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Introduction to Professional Development: A Business Communication Approach

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Introduction to Professional Development

INTRODUCTION TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Business Communication Approach

ROSE HELENS-HART AND RACHEL DOLECHEK

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Introduction to Professional Development: A Business Communication Approach*. This book was created to service the BCOM 210: Introduction to Professional Development course in the Department of Applied Business Studies (ABS) in the Robbins College of Business and Entrepreneurship (RCOBE) at Fort Hays State University (FHSU). The course is required for several ABS majors and is a popular elective among RCOBE students. BCOM 210 uses concepts from business communication to assist students in understanding their professional desires and forming a plan for their career futures.

Creating this book was an endeavor supported by the FHSU Open Textbook Grant Program. Some chapters are the original works of Rose Helens-Hart and Rachel Dolechek, while others have been collected and adapted from other Open Educational Resources. Adaptations were made to create a consistent tone and style throughout the text, ensure content was concise and relevant to course objectives, and make examples and language more accessible to FHSU's multicultural student body.

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Dr. Rachel Dolechek is an Assistant Professor of Business Communication at FHSU. She teaches courses in business, corporate, and managerial communication, professional development, and business education. Her research interests involve employability, business communication, and strategies for teaching and learning. She is involved in Phi Kappa Phi, Association for Business Communication, and Management and Organizational Behavior Teaching Society.

PART I

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO PROFESSIONALISM & CAREERS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO PROFESSIONALISM

Welcome to Professional Development: A Business Communication Approach. In this text, you will be learning about skills to form and enhance your professionalism and employability. In this chapter, we will be answering the question, “What does it mean to be professional?” When you ask yourself that question, what comes to mind? A person in a business suit? The friendly customer service agent? Our exposure to different types of professionals, our families, friends, school, work experience, and the media shape our understanding of what it means to “be professional” in terms of behavior and “a professional” in terms of holding a position of employment in a certain area.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Identify key components of professional business communication.
- Identify key qualities of highly employable people.

This chapter includes original content and content adapted from two open educational resources:

Six Steps to Job Search Success by Caroline Ceniza-Levine and Connie Thanasoulis-Cerrachio

Be the Boss of Your Career: A Complete Guide for Students & Grads by Lindsay Bortot and Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

Adaptations included editing tone, images, removing content to align the chapter with BCOM210 course learning objectives, and revising examples for an FHSU student population, and adding some original exercises to align with course objectives.

1.1 PROFESSIONALS AND PROFESSIONALISM

Rose Helens-Hart

Being "professional" can mean a lot of things. In a sociological sense, it is about the rise of a professional class, and the changes in the structure and performance of work (Evetts, 2003; Hall, 1968). Professions are knowledge-based categories of occupations. Professionals are then the people who utilize specialized knowledge to do those occupations.

Professions also have value systems that form a moral community for those in an occupation. People in these communities have similar beliefs about how to perform those jobs ethically and functionally (Evetts, 2003). A formal professional community is a professional association. For example, the Association for Business Communication is an international, interdisciplinary organization with the mission of "advancing business communication research, education, and practice" (ABC, para 2). It has developed a code of ethics for its members that includes being truthful, honest, fair, and respectful. Early professions were law and medicine, but the line between occupations and professions is now blurred—many groups are attempting to professionalize and call their occupations "professions." Shifting from defining a professional as someone belonging to a specific occupational group, a professional can also be defined generally, with a set of characteristics or behaviors.

Imagine a professional in your mind. How does this person behave, what do they look like? We often learn what it means to be professional in one context or another through socialization or the process through which we observe or are told the norms and expectations of a group. In general, we might say being a professional means **taking care, being courteous, and following conventional business norms**. Professionalism serves a gatekeeping function. Individuals judge messages, and in turn the sender of those messages, by their professionalism. Those that are seen as professional will have better access to individuals and information. An unprofessional message may be ignored and it likely will not achieve its purpose—it could even offend others and damage relationships.

Researchers at the University of Louisville (Lucas & Rawlins, 2015) surveyed practitioners, businesses, business communication course curricula across the country, and academic literature to articulate core business communication competencies. Being professional is one of the core competencies. In business communication, professionalism consists of three components: care, courtesy, and convention.

Care is the first component of professionalism in business communication (Lucas & Rawlins, 2015). It involves paying attention to details. In writing, paying attention to details means proofreading, checking your spelling grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and not using texting lingo. Taking care means making sure that you send the correct times, dates, and locations for meetings, and attach the right required documents. Another part of taking care involves your personal appearance, being clean, dressing well and so forth.

Care: Pay attention to details

- Proofread, spelling grammar, punctuation, capitalization, no texting lingo
- Times, dates, locations, correct attachments
- Check font type, color, size
- Your personal appearance

"Courtesy" is the second component of professionalism in business communication (Lucas & Rawlins, 2015). This includes following the standards of business etiquette—in other words, being polite. So, saying "please" and "thank you", and using proper forms of address such as Mr., Ms., Dr., or another title such as Vice President, Dean, etc., and following the chain of command. Being courteous involves an appropriate display of emotions and being cognizant of your tone and word choice.

Courtesy: Follow the standards of business etiquette

- "Please" and "thank you"

- Emotional control—tone and word choice
- Proper forms of address (Dr., Ms., Mr., other professional title such as Director, President)
- Chain of command
- Politeness

The final component of professionalism in business communication is "convention" (Lucas & Rawlins, 2015). This component refers to following the accepted norms of business communication. So, formatting documents properly and using standards of design. Organizations might provide you with specific formatting guidelines, but learning what is standard for the business world and your field and organization in specific is a part of your professional development. Breaking conventions or organizational norms can distract from your message.

Convention: Follow accepted norms

- Breaking conventions or organizational norms can distract from the central message
- Formatted properly, standards of design
- In an organization, you may be provided with specific formatting guidelines

Being professional can help you stand out as a job applicant or new member of an organization, and be accepted as an organizational peer. As you interact with individuals in your professional network, remember to take care, be courteous, and consider business communication conventions.

1.2 PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS: THE EMPLOYERS' PERSPECTIVE

Rachel Dolechek

It is important to develop professional characteristics as you pursue your educational goals before your first (or next) career move. These characteristics are defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) as core competencies for career readiness. There are eight NACE core competencies developed by employers to create a shared understanding and common vocabulary between academia and industry (National Association of Colleges and Employers, n.d.). The NACE core competencies framework is utilized by many Career Services offices, including Fort Hays State University Career Services, as a foundation for preparing students for the requirements in the workplace.

Table 1.1: Career Ready Competencies Defined by NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2021)

Competency	Definition
Career & Self-Development	Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.
Communication	Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.
Critical Thinking	Identify and respond to needs based on an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.
Equity & Inclusion	Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.
Leadership	Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.
Professionalism	Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.
Teamwork	Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.

Technology	Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals. (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2021)

You may be thinking you are proficient or even excelling in some or all of the eight competencies presented in Table 1.1. From the employer's perspective, there is still room for improvement with new graduates for each competency. In 2019, employers reported graduates to be least proficient in the areas that employers believed to be the most important (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2019). The greatest gaps in need versus proficiency were in the professionalism, communication, and critical thinking competencies, as represented in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Need vs. Proficiency

(National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2019)

Competency	Percent of Employers Considered Essential	Percent of Employers Who Deem Graduates as Proficient
Professionalism	95.1%	46.5%
Communication	93.2%	49%
Critical Thinking	99.0%	60.4%

The professional competency had the highest skills gap with a 48.6 percentage points difference. Why might graduates fall short in achieving proficiency with the professionalism competency in the eyes of the employer? The professionalism competency is difficult because it requires consistently achieving high standards and includes a variety of behaviors (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2021; MindTools, n.d.), such as:

- Acting equitably with integrity and accountability
- Being punctual, present, and prepared
- Working productively with others
- Managing time effectively to accomplish organizational goals and meet deadlines
- Showing attention to detail
- Having a professional work image and a positive personal brand

You now may understand what professionalism is and how important this competency is from an employer's perspective. Take time to develop all eight NACE core competencies during your college experience. You can improve your proficiency in the professionalism competency by reviewing your social media accounts through the eyes of an employer. Perhaps complete a mock interview, internship, or experiential learning activity in class to gain experience with the professionalism competency.

1.3 PROFESSIONAL IMAGE AND ATTIRE

Lindsay Bortot and Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College

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Your professional image and visual presentation weigh heavily on an employer's impression of you. It is important to note that different employers and environments will have differing expectations of formality when it comes to dress codes. For example, a construction company may be much more casual than a law office. As a general rule when interviewing or networking, focus on dressing one step above what they would wear to work. This may involve researching the company beforehand or asking the person who has called to schedule the interview what the dress code is. Use the images below to help you to prepare.

- Avoid any clothing that is ill-fitting, revealing, or uncomfortable.
- Have polished, clean shoes, and avoid shoes that may be difficult to walk in.
- Choose solid colors and subtle patterns, avoid distracting patterns or bright colors.
- Avoid noisy or distracting jewelry, watches, and heavy

makeup.

- Make sure your clothes are clean, ironed, and not wrinkly.
- Ensure you are well-groomed by having clean and neat hair.
- Be aware of scent-free policies.

FEMININE BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

- **TOP:** Light-colored, collared blouse, tucked in
- **SUIT:** Typically two pieces in black, charcoal or navy
- **BOTTOMS:** Skirts are not shorter than two fingers above the knee with minimal slits, pants are wrinkle-free
- **ACCESSORIES:** Minimal and conservative jewelry can be worn, avoid anything that's dangling or distracting.
- **SHOES:** Matching, closed-toe, polished shoes with a low to moderate heel
- **HAIR:** Clean & neat
- **MAKEUP:** Natural and conservative
- **HOSIERY** Wear black or neutral hosiery with a skirt
- **NAILS:** Neutral polished nails or none at all, avoid bold colors and remove if chipping

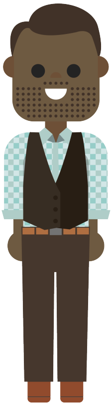
FEMININE BUSINESS CASUAL

- **TOP:** Tailored shirts, blouses or sweaters with a conservative neckline
- **BOTTOMS:** Skirts are not shorter than two fingers above the knee with minimal slits, and pants are wrinkle-free and fitted. Khaki or other colors are appropriate
- **ACCESSORIES:** Several pieces of jewelry can be worn, avoid being flashy. Belt should match shoes
- **SHOES:** Matching, closed or opened toe, polished shoes with a low to moderate heel
- **HAIR:** Clean & neat
- **MAKEUP:** Natural and conservative
- **HOSIERY** Wear black or neutral hosiery with a skirt
- **NAILS:** Neutral polished nails or none at all, avoid bold colors and remove if chipping

MASCULINE BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

- **TOP:** A solid colored, button-up dress shirt, tucked in
- **TIE:** Conservative pattern or solid color, hang to belt line
- **SUIT:** Typically two to three-piece suit in black, charcoal or navy
- **BOTTOMS:** Wrinkle-free and fitted pants that break just above your shoe
- **SOCKS:** Dark colors that match attire
- **HAIR:** Clean & neat
- **FACIAL HAIR:** Neatly trimmed & well-groomed
- **ACCESSORIES:** A belt that matches the color of your shoes
- **NAILS:** Trimmed and clean
- **SHOES:** Black or brown, polished, closed-toe shoes

MASCULINE BUSINESS CASUAL



- **TOP:** Subtly colored or patterned button-up shirt, tucked in
- **TIE:** Optional, conservative pattern or solid color, hang to belt line
- **BOTTOMS:** Dress pants, khaki or other colored fitted pants
- **SOCKS:** Colors that match attire
- **HAIR:** Clean & neat
- **FACIAL HAIR:** Neatly trimmed & well-groomed
- **ACCESSORIES:** A belt that matches the color of your shoes
- **NAILS:** Trimmed and clean
- **SHOES:** Black or brown, polished, closed-toe shoes

GENDER-NEUTRAL BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

- **TOPS:** Sweater, subtly colored or patterned collared shirt, tucked in
- **SUIT:** Typically two to three-piece suit in black, charcoal or navy
- **BOTTOMS:** Wrinkle-free and fitted pants that break just above your shoe
- **HAIR:** Clean & neat
- **MAKEUP:** Natural and conservative
- **FACIAL HAIR:** Neatly trimmed & well-groomed
- **ACCESSORIES:** A belt that matches the color of your shoes
- **SOCKS:** Colors that match attire
- **NAILS:** Trimmed and clean
- **SHOES:** Black or brown, polished, closed-toe shoes

GENDER-NEUTRAL BUSINESS CASUAL

- **TOPS:** Sweater, sweater vest, subtly colored or patterned button-up shirt, tucked in
- **BOTTOMS:** Dress pants, khaki or other colored fitted pants
- **HAIR:** Clean & neat
- **MAKEUP:** Natural and conservative
- **FACIAL HAIR:** Neatly trimmed & well-groomed
- **ACCESSORIES:** A belt that matches the color of your shoes
- **SOCKS:** Colors that match attire
- **NAILS:** Trimmed and clean
- **SHOES:** Black or brown, polished, closed-toe shoes

1.4 YOUR NETWORKING PITCH

Caroline Ceniza-Levine and Connie Thanasoulis-Cerrachio

A networking pitch was originally termed an elevator pitch because, in the time an elevator takes to go between floors (generally thirty to forty seconds), you should be able to articulate your value proposition (the skills you have and the position you are seeking). The elevator pitch is now also called the professional pitch or networking pitch.

This thirty- to forty-second summary should be spoken, or delivered, in a confident and convincing manner, making a strong impression. If your pitch is too long and drawn out, it lacks conviction. When meeting networking contacts, recruiters, and hiring managers, this is your chance to make a great impression and present yourself with clarity. No one wants to listen to a long, drawn-out speech. Make your pitch clear and concise, enabling the person who is listening to know exactly what type of job candidate you are.

How do you craft an effective pitch? Three steps will ensure your success:

1. **Write your pitch** for a specific interview or networking situation.
2. **Edit your pitch** so that you are using clear, concise, and concrete language that is customized to the situation.
3. **Practice delivering your pitch** verbally, and further edit it as needed because we do not write the same way that we speak. Continue rehearsing and repeating your pitch to ensure that your delivery is natural, convincing, and authentic.

Any information you can share that distinguishes you from others is very helpful. Perhaps you have something unique in your background:

- You speak two or three languages.
- You lived abroad for a particular length of time.
- You achieved something significant athletically or creatively.
- You volunteered in a meaningful way and perhaps raised extraordinary funds for various charities.

Distinguish yourself from others in whatever way you can to ensure you are remembered in a positive light.

You will deliver your pitch at different times and occasions, including the following:

- Career fairs present an opportunity to meet representatives from various companies. These individuals will meet many students or candidates, so it is important that you make sure your pitch is short and crisp. Also be certain to do your research on their company, as many candidates do not.

- Networking events enable you to first meet someone in a more relaxed setting.
- Interviews often begin with the interviewer asking for a summary of your background or asking that you take one or two minutes to let them know about you. Include high-level themes in your past (e.g., you have always been involved in healthcare at some point in your schooling and in your career). If themes are not apparent, talk about your achievements and the quality of your efforts.

STEP 1: WRITE YOUR PITCH

Your pitch should answer the following five questions:

1. *What is your educational background*? Detail the college

or university you attended, your major and minor, and your expected degree and graduation month and year.

2. *Do you have any pertinent experience in the field in which you are interested*?
3. *What are your critical skills, strengths, or passions*? Highlight your top two or three skills and if you have a passion that is driving you toward a certain kind of work or position.
4. *What do you want to do*? Be specific regarding industry, function, and geography.
5. *Why would you be good at the position*? Focus on presenting your top two or three skills, and the skills you have that are necessary to succeed at the job you are targeting.

Type the answers to the preceding five questions, trying to fill one complete page (8½ × 11).

STEP 2: EDIT YOUR PITCH

Once your pitch is written, review and edit it accordingly. You should use words that come naturally to you because the more natural the delivery, the more impressive the pitch. Revise general or vague language (ex. "I have always enjoyed helping others," "I have learned many things," "I want a job where I can grow") and replace it with specific and concrete language (ex. "Since my freshman year of high school, I have worked in customer service roles," "in my management courses, I have learned about how to collaboratively solve personality-driven conflict," "I want a summer internship where I can assist the office of talent development in program appraisal"). Here are some additional steps you can consider while editing your pitch:

- After you edit the one-page answers to the pitch questions, ensuring that you have covered all the important items, cut it to half a page; this forces you to prioritize the essential elements.
- After you edit the half-page document, ensuring that you have covered all the important items, cut it in half again (it is now one-quarter of the page); this forces you to be even more ruthless in prioritizing.
- After you edit the quarter-page document, ensuring you have covered all the important items, cut it in half again, leaving only four or five key bullets; this forces you to be concise and select just the most important items.

STEP 3: PRACTICE DELIVERING YOUR PITCH

Once you have the final pitch in writing, you will need to practice, then practice, then practice some more. Your pitch should be spoken in a confident and compelling manner without notes.

- Deliver your pitch out loud to ensure it flows smoothly and addresses your career highlights. Practice it until you have the main points memorized. Practice until you can repeat it when someone shakes you from your sleep at 3:30AM and you maintain your passion when saying it.

SAMPLE PITCH 1

Hi, I'm Eleni.

I'm attending XYZ University and will graduate this May. I have a major in finance and a GPA of 3.7. I work part time for X Bank, conducting research that is used to advise clients on their portfolios.

My passion lies in finance, and I've had 3 internships in the industry. I'd be an excellent candidate for this as I have strong quantitative and communication skills along with highly detailed research skills.

I'm interested in an analyst position in your asset management division as I will be able to contribute from day one.

SAMPLE PITCH 2

Hi. My name is Christina.

I'm currently attending ABC University, majoring in marketing with a communications minor. I selected ABC University because of its quality marketing curriculum.

I've seen the power marketing has to sell products. I've worked in retail for the past three years and sales tripled in cases where items were marketed well.

This is the career for me because I thrive on being creative and client focused, and I enjoy using these skills to grow revenue.

I would be a strong match for your opportunity. I have also studied your company, and I'm drawn to your culture of constant innovation.

SAMPLE PITCH 3

Hi, I'm Aaron, a tax specialist with an Enrolled Agent Certification.

I have an undergrad in accounting, and I will earn my Masters in Tax at Fordham in 2012.

I volunteer by preparing income tax returns for low-income individuals.

I'm a natural leader and team player: I was a sergeant in the Korean army and I led a team of 15, and was awarded the best guerilla fighter award for exceptional leadership and teamwork skills.

My quantitative skills are strong and I expect a 4.0 this semester.

Nice to meet you!

SAMPLE PITCH 4

My name is Alyse and I graduated last year from SUNY Buffalo, with an undergrad degree in psychology. I've always been fascinated by people, and my passion is to work with people in the health-care industry. I'm a runner, and while at the track team in school, I hurt my leg and needed to go for physical therapy. The team at the rehab unit was impressive and guided me through the exercises that eventually got me running again. I was truly inspired by their knowledge and abilities and ever since then, I knew I wanted a career in health care. It's really nice to meet you today!

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A networking pitch articulates your value proposition (i.e., the skills you have that match the position you are seeking).
- Your pitch should contain your educational background, experience related to the field in which you are interested, your critical skills and expertise, what you want to do, and why you would be good at it.
- Writing your pitch and editing it will enable you to get the right content and tone.
- Practicing the delivery of your pitch will ensure your delivery is natural and confident.

1.5 DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

Rachel Dolechek and Rose Helens-Hart

1.5.1 Professionalism in email

Instructions: Consider the e-mail below. How well does it execute care, courtesy, and conventionality? How might you rewrite this message to make it sound more professional?

To: Dana Woods <directorhumanresources@marketweb.com>

From : Tye Ger FHSUfan4lyfe@gmail.com

Subject Line: Problem with your sit

Hi,

I just tried to submit my application online and when I got to the end of the from it popped up saying there was an error! My internet and computer are working fine so i think your site has a issue, which is really an inconvenience. Is their any way i can still submit my application? J I know it is now after the deadline so I have attached my materials.

Thanks,

Tye

———

"Winter is coming."—George R.R. Martin

Debrief

Our job applicant, Tye, has not written a professional e-mail. Let us take a look at some of what could be preventing him from making a professional impression on his reader.

First, Tye's e-mail address "FHSUfan4lyfe@gmail.com" does not follow business communication conventions. It sounds like a student's e-mail or a sports fan's email, instead of a serious job applicant. Tye should consider changing his e-mail to TyeGer@gmail.com.

Second, Tye begins his letter with "Hi" rather than "Hello Director Woods." It is courteous to address people by name and their proper title if you know it.

While some names are typical for certain genders, others are not. In any case, you might not use a person's preferred pronouns unless they are listed in their contact infomormation. Since the contact person's e-mail address indicates that they are the director of human resources, Tye can refer to them as "Director." Tye might also be able to find out this person's professional title or preferred pronouns by doing some searching on the company website or LinkedIn.

Third, there are a number of typos in this e-mail which indicates a lack of care. Tye types "from" instead of "form", misspells "inconvenience" and does not capitalize "I" which might indicate he is sending the e-mail from a phone. It is hard to proofread on phones. If you can, wait to write e-mails from a computer with a regular keyboard.

Fourth, Tye's tone is too casual and he might be perceived as rude. He blames the business for his problem, assumes they will accept his late application, and uses an emoticon, which is overly casual for this first communication as is concluding the e-mail with just his first name. Tye should conclude his e-mail with his full name and contact information. Finally, Tye's *Game of Thrones* quote again is overly casual and oddly ominous for a business e-mail.

1.5.2 Sharing office space

Imagine you have just been hired into a new position at a company that believes workspaces should be collaborative. As such, the office in which you will work is a renovated loft space. There are no assigned desks and the only walled-off workspace is a conference room with glass walls that double as writing surfaces. A break area in the corner of the 2000 sqft loft includes a kitchen.

Do a search online to find some general tips for how to exhibit care, courtesy, and conventionality in this sort of shared workspace.

1.5.3 Top skills

Review the eight NACE core competencies in Table 1.1. On a three-point scale (1=need to develop, 2=currently developing, 3=excelling), rate yourself on each competency. Next, reflect on how you can improve in each competency. What can you do this month, this year, or in the next 2-5 years to excel (or continue to excel) in each competency?

1.5.4 Professional associations, moral communities

Do an online search for professional associations in your discipline. For example, if you are a talent development major, you might look at the Association for Talent Development or the Society for Human Resource Management.

Once you have located an association, look for its mission, vision, and code of ethics. With this information in mind, how does one demonstrate professionalism in that professional community?

1.5.5. Professionalism SWOT Analysis

Complete a personal SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) of your professionalism to review your strengths, uncover weaknesses, understand your opportunities, and address any threats moving forward.

1.5.6. Difficult Situations in the Job Search Process

According to Chelsea C. Williams, founder and CEO of College Code, the biggest challenge with professionalism in job hunting is ensuring all candidates understand what professionalism means within the context of the organization they are applying to and the job function they are taking on (Gray, 2021). In other words, professionalism may look different from one organization to another. There may be instances where professionalism in the workplace may be at odds with authenticity. If you were in a situation where you thought an employer might perceive you to be unprofessional due to your appearance or the way you speak, how would you navigate the situation? Who could you contact to discuss your experience and help you navigate this situation?

1.5.7 Networking Pitch

Write a networking pitch that highlights your employability and professionalism. Practice this pitch and share it with your classmates.

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CHAPTER 2: CAREER PERSPECTIVES

Rachel Dolechek and Rose Helens-Hart

Our world is unpredictable and so is the ever-changing needs of the job market. In this chapter, we will learn about how people have theorized career development trajectories. A discussion of chaos theory, career myths, and employability will help you see beyond the linear path of college to career, normalize detours and exploration, and understand what it means to become the "right kind of employee" rather than seeking the "right kind of job."

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Define career development and employability.
- Describe how chaos theory applies to career

planning.

- Critique career myths that create barriers in career development.

2.1 THEORIES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Rose Helens-Hart

As a college student at Fort Hays State University (FHSU), you have access to staff and self-serve resources to help you manage your career during and after college. At FHSU, the office of **Career Services** offers a variety of services and activities such as private sessions where you can explore career interests and options, career fairs, mock interviews, resume and cover letter assistance, and job or internship job boards for online and on-campus students. The focus of career services is not the same at every school. Its direction will have been shaped by over a hundred years of career development theory and practices.

Bureaucracy and stability characterized twentieth-century careers. Employees could expect to keep their jobs and be promoted if they worked hard (Savickas et al., 2009). During this time, career planning largely followed **trait-and-factor models** (Brott, 2001; Campbell & Ungar, 2004; Parson, 1909), where job seekers could assess their human capital through quantitative assessments and be matched to lifelong careers. These models depict careers moving in a linear fashion where success is defined by financial rewards and upward movement in an organization (Buzzanell & Goldzwig, 1991). These ideas are so entrenched in our society that they seem natural–it is difficult to imagine a world without them. However, nonlinear career models have gained popularity and may better capture the experiences of modern workers.

Twenty-first century careers are more unpredictable than those in the twentieth century. The job you will have in five years may not currently exist. The definition of success has become more complex and one cannot expect job security or organizational loyalty in exchange for hard work (Lyon & Kirby, 2000). The economy and ways of organizing and doing business have changed, necessitating a change in planning for one's career. Individuals should expect periodic unemployment or career changes over their lifetime (Jarvis & Keeley, 2003). **Self-managed careers**, often termed **boundaryless**, require individuals to be proactive and adaptable (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Briscoe et al., 2006; Hall, 1996; Hall, 2004).

Developing career planning skills for this new labor market can increase your employability and career satisfaction (De Vos et al., 2011; Fugate et al., 2003; McGrath, 2002). To face a professional world of constant change, consider these non-linear career beliefs:

- Career development occurs over a lifetime (Brott, 2001).
- Your relationships with others influence your career trajectory–-career planning is a social activity (Helens-

Hart, 2019; McMahon et al., 2003; Savickas et al., 2009).

Self-knowledge of interests, abilities, achievements, motivations, and relationships positively and negatively affect your ability to imagine a preferred future (Brott, 2001; Law et al., 2002; Savickas, 1994; Schultheiss, 2003).

2.2 CHAOS THEORY

Rachel Dolechek

Up to this point, we have discussed the importance of career development and both linear and non-linear career beliefs. The non-linear approach to career development accepts unplanned events and unpredictable conditions that will be endured throughout a career. **Chaos theory** embraces the non-linear aspects of career development. Chaos theory is the "study of the behavior of complex dynamical systems" (Kaufman, 1995 as cited in Pryor & Bright, 2011). It originated as a way to develop a better weather-predicting model. In practical terms, the further out we are in time, the harder it is to predict the weather. By using chaos theory in careers, you may see the connection between predicting the outcome of a future career. The greater the distance in time, the harder it is to be accurate in predicting career paths. There are too many variables, unplanned events, and unpredictable conditions in your life and in industry to accurately predict the outcome (Brooks, 2017).

We can use chaos theory to think about the potential disruptions you may have along your career journey. You can also utilize chaos theory to reframe how you think about career planning. Mesaros (2019) suggests:

- Place an emphasis on preparation instead of planning
- Focus on adaptation, not deciding (de-emphasize the finality of choices)
- Develop short-term, flexible goals
- Grow self-awareness and build transferrable skills

Being realistic about your career journey and how you prepare for this journey will set you on a path to adaptability and employability. Moving forward in this text, we take the perspective that the skills for self-managing one's career are relevant to those looking to enter into the workforce or those looking to change careers. We will be focusing on helping you develop and maintain your employability through communication-based skills essential for the modern workplace.

2.3 EMPLOYABILITY

Rose Helens-Hart

Employability is generally understood as the likelihood an individual could obtain employment (De Vos et al., 2011; Fugate et al., 2003). Since most of you will not be in a traditional linear careers that occur in a single or few organizations, developing and maintaining your employability during your working years is important. Rather than thinking about finding the right kind of job, think about how to become the right kind of worker.

Various attributes contribute to one's employability. This text modifies a model created by Fugate, Kinicki, and Ashforth (2004), which consolidates a host of attributes into four categories: career identity, personal adaptability, human capital, and social capital. Together these categories facilitate the "identification and realization of career opportunities within and between organizations" (p. 18).

Career identity refers to individuals' understanding of who they are and who they want to be in the world of work (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). These identities are formulated with values, beliefs, hopes, fears, goals and work preferences, which may change with new experiences over a lifetime. Career identity acts as a "cognitive compass" guiding individuals to seek out particular career opportunities (p.17). Career identity is important to self-managing careers because it serves to limit the number of careers being considered. For example, if an individual wants to be a director of communications for a sporting goods brand, she may pursue a degree in corporate communication to gain theoretical knowledge and seek an internship in communications, and join her university's chapter of DECA to hone her technical skills. In this example, the individual's career identity is directing her actions and serving as motivation to sustain the behavior that is guiding her toward her career goal.

Personal adaptability, refers to an individual's ability to meet the demands of a given situation (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). In other words, adaptable individuals are able to deal with rapidly changing work environments to stay productive and attractive to employers. They tend to be optimistic, open to change, have a propensity to learn, and have an internal locus of control. Optimistic and open individuals view change as opportunity and are willing to explore those opportunities. Individuals with a propensity to learn seek the knowledge and skill needed to take advantage of those opportunities. Individuals with an internal locus of control, who believe that they have the ability to influence the events in their lives and attribute success and failure to personal actions, tend to be more proactive and plan in situations of uncertainty. More broadly, generalized self-efficacy refers to individuals' perceptions of their ability to perform in multiple contexts in their lives. Together, these characteristics support personal adaptability and contribute to one's employability.

The last two categories relate to one's ability to locate and seize career opportunities. **Human capital** refers to individual characteristics such as a person's cognitive ability, age, education, breadth and depth of skills, and work experience. **Social capital** refers to the information and influence inherent in one's social network. The size and diversity of a network, and the strength of relationships with those in one's network influence its value. Network connections can provide individuals with insider information and opportunities otherwise not accessible to others without these connections. For example, job seekers may be told about unadvertised job opportunities or be more likely to obtain interviews out of hundreds of applications if they have positive personal connections with others in the organization.

In BCOM210, each of our modules can be traced back to learning objectives related to these employability dimensions. Communication is a core feature for clarifying career identity, developing a professional network, exercising adaptability, and communicating our value to professional contacts.

2.4 MYTHS OF CAREER PLANNING

Rose Helens-Hart

There are a number of myths of career planning that can cause anxiety or obstacles when imagining and pursuing a possible future (Barett & Helens-Hart, 2022; Helens-Hart, 2019; Rodgers, n.d.). Perhaps you have heard a few of these:

- There is one right career out there for everyone;
- Majors determine what career you can pursue;
- Career assessments can tell you what career to pursue;
- A college degree will get you a good job;
- You need to follow your passion;
- Making money will make you happy.

Some of you are probably questioning why these are myths. After all, money is needed to sustain yourself and you plan to use your degree in your career–that is why you have or will choose a particular major or concentration. Let us deconstruct some of these myths to see how they could be holding you back as you consider a path forward in your career.

Myth 1: There is one right career out there for everyone

While you might perform better in certain types of work more than others, your human capital may be suitable for a variety of roles. Understanding where and how you and your skills are valuable is an important part of scanning the job landscape. In addition, considering how your personal beliefs, values, and ethics can be supported by multiple industries or organizations, can open up more possibilities for you. Since people are likely to experience (in)voluntary unemployment and career changes, you will need to consider there is more than one career out there that could make you happy.

Myth 2: Majors determine what career you can pursue

Some majors prepare graduates to enter into specific lines of work or specific vocations. For example, those who obtain nursing degrees may likely pursue careers in healthcare. Accounting majors may often obtain jobs in accounting. But what about history majors, communication majors, or management majors? The curriculum in each of these majors may present likely career paths but they are not closely tied to specific careers. Employers often seek people who think critically, communicate, and can manage and lead others. These skills can be developed regarless of one's major.

This myth is comforting to those who want a simple, directed path toward a career. For most people, however, their education focuses more on skills that can be valuable in any employment context. Even those on linear paths can deviate if they so choose. If you are an accounting major or professional reading this book, you are probably detail-oriented and comfortable with math. Those skills are valuable to many lines of work.

Myth 3: Career assessments can tell you what career to pursue

Career assessments, or any sort of personality or behavioral assessment, can help you reflect on your preferences, values, desires, motivations and more, and match them to preset categories. They are good to get you thinking about options and reflecting on yourself. You should be careful, however, accepting the results of any assessment as reporting stable truth about yourself.

First, not all assessments are valid and reliable. Even widely adopted assessments such as the Myers Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) have their critics arguing they are not reliable or valid (Barbuto, 1997). You might hear that some assessments are based on "arm-chair psychology." This means that the science behind them may be based on weak theories and methods that sound and feel true but may not be able to hold up against scientific scrutiny.

Second, a self-report assessment can suffer from social desirability bias (Callegaro, 2008). This means we may intentionally or unintentionally select answers that reflect qualities we think we should possess. For example, if you are taking the MBTI and a question refers to planning ahead, you might think generally that this is a good thing to do, though you may not be very good at proactive planning. You might then rate your approval of this statement and others like it higher causing your results to skew and suggest you are a proactive planner. There are strategies and tactics the developers of assessments use to try and minimize this type of bias, but even the best assessments may produce biased results.

Instead of taking assessment results as truth, consider them a starting point for additional personal reflection. If your MBTI results say you are an extrovert, consider how you see this label impacting your social and professional interactions. Then consider how and when you might exhibit introverted characteristics. Since adaptable individuals may be able to exercise different behaviors when a situations calls for them, knowing you might lean toward extroverted tendencies can help you consider the type of work that could be more comfortable or fulfilling.

Myth 4: A college degree will get you a good job

Unfortunately, a college degree cannot guarantee you a "good job," because it cannot account for your definition of "good" or available job prospects. But a college degree is still considered a good investment in your future. According to the Social Security Administration, depending on sex and other socioeconomic factors, those who obtain a bachelor's degree will earn $450,000-$900,000 more in median lifetime earnings than those with high school diplomas alone (Tamborini, et. al, 2015). Students, however, may not be able to obtain the job they want after graduation for a number of reasons. They may face stiff competition for a limited number of jobs, jobs in their preferred area may be in decline, or they may not be very good at knowing their skills and applying for jobs. In other words, they may not be as employable as others . You could be the best underwater basket weaver to graduate from your university, but if no one is hiring underwater basket weavers or you do not know who is hiring underwater basket weavers, you might have to take a less desirable position until you figure out where your skills are marketable. And of course, you may get what you thought was your dream job only to find out the dream is a nightmare.

When tackling this myth, it is more important to focus on what you think a "good job" is and how you came to that conceptualization. Research on this phrase (Barrett & Helens-Hart, 2022) has indicated students consider a good job to be one that requires a four-year degree, requires knowledge and skills related to their majors, pays a high salary, and is full time. What you think is a good job may be informed by junior or limited information. Through coursework, internships, informational interviews, and other career exploration activities, you can get a more realistic idea of the work you might find most enjoyable, important, or rewarding at this point in your career.

Myth 5: You need to follow your passion

You may have heard the saying "Do what you love and you'll never work a day in your life." The idea that one should find a way to turn their passion into a career or that one should have a "calling" to certain work is a way to think about what work might be enjoyable for you. However, there is a potential downside to believing all work should bring joy and that you need to monetize what makes you happy. Let us look at the good advice this myth could offer but why in the end, it is not true for everyone.

Individuals who describe their work as a calling have reported greater work satisfaction where they have been able to elevate the meaning of their work beyond its utility and financial reward (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2014). The belief that one's work benefits others can serve to protect employees against burnout and decreased job satisfaction (Dik et al., 2009). A calling can be defined as a transcendent summon or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness in a work role that is primarily motivated by other-oriented values.

When careers are viewed as a calling rather than just a job, paid work becomes a means to transcendent fulfillment and the primary site for enacting one's life purpose (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2014). Although callings have largely been theorized as contributing to positive work outcomes such as job satisfaction, authors have begun to explore the dark side of a calling (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2014; Duffy et al., 2011).

The requirement of a calling can constrain choices of paid-labor and how people occupy their time outside of their jobs. Individuals may feel obligated to accept undesirable working conditions such as low salaries, inept management, or unpaid overtime because they feel morally bound to their occupation (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2014).

The discourse of "a calling" is appealing to college students as large numbers surveyed have reported the desire to make contributions to society through their careers (Duffy & Raque-Bogdan, 2010). College students who report having a calling also report having high levels of career decidedness, self clarity, and career commitment (Duffy et al., 2011).

It is OK not to have a passion or at least not to know what you are passionate about right now. And when/if you do find your passion, it is OK not to find it at work.

Myth 6: Making money will make you happy

Let us face it, the ability to provide for yourself or your family is essential. In Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, money can facilitate the fulfillment of many basic needs such as food, security, and shelter. Not being concerned about money is a luxury that many adults do not have. But, financial incentives are not the only element of a job or career you should probably consider.

How long do you think you would work in a position where you disliked your tasks, co-workers, commute, hours, but you made $500,000 a year? Some of you may be able to stick it out but many will be looking for other opportunities, even if they have to take a pay cut. For your own mental health and work satisfaction, it is important to find something that attracts you to your work or where you work other than money.

2.5 DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

Rose Helens-Hart and Rachel Dolechek

2.5.1 Career genealogy

On a blank sheet of paper, write down the names of people who you have personally known and who have been important to you or influential in your life. Note that the people you list can be living or deceased and people you like or dislike. If you grew up with family members, be sure to list them.

Now, list these people's occupations or the work (paid or unpaid) they typically perform(ed). Some people will likely have multiple occupations listed.

Look at the list of work you have created and reflect on how your past or current career aspirations may have been influenced by the work you have been exposed to growing up. Do you find yourself down a path toward a similar or dissimilar career than the people you have listed? What are your assumptions about their work? How do you think these assumptions have moved you toward or away from certain kinds of work?

2.5.2 Employability self-assessment

On a blank sheet of paper, brainstorm all the skills and attributes you think you possess. Remember that a skill is something you learn and utilize. An attribute is a quality you might possess. So, you might be good at taking accurate notes during meetings (a skill) and you may be dependable (an attribute).

Now, create four quadrants on another sheet of paper and label each with one of the employability categories (career identity, personal adaptability, human capital, and social capital) discussed in this chapter. Sort your initial list of skills and attributes into the quadrants and add additional ones if you think of them.

Discuss your completed quadrants with a small group of classmates. Where are you excelling in your employability? In what quadrant might you focus on developing in the next three months?

2.5.3 O*Net interest profiler

Take the O*NET Interest Profiler assessment at https://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip. This self-assessment takes 5-10 minutes to complete.

1. Choose a “best fit” occupation you are or would consider pursuing. Click on the occupation and review the “My Next Move” page. What do you find interesting about this occupation (e.g. skills, knowledge, abilities, technology, and/or job outlook)?

2. When you started the assessment, you were told not to think about education/training or money. Did you find yourself considering these factors as you answered each question?
3. The O*NET Interest Profiler is intended to provide initial guidance and prompt you to think more about your interests and future careers. Do not make career choices based on this assessment. Instead, use your results as a starting point. Explore other resources, such as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. What are the fastest growing occupations? What are the projections for rate of change by industry? By exploring additional resources, have your thoughts on your O*Net results changed?

2.5.5 Golden Handcuffs

In your career, how important is money? What sort of salary and benefits will you seek to meet what you perceive to be your ideal standard of living? Now, visit Glassdoor.com and find salary ranges for jobs that interest you in a particular geographic location. How do your compensation desires match up to the jobs you might pursue?

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PART II

PART 2: CAREER COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER 3: PURSUING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Jordan Smith

Today, both job seekers and recruiters have more ways than ever to connect. Though the traditional means of in-person networking are still necessary, online networking has become a norm. As in the world of dating, technology can certainly help connect people according to compatible interests and preferences; from there, however, the relationship depends entirely on how things go in person. This chapter examines the spectrum of job search tools and techniques available to the modern job seeker. It provides guidance on how you can prepare a résumé and cover letter that will increase your chances of getting an interview and hence a job.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Identify and assess individual skills, strengths, and experiences to identify career and professional development goals
- Research the job market to identify career opportunities and requirements
- Prepare a targeted resume and cover letter

This chapter is adapted from two open educational resources:

Professional Communications: A Common Approach to Work-place Writing by Jordan Smith, Melissa Ashman, eCampusOntario, Brian Dunphy, and Andrew Stracuzzi.

