Log in
Sign up for Facebook
Help Centre

Facebook is one of the most visited social-networking and news websites in the world. ©iStockphoto.com/hocus-focus

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Verbal Communication 27
Nonverbal Communication 29
Codes of Nonverbal Communication 33
Forming Relationships With Verbal and Nonverbal Communication 39
KEYS to Excellence in Verbal and Nonverbal Communication 42

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to

1. Define *verbal communication*
2. Define *nonverbal communication*
3. Appraise your verbal and nonverbal communication skills
4. Discuss examples of how verbal and nonverbal communication are related
5. Apply the KEYS approach to conduct yourself with professional excellence through verbal and nonverbal communication in the workplace