Be the Boss of Your Career: A Complete Guide for Students & Grads by Lindsay Bortot and Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

Adaptations included editing tone, images, removing content to align the chapter with BCOM210 course learning objectives, revising examples for an FHSU student population, and adding some original exercises to align with course objectives.

3.1 ASSESS YOUR SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Jordan Smith

The first step to putting together a winning résumé is to list your employable skills and qualifications. Which of your qualities make you hireable? If these do not come immediately to mind or the wording eludes you, a good place to start is the vocational learning outcomes of your current academic program. These describe the skills that industry employers have said graduates must have to be considered for hire. Find these on the program webpage for your academic institution. Though they are quite general, you can find more specific learning outcomes on the syllabus for each course in your program.

Of course, you can not possibly put all of these on a résumé because the full list would include too many, be too detailed, and would be worded in a manner unsuitable for a résumé. At this point, however, what is important is that you begin a master list of such skills that you can tailor for the résumé when you see what skills and duties employers list in their job postings. Matching the skills you have with what those employers want is the key to a successful application.

In addition to program-specific skills, you can also add a range of other skills. Get started by asking yourself the following questions:

- What specific computer programs am I good at? Do I have examples of work I can show an employer of how I have used them at an intermediate or advanced level?
- Do I work well with others? Have I demonstrated this with my employment experience or with volunteer or extracurricular activities such as league sports or clubs?
- Am I better at following instructions or giving them? Am I destined for leadership roles? What proof can I offer up either way?
- Can I read, write, and converse in another language besides English? At what level of proficiency?
- Am I a quick learner? Am I a creative thinker? Can I think of specific instances as proof of my answers to these questions if asked in a job interview?
- Am I a good communicator in both written and spoken situations? What evidence can I offer employers of my proficiency in both? (Guffey, Loewy, & Almonte, 2016, pp. 377-378)

Not only will a few pages of notes in answer to these questions help you prepare résumés and cover letters, but they will also help you prepare for the job interview later.

3.2 FIND JOB POSTINGS

Jordan Smith

Major job search engines like Monster and Indeed are good places to start your job search, but they should be only a part of a broader job-search strategy. Both job seekers and employers have their objections to these sites. To seekers, applying through them can be frustrating for the following reasons:

- Some will strip out the formatting you have meticulously assembled for your résumé and cover letter;
- Submitting confidential information about yourself to them feels risky;
- They can feel like vast abysses into which you send dozens of applications you have labored over for hours, but without ever receiving a response back.

To employers and recruiters, the big job sites attract a flood of poor-quality applicants from around the world, leaving the hiring manager or committee with the time-intensive job of sorting out the applicants worth seriously considering from the droves of under-qualified applicants taking shots in the dark with what amounts to spam applications. With such a demanding selection process, employers simply do not have time to respond to them all.

Nonetheless, ignoring these sites altogether would be a mistake because too many employers use them to advertise positions. When your full-time job is just to find a full-time job, you need to explore all opportunities. The following are sites worth searching for job postings and other information they offer on the job market:

- Handshake
- Monster
- Indeed
- CareerBuilder
- Glassdoor

A search for the jobs available in the career you are training for may yield depressingly few hits if you use just one or two of the above sites. If so, be prepared to use all of them and widen your search area to neighboring towns, large urban centers, and even other states and countries. Even if you are not seriously considering moving for a job—if your strategy is just to wait until relevant jobs arise closer to home—at least getting a sense of what is out there is an important exercise for now. Beyond the above sites, also seek out the following:

- Job search engines specific to your sector or field
- Professional association sites specific to your field

- Company/organization websites (look for their Careers page)
- Professional networking sites such as LinkedIn

Your goal is to collect as many job leads as possible to get a full sense of what is available before focusing on those worth devoting significant time to.

Once you have collected some job postings for positions you can pursue seriously, your next step is to compile a set of notes that will furnish all the necessary information for a cover letter and résumé. For each position you find a posting for, list the following:

1. Job title exactly as given in the job posting

- Use this in the subject line for both your cover letter and in the Objective Statement (if needed) in your résumé.
- Also, copy and paste the reference number, if the position has one. Larger organizations that have a dedicated human resources (HR) department will use the reference number for the position you are applying for to process your application properly.

2. Required skills, competencies, and qualifications

- Every job posting worth applying to lists skills the employer is looking for in the ideal employee for that position. These may also take the form of job duties. Copy and paste these into your notes to ensure accuracy of transcription.
- Use this list as a guide for what to include in the Skills and Qualifications Summary section of your résumé, as well as under entries in the Employment and/or Education sections as proof that you have developed the skills the employer requires of applicants. If the employer or their third-party recruiter agents use an electronic filter to dispose of applications that do not match enough of the keywords present in the posting, basing your résumé on the posting's list of skills will increase your chances of success. Copy the exact wording.
- Do not let the fact that you do not have everything the employer asks for be a reason to not apply. Some employers may ask for too much when listing required educational credentials and experience to see if the unicorn candidate they seek actually exists. If not, they will select from among the next-best applicants. If you have reasonably equivalent experience or potential instead of the exact credentials required by the employer, find opportunities in your résumé, cover letter, and

interview to explain how you can nonetheless deliver on what they want.

3. Company name, mailing address, and website

- Find the mailing address on the company's Contact page
- Use the company name and mailing address in your cover letter. This will clarify to the hiring manager that your application is specific to the location where you intend to work.
- Use the website to research the company.

4. Company background

- Search the company website, especially its *About Us* page, for basic details about its size, history, and mission or vision statement.
- Extend this research to an online search for news about the company beyond what they present itself. Look especially for recent news items that might offer clues as to why they are hiring and what problems they need to solve. Knowing this informs how you persuasively pitch yourself as part of the solution to those problems.
- Use this information to inform your cover letter and prepare your interview talking points. Paraphrasing the

employer's mission or vision statement to make it your own in both the cover letter and interview will help convince the employer that your priorities align with theirs and you will fit the company culture.

5. Services and products

- Sketch out a list of the company's products and/or services; if there are many, just give some major categories relevant to the job you would do for them.
- Use this knowledge to prepare for parts of the cover letter and interview.

6. Clientele

- Identify demographic and other information about the company's customer base or clientele. Since the first rule of business is to know the customer, what they want, and how to provide it, proving your understanding of these will help convince the employer that you share their priorities.
- Use this to prepare your cover letter and for your interview.

7. Hiring manager name and contact information

- When the manager responsible for filling a position sees their name as the addressee in the cover letter, this usually reflects well on the applicant. As opposed to addressing the letter generically "To whom it may concern," the targeted cover letter shows that the applicant is resourceful in discovering who exactly to direct their pitch to and would be similarly resourceful in networking on the company's behalf in the position they are applying to.
- Search out the company Contact and About pages to determine who would likely be in charge of hiring.
    - Some job postings will name whom to send applications to, in which case this is easy, but usually you have to dig for this, perhaps using LinkedIn.
    - If it is a larger company, look for head personnel in HR (human resources), recruiting, or operations.
    - If it is a small business, the hiring manager is more likely to be the CEO, director, or owner.

- If this information is not available on the job posting and you cannot find it on the website, try calling the company and ask to whom you can address your cover letter for the job application (Guffey et al., 2016, p. 398).

- Calling the company shows that you are proactive and resourceful in getting the information necessary to succeed, shows that you care about what the company wants, and is a good networking play.
- Calling also provides you with an opportunity to ask about their preferences for cover letters (do they want them or not?) and résumés (one page or two? reverse-chronological, functional, or combination résumé? what else do they like to see in them?) so you can tailor yours accordingly.
- If they refuse to divulge this information, respect that they want to protect the identity of the hiring manager so that applicants can not influence them outside of the standard hiring process. If this is the case, "Dear Hiring Manager" is an acceptable alternative salutation in the cover letter.

- Use this information for your cover letter and preparing for your interview; also consider if this person is worth working for by examining their LinkedIn profile and whatever else you can find online. After all, a hiring process is a two-way street where both employer and applicant assess each other for compatibility.

8. Job posting URL and screenshot

- Copy and paste the web address (URL) for the job posting into your notes and, to retrieve it easily, hyperlink the address by positioning your cursor at the end of it and hitting the spacebar (or highlight, type ctrl + k, and paste in the URL into the web address field).
- Just to keep a record of the job posting for future reference, especially if the posting is taken down after the application window expires and you need to review it ahead of the interview, insert a screenshot (Take-a-screenshot.org, 2014) of the job posting below the URL. You may need two or three screenshots to cover the full scroll-down length of the posting webpage.

Making a habit of keeping such a record of the jobs you are serious about and that you have a good chance of hearing back from will set you up for success. Applications that do not address what the posting asks for because the applicant did not strategically note what that was, however, will likely be disposed of electronically before a human even sets eyes on them.

3.3 TRADITIONAL JOB SEARCH TECHNIQUES

Jordan Smith

Despite the convenience of online job searches and applications, they are not nearly as effective on their own as traditional in-person networking. Much of the daily operations of a business involve employees being present in a workplace or going into the field and working with or for others, not secluded entirely in a technology bubble. With its emphasis on soft skills, only traditional networking can give employers a convincing first impression that a job candidate would be productive in such interactions. Since the majority of hiring happens as the result of networking in its various forms, begin cultivating a professional network in the following ways:

1. Be friendly, outgoing, and supportive of your peers in your college classes. Though it is partly true that you will be competing with your classmates for jobs when you graduate, you may also rely on them for recruiting opportunities. Say a classmate you know quite well landed a job with a reputable company soon after graduation. Six months later, that company is hiring again. Who is going to alert you to the opportunity? Who is going to coach you on what the employer prefers to see in résumés, cover letters, and interviews? Who is going to put in a good word for you with the hiring manager? If you can count on an inside friend or colleague being supportive because they are familiar with you and know you will perform well in that position, your path into that job is so much easier than without that guide.

If you spend your college years passing through like a ghost, however, focusing exclusively on your academic performance and shunning all social activities, you will miss valuable opportunities to connect with the people that may be your coworkers and even managers in your future workplaces. If they are in a position to help you but recall that you just kept to yourself in your old college days, they probably will not want to recommend you to the company because they recognize that your lone-wolf attitude will set you up to fail in that organization.

2. Ask your instructors and program coordinators for advice. Some instructors and program coordinators are highly invested in the success of their students and are eager to recommend them to their industry contacts as a way of assisting their recruitment efforts. This only works, however, if the student has the courage to ask for those connections and recommendations.

3. Attend industry conferences and network with participants. Joining a professional association and attending its meetings and conferences will give you ample opportunities to network with employers and their recruiting agents. As in the previous scenarios, this only works if you are friendly and outgoing. Conference participants who merely soak in others' presentations and discussions without networking are effectively invisible to the recruiters.

4. Attend career fairs and sign up for interviews with visiting recruiters. Colleges have tight connections with industry partners because they are a greenhouse for the emerging labor pool. When company recruiters come around, be there to ask them about the opportunities they bring. Recruiters are not interested in students who are not interested in them. Attending career fairs and talking to recruiters is a great way of showing interest (Guffey, Loewy, & Almonte, 2016, p. 383).

3.4 RÉSUMÉS AND ONLINE APPLICATIONS

Jordan Smith

A résumé is the central document of your job application because it is what employers focus on most when judging an applicant's suitability for doing the job they are hiring for. Does the candidate have the right combination of core and soft skills to do the job? Did they acquire those skills with the right combination of education, employment, and other experience? Are they able to put a document together in a clear, concise, correct, organized, and reader-friendly way? Unable to appear in person to make the pitch at this point, the applicant's résumé conveniently answers these questions. It is convenient because (1) it proves the applicant's writing ability and (2) interviewing every applicant in person about their skills would be logistically impossible. The goal of the résumé, then, is to convince the employer to include you in the small selection of candidates they will interview to find the right person for the job.

Can you get to an interview without it? Sometimes a small-business owner will sidestep usual human resources (HR) best practices and hire without placing too much emphasis (if any) on the résumé. In most cases, however, the résumé is key to the hiring process. If that process is a communications test, the résumé, packaged along with the cover letter, is the written component. Sometimes one writing mistake—even just one little typo (LedgerLink, 2009)—can fail you out of the running so you do not proceed to the oral component (the interview). Employers demand perfection in the résumé for the following reasons:

1. Enough applicants may set the quality bar high by delivering a flawless résumé. When the hiring manager's task is to whittle down a pile of a hundred applications to about five for interviews, even one writing mistake in a résumé gives them the reason they are looking for to dump the résumé in the shredder, thinning out the pile a little further. They might even feel vindictive about it because a résumé riddled with errors is insulting; it says to the employer: "I'm not bothering to fix up my résumé because you're not worth my time." This is why writing errors often rank as hiring managers' #1 pet peeve (Vandegriend, 2017). If 90% of résumés have errors and can be shredded upon first sight of one, the hiring manager's job of sorting through a hundred applications then becomes selecting the five most qualified from among the ten flawless ones remaining after the quality-of-writing cull.
2. A perfect résumé speaks volumes about how

> conscientious a job applicant can be about the quality of work they do. If a résumé is poorly written, the employer can safely expect a similarly poor quality of work if the applicant became an employee. That may be untrue and unfair, but the employer has nothing else to go on besides this document and the cover letter to make a snap judgment about whether the applicant would be suitable in the position. A perfect résumé shows that the applicant cares about what the employer wants, knows how to deliver it, and could potentially continue to do the same if hired.

Employer expectations are high and rising. Gone are the days where a printed résumé was all you were responsible for. Today you must also project a professional image online in whatever employers find when they Google-search you—because they almost certainly will. Even your electronically submitted résumé must be written with a consideration of the electronic filters employers use to scan applications and pre-select only those that truly answer the job posting's call.

Generic Résumés

Since 93% of employers Google-search job applicants to see how they present themselves in social media differently from their application (Jobvite, 2014, p. 10), a two-pronged approach to professionalizing your web presence is absolutely necessary. First, remove anything that makes you look unprofessional. Adjust your privacy settings to minimize your personal presence in public searches. In Facebook and Instagram, for instance, this means setting your entire profile to private (available only to friends) except what the sites force you to make public. Since over half of recruiters have reconsidered a candidate based on what they see on social media (Jobvite, 2014, p. 11), your publicly available profile picture, for instance, should be a decent headshot rather than a spring break party picture.

Second, professionalize your social media presence by actively posting career-oriented content that will be the first "hit" employers see when they Google-search you. When this content takes the form of a résumé, it is a "passive" one in that you put out a generic version for people to find rather than a targeted one in response to a job posting. In combination, passive and targeted résumés can be a winning combination. On its own, however, a passive generic résumé is useless. Consider the following strategies for how to win an interview with a combined approach to résumé building.

Generic Résumé Topics

- An Effective Passive Generic Résumé: Your LinkedIn Profile
- What's Wrong with Sending a Generic Résumé? —It's Spam

An Effective Passive Generic Résumé: Your LinkedIn

Profile

If you have not done this yet, professionalize your web presence by assembling a well-developed LinkedIn profile. The site and others offer plenty of advice on how to make the most of the social media platform, so search a few out to get a picture of the consensus on what makes for a successful profile. A good, current place to start is The Most Effective Ways to Use LinkedIn (Doyle, 2018) because it links you to several in-depth guides for building each aspect of your profile.

If you have done this already, show potential employers that you are fully committed to your profession by continually updating your profile as the site adds and develops features. Keep building your network and adding content related to your field. Show that you engage in professional activities online because you are a motivated professional rather than toss a profile together as a one-time exercise because someone told you to.

As you gain more professional experience throughout your career, add it all to your LinkedIn profile to make it a master CV ("curriculum vitae," meaning "course of life" in Latin) from which you can extract targeted résumés for particular job applications. It is okay if your targeted résumé and CV cover the exact same content in the beginning of your working life because you will not have much to put in either; employers will understand that when they see the year you graduated from college. As you gain more experience and can be picky about what you include in a targeted résumé, however, your

LinkedIn CV will provide employers with a fuller picture of what you have been doing with your life. They will be impressed that (1) you were able to present to them a slice of that history relevant to the job at hand, and that (2) you are so much more well-rounded than your targeted résumé lets on. They will see that you have depth.

What is Wrong with Sending a Generic Résumé? —It's Spam

To be competitive in any fierce job competition, a generic résumé—i.e., the kind that you made a hundred copies of to get your first job and handed out to every shop on the street that had a "Help Wanted" sign in the window—just is not going to cut it. Indeed, it ranks among the top 10 pet peeves of hiring managers (Vandegriend, 2017) because, like spam, generic résumés just give the busy hiring manager more useless junk to sort through. Even a well-developed passive résumé like a LinkedIn profile is not enough on its own. (Do not be surprised if your LinkedIn message inbox is not flooded with job offers if you do nothing other than post your profile.)

To have any chance of succeeding in this game, actively apply to job postings and make your applications stand out with superior quality, knowing that your application will be just one of dozens, perhaps even hundreds, vying for interview spots. When an employer goes through the pile of applications that make it past the electronic filters, the résumés targeted specifically at that job make the generic ones look unprepared to compete. Along with those marred by glaring errors, generic résumés are the first to go into the shredder. They annoy hiring managers because they mean more work, but they are easy to spot and reject when the goal is to thin out the pile.

Can you land a job with a generic résumé alone? If you are what a small business without dedicated HR personnel is looking for regardless of what your résumé says, yes, probably, you can get that job mostly by networking your way into it. If you are up against some serious competition in a strict, application-based hiring process driven by sound HR practices that seek to eliminate bias, however, anything less than a targeted résumé does not stand a chance. What is a targeted résumé, then?

3.5 TARGETED RÉSUMÉ PARTS

Jordan Smith

A targeted résumé is the result of the job applicant tailoring their résumé to present nothing more or less than what the job posting asks for. An employer's job posting is a wish-list of all the skills and qualifications that would set up the applicant for success in the position advertised. It also informs the selection criteria the employer applies to every job application. This way, every application is measured objectively for how well it reflects what the job posting asked for, as well as how current and well-presented it is. The employer expects that each section will prove that the applicant is perfect for the job, as well as meet general expectations for quality of writing—clarity, conciseness, correctness, and accuracy—as well as document readability and organization.

You have three options for types of résumé based on your situation and what the employer wants, each defined by how they organize the content:

1. Reverse-chronological résumé: For each experience section (Education, Employment, and Related Activities), this résumé lists your professional activities starting with the present or latest (most recent) at the top and your first (oldest) at the bottom. A key feature is a column with date ranges in months and years beside each educational program, job, and relevant activity you have done. This presents the hiring manager with a snapshot of where you are at right now in your professional development, how you got there, and where you came from.

Reverse-chronological résumés can be revealing in ways that might not cast you in an entirely positive light. Exclusively short-term employment and significant gaps in your work and educational history will be questioned (Vandegriend, 2017). These will make the reader wonder (1) why you are not able to keep a job for long (are you chronically unsatisfied in your work? incompetent? unlikeable?) and (2) what you were doing in those gaps? Unfortnatley, employers might make incorrect or disparaging assumptions about gaps. Were you in jail? Unemployed and playing video games in your parents' basement all day? Ill? Your gaps may be easily explained in an interview, but to get you there, we can consider some alternative ways of organizing a résumé.

2. Functional (a.k.a. competency- or skills-based) résumé: Rather than organize the résumé around experience sections measured out in months and years, the functional résumé makes important skills the subheadings. The bullet points that follow explain in more detail what each skill entails, how it was acquired through training or education, and how it was practiced and applied professionally. The functional résumé is ideal if you have questionable gaps or durations in your employment or educational history because it omits or de-emphasizes date ranges.

3. Combination functional and reverse-chronological résumé: This is the most popular form of resume and the basis for the guide on targeted résumé parts given below. It uses the reverse-chronological format for the standard experience sections showcasing the applicant's educational and employment history but adds a Skills and Qualifications Summary at the beginning to highlight the applicant's abilities and credentials that match what the job posting asked for.

Some employers have strong preferences for one résumé type. Helpful employers will specify which they prefer in the job posting. If not, however, your only recourse is to contact the company and ask what their preferences are. This shows that you care enough about meeting employer expectations to be proactive on the communication front. Employers hope you will do the same as an employee—as opposed to guessing at expectations and potentially wasting your time and effort, as well as company money, doing something no one wants. Let us look in detail at how you can make your résumé meet common (but not necessarily all) employer expectations in all parts of a combination reverse-chronological/functional targeted résumé.

Targeted Résumé Parts

- Objective Statement

- Personal Information Header
- Skills and Qualifications Summary
- Education
- Employment Experience
- Related Experience
- References

Personal Information Header

The personal information header appears at the top of the document because its most important piece, your name, is your document's title, not "Résumé." Use your full legal name so that, if you are the leading candidate, it will make the employer's job of due-diligence background checks (e.g., police record checks, checking academic transcripts for proof of credentials, etc.) easier. (If you go by a nickname, you can certainly state your preferences after you get the job.) Also use a larger font size, bold typeface, and even color to make your name stand out from the rest of the text. Do not make it so large that it overwhelms the page, however; a 15-point font, compared with the 11- or 12-point font you use for the rest of the text, is perfect.

Your Name

600 Park Street (785) 628-4000
Hays, KS 67601 name@mail.fhsu.edu

Figure 3.5.1: Sample Personal Information Header

Below or beside your name, add your contact information, including your physical mailing address, phone number, and email address. If you have multiple addresses and phone numbers, use only those that the employer can best reach you with.

Fully spell out the street type rather than abbreviate it (e.g., Avenue, not Ave.) to strike a formal tone. Whatever phone number you give, ensure that the personalized message that a caller hears if they are sent to voicemail is a professional one.

Use a standard email address like name@gmail.com or your college email address to prove you went to the school given in your résumé's Education section. Do not use an unprofessional email address like cray-cray.tay-tay@yahoo.com or macdaddy.playa@hotmail.com; those email addresses are fine for use with close friends who share your sense of humor but not with an employer. Also, do not use your work email address unless your current employer is okay with you using it to look for work elsewhere since they will have access to those emails. Finally, space permitting, include a personal website such as a link to your LinkedIn profile and/or online portfolio. Make it easy for hiring managers to find whatever else you want them to see of you online besides what they search out themselves.

Do not overload your personal information header with inappropriate or too much information, however. To avoid inviting various types of bias into the selection process or information that might be exploited, never include the following details:

- Your **Social Security Number** (SSN): Give this to the employer only when you have accepted a job offer and they require your SSN for payroll processing.
- Your **age**: Do not give employers a reason to make biased assumptions about the quality of work you will do based on your age. Some employers consider employees who are too young or too old to be liabilities. You want to at least tout your qualifications in an interview rather than be discriminated against during application selection.
- Your **ethnicity** or place of origin: The employer will inevitably make certain assumptions—positive or negative—based on what your full name says about your ethnicity, but the personal information header is not the place for you to say anything about it either way. Many organizations have legal policies that allow them to give special consideration to applicants who are from traditionally underrepresented groups.. Only indicate your ethnicity or sex if an online application questionnaire asks if you identify as a particular ethnicity.
- Your **sexual orientation**: If this matters at all (99.9% of the time it does not), it is something you can discuss during the interview if you want.
- Any disability: To prevent inviting ability bias into the employer's assessment of your employability, leave out any mention of disabilities or health conditions.
- Your **picture**: Unless it is an industry expectation, such

as in the entertainment business, your physical appearance should not matter at this stage—only your words. Avoid inviting lookism bias into the selection process. The employer can always look you up on social media; otherwise, they will see you at the interview.

Putting it all together, your personal information header should be only two-to-three lines on the page and placed in the document header so that it goes automatically on every page and leaves more room below. Spreading that information out across the header is a more efficient use of space than stacking each piece of information to make a five- or six-line block. To look fresh, some résumé templates place the information in a column in the margin or even near the bottom. This may backfire because, if most employers expect to see that information at the top and do not see it at first glance, they might discard the application thinking the applicant simply forgot to put it there. No matter how good a résumé is, there is no point in reading on if the applicant can not be contacted. Stacking your personal information on the side may be okay for someone with a one-page résumé that lacks depth of experience, but any résumé that goes onto a second page should have that information in the header so it appears uniformly at the top of every page.

Objective Statement

Most resumes do not need an Objective Statement. But, when the Objective Statement mentions the company and position in question, it is the first sign confirming to the employer that this résumé is targeted. Like someone on a date who makes the other feel special by saying that they are interested only in them, the Objective Statement signals the employer is the applicant's priority. Whereas a generic résumé may call this "Career Objective" and declare a long-term career goal, a targeted résumé's Objective Statement focuses on what exactly the applicant can do for the employer. Convention requires that this be a one-line infinitive-verb statement that helps the employer understand that your priority is to help them achieve their business goals. Not a complete sentence, an infinitive verb phrase begins with "To" and follows with a present-tense first-person verb.

OBJECTIVE

To contribute to an increase in sales at Company XYZ as a top sales representative.

Figure 3.5.2: Sample Objective Statement

Skills and Qualifications Summary

The Skills and Qualifications Summary section follows the Objective because of its importance in declaring in one neat package the major skills and qualifications that match those in the job posting. In a combination résumé, it is the feature borrowed from the functional résumé type. If the job ad lists four main skills—let us call them skills "ABCD"—the candidates who list skills ABCD in this section will have the best chance of getting an interview because they frontload their résumé with all the top-priority items the employer seeks. Doing this shows you can follow instructions and says to the employer, "I read your job posting and am confident that I'm what you're looking for."

If you have skills ABC and omitted D even though you have that skill, you could lose the competition for interview spots to those who were conscientious enough to add it to the list. If you have skills ABCDEFG, adding EFG will appear to be a résumé-padding distraction. You can put EFG in your CV on LinkedIn but listing only ABCD here makes this a truly targeted résumé. If you have ABC but adding D would be dishonest because you do not have that skill, just go with ABC; do not let the fact that you do not have everything the employer is looking for stop you from applying. If you shoot yourself down for every job application because you have only about 80% of what they are looking for, you will self-sabotage yourself out of almost every employment opportunity. Apply anyway because the employer may have asked for too much and will find that no applicant has ABCD, which means they will shortlist candidates with three out of four.

Your Skills and Qualifications Summary section helps you pass the filter that many employers use to scan electronically submitted applications to ensure they have used enough of the job posting's keywords. Filtering out applicants merely taking shots in the dark gives the busy hiring manager more time to focus on those who truly qualify. Do not worry about this being plagiarism. If your application fails to mirror exactly the key terms listed throughout the job posting, the employer might not even see yours.

Dividing the Skills and Qualifications Summary into sub-lists related to categories of the job will increase your chances of meeting the employer's approval. To use this highly prized real estate on the page effectively, consider arranging the sub-lists in three columns; a couple could be for job-specific technical skill sets, another for transferrable soft skills. Make a three-cell, single-row, borderless table from MS Word's Insert menu with a centered bold heading and a bulleted list of skills in each cell. Only do this, however, if you are sure that your application formatting will not be electronically filtered out. Some of the online application services offered through job search engines such as Indeed will convert résumés into scannable formats, often scrambling text into an unreadable mess. Converters are the bane of applicants who spend time carefully formatting for readability and space efficiency (TERRIBLE Resume Converter, n.d.).

Begin with a short paragraph of noun phrases (not complete sentences) profiling where you are in your career with relevant credentials.

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY

A recent graduate of information networking and telecommunications at Fort Hays State University. A software developer specializing in programming and project management but with additional proficiencies in level design and asset modeling, as well as competence in user interface design.

Programming Language	Software	Interpersonal
• 3 years' advanced proficiency in C++ • 2 years' intermediate use of C# • 1 year of familiarity with OpenGL	• 3 years' advanced proficiency with 3ds Max • 5 years' functional proficiency with Photoshop • 2 years' familiarity with Java	• Leadership and teamwork skills • Advanced writing and presentation skills • Bilingual (reading, writing, speaking) in English and French

Figure 3.5.3: Sample Skills and Qualifications Summary

Education

List your education in reverse-chronological order with the program title and credential type as your bold subheading followed by the institution and its location in plain style either on the same line or on the line below. The program title precedes the institution because it is more relevant in proving that you have trained for the job at hand. Give the date near the margin. If you are still in the program, put "Present" or your expected graduation date—e.g., "April 2020 (expected)."

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Information Networking and Telecommunications Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas	December 2023

- Overall GPA of 3.97 in courses including Programming Fundamentals, Game Algorithms, Graphics Computations, Assets, Level Design, Scripting, Project Management, and Communications
- Gameplay programming in C++, C#, Java, OpenGL, Unity, and Unreal
- Asset design and animation using 3ds Max, Substance Painter, and Photoshop
- Collaborated in the production of a fully functioning FPS video game

Figure 3.5.4: Sample Education Section

In the sub-points under the program title subheading, include your overall grade-point average (GPA) if it is above 3.5 on a 4-point scale (high-A average), which proves to employers that you have had a strong work ethic throughout your training when you have more industry-relevant training than work experience. Be honest because the employer may request an official college transcript, and any discrepancy between the numbers there and on your résumé will end your candidacy.

Drop the GPA line when you have 3-5 years of successful work experience in the same type of job you apply to.

In the list of subpoints, include course titles that prove how you learned the skills identified in the job posting and in your Summary section. If the titles alone do not have the same wording as those sought-after skills, include further points that do. The wording is vital because your application can be electronically filtered out if it does not contain enough matching key terms in the job posting. Once a human reads the résumé and they are not convinced you have proved where you learned, practiced, and applied the skills they are looking for, they may deprioritize and ultimately reject your application. When you have enough industry-relevant work experience (e.g., 5-10 years) for the jobs you apply to, you can shift the skills learned in your training to go instead under the jobs you have actually done, leaving your Education section as simply a list of credentials.

Omit your high school in the list of educational experiences. Even if you recently graduated, to an employer it is redundant padding because being in a college program proves that you completed high school. Also, showing when you graduated gives away your age, which may introduce some age-based discrimination into the selection process. If you want to list participation in high-school clubs related to your field of study, do it in the Related Experience section.

Add other programs you have completed, even if they are not directly relevant to the job, just to show what you have been doing with your time. If they did not provide you with any skills matching those in the job posting, omit sub-points under them. If you did not finish a program, leave it out. When employers check your LinkedIn profile, they will understand that you omitted an unfinished program from your targeted résumé because it did not relate enough to the job at hand.

Experience

The Experience section follows the same format as the Education section, only with the job title as the subheading in bold followed by the company name and location in plain style. List your jobs in reverse-chronological order with your current (or most recent) job first and your earliest last. List the month/year date ranges in the same position as in the Education section. The months are important because a date range such as "2015-2016" is misleading if you worked a few weeks before and after New Year's, whereas "Dec. 2015 – Jan. 2016" honestly indicates seasonal work.

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Student Support Representative, Student Support Services TigerTech, Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas	Apr. 2019 – Present

- Provide effective customer service in supporting student and faculty clientele

- Fostered effective teamwork among staff by role-modeling and conflict resolution

Sandwich Artist, Person in Charge, Subway Hays, Kansas	Jul. 2014 – Apr. 2019

- Managed staff and conducted quality-control inspections
- Ensured customer service satisfaction through direct interaction and team motivation

Figure 3.5.5: Sample Employment Experience Section

At the beginning of your working life, include whatever jobs you have done (except perhaps newspaper or flyer delivery) but make them relevant by adding transferrable skills as subpoints underneath. While you should omit task-specific skills, definitely list transferrable skills (e.g., teamwork) that match those listed in the job posting. As you can also see in Figure 3.5.5, each bullet-point skill begins with an action verb for consistent parallelism, the verb for the present job is in the present tense, and those for the past job are consistently past-tense verbs. Use clear, high-impact action verbs such as the following:

Achieved	Coordinated	Expanded	Innovated	Provided	Serve
Analyzed	Corrected	Expedited	Introduced	Reduced	Spea
Approved	Delegated	Facilitated	Investigated	Represented	Spur
Averaged	Designed	Grew	Managed	Resolved	Strea
Collaborated	Directed	Implemented	Organized	Restructured	Stren
Constructed	Enabled	Improved	Overhauled	Reviewed	Supe
Contributed	Engineered	Increased	Pioneered	Revitalized	Targ
Converted	Established	Initiated	Prioritized	Screened	Tran

Fleshed out into bullet-point descriptions of skills in a three-part ***verb*** + ***object*** + ***prepositional phrase*** structure, some of the above action verbs may look like the following:

- **Collaborated** with team members consistently in working groups improving departmental processes
- **Streamlined** collaborative report-writing processes by switching to Google Docs
- **Organized** annual awards dinner celebration for a department of 150 employees
- **Designed** 13 internal feedback forms in the company intranet for multiple departments
- **Secured** government program funding successfully for eight departmental initiatives

Notice that the writer focuses on quantifiable achievements with actual numerical figures and places adverbs after the verb rather than begin points with them (e.g., not *Consistently collaborated with team members*) so that you always lead with verbs (Guffey, Loewy, & Almonte, 2016, p. 387). To make your accomplishments more concrete, Google executive Laszlo Block advises you to structure them according to the following formula:

Accomplished X as measured by Y by doing Z

Even if your job is just a grocery store cashier, you can quantify your achievements and put them in perspective. Instead of "Processed customer purchases at the checkout," saying "Served 85 customers per day with 100% accuracy compared to my peers' average of 70 customers at 90% accuracy" demonstrates your focus on achieving outstanding excellence with regard to KPIs (key performance indicators), which hiring managers will love (Block, 2014).

As you add more industry-specific work experience throughout your career, you can move those transferrable skills to go under only career-oriented entries in this section and delete non-industry-related work experience. For instance, you would delete food service industry jobs such as Subway if your career is not culinary in nature. A decade or two into your working life, you will have a solid record of only career-oriented work experience in résumés targeted to career employers.

The gold standard of experience that employers want to see in a résumé is that you have previously done the job you are applying for—just for another employer (Vandegriend, 2017). This means that you can carry on in the new position with minimal training. If that is the case, you certainly want to place your Employment Experience section above your Education section. Otherwise, recent college graduates should lead with their more relevant Education section, appealing to employers hiring for potential rather than for experience, until they get that industry work experience.

Related Experience

The Related Experience section gives you a chance to match any of the skills listed in the job posting that you have not yet matched in either of the Education or Employment Experience sections. It also helps prove that you are a well-rounded candidate who has developed the soft skills that employers value. (Merely listing such skills in the Qualifications Summary is suspicious unless you later list experiences that suggest you developed them in a formal way. Without the proof, the employer may just think that you have copied a list of soft skills off a generic résumé model.) The Related Experience section is organized in the same manner as the other two experience sections above it, using subheadings for categories such as the following:

- Volunteer activities
- Unpaid work experience (e.g., co-op)
- Certifications (e.g., First Aid, WHMIS)
- Memberships in professional associations or community organizations
- Honors and awards (for merit, not won by luck)
- Extracurricular activities

Beneath each subheading, list specifics (e.g. First Aid and WHMIS as bullet points under Certifications). Omit mere hobbies and interests but include league sports if the job posting included teamwork skills as a requirement and you match that in the bullet point beneath the entry. Use a single month-year combination for one-time events and date ranges for longer-duration activities. Drop the least relevant from targeted résumés as you gain experience over the years while keeping them in your LinkedIn profile.

References

References will be submitted in a seperate document with your resume, if requested. In the context of the résumé, references are former employers who can vouch for you as a quality employee when asked by the employer you have applied to. If you are asked to provide references, do so on a separate page. You can include a References section with actual entries when applying to a smaller organization that will likely make quick decisions about hiring but make sure you notify your references that you have applied for a job. In addition, you need to be sure that those you want to list as a reference are still willing to serve as one. In those situations, providing your references' contact information will allow the employer to call up the people who have agreed to endorse you to do quick background checks before finalizing their decisions. Withholding the references so that they have to call you to ask for them slows down their process. If they are considering you and another leading candidate, the one who provides the References in their application package and gets a solid endorsement looks better than the one who required them to do more work for the same information.

If you include references, put them all on one page at the end of your application document so they can be separated out and shredded at the end of the hiring process.

Three to five references are best, and each must be someone who was in a position of authority over you, such as a manager or supervisor, for at least two years, ideally. The assumption is that less than two years is not enough time to fully assess the consistency of an employee's work ethic. List your references in order of what you expect to be the most enthusiastic endorsement down to the least. Do not include coworkers, friends, or family members among your references. If your parents or relatives were your employers (e.g., on the family farm), include them as references only if they are your only work experience. As soon as you have enough non-family work experience, drop your parents or relatives from the list. An employer seeing endorsements from people with the same last name might assume that they will be biased to the point of being useless as references.

Each reference must contain the following pieces of information:

1. **Full name in bold,** followed by a comma and the reference's official job title capitalized (e.g., Manager,

Supervisor, CEO, or Franchise Owner)

2. **Company** or organization they represent (or represented when you worked under them, though they have since moved on to another company) in plain style. It is important to give the name of the company so that the reader can connect it to your Employment Experience section. If you worked for a company but do not have a reference for it, the reader might suspect that you did so poorly a job that the employer refused to give you a strong reference. This is why you should always do your best work in any job; even if you don't enjoy the work, doing your best increases your chances of getting a good reference that you can use as your ticket to a better job.
3. **Phone number**. Employers checking references prefer to call, rather than email, so they can have a quick back-and-forth conversation about the candidate. The caller will rely on important clues such as voice tones for assessing the honesty of the reference's endorsement, which would not be possible in a non-verbal email.
4. **Email address**. This is only for the potential employer to set up a time for a phone call with the reference or to ask for details in writing if a phone call is somehow difficult or impossible (e.g., time-zone differences or international calling charges). Consider, however, that managers or supervisors might hesitate from endorsing anyone in writing, which is why the telephone is the

preferred channel here.

It is very important that you confirm with your references that they will provide you with a *strong* endorsement (use those words when you ask) if called upon by a potential employer. Do not be afraid to ask. Providing references is part of a manager's or supervisor's job. They got to where they are on the strength of their former employers' references, and there is a "pay it forward" principle motivating them to do the same for the employees under them. If they do not believe in your potential, they will likely be honest in advising you to ask someone else. Bear in mind that some larger corporations have HR policies that prohibit managers from providing references because of myriad legal implications. They may only be allowed to confirm that you worked for them but nothing more. If so, consider asking other managers or supervisors for more helpful references.

3.6 RÉSUMÉ FORMATTING AND SUBMISSION

Jordan Smith

When all your content is in place, ensure that your résumé is impeccably organized, revised, and proofread. According to one study surveying hiring managers, the top three deal-breaker reasons for rejecting a résumé are the following:

1. Spelling or grammar errors
2. Lack of targeting
3. Disorganization (Vandegriend, 2017)

Since even one typo can ruin your chances of being selected for an interview (LedgerLink, 2009), no documents you have ever written in your life should be as thoroughly revised and proofread as your résumé and cover letter.

Résumé Formatting and Submission Topics

- One Page or Two?
- Format for Ease of Readability
- Electronic, Scannable, and Hard-copy Submissions

One Page or Two?

A common employer expectation requires you to fit all of your details on one page. If this means cutting details that might convince an employer to invite you to an interview, then only do this if you are sure that an employer will discard your résumé if it goes over a page. If you see "Send your one-page résumé now!" on the posting, that is your cue for the required length. Even if an employer is not so strict, any details that spill onto the second page will, according to the Law of Diminishing Returns, work against you if they do not effectively convince the employer to invite you to an interview. The busy hiring manager speed-reading through dozens or hundreds of applications will be annoyed by any time-wasting padding in a résumé, and the slightest annoyance is enough to prompt them to dump your application in the shredder.

Format for Ease of Readability

Ensure that your résumé is easy to read in every way. Trying to fit everything on a single page by reducing the font size to 8-point and the margins to 1cm, as well as using multiple columns to fill every square centimeter of available white space, will just annoy the reader by making the document difficult to read. They will suspect that you will be similarly disrespectful to your readers on the job, so they may simply shred your résumé after a mere glance at its formatting. Follow the guidelines for effective document design. Ensure especially that your:

- Text is a standard 11- or 12-pt. font type with sparing use of color, all-caps, and bold typeface (just for headings and subheadings); avoid italics and underlining
- Margins 1 inch all around and empty on the sides
- Text and whitespace are balanced without leaving large gaps
- Pages are numbered (paginated) if you have more than one; ensure that the page number font is consistent with that of the rest of the document since MS Word will resort to the default font for page numbers

Electronic, Scannable, and Hard-copy Submissions

If the employer requires an **electronic submission**, follow their directions exactly. If they ask for a PDF or MS Word file named a certain way (e.g., Resume_Yourlastname_Yourfirstname.docx or .pdf), doing it any other way will disqualify you immediately. (The reason is obviously that if you cannot follow simple instructions for submitting your résumé, you will have problems taking direction in the workplace—problems that can potentially be expensive to the employer.) If you have a choice between MS Word or PDF, go with PDF because it embeds fonts and formats, so you can be reasonably sure that you will avoid issues with font conversion or format scrambling when your document is opened on another computer.

If the employer uses a job search site such as Indeed, beware that your résumé formatting will be stripped out by their scannable résumé converter. Avoiding the nightmare scenario of the employer seeing your résumé massacred by the converter and thinking it is your fault (TERRIBLE Resume Converter, n.d.) by doing the following:

1. Produce a version of your résumé that uses no formatting whatsoever—no bullet points, no tabbing, no columns, no bold typeface, no color, no changes in font size, etc. If the converter can not do this properly for you, doing it manually yourself will ensure that the employer sees a readable (albeit homely) version.
2. Use Indeed (or other search engines) to find job postings but send your well-formatted application directly to the company either via email or traditional mail.

Try these approaches in combination to ensure the employer gets your application.

If the employer uses an **online application form**, having the simplified version recommended in #1 above ready to copy and paste into the given fields will make your work much easier. This is especially necessary if the form will time out to prevent applicants writing from scratch as they go. Do not forget: when employers use these electronic filtering methods, it is for no other reason than to have the program scan the résumés and filter out the generic spam applications that fail to meet a given quota of the job posting's keyterms. The program sends along only the targeted résumés to the hiring manager, so ensure that your résumé content features those keyterms and does not crowd them out with much else.

If the employer requires a **hard-copy submission**, it may be worth going to an office supply store to invest in some high-quality paper and printing. When the employer sees stacks of applications printed on standard paper stock, one printed on quality paper really stands out. High-quality printing also shows respect, suggesting that the employer was worth the extra expense. Also, put an 8.5″ x 11″ cardboard backing in with your application when you mail it in a 9″ x 11.5″ envelope to ensure that it will not be creased in transit. High-quality writing and convincing content printed on pristine, high-quality paper is a winning combination in the eyes of any hiring manager exhausted by the disappointing quality of the majority of applications.

For more on résumés, see the following resources:

- Designing Your Professional Resume by Fort Hays State University Career Services
- Resume Examples by Major by Fort Hays State University Career Services
- Introduction to and Expectations for Résumés (Purdue OWL, n.d.) and the modules following

- How to Make a Resume (wikiHow, 2018)

3.7 COVER LETTER

Lindsay Bortot and Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College

Think of the cover letter like beautifully crafted icing on top of a delicious and important cake. The cake is an essential component, but neither the cake nor the icing are nearly as good when they are eaten on their own. In comparison, your cover letter should always accompany your resume, and emphasize, expand, and complement several key points related to the employer's needs. Just like a good cake, it has to be professional, well-crafted, interesting, and impressive! It should encourage the employer to want to read through your resume and persuade them to meet with you to further explore your qualifications.

It is common to question why a cover letter is needed and whether or not recruiters or employers even read it. There are definitely some companies that are too busy to read cover letters, but there are many managers at small and medium sized companies that do take the time to skim through them. Truthfully, we cannot know for sure what each and every employer or recruiter reads or relies on when deciding on whom to interview. However, if your resume has been shortlisted, your cover letter could set you apart from other candidates. By submitting both a tailored resume and cover letter, you will increase your chances of being screened in. Preparing a well thought-out, personalized, customized, and compelling cover letter is an effective job search strategy that can give you an advantage over other applicants.

There are two types of cover letters that you can prepare:

- **Targeted:** A targeted cover letter is written in response to a specific job posting and is the most commonly used type of letter. You customize the content of your letter to match the job requirements listed in the advertisement. Your cover letter should provide concrete examples from your experience of how you have demonstrated the qualifications listed. This type of letter is typically used when submitting applications online or emailing your documents directly in response to a position.
- **Generalized:** A generalized cover letter can be used when you are applying to a company, but you are unaware of the positions that they are hiring for. This type of letter might be used when attending a career event where multiple employers are present but the available jobs are unknown. You can also prepare a generalized cover letter for when you find yourself in an unplanned networking situation; your letter will provide your contact with information highlighting your professional accomplishments.

3.8 COVER LETTER SECTIONS

Lindsay Bortot and Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College

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- **Your Contact Information:** Similar to your resume, your cover letter should start by indicating your first and last name, current address, phone number, and email address. It is appropriate for this section to match the format of your resume to show consistency in your branding.
- **Date of Submission:** Indicate the date that you are applying and submitting your application for the position. Write out the date in long form, for example, March 31, 2023.
- **Company Name, Department Name, and Address:** In this section, include the name of the company and/or department that is listed on the job posting, as well as the company's full address. If the address is not listed on the posting and there happens to be several different locations, you could reach out to the company directly to find out more information on which location is hiring. If you are still unable to obtain this information,

use the Head Office address.

- **Greeting:** Often times the name of the hiring contact and address will be included on the posting, however if it is not, put in the extra effort to research this information for yourself. Consider looking at the website, LinkedIn, or calling the company directly to obtain the name of the person in charge of hiring for the position. If you are able to obtain this information, personalize your greeting to say, "Dear Mr. or Ms. Last Name." If by their name, their gender is unknown, you would say, "Dear First and Last Name." If you are unable to obtain a specific name, "Dear Hiring Manager" is appropriate. As a best practice, the more personalization, the better, therefore, do not use a generic greeting such as "To Whom it May Concern"
- **Introduction:** In the first paragraph, start with an interesting hook, introduce yourself, state what position and company you are applying to, why you are applying, and where you saw it advertised or how you heard about the position.
- **Body of the Letter:** In the body of the letter, your goal is to sell yourself by providing a summary of your relevant education, experience, and personal characteristics that match the requirements of the job posting and demonstrate how you will meet the employer's needs.
- **Organization:** In this paragraph, you should be

convincing the employer that they are the only company that you want to work for. Show the employer that you are a strong fit for the organization's culture by highlighting what interests you about the mission, vision, values, and/or projects and services. By stating your knowledge of the company and emphasizing your interest, you are setting yourself apart from other candidates who have not strategically communicated this.

- **Conclusion:** In closing your cover letter, briefly summarize what you will contribute to the company. Additionally, thank the employer for their consideration, provide your contact information and remind them how you can be reached most easily, you can also clarify which times of the day you are most reachable if you have other obligations. Lastly, welcome an opportunity to meet or discuss your qualifications further.
- **Signature:** Complete your letter by writing "Sincerely" underneath your last paragraph. Skip several spaces and type out your first and last name. There are several applications that can be downloaded on your smart devices that allow you to create an importable image of your handwritten signature, which offers a nice professional look to finish off your letter when submitting your applications online.

3.9 COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

Lindsay Bortot and Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College

Your Name
Your Address
Your Contact Information

Date of Submission

Employer's Name

Employer's Title
Company Name/Department Name
Company Address

Re: Job Title, Job Reference # (if applicable)

Dear Mr. or Ms. Last Name, or Dear Hiring Manager, (when there is no contact person). Avoid using the titles of "Miss" or "Mrs." unless you know this is how the person wishes to be referred to. These two titles indicate a woman's marital status. Ms. does not indicate marital status. Many women professionals prefer not to be addressed by their marital status.

INTRODUCTION: The introduction should answer the 4 "W's" Who, Why, What, and Where.

Who: Introduce yourself to the employer (your program of study) and start with a strong sentence that demonstrates why they should be interested in you.

Why: Indicate why you are writing and the reason you are interested in the company.

What: List the job title or describe what type of job interests you.

Where: Note whether you are responding to an advertised position, wish to be considered for a prospective opening, or if you were referred to the company by a friend or a colleague.

BODY OF LETTER: Promote yourself; give a summary of your relevant experience and how they meet the employer's needs: e.g. work placements, co-op, applied research, previous employment, years of experience, etc. Use descriptive, positive, action verbs to describe what you can do and keywords from the job posting. Highlight your strongest skills and provide further or more in-depth details about a significant accomplishment or an example that pertains to the job.

ORGANIZATION: Explain briefly why you would like to work for this employer. This paragraph lets the employer know that you have written this letter specifically for them. Demonstrate your knowledge of the company.

CLOSING: Summarize what you can do for the company. Thank the employer for their attention or consideration given. Ask for action, such as a meeting to further discuss your qualifications. Include your phone number and email address.

Sincerely, (Leave 4 – 6 spaces)

YOUR SIGNATURE

(if giving in person, include signature, if submitting online, insert image of signature)

Your first and last name (typewritten)

3.10 COVER LETTER TIPS

Lindsay Bortot and Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College

- **Customize it.**
  The employers want to see you demonstrate your knowledge of the company, show how you could benefit their team, and provide compelling reasons why you would like to work for them. Emphasize and expand on several key points related to the employer's needs and highlight asset points, such as the ability to work flex hours, willingness to relocate, etc.
- **Do your research.**
  Read through the "About Us" page on the company's website, their mission statement, and social media sites to get more information and insight into the company before you start writing. Your goal is to make the company believe that they are the one and only place you want to work. This is also good preparation for the common questions that will often be asked, such as: "What do you know about our company/organization and why do you want to work for us?"
- **Personalize it.**
  Whenever possible, personalize your greeting and

address your cover letter to the appropriate individual(s). For some Hiring Managers this small detail can make the difference between screening you in or out. Also, if you heard about the position from someone you know, or someone you met at an employer event or career fair, make sure to mention their name(s) in your introduction.

- **Be creative.**
  Avoid using the same cookie-cutter introductory lines like everyone else. Show your uniqueness and come up with a creative hook line to capture your reader's attention. Consider stating an accomplishment, highlighting your passion, mentioning your love for the company, or something interesting you heard about the company in the news. For example, avoid the standard, "I would like to apply for the position of…, but try something more like, "Are you looking for someone who finds inefficiencies, identifies ways to streamline them, and consistently strives to boost the productivity of the team? Doing just this has earned me two promotions in the last year at my current company, and it is what I would like the opportunity to do for you."
- **Be consistent with your format and presentation.**
  Write your cover letter in a business letter format, you will see this reflected in the template provided in the following section. Use the same font type and size as your resume. Stick to plain paper and avoid graphics.

- **Follow instructions.**
  Pay attention to the application instructions, many job postings require
  you to quote a job number in your cover letter to be considered altogether. The posting may also indicate what preferred file format to submit your document in as well. Furthermore, there are some trend-setting companies that are challenging the more conventional cover letter formats. Should you be applying to these companies, make sure to closely read the instructions that are provided on the job posting and write your cover letter accordingly.
- **Do not duplicate your resume.**
  Avoid presenting information not covered in the resume, but at the same time do not restate your resume word for word. Rather, summarize your most relevant skills and experiences as they relate to the employer's needs.
- **Be concise.**
  A three to four-paragraph, one-page cover letter is perfectly acceptable. Remembering the volume of applications employers receive, ensuring that your cover letter is concise and to the point will increase its likelihood of being read. You can use point form when describing your qualifications, but do not turn the whole cover letter into point form format as you risk not including enough of an explanation.
- **Be aware of organization and flow.**

A disorganized and poorly written cover letter can be tiresome for an employer to read. Ensure that the content of your letter flows well and that you are not bouncing back between ideas. Secondly, limit the amount of "I" sentences and run-on sentences; focus on using transition words like, "additionally and furthermore" to make your writing flow more easily.

- **Proofread.**
  Have a second set of eyes read through your cover letter for mistakes. One grammatical error may mean that your application will not be considered. Furthermore, pay close attention to your details. If you tend to build off of previously saved cover letters, ensure that you have changed all the pertinent information before sending. Submitting a cover letter with the wrong date or employer name on the application may cause an employer to have a negative first impression.

3.11 DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

Rachel Dolechek and Rose Helens-Hart

3.11.1. Employable Skills Self-Assessment

Using the bulleted list in Chapter 3.1, assess your skill set. This is a great first step in matching skills you have with those an employer requires.

3.11.2. Organizing Your Search

Imagine you are getting ready to start your next job search. How would you organize your search materials? Provide a summary of how you would organize your search. In addition, create an Excel file with appropriate columns and rows to serve as a template for organizing job search details.

3.11.3. Résumé Draft

Go to Handshake and find a job you would be interested in applying for after graduation. Save a PDF copy of the job call to your computer.

Develop a draft résumé for the job you chose using the following criteria:

- A maximum of one to two full pages
- Original Word document (no templates allowed) without text boxes to make review and editing easy
- Omit high school information
- Use the correct name of the degree you are seeking

- Spell out your school name (e.g. Fort Hays State University instead of FHSU)
- Do not include a picture of yourself or other demographic information (e.g. age, race, religion, marital status, etc.)
- Do not include references on the resume.

3.11.4. Reference Request

Before including a reference on your résumé, always ask and confirm your references will provide a strong, positive endorsement if contacted by an employer. Draft an email to a potential reference requesting they serve as a reference. Your email should include a subject line, appropriate greeting, and signature line.

When developing your email, follow the structure and strategy for the message:

- Open by clearly stating why you are

requesting a recommendation. If you have not been in contact with this person in some time, remind them of who you are and how they know you. Including dates or events may be helpful to the reader.
- Use the body of the message to describe the position you are seeking, the action you are requesting, and the date you need a response. If you are asking the reader to write a letter or submit a recommendation, provide all contact information and submission details.
- Be sincere in the conclusion of the message by thanking the reader for their consideration (Bovee & Thill, 2019).

3.11.5. Dream Job Cover Letter

Write an unsolicited cover letter for your dream job. Be convincing in how you present your pitch.

3.11.6. Solicited Cover Letter

Using Handshake, find a position currently posted within your field of study. Write a solicited cover letter for this position.

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CHAPTER 4: PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEWING

Lumen Learning and Linda (Bruce) Hill

If your résumé and cover letter have served their purposes well, you will be invited to participate in an interview with the company or organization you are interested in. Congratulations! It is an exciting time, and your prospects for employment are strong if you put in the time to be well-prepared for the interview.

There are two major categories that employers are looking to evaluate in a candidate during an interview.

- **Qualifications:** Do you have the required credentials, skills, and abilities to perform the job?
- **Personal and career fit:** Do your personal qualities, attributes, and career goals match with what the company is seeking?

This section will provide you with a thorough understanding of what you need to know at every stage of the interview process. We will explain the different types of interview formats and provide you with sample questions and answers that will be crucial in increasing your chances of securing your next job. Remember that the interview is a chance for the employer to learn more about you, your skills and experiences, but it is also an opportunity for you to learn more about the company and whether or not this opportunity will be a good match to your current goals and future career aspirations.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Evaluate your interviewing strengths.
- Practice the STAR interviewing method.
- Identify and prepare for common interview questions.

This chapter is adapted from three open educational resources:

Adaptations included editing tone, images, removing content to align the chapter with BCOM210 course learning objectives, revising examples for an FHSU student population, and adding some original exercises to align with course objectives.

4.1 PREPARING EFFECTIVELY FOR A JOB INTERVIEW

Lumen Learning and Linda (Bruce) Hill

When you obtain an interview, there are many ways to prepare. Doing your research and practicing before an interview will help you feel more confident and be more authentic and impressive in the interview.

Follow these steps to begin your preparation:

1. Review the Job Description

When you prepare for an interview, your first step will be to carefully read and reread the job posting or job description. This will help you develop a clearer idea of how you meet the skills and attributes the company seeks. Highlight key skills and terms and identify where you have practiced skills and developed your qualifications.

2. Research the Company or Organization

Researching the company will give you a wider view of what the company is looking for and how well you might fit in. Your prospective employer may ask you what you know about the company. Being prepared to answer this question shows that you took time and effort to prepare for the interview and that you have a genuine interest in the organization. It shows good care and good planning—soft skills you will surely need on the job. A good place to start your research is the company's website. Read the "About" page, and staff bios, and see if they have posted any news about the company or its community involvement. You can also read LinkedIn profiles of staff you will meet with and follow the company's page.

3. Practice Answering Common Questions

Most interviewees find that practicing for the interview in advance with a family member, a friend, or a colleague eases possible nerves during the actual interview. It also creates greater confidence when you walk through the interview door. In the "Interview Questions" section of this chapter, you will learn more about specific questions you will likely be asked and corresponding strategies for answering them.

4. Plan to Dress Appropriately

Interviewees are generally most properly dressed for an interview in business attire, with the goal of looking highly professional in the eyes of the interviewer. Most will wear "business formal" to an interview, which would mean a business suit but some may prefer to wear "business casual" for certain jobs. To determine what level of formality would be appropriate, do some research on the company and field. Try to find photos of company events, LinkedIn profile pictures, and information on the general level of formality for the industry. When in doubt, dress more formally, you can always take off a tie or a blazer to dress down if you need to.

5. Come Prepared

Plan to bring your résumé, cover letter, and a list of references to the interview. You may also want to bring a portfolio of representative work. Leave behind coffee, chewing gum, and any other items that could be distractions. Bring a small notebook and pen in case you need to make notes about questions you have been asked or information you have been given.

6. Be Confident

Above all, interviewees should be confident and "courageous." By doing so you make a strong first impression. As the saying goes, "There is never a second chance to make a first impression." In addition, be kind and respectful to everyone you meet. Assume when you leave the house, the interview has started. You never know who you might be next to in traffic or the waiting area.

4.2 JOB INTERVIEW TYPES AND TECHNIQUES

Lumen Learning and Linda (Bruce) Hill

Every interview you participate in will be unique: The people you meet with, the interview setting, and the questions you will be asked will all be different from interview to interview.

The various factors that characterize any given interview can contribute to the sense of adventure and excitement you feel. But it is also normal to feel a little nervous about what lies ahead. With so many unknowns, how can you plan to "nail the interview" no matter what comes up?

A good strategy for planning is to anticipate the type of interview you may find yourself in. There are common formats for job interviews, described in detail, below. By knowing a bit more about each type and being aware of techniques that work for each, you can be prepared no matter what form your interview takes.

Screening Interviews

Screening interviews might best be characterized as "weeding-out" interviews. They ordinarily take place over the phone or in another low-stakes environment in which the interviewer has maximum control over the amount of time the interview takes. Screening interviews are generally short because they glean only basic information about you. If you are scheduled to participate in a screening interview, you might safely assume that you have some competition for the job and that the company is using this strategy to narrow down the applicant pool. With this kind of interview, your goal is to secure a face-to-face interview. For this first interview, though, prepare well and challenge yourself to shine. This type of interview should be treated like a real interview. This may mean dressing for the interview and having a resume in front of you so that it can be referred to. Another suggestion is to use a land line phone if possible and/or make sure a cell phone is fully charged and that the screening interview takes place in a location that is free of distractions. Try to stand out from the competition and be sure to follow up with a thank-you note.

Phone or Web Conference Interviews

If you are geographically separated from your prospective employer, you may be invited to participate in a phone interview or online interview, instead of meeting face-to-face. Technology, of course, is a good way to bridge distances. The fact that you are not there in person does not make it any less important to be fully prepared, though. In fact, you may wish to be all the more "on your toes" to compensate for the distance barrier. Make sure your equipment (phone, computer, Internet connection, etc.) is fully charged and works. If you are at home for the interview, make sure the environment is quiet and distraction-free. If the meeting is online, make sure your video background is pleasing and neutral, like a wall hanging or even a white wall. You can also use a neutral digital background (do not interview from the deck of the Starship Enterprise) but be aware of how your lighting and the colors you wear will affect your image while using a virtual background.

One-on-One Interviews

The majority of job interviews are conducted in this format—just you and a single interviewer—likely with the manager you would report to and work with. The one-on-one format gives you both a chance to see how well you connect and how well your talents, skills, and personalities mesh. You can expect to be asked questions like "Why would you be good for this job?" and "Tell me about yourself." Many interviewees prefer the one-on-one format because it allows them to spend in-depth time with the interviewer. Rapport can be built. As always, be very courteous and professional. Have handy a portfolio of your best work.

Panel Interviews

An efficient format for meeting a candidate is a panel interview, in which perhaps four to five coworkers meet at the same time with a single interviewee. The coworkers comprise the "search committee" or "search panel," which may consist of different company representatives such as human resources, management, and staff. One advantage of this format for the committee is that meeting together gives them a common experience to reflect on afterward. In a panel interview, listen carefully to questions from each panelist, and try to connect fully with each questioner. Be sure to write down names and titles, so you can send individual thank-you notes after the interview.

Serial Interviews

Serial interviews are a combination of one-on-one meetings with a group of interviewers, typically conducted as a series of meetings staggered throughout the day. Ordinarily this type of interview is for higher-level jobs, when it is important to meet at length with major stakeholders. If your interview process is designed this way, you will need to be ultra-prepared, as you will be answering many in-depth questions. Be prepared.

Lunch Interviews

In some higher-level positions, candidates are taken to lunch or dinner, especially if this is a second interview (a "call back" interview). If this is you, count yourself lucky and be on your best behavior, because even if the lunch meeting is unstructured and informal, it is still an official interview. Do not order an alcoholic beverage, and use your best table manners. You are not expected to pay but can make the offer. But, as always, you must send a thank-you note.

Group Interviews

Group interviews are comprised of several interviewees and perhaps only one or two interviewers who may make a presentation to the assembled group. This format allows an organization to quickly prescreen candidates. It also gives candidates a chance to quickly learn about the company. As with all interview formats, you are being observed. How do you behave with your group? Do you assume a leadership role? Are you quiet but attentive? What kind of personality is the company looking for? A group interview may reveal this.

For a summary of the interview formats we have just covered (and a few additional ones), take a look at the following video, *Job Interview Guide—10 Different Types of Interviews in Today's Modern World.*

Video: *Job Interview Guide – 10 Different Types of Interviews in Today's Modern World*

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://fhsu.pressbooks.pub/profdev/?p=155#oembed-1

4.3 TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Lindsay Bortot and Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College

Preparation is essential for a successful interview. You want to ensure that you are able to convey to the employer that you are the most suitable candidate for the position. You are the interviewer's main source of information concerning your qualifications. Do not assume that the interviewer knows all of your qualifications and accomplishments; you must clearly describe as you answer the questions during an interview.

Introductory Questions

Introductory questions give you an opportunity to describe yourself and your accomplishments as they pertain to the job you are applying for. These questions are used to assess your background, your experience, and your organizational fit. Being that they are open-ended questions, they give you an opportunity to sell yourself.

Examples of common introductory questions include:

- Tell me about yourself.
- How has your education prepared you for this role?
- What do you know about our organization?
- Why are you interested in working for our company?
- What experience do you have that relates to this position?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?

Behavioral questions

Behavioral questions will ask you to describe a specific situation or experience and require you to provide an example of how you handled it in the past. Behavioral interviews are founded on the idea that the best predictor of future behavior is based on evaluating past behavior. The key is not to get the "right" answer but to demonstrate how you came to an appropriate result. To answer these questions well and completely, you need to be prepared with specific examples or experiences.

Examples of common behavioral questions include:

- Give an example of a situation where you had to deal with conflict, either with a customer or coworker. How did you handle it?
- Describe a situation where a coworker or supervisor had

expectations that you felt were unrealistic. How did you deal with that?

- Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
- Describe a stressful situation at work and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a time when you made a mistake? What did you learn from it?
- Describe a situation in which you had to balance multiple priorities.
- Provide a situation in which you managed a tight deadline?
- Give an example of a time when you collaborated as part of a team.
- Give an example of an occasion when you used logic to solve a problem.
- Share an example of how you were able to motivate employees or coworkers.
- Tell me about a time you have gone above and beyond the call of duty? If so, how?

The KEY to Answering Behavioral Questions, S.T.A.R. Technique

When answering behavioral questions, you should use the STAR technique to ensure you have included the appropriate amount of information and detail.

- **Situation** – Briefly describe the event or situation and include information on the who, what, where, and when.
- **Task** – Give a clear explanation of the task you had to complete and any challenges that accompanied it.
- **Action** – Speak about the actions you took to complete the task, purposefully mentioning qualities or traits that the interviewer is looking for.
- **Result** – In summary, emphasize what the result of your efforts was and quantify it when appropriate.

Situational questions

Situational questions are focused on hypothetical scenarios and they require you to demonstrate sound judgment with a response or solution to a problem that you may not have experienced before. Sometimes these questions require you to think outside the box, and carefully consider what is really being asked.

Examples of situational questions include:

- If you discovered your supervisor was breaking the company's code of conduct, what would you do?
- As the team leader, you are faced with a situation where two team members are arguing, how would you deal with the situation?
- If you had two important deadlines coming up, how would you prioritize your tasks?

More unconventional questions an employer may ask:

- If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?
- If you had to sell this pen, what would you say?

Job knowledge or technical questions

These questions typically assess the particular technical or professional skills and knowledge you will need to perform a job. Hands-on tests, simulations, and questions are phrased to find your level of experience with specific equipment, software, processes, procedures, etc.

Examples of technical questions include:

- What is the order of operations used when evaluating formulas in Excel?
- What are the key PivotTable "sections" into which users can drag columns?
- How do you properly use a blood pressure monitor?
- What is the process in which you enter an invoice into SAP?
- Show me how to wire these two three-way switches.

Your turn! Questions to ask the employer

When an employer asks you at the end of the interview, "Do you have any questions for us?" you want to avoid saying, "no." Having a lack of questions prepared may suggest to an employer that you are uninterested in the opportunity. It is your responsibility to come up with some well thought out and engaging questions. The questions that you ask can be about the roles and responsibilities of the job, the organizational structure of the company, general interest, or the next steps in the hiring process. Be conscientious of the interviewer's time, choose no more than three questions to ask.

Examples of questions you **SHOULD** ask include:

- What skills make the most successful employees here?

- What is the top priority of someone who accepts this job?
- Can you describe recent projects of someone in this position?
- What does a typical day/week look like in this role?
- How large is the team I would be working with?
- Is there any advice you can provide that would help me prepare for my first three
  months in this role?
- What is your favorite part about working for this organization?
- What are the next steps in the hiring process?
- When should I expect to hear back?

Examples of questions you **SHOULD NOT** ask include:

- How much will I get paid? What is the salary? Is this negotiable?*
- How many weeks' vacations will I be entitled too?*
- What does the benefits package include?*
- How long until I can become a manager?
- Can I apply to other jobs once I am working here?

* You will talk about salary and benefits if you are offered the position.

4.4 SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Lindsay Bortot and Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College

Question 1: Tell me about yourself.

This question is often used at the beginning of the interview as a way for the interviewers to get to know you. When answering this question, avoid being too general and do not go into irrelevant personal details ("I was born on a summer's night…as a child I loved playing with Lego…"). Use your resume to guide you in providing an outline for the employer to understand your work history. Focus on describing your related education, experience, personal traits, and emphasize your interest in this position or company.

Example answer:

"I am in the final semester of my Bachelors of Business Education in Corporate Communication degree. I had the opportunity to complete an internship with the Hays Larks, where I gained practical experience in managing social media posts and contests for the baseball team. Additionally, I was a student employee for the Applied Business Studies Department on campus and have worked in customer service roles at local restaurants. I wanted to pursue corporate communication as a career because I have a passion for connecting communities and seeing local businesses thrive. This has been obvious in my previous work experiences, as I have often been regarded by my managers and colleagues as welcoming, approachable, and kind. I believe I would bring many relevant qualities to this position, for example, having successfully balanced my school schedule and maintained two part-time jobs, I know my time-management skills will be an added benefit to your team on a daily basis. I am excited for an opportunity to work with a family-oriented business that is committed to making a positive impact on their community through providing locally sourced products."

Question 2: What are your strengths?

This question tests your self-knowledge. The interviewer is looking for you to describe some of your core skills or traits that would make you an excellent candidate for this job. You should be able to clearly and directly identify your strengths as if you were a product that you were trying to sell to the employer. The best strategy is to speak confidently, and relate your strengths to the requirements of the job. Simply listing a number of qualities is not sufficient. Focus on identifying three strengths and add value to your responses by expanding your answers and providing concrete examples from your work, school, or volunteer experiences.

Example answer:

"In all of my past jobs, I've considered myself to have a strong work ethic. For example, I remember a situation that occurred when I was working as a ranch hand on my family's farm. I was working with a foreman who had my team on a strict timeline. Unfortunately, there was some confusion and we did not receive a delivery of feed that we needed. After calling the supplier, we learned that the shipment would arrive later on that evening, after the time our shifts ended. Rather than go home, I volunteered to stay late and make sure the feed was unloaded properly, ensuring we would be ready to go in the morning."

Question 3: What are your greatest weaknesses?

We all have weaknesses or qualities that we are working on developing, that is why an interviewer will ask you about yours to see if you have a realistic picture of your own limitations. In your response, discuss a weakness that does not directly affect your ability to do the job you are applying for and then follow up by demonstrating what you are doing or have done to improve upon this weakness. A thoughtful response shows self-reflection and initiative in overcoming your weaknesses. Avoid overused clichés, such as “I work too hard” or “I am a perfectionist,” which come across as insincere and does not actually answer the question.

Example answer:

“When delivering presentations to large groups of people or speaking in front of crowds, I sometimes feel nervous. However, while completing my degree, I have taken many opportunities to voluntarily present information during my group projects, which involved speaking in front of 20-30 classmates. As a result, I feel more comfortable presenting, however, I know I need to continue to improve my skills further – this is why I have decided to attend a Toastmasters group once a week.”

Question 4: Why should we hire you?

This question provides you the opportunity to give your sales pitch. Reiterate to the employer what benefits they can expect from you. It is your opportunity to show your confidence and to highlight to an employer what specifically differentiates you from other candidates.

Example answer:

"I believe there are many reasons why you should hire me. For one, I meet the education and experience qualifications you are seeking for an individual to succeed in this role. I understand that there are likely other candidates that meet those criteria too, which is why I want you to know what sets me apart is my passion and commitment to motivate my team members to achieve their goals. For example, in my past work experiences, I have always exhibited a positive attitude and made it a point to lend a helping hand whenever opportunities presented themselves. My relationships with my team members have always been extremely collaborative and, as a result, we were more productive and efficient in completing our daily tasks."

Question: 5 Where do you see

yourself in the next five years?

This question is asked to address what your future goals or career aspirations are and how you intend to achieve them. Employers may also be looking to get a sense of your long-term commitment to their organization. Avoid speaking about unrelated ideas or ideas that would make the employer question your interest in working for them, such as mentioning your real goal is to start your own business or return to school full-time.

Example answer:

"In the next five years, I would like to become the top seller your company has on staff. I would like to take opportunities to learn and grow so that in the future, I become the sales expert that others rely on. My goal is to learn from the talented team of professionals at this company. In the long-term, I feel like this will prepare me to take on greater responsibilities as those opportunities present themselves."

Question 6: Tell me about a time when you experienced a conflict with a coworker/supervisor/manager. How did you handle it?

This question is often asked to see how you are able to manage conflict and work cohesively as part of a team. The interviewers are seeking examples of real-life scenarios that have occurred and how you have handled them. Your ability to demonstrate appropriate problem-solving skills in resolving conflicts, while dealing with different personalities, will give the employer confidence that this is something you will be able to effectively deal with in the future. Avoid saying that you have never had a conflict or using negative language to describe others in the situation. Your answer should not include relying on your manager to solve the problem – employers want to know that you are able to overcome small conflicts and move forward without interrupting the flow of the workplace.

Situation: "When I was working as an administrative assistant with an accounting firm, the firm was experiencing some staffing changes and I was asked to support one of the other managers that I had not previously worked with. My previous manager had been very diligent in providing me feedback on my work so I knew what was expected of me. The new manager provided less feedback, which I was finding challenging. This caused a few disagreements as a result of not understanding what the other person wanted."

Task: "I knew that I needed to clarify the manager's expectations of me and identify how I could support him better."

Action: “I suggested that we meet so that we could have more of a conversation about this. In the meeting, I acknowledged the disagreements and asked for specific feedback on what was and was not working. Being able to have an honest discussion regarding work styles and expectations led to a much better understanding on how we could work together more effectively. Listening and understanding each other’s point of view was helpful in coming up with a solution.”

Result: “After we had this conversation, we successfully worked together for several years. Since that experience, whenever I start a new job, I always take the opportunity at the beginning to discuss expectations.”

Question 7: Tell me about a time when you experienced an angry customer. How did you handle it?

Similar to the previous question, this is often asked to see how you are able to appropriately manage conflict and use sound judgment when faced with difficult situations. Again, the interviewers are seeking examples of real life scenarios to demonstrate how you were able to think on your feet, find a solution, and maintain your professionalism. Avoid saying that you have never had this happen, but rather, relate it to a situation in which you exercised conflict resolution. Show how you took the initiative to implement a solution without having to escalate it to your manager.

Example answer:

Situation: "When I was working as a sales associate at Walmart, a customer came in looking for a specific product that was currently on promotion. Due to the fact that it was a busy time of year, we did not have any of that product left in the store. The client appeared agitated and verbalized her frustrations towards me and several other employees."

Task: "I knew that I had to calm the customer down and find out what I could do to help."

Action: "I took the customer aside, listened to her concerns, validated her frustrations, and apologized for the inconvenience. Through our conversation, the customer disclosed that finding transportation was very challenging for her and she was upset because she knew she wouldn't be able to get to another store to purchase this product. I then presented a solution by calling other stores to locate the product and offered to have the product delivered straight to her house the following day."

Result: "As a result, the customer felt understood and made sure to tell me how much she

appreciated my efforts, despite her initial concerns. Later on that day, my manager pulled me aside to recognize my excellent interpersonal skills and my ability to handle a difficult situation with such professionalism."

Question 8: What is your target salary? What do you feel this position should pay?

In this question, the employer could be interested to see if you have a realistic expectation of
your salary based on your skills and experiences. They may also be evaluating whether or not your expectation fits within what the company can realistically offer you. Make sure to conduct your own research and show your flexibility by providing a salary range rather than a concrete number. You can research this information ahead of your interview using the following resources:

- glassdoor.com
- Payscale.com

Example Answer:

"In my research, I have seen salaries ranging from $42,000-$46,000 based on positions requiring my level of education and experience. However, I am flexible to discuss the salary and associated benefits packages that you had in mind for this position."

4.5 UNLAWFUL QUESTIONS

Lindsay Bortot and Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College

Employment law in the United States prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of: **race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age** (40 or older), **disability,** or **genetic information**. State employment law may broaden this list. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission protects job seekers against unlawful questions. For more information, check out: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Employers' questions must be related to the job for which you are applying. However, use your discretion when answering, as questions could be asked unintentionally. Here is how you might respond if asked an inappropriate question:

- Ask the interviewer to clarify the meaning of the question.
- Ask the interviewer in what circumstances the question apply to the job.
- Politely decline to answer.

4.6 INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Dawn Forrester and Eden Isenstein

As you develop your career identity and learn what it means to be a professional in a field or if you are looking for a new job or exploring a change of career, one of the best ways to learn about different fields and industries is to conduct informational interviews with people who have expertise in those fields. An informational interview is a conversation in which a person seeks insights on a career path, an industry, a company, and/or general career advice from someone with experience and knowledge in the areas of interest.

Informational interviews differ from job interviews because the conversation is not about hiring and not about a specific job. The knowledge seeker asks general questions about an industry, company, or career path, and the knowledge provider has an opportunity to learn about the knowledge seeker's character and qualifications outside of a formal job interview process.

Even though an informational interview is usually less formal than a job interview, it still requires preparation, and you will find that it calls upon many of the skills you are practicing in this business communication course: research, audience analysis, crafting your message, delivering your message succinctly and professionally, active listening, and soliciting feedback, among others. Although each information interview situation will be different, the following steps can help you get started.

Step 1: Research the Field

The more specific and focused you can be in each part of the interview process, the more you will get out of it. To move from the general to the specific, we need to start with some research. Use the internet to find local companies or organizations that are involved in the field of interest, and try to find out as much as you can about terminology, subfields, and job titles. Check national job listings for the job titles you have found (websites like indeed.com can help). What qualifications are they looking for?

Step 2: Identify People to Interview

There are two ways to go about selecting people to interview: using your social and professional network or reaching out to people outside of your network. If you can use your network, you are more likely to have a successful response, but you may be able to get closer to the career field you are looking for if you reach outside your network. Your school's alumni network can be an excellent resource.

When you find someone you might want to talk to, find out what you can about their professional presence on the internet. Do they have a LinkedIn profile? Is their resume posted somewhere? Is any of their work published or public in some way? The more you know about the person professionally, the more you can focus your questions to their specific situation. Note, however, that it is unwise (and unprofessional) to go digging into personal information about the person on the internet. It is not relevant to the situation, and there is a high risk of misidentification or misunderstanding.

It is best to compile a list of people you would like to speak with (and some notes to remind yourself how you found them and why you want to talk to them).

Step 3: Prepare Your Introductory Message

Throughout this course, we have been stressing the need to tailor your communication to your audience. This is very much the case for informational interview requests, especially if the person is outside of your immediate social network. Why are you contacting this person specifically? Do you have a shared connection somehow? Have you seen his or her work or something he or she worked on? Does his or her background or career path have similarities to yours?

In reaching out—usually via email, unless you have been invited to text or call—be clear and specific about what you are asking for.

- Mention how you got their name.
- Ask for a 20–30 minute appointment, at their convenience.
- Emphasize that you are looking for information, not a job.

Especially if you are cold-contacting someone (emailing someone without an introduction from a shared connection), you should not be surprised if your request is ignored completely. That is OK! Repeat Step 3 with the next name on your list. Use this opportunity to revise and refine your message.

Once someone agrees to meet with you, it is time to prepare for the interview.

Step 4: Conduct the Interview

Before the interview, you should prepare a list of questions you would like to ask, but also be ready to improvise. You should spend time in advance thinking about what you want to learn from this particular person. The more specific and informed your questions are, the more useful the answers will be.

Dress professionally for the interview (even virtual interviews) and make sure you arrive on time or early. Introduce yourself, thank them for coming, and remind them why you wanted to meet with them. Remind yourself and your interviewee that you are looking for information, not a job; this interview is about the interviewee and their experience, not about you and your qualifications. That said, do not expect the person you are meeting with to guide the conversation. You are responsible for asking the questions that will bring out the information you are looking for (Berkeley Career Center, n.d.).

Remember that this interview is a speaking situation, not just a friendly chat (though it will probably be friendly as well). Speak clearly and concisely, and try to use specific, concrete, and professional language.

Step 5: Follow Up and Reflect

It is important to write down a record of the meeting as soon as possible afterwards, while the details are fresh in your mind (LiveCareer, n.d.). Track not only what you learned and next steps, but also reflect on the interview itself. What went well? Did anything happen that you were not expecting? What can you do more effectively next time?

Be sure to send a thank-you note within one or two days of the interview. Whether you write the note by hand or send an email will depend largely on how you reached the person, whether you have a physical address to send it to, and your personal preferences. Either way, you should try to be as specific as possible, and mention something about the interview that you remember (Kalish, n.d.).

DESIGNING YOUR CAREER: THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

The video below will give you even more information about the importance of informational interviews. You will be reminded that an informational interview is not a job interview, you will learn the key to successful informational interviews, and finally, you learn 5 important tips to make this a great experience.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

https://fhsu.pressbooks.pub/profdev/?p=159#oembed-1

More Resources for Informational Interviewing

Informational Interviewing Tutorial: A Key Networking Tool

Identifying People to Interview

Questions to Ask at the Informational Interview

Informational Interviewing is an article from UC Berkeley's Career Center webpage

And, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Informational Interviewing will give you even more information.

Aim for your Informational Interview to last about 30 minutes or so.

4.7 DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

Rose Helens-Hart and Rachel Dolechek

4.7.1. STAR Interview Practice

Utilize the STAR Interviewing method to answer the behavioral questions below. Questions are organized by the skill they are assessing. Once you have practiced a few, pair up with a classmate and ask each other questions for a quick mock interview.

ST—Situation & Task: Identify a specific situation you were in and your task. Give enough detail for the interviewer to understand what was asked of you.

A—Action: Describe the action you took and make sure to focus on YOU, even if you were accomplishing a task with a group or team.

R—Results: Finally tell the interviewer the result of your action. What was the outcome? What did you accomplish and what did you learn?

Communication

- Give me a specific example of a time when a co-worker criticized your work in front of others.
- How do you ensure that someone understands what you are saying?
- Tell me about a time when you had to present complex information.
- Tell me about a time you had to use your written communication skills to get across an important point.

Decision Making

- Give me an example of a time you had to make a difficult decision.
- Tell me about a problem you solved for your employer.
- Give me an example of when taking your time to make a decision was worth it in the end.

Initiative

- What did you do to prepare for this interview?
- Give me an example of a situation that could not have happened successfully without you being there.
- Tell me about what you do when you don't know how to do something and there is no one there to help you.

Planning and Organization

- Tell me about a time when you had many projects due at the same time.
- How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time?

Flexibility

- Describe a time when you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.
- Discuss when you put your needs aside to help a co-worker understand a task.

Leadership

- Tell me about a time when you influenced the

outcome of a project by taking a leadership role.
- Give me an example of when you involved others in making a decision.

Time Management

- Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a deadline.
- Tell me about a time when you were particularly effective in prioritizing tasks and completing a project on schedule.

Teamwork

- Tell me about a time when you worked in a team to achieve a goal.
- Tell me about a time when you worked in a team where someone wasn't contributing.

4.7.2. Generating Skill Stories

To answer interview questions in clear and concrete terms, you will need to identify when, where, and how you have developed your employability. On a separate sheet of paper, identify your skills and qualifications. Then, answer three questions related to these skills and qualifications:

- Where did you learn this skill/acquire this qualification?
- How have you practiced this skill/developed this qualification?
- What is a story that demonstrates your skill or qualification level?

4.7.3. FHSU Big Interview

FHSU provides its students with a service that allows them to practice interviewing online anytime, anywhere. “Big Interview is **an online system that combines training AND practice to help**

improve your interview technique and build your confidence. Big Interview offers a variety of tools including: Challenging, virtual mock interviews for all experience levels and hundreds of industries." (BigInterview, n.d.)

Get started with Big Interview here!

4.7.4. SWOT Interviewing

Strengths, weaknessesm opportunities, threats (SWOT) analyses can be used in a variety of contexts, including preparing for interviews. Create a SWOT chart for your next interviewing opportunity.

4.7.5. Informational Interview

Interview a professional and analyze their advice using content from this course and other credible sources.

Activity Objectives:

- Apply interviewing skills;
- Practice professional communication;
- Evaluate professional advice;
- Develop your professional network;
- Clarify your career identity.

Activity Steps

1. Select someone you can identify as being part of (or you want them to be a part of) your professional network or an actual or possible mentor who has been working in a field of interest to you for at least five (5) years. Family members and friends are okay to interview but you should be considering pursuing their fields or jobs. Send them a professional e-mail or give them a call to set

up a time to conduct an informational interview over the phone, video conferencing, or in-person. No email interviews–you must speak with the person in real-time. Be respectful of their time—don't expect people to drop everything to help you.

2. Start your interview with some questions that help you understand your interviewee's job or career, such as, "what it is like to work in your position?" or "what attracted you to this work?" Try to find out as much as you can about your interviewee before the interview. If your interviewee has a LinkedIn profile or staff biography, you can find out basic information such as employment title and career history. You should personalize questions to fit the person you are interviewing and ask follow-up questions. Here are some sample questions:

- How would you describe what it means to be a "professional" in your field?
- What does it mean to "behave in a professional manner" at your workplace?
- How important is professionalism at your

workplace?
- Do you belong to any professional organizations? If so, how have they influenced your professional development?
- What do you like most about your work? What is challenging?
- What advice do you have for someone looking to enter your line of work?

3. Once you have completed your interview, send your interviewee a thank you message to show you appreciated their time.

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CHAPTER 5: FOLLOWING UP ON JOB APPLICATIONS

Rachel Dolechek

The steps you take after the interview continue to make an impression on the employer. In this chapter, we will discuss the process of following up on job applications. Writing a thank you message to follow up on an interview is another chance to promote yourself to the employer. Yet, you may also find yourself in a position to write a letter of acceptance, a letter declining an offer, or perhaps an email to inquire about the hiring decision. This chapter will introduce each scenario and guide you through negotiating your job offer.

Learning Objectives

- Understand what is required after an

interview
- Recognize common job search messages and explain when to use each message
- Prepare for job offer negotiation by understanding perks and benefits

This chapter includes original content and content adapted from one open educational resource:

Adaptations included editing tone, images, removing content to align the chapter with BCOM210 course learning objectives, revising examples for an FHSU student population, and adding some original exercises to align with course objectives.

5.1 AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Lindsay Bortot and Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College

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You made it through the interview! But, before you end your day, follow these three valuable steps to leave a lasting impression.

- **Evaluate and reflect.**
  After the interview, it is a good idea to reflect on your performance and consider what questions you answered well and what questions could have used more information or preparation. A best practice is also to write down the questions that were asked so that you can prepare better for next time.
- **Ask for feedback.**
  If you were not the chosen candidate, that is OK. Look at your experience as a practice round, and take the opportunity to ask the employer for feedback on your interview. You may find that not all employers will provide you with this specific information or that the response you receive is vague. However, if you do receive

feedback, this information could be very valuable in increasing your chances of successfully passing your next interview. Rather than asking, "why didn't I get the job?", which could make an interviewer feel uncomfortable, instead ask, "do you have any feedback that could help me improve my candidacy if another position were to open?" Asking for feedback that focuses on getting information that will help you be a better candidate in your next interview will help you continue to have a positive relationship with the interviewer.

- **Send a thank you letter.**
  After your interview, differentiate yourself by showing your appreciation and reiterate to the employer your interest in the position by sending a thank you letter in an email format to those who took the time to interview you. Your thank you letter should be sent within a 24-48 hour period of when the interview was held. If you have agreed to provide additional information or samples of your work, be sure to do this as soon after the interview as possible. Remember to always proofread your email for spelling or grammatical errors.

Example generic thank-you letter

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name, (if multiple, list all the interviewers' names)

Thank you for meeting with me today to discuss the [**name of job and reference number**] position with your company. I really appreciate the time you took to get to know me and hear about my skills, experiences, and qualifications in [**area of expertise**].

After speaking with you (or the interview panel), I am confident that I would be an ideal candidate for this role, offering **[desired skills the employer is seeking]**, which are needed to succeed with your diverse clientele. In addition to my enthusiasm and strong work ethic, I would bring the technical and analytical skills necessary to complete **[specific tasks and duties of the position].**

I am very interested in working with your talented team and I look forward to hearing from you once the final decisions are made. Please feel free to contact me at any time. If you require any further information, I can be reached at (555) 555-4723.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

5.2 JOB OFFER INQUIRY AND RESPONSE

Rachel Dolechek

Job Offer Inquiry

After the interview, you were informed the employer would make a hiring decision within two weeks. Time has passed and you have yet to hear from the employer. A message of inquiry is an appropriate next step. This message can be sent via email or phone. Begin by providing the reader with information to recall the previous discussion and make your inquiry. End the message courteously while requesting action (Rentz & Lentz, 2021; Bovee & Thill, 2019).

Job offer inquiry example

Dear Ms. Mason,

When we visited on May 1 regarding the corporate communication specialist position, you indicated a hiring decision would be made by May 15. Could you please tell me the status of my application with you?

I am enthusiastic about the position and your organization. I would very much appreciate hearing from you by May 30.

Sincerely,

[Full Name]
[Contact Information]

Job Offer Acceptance Message

Congratulations! You were just offered a position at your dream job. A formal letter of acceptance is your next step. Take time to develop this message, but be prompt and send the message within five days. Keep the message brief and include the following elements (Hertzberg, 2022):

- A message of acceptance for the job offer
- A thank-you for the opportunity
- Your title
- A summary of employment details (e.g. salary, benefits, etc.)
- The expected start date

Letter of acceptance example

Dear Ms. Mason,

I am excited to accept the corporate communication specialist position. Thank you for the opportunity to work at ABC Company.

As we discussed, my starting salary will be $53,000 per year with two weeks of paid time off. Health and dental benefits will be available after sixty days of employment.

As requested, I will be at your Chicago headquarters on August 1 at 9:00 a.m. ready to work. I am eager to join your team.

Sincerely,

[Full Name]
[Contact Information]

Declining a Job Offer Message

You have several interviews throughout the job search process, which result in multiple job offers. This requires you to determine which opportunity is the right fit and which offers you must decline. In this scenario, writing a letter to decline a job offer is your next step. According to Taylor (2022), the best way to turn down a job offer is to first do so verbally by calling the hiring manager or recruiter, then put it in writing. Your written message should be timely and brief by including the following elements (Taylor, 2022):

- Be specific and definitive in declining the offer
- Thank the employer for the offer
- Provide a brief reason for the decline
- Offer to be considered for future opportunities

Declining a job offer example

Dear Ms. Mason,

Thank you for your hospitality during my interview last month. You and your team were immensely helpful in answering all of my questions and providing a tour of your offices.

I was fortunate to receive two job offers during my search. Due to some unforeseen family issues, I have chosen to accept a position closer to home. Thus, I am unable to accept the corporate communication specialist position at this time.

I do hope another opportunity will present itself to work for your company in the future. Thank you again for your consideration and kindness.

Sincerely,

[Full Name]
[Contact Information]

5.3 NEGOTIATING JOB OFFERS, PERKS AND BENEFITS

Rose Helens-Hart

When you receive a job offer, do not accept immediately. Rather, find out about the *total package.* Salary, vacation time, flexible working schedules, company cars, bonuses, moving expense, and start date are just some of the regularly negotiated aspects of an offer.

To negotiate well, you first have to understand an offer. One offer may have a lower salary than another, but much better benefits, making the offer higher in *total compensation.* Get to know your job offer by learning about its components with this guide: Understand All 25 Components of Your Job Offer Benefits.

For more resources on negotiations, salary, and living expenses, visit the FHSU Career Center's Salary/Benefits Information page and the full From Interview to Offer to Job guide from College Grad.

5.4 DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

Rachel Dolechek and Rose Helens-Hart

5.4.1. Hand-written thank you message

Imagine you have just completed a great interview. When might it be appropriate to send a hand-written thank you message? Draft a hand-written thank you message.

5.4.2. “Ghosting”: Inquiry to the employer

Being “ghosted” by a potential employer may seem unprofessional (Deichler, 2021) but it is not only happening, it is increasing. Using the job offer inquiry suggestions from this chapter, draft a message to the potential employer.

5.4.3. Creating a buffer

A buffer can be used when developing a written message to decline a job offer (Bovee & Thill, 2019). Imagine you are needing to decline a job offer. Develop three different buffers that could be used to start your message.

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PART III

PART 3: EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER 6: WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)

Successful business communication is often associated with writing and speaking well, being articulate or proficient with words. Business communication in written form requires skill and expertise. How you represent yourself with the written word counts. Writing in an online environment requires tact and skill, and an awareness that what you write may be there forever. From memos to letters to telephone conversations, your business communication represents you and your company. This chapter discusses workplace communication and the importance of delivering your message.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the role of text messaging, memos, and letters in business communication.
2. Demonstrate the appropriate use of netiquette.
3. Demonstrate the five stages in a telephone conversation.
4. Discuss meetings and their role in business communication.
5. Describe the main parts of an agenda.

In addition to originally authored content, this chapter was adapted from the following Open Education Resources:

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Adaptations included editing tone, images, removing content to align the chapter with BCOM210 course learning objectives, revising examples for an FHSU student population, and adding some original exercises to align with course objectives.

6.1 TEXT, E-MAIL, AND NETIQUETTE

Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)

Text messages and e-mails are part of our communication landscape, and skilled business communicators consider them a valuable tool to connect. Netiquette refers to etiquette, or protocols and norms for communication, on the Internet.

TEXTING

Whatever digital device you use, written communication in the form of brief messages, or texting, has become a common way to connect. It is useful for short exchanges, and is a convenient way to stay connected with others when talking on the phone would be cumbersome. Texting is not useful for long or complicated messages, and careful consideration should be given to the audience.

It is often said that you can tell how old someone is by how he or she inputs a phone number on a cell phone. If the person uses his or her thumb while holding the digital device, that person may have been raised on video games and be adept at one-handed interfaces. If he holds the digital device with one hand and inputs the number with the other, he may be over thirty, or may be less comfortable with some technological devices. Of course, there is no actual correlation between input and age, but it is a useful example to use when considering who your audience is when writing a text message. If the person is a one-hander, and knows all the abbreviations common to texting, you may be able to use similar codes to communicate effectively. If the person is a two-hander, you are better off using fewer words and spelling them out. Texting can be a great tool for connecting while on the go, but consider your audience and your company, and choose words, terms, or abbreviations that will deliver your message.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE BUSINESS TEXTING

- Know your recipient; “? % dsct” may be an understandable way to ask a close associate what the proper discount is to offer a certain customer, but if you are writing a text to your boss, it might be wiser to write, "what % discount does Murray get on $1K order?"

- Anticipate unintentional misinterpretation. Texting often uses symbols and codes to represent thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Given the complexity of communication, and the useful but limited tool of texting, be aware of its limitation and prevent misinterpretation with brief messages.
- Contacting someone too frequently can border on harassment. Texting is a tool. Use it when appropriate but do not abuse it.
- Unplug yourself once in awhile. Do you feel constantly connected? Do you feel lost or "out of it" if you do not have your cell phone and cannot connect to people, even for fifteen minutes? Sometimes being unavailable for a time can be healthy—everything in moderation, including texting.
- Do not text and drive. Research shows that the likelihood of an accident increases dramatically if the driver is texting behind the wheel (Houston Chronicle, 2009). Being in an accident while conducting company business would reflect poorly on your judgment as well as on your employer.

E-MAIL

Electronic mail, usually called e-mail, is quite familiar to most students and workers. It may be used like text, or synchronous chat, and it can be delivered to a cell phone. In business, it has largely replaced print hard copy letters for external (outside the company) correspondence, as well as taking the place of memos for internal (within the company) communication (Guffey, 2008). E-mail can be very useful for messages that have slightly more content than a text message. It is best used for fairly brief messages.

Many businesses use automated e-mails to acknowledge communications from the public, or to remind associates that periodic reports or payments are due. You may also be assigned to “populate” a form e-mail in which standard paragraphs are used but you choose from a menu of sentences to make the wording suitable for a particular transaction.

E-mails may be informal in personal contexts, but business communication requires attention to detail, awareness that your e-mail reflects you and your company, and a professional tone so that it may be forwarded to any third party if needed. E-mail often serves to exchange information within organizations. Although e-mail may have an informal feel, remember that when used for business, it needs to convey professionalism and respect. Never write or send anything that you would not want read in public or in front of your company president.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE BUSINESS E-MAILS

- Proper salutations should demonstrate respect and avoid mix-ups in case a message is accidentally sent to the wrong recipient or it gets forwarded. For example, use a salutation like "Dear Ms. X" (external) or "Hi Barry" (internal).
- Subject lines should be clear, brief, and specific. This helps the recipient understand the essence of the message. For example, "Proposal attached" or "Your question about discount codes."
- Close with a signature. Identify yourself by creating a signature block that automatically contains your name and business contact information.
- Avoid abbreviations. An e-mail is not a text message, and the audience may not find your wit cause to ROTFLOL (roll on the floor laughing out loud).
- Be brief. Omit unnecessary words.

- Use a good format. Include line breaks between sentences or divide your message into brief paragraphs for ease of reading. A good e-mail should get to the point and conclude in three small paragraphs or less.
- Reread, revise, and review. Catch and correct spelling and grammar mistakes before you press "send." It will take more time and effort to undo the problems caused by a hasty, poorly written e-mail than to get it right the first time.
- Reply promptly. Watch out for an emotional response—never reply in anger—but make a habit of replying to all e-mails within twenty-four hours, even if only to say that you will provide the requested information in forty-eight or seventy-two hours.
- Use "Reply All" sparingly. Do not send your reply to everyone who received the initial e-mail unless your message absolutely needs to be read by the entire group.
- Avoid using all caps. Capital letters are used on the Internet to communicate emphatic emotion or yelling and are considered rude.
- Test links. If you include a link, test it to make sure it is complete.
- E-mail ahead of time if you are going to attach large files (audio and visual files are often quite large) to prevent exceeding the recipient's mailbox limit or triggering the spam filter.
- Give feedback or follow up. If you do not get a response

in twenty-four hours, e-mail or call. Spam filters may have intercepted your message, so your recipient may never have received it.

Let us look at two examples of business e-mail. In Figure 6.1 we have an e-mail form. In Figure 6.2, we have a letter written specifically for the situation and audience.

FIGURE 6.1

Welcome to The [our name] Store

Dear [customer's name]

Thank you for registering with The [our name] Store.

You can manage your personal information from the "My Account" section of the site when you sign in to The [our name] Store.

You can change your contact details and password, track recent orders, add alternate shipping addresses, and manage your preferences and customer profile all in this one convenient location.

Thank you for your interest in The [our name] Store.

We look forward to your next visit.

FIGURE 6.2

To: Harriet Adamo, Physical Plant Manager, XYZ Corporation
From: Mel Vargas, Construction Site Manager, Maxim Construction Co.
Sent: Mon 10/25/09 8:14 AM
Subject: construction interruptions

Harriet,

I know employees of XYZ Corp. are looking forward to moving into the new ABC Street building in January, but recently groups of employees who do not have business here have been walking through the building. These visits create a safety hazard, interrupt the construction workers, and could put your occupancy date in jeopardy.

Would you please instruct your staff members who haven't already been moved to ABC Street to stay out of the building? If they need to meet here with someone who has already moved, they should conduct their business and leave promptly via the nearest staircase.

We need to avoid further interruptions so our construction workers can get the building ready for occupancy on schedule. If you have any questions, please call me.

Thanks,
Mel

Melvin R. Vargas
Construction Site Manager, Maxim Construction Co.
1234 Main Street, Big City, USA 98765-1111
(111) 123-4567, ext. 98

NETIQUETTE

We create personal pages, post messages, and interact via mediated technologies as a normal part of our careers, but how we conduct ourselves can leave a lasting image, literally. The photograph you posted on your Instagram page may have been seen by your potential employer, or that angry remark in a post may come back to haunt you later. Some fifteen years ago, when the Internet was a new phenomenon, Virginia Shea laid out a series of ground rules for communication online that continue to serve us today.

VIRGINIA SHEA'S RULES OF NETIQUETTE

- Remember the human on the other side of the electronic communication.
- Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life.
- Know where you are in cyberspace.
- Respect other people's time and bandwidth.

- Make yourself look good online.
- Share expert knowledge.
- Keep flame wars under control.
- Respect other people's privacy.
- Do not abuse your power.
- Be forgiving of other people's mistakes (Shea, 1994).

Her rules speak for themselves and remind us that the platinum rule (treat others as they would like to be treated) is relevant wherever there is human interaction.

6.2 MEMORANDUMS AND LETTERS

Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)

MEMOS

A memo (or memorandum, meaning "reminder") is normally used for communicating policies, procedures, or related official business within an organization. It is often written from a one-to-all perspective (like mass communication), broadcasting a message to an audience, rather than a one-on-one, interpersonal communication. It may also be used to update a team on activities for a given project, or to inform a specific group within a company of an event, action, or observance.

MEMO PURPOSE

A memo's purpose is often to inform, but it occasionally includes an element of persuasion or a call to action. All organizations have informal and formal communication networks. The unofficial, informal communication network within an organization is often called the grapevine, and it is often characterized by rumor, gossip, and innuendo. On the grapevine, one person may hear that someone else is going to be laid off and start passing the news around. Rumors change and transform as they are passed from person to person, and before you know it, the word is that they are shutting down your entire department.

One effective way to address informal, unofficial speculation is to spell out clearly for all employees what is going on with a particular issue. If budget cuts are a concern, then it may be wise to send a memo explaining the changes that are imminent. If a company wants employees to take action, they may also issue a memorandum. For example, on February 13, 2009, upper management at the Panasonic Corporation issued a declaration that all employees should buy at least $1,600 worth of Panasonic products. The company president noted that if everyone supported the company with purchases, it would benefit all (Lewis, 2009).

While memos do not normally include a call to action that requires personal spending, they often represent the business or organization's interests. They may also include statements that align business and employee interest, and underscore common ground and benefit.

MEMO FORMAT

A memo has a header that clearly indicates who sent it and who the intended recipients are. Pay particular attention to the title of the individual(s) in this section. Date and subject lines are also present, followed by a message that contains a declaration, a discussion, and a summary.

In a standard writing format, we might expect to see an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. All these are present in a memo, and each part has a clear purpose. The declaration in the opening uses a declarative sentence to announce the main topic. The discussion elaborates or lists major points associated with the topic, and the conclusion serves as a summary.

Let us examine a sample memo.

FIGURE 6.3

To: All Employees
From: Larry Ogawa, President, University of State
Date: February 14, 2009
Subject: Future Expenditure Guidelines

After careful deliberation, I have determined it is necessary to begin the initial steps of a financial stewardship program that carries UState through what appears to be a two-year cycle of a severe state shortfall in revenue and subsequent necessary legislative budget reductions.

Beginning February 9, 2009, the following actions are being implemented for the General Fund, Auxiliary Fund, and Capital Fund in order to address the projected reductions in our state aid for the remainder of this year 2008–09 and for next year 2009–10.

1. Only purchases needed to operate the university should be made so that we can begin saving to reduce the impact of 2009–10 budget reductions.
2. Requests for out-of-state travel will require approval from the Executive Committee to ensure that only necessary institutional travel occurs.
3. Purchases, including in-state travel and budget transfers, will require the appropriate vice president's approval.

Please understand that we are taking these prudent steps to create savings that will allow UState to reduce the impact of projected cuts in expected 2009–10 legislative reductions. Thank you for your cooperation, and please direct any questions to my office.

FIVE TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE BUSINESS

MEMOS

AUDIENCE ORIENTATION

Always consider the audience and their needs when preparing a memo. An acronym or abbreviation that is known to management may not be known by all the employees of the organization, and if the memo is to be posted and distributed within the organization, the goal is clear and concise communication at all levels with no ambiguity.

PROFESSIONAL, FORMAL TONE

Memos are often announcements, and the person sending the memo speaks for a part or all of the organization. While it may contain a request for feedback, the announcement itself is linear, from the organization to the employees. The memo may have legal standing as it often reflects policies or procedures, and may reference an existing or new policy in the employee manual, for example.

SUBJECT EMPHASIS

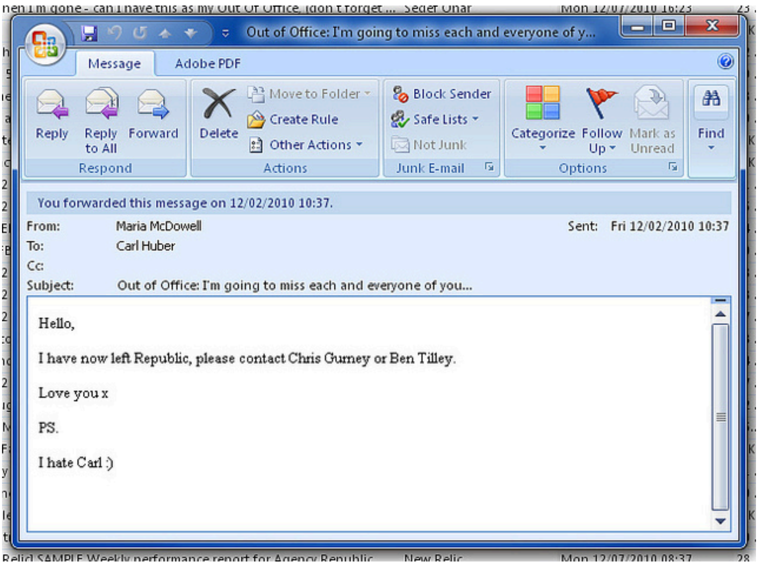
The subject is normally declared in the subject line and should be clear and concise. If the memo is announcing the observance of a holiday, for example, the specific holiday should be named in the subject line—for example, use "Thanksgiving weekend schedule" rather than "holiday observance."

DIRECT FORMAT

Some written business communication allows for a choice between direct and indirect formats, but memorandums are always direct. The purpose is clearly announced.

OBJECTIVITY

FIGURE 6.4



Memos are a place for just the facts, and should have an objective tone without personal bias, preference, or interest on display. Avoid subjectivity.

LETTERS

Letters are brief messages sent to recipients that are often outside the organization (Bovee, C., & Thill, J., 2010). They are often printed on letterhead paper, and represent the business or organization in one or two pages. Shorter messages may include e-mails or memos, either hard copy or electronic, while reports tend to be three or more pages in length.

While e-mail and text messages may be used more frequently today, the effective business letter remains a common form of written communication. It can serve to introduce you to a potential employer, announce a product or service, or even serve to communicate feelings and emotions. We will examine the basic outline of a letter and then focus on specific products or writing assignments.

All writing assignments have expectations in terms of language and format. The audience or reader may have their own idea of what constitutes a specific type of letter, and your organization may have its own format and requirements. This chapter outlines common elements across letters, and attention should be directed to the expectations associated with your particular writing assignment. There are many types of letters, and many adaptations in terms of form and content, but in this chapter, we discuss the fifteen elements of a traditional block-style letter.

Letters may serve to introduce your skills and qualifications to prospective employers, deliver important or specific information, or serve as documentation of an event or decision. Regardless of the type of letter you need to write, it can contain up to fifteen elements in five areas. While you may not use all the elements in every case or context, they are listed in Table 6.1

TABLE 6.1 ELEMENTS OF A BUSINESS LETTER

Content	Guidelines
1. Return Address	This is your address where someone could send a reply. If your letter includes a letterhead with this information, either in the header (across the top of the page) or the footer (along the bottom of the page), you do not need to include it before the date.
2. Date	The date should be placed at the top, right or left justified, five lines from the top of the page or letterhead logo.
3. Reference (Re:)	Like a subject line in an e-mail, this is where you indicate what the letter is in reference to, the subject or purpose of the document.
4. Delivery (Optional)	Sometimes you want to indicate on the letter itself how it was delivered. This can make it clear to a third party that the letter was delivered via a specific method, such as certified mail (a legal requirement for some types of documents).
5. Recipient Note (Optional)	This is where you can indicate if the letter is personal or confidential.

Content	Guidelines
6. Salutation	A common salutation may be "Dear Mr. (full name)." But if you are unsure about titles and gender (i.e., Mrs., Ms., Dr.), you may simply write the recipient's name (e.g., "Dear Cameron Rai") followed by a colon. A comma after the salutation is correct for personal letters, but a colon should be used in business. The salutation "To whom it may concern" is appropriate for letters of recommendation or other letters that are intended to be read by any and all individuals. If this is not the case with your letter, but you are unsure of how to address your recipient, make every effort to find out to whom the letter should be specifically addressed. For many, there is no sweeter sound than that of their name, and to spell it incorrectly runs the risk of alienating the reader before your letter has even been read. Avoid the use of impersonal salutations like "Dear Prospective Customer," as the lack of personalization can alienate a future client.
7. Introduction	This is your opening paragraph, and may include an attention statement, a reference to the purpose of the document, or an introduction of the person or topic depending on the type of letter. An emphatic opening involves using the most significant or important element of the letter in the introduction. Readers tend to pay attention to openings, and it makes sense to outline the expectations for the reader up front. Just as you would preview your topic in a speech, the clear opening in your introductions establishes context and facilitates comprehension.

Content	Guidelines
8. Body	If you have a list of points, a series of facts, or a number of questions, they belong in the body of your letter. You may choose organizational devices to draw attention, such as a bullet list, or simply number them. Readers may skip over information in the body of your letter, so make sure you emphasize the key points clearly. This is your core content, where you can outline and support several key points. Brevity is important, but so is clear support for main point(s). Specific, meaningful information needs to be clear, concise, and accurate.
9. Conclusion	An emphatic closing mirrors your introduction with the added element of tying the main points together, clearly demonstrating their relationship. The conclusion can serve to remind the reader, but should not introduce new information. A clear summary sentence will strengthen your writing and enhance your effectiveness. If your letter requests or implies action, the conclusion needs to make clear what you expect to happen. It is usually courteous to conclude by thanking the recipient for his or her attention, and to invite them to contact you if you can be of help or if they have questions. This paragraph reiterates the main points and their relationship to each other, reinforcing the main point or purpose.
10. Close	“Sincerely” or “Cordially” are standard business closing statements. (“Love,” “Yours Truly,” and “BFF” are closing statements suitable for personal correspondence, but not for business.) Closing statements are normally placed one or two lines under the conclusion and include a hanging comma, as in Sincerely,

Content	Guidelines
11. Signature	Five lines after the close, you should type your name (required) and, on the line below it, your title (optional).
12. Preparation Line	If the letter was prepared, or word-processed, by someone other than the signatory (you), then inclusion of initials is common, as in MJD or abc.
13. Enclosures/ Attachments	Just like an e-mail with an attachment, the letter sometimes has additional documents that are delivered with it. This line indicates what the reader can look for in terms of documents included with the letter, such as brochures, reports, or related business documents.
14. Courtesy Copies or "CC"	The abbreviation "CC" once stood for carbon copies but now refers to courtesy copies. Just like a "CC" option in an e-mail, it indicates the relevant parties that will also receive a copy of the document.
15. Logo/ Contact Information	A formal business letter normally includes a logo or contact information for the organization in the header (top of page) or footer (bottom of page).

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE LETTERS

Remember that a letter has five main areas:

1. The heading, which establishes the sender, often including address and date
2. The introduction, which establishes the purpose
3. The body, which articulates the message
4. The conclusion, which restates the main point and may include a call to action
5. The signature line, which sometimes includes the contact information

FIGURE 6.5 SAMPLE BUSINESS LETTER

(1 inch margins on all sides of the letter)

1. **Return Address**: (if not in letterhead logo)
2. **Date**: 01/01/201X

3. **Reference—Re**: How to write a letter

4. **Delivery** (optional): USPS Certified Mail #123456789

5. **Recipient Note** (optional): Confidential

6. **Salutation**: Dear Student X:

7. **Introduction**: This letter is to inform you that the myth of a paperless office, where you will not be required to produce hard copy letters on letterhead, is a myth.

8. **Body**: While e-mail has largely replaced letter writing for many applications, there remain several reasons for producing a hard copy letter. The first reason is that you are required to write it for this class, as many employers still produce letters as a normal part of business communication, including documentation. Next, we must consider that paper sales in business have increased across the last decade, showing no signs of the decrease we would associate with the transition to the paperless office. Finally, business letters serve many functions, and your proficiency in their efficient and effective production will contribute to your personal and professional success.

9. **Conclusion**: Letter writing is a skill that will continue to be required in the business environment of today and tomorrow.

10. **Close**: Sincerely,

11. **Signature Line**: Scott McLean

12. **Preparation Line**: GSM/ep

13. **Enclosures**: (optional, if needed)

14. **Courtesy Copies**: cc: Jenn Yee

15. **Logo/Contact Information**: flatworld 13 N. Mill Street
Nyack, NY 10960

Always remember that letters represent you and your company in your absence. In order to communicate effectively and project a positive image,

- be clear, concise, specific, and respectful;
- each word should contribute to your purpose;
- each paragraph should focus on one idea;
- the parts of the letter should form a complete message;
- the letter should be free of errors.

6.3 TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION

Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)

Talking on the phone or producing an audio recording lacks an interpersonal context with the accompanying nonverbal messages. Unless you use vivid language, crisp, and clear descriptions, your audience will be left to sort it out for themselves. They may create mental images that do not reflect your intention that lead to miscommunication. Conversations follow predictable patterns and have main parts or stages we can clearly identify. While not every conversation is the same, many will follow a variation of a standard pattern composed by David Taylor and Alyse Terhune (2000):

1. Opening
2. Feedforward
3. Business
4. Feedback
5. Closing

Table 6.2 provides an example of how a conversation might go according to these five stages.

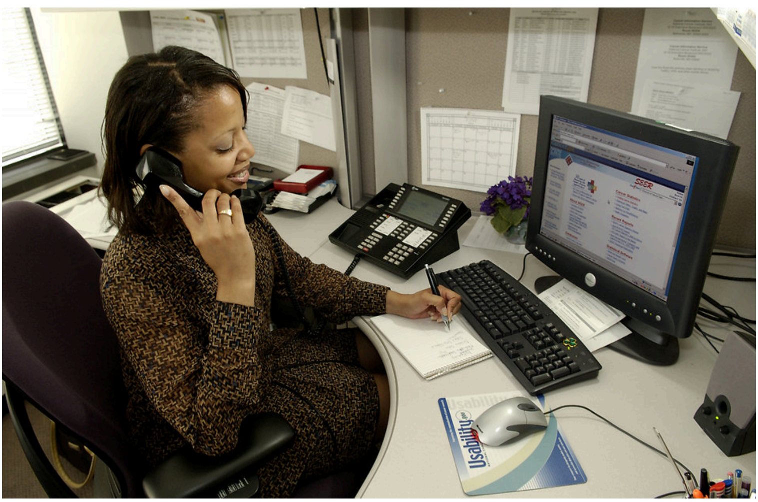
TABLE 6.2 A FIVE-STAGE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION (Taylor & Turhune, 2000)

Stage	Subevents	Example
Opening	• Both parties identify themselves • Greetings are reciprocated	• [phone rings] • Lee: Hello, Lee Ho. • Val: Hi, Lee. This is Val Martin from [company or department]. How are you? • Lee: Fine, and you? • Val: Fine, I'm doing great.
Feedforward	• Purpose and tone of conversation are established • Permission is given to continue (or not)	• Val: I hate to bother you, but I wonder if you have five minutes to give me some advice. • Lee: Sure, Val. What's happening? • [or: I'm tied up right now. Can I call you back in an hour?]

Stage	Subevents	Example
Business	• Substance of conversation • Parties exchange roles	• Val: Here's the situation. [explains] I know you are good at resolving these kinds of issues, so I was wondering what you think I should do. • Lee: Wow, I can understand how this has you concerned. Considering what you've told me, here's what I think I would do. [explains]
Feedback	• Signal that business is concluded	• Val: Hmm, that makes sense. I'll certainly keep your ideas in mind. Thank you so much, Lee! • Lee: Hey, you're welcome. Let me know how it turns out.
Closing	• Both parties say goodbye	• Val: Yes, I will. Have a good weekend, Lee. • Lee: You too, Val. Bye. • Val: Bye. • [they hang up]

Cell phones are a part of many, if not most, people's lives in the industrialized world and, increasingly, in developing nations as well. Computer users can also utilize voice interaction and exchange through voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) programs like Skype. With the availability of VoIP, both audio and visual images are available to the conversation participants. But in our discussion, we'll focus primarily on voice exchanges.

FIGURE 6.6



Telephone conversations in business require skill and preparation.

Bill Branson – Business Woman – public domain.

Since you lack the nonverbal context, you need to make sure that your voice accurately communicates your message. Your choice of words and how you say them, including spacing or pausing, pace, rhythm, articulation, and pronunciation are relevant factors in effective delivery. Here are five main points to consider:

1. Speak slowly and articulate your words clearly.
2. Use vivid terms to create interest and communicate descriptions.
3. Be specific.
4. Show consideration for others by keeping your phone conversations private.
5. Silence cell phones and other devices when you are in a meeting or sharing a meal with colleagues.

You do not have to slow down your normal pattern of speech by a large degree, but each word needs time and space to be understood or the listener may hear words that run together, losing meaning and creating opportunities for misunderstanding. Do not assume that they will catch your specific information the first time and repeat any as necessary, such as an address or a phone number.

Feedback, the response from the receiver to the sender, is also an essential element of phone conversations. Taking turns in the conversation can sometimes be awkward, especially if there is an echo or background noise on the line. With time and practice, each "speaker's own natural, comfortable, expressive repertoire will surface" (Mayer, 1980).

6.4 IMPROVING VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)

By defining the terms we use and choosing precise words, we will maximize our audience's understanding of our message. In addition, it is important to consider the audience, control your tone, check for understanding, and focus on results. Recognizing the power of verbal communication is the first step to understanding its role and impact on the communication process.

DEFINE YOUR TERMS

Even when you are careful to craft your message clearly and concisely, not everyone will understand every word you say or write. As an effective business communicator, you know it is your responsibility to give your audience every advantage in understanding your meaning. Yet your presentation would fall flat if you tried to define each and every term—you would end up sounding like a dictionary.

The solution is to be aware of any words you are using that may be unfamiliar to your audience. When you identify an unfamiliar word, your first decision is whether to use it or to substitute a more common, easily understood word. If you choose to use the unfamiliar word, then you need to decide how to convey its meaning to those in your audience who are not familiar with it. You may do this in a variety of ways. The most obvious, of course, is to state the meaning directly or to rephrase the term in different words. But you may also convey the meaning in the process of making and supporting your points. Another way is to give examples to illustrate each concept, or use parallels from everyday life.

Overall, keep your audience in mind and imagine yourself in their place. This will help you to adjust your writing level and style to their needs, maximizing the likelihood that your message will be understood.

CHOOSE PRECISE WORDS

To increase understanding, choose precise words that paint as vivid and accurate a mental picture as possible for your audience. If you use language that is vague or abstract, your meaning may be lost or misinterpreted. Your message will also be less dynamic and interesting than it could be.

Table 6.3 lists some examples of phrases that are imprecise and precise. Which one evokes a more dynamic image in your imagination?

TABLE 6.3 PRECISELY WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

The famous writer William Safire died in 2009; he was over seventy.	The former Nixon speech writer, language authority, and *New York Times* columnist William Safire died of pancreatic cancer in 2009; he was seventy-nine.
Clumber spaniels are large dogs.	The Clumber Spaniel Club of America describes the breed as a "long, low, substantial dog," standing 17 to 20 inches high and weighing 55 to 80 pounds.
It is important to eat a healthy diet during pregnancy.	Eating a diet rich in whole grains, fruits and vegetables, lean meats, low-fat dairy products can improve your health during pregnancy and boost your chances of having a healthy baby.
We are making good progress on the project.	In the two weeks since inception, our four-member team has achieved three of the six objectives we identified for project completion; we are on track to complete the project in another three to four weeks.
For the same amount spent, we expected more value added.	We have examined several proposals in the $10,000 range, and they all offer more features than what we see in the $12,500 system ABC Corp. is offering.
Officers were called to the scene.	Responding to a 911 call, State Police Officers Arellano and Chavez sped to the intersection of County Route 53 and State Highway 21.
The victim went down the street.	The victim ran screaming to the home of a neighbor, Mary Lee of 31 Orchard Street.

Several different colors are available.	The silk jacquard fabric is available in ivory, moss, cinnamon, and topaz color.
This smartphone has more applications than customers can imagine.	At last count, the BlackBerry Tempest has more than 500 applications, many costing 99 cents or less; users can get real-time sports scores, upload videos to TwitVid, browse commuter train schedules, edit e-mails before forwarding, and find recipes—but so far, it does not do the cooking for you.
A woman was heckled when she spoke at a health care event.	On August 25, 2009, Rep. Frank Pallone (Democrat of New Jersey's 6th congressional district) hosted a "town hall" meeting on health care reform where many audience members heckled and booed a woman in a wheelchair as she spoke about the need for affordable health insurance and her fears that she might lose her home.

CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

In addition to precise words and clear definitions, contextual clues are important to guide your audience as they read. If you are speaking to a general audience and choose to use a word in professional jargon that may be understood by many—but not all—of the people in your audience, follow it by a common reference that clearly relates its essential meaning. With this positive strategy you will be able to forge relationships with audience members from diverse backgrounds. Internal summaries tell us what we have heard and forecast what is to come. It is not just the words, but also how people hear them that counts.

If you say the magic words "in conclusion," you set in motion a set of expectations that you are about to wrap it up. If, however, you introduce a new point and continue to speak, the audience will perceive an expectancy violation and hold you accountable. You said the magic words but did not honor them. One of the best ways to display respect for your audience is to not exceed the expected time in a presentation or length in a document. Your careful attention to contextual clues will demonstrate that you are clearly considering your audience.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR TONE

Does your writing or speech sound pleasant and agreeable? Simple or sophisticated? Or does it come across as stuffy, formal, bloated, ironic, sarcastic, flowery, rude, or inconsiderate? Recognizing our own tone is not always easy, as we tend to read or listen from our own viewpoint and make allowances accordingly.

Once we have characterized our tone, we need to decide whether and how it can be improved. Getting a handle on how to influence tone and to make your voice match your intentions takes time and skill.

One useful tip is to read your document out loud before you deliver it, just as you would practice a speech before you present it to an audience. Sometimes hearing your own words can reveal their tone, helping you decide whether it is correct or appropriate for the situation.

Another way is to listen or watch others' presentations that have been described with terms associated with tone. Martin Luther King Jr. had one style while President Barack Obama has another. The writing in *The Atlantic* is far more sophisticated than the simpler writing in *USA Today*, yet both are very successful with their respective audiences. What kind of tone is best for your intended audience?

Finally, seek out and be receptive to feedback from teachers, classmates, and coworkers. Do not just take the word of one critic, but if several critics point to a speech as an example of pompous eloquence, and you do not want to come across in your presentation as pompous, you may learn from that example speech what to avoid.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

When we talk to each other face-to-face, seeing if someone understood you is not all that difficult. Even if they really did not get it, you can see, ask questions, and clarify right away. That gives oral communication, particularly live interaction, a distinct advantage. Use this immediacy for feedback to your advantage. Make time for feedback and plan for it. Ask clarifying questions. Share your presentation with more than one person, and choose people that have similar characteristics to your anticipated audience.

If you were going to present to a group that you knew in advance was of a certain age, sex, or professional background, it would only make sense to connect with someone from that group prior to your actual performance to check and see if what you have created and what they expect are similar. In oral communication, feedback is core component of the communication model and we can often see it, hear it, and it takes less effort to assess it.

BE RESULTS ORIENTED

At the end of the day, the assignment has to be complete. It can be a challenge to balance the need for attention to detail with the need to arrive at the end product—and its due date. Stephen Covey, the author of the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (2004), suggests beginning with the end in mind as one strategy for success. If you have done your preparation, know your assignment goals, desired results, have learned about your audience and tailored the message to their expectations, then you are well on your way to completing the task. No document or presentation is perfect, but the goal itself is worthy of your continued effort for improvement.

Here the key is to know when further revision will not benefit the presentation and to shift the focus to test marketing, asking for feedback, or simply sharing it with a mentor or coworker for a quick review. Finding balance while engaging in an activity that requires a high level of attention to detail can be a challenge for any business communicator, but it is helpful to keep the end in mind.

6.5 BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

[Author removed at request of original publisher]

Business and professional meetings are a part of the communication climate of any business. Some view meetings as boring, pointless, and futile exercises, while others see them as opportunities to exchange information and produce results. A combination of preparation and execution makes all the difference. Remember, too, that meetings do not have to take place in a physical space where the participants meet face-to-face. Instead, a number of technological tools make it possible to hold virtual meetings in which the participants are half a world away from one another. Virtual meetings are formally arranged gatherings where participants, located in distinct geographic locations, come together via the Internet.

FIGURE 6.7

Meetings are group communications in action around a defined agenda, at a set time, for an established duration.

A meeting is group communication in action around a defined agenda, at a set time, for an established duration. Meetings can be effective, ineffective, or a complete waste of time. If time is money and effectiveness and efficiency are your goals, then if you arrange a meeting, lead a meeting, or participate in one, you want it to be worth your time (Mosvick, 1996).

Regardless how you come together (face-to-face, virtually) as a team, group, or committee, you will need to define your purpose in advance with an agenda (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). The main parts of an agenda for a standard meeting are listed in Table 6.4.

TABLE 6.4 MEETING AGENDA ELEMENTS

Term	**Definition**
Title Header	Title, time, date, location, phone number, e-mail contact, and any other information necessary to get all participants together.
Participants	Expected participants
Subject Line	Purpose statement
Call to Order	Who will call the meeting to order?
Introductions	If everyone is new, this is optional. If even one person is new, everyone should briefly introduce themselves with their name and respective roles.
Roll Call	This may quietly take place while introductions are made.
Reading of the minutes	Notes from the last meeting are read (if applicable) with an opportunity to correct. These are often sent out before the meeting so participants have the opportunity to review them and note any needed corrections.

Term	**Definition**
Old Business	List any unresolved issues from last time or issues that were "tabled," or left until this meeting.
New Business	This is a list of items for discussion and action.
Reports	This is optional and applies if there are subcommittees or groups working on specific, individual action items that require reports to the group or committee.
Good of the Order	This is the time for people to offer any news that relates to the topic of the meeting that was otherwise not shared or discussed.
Adjournment	Note time, date, place meeting adjourned and indicate when the next meeting is scheduled.

PREPARATION

A meeting, like a problem-solving group, needs a clear purpose statement. The specific goal for the specific meeting will clearly relate to the overall goal of the group or committee. Determining your purpose is central to an effective meeting and getting together just to get together is called a party, not a meeting. Do not schedule a meeting just because you met at the same time last month or because it is a standing committee.

Members will resent the intrusion into their schedules and quickly perceive the lack of purpose.

Similarly, if the need for a meeting arises, do not rush into it without planning. A poorly planned meeting announced at the last minute is sure to be less than effective. People may be unable to change their schedules, may fail to attend, or may impede the progress and discussion of the group because of their absence. Those who attend may feel hindered because they needed more time to prepare and present comprehensive results to the group or committee.

If a meeting is necessary, and a clear purpose can be articulated, then you will need to decide how and where to meet. Distance is no longer an obstacle to participation, as we will see later in this section when we explore some of the technologies for virtual meetings. However, there are many advantages to meeting in person. People communicate not just with words but also with their body language—facial expressions, hand gestures, head nodding or head shaking, and posture. These subtleties of communication can be key to determining how group members really feel about an issue or question. Meeting synchronously can be important, too, as all group members have the benefit of receiving new information at the same time. For purposes of our present discussion, we will focus on meetings taking place synchronously and face-to-face.

If you have a purpose statement for the meeting, then it also follows that you should be able to create an agenda, or a list of topics to be discussed. You may need to solicit information from members to formulate an agenda, and this premeeting contact can serve to encourage active participation. The agenda will have a time, date, place, and method of interaction noted, as well as a list of participants. It will also have a statement of purpose, a list of points to be considered, and a brief summary of relevant information that relates to each point. Somewhere on the agenda the start and end times need to be clearly indicated, and it is always a good idea to leave time at the end for questions and additional points that individual members may want to share. If the meeting has an emotional point or theme, or the news is negative, plan for additional time for discussion, clarification, and recycling of conversations as the participants process the information.

If you are planning an intense work session, you need to consider the number of possible interactions among the participants and limit them. Smaller groups are generally more productive. If you are gathering to present information or to motivate the sales staff, a large audience, where little interaction is expected, is appropriate. Each member has a role, and attention to how and why they are interacting will produce the best results. Review the stages of group formation in view of the idea that a meeting is a short-term group. You can anticipate a "forming" stage, and if roles are not clear, there may be a bit of "storming" before the group establishes norms and becomes productive. Adding additional participants for no clear reason will only make the process more complex and may produce negative results.

Inviting the participants via e-mail has become increasingly common across business and industry. Software programs like Microsoft Outlook allow you to initiate a meeting request and receive an "accept" or "decline" response that makes the invitation process organized and straightforward. Reliance on a software program, however, may not be enough to encourage and ensure participation. A reminder on the individual's computer may go off fifteen minutes prior to the meeting, but if they are away from their computer or if Outlook is not running, the reminder will go unseen and unheard. A reminder e-mail on the day of the meeting, often early in the morning, can serve as a personal effort to highlight the activities of the day.

If you are the person responsible for the room reservation, confirm the reservation a week before the meeting and again the day before the meeting. Redundancy in the confirmation process can help eliminate double-booking a room, where two meetings are scheduled at the same time. If technology is required at the meeting, such as a microphone, conference telephone, or laptop and projector, make sure you confirm their reservation at the same time as you confirm the meeting room reservation. Always personally inspect the room and test these systems prior to the meeting. There is nothing more embarrassing than introducing a high-profile speaker, such as the company president, and then finding that the PowerPoint projector is not working properly.

CONDUCTING THE MEETING

The world is a stage and a meeting is a performance, the same as an interview or speech presentation. Each member has a part to perform and they should each be aware of their roles and responsibilities prior to the meeting. Everyone is a member of the group, ranging from new members to full members. If you can reduce or eliminate the storming stage, all the better. A clearly defined agenda can be a productive tool for this effort.

People may know each other by role or title, but may not be familiar with each other. Brief introductions can serve to establish identity, credibility, and help the group transition to performance. The purpose of the meeting should be clearly stated, and if there are rules or guidelines that require a specific protocol, they should be introduced.

Mary Ellen Guffey provides a useful participant checklist that is adapted here for our use:

- Arrive on time and stay until the meeting adjourns (unless there are prior arrangements)
- Leave the meeting only for established breaks or emergencies
- Be prepared and have everything you need on hand
- Turn off cell phones and personal digital assistants
- Follow the established protocol for turn taking
- Respect time limits
- Demonstrate professionalism in your verbal and nonverbal interactions
- Communicate interest and stay engaged in the discussion
- Avoid tangents and side discussions
- Respect space and do not place your notebook or papers all around you
- Clean up after yourself
- Engage in polite conversation after the conclusion

If you are cast in the role of meeting leader, you may need to facilitate the discussion and address conflict. The agenda serves as your guide and you may need to redirect the discussion to the topic, but always demonstrate respect for each and every member. You may also need to intervene if a point has reached a stalemate in terms of conflict (this text offers specific guidelines for managing interpersonal conflict that apply here).

There has been quite a discussion on the role of seating arrangements in meeting within the field of business communication. Generally, a table that is square, rectangular, or U-shaped has a fixed point at which the attention is directed, often referred to as the head of the table. This space is often associated with power, status, and hierarchy and may play an important role in the flow of interactions across the meeting. If information is to be distributed and presented from administration to managers, for example, a table with a clear focal point for the head or CEO may be indicated. Tables that are round, or tables arranged in a circular pattern, allow for a more egalitarian model of interaction, reducing the hierarchical aspects while reinforcing the clear line of sight among all participants. If a meeting requires intense interaction and collaboration, generally a round table or a circular pattern is indicated.

Some meetings do not call for a table, but rather rows of seats all facing toward the speaker; you probably recognize this arrangement from many class lectures you have attended. For relatively formal meetings in which information is being delivered to a large number of listeners and little interaction is desired, seating in rows is an efficient use of space.

Transitions are often the hardest part of any meeting. Facilitating the transition from one topic to the next may require you to create links between each point. You can specifically note the next point on the agenda and verbally introduce the next speaker or person responsible for the content area. Once the meeting has accomplished its goals in the established time frame, it is time to facilitate the transition to a conclusion. You may conclude by summarizing what has been discussed or decided, and what actions the group members are to take as a result of the meeting. If there is a clear purpose for holding a subsequent meeting, discuss the time and date, and specifically note assignments for next time.

Feedback is an important part of any communication interaction. Minutes are a written document that serves to record the interaction and can provide an opportunity for clarification. Minutes often appear as the agenda with notes in relation to actions taken during the meeting or specific indications of who is responsible for what before the next meeting. In many organizations, minutes of the meeting are tentative, like a rough draft, until they are approved by the members of the group or committee. Normally minutes are sent within a week of the meeting if it is a monthly event, and more quickly if the need to meet more frequently has been determined. If your organization does not call for minutes, you can still benefit by reviewing your notes after a meeting and comparing them with those of others to make sure you understood what was discussed and did not miss—or misinterpret—any key information.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO FACILITATE MEETINGS

Given the widespread availability and increasingly low cost of electronic communication, technologies that once served to bring people together across continents and time zones are now also serving people in the same geographic area. Rather than traveling (by plane, car, or even elevator within the same building) to a central point for a face-to-face interaction, busy and cost-conscious professionals often choose to see and hear each other via one of many different electronic interface technologies. It is important to be aware of the dimensions of nonverbal communication that are lost in a virtual meeting compared to an in-person meeting. Nevertheless, these technologies are a boon to today's business organizations, and knowing how to use them is a key skill for all job seekers. We will discuss the technologies by category, beginning with audio-only, then audio-visual, and finally social media.

AUDIO-ONLY INTERACTIONS

The simplest form of audio-only interaction is, of course, a telephone call. Chances are that you have been using the phone all your life, yet did you know that some executives hire professional voice coaches to help them increase their effectiveness in phone communication? When you stop to think about it, we use a great many audio-only modes of communication, ranging from phone calls and voice-activated telephone menus to radio interviews, public address systems, dictation recording systems, and computer voice recognition technology. The importance of audio communication in the business world has increased with the availability of conference calls, Web conferences, and voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) communications.

Your voice has qualities that cannot be communicated in written form, and you can use these qualities to your advantage as you interact with colleagues. If you are sending a general informative message to all employees, an e-mail may serve you well, but if you are congratulating one employee on receiving an industry award, your voice as the channel carries your enthusiasm.

Take care to pay attention to your pronunciation of words, stating them correctly in normal ways, and avoiding words that you are not comfortable with as you may mispronounce them. Mispronunciation can have a negative impact on your reputation or perceived credibility. Instead of using complicated words that may cause you to stumble, choose a simple phrase if you can, or learn to pronounce the word correctly before you use it in a formal interactive setting.

Your voice quality, volume, and pitch also influence how your spoken words are interpreted. Quality often refers to emotional tone of your voice, from happy and enthusiastic to serious or even sad. In most business situations, it is appropriate to speak with some level of formality, yet avoid sounding stilted or arrogant. Your volume (the loudness of your voice) should be normal, but do make sure your listeners can hear you. In some situations, you may be using a directional microphone that only amplifies your voice signal if you speak directly into it.

If your audience includes English learners, remember that speaking louder (i.e., shouting) does not help them to understand you any better than speaking in a normal tone. Your word choices will make a much more significant impact when communicating across cultures; strive to use direct sentences and avoid figures of speech that do not translate literally.

Pitch refers to the frequency, high or low, of your voice. A pleasant, natural voice will have some variation in pitch. A speaker with a flat pitch, or a monotone (one-tone) voice, is often interpreted as being bored and often bores his or her listeners.

If you are leaving a voicemail, state all the relevant information in concise, clear terms, making sure to speak slowly; do not forget to include your contact information, even if you think the person already knows your phone number. Imagine you were writing down your phone number as you recite it and you will be better able to record it at a "listener-friendly" speed. Do not leave a long, rambling voice mail message. You may later wish you had said less, and the more content you provide the more you increase the possibility for misunderstandings without your being present for clarification.

AUDIO-VISUAL INTERACTIONS

Rather than call each other, we often call and interact in both audio and visual ways via the Internet. There are several ways to interface via audio and video, and new technologies in this area are being invented all the time. For example, VoIP software allows the participants to see and hear each other across time and distance with one-on-one calls and video conferencing. The audio portion of the call comes through a headset, and the callers see each other on their computer monitors, as if they were being broadcast on television. This form of audio-visual communication is quickly becoming a low- or no-cost business tool for interaction.

If you are going to interact via audio and visual signals, make sure you are prepared. Appropriate dress, setting, and attitude are all required. The integration of a visual signal to the traditional phone call means that nonverbal gestures can now be observed in real time and can both aid and detract from the message.

If you are unfamiliar with the technology, practice with it before your actual business interaction. Try out the features with a friend and know where to find and access the information. If the call does not go as planned, or the signal is not what you expected or experienced in the past, keep a good attitude and try again.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Online communities, forums, blogs, tweets, cloud computing, and avatar-activated environments are some of the continually developing means of social media being harnessed by the business world. The Internet is increasingly promoting tools and platforms for people to interact. From bulletin boards that resemble the FreeNet posts of years past, to interactive environments like Second Life, people are increasingly representing and interpreting themselves online.

Humans seek interaction, and this has led to new ways to market, advertise, and interact; however, caution is warranted when engaging in social media online. When you use these media, remember a few simple cautions:

1. Not everything is at it appears. The individuals on the forum may not all be who they represent themselves to be.
2. The words you write and the images you send, regardless of how much you trust the recipient, may become public and can remain online forever.
3. Always consider what you access and what you post, and how it represents you and your employer, even if you think others cannot know where you work or who you are.
4. Be aware that Internet service providers (ISPs) are required by law to archive information concerning the use and traffic of information that can become available under subpoena.

Forums are often theme-based websites that gather a community of individuals dedicated to a common interest. From owner-enthusiast websites that celebrate the new Mini

Cooper, where owners discuss modifications and sell parts to each other, to forums that emphasize a viewpoint, such as the Life After the Oil Crash (LATOC) discussion board, affectionately called doomers, people come together to compare notes around areas of interest.

Professional networking sites such as LinkedIn allow people to link to, and interact with, others who work in their industry or related ones. More general social media sites include MySpace and Facebook, which also present threaded discussions and dynamic interfaces with groups that may or may not be limited to those that user intends. Interactive writing platforms such as blogs, wikis, and cloud computing involve having common documents stored on the Internet which can be accessed from multiple sites at once, further facilitating the interaction. Blogs are Web pages with periodic posts that may or may not feature feedback responses from readers. Wikis are collaborations on Web content that are created and edited by users. Cloud computing involves secure access of files from anywhere as information is stored remotely. Somewhere between a social networking site, where people gather virtually to interact, and a computer game lies the genre of avatar-activated virtual worlds such as Second Life. In these environments, users can meet others and make friends, participate in activities, and create and trade virtual property and services.

Business and industry organizations may also incorporate posts and threaded discussions, but often under a passwordprotected design on a company's intranet or other limited-access platform. Employees may use their business-provided computer equipment to access sites that are not business related (if not specifically blocked), but all information associated with a each business's computer is subject to inspection, archival, and supervision.

Every computer is assigned an Internet protocol or IP address. The IP address can be specifically traced back to the original user, or at least to the computer itself and to who is responsible for its use. From an e-mail via one of the free sites (e.g., Juno, Google's Gmail, or Yahoo! Mail) to cloud computing and wikis, your movements across the Web leave clear "footprints."

Whether you maintain a personal webpage, a blog, or engage with peers and colleagues via Twitter, take care when considering what personal information to make public. Privacy is an increasing issue online and your safety is a priority. Always represent yourself and your organization with professionalism, knowing that what you search for and how you use your business computer can and often is subject to inspection.

ORGANIZATIONAL

COMMUNICATION

Businesses and companies are often described in terms we normally associate with family, from relationships between siblings, to dominant-subordinate roles between parents and children, and the role of praise and correction. Organizational communication, or the study of the communication context, environment, and interaction within an organization, was once the domain of speech communication departments. Modern business schools now view the study of organizational communication as an integral part of the curriculum, noting the interdependent relationships of productivity, climate, and interaction between individuals within the organization (internal) and related to the organization (external), such as suppliers or customers.

Organizations have communication needs and challenges just like a family, a group, or a community. We can examine the study of communication within an organization, noting common interactive practices like performance reviews, newsletters, supervisor and direction, and the flow of information throughout the organization. We can also study the practices of the organization as they relate to other organizations and the media, as is public relations, crisis communication plans, and interorganizational interaction. Research into these areas often emphasizes the outcome, in terms of increased productivity and more effective strategic communication systems (Tucker, Meyer, & Westman, 1986). Change management, knowledge management, organizational culture, leaderships, and strategic planning often include elements of organizational communication, and again examine communication from the perspective of efficiency and effectiveness.

As a skilled business writer or communicator, you can see that the study of organizational communication can serve to inform you on the lessons learned by other companies, which are often represented in research publications, to improve the processes in place within your organization. For example, crisis management once was a knee-jerk reaction to a situation, one that caused businesses and companies to experience chaos and information management in unanticipated ways, leading to mistakes and damaging reputations. Crisis communication plans are now a common feature in business, outlining roles and responsibilities, as well as central communication coordination and how to interact with media. Supervisors and employees then have a guide to serve everyone, much like a common playbook in organized sports like football, where everyone knows everyone else's position on the field once an emergency occurs.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Meetings require planning, choice of appropriate technology, and understanding of organizational communication.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

You want an efficient and effective meeting, but recognize that group communication by definition can be chaotic and unpredictable. To stay on track, consider the following strategies:

- Send out the last meeting's minutes one week before the next meeting.
- Send out the agenda for the current meeting at least one week in advance.
- Send out reminders for the meeting the day before and the day of the meeting.

- Schedule the meeting in Outlook or a similar program so everyone receives a reminder.
- Start and end your meetings on time.
- Make sure the participants know their role and requirements prior to the meeting.
- Make sure all participants know one another before discussion starts.
- Formal communication styles and reference to the agenda can help reinforce the time frame and tasks.
- Follow Robert's Rules of Order when applicable, or at least be familiar with them.
- Make sure notes taken at the meeting are legible and can be converted to minutes for distribution later.
- Keep the discussion on track, and if you are the chair, or leader of a meeting, do not hesitate to restate a point to interject and redirect the attention back to the next agenda point.
- If you are the chair, draw a clear distinction between on-topic discussions and those that are more personal, individual, or off topic.
- Communicate your respect and appreciation for everyone's time and effort.

- Clearly communicate the time, date, and location or means of contact for the next meeting.

6.6 DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

6.6.1. Email Critiques

1. Find an example of an e-mail that you wish you had never sent or received. Rewrite it to eliminate the characteristics that you find problematic. Share it with your classmates.
2. Choose at least three e-mails you have sent or received that are good examples of business communication. What makes them good examples? Could they be improved in any way? Share your suggestions with classmates.

6.6.2. Memo & Letter Critiques

1. Find a memo from your work or business, or borrow one from someone you know. Share it with your classmates, observing confidentiality by blocking out identifying details such as the name of the sender, recipient, and company. Compare and contrast.
2. Create a draft letter introducing a product or service to a new client. Post and share with classmates.
3. Write a memo informing your class that an upcoming holiday will be observed. Post and share with classmates.
4. Find a business letter (for example, an offer you received from a credit card company or a solicitation for a donation) and share it with your classmates. Look for common elements and points of difference.

6.6.3. Telephone: Share and Compare

1. Write an outline of a script for a telephone conversation that introduces a new product or service to an existing client. Partner with a classmate to role-play the conversation and note points that could use improvement. Compare your results with your classmates.
2. Think of a phone conversation you had recently. Write a brief summary and include at least one example of what worked or what did not. Share and compare with classmates.

6.6.4. Jargon Exercises

1. Choose a piece of writing from a profession you are unfamiliar with. For example, if you

are studying biology, choose an excerpt from a book on fashion design. Identify several terms you are unfamiliar with, terms that may be considered jargon. How does the writer help you understand the meaning of these terms? Could the writer make them easier to understand? Share your findings with your class.

2. In your chosen career field or your college major, identify ten jargon words, define them, and share them with the class.

6.6.5. Meetings Exercises

1. Create a sample agenda for a business meeting to discuss the quarterly sales report and results from the latest marketing campaign. Decide what information is needed, and what position might normally be expected to produce that information. Note in

your agenda all the elements listed above, even if some elements (such as "good of the order") only serve as a placeholder for the discussion that will take place.

2. Take notes in one of your classes as if they were the official minutes of a meeting. Does the class "meeting" have a purpose? What preparations were made and what technology was used? Is there a follow-up or a plan for the next class meeting? Compare your notes with another student to see if you understood all the information conveyed in the class.
3. Collaborate with one or more classmates and contribute to a computing cloud or a wiki. What was the activity like? Did you learn new information that you would not have learned by studying individually?

6.6.6. Improving Your Verbal Communication

Make an audio recording of your voice and listen to it. Are there aspects of your voice quality, pronunciation, or delivery style that you would like to improve? Practice daily and make more recordings until you notice improvement.

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CHAPTER 7: PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Linda Macdonald; Kayler Mutyabule; and Saylor Academy

Just as you need to write professionally in your career to complete tasks and maintain relationships, you may need to match that professionalism while speaking. This chapter focuses on more formalized speaking–presentations–that take place in the workplace. For most people, the mere thought of speaking in front of an audience prompts a fear response, and part of our focus in this chapter is on how to deal with this anxiety.

After discussing the various methods of presenting in face-to-face and online formats, we will discuss structuring and outlining your presentation. Having a clear direction will help keep your audience engaged and boost your confidence. After discussing how to plan the content of your presentation, we will discuss designing visual elements and verbal and nonverbal delivery techniques.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to

- Identify ways to manage presentation anxiety.
- Apply an appropriate delivery method for a particular speaking situation.
- Select an appropriate organizational pattern.
- Create an outline for a presentation.
- Create well-designed presentation slides.
- Identify the principles and types of nonverbal communication.
- Identify and be able to create effective transitions within a presentation.
- Understand how to use a variety of strategies to help audience members follow a presentation's content: internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts.

This chapter has been adapted from the Open Education Resources:

Stand up, Speak out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking available under the terms of aCreative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike license

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Adaptations included editing tone, images, removing content to align the chapter with BCOM210 course learning objectives, revising examples for an FHSU student population, and adding some original exercises to align with course objectives.

7.1 MANAGING SPEECH ANXIETY

Linda Macdonald

Your success in business will be influenced by your ability to speak well– to tell your story to interviewers, to present recommendations to a client, to express your ideas to your team members, or to pitch your product to investors. Speaking in public, whether with a small group or a large audience, develops your critical thinking, leadership and persuasion skills, and professionalism.

Despite the opportunities that come with presenting, nearly everyone experiences some anxiety associated with public speaking. Our fears have been heightened by speaking in online meetings and virtual events. Online anxiety is exacerbated by the lack of direct eye contact and every fumble to find the unmute button. Social anxiety compounds speech anxiety.

This short Jerry Seinfeld clip explains the extent of our number one fear.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://fhsu.pressbooks.pub/profdev/?p=32#oembed-1

(Direct link to Seinfeld Clip)

In his YouTube video, "Why do we fear public speaking?", Dave Guin tells us that we are biologically engineered to be scared. Through a story about early humans facing a prehistoric bear in a cave, he compares the fear of public speaking to the fear of the unknown. Every one of us, in our common humanity, Guin says, is afraid of the unknown and of public speaking. To manage this fear of speaking, Guin says we must desensitize ourselves. By practicing and putting ourselves forward, we reduce our fear. For many university students, however, it is not the prehistoric bear Guin describes that prompts a flight response: It is their peers and professors.

As university students, you are in a unique position. You are planning to enter or grow your current position in a professional context but your classroom training is among social peers. Remember, though, that nearly everyone in the course shares this same fear. You may not overcome your instinctive fear, but you can manage it. Your professors may need to evaluate your performance but they are also there to help you succeed. Everyone wants to see you do well.

One way to deal with your fear is to turn the attention away from how you feel and toward how the audience feels. When you watch a speaker who is anxious and fumbling with the clicker, shifting weight from one hip to another, pacing quickly, or taking a lengthy pause or filling time with excessive "ums" and "uhs", you begin to feel anxious yourself. As a member of the audience, you may feel concerned for the speaker and shift from listening to the content to focusing on the body movements. Audiences reflect the speaker's feelings. If you speak with confidence in an interview, you are more likely to inspire the audience to feel confident in your abilities. If you are enthusiastic about your new business plan, investors will be more likely to become enthused themselves. Emotions are contagious.

To share a positive presence with your audience, find your confidence. Caroline Goyder's TEDx Talk offers three techniques to access the confidence within us. Watch her 19-minute presentation.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://fhsu.pressbooks.pub/profdev/?p=32#oembed-2

(Direct link to Caroline Goyder's Ted Talk: The surprising secret to speaking with confidence.)

To manage your anxiety, remember that your fear response is natural and normal, focus on your audience's needs, and use the confidence within you. The following sections will introduce additional ways to manage anxiety, including organizing the content of your presentation and practicing the vocal techniques and body movements that you will use in your delivery.

7.2 METHODS OF PRESENTATION DELIVERY

Jordan Smith; Melissa Ashman; eCampusOntario; Brian Dunphy; Andrew Stracuzzi; and Linda Macdonald

The Importance of Delivery

Delivery is what you are probably most concerned about when it comes to giving presentations. This section is designed to help you give the best delivery possible and eliminate some of the nervousness you might be feeling. To do that, you should first dismiss the myth that presenting is just reading and talking at the same time. Presentations have more formality than talking. During a presentation, such as an oral report, you should project professionalism. This means meeting the expectations of your situation and audience. Start by being well groomed and wearing clean, appropriate clothes for the situation.

Professionalism in speaking also means being prepared to use language correctly and appropriately for the audience and the topic, making eye contact with your audience, projecting confidence, and knowing your topic very well.

Methods of Presentation Delivery

There are four methods of delivery that can help you balance between too much and too little formality and memorization when giving a presentation.

Impromptu Speaking

Impromptu speaking is the presentation of a short message without advance preparation. You have probably done impromptu speaking many times in informal, conversational settings. Self-introductions in group settings are examples of impromptu speaking: “Hi, my name is Jocelyn, and I’m an account manager.” Another example of impromptu presenting occurs when you answer a question such as, “What did you think of the report?” Your response has not been pre-planned, and you are constructing your arguments and points as you speak.

The advantage of this kind of speaking is that it is spontaneous and responsive in a group context. The disadvantage is that the speaker is given little or no time to think of the central theme of their message. As a result, the message may be disorganized and difficult for listeners to follow.

This step-by-step guide may be useful if you are called upon to give an impromptu presentation in public:

1. Take a moment to collect your thoughts and plan the main point you want to make. You might write a few keywords on a notepad if you have one near.
2. Thank the person for inviting you to speak. Avoid making comments about being unprepared, called upon at the last moment, on the spot, or feeling uneasy.
3. Deliver your message, making your main point as briefly as you can while still covering it adequately and at a pace your listeners can follow.
4. If you can use a structure, using numbers if possible: "Two main reasons . . ." or "Three parts of our plan. . ." or "Two side effects of this drug. . ." Timeline structures are also effective, such as "past, present, and future" or "East Coast, Midwest, and West Coast".
5. Thank the person again for the opportunity to speak.
6. Stop talking (it is easy to "ramble on" when you do not have something prepared). If in front of an audience, do not keep talking as you move back to your seat.

Impromptu presentations are generally most successful when they are brief and focus on a single point.

For additional advice on impromptu speaking, watch the following 4-minute video from Toastmasters: *Impromptu Speaking*:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://fhsu.pressbooks.pub/profdev/?p=36#oembed-1

(Direct link to Toastmasters Impromptu Speaking)

Manuscript Presentations

Manuscript presentations are the word-for-word iteration of a written message. The advantage of reading from a manuscript is the exact repetition of original words. In some circumstances, this exact wording can be extremely important. For example, reading a statement about your organization's legal responsibilities to customers may require that the original words be exact. Acceptable uses of a manuscript include

- Highly formal occasions (e.g. a commencement speech)
- Particularly emotional speeches (e.g. a wedding speech, a eulogy)
- Situations in which word-for-word reading is required

(e.g. a speech written by someone else; a corporate statement; a political speech)
- Within a larger speech, the reading of a passage from another work (e.g. a poem; a book excerpt).

Manuscript presentations, however, have a significant disadvantage: Your connection with the audience may be affected. Eye contact, so important for establishing credibility and relationship, may be limited by reading, your use of gestures will be limited if you are holding a manuscript, and a handheld manuscript itself might appear as a barrier between you and the audience. In addition, it is difficult to change language or content in response to unpredictable audience reactions. Reading a manuscript is not as easy as one might think. Keeping your place in a manuscript is difficult and most of us will sound monotone.
You can develop strategies to mitigate these disadvantages.
Use a conversational tone. To speak conversationally,

- Write the speech in a conversational style, and
- Practice your speech so that it flows naturally.

Preparation will make the presentation more engaging and enhance your credibility:

- Select and edit material so that it fits within your time limit;

- Select material that will be meaningful for your particular audience;
- Know the material well so that you can look up at your audience and back at the manuscript without losing your place; and
- Identify keywords for emphasis.

An essential part of preparation is preparing your manuscript. The following suggestions are adapted from the University of Hawai'i Maui Community College Speech Department:

- **Make the manuscript readable.**
    - Use a full 8.5 x 11inch sheet of paper, not notecards.
    - Use only one side of the page.
    - Include page numbers.
    - Use double or triple line spacing.
    - Use a minimum of 16 pt. font size.
    - Avoid overly long or complex sentences.
    - Use bold or highlight the first word of each sentence, as illustrated by the University of Hawai'i.

Here are some examples of Manuscript techniques you can use for your manuscript.

You can start each sentence with the first word bolded and on the left margin.

You can use a larger first letter for each sentence so that you can quickly pick out the beginning of each sentence.

You can also **bold** and/or *italicize* words that you want to ***emphasize***.

- **Mark up your manuscript.**
  - Add notations—"slow down," "pause," "look up," underline keywords, etc. as reminders about delivery.
  - Highlight words that should be emphasized.
  - Add notes about pronunciation.
  - Include notations about time, indicating where you should be at each minute marker.

To deliver the speech effectively, make sure you are comfortable with the manuscript delivery style. To engage your audience,

- Practice your presentation.
- Try to avoid reading in a monotone. Just as contrast is important for document design, contrast is important in speaking. Vary your volume, pace, tone, and gestures.
- Make sure that you can be clearly understood. Speak loud enough that the back of the room can hear you,

pronounce each word clearly, and try not to read too fast.

- Maintain good eye contact with your audience. Look down to read and up to speak.
- Match gestures to the content of the speech, and avoid distracting hand or foot movements.
- If there is no podium, hold the manuscript at waist height.

Memorized Speaking

Memorized speaking is the recitation of a written message that the speaker has committed to memory. Actors, of course, recite from memory whenever they perform from a script in a stage play, television program, or movie scene. When it comes to speeches, memorization can be useful when the message needs to be exact and the speaker does not want to be confined by notes.

The advantage to memorization is that it enables the speaker to maintain eye contact with the audience throughout the speech. Being free of notes means that you can move freely around the stage and use your hands to make gestures. If your speech uses visual aids, this freedom is even more of an advantage. However, there are some real and potential costs.

First, unless you also plan and memorize every vocal cue (the subtle but meaningful variations in speech delivery, which can include the use of pitch, tone, volume, and pace), gesture, and facial expression, your presentation will be flat and uninteresting, and even the most fascinating topic will suffer and you will not effectively engage your audience. (Manuscript speaking often suffers the same fate.) Second, if you lose your place and start trying to ad lib, the contrast in your style of delivery will alert your audience that something is wrong. More frighteningly, if you go completely blank during the presentation, it will be extremely difficult to find your place and keep going. Memorizing a presentation takes a great deal of time and effort to achieve a natural flow and conversational tone.

Extemporaneous Presentations

The extemporaneous speaking style benefits from the flexibility and naturalness that comes with impromptu speaking as well as the benefits of well-developed content and organization that comes with manuscript or memorized speaking. This presentation delivery style maximizes all of the benefits of the various presentation styles while minimizing their challenges.

Extemporaneous presentations are carefully planned and rehearsed presentations, delivered in a conversational manner using brief notes or a slide deck. By using notes rather than a full manuscript, the extemporaneous presenter can establish and maintain eye contact with the audience and assess how well they are understanding the presentation as it progresses.

To avoid over-reliance on notes or slides, you should have a strong command of your subject matter. Then select an organizational pattern that works well for your topic. Your notes or slide deck should reflect this organizational pattern. In preparation, create an outline of your speech.

Watch some of the following 10-minute videos of a champion speaker presenting an extemporaneous speech at the *2017 International Extemporaneous Speaking National Champion.* :

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://fhsu.pressbooks.pub/profdev/?p=36#oembed-2

(Direct link to 2017 International Extemporaneous Speaking National Champion video)

Presenting extemporaneously has some advantages. It promotes the likelihood that you, the speaker, will be perceived as knowledgeable and credible since you know the speech well enough that you do not need to read it. In addition, your audience is likely to pay better attention to the message because it is engaging both verbally and non-verbally. It also allows flexibility; you are working from the strong foundation of an outline, but if you need to delete, add, or rephrase something at the last minute or to adapt to your audience, you can do so.

Adequate preparation cannot be achieved the day before you are scheduled to present, so be aware that if you want to present a credibly delivered speech, you will need to practice many times. Extemporaneous presenting is the style used in the great majority of business presentation situations.

7.3 STRUCTURING YOUR PRESENTATION

Lucinda Atwood; Christian Westin; [Author removed at request of original publisher]; and Linda Macdonald

Presentations can be organized in many different ways. The choice of an organizing principle, or a core assumption around which everything else is arranged, depends on the subject matter, the speaking situation, and many other factors, including your preference as a speaker.

Presentation Structure

The simple structure outlined below is adaptable to most topics. The presentation begins with an attention-getter, a claim, and an overview of key points that will be addressed. The main part of the speech follows with two to five main points; and concludes with a summary and, in a persuasive speech, a call to action.

Introduction

In the Introduction of your presentation, you will capture the audience's attention, tell them who you are, state the main point of your presentation, and provide a preview.

- **Attention-getter/grabber** A very brief and interesting statement or question that grabs the audience's attention. See Grabber Types below for more details.
- **Self-introduction** (Place before or after the grabber*)* Tell the audience your name and credentials. For example: *I'm Minh and I've been a professional career coach for 10 years.*
- **Thesis** The main point or argument of your presentation. Be brief and precise, not general or vague. For example: *I'm going to show you how practicing your presentation 10 times will improve your level of comfort by 50%.*
- **Overview of main points** Briefly outline the main points that you will cover in your presentation. To help your audience, list these in the same order that you will deliver them later on. For example: *First, we'll talk about what makes presentations great, then I'll share some data on how practice affects your confidence and performance, and finally, we'll look at how to practice.*

Attention-getter/grabber types

Remember that the job is *grabbing* the audience's attention, so it must be surprising, fascinating or intriguing. It must also be related to your presentation's topic. Some descriptions and examples are presented here:

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://fhsu.pressbooks.pub/profdev/?p=38#h5p-3

You can also mix and match grabbers. For example, you could show an image and ask the audience to guess what it is.

The length of your grabber is relative to your total presentation time. For a 2-minute presentation, it should be quite brief – maybe one sentence. For a 16-minute team presentation, a 45-60 second grabber would be appropriate.

Body

In this part of your presentation, you will deliver detailed information. Depending on the length of the presentation and your purpose, you might have two to five points in the body.

- **Key point 1** A major point that supports your thesis and may have supporting sub-points
- **Key point 2** Another major point that supports your thesis and may have supporting sub-points
- **Key point 3** The final major point that supports your thesis and may have supporting sub-points

Your points can be arranged in a variety of ways. In her TED Talk *The Secret Structure of Great Talks* and her *Harvard Business Review* article titled "Structure your presentation like a story" (click here for direct link to her article), Nancy Duarte advocates organizing a presentation according to what *is* and what *could be*. Before reading on, take a moment to read the Duarte article, then check your knowledge.

Other ways to organize the body of your presentation are presented in Table 7.1 The center column explains how the principle works, and the right column provides an applied example based on a sample presentation about the United States' First Transcontinental Railroad. For example, using a biographical organizing principle, you might describe the journey of the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1804, Lincoln's signing of the Pacific Railroad Act in 1862, and the completion of the first Transcontinental Express train trip in 1876. As another example, using a spatial organizing principle, you might describe the mechanics of how a steam locomotive engine works to turn the train wheels, which move on a track to travel across distances.

As you read each organizational structure, consider how the main points and subheadings change or adapt to meet each pattern.

Table 7.1

Sample Organizing Principles for a Presentation

Organizing Principle	Explanation	Applied Example
1. Time (Chronological)	Structuring your speech by time shows a series of events or steps in a process, which typically has a beginning, middle, and end. "Once upon a time stories" follow a chronological pattern.	Before the First Transcontinental Railroad, the events that led to its construction, and its impact on early America…
2. Comparison	Structuring your speech by comparison focuses on the similarities and/or differences between points or concepts.	A comparison of pre– and post–First Transcontinental Railroad North America, showing how health and life expectancy remained the same.
3. Contrast	Structure your speech by using contrasting points highlights the differences between items and concepts.	A contrast of pre– and post–First Transcontinental Railroad North America, by shipping times, time it took to communicate via letter, or how long it took to move out West.

Organizing Principle	Explanation	Applied Example
4. Cause and Effect	Structuring your speech by cause and effect establishes a relationship between two events or situations, making the connection clear.	The movement of people and goods out West grew considerably from 1750 to 1850. With the availability of a new and faster way to go West, people generally supported its construction.

Organizing Principle	**Explanation**	**Applied Example**
5. Problem and Solution	Structuring your speech by problem and solution means you state the problem and detail how it was solved. This approach is effective for persuasive speeches.	Manufacturers were producing better goods for less money at the start of the Industrial Revolution, but they lack a fast, effective method of getting their goods to growing markets. The First Transcontinental Railroad gave them speed, economy, and access to new markets.
6. Classification (Categorical)	Structuring your speech by classification establishes categories.	At the time the nation considered the First Transcontinental Railroad, there were three main types of transportation: by water, by horse, and by foot.

Organizing Principle	Explanation	Applied Example
7. Biographical	Structuring your speech by biography means examining specific people as they relate to the central topic.	• 1804: Lewis and Clark travel 4,000 miles in over two years across America • 1862: President Lincoln signs the Pacific Railroad Act • 1876: The Transcontinental Express from New York arrives in San Francisco with a record-breaking time of 83 hours and 39 minutes • 2009: President Obama can cross America by plane in less than 5 hours
8. Space (Spatial)	Structuring your speech by space involves the parts of something and how they fit to form the whole.	A train uses a heat source to heat water, create stream, and turn a turbine, which moves a lever that causes a wheel to move on a track.

Organizing Principle	Explanation	Applied Example
9. Psychological	It is also called "Monroe's Motivated Sequence" (Ayres, J. and Miller, J., 1994). Structuring your speech on the psychological aspects of the audience involves focusing on their inherent needs and wants. See Maslow and Shutz. The speaker calls *attention* to a *need*, then focuses on the satisfaction of the need, *visualization* of the solution, and ends with a proposed or historical *action*. This is useful for a persuasive speech.	When families in the year 1800 went out West, they rarely returned to see family and friends. The country as a whole was an extension of this distended family, separated by time and distance. The railroad brought families and the country together.
10. Elimination	Structuring your speech using the process of elimination involves outlining all the possibilities.	The First Transcontinental Railroad helped pave the way for the destruction of the Native American way of life in 1870. After examining treaties, relocation and reservations, loss of the buffalo, disease and war, the railroad can be accurately considered the catalyst for the end of an era.

Transitions

The structure of your presentation should be clear to your listeners at the start of the presentation and reinforced throughout with transitions. Transitions both connect to your thesis and indicate a shift to your next point.

As part of your introduction, you should make clear the structure of your points. For example,

> "Slack Desktop offers three time-saving benefits for our team collaborations."
>
> "First, I will discuss the current inefficiencies in our collaborations and then explain how Slack Desktop can resolve these problems."
>
> "Slack Desktop's built-in notification system, keyboard shortcuts, and convenience in switching between workspaces are advantages for team collaborations."

Provide a transition as you move from the introduction to the first point. For example,

> "The first advantage for our teams in using Slack Desktop…"
>
> "First, I will provide an overview of Slack's capabilities before addressing the two features that are most compelling for our teams…"
>
> "Let's begin with the built-in notification system…"

As you move to the second and third points, you can reinforce the structure of the presentation for your listener by stating where you have been and where you are going. For example,

> "We have covered the benefits of the notification system and the range of keyboard shortcuts and will now discuss the greatest benefit for our work– the simplicity in moving between teams."
>
> "A final benefit of Slack Desktop for collaborations is the ease in switching between teams."
>
> "Now that I have demonstrated the problems with the current system, I will demonstrate the solutions to these problems with Slack."
>
> "It is clear that the notifications systems and keyboard shortcuts are time-saving features, but the greatest time-saving feature is the ease and convenience in switching between teams."
>
> "Although Slack has several beneficial features, team collaborations in our company may be better facilitated through Chanty."
>
> "Just as keyboard shortcuts provide added convenience, so too does the notification system."

Finally, transition to the conclusion:

> "In summary, Slack has indisputable advantages."
>
> "In conclusion,.."
>
> "What I would most like you to take from this presentation is…"

Transitions connect your points and ensure the audience follows you. The audience will clearly see where you have been and where you are going next. Practice your transitions so that the content flows naturally. As we will discuss in Chapter 3.12, moving as you transition between points can help you remember the order of points as well as engage your audience.

Conclusion

At the end of your presentations, you'll remind the audience of what you told them, and tell them what to do next.

- **Summary of main points** (can be merged with your conclusion) Clearly restate your three main points in the same order you delivered them. It is the same as your overview but in past tense. *First, I described what makes presentations great, then I shared data on how practice affects confidence and performance, and finally, we looked at how to practice.*
- **Conclusion** Restate your thesis in past tense. For example: *I'm showed you that practicing your presentation 10 times will improve your grade by 20%.*
- **Call to action** Give your audience clear, active and compelling direction, based on what you told them. For example: *Practice your presentations ten times and start collecting those A-plusses!*

Now that you have some ideas of how you might structure your presentation, move on to creating an outline, the subject of the next chapter section.

7.4 OUTLINING YOUR PRESENTATION

Linda Macdonald

For your presentation to be as effective as possible, it needs to be organized into logical patterns. Information will need to be presented in a way your audience can understand. This is especially true if you already know a great deal about your topic. You will need to take careful steps to include pertinent information your audience might not know and to explain relationships that might not be evident to them. Using a standard outline format, you can make decisions about your main points, the specific information you will use to support those points, and the language you will use. Without an outline, your message is liable to lose logical integrity. It might even deteriorate into a list of bullet points with no apparent connection to each other except the topic, leaving your audience relieved when your presentation is finally over.

A **full-sentence outline** lays a strong foundation for your message. It will call on you to have one clear and specific purpose for your message. Writing your specific purpose in clear language serves you well. It helps you frame a clear, concrete thesis statement. It helps you exclude irrelevant information. It helps you focus only on information that directly bears on your thesis. It reduces the amount of research you must do. It suggests what kind of supporting evidence is needed, so less effort is expended in trying to figure out what to do next. It helps both you and your audience remember the central message of your presentation.

Finally, a solid full-sentence outline helps your audience understand your message because they will be able to follow your reasoning. Remember that live audiences for oral communications lack the ability to "rewind" your message to figure out what you said, so it is critically important to help the audience follow your reasoning as it reaches their ears.

Speakers who carefully write a full-sentence outline show a stronger tendency to give powerful presentations of excellent messages.

TESTS SCOPE OF CONTENT

When you begin with a clear, concrete thesis statement, it acts as kind of a compass for your outline. Each of the main points should directly explicate. The test of the scope will be a comparison of each main point to the thesis statement. If you find a poor match, you will know you have wandered outside the scope of the thesis.

Let us say that you have been asked to speak at the Hays chapter of Rotary International about the FHSU Wind Energy Project. The general purpose of your presentation is to inform, and your broad topic area is wind-generated energy for FHSU. Now you must narrow this to a specific purpose. You have many choices, but let us say your specific purpose is to inform a group of Rotarians about the economic reasons why FHSU utilizes two wind turbine generators.

Your first main point could be that modern windmills require a very small land base, making the cost of real estate low. This is directly related to economics. All you need is information to support your claim that only a small land base is needed.

In your second main point, you might be tempted to claim that windmills do not pollute in the ways other sources do. However, you will quickly note that this claim is unrelated to the thesis. You must resist the temptation to add it. Perhaps in another presentation, your thesis will address environmental impact, but in this presentation, you must stay within the economic scope. Perhaps you will say that once windmills are in place, they require virtually no maintenance. This claim is related to the thesis. Now all you need is supporting information to support this second claim.

Your third point, the point some audience members will want to hear, is the cost of generating electrical energy with windmills compared to other sources. This is clearly within the scope of energy economics. You should have no difficulty finding authoritative sources of information to support that claim.

When you write in outline form, it is much easier to test the scope of your content because you can visually locate specific information very easily and then check it against your thesis statement.

TESTS LOGICAL RELATION OF PARTS

You have many choices for your topic, and therefore, there are many ways your content can be logically organized. In the example above, we simply listed three main points that were important economic considerations about wind farms. Often the main points of a presentation can be arranged into a logical pattern; let us take a look at some such patterns.

A chronological pattern arranges main ideas in the order events occur. In some instances, reverse order might make sense. For instance, for the FHSU Wind Energy Project, you might discuss when the idea was first proposed and the process of it being approved.

A cause-and-effect pattern calls on you to describe a specific situation and explain what the effect is. However, most effects have more than one cause. Even dental cavities have multiple causes: genetics, poor nutrition, teeth too tightly spaced, sugar, ineffective brushing, and so on. If you choose a cause-and-effect pattern, make sure you have enough reliable support to do the topic justice.

A biographical pattern is usually chronological. In describing the events of a business, you will want to choose the three most significant events. Otherwise, the presentation will end up as a very lengthy and often pointless timeline or bullet point list. For example, one could easily pick four major developments for Apple Computers that help explain its success. They include the releases of the Apple II, iTunes, iPod, and iPhone. A simple timeline would present great difficulty in highlighting the relationships between important events. An outline, however, would help you emphasize the key events that contributed to Apple's success.

Although a comparison-contrast pattern appears to dictate just two main points, McCroskey, Wrench, and Richmond (2003) explain how a comparison-and-contrast can be structured as a presentation with three main points. They say that "you can easily create a third point by giving basic information about what is being compared and what is being contrasted. For example, if you are giving a presentation about two different medications, you could start by discussing what the medications' basic purposes are. Then you could talk about the similarities, and then the differences, between the two medications."

Whatever logical pattern you use, if you examine your thesis statement and then look at the three main points in your outline, you should easily be able to see the logical way in which they relate.

TESTS RELEVANCE OF SUPPORTING IDEAS

When you create an outline, you can clearly see that you need supporting evidence for each of your main points. For instance, using the FHSU Wind Energy Project example above, your first main point claims that less land was needed for windmills than for other utilities. Your supporting evidence should be about the amount of acreage required for a windmill and the amount of acreage required for other energy generation sites, such as nuclear power plants or hydroelectric generators. Your sources should come from experts in economics, economic development, or engineering. The evidence might even be expert opinion but not the opinions of ordinary people. The expert opinion will provide stronger support for your point.

Similarly, your second point claims that once a wind turbine is in place, there is virtually no maintenance cost. Your supporting evidence should show how much annual maintenance for a windmill costs and what the costs are for other energy plants. If you used a comparison with nuclear plants to support your first main point, you should do so again for the sake of consistency. It becomes very clear, then, that the third main point about the amount of electricity and its profitability needs authoritative references to compare it to the profit from energy generated at a nuclear power plant. In this third main point, you should make use of just a few well-selected statistics from authoritative sources to show the effectiveness of wind farms compared to the other energy sources you have cited.

Where do you find the kind of information you would need to support these main points? A reference librarian can quickly guide you to authoritative statistics manuals and help you make use of them.

An important step you will notice is that the **full-sentence outline includes its authoritative sources within the text**. This is a major departure from the way you have learned to write a research paper. In the research paper, you can add that information to the end of a sentence, leaving the reader to turn to the last page for a fuller citation. In a presentation, however, your listeners can not do that. From the beginning of the supporting point, you need to fully cite your source so your audience can assess its importance.

Because this is such a profound change from the academic habits that you are probably used to, you will have to make a concerted effort to overcome the habits of the past and provide the information your listeners need when they need it.

TEST THE BALANCE AND PROPORTION OF THE PRESENTATION

Part of the value of writing a full-sentence outline is the visual space you use for each of your main points. Is each main point of approximately the same importance? Does each main point have the same number of supporting points? If you find that one of your main points has eight supporting points while the others only have three each, you have two choices: either choose the best three from the eight supporting points or strengthen the authoritative support for your other two main points.

Remember that you should use the best supporting evidence you can find even if it means investing more time in your search for knowledge.

SERVES AS NOTES DURING THE PRESENTATION

Although we recommend writing a full-sentence outline during the presentation preparation phase, you should also create a shortened outline that you can use as notes allowing for a strong delivery. If you were to use the full-sentence outline when delivering your presentation, you would do a great deal of reading, which would limit your ability to give eye contact and use gestures, hurting your connection with your audience. For this reason, we recommend writing a short-phrase outline on 4 × 6 notecards to use when you deliver your presentation. The good news is that your three main points suggest how you should prepare your notecards.

Your first 4 × 6 notecard can contain your thesis statement and other keywords and phrases that will help you present your introduction. Your second card can contain your first main point, together with keywords and phrases to act as a map to follow as you present. If your first main point has an exact quotation you plan to present, you can include that on your card. Your third notecard should be related to your second main point, your fourth card should be about your third main point, and your fifth card should be related to your conclusion. In this way, your five notecards follow the very same organizational pattern as your full outline. In the next section, we will explore more fully how to create a speaking outline.

When we discuss outlining, we are actually focusing on a series of outlines instead of a single one. Outlines are designed to evolve throughout your presentation preparation process, so this section will discuss how you progress from a working outline to a full-sentence outline and, finally, a speaking outline. We will also discuss how using notecards for your speaking outline can be helpful to you as a speaker.

WORKING OUTLINE

A working outline is an outline you use for developing your presentation. It undergoes many changes on its way to completion. This is the outline where you lay out the basic structure of your presentation. You must have a general and specific purpose; an introduction, including a grabber; and a concrete, specific thesis statement and preview. You also need three main points, a conclusion, and a list of references.

One strategy for beginning your working outline is to begin by typing in your labels for each of the elements. Later you can fill in the content.

When you look ahead to the full-sentence outline, you will notice that each of the three main points moves from the general to the particular. Specifically, each main point is a claim, followed by particular information that supports that claim so that the audience will perceive its validity. For example, for a presentation about coal mining safety, your first main point might focus on the idea that coal mining is a hazardous occupation. You might begin by making a very general claim, such as "Coal mining is one of the most hazardous occupations in the United States," and then become more specific by providing statistics, authoritative quotations, or examples to support your primary claim.

A working outline allows you to work out the kinks in your message. For instance, let us say you have made the claim that coal mining is a hazardous occupation but you cannot find authoritative evidence as support. Now you must reexamine that main point to assess its validity. You might have to change that main point to be able to support it. If you do so, however, you must make sure the new main point is a logical part of the thesis statement–three main points–conclusion sequence.

The working outline should not be thought of a “rough copy,” but as a careful step in the development of your message. It will take time to develop. Here is an example of a working outline:

Name: Anomaly May McGillicuddy

Topic: Smart dust

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform a group of science students about the potential of smart dust

Main Ideas:

1. Smart dust is an assembly of microcomputers.
2. Smart dust can be used by the military—no, no—smart dust could be an enormous asset in covert military operations. (That is better because it is more clear and precise.)
3. Smart dust could also have applications in daily life.

Introduction: **(Grabber)** (fill in later)

(Thesis Statement) Thus far, researchers hypothesize that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking patients in hospitals to early warnings of natural disasters and defending against bioterrorism.

(Preview) Today, I am going to explain what smart dust is and the various applications smart dust has in the near future. To help us understand the small of it all, we will first examine what smart dust is and how it works. We will then examine some military applications of smart dust. And we will end by discussing some nonmilitary applications of smart dust.

(Transition) (fill in later)

Main Point I: Dr. Kris Pister, a professor in the robotics lab at the University of California at Berkeley, originally conceived the idea of smart dust in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

(Transition) (fill in later)

Main Point II: Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, military uses of smart dust have been widely theorized and examined.

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

(Transition) (fill in later)

Main Point III: According to the smart dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a common part of our daily lives.

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

(Transition) (fill in later)

Conclusion: (Bring your message "full circle" and create a psychologically satisfying closure.)

This stage of preparation turns out to be a good place to go back and examine whether all the main points are directly related to the thesis statement and to each other. If so, your message has a strong potential for unity of focus. But if the relationship of one of the main points is weak, this is the time to strengthen it. It will be more difficult later for two reasons: first, the sheer amount of text on your pages will make the visual task more difficult, and second, it becomes increasingly difficult to change things in which you have a large investment in time and thought.

You can see that this working outline can lay a strong foundation for the rest of your message. Its organization is visually apparent. Once you are confident in the internal unity of your basic message, you can begin filling in the supporting points in descending detail—that is, from the general (main points) to the particular (supporting points) and then to greater detail. The outline makes it visually apparent where information fits. You only need to assess your supporting points to be sure they are authoritative and directly relevant to the main points they should support.

Sometimes transitions seem troublesome, and that is not surprising. We often omit them when we have informal conversations. Our conversation partners understand what we mean because of our gestures and vocal strategies. However, others might not understand what we mean but think they do, and so we might never know whether they understood us. Even when we include transitions, we do not generally identify them as transitions. In a presentation, however, we need to use effective transitions as a gateway from one main point to the next. The listener needs to know when a speaker is moving from one main point to the next.

In the next type of outline, the full-sentence outline, take a look at the transitions and see how they make the listener aware of the shifting focus to the next main point.

FULL-SENTENCE OUTLINE

Your full-sentence outline should contain full sentences only. There are several reasons why this kind of outline is important. First, you have a full plan of everything you intend to say to your audience so that you will not have to struggle with wording or examples. Second, you have a clear idea of how much time it will take to present your presentation. Third, it contributes a fundamental ingredient of good preparation, part of your ethical responsibility to your audience. This is how a full-sentence outline looks:

Name: Anomaly May McGillicuddy

Topic: Smart dust

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform a group of science students about the potential of smart dust.

Main Ideas:

1. Smart dust is an assembly of microcomputers.
2. Smart dust could be an enormous asset in

covert military operations.

3. Smart dust could also have applications in daily life.

Introduction: **(Grabber)** In 2002, famed science fiction writer, Michael Crichton, released his book *Prey*, which was about a swarm of nanomachines that were feeding off living tissue. The nanomachines were solar-powered, self-sufficient, and intelligent. Most disturbingly, the nanomachines could work together as a swarm as it took over and killed its prey in its need for new resources. The technology for this level of sophistication in nanotechnology is surprisingly more science fact than science fiction. In 2000, three professors of electrical engineering and computer Science at the University of California at Berkeley, Kahn, Katz, and Pister, hypothesized in the *Journal of Communications and Networks* that wireless networks of tiny microelectromechanical sensors, or MEMS; robots; or devices could detect phenomena including light, temperature, or vibration. By 2004, *Fortune Magazine* listed "smart dust" as the first in their "Top 10 Tech Trends to Bet On."

(Thesis Statement) Thus far researchers hypothesized that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking patients in hospitals to early warnings of natural disasters and as a defense against bioterrorism.

(Preview) Today, I'm going to explain what smart dust is and the various applications smart dust has in the near future. To help us understand the small of it all, we will first examine what smart dust is and how it works. We will then examine some military applications of smart dust. And we will end by discussing some nonmilitary applications of smart dust.

(Transition) To help us understand smart dust, we will begin by first examining what smart dust is.

Main Point I: Dr. Kris Pister, a professor in the robotics lab at the University of California at Berkeley, originally conceived the idea of smart dust in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. According to a 2001 article written by Bret Warneke, Matt Last, Brian Liebowitz, and Kris Pister titled "Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer" published in *Computer*, Pister's goal was to build a device

that contained a built-in sensor, communication device, and a small computer that could be integrated into a cubic millimeter package.

2. For comparison purposes, Doug Steel, in a 2005 white paper titled “Smart Dust” written for C. T. Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston, noted that a single grain of rice has a volume of five cubic millimeters.

    1. Each individual piece of dust, called a mote, would then have the ability to interact with other motes and supercomputers.
    2. As Steve Lohr wrote in the January 30, 2010, edition of the *New York Times* in an article titled “Smart Dust? Not Quite, But We’re Getting There,” smart dust could eventually consist of “Tiny digital sensors, strewn around the glove, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical

world in new ways."

(Transition) Now that we've examined what smart dust is, let's switch gears and talk about some of the military applications for smart dust.

Main Point II: Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, military uses of smart dust have been widely theorized and examined.

1. According to the smart dust website, smart dust could eventually be used for "battlefield surveillance, treaty monitoring, transportation monitoring, scud hunting" and other clear military applications.
    1. Probably the number one benefit of smart dust in the military environment is its surveillance abilities.
        1. Major Scott Dickson, in a Blue Horizons paper written for the US Air Force Center for Strategy and Technology's Air War College, sees smart dust as helping the military in

battlespace awareness, homeland security, and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) identification.

2. Furthermore, Major Dickson also believes it may be possible to create smart dust that has the ability to defeat communications jamming equipment created by foreign governments, which could help the US military not only communicate among itself, but could also increase communications with civilians in military combat zones.

2. According to a 2010 article written by Jessica Griggs in new *Scientist*, one of the first benefits of smart dust could be an early defense warning for space storms and other debris that could be catastrophic.

(Transition) Now that we've explored some of the military benefits of smart dust, let's switch gears and see how smart dust may be able to have an impact on our daily lives.

Main Point III: According to the smart dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a common part of our daily lives.

1. Everything from pasting smart dust particles to our fingertips to creating a virtual computer keyboard to inventory control to product quality control has been discussed as possible applications for smart dust.

    1. Steve Lohr, in his 2010 *New York Times* article, wrote, "The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil."

2. Medically, according to the smart dust website, smart dust could help disabled individuals interface with computers.

    1. Theoretically, we could all be injected

with smart dust, which relays information to our physicians and detects adverse changes to our body instantly.

2. Smart dust could detect the microscopic formations of center cells or alert us when we've been infected by a bacterium or virus, which could speed up treatment and prolong all of our lives.

(Transition) Today, we've explored what smart dust is, how smart dust could be utilized by the US military, and how smart dust could impact all of our lives in the near future.

Conclusion: While smart dust is quickly transferring from science fiction to science fact, experts agree that the full potential of smart dust will probably not occur until 2025. Smart dust is definitely in our near future, but swarms of smart dust eating people as was depicted in Michael Crichton's 2002 novel, *Prey*, isn't reality. However, as with any technological advance, there are definite ethical considerations and worries related to smart dust. Even Dr. Kris Pister's smart dust project website admits that as smart dust becomes more readily available, one of the trade-offs will be privacy. Pister responds to these critiques by saying, "As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were greater than or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn't be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far outweigh the risks to personal privacy."

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When you prepare your full-sentence outline carefully, it may take as much as 1 ½ hours to complete the first part of the outline from your name at the top through the introduction.

When you have completed that part, take a break and do something else. When you return to the outline, you should be able to complete your draft in another 1 ½ hours. After that, you only need to do a detailed check for completeness, accuracy, relevance, balance, omitted words, and consistency. If you find errors, instead of being frustrated, be glad you can catch these errors *before* you are standing up in front of your audience.

You will notice that the various parts of your presentation, for instance, the transition and main points, are labeled. There are compelling reasons for these labels. First, as you develop your message, you will sometimes find it necessary to go back and look at your wording in another part of the outline. Your labels help you find particular passages easily. Second, the labels work as a checklist so that you can make sure you have included everything you intended to. Third, it helps you prepare your speaking outline.

You will also notice the full references at the end of the outline. They match the citations within the outline. Sometimes while preparing a presentation, a speaker finds it important to go back to an original source to be sure the message will be accurate. If you type in your references as you develop your presentation rather than afterward, they will be a convenience to you if they are complete and accurate.

Do not think of the references as busywork or drudgery. Although they are more time-consuming than text, they are good practice for the more advanced academic work you will do in the immediate future.

SPEAKING OUTLINE

Your full-sentence outline prepares you to present a clear and well-organized message, but your speaking outline will include far less detail. Whenever possible, you will use keywords and phrases, but in some instances, an extended quotation will need to be fully written on your speaking outline.

Resist the temptation to use your full-sentence outline as your speaking outline. The temptation is real for at least two reasons. First, once you feel that you have carefully crafted every sequence of words in your presentation, you might not want to sacrifice quality when you shift to vocal presentation. Second, if you feel anxious about how well you will do in front of an audience, you may want to use your full-sentence outline as a "safety net." In our experience, however, if you have your full-sentence outline with you, you will end up reading, rather than speaking, to your audience.

Your presentation has five main components: introduction, main point one, main point two, main point three, and the conclusion. Therefore we strongly recommend the use of five notecards: one for each of those five components. There are extenuating circumstances that might call for additional cards, but begin with five cards only.

How will five notecards suffice in helping you produce a complete, rich delivery? Why can not you use the full-sentence outline you labored so hard to write? First, the presence of your full-sentence outline will make it appear that you do not know the content of your presentation. Second, the temptation to read the presentation directly from the full-sentence outline is nearly overwhelming; even if you resist this temptation, you will find yourself struggling to remember the words on the page rather than speaking extemporaneously. Third, sheets of paper are noisier and more awkward than cards. Fourth, it is easier to lose your place using the full outline. Finally, cards just look better. Carefully prepared cards, together with practice, will help you more than you might think.

Plan to use five cards. Use 4 × 6 cards. The smaller 3 × 5 cards are too small to provide space for a visually organized set of notes. With five cards, you will have one card for the introduction, one card for each of the three main points, and one card for the conclusion. You should number your cards and write on one side only. Numbering is helpful if you happen to drop your cards, and writing on only one side means that the audience is not distracted by your handwritten notes and reminders to yourself while you are speaking. Each card should contain keywords and key phrases but not full sentences.

Some presentations will include direct or extended quotations from expert sources. Some of these quotations might be highly technical or difficult to memorize for other reasons, but they must be presented correctly. This is a circumstance in which you could include an extra card in the sequence of notecards. This is the one time you may read fully from a card. If your quotation is important and the exact wording is crucial, your audience will understand that.

How will notecards be sufficient? When they are carefully written, your practice will reveal that they will work. If, during practice, you find that one of your cards does not work well enough, you can rewrite that card.

Using a set of carefully prepared, sparingly worded cards will help you resist the temptation to rely on overhead transparencies or PowerPoint slides to get you through the presentation. Although they will never provide the exact word sequence of your full-sentence outline, they should keep you organized during the presentation.

The “trick” to selecting the phrases and quotations for your cards is to identify the labels that will trigger a recall sequence. For instance, if the phrase “more science fact” brings to mind the connection to science fiction and the differences between the real developments and the fictive events of Crichton’s novel *Prey*, that phrase on your card will support you through a fairly extended part of your introduction.

You must discover what works for you and then select those words that tend to jog your recall. Having identified what works, make a preliminary set of no more than five cards written on one side only, and practice with them. Revise and refine them as you would an outline.

The following is a hypothetical set of cards for the smart dust presentation:

Card 1.

Introduction: 2002, *Prey*, swarm nanomachines feed on living tissue.

Kahn, Katz, and Pister, U C Berkeley engineering and computer sci. profs. hyp.

Microelectromechanical (MEMS) devices could detect light, temp, or vib.

Thesis Statement: Researchers hyp that s.d. could track patients, warn of natural disaster, act as defense against bioterrorism.

Prev.: What smart dust is and how it works, military aps, nonmilitary aps.

Transition: To help understand, first, what smart dust is.

Card 2.

I. Dr. Kris Pister, prof robotics lab UC Berkeley conceived the idea in 1998 in a proj. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. 2001 article by Bret Warneke et al titled "Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer" publ. in *Computer*, Pister wanted sensors, comm. devices, and computer in a cubic millimeter package.

2. Doug Steel of CT Bauer College of Bus at Houston noted grain of rice = 5 cm.

    1. Each mote could interact w/ others.
    2. (see extended quotation, next card)

Card 3.

Quotation: Steve Lohr, NYT Jan 30 2005, "Smart Dust? Not Quite, but We're Getting There." Smart dust could eventually consist of "Tiny digital sensors, strewn around the globe, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical world in new ways."

Card 4.

II. Orig conceptualized under DARPA, military uses theor. and examined.

1. Smart Dust website, battlefield surveill., treaty monitor., transp. monitor., + scud hunting.
    1. benefit, surveill.
        1. Maj. Scott Dickson, Blue Horizons Paper for Ctr for Strat and Tech for USAF air war college, sees s.d. as help for battlespace awareness, homeland security, and WMD ID.
        2. could also defeat comm. jamming equipt by communicating among itself and w/ civilians in combat zones.
2. 2010 article Jessica Griggs *New Scientist*, early defense, storms and debris.

Transition: Switch gears to daily lives.

Card 5.

III. s.d. project website: s.d. could become common in daily life.

1. Pasting particles for virtual computer keyboard to inventory control poss.
    1. Steve Lohr, 2010, NYT, "The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil."
2. Medically, accdng to SD project website, help disabled.
    1. interface w/ computers
    2. injected, cd. relay info to docs and detect body changes instantly

1. cancer cells, bacteria or virus, speed up treatment, and so on.

Transition: We expl. What SD is, how SD cd be used military, and how SD cd impact our lives.

Card 6.

Conclusion: Transf fiction to fact, experts agree potential 2025. Michael Crichton's Prey isn't reality, but in developing SD as fact, there are ethical considerations. Pister: privacy.

Dr. Kris Pister: "As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were larger or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn't be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far far outweigh the risks to personal privacy."

Using a set of cards similar to this could help you get through an impressive set of specialized information. But what if you lose your place during a presentation? With a set of cards, it will take less time to find it than with a full-sentence outline. You will not be rustling sheets of paper, and because your cards are written on one side only, you can keep them in order without flipping them back and forth to check both sides.

What if you go blank? Take a few seconds to recall what you have said and how it leads to your next points. There may be several seconds of silence in the middle of your presentation, and it may seem like minutes to you, but you can regain your footing most easily with a small set of well-prepared cards.

Under no circumstances should you ever attempt to put your entire presentation on cards in little tiny writing. You will end up reading a sequence of words to your audience instead of telling them your message.

As with any part of the presentation process, there are some pretty commonly agreed upon principles for creating an outline. Now that we have examined the basics of outline creation, there are some important factors to consider when creating a logical and coherent outline: singularity, consistency, adequacy, uniformity, and parallelism.

SINGULARITY

For the sake of clarity, make sure your thesis statement expresses one idea only. Only in this way will it be optimally useful to you as you build your outline. If you have narrowed your topic skillfully, you can readily focus the thesis statement as one central point. For instance, if you have a thesis statement that says US employment law protects certain classes of people against discrimination but most people are unaware of how to file an EEOC complaint, you have a thesis statement focusing on two different issues. Which focus will you follow? It is crucial to choose just one, saving the other perhaps for a different presentation.

The same holds true for your three main points: they should each express one clear idea. For the sake of your audience, maintain clarity. If many different ideas are required in order to build a complete message, you can handle them in separate sentences with the use of such transitions as “at the same time,” “alternately,” “in response to that event,” or some other transition that clarifies the relationship between two separate ideas.

CONSISTENCY

The entire point of framing a thesis with one clear focus is to help you maintain consistency throughout your presentation. Beyond the grammatical requirements of subject-verb agreement, you will want to maintain a consistent approach. For instance, unless your presentation has a chronological structure that begins in the past and ends in the future, you should choose a tense, past or present, to use throughout the presentation. Similarly, you should choose language and use it consistently. For instance, use humanity instead of mankind or humans, and use that term throughout.

Similarly, define your terms and use those terms only to designate the meanings in your definition. To do otherwise could result in equivocation and confusion. For instance, if you use the word "right" in two or three different senses, you should change your language. The word "right" can be applicable to your *right* to a good education; the ethical difference between *right* and wrong; and the status of a statement as *right*, or accurate and correct. By the same token, in a healthcare setting, saying that a medical test had a positive outcome can be confusing. Does the patient test positive for the presence of disease, or does the test reveal some good news? If you find yourself using the same word to mean different things, you will need to spend extra time in your presentation explaining these meanings very clearly—or avoid the problem by making other word choices.

ADEQUACY

To make sure your audience will understand your presentation, you must set aside the assumption that what is obvious to you is also obvious to your audience. Therefore, pay attention to adequacy in two ways: definitions of terms and support for your main points.

You should use concrete language as much as you can. For instance, if you use the word "community," you are using an abstract term that can mean many things. You might be referring to a suburban neighborhood; to a cultural group, such as the Jewish community; to an institutional setting that includes an academic community; or to a general sense of overarching mainstream community standards for what materials should or should not be broadcast on television, for instance. You may not find any definition of "community" that conveys your meaning. Therefore, you will need to define for your audience what *you* mean by "community."

Adequacy is also a concern when you use evidence to support your main points. Evidence of the right kind and the right weight are needed. For instance, if you make a substantial claim, such as a claim that all printed news sources will be obsolete within ten years, you need expert sources. This means you need at least two well-known experts from the institutions that provide news (newspapers, television news, or news radio). They should be credible sources, not sources with extreme views whose contact with reality is questioned. This will give you the right kind of evidence, and a large enough amount of evidence.

UNIFORMITY

A full-sentence outline readily shows whether you are giving "equal time" to each of your three main points. For example, are you providing three pieces of evidence to support each main point? It should also show whether each main point is directly related to the thesis statement.

PARALLELISM

Parallelism refers to the idea that the three main points follow the same structure or make use of the same kind of language. For instance, in the sample outline we used previously, you see that each of the main points emphasizes the topic, smart dust.

Parallelism also allows you to check for inconsistencies and self-contradictory statements. For instance, does anything within main point two contradict anything in main point one? Examining your text for this purpose can strengthen the clarity of your message. For instance, if in main point one you claim that computer crime leaves an electronic trail, but in main point two you claim that hackers often get away with their crimes, you have some explaining to do. If an electronic trail can readily lead to the discovery of the electronic felon, how or why do they get away with it? The answer might be that cybercrime does not fall within the jurisdiction of any law enforcement agency or that the law lags behind technology. Perhaps there are other reasons as well, and you must make sure you do not leave your audience confused. If you confuse them, you will sound confused, and you will lose credibility. There is no doubt that a full-sentence outline provides the most useful opportunity to examine your message for the details that either clarify or undermine your message.

Finally, your conclusion should do two things. First, it should come "full circle" to show the audience that you have covered all the territory you laid out in your preview. Second, it should provide satisfying, decisive, psychological closure. In other words, your audience should know when your presentation is over. You should not trail off. You should not have to say, "That's it." Your audience should not have to wait to see whether you are going to say anything else. At the right time, they should feel certain that the presentation is over and that they can clap.

7.5 TRANSITIONING AMONG PRESENTATION PARTS

[Author removed at request of original publisher]

Have you ever been listening to a presentation or a lecture and found yourself thinking, "I am so lost!" or "Where the is this speaker going?" Chances are one of the reasons you were not sure what the speaker was talking about was that the speaker did not effectively keep the presentation moving. When we are reading and encounter something we do not understand, we can reread the paragraph and try to make sense of what we are trying to read. Unfortunately, we are not that lucky when it comes to listening to a speaker. We cannot pick up our remote and rewind the person. For this reason, speakers need to really think about how they keep a presentation moving so that audience members are easily able to keep up with the presentation. In this section, we are going to look at four specific techniques speakers can use that make following a presentation much easier for an audience: transitions, internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts.

TRANSITIONS BETWEEN MAIN POINTS

A transition is a phrase or sentence that indicates that a speaker is moving from one main point to another main point in a presentation. Basically, a transition is a sentence where the speaker summarizes what was said in one point and previews what is going to be discussed in the next point. Let us look at some examples:

- Now that we have seen the problems caused by our company's lack of social media use policies, let us examine how policies could benefit our company.
- Thus far we have examined the history and prevalence of invasive plant species in the Midwest, but it is the impact that these species have on the health of native vegetation that is of the greatest concern.
- Now that we have thoroughly examined how these two supplies are similar to one another, we can consider the many clear differences between the two suppliers.
- Although Widget World was one of the most prolific distributors of widgets prior to COVID, Widget World continued to distribute during the pandemic as well despite supply chain disruptions.

You will notice that in each of these transition examples, the beginning phrase of the sentence indicates the conclusion of a period of time (now that, thus far). Table 7.1 "Transition Words" contains a variety of transition words that will be useful when keeping your presentation moving.

TABLE 7.1 TRANSITION WORDS

Addition	also, again, as well as, besides, coupled with, following this, further, furthermore, in addition, in the same way, additionally, likewise, moreover, similarly
Consequence	accordingly, as a result, consequently, for this reason, for this purpose, hence, otherwise, so then, subsequently, therefore, thus, thereupon, wherefore
Generalizing	as a rule, as usual, for the most part, generally, generally speaking, ordinarily, usually
Exemplifying	chiefly, especially, for instance, in particular, markedly, namely, particularly, including, specifically, such as
Illustration	for example, for instance, for one thing, as an illustration, illustrated with, as an example, in this case
Emphasis	above all, chiefly, with attention to, especially, particularly, singularly
Similarity	comparatively, coupled with, correspondingly, identically, likewise, similar, moreover, together with
Exception	aside from, barring, besides, except, excepting, excluding, exclusive of, other than, outside of, save
Restatement	in essence, in other words, namely, that is, that is to say, in short, in brief, to put it differently
Contrast and Comparison	contrast, by the same token, conversely, instead, likewise, on one hand, on the other hand, on the contrary, nevertheless, rather, similarly, yet, but, however, still, nevertheless, in contrast

Sequence	at first, first of all, to begin with, in the first place, at the same time, for now, for the time being, the next step, in time, in turn, later on, meanwhile, next, then, soon, the meantime, later, while, earlier, simultaneously, afterward, in conclusion, with this in mind
Common Sequence Patterns	first, second, third… generally, furthermore, finally in the first place, also, lastly in the first place, pursuing this further, finally to be sure, additionally, lastly in the first place, just in the same way, finally basically, similarly, as well
Summarizing	after all, all in all, all things considered, briefly, by and large, in any case, in any event, in brief, in conclusion, on the whole, in short, in summary, in the final analysis, in the long run, on balance, to sum up, to summarize, finally
Diversion	by the way, incidentally
Direction	here, there, over there, beyond, nearly, opposite, under, above, to the left, to the right, in the distance
Location	above, behind, by, near, throughout, across, below, down, off, to the right, against, beneath, in back of, onto, under, along, beside, in front of, on top of, among, between, inside, outside, around, beyond, into, over

Beyond transitions, there are several other techniques that you can use to clarify your presentation organization for your audience. The next sections address several of these techniques, including internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts.

INTERNAL PREVIEWS

An internal preview is a phrase or sentence that gives an audience an idea of what is to come within a section of a presentation. An internal preview works similarly to the preview that a speaker gives at the end of a presentation introduction, quickly outlining what he or she is going to talk about (i.e., the presentation's three main body points). In an internal preview, the speaker highlights what he or she is going to discuss within a specific main point during a presentation.

Ausubel (1968) was the first person to examine the effect that internal previews had on the retention of oral information. Basically, when a speaker clearly informs an audience what he or she is going to be talking about in a clear and organized manner, the audience listens for those main points, which leads to higher retention of the speaker's message. Let us look at a sample internal preview:

> To help us further understand why starting a recycling

> program on campus is important, we will first explain the positive benefits of student-led recycling programs and then explore how recycling can help our campus.

When an audience hears that you will be exploring two different ideas within this main point, they are ready to listen for those main points as you talk about them. In essence, you are helping your audience keep up with your presentation.

Rather than being given alone, internal previews often come after a speaker has transitioned to that main topic area. Using the previous internal preview, let us see it along with the transition to that main point.

> Now that we've explored the effect that a lack of consistent recycling has on our campus, let us explore the importance of recycling for our campus (transition). To help us further understand why starting a recycling program on campus is important, we will first explain the positive benefits of student-led recycling programs and then explore how recycling can help our campus. (internal preview).

While internal previews are definitely helpful, you do not need to include one for every main point of your presentation. In fact, we recommend that you use internal previews sparingly to highlight only main points containing relatively complex information.

INTERNAL SUMMARIES

Whereas an internal preview helps an audience know what you are going to talk about within a main point at the beginning, an internal summary is delivered to remind an audience of what they just heard within the presentation. In general, internal summaries are best used when the information within a specific main point of a presentation was complicated. To write your own internal summaries, look at the summarizing transition words in Table 7.1 "Transition Words" Let us look at an example.

> To sum up, workplace bullying is a definite problem. Bullying in the workplace has been shown to be detrimental to the victim's performance, job satisfaction, and organizational loyalty.

In this example, the speaker was probably talking about the impact that bullying has on an individual victim in the workplace. Of course, an internal summary can also be a great way to lead into a transition to the next point of a presentation.

> In this section, we have explored how bullying in the workplace has been shown to be detrimental to the victim's performance, job satisfaction, and organizational loyalty (internal summary). Therefore, workplaces need to implement organization-wide, comprehensive antibullying programs (transition).

While not sounding like the more traditional transition, this internal summary helps readers summarize the content of that main point. The sentence that follows then leads to the next major part of the presentation, which is going to discuss the importance of antibullying programs.

SIGNPOSTS

Have you ever been on a road trip and watched the green rectangular mile signs pass you by? Fifty miles to go. Twenty-five miles to go. One mile to go. Signposts within a presentation function the same way. A signpost is a guide a speaker gives her or his audience to help the audience keep up with the content of a presentation. If you look at Table 7.1 "Transition Words" and look at the "common sequence patterns," you will see a series of possible signpost options. In essence, we use these short phrases at the beginning of a piece of information to help our audience members keep up with what we are discussing. For example, if you were giving a presentation whose main point was about the three functions of credibility, you could use internal signposts like this:

- The first function of credibility is competence.

- The second function of credibility is trustworthiness.
- The final function of credibility is caring/goodwill.

Signposts are simply meant to help your audience keep up with your presentation, so the more simplistic your signposts are, the easier it is for your audience to follow.

In addition to helping audience members keep up with a presentation, signposts can also be used to highlight specific information the speaker thinks is important. Where the other signposts were designed to show the way (like highway markers), signposts that call attention to specific pieces of information are more like billboards. Words and phrases that are useful for highlighting information can be found in Table 7.1 "Transition Words" under the category "emphasis." All these words are designed to help you call attention to what you are saying so that the audience will also recognize the importance of the information.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Transitions are very important because they help an audience stay on top of the information that is being presented to them. Without transitions, audiences are often left lost and the ultimate goal of the presentation is not accomplished.

- Specific transition words, like those found in Table 7.1 “Transition Words”, can be useful in constructing effective transitions.
- In addition to major transitions between the main points of a presentation, speakers can utilize internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts to help focus audience members on the information contained within a presentation.

7.6 CREATING SLIDES FOR PRESENTATIONS

Lucinda Atwood; Christian Westin; and Linda Macdonald

When making slides, make sure you consider these five elements: organization, titles and text, visual design, content, and user experience.

Organization

Your slide deck must be organized to match the order of your presentation. Make sure that information is presented in a logical way. For example, if you are talking about something that happens in a sequence, make sure it is in the correct order in your slides. Present information based on its importance. The size of text and list format of key points and sub-points should be consistent with their importance.

Titles and text

The appearance of your titles and text can reinforce your professionalism.

Consistency Throughout your slide deck, titles and text should be consistent in heading and text size, bullet style, hierarchy of points, and formatting. If the style does change, it should be an intentional design choice that reflects the content. Be especially careful with team projects – it is easy to lose consistency when more than one person creates the slides.

Brevity Your slides are not a script. If you include too much information on them, your audience will be reading, not listening to you. Slides should reinforce your key points, highlighting only the most important information. Share anecdotes, smaller details and extra information verbally.

Pro Tip

Two great methods keep slides brief: The **1-6-6 Method** recommends that each slide have a maximum of 1 idea, 6 bullet points, and 6 words per bullet. The **1-3-5 Method** is similar: It suggests 1 idea, 3 bullet points and 5 words per bullet, per slide.

Font style Your audience might have less than perfect vision or a small device, so make the type easy to read. Your slide should have short blocks of text. Brief text is easier to read in a sans-serif font. Highway signs, for example, are designed for small amounts of text to be read at a distance. In general, you can use a simple sans-serif font like Arial or Calibri for slides that will be viewed online or through a projector.

However, you may want to add visual interest with font pairing. Limit the number of fonts you use to no more than two, one for the headings and one for the main bodies of text. An internet search of effective font pairings for presentation slides can give you some ideas (for example, see Canva). Font pairings can be one of four types, as shown in the images below along with examples of each type of pairing. Choose the pairing and the typefaces best suited to your purpose, audience, and context.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://fhsu.pressbooks.pub/profdev/?p=51#h5p-7

The font size depends on the size of the screen and the distance of the audience from it. If you are using a font size smaller than 32, test your slides to make sure text is visible from the back of the room or on a small device.

Use high-contrast colors for text, such as black on white, or white on navy blue. If you are placing text on an image, use a solid background color in the text box.

You can further differentiate text with bold or italics. Remember, though, that too much emphasis is no emphasis at all.

Spelling and grammar Checking your spelling and grammar. (Most presentation apps include spell-check tools.) Typos and grammar errors make you look sloppy and unprofessional.

Animations You can use the app's animation tools to move objects and text on, off, or around a slide. You have probably seen slides with bullet points that appear one at a time. Animations are useful when you want to gradually reveal information, for example, if you want the audience to focus on one point at a time or when you want to ask a question before showing the answer.

Limit the number of animations you use, and avoid whimsical or unnecessary ones – they can make your slides annoying and unprofessional.

Transitions You can use transitions, like fade-in or fade-out, when you are moving from one slide to the next. To avoid distracting your audience, do not use too many different types of transitions, and avoid overly dramatic transitions. Just like animations, a little goes a long way.

Visual design

You do not have to be a designer to make professional slides; most apps include professionally-designed templates, or you can start with a blank slide. Whichever you choose, make sure the visual design supports your content and strengthens your message. Slides should relate to each other visually: Colors, layout, text, and images should be consistent.

Consistency All slides should have a consistent design as though they were created by one person, not pieced together from multiple sources. If the design changes within the slide deck, the change should be an intentional design choice that reflects the purpose of the presentation. Be especially careful during team projects; it is easy to lose consistency when more than one person creates the slides.

Alignment Keep slides looking clean and professional by aligning various text or image elements. For example, text is almost always left-aligned (except captions and titles). Space text and images so they are balanced and visually pleasing. PowerPoint shows alignment markings to help with this.

Branding Branded elements make your slides look professional. You can use your brand's colors and logo on the title page, and/or at the top or footer of each slide. Your branding may include fonts, text size and color. Whatever you choose, make sure all text is easy to read and not distracting.

Images Human brains love images. Include images in your slides to add interest and explain key points. Make sure every image is high quality, high resolution, relevant and appropriate, large enough to be easily seen from afar, not stretched or distorted, and free of watermarks. (More about watermarks below).

Single images are generally better than collages because you want slides to be uncluttered. No matter how cute they are, *do not* include images that are unprofessional or unrelated to your subject – such as emojis, minion pictures, and bad clip art.

Charts and graphs Well-displayed information can enhance your audience's understanding and help to convince them that you are a professional. Charts and graphs are fantastic ways to show data, describe relationships, and help your audience understand a key point. Make sure the labels and titles are large enough to be easily read, and remove unnecessary details; you can verbally explain details and background information. If your presentation includes handouts, you can show the basic chart or graph on screen, and add a more detailed version in the handout. See "Which chart, or visual should I use? " below for examples and additional guidelines.

Content

Complete Your presentation should include at least one slide for each key point. Make sure that only the most important information of your presentation is on your slides.

Makes sense Information presented is well researched.

Fits audience Assume that your audience is smart like you, but does not have specialist knowledge. Take the time to explain anything that the majority of people might not know.

Citations and references For facts, quotes, or other statistics, you may want to include your source on the slide, especially if it adds credibility. Otherwise, sources (including for images) are listed in both the notes section and in a list of sources at the end of your presentation.

Authorship Include your full name at the start of your slides. You may want to include your name and contact information on your last slide.

Engages the left and right brain Audience members engage and remember better when you engage the "left brain" – logic, facts, science, numbers, and hard data – as well as the "right brain" – emotion, color, artistic and sensory information like music, videos, and other media.

Audience experience

This element is a bit different from the ones above because it focuses on the live integration of your slides and your presentation.

Slides enhance the presentation Remember that you are the star of the show, and your slides are there to support your live delivery. For this reason it is important to ensure that you do not use the slides as a teleprompter – always practice and know your entire presentation and slideshow thoroughly. Avoid turning your back to the audience to look at the slide while speaking.

Number of slides is reasonable Practice delivering your presentation to ensure you are not rushing through too many slides or forcing the audience to stare a the same slide for too long.

Agenda / overview Longer or more complex presentations (for example, case study presentations) often include an agenda or overview slide. Shorter presentations typically do not use them.

Animations and transitions executed When practicing your presentation, remember which slides have animations or transitions, and practice advancing your slides at the right time. Sometimes presenters get caught up in their content and forget to move the slides ahead.

Using other people's images

You can use your own images in your presentations. You can also use downloaded images, but be careful to use copyright-free images, and credit them properly, even if no attribution is required for use.

Many images that you see online are copyrighted, meaning you cannot use them without the creator's permission. A lot of those images have watermarks to make sure people do not use them, or pay to use them. Do not use watermarked images—it is illegal and unethical. A watermark looks like this:

Image courtesy Lucinda Atwood

Where to find images

Many high-quality images are freely available online. Sources include

- Creative Commons
- Pexels
- Unsplash
- Pixabay
- Flicker – Creative Commons license
- Google: Enter your search words and click *Search*. Then click *Images*, and then *Tools* (underneath the search bar). Then click *Usage Rights* and select *Creative Commons*

Licenses.

How to give credit

Always give credit to the creators of anything you did not create – including images, charts, graphs, video, audio and gifs. You do not need to credit anything you made yourself. Your authorship is implied as no source is provided.

Put image credits in the Notes section of the slide. Also list the credits on one slide at the end of the presentation.

Citations have three parts. Use the following citation form:

[Title of the Creative-Commons-licensed image] by **[Creator]** licensed under **[license type]**

Link to each of the three elements– title, creator, and license. For example, the following image should be cited as

DSC03194 – Peggy's Cove Lighthouse by Dennis Jarvis licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Some sites, like Unsplash, provide the appropriate source attribution for you when you download the image.

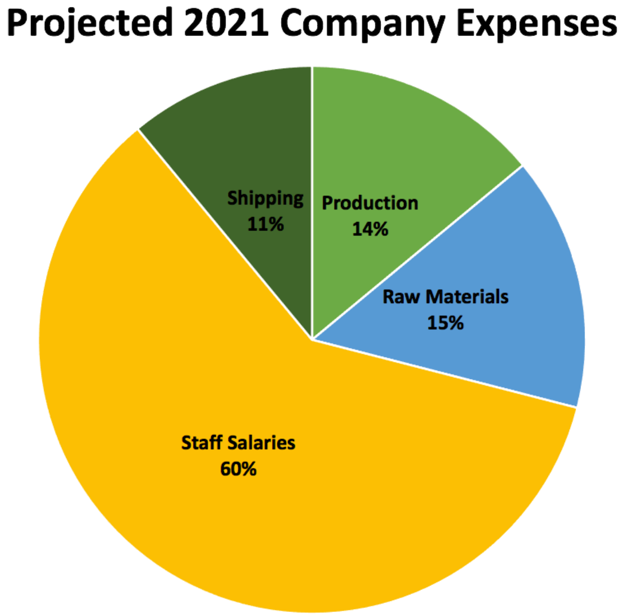
Which graph, chart, or visual should I use?

You can easily make charts and graphs for your presentation, using Excel or Google Spreadsheets. Add the data to the spreadsheet, then decide which type of chart or graph to use.

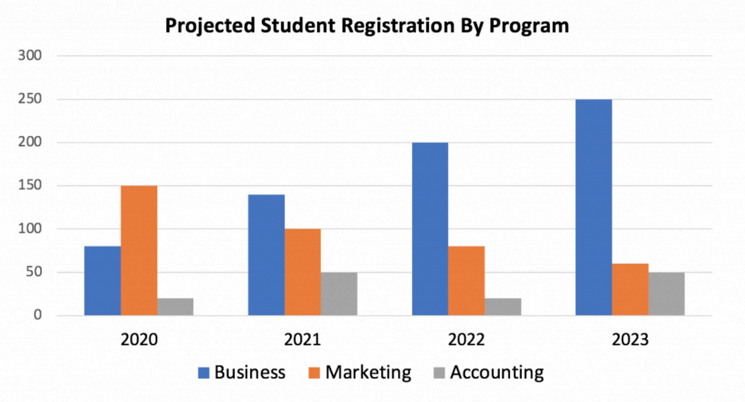
No matter what type you use, always include a title, clear labels, and high-contrast colors that are visible to all users. For example, many people can not see the difference between red and green, so avoid using them together.

The most common types are presented here:

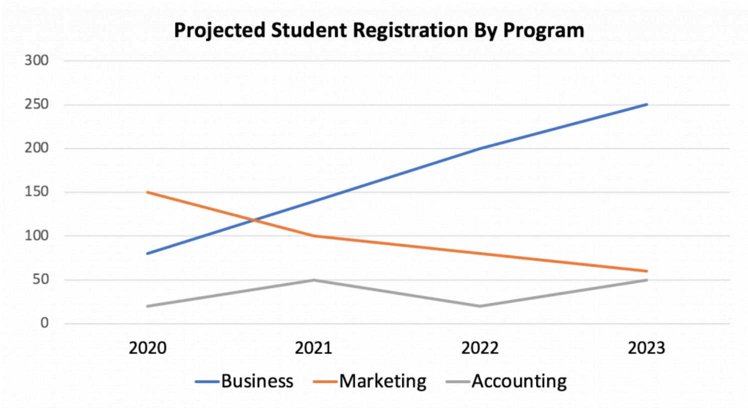
Pie charts show percentages – portions of a whole. The total segments should add up to 100% or a complete whole. Pie charts are excellent for showing relationships. In the example below we quickly see that Staff Salaries are a huge portion of the company expenses.



Bar graphs allow comparison between different values, and can show changes over time (if the difference in values are large). The horizontal and vertical axis must always be labelled. This graph shows that the number of business students is expected to rise, while the number of marketing students will decrease.



Line graphs show a trend or progress over time. They can show small changes over time better than a bar graph. Note that the example below shows the same data used in the chart above, but the line graph emphasizes the trend of business registrations growing, marketing registrations declining, and accounting registrations remaining low with a bit of fluctuation. This graph would be better if you wanted to focus on changes over time.



Heatmap charts use color to convey the magnitude of certain values. Examples include a risk management heatmap showing low, medium, and high risk based on the likelihood and impact of various outcomes, or an atlas heatmap as displayed below. Because heatmaps depend only on color – not shape or size – be very careful to use colors that all users can see.

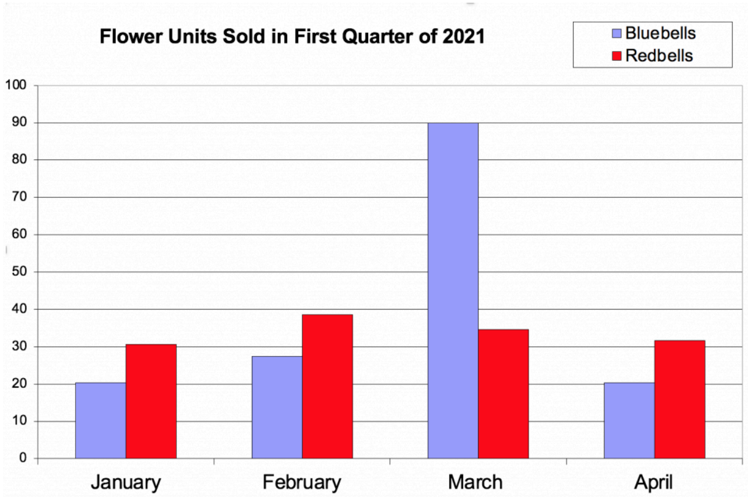
Which chart? An example

Imagine that our team is excited to share the success of our recent marketing campaign to promote bluebell flower sales during the month of March. Here are two ways we might display the data. Look at both and note your response: Which one is easier to understand? Which do you prefer to look at?

Example 1

	January	February	March	April
Bluebells	20.4	27.4	90	20.4
Redbells	30.6	38.6	34.6	31.6

Example 2



Example 1 is harder to read because it is not visual. There are many numbers, no hierarchy or color, and the heavy lines compete with the content. It is not easy for the viewer to quickly understand the information. This example also lacks a title or legend (a description of what the data is conveying).

Example 2 shows the same information, but in a way that is easy to quickly understand. This version emphasizes the dramatic success of our marketing campaign, which boosted sales of bluebells during March. Also notice the inclusion of a title, legend, clear axis labels, and color coding – all of which help the audience's understanding.

7.7 MOVEMENT AND VOCAL QUALITIES IN YOUR PRESENTATION

[Author removed at request of original publisher]; Linda Macdonald; and Saylor Academy

At some point in your business career, you will be called upon to give a presentation or remarks. It may be to an audience of one on a sales floor or to a large audience at a national meeting. You already know you need to make a positive first impression, but do you know how to use movement and vocal qualities to the most powerful effect in your presentation? In this section, we will examine several strategies for using movement and voice.

Customers and audiences respond well to speakers who are comfortable with themselves. Comfortable does not mean overconfident or cocky, and it does not mean shy or timid. It means that an audience is far more likely to forgive the occasional "umm" or "ahh," or the nonverbal equivalent of a misstep if the speaker is comfortable with themselves and their message.

Movement

Let us start with behaviors to avoid. Would you rather listen to a speaker who moves confidently across the stage or one who hides behind the podium, one who expresses themselves nonverbally with purpose and meaning or one who crosses their arms or clings to the lectern?

Audiences are most likely to respond positively to open, dynamic speakers who convey the feeling of being at ease with their bodies. The setting, combined with audience expectations, will give a range of movement. If you are speaking at a formal event, or if you are being covered by a stationary camera, you may be expected to stay in one spot. If the stage allows you to explore, closing the distance between yourself and your audience may prove effective. Rather than focus on a list of behaviors and their relationship to environment and context, give emphasis to what your audience expects and what you yourself would find more engaging instead.

Novice speakers are sometimes told to keep their arms at their sides or to restrict their movement to only that which is absolutely necessary. If you are in formal training for a military presentation, or a speech and debate competition, this may hold true. But in business and industry, expressive gestures, like arm movements while speaking, may be appropriate and, in fact, expected.

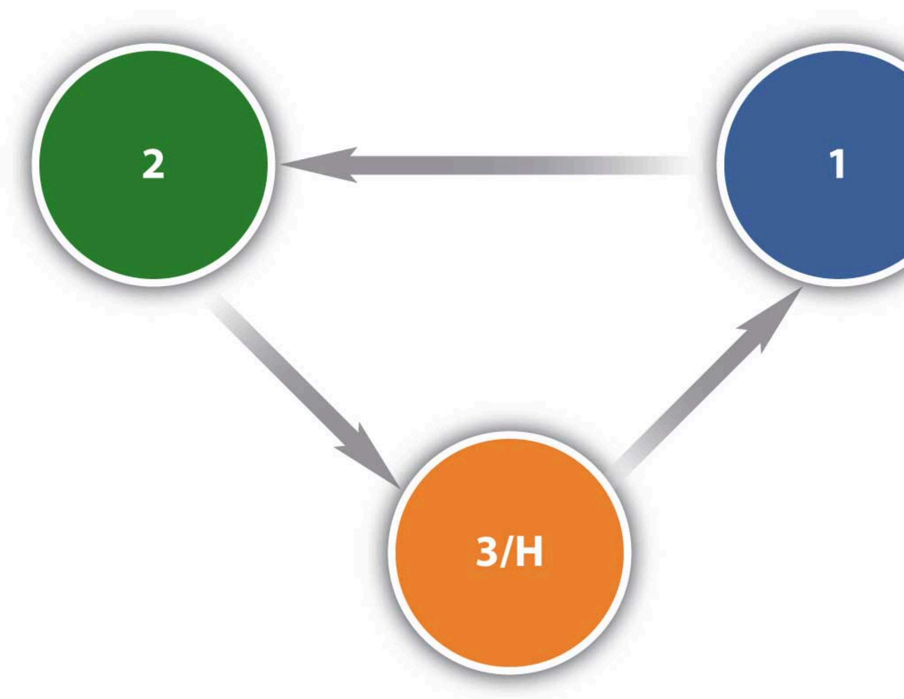
The questions are, again, what does your audience consider appropriate and what do you feel comfortable doing during your presentation? Since the emphasis is always on meeting the needs of the customer, whether it is an audience of one on a sales floor or a large national gathering, you may need to stretch outside your comfort zone. On that same note, do not stretch too far and move yourself into the uncomfortable range. Finding balance is a challenge, but no one ever said giving a speech was easy.

Movement is an important aspect of your speech and requires planning, the same as the words you choose and the visual aids you design. Be natural, but do not naturally shuffle your feet, pace back and forth, or rock on your heels through your entire speech. These behaviors distract your audience from your message and can communicate nervousness, undermining your credibility.

POSITIONS ON THE STAGE

FIGURE 7.2

SPEAKER'S TRIANGLE



In a speech presentation, positions on the stage can guide both the speaker and the audience through transitions. The **speaker's triangle** (see Figure 7.2) indicates where the speaker starts in the introduction, moves to the second position for the first point, across for the second point, then returns to the original position to make the third point and conclusion. This movement technique can be quite effective to help you remember each of your main points. It allows you to break down your speech into manageable parts. Your movement will demonstrate purpose and reinforce your credibility.

GESTURES

Gestures involve using your arms and hands while communicating. Gestures provide a way to channel your nervous energy into a positive activity that benefits your speech and gives you something to do with your hands. For example, watch people in normal, everyday conversations. They frequently use their hands to express themselves. Do you think *they* think about how they use their hands? Most people do not. Their arm and hand gestures come naturally as part of their expression, often reflecting what they have learned within their community.

For professional speakers, this is also true, but deliberate movement can reinforce, repeat, and even regulate an audience's response to their verbal and nonverbal messages.

You want to come across as comfortable and natural, and your use of your arms and hands contributes to your presentation. A well-chosen gesture can help make a point memorable or lead the audience to the next point.

FACIAL GESTURES

As you progress as a speaker from gestures and movement, you will need to turn your attention to facial gestures and expressions. Facial gestures involve using your face to display feelings and attitudes nonverbally. They may reinforce, or contradict, the spoken word, and their impact cannot be underestimated. As we have discussed, people often focus more on how we say something than what we actually say, and place more importance on our nonverbal gestures (Mehrabian, 1981). As in other body movements, your facial gestures should come naturally, but giving them due thought and consideration can keep you aware of how you are communicating the nonverbal message.

Facial gestures should reflect the tone and emotion of your verbal communication. If you are using humor in your speech, you will likely smile and wink to complement the amusement expressed in your words. Smiling will be much less appropriate if your presentation involves a serious subject such as cancer or car accidents. Consider how you want your audience to feel in response to your message, and identify the facial gestures you can use to promote those feelings. Then practice in front of a mirror so that the gestures come naturally.

In Western cultures, eye contact is essential for building a relationship with the audience. Eye contact refers to the speaker's gaze in engaging the audience members. It can vary in degree and length, and in many cases, is culturally influenced. Both the speaker's and audience members' notions of what is appropriate will influence normative expectations for eye contact. In some cultures, there are understood behavioral expectations for male gaze directed toward females, and vice versa. In a similar way, children may have expectations of when to look their elders in the eye and when to gaze down. Depending on the culture, both may be nonverbal signals of listening. Understanding your audience is critical when it comes to nonverbal expectations.

When giving a presentation, avoid looking over people's heads, staring at a point on the wall, or letting your eyes dart all over the place. The audience will find these mannerisms unnerving. They will not feel as connected, or receptive, to your message and you will reduce your effectiveness. Move your eyes gradually and naturally across the audience, both close to you and toward the back of the room. Try to look for faces that look interested and engaged in your message. Do not focus on only one or two audience members, as audiences may respond negatively to perceived favoritism. Instead, try to give as much eye contact as possible across the audience. Keep it natural, but give it deliberate thought.

Voice

In "Your Speaking Voice", Toastmasters International (2011) says that "you can develop the sort of voice that wins favorable attention and reflects the qualities you wish to project" (p. 3). According to Toastmasters, you can correct bad speaking habits and develop effective speaking qualities by aiming to develop a voice that is

- pleasant, conveying a sense of warmth
- natural, reflecting your true personality and sincerity
- dynamic, giving the impression of force and strength – even when it is not especially loud
- expressive, portraying various shades of meaning and never sounding monotonous or without emotion
- easily heard, thanks to proper volume and clear articulation (Toastmasters International, 2011)

In working to convey a sense of warmth, remember that your goal is to build a relationship with your audience. In most business settings, a conversational tone is appropriate for achieving a connection. Toastmasters' second goal concerns a natural, genuine personality. Speaking from your core values helps achieve this goal.

A dynamic and expressive voice uses a range of **volumes, pace, and inflections** to enhance the content of the presentation. Toastmasters says that an effective speaker may use as many as 25 different notes:"A one-note speaker is tedious to an audience and promotes inattention and boredom. Vocal variety is the way you use your voice to create interest, excitement, and emotional involvement. It is accomplished by varying your pitch, volume, and timing" (p. 6). A dynamic voice is one that attracts attention and reflects confidence.

Filler words like "um" and "uh" can reduce your dynamism and affect your credibility since you may appear unsure or unfamiliar with your content. In addition to avoiding this filler-word habit, avoid using a **"vocal fry"**, a low growl at the end of a sentence, or an uplift at the end of a declarative statement. The effects of these habits on your demonstration of authority and conviction are addressed in this three-minute video by Taylor Mali:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You

can view them online here:
https://fhsu.pressbooks.pub/profdev/?p=57#oembed-1

(Direct link to Totally like whatever, you know by Taylor Mali video)

RESONANCE

One quality of a good speaking voice is **resonance**, meaning strength, depth, and force. This word is related to the word *resonate*. Resonant speech begins at the speaker's vocal cords and resonates throughout the upper body. The speaker does not simply use his or her mouth to form words, but instead projects from the lungs and chest. (That is why having a cold can make it hard to speak clearly.)

Some people happen to have powerful, resonant voices. But even if your voice is naturally softer or higher pitched, you can improve it with practice.

- Take a few deep breaths before you begin rehearsing.

- Hum a few times, gradually lowering the pitch so that you feel the vibration not only in your throat but also in your chest and diaphragm.
- Try to be conscious of that vibration and of your breathing while you speak. You may not feel the vibration as intensely, but you should feel your speech resonate in your upper body, and you should feel as though you are breathing easily.
- Keep practicing until it feels natural.

ENUNCIATION

Enunciation refers to how clearly you articulate words while speaking. Try to pronounce words as clearly and accurately as you can, enunciating each syllable. Avoid mumbling or slurring words. As you rehearse your presentation, practice speaking a little more slowly and deliberately. Ask someone you know to give you feedback.

VOLUME

Volume is simply how loudly or softly you speak. Shyness, nervousness, or overenthusiasm can cause people to speak too softly or too loudly, which may make the audience feel frustrated or put off. Your volume should make the audience comfortable– not so soft that audiences must strain to hear you or so loud that audiences feel threatened or uneasy. You will need to adjust your volume depending on the size of your audience and the space to ensure that the person farthest away from you can hear. You may also need to eliminate outside noises by closing doors and windows. Be sure that you do not create noises yourself that are distracting. Shoes on tile floors, heavy jewelry, and phones can create distracting noises. If possible, you can also move closer to your audience so that they can hear you more comfortably; this technique also develops trust with your audience. Here are some tips for managing volume effectively:

- Do not be afraid of being too loud, many people speak too quietly. As a rule, aim to use a slightly louder volume for public speaking than you use in conversation.
- Consider whether you might be an exception to the rule. If you know you tend to be loud, you might be better off using your normal voice or dialing back a bit.
- Think about volume in relation to content. Main points

should usually be delivered with more volume and force. However, lowering your voice at crucial points can also help draw in your audience or emphasize serious content.

PITCH

Pitch refers to how high or low a speaker's voice is. The overall pitch of people's voices varies among individuals. We also naturally vary our pitch when speaking. For instance, our pitch gets higher when we ask a question and often when we express excitement. It often gets lower when we give a command or want to convey seriousness.

A voice that does not vary in pitch sounds monotonous, like a musician playing the same note repeatedly. Keep these tips in mind to manage pitch:

- Pitch, like volume, should vary with your content. Evaluate your voice to make sure you are not speaking at the same pitch throughout your presentation.
- It is fine to raise your pitch slightly at the end of a sentence when you ask a question. However, some speakers do this for every sentence, and as a result, they

come across as tentative and unsure. Notice places where your pitch rises, and make sure the change is appropriate to the content.

- Lower your pitch when you want to convey authority. But do not overdo it. Questions should sound different from statements and commands.
- Chances are, your overall pitch falls within a typical range. However, if your voice is very high or low, consciously try to lower or raise it slightly.

PACE

Pace is the speed or rate at which you speak. Speaking too fast makes it hard for an audience to follow the presentation. The audience may become impatient.

Many less experienced speakers tend to talk faster when giving a presentation because they are nervous, want to get the presentation over with, or fear that they will run out of time. If you find yourself rushing during your rehearsals, try these strategies:

- Take a few deep breaths before you speak. Make sure to breathe during your presentation.

- Identify places where a brief, strategic pause is appropriate—for instance, when transitioning from one main point to the next. Build these pauses into your presentation.
- If you still find yourself rushing, you may need to edit your presentation content to ensure that you stay within the allotted time.

If, on the other hand, your pace seems sluggish, you will need to liven things up. A slow pace may stem from uncertainty about your content. If that is the case, additional practice should help you. It also helps to break down how much time you plan to spend on each part of the presentation and then make sure you are adhering to your plan.

In Summary

The following 16-minute video by David JP Phillips effectively pulls together the skills discussed in this chapter. According to Phillips, a communication expert, *everyone* can be an effective speaker. As he points out in his TED Talk, we refer to presentation *skills*, not talent, indicating that we all can learn to use techniques that will help us develop a relationship with our audiences and deliver high-quality presentations. Some of the skills he demonstrates in this video might be successfully incorporated in your own presentations.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://fhsu.pressbooks.pub/profdev/?p=57#oembed-2

(Direct link to The 110 Techniques of Communication and Public Speaking by David JP Phillips video)

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://fhsu.pressbooks.pub/profdev/?p=57#h5p-9

7.8 DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

Exercise 7.7.1. Preparing to speak: Warming up your face

Just as an athlete will warm up and stretch before a race or game, a speaker needs to warm up. A good place to start is the face. These three exercises, as silly as they may seem while you are doing them, are a great way to help your face feel relaxed and free to express during your presentation. Having an animated face is one of the keys to being an engaged speaker.

1. Take the palms of your hands and gently massage your face, spending a little more time on your cheeks.
2. Imagine you have put the most sour candy in

your mouth or there is a large vacuum an inch from your face and make your most intense pucker. Pucker your lips, suck in your cheeks and furrow your brow.

3. Imagine someone has flipped reverse on that vacuum now or that you are a dog sticking its head out of a fast-moving vehicle's window. Make your best 'blown away' face. Widen your eyes, lift your brow, and open your mouth as wide as you can. You can use your hands to gently push back your cheeks, chin or forehead.

Exercise 7.7.2. Preparing to speak: Warming up your mouth

Just as an athlete will warm up and stretch before a race or game, a speaker needs to warm up. After you have warmed up your face (see exercise 7.1), you need to warm up your mouth to ward off stuttering and tripping over words. This exercise, as silly as it may seem while you are doing it, is a great way to help your mouth feel flexible and nimble.

In this exercise, you are simply going to repeat the phrase “the tip of the tongue, the roof of the mouth, the lips and the teeth” with increasing speed and overenunciating and exaggerating the face. Start by saying the phrase normally a few times to learn it. Then, begin to overenunciate. Now, while continuing to over-annunciate, exaggerating your face (lips and cheeks) as your mouth form the words. Finally, pick up speed. Gradually pick up speed until you cannot possibly say the phrase any faster. This is also a fun game to play with friends–who can say it the fastest without tripping over a word?

Exercise 7.7.3. Outlining a presentation

Find a sample informative or persuasive speech online or attend one in person if your university is hosting a speech tournament or conference. Here are a couple of interesting ones:

For and Against Presentation: Smart Phones

Problem-Solution Presentation: China's One-Child Policy

Attempt to outline the content of the presentation using the three-part outline model (intro, body, conclusion).

- Introduction
  - Attention Getter
  - Statement of Topic/Thesis
  - Speaker Credibility
  - Relevance to Audience
  - Preview of Main Points
  - [transition to body}
- Body
  - Main Point 1
    - Claim, Explanation, Evidence, Citations

- Main Point 2
  - Claim, Explanation, Evidence, Citations
- Main Point 3
  - Claim, Explanation, Evidence, Citations
- [transition to body}

- Conclusion
  - Restatement of Topic/Thesis
  - Review Main Points
  - Call to Action
  - Concluding Statement

7.7.4. Exercise Oral Citations

When you use information that is not common knowledge, you will need to tell your audience where this information came from. You will provide an oral citation and include a written one on your visual presentation, if you have one. Access the following NACE article on eight competencies for a career-ready workforce and write a statement that summarizes an interesting point in each of them. Practice stating this point and providing an oral citation in the following format: author's name, date and name of the publication.

Example, "Barrett and Helens-Hart found in their 2022 research article 'The value of a liberal arts degree: Students' perspectives on financial and nonfinancial returns on investment,' that many liberal arts students at a large mid-western university did not have a clear idea of projected salaries for graduates with their degree."

7.9 REFERENCES

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PART IV

PART 4: SHOWING UP, GETTING CONNECTED

CHAPTER 8: NETWORKING

Lindsay Bortot and Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College

Networking is the act of exchanging information to cultivate productive, organic, and lasting relationships. When you develop and maintain strong and productive relationships across many different facets of your life, you increase your chances of those relationships positively impacting your career goals. It is important to recognize that engaging in networking opportunities will not lead to results overnight; it is a long-term strategy that will allow you to build a strong community of individuals and professionals that, when accessed properly, can support you in your career development journey.

When you learn how to network effectively, you bypass the internet job application gatekeepers and increase your chances of getting interviewed. It is about leveraging the connections you already have who can confidently attest to your past performance and future potential. Furthermore, it is also about putting yourself out there and using your connections to persistently and continually expand your networks. Even though we know that networking is a necessary component of uncovering the hidden job market, many of us still find it uncomfortable and question whether what we are doing is right. In this chapter, you will learn how to prepare yourself for both planned and unplanned networking interactions, as well as identify many different networking activities that you can incorporate into your overall job search strategy.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define networking.
- Identify strategies for networking, social media networking, and personal branding.
- Determine the strength of your personal-professional network.
- Identify possible ideal mentors.
- Assess the benefits of mentoring partnerships.

In addition to newly-authored content, this chapter was adapted from two Open Education Resources:

Six Steps to Job Search Success by Caroline Ceniza-Levine and Connie Thanasoulis-Cerrachio

Adaptations included editing tone, images, removing content to align the chapter with BCOM210 course learning objectives, and revising examples for an FHSU student population and adding some original exercises to align with course objectives.

8.1: NETWORK EFFECTIVELY

Caroline Ceniza-Levine and Connie Thanasoulis-Cerrachio

Definition of Networking.

You can look up the word "networking" in dictionaries, and you will find many different definitions. One of the best definitions for networking comes from a business coach, Bob Burg, who defines it as such:

"Networking is defined as establishing a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship of give and take, with the emphasis on the give." [1]

This is a good definition for the following reasons:

- Relationships are to be established for the long term, throughout your college years and business career.
- Relationships should be mutually beneficial because such relationships are more likely to be sustained.
- Relationships in networking emphasize the give versus the take. This may not seem intuitive because we network to get a job—right? Wrong. Focusing only on getting a job gives networking and you a bad reputation. Focusing on the other person's interests and pursuits will build a network for you that will always be there when you need something.

Another truth in networking is that the more you give, the more you will get. A genuine quality of giving will separate you from other networkers. Being genuinely interested in finding out about a person and wanting to know them well enough to positively affect their career, their lives, and their interests is a huge differentiator.

Quality, Not Quantity. Networking is not about

1. Bob Burg, "Endless Referrals" (lecture, East Elmhurst, NY, October 22, 2008).

quantity; it is about quality. We all know more people than we realize and we have numerous opportunities to meet new people every day. Just do not forget that after you meet someone unless you maintain and expand that relationship, that person is not really part of your core network. Networking is not just about approaching people; it is about following up.

The Power of Networking. People naturally want to network with people who they know, like, and trust. Once these criteria have been met, people will generally open their networks up to you.

It is a given that one person knows 250 people, give or take. Most people could invite about 250 people to their wedding and have approximately 250 visitors at their funeral.

If you know, like, and trust another individual, and therefore open your network up to that person, they will have access to a network of 500 individuals:

their 250 contacts + your 250 contacts = 500 contacts

- Multiply 500 by 10 people, and you will now have access to 2,500 individuals.
- Multiply 2,500 by 100 people, and you will now have access to 25,000 individuals.
- Multiply 25,000 by 250 people, and you will now have access to 625,000 individuals.

Your need to know 250 people might be intimidating, but let us start with about 100 people you may know:

- Friends
- Family
- Schoolmates (fraternity, sorority, athletes, classmates)
- Professors, teaching assistants, school administrators, coaches
- Past and current coworkers
- School reunion attendees
- Neighbors
- Owners of neighborhood businesses (deli, coffee shop, dry cleaners, hardware stores, and so forth)
- People with whom you have volunteered
- People from a religious organization to which you belong
- Societies you might want to join that provide information about careers that are meaningful to you (e.g., Public Relations Student Society of America, National Society of Hispanic/Black MBAs, Society of Human Resources Professionals, Society of Speech and Drama Professionals, Society of Tennis Medicine, Society of Pharmacists)

In addition to who you know now, this chapter will give you strategies for building more networking contacts. Some useful venues include the following:

- Family events (weddings, birthdays, barbeques, and so forth)
- Alumni events (great opportunities to network with professionals with whom you have something in common)

The power of networking is limitless. Most individuals will use LinkedIn.com to keep in contact with their networks. Some individuals are open networkers and will connect with anyone who wants to connect with them. Others will be more discriminating and connect only to those people they know well. Either way, it is a huge benefit to keep in touch with your contacts when they move from company to company and as they change e-mail addresses. It is estimated that Generation Y (anyone born between 1980-1995) will change jobs close to twenty times in their lifetime. Keeping in touch with individuals this way can be very convenient and beneficial.

The Benefits of Networking. Networking has countless benefits. Aside from the social benefits of building relationships and keeping in touch with friends and valued acquaintances, networking yields other advantages:

- You will have insider information before things are public knowledge. This could pertain to the right companies to join or the right departments to consider. Often, before jobs are even posted, your networking contacts can let you know of opportunities.

- You will have access to individuals you otherwise might never meet or get to know, and your reach will extend to opportunities others may not ever hear of.
- You will know news before it reaches the general public, thus increasing your credibility.
- You might get the opportunity to lead others in your field. You could participate in a panel discussion or on a task force.

Networking enhances our lives in many ways. You can meet interesting people who share their life experiences, you can gain access to information you may never have known, and you can have access to career opportunities that otherwise would be out of your reach. The more effectively you network, the more opportunities will be presented to you. This chapter will outline strategies to build and expand your network so those opportunities are within your reach.

8.2: THE FOUR STAGES OF NETWORKING

Caroline Ceniza-Levine and Connie Thanasoulis-Cerrachio

Four Stages of Networking

Networking consists of four stages, and the sequential order of the four stages is extremely important:

1. Research
2. The approach
3. The follow-up
4. The request

We all know individuals who call us only when they need something. They use only two of the four steps: they go from the approach right to the request. We know how we feel when this happens. When these people contact us, we no doubt say to ourselves, "I wonder what they want now." To avoid this annoying behavior, you must follow the four steps sequentially. Let us review each one in the order they should be used.

RESEARCH

Research enables you to identify key things and key people with whom you should be networking. In a job search, you should aim your research to answer the following questions:

- What details are available about the company of interest?
- What specific departments exist within the company?
- Who are the individuals who run those departments (the decision-makers)?
- Does this company recruit on campus?
- Does HR lead the company's recruiting efforts, or do the hiring managers find their own talent (for the most part)?
- What is the profitability of each department?
- What companies compete against the main company and against the specific departments (they might be different)?
- What are the top products and services produced?
- What are the goals of the company or the department?
- What recent challenges and trends are they experiencing?

Once you identify these items, research everything about them through company websites, Google, LinkedIn, and the people in your network. The more information you gather, the more knowledgeable you will be about your job search, and the more likely you will impress those with whom you meet and network.

THE APPROACH

Once you have identified the individuals with whom you would like to network or contact, think about how you would like to contact them. Great care should be taken with this step because first impressions matter. Things to consider include the following:

- Do you know anyone who can make a *warm* introduction? Cold contacts are clearly not as effective as an introduction from someone who knows both parties. If you are fortunate enough to have such a contact, approach them to make the connection. Never ask for a job. Instead, ask that they make an introduction. People you already know can make introductions:
    - Friends and family
    - Current or past employees of the company (this includes classmates who have interned at companies of interest)

    - Peers at school
    - Career services
    - Other school contacts, including professors, administrators, and so on
- If you must make a *cold* contact, your research can be used to impress. In a cover letter, you may write intelligently and compellingly about how you can be instrumental in the company because you can do x, y, or z. Be specific about your knowledge of the company, the departments, and the company's competitors. Know why another company is challenging them, or why they are clearly the industry leader with no close second.

RECONNECT WITH OLD CONTACTS

If you have great contacts, but have not kept in touch with them, you can use different ways to reconnect, but take care to not offend. The first time you reconnect, it cannot be about your job search. You cannot ask for anything the first time, except how the other person is doing. The point of reconnecting is to reestablish the relationship. The other person is the focus and by listening to them and being interested, you actually help yourself because you will learn about what is going on in the market and what people care about, and you can act on this *later*.

This is why maintaining your network is so critical when you do not need anything. It takes the time pressure off you to accomplish anything. If, however, you have waited until you are in need to work on your network, then you must discipline yourself to make those early contacts about your network and not about yourself. One good exercise is to take three to five contacts per day and just say hello. This gets you in the habit of regularly reaching out to your network so that when you actually have a question to ask or even a favor, the request isn't the only time you have reached out.

When using LinkedIn, remind people how you know each other. Do not use those template connection invitations. Compose a personal message about where you met, when you last spoke, or something else that shows genuine interest. Add an updated and professional-looking picture of yourself so that old connections who may have forgotten your name can recognize you visually.

THE FOLLOW-UP

A networking paradox, a seemingly contradictory statement that may nonetheless be true, is that you cannot get a job without networking, but the biggest networking pet peeve is when someone asks for a job. Remember that no one wants to be contacted only in times of need. That is what gives networking a bad reputation.

Once you have made the contact, the very next step is to follow up and maintain the networking contact. Immediately after meeting someone, following either a marketing event of some kind, a networking meeting, or an interview, you should send that person an e-mail that mentions that you were happy to see or meet them, references something you discussed (to at the very least remind them of your conversation), and asks for nothing in return.

Recruiters and hiring managers appreciate e-mails that reiterate interest or share an item that may be of interest to them, but what is not appreciated is requiring that they get back regarding a date or detail of some kind. Avoid it if at all possible. The best way to build a solid network is to contact people when you do not need anything. Even if you are a job seeker and are networking to jump-start your search, you do not want your first contact (or even your second) to be a request for help. Instead, maintain (or restart) your network by reaching out to people regularly—without asking for anything.

If you plan to add someone to your network for the long term, you should follow up with that person several times a year. Asking for help or just talking about yourself doesn't count. Follow up in a way that focuses on them and what you can do for them, not the other way around. Focus on giving away—not selling. Here are some creative ways to reach out:

- *Say thank you*: Thank them for their time in meeting with you, and for the information they shared. Add something you discussed to the thank-you note to support the fact that you were listening and comprehending. Set the stage for future networking contact.
- *Give a results update*: If someone gave you advice, let them know what you did with it. Perhaps someone made a connection that resulted in another connection. Keep them updated and thank them again for the connection.
- *Spread holiday cheer*: Send holiday cards, and include some information about yourself to keep people updated. Remember to note information you receive in return (e.g., changes of address, changes of employment). Christmas, Hanukkah, New Year's Day, Easter, the Fourth of July, Passover, Memorial Day, and Thanksgiving are great times to keep in touch, but you

might even use the arrival of spring as a reason to reach out.

- *Announce a life change*: You might announce the end of the school year, entrance to an internship, entry to a graduate degree program, a promotion, or just an e-mail change. When you send out announcements, include news about other areas of your life. Always be upbeat. Job seekers can let their network know they are looking in specific industries, but should not immediately ask for help. For job seekers who have already announced they are looking, consider a follow-up contact letting people know where you are in your search.
- *Offer an interesting article*: Pick something about their industry and company, and it shows you are on top of news that matters to them. This works well for professional contacts, with whom you may not be on a familiar enough basis for a holiday card or personal announcement. An insightful article lets the contact know you are thinking of them and you understand what's important in their industry.
- *Introduce a new contact*: When you introduce people to your network, not only do you expand the contacts of the person you introduce, but you also get an opportunity to catch up with your network. Like sending an interesting article, an interesting referral lets the contact know you are knowledgeable about their needs and willing to help.

- *Simply say hello*: Sometimes a person just pops into your head. Maybe they resemble someone on TV. Maybe you heard a joke they would enjoy. Follow your instinct and call or e-mail to say hello. It is always nice to know people are thinking of you.
- *Offer congratulations*: Did they make one of those business magazine top lists (e.g., Most Innovative, Most Admired, Best Places to Work)? If you hear good news about someone or their company, point it out.
- *Make a recommendation*: If you read a good book, try a good restaurant, and so forth, pass that on. (Make sure to keep it professional because your referrals are always a reflection of you.)

Use these nine methods, timed six to seven weeks apart, and you have almost a year of follow-up. Now you have no excuse not to maintain your network.

Figure 8.1 and Figure 8.2 are examples of a follow-up note after a networking meeting.

FIGURE 8.1 EXAMPLE FOLLOW-UP NOTE 1

Dan,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me yesterday. Our conversation was very informative and reinforced my commitment to pursuing an internship in brand management at Nestlé.

After speaking with you I am even more confident that Nestlé would be the best possible place for my career to begin. Your goals for next year of 20 percent brand expansion and creative client focus fit my background very closely.

During my last internship, my team brainstormed on how to focus on our niche market of 35 to 40 year olds, and some of our recommendations are being considered for implementation this year. In addition, my strengths include an exceptional work ethic, strong marketing and teamwork skills, and very clear communication skills. I am confident that I would be a strong contributor to the Nestlé organization from day one.

Additionally, as per our discussion last night, I've attached the article that ran in my school paper which covered the marketing competition held at my school. My team came in second place amongst 17 teams and the competition was fierce.

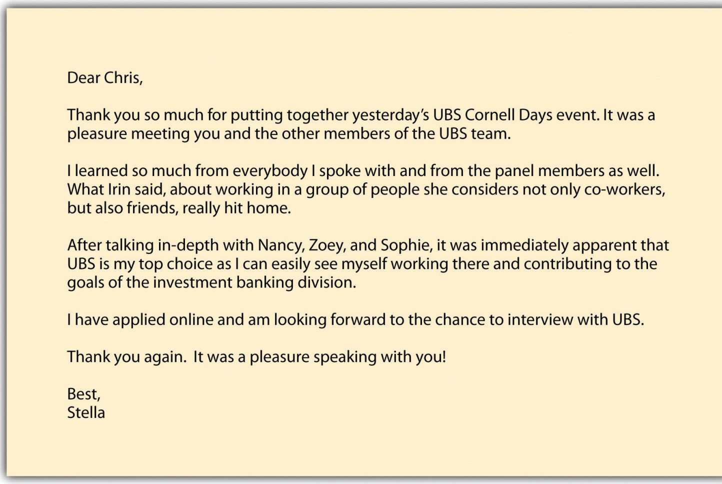
I appreciate all the advice that you gave me and plan to use it to the utmost. Your enthusiasm for working at Nestlé left a very strong impression on me.

I hope to be selected to interview in October, and once again, I thank you for all of your guidance and your time.

Thank you again.

Regards,
Christina

FIGURE 8.2 EXAMPLE FOLLOW-UP NOTE 2



Dear Chris,

Thank you so much for putting together yesterday's UBS Cornell Days event. It was a pleasure meeting you and the other members of the UBS team.

I learned so much from everybody I spoke with and from the panel members as well. What Irin said, about working in a group of people she considers not only co-workers, but also friends, really hit home.

After talking in-depth with Nancy, Zoey, and Sophie, it was immediately apparent that UBS is my top choice as I can easily see myself working there and contributing to the goals of the investment banking division.

I have applied online and am looking forward to the chance to interview with UBS.

Thank you again. It was a pleasure speaking with you!

Best,
Stella

THE REQUEST

Only when you have completed the first three steps should you make a request. The quality of your network depends on following this checklist. It is tempting to jump from step 2 (the approach) to step 4 (the request), but you do so at the risk of not building a quality network on which you can rely for your professional success.

8.3: BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

Caroline Ceniza-Levine and Connie Thanasoulis-Cerrachio

Build Your Network Every Day

Great networkers build their networks every day while keeping in touch with those they have already met. Net**work**ing is **work**, but the rewards far outweigh the effort you will expend.

The most effective way to build a network is to have a genuine interest in every person you meet. Most individuals know when someone wants to know them for what they offer versus wanting to know them for what they can gain from the relationship. Do not fall into that self-serving trap. Genuine interest in others is the impetus for building long-term, mutually beneficial relationships of give and take, with an emphasis on the give.

If you are just beginning to build your network, or if you want to expand the network you already have, consider the following exercise:

Quadrant I *High Willingness to Help* *Low Relevance to Job Search*	**Quadrant II** *High Willingness to Help* *High Relevance to Job Search*
Quadrant III *Low Willingness to Help* *Low Relevance to Job Search*	**Quadrant IV** *Low Willingness to Help* *High Relevance to Job Search*

Notice that the horizontal axis is relevance to job search. As you go from left to right, the relevance to your job search becomes stronger. Willingness to help is on the vertical axis; as you go higher, the willingness to help is greater.

Logically, you will want to expand your network with the people who represent the characteristics in quadrant II: high willingness to help and high relevance to your job search. These individuals include the following:

- Career services directors, career counselors, administrators
- Peers with whom you have good relationships and who could perhaps share information about their prior internships
- Professors who are impressed with your abilities and performance and who have ties to corporations of interest to you
- Alumni who want an increasing number of qualified candidates from their school to enter their company or industry

- Past employers who were very satisfied with your level of work, who have contacts at firms in which you are interested, and so forth
- Your relative who works in a corporation, but not in your industry, who may be friends with those who do work in your industry

Logically, you will want to spend the least amount of time with people in quadrant III because they have no relevance to your job search and are not willing to help.

Quadrants I and IV remain, and very helpful networking contacts could be lurking in both of these populations.

Quadrant I: This is an excellent resource for networking contacts because these individuals are very willing to help, but perhaps their relevance to your job search is not obvious or apparent. You never know who people know, so it is very much worth your while to get to know as many people as you can, no matter what the venue.

People in quadrant I include the following:

- A neighbor might be best friends with an administrative assistant at the company in which you are interested and that assistant could easily share your résumé with hiring managers.
- Someone with whom you are affiliated by attending a church, synagogue, or any other place of worship may have contacts in the industry in which you are interested

and can arrange for an informational interview.

- Your landscaper might have a brother who is a senior or top-level executive at the exact company in which you are interested.
- A diner owner could have a close friend who is a hospital administrator and can arrange an introduction into the healthcare field.
- A teacher's spouse might be a vendor to the company in which you are interested.
- Your dog groomer might have a neighbor who is a junior-level manager at a firm of interest.

The endless possibilities in this quadrant shouldn't be overlooked!

Quadrant IV's population could also represent fruitful opportunities, but you will need to ask yourself, "at what cost?" If someone highly relevant to your job search has a low willingness to help, could you turn that person around? What would it take? Often, it is best to funnel your energy and effort into the quadrants that will yield the best results: quadrants I and II.

BUILD YOUR NETWORK

EVEN IF YOU ARE SHY

If you are shy and the thought of networking wreaks havoc with your nervous system, certain strategies you can employ immediately will allow you to benefit from networking venues of all kinds.

STEP 1: OBSERVE THE NETWORKING MASTERS

We all know people who are natural networkers and who know how to work a room better than most. For those of you who are shy watch people who network effectively. Observe how they meet and greet a variety of people. Notice their body language, especially their smile, posture, handshake, and eye contact. You will naturally pick up pointers from these individuals.

STEP 2: PAIR UP WITH SOMEONE WHO IS A GOOD NETWORKER

If you can pair up with a networking master, by all means, do. If you have a friend who is extroverted, ask them to attend an event with you and pair up to meet as many people as you can. This can be a very valuable adventure that results in meeting quite a lot of new people.

STEP 3: ASK QUESTIONS THAT GET OTHER PEOPLE TO TALK EASILY

You can ask seven questions that will naturally elicit a great response from a person you want to get to know:

1. How did you get your start in this business?
2. What do you enjoy most about what you do?

3. What separates you from your competition?
4. What do you see as the coming trends in this business?
5. What is the strangest (or funniest) incident you have ever experienced in this business?
6. What three or four critical skills are necessary to succeed in this business?
7. What advice would you give to me knowing I want to get my start in this business?

(See http://www.burg.com for a list of exceptional networking questions, including some of the preceding.)

STEP 4: DO NOT TAKE THINGS PERSONALLY

When you take the plunge and begin networking and meeting individuals, try to develop a thick skin and do not take things personally. Some individuals will not want to communicate with you, and that is fine. Move on to those who do. To a large degree, it is a numbers game, so the more individuals you meet and follow up with correctly, the more will join your network.

MEET PEOPLE AT DIFFERENT VENUES

Your college environment is rich with potential networking contacts. Earlier in this chapter, it was noted that everyone knows, give or take, about 250 people, and the more people you meet who give you access to their network of 250, the more you will multiply the people with whom you are connected. Here are some ways for you to network effectively:

- *Join school clubs*: Some schools have over two hundred clubs—everything from business clubs to tennis clubs to Asian heritage clubs. Join at least three or four that spark your interest so you have variety in your friends and network. Club membership is a great way to get connected early on in your college career, meet people who have the same interests as you, and learn a tremendous amount. School clubs funnel information to their members about networking events, internships, and full-time opportunities.
- *Establish a relationship with career services*: Get involved with this group early on. People in career services have relationships with all the companies that come on campus to recruit. Check-in with them in your freshman year and find out what opportunities exist and what the process is for applying.

- *Get to know your professors*: Professors are human beings, just like you. Ask them about their backgrounds and how they ended up teaching at your school. Ask what they like about it. You will be surprised at what you find out. Some professors will have worked in the business world and will have some good connections for you. You never know until you ask.
- *Be curious about people and ask open-ended questions*: When meeting someone new, ask them questions like "How did you pick this school?" and *listen*. A good listener is so hard to find. Open-ended questions often yield a story (sometimes a compelling story), and you learn quite a bit about a person. Ask about their family relationships. Be genuine because it is wonderful to find out about people, and you never know who they know or who their extended family knows.
- *Meet as many different types of people at school as possible*: Your school presents opportunities to meet people from all walks of life. Try to meet the president of the university, various administrators, deans (the dean of students is a great contact because that person manages the school clubs), professors, teaching assistants, fellow students, cafeteria workers, the food truck vendor on the corner, the office supply store owner and clerks, the workers at your favorite coffee shop, security, library staff, and so on. Get to know these folks by (a) being polite and pleasant, (b) being responsible, and (c)

recognizing them and knowing them by name. Even if your new acquaintances do not further your networking objectives, perhaps some will become friends and make your stay at school all the better,

- *Keep in touch with your old high school friends*: Your high school friends are likely at different schools, but it is important to maintain contact. Your network will only grow this way, and you will enjoy continuing your friendships.

Networking is critical to your success throughout life. If you have not networked well before, it is now a good time to start.

NETWORK WITH EXECUTIVES

Your network should include people at all levels: your family and friends, past peers, and past managers. Follow these three suggestions to include senior people at all different levels in your network:

1. Participate in cross-functional task forces in any kind of

work or educational situation. You will meet people at varying management levels and also get the chance to impress them and include them in your network.

2. Contact senior managers and thank them or compliment them on their presentation or speech at any other formal meeting. Mention something specific about what they said, especially if it helped you in some way (it increased your knowledge, made you think differently about something, gave you an idea to solve a problem, and so forth), so they know you listened and they know your comment is genuine. Continue to follow up with them in other ways (holidays, congratulate them should they get promoted, and so forth).
3. A mentor, a wise and trusted counselor, can give you perspective that is very objective and, in some cases, powerful. They can also make great introductions, so don't hesitate to explore this with them.

NETWORK WITH RECRUITERS

Many job seekers feel uneasy about keeping in touch with recruiters and feel like they are being a pest. However, recruiters appreciate candidates who stay in touch, as long as it is in an unassuming way. For example, candidates should let recruiters know the latest news about them and their market, but should not include a request or a need with that news.

Industry professionals offer the following networking advice regarding how job seekers can stay in touch:

- *Build the relationship before you need anything*. Xavier Roux, a partner at Redseeds Consulting, an executive search firm for management consulting, advises, "Strong candidates cultivate good relationships with recruiters when they are *not* looking for a job so that they can get help when they are."
- *Do not be afraid to follow up about a specific position that interests you*. Andrew Hendricksen, a managing partner with OP/HR Group, an executive search firm focusing on technology and new media advises, "If you are very qualified you should feel comfortable making one to two cold or follow-up calls no matter what stage you are in the process, but keep in mind too many will result in your being disqualified….[Send] a follow-up action plan once you understand a hiring manager's expectations. This works especially well for people in sales and marketing or any job that requires results. If you are considered a top prospect, sending a high-level yet well-thought-out 90-day action plan can put you above your

competition."

- *Contact people via social media after you have done the research and are fully prepared*. Jennifer Sobel, a recruitment manager at Disney ABC Television Group advises, "Many job seekers are desperately trying to use social networking tools to search for jobs, which is a great idea. However, they are using the tools all wrong. I must get ten to fifteen 'LinkedIn' requests per day from people searching for a job at my company. Their requests usually sound something like this: 'Hi, I don't know you but would love to work at your company. Are there any openings for me?' I would urge each job seeker to only reach out when they have identified an open position that they meet the minimum qualifications for….Not having your research done beforehand comes off as lazy and it doesn't give a recruiter any reason to help you."
- *Remember that being helpful is a two-way exchange*. Sarah Grayson, a founding partner of On-Ramps, an executive search for the social sector, advises, "It's always impressive to me when candidates refer us other strong candidates and go out of their way to stay in touch….It shows me that they know how to network and value relationships."

8.4 SOCIAL NETWORKING

Caroline Ceniza-Levine and Connie Thanasoulis-Cerrachio

Be Aware of Radical Transparency

Radical transparency, the ability to see personal information in cyberspace, was the phrase corporate firms used decades ago when they finally opened their books up to public scrutiny. Now, this phrase pertains to the radical transparency you experience by using social networking sites.

Facebook started as a tool for college students, but companies entered this space in the 1990s. Companies, namely recruiters, started looking at Facebook pages and MySpace accounts when considering candidates for open positions. In fact, 40 percent or more of college admissions counselors reviewed Facebook pages before admitting candidates to their colleges and 40 percent of those who looked were not impressed by what they saw. Employers now review social media accounts before making hiring decisions.

A word of caution to all: Ensure your digital dirt (any unflattering personal information in cyberspace) is cleaned up.

Your social media accounts should be professional and seek to impress anyone who reviews it, especially future employers.

RECRUITERS USE SOCIAL NETWORKS

A high majority of recruiters use online social networks, such as LinkedIn, to find candidates, so job seekers absolutely need to take advantage of these tools. However, so many options are available and they are all so time-consuming that job seekers risk being overwhelmed.

MAKE A CHOICE AND GO DEEP

Rather than spending a little time here and there on LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, blogging, or building a personal website, decide what you want to accomplish and research your options to see what best suits your objectives. Devote the bulk of your time to the area that will most help you accomplish your objectives.

PLACE AN OVERALL TIME LIMIT ON ONLINE SEARCH ACTIVITIES

A thorough job search encompasses many different activities, including research, expanding your network, following up with your existing network, updating your contact database, troubleshooting your search, and more. Online networking is helpful for research, networking, and maintaining contact information, so it is worth a substantive time commitment, but not all of your time.

OFFLINE NETWORKING ETIQUETTE STILL APPLIES

The most successful online networkers share much in common with successful offline networkers. You can do several things to match their success. Be respectful of people's time. Write engaging (and grammatically correct) business communications. Ask intelligent questions. Focus on giving and helping others. Remember that online social media is one tool in the broad umbrella of networking, and common sense networking etiquette still applies.

SOCIAL NETWORKING IS NOT JUST ABOUT NETWORKING

LinkedIn and Facebook are referred to as social networking, so most job seekers use them primarily or even exclusively as networking tools. However, social networks are valuable at every stage of the job search, not just networking.

SOCIAL NETWORKS HELP WITH TARGET IDENTIFICATION

Use the detailed profiles on LinkedIn to get a better understanding of different job functions and career paths. If you think you want to work in corporate philanthropy, find people who have these jobs and review their experience, skills, and projects. Use what you learn as a guide to what you might need in your career, or at least as good issues to research.

RESEARCH COMPANIES AND INDUSTRIES

Again using the profile data, pay attention to how people talk about their work. Projects on which people are working hold invaluable clues to deciphering exactly what a company does, especially when it is a small, privately held company with little published information about clients or projects. Group discussions that occur between group members on LinkedIn, are another way to get a sense for a company or industry. Find a company alumni group or industry niche and follow the discussions or ask questions.

GATHER SALARY DATA

Use the Q&A function or specific group discussions on LinkedIn to collect data on salary, lifestyle, growth prospects, and other useful information for your own offer negotiation. Many geographies and industries are represented on online social networks, so you can specify exactly what you are looking for and likely find a close proxy.

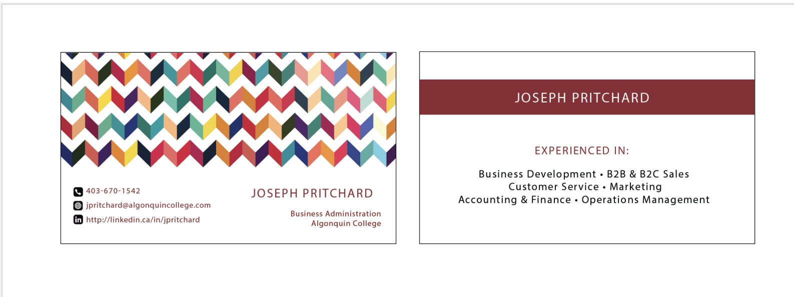
8.5: BUSINESS NETWORKING CARDS

Lindsay Bortot and Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College

Make business networking cards.

You might be thinking, is it only appropriate to have a business card if I have a job? The answer is no; as a job seeker, a business card is a great way to leave a lasting impression while also giving the employer or industry a professional way to contact you in the future. Sure, handing in a resume provides more detailed information, but providing a tailored business card will likely end up in their wallet or their pocket versus getting lost in that giant stack of resumes they have already been given. When they empty their pockets, they may be more inclined to think of you and the conversation that was had. It is essential to include your name, phone number, and email address on your business cards. Beyond your contact information, you can consider adding a title or the program you are in, areas of knowledge, LinkedIn URL, personal website, online portfolio, or blog links. Be creative, select colors and styles that match your personality and your industry, and add a logo or design to really emphasize your brand.

Here is an example of a student's business networking card:



8.6: NETWORKING CASE STUDIES

Caroline Ceniza-Levine and Connie Thanasoulis-Cerrachio

Case studies are a great way to "practice" your networking skills, which is always a wise thing to do. They teach you how to network better in a variety of situations.

CASE STUDY 1

Your mentor introduces you to her colleague who introduces you to a business lead (Jane Smith), who consents to an informational interview. You send your mentor's colleague a nice thank-you and schedule the interview. The interview is substantive, and you send Jane Smith a nice thank-you. Two weeks later you get a formal employment interview, which you schedule for later. Are you done for now?

CASE STUDY 2

You get an informational interview with a managing director, Jeff Roberts, in the boutique firm that specializes in exactly what you want to do. He asks you to coordinate with his assistant to get on his calendar. You call her to schedule the meeting. After the interview, you send Jeff Roberts a nice thank-you. Have you completed the interview etiquette?

CASE STUDY 3

You are late for a 1:30 interview at a company's headquarters and by the time you get there, it's about 1:25. You go to the security desk, but bypass the X-ray area, so they redirect you there. You get a bit huffy. You rush to the elevator and fail to keep it open for a woman who is trying to get in. When you finally make it upstairs, you are escorted to the office and asked to wait for a moment or two. When the person with whom you are meeting finally arrives, you recognize each other: you did not save the elevator for her. What do you do?

CASE STUDY 4

You are scheduled for a second interview on a Friday, at 5 p.m. You are invited to attend the company's weekly happy hour and afterward meet with some of the team privately for one-on-one interviews. You wear an interview suit and discover everyone else is wearing jeans. At your first interview, they had all worn business casual. "Jeans are allowed on Friday," someone calls out. Are you appropriately dressed? What if you get called in the next Friday—what do you wear?

CASE STUDY 5

You are very interested in working for two companies, and fortunately, you are in final rounds with both. You receive the first offer, and feel strongly that you will accept—in fact, you know you will if you get the second offer. The deadline for the first offer is a week away. The second company calls to schedule a final round. What do you tell them?

CASE STUDY 6

You are in a two-on-one interview. One person is a line business manager and is taking the lead in the interview; the other person is an HR representative and does not say much. How do you conduct yourself during the interview and how do you interact with each person?

CASE STUDY 7

You are attending a school-sponsored networking event with your classmates and representatives from a top marketing firm. You strike up a conversation with a company person and realize that several of your classmates have gathered to either contribute to your discussion or ask their own questions of the company representative with whom you are speaking. You first finish with the conversation before turning to your classmates and acknowledging their presence. Is this good or bad networking behavior? Why?

CASE STUDY 8

You have accepted an invitation to attend training with the office of career services because a representative from a top company will be giving an overview of their business. At the last minute, you need to cram for an exam. In addition, you also do not feel well having stayed up too late the night before, so you decide not to attend. Is this good or bad networking behavior? Why?

CASE STUDY: THINGS TO CONSIDER

Here are key points to consider for each of these case studies, which will help you build upon your networking skills.

CASE STUDY 1

The topic is “Mentor Introductions and Follow-Up”:

- Always keep your mentor in the loop. They want to know you are taking their advice and reaping the fruits of your efforts. Your mentor is there to help you succeed.
- Maintain good relationships with everyone with whom you come into contact, and you will benefit in the long run. Sending thank-you notes shows good manners and an appreciative attitude, and it is a good way to stay connected.
- Be aware of the matrix A pattern that helps to organize organizations or processes. relationships all around you. When you land a position in a corporation, you can often have three or four different managers. Navigating these individuals with ease separates you from those who have difficulty doing so.

CASE STUDY 2

The topic is “Informational Interview Follow-Up”:

- It is always wise to thank everyone who has helped you to land interviews and coordinate schedules. This includes administrative staff.
- Administrative assistants often carry influence with their manager, so the extra step to extend thanks for their efforts is good manners and good career management.

CASE STUDY 3

The topic is “Late for an Interview”:

- You only get one chance to make a first impression!
- You have to apologize, give a short explanation, and move on quickly.
- You next redirect your focus to the interview at hand and do your very best.

CASE STUDY 4

The topic is “Business or Business Casual Dress”:

- When in doubt, always dress in business attire. You had no idea it was dress-down Friday, so it was wise for you to wear a suit.
- When you get called back the following Friday, you remember that jeans are allowed on Friday. Jeans are allowed, but that does not mean everyone wears them. The more senior people may wear khakis, and if you wore jeans, you could be dressed inappropriately (i.e., more casually than the senior managers). Remember that you are not yet an employee; you are still a candidate, so dress more conservatively.
- When interviewing in different industries, keep in mind that different dress protocols apply, for example, nuances in media are dramatically different from financial services.

CASE STUDY 5

The topic is “Multiple Offers”:

- The most impressive candidates communicate well and let recruiters and hiring managers know that they have options. It is especially impressive when they communicate deadlines so appropriate actions can be taken.
- If you know you want a position with a company and you know you will accept its offer, take yourself out of the running for the second opportunity. It shows (a) confidence, (b) goodwill, and (c) your thoughtfulness in giving other candidates a chance to interview. The positive qualities and effects of this decision just go on and on!
- On the other hand, it is always good to explore all options. Definitely let the second company know that you have received an offer from another company. Exploring this second company may help you decide which company you prefer. Perhaps they will expedite the interview process because they really want you, and then you can make a more informed decision.

CASE STUDY 6

The topic is "Live Interviewing with Multiple Interviewers":

- Acknowledge the business manager and the HR representative and treat both with utmost respect. When answering the business manager's questions, direct your answer to both parties and maintain eye contact with both.
- Remember, at all stages of the interview and job search process, you are constantly marketing yourself and selling your abilities.
- You have no idea which person is the real decision-maker.
- Ask each interviewer questions and tailor your questions to the interviewer.
- You may be in other situations when you are in a group, yet talking mostly to one person. Be polite and address and acknowledge all members in the group.
- Remember that the HR representative has the ability to direct you to another business, should your interview with this particular business not go as well as you would like.

CASE STUDY 7

The topic is “Being Inclusive at a Networking Event”:

- Always include others in your conversation; this is both thoughtful and polite.
- Encourage others to ask questions. You can always learn from their questions and the responses they receive.

CASE STUDY 8

The topic is “Office of Career Services Training Session”:

- If you have accepted an invitation to attend an event, barring a medical emergency, you should make every effort to attend. Your attendance is a reflection of your commitment. If you are feeling ill but are COVID-negative, wearing a face mask and keeping some distance between yourself and others is appropriate.
- If you absolutely cannot attend, make sure you contact someone in career services and let them know why you cannot attend. Simply not showing up is in poor taste

and disrespectful of other people's efforts on your behalf.

- If you do not show and there is a poor turnout, the company sponsoring the business overview may decide to do fewer events with the school or pull out altogether.

8.7: MENTORING PARTNERSHIPS

Rose Helens-Hart

During the process of networking, you may find individuals who you connect with, admire, and want to have a closer professional relationship with. These individuals may be good mentor candidates. You may also join an organization that has a formalized mentoring program, where you are assigned a mentor and provided with a timeline and template for reaching professional goals.

A mentoring relationship involves a mentor and mentee who share a goal of professional and personal development (Mind Tools Content Team, n.d.). Usually, the mentor has experience in the field or job a mentee is interested in. The mentor shares experience, advice, and network connections to help the mentee grow. Just like in other networking relationships, mentees also have a lot to offer a mentor.

As you think about who you might want as a mentor, how to get and give the most in a mentoring partnership, or becoming a mentor to a peer or more junior employee, consider dispelling several myths about mentoring and identifying the qualities of an ideal mentor and the benefits of engaging in a mentoring partnership.

Demystifying Mentoring

In your exposure to mentoring, you have probably come across some sound advice, but some myths (Gallo, 2011) as well. These myths can hinder your professional growth by placing unnecessary restrictions on seeking a mentor.

Myth #1: You have to find one perfect mentor

One *perfect mentor* may not be out there and you could be delaying your growth searching for just one person. Rather, you might identify several people who can support you in different ways or areas of your career.

Myth #2: Mentoring is a formal long-term partnership

You and your mentor will set the terms of your partnership.

Myth #3: Mentoring is for junior people

Mentoring can be useful for people at any level of their career as long as they have professional development goals. There are always areas in which we can grow.

Myth #4: Mentoring is something more experienced people do out of the goodness of their hearts

Mentoring is a mutually beneficial partnership. Mentor and mentee should benefit.

Now that you have an idea of what mentoring is and have dispelled some myths, let us look at some of the ideal qualities a mentor should possess.

Qualities of ideal mentors

Ideal mentors (Mind Tools Content Team, n.d.) should:

- **Be trustworthy**
  Personal and professional growth will necessitate some self-reflection and identification of areas you would like to develop. For a mentor to help you with these things, you need to be able to feel vulnerable and as if you can share problems and concerns with your mentor. You will not feel comfortable doing this if you cannot trust them with your personal information.
- **Have the desire and time to help**
  You can think you have found the *perfect mentor* but that person may not have energy and time to devote to you. A fact of being a successful person will probably mean the person's time is limited, they are focused on important projects, and they may already have other mentees. This is why it is important to consider having multiple mentors.
- **Ask thoughtful questions**
  You might think you know what you want, but a good mentor knows what questions to ask that will get you thinking about yourself and your career in new ways. Mentors also need to ask questions to assess how they can help you and how you can help them.
- **Listen actively**
  Good mentors actively listen by paying attention to the mentee's verbal and nonverbal communication, being patient, suspending judgment, and summarizing back to the mentee to check they have understood. Through

active listing, again, mentors can identify how they can help you and how you can help them.

- **Provide constructive feedback**
  Mentors need to be able to provide feedback in a way that will be well-received by a mentee. This means they should be able to describe situations and behaviors objectively and focus on a path forward rather than dwelling on blame. The best advice will be ignored if a mentor does not communicate it in a way that makes a mentee feel ashamed or defensive.

Now that you may have someone in mind who you think possessess the ideal qualities of a mentor, let us talk about the benefits of mentoring from a mentor and mentee perspective.

Benefits to the Mentor

Mentors can grow personally and professionally from a mentoring partnership (Mind Tools Content Team, n.d.) in some of the following ways:

- **Building leadership skills**
  Being a mentor can help you practice motivating others and identifying where they need support. These skills can help you be a better leader, manager, and team member.
- **Improving communication skills**
  Your mentee may communicate differently than you, meaning you may have to adapt your style so that your

messages are understood. Adaptation to others can make you more of an effective communicator.

- **Learning new perspectives**
  Working with someone from a different background, who has different perspectives, who is from a different generation perhaps, can help you understand situations from a different perspective. A mentor is likely to provide an insider's perspective, which can be insulated from change, a mentee can help a mentor stay up-to-date on employment trends.
- **Advancing your career**
  Improved leadership and communication skills can help you prepare for higher levels of responsibility in your career. Mentoring might be seen as a form of elective service to the organization or professional community, which could give you another boost over competition for promotions.
- **Gaining personal satisfaction**
  Using your skills and knowledge to help someone can be personally fulfilling. In addition, when the person you have helped does well, knowing you were a part of their success can also be rewarding.

Benefits to the Mentee

Mentees can receive valuable support from mentors and grow personally and professionally from mentoring relationships (Mind Tools Content Team, n.d.). Here are several ways that happens:

- **Gaining valuable advice**
  Whether your mentor is a peer or more advanced in their career, they can offer valuable insider information about what they have experienced. They may be familiar with issues you are encountering or goals you have. Sharing this information can help you move through problems or reach your goals more efficiently or expertly.
- **Developing knowledge and skills**
  The goals you set with a mentor can help you improve your employability by setting goals related specifically to your human capital. A mentor can help you identify your knowledge and skill gaps and get you on a path and either teach you what you need to know of connect you with someone who can further help you.
- **Improving communication skills**
  Just as a mentor will need to adapt their communication to best reach you, you might also learn to communicate better through adapting or simply practicing the professional communication skills you already have begun to develop.
- **Learning new perspectives**
  Just as you are likely to share new perspectives with your mentor, they will have new perspectives to share with you. While we may be attracted to those who are *like*

us, engaging in a mentoring partnership with someone who has a different background or culture can lead to learning new ways of thinking and ways of looking at problems and opportunities.

- **Building your networking**
  Another way your mentor can help you improve your employability is by introducing you to their personal and professional contacts and expanding your network–your social capital. If this happens, be sure to follow up with these people as you are using your mentor's goodwill and your behavior reflects back on them.
- **Advancing your career**
  Being mentored can help advance your career by motivating you to pursue a professional development plan. Your mentor can also help keep you accountable on your path toward development.

How to Manage a Mentoring Relationship

There are several things you can do to make a mentoring partnership last and beneficial for both parties (Mind Tools Content Team, n.d.).

- **Establish guidelines:**
  Establishing a mentoring agreement that includes guidelines for meetings, goals, and a timeline can provide structure to the relationship. It can also increase the

likelihood that your mentoring sessions stay on each others' calendars. For a busy mentor, setting an agenda and timeline for goals can help assure them their time is being respected.

- **Set goals**
  Use your initial meeting(s) to discuss some long and short-term goals you would like to work on. Give your mentor the chance to offer insight into those goals and propose alternative ones. Set SMART goals–goals that are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound.
- **Set regular mentoring meetings**
  Set regular meetings to keep yourself accountable for doing the work you need to grow and to keep growth momentum going.
- **Be honest and open**
  Honesty and openness are essential to determining goals but also to find out if the mentor and mentee are a good fit for each other. Through being open and honest, you might find out that you do not like or respect the other person. This is better to know before the partnership goes very far so that both of your time and energy could be reinvested into a different partnership.

8.8 PROFESSIONAL DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

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With all the different social media options out there, managing your web presence and maintaining a professional digital footprint becomes essential in ensuring your job search success. More and more often, employers are googling potential candidates as an informal way of prescreening them. This can be a very quick and easy alternative to find out about a person's professionalism or lack thereof, and can directly impact your chances of finding employment. Ensure that your information is up-to-date and that the images and content you are publicizing across your social media platforms reflects you in a positive and professional light. Spend time virtually cleaning up your accounts before you start your job search.

8.9 LINKEDIN

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LinkedIn is a social networking website with the largest online professional network in the world, the fastest-growing demographic being students and recent graduates. LinkedIn provides you with the resources to access various professional networks, key decision-makers, recruiters, and learning opportunities that will help you in your search for meaningful work. Just having a LinkedIn account will not guarantee you a job, however, many recruiters have successfully hired using a social network and, the largest percentage hired using LinkedIn. As this tool continues to evolve, creating a captivating profile is essential to effectively self-market, generate connections, identify leads, grow your professional brand, and make a professional online impression.

LinkedIn Profile Essentials

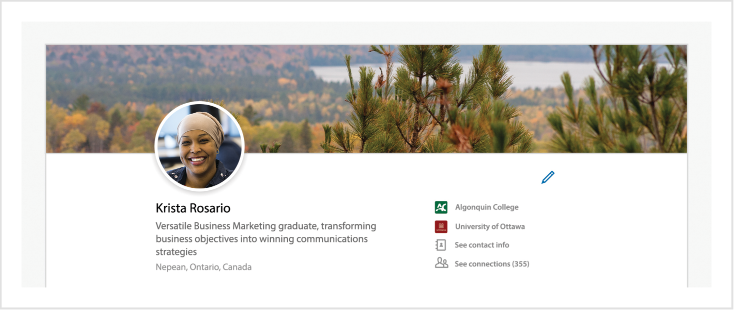
Aim for an All-Star rating. There is nothing more disappointing to your audience than an incomplete or poorly maintained profile. Make sure you have completed all of the suggested sections to generate an All-Star rating; this will increase your visibility and encourage other professionals to connect with you. If you want to be 40x more likely to be viewed, pay attention to your Profile Completion Meter and ensure the following sections are complete:

- Skills (+5), current position, two past positions, photo, location, summary, education, industry, and location
- At least 50 connections

Use the following tips to create an effective profile that will help you stand out:

- **Come up with a targeted and attractive headline.** Do not fall into the mistake of using your automatically generated job title and company name as your headline. You must stand out and grab the attention of the reader by describing what you do, and what added benefits you can offer the reader. Try to be rich with keywords when possible, as well as clear, intentional, and succinct to fit within the 120-character limit.
- **Increase your views with a good photo.** This is often a person's first glimpse of your profile; if you do not have a photo that represents your personal brand, you may be leaving the wrong first impression. With access to high-resolution phone cameras these days, you do not necessarily have to get a professional photo taken. When taking your own headshot:

    - Ensure that the quality of the image is clear, you are in a well-lit space, and that the background is not distracting.
    - Look directly at the camera and smile.
    - Avoid wearing accessories like hats or sunglasses that may hide your face.
    - Avoid using a cropped photo from a group picture.
    - Dress appropriately for your career goal.
- **Build a conversational and informative summary.** Ask yourself what you want your target audience to know about you. A well-crafted summary is an opportunity for you to highlight your skills, experience, and your future career aspirations while characterizing elements of your personality in the tone you are writing in. When writing your summary consider:
        - Making your first two lines captivating as this is all that is displayed at first glance.
        - Writing in first or third person, keeping in mind first person is seen as more direct and intimate.
        - Incorporating industry keywords to be more visible in recruiter searches.
        - Including information on your background, what you can offer, your professional goals and
          a call to action.



- **Show your experience.**
  Always add rich descriptions to your experience sections. These can reflect the STAR technique you used to develop your resume descriptions and interview answers. In addition, emphasize the skills you gained in your day-to-day tasks and include details of your various accomplishments from your paid or unpaid part-time, full-time, or summer work experience. Listing in bullet points is often the preferred format.
- **Share your accomplishments.**
  Add in additional sections to showcase some of your other accomplishments that might set you apart from your competition. Including information on additional certifications or awards received can be impressive. Highlight your project work. Do not minimalize your project experience; describe the practical experience you gained so that readers can see how this translates into on-the-job skills. You can provide a relevant URL to the project and connect your team members who are also LinkedIn members.

- **Showcase your education.**
  List all of your post-secondary education. Typically after you have completed post-secondary you would not need to list your high school education here. Some employers and recruiters may have a preference for seeking out candidates that graduated from a specific school or program. Notable accomplishments such as achieving a high GPA, or relevant courses can be included in the description to show that you are a high-performing candidate.
- **Promote your skills.**
  Paint a picture of what you can offer a recruiter or an employer. Start by listing at least five skills you have learned throughout your academic, volunteer, and work experiences. As you develop more skills, update your profile to reflect this. Identify both soft skills that are transferable from one field to another and hard skills that you learned during formal training or on the job and ensure that they relate to your job goal. When your connections endorse you for your skills, you increase your credibility and improve your search ranking.
- **Personalize your URL.**
  By default, when you start your LinkedIn account you are given a public URL. With the increase in LinkedIn's popularity, you may want to use your URL to promote yourself in the signature of your email address, on your resume, and on your business networking cards.

Personalizing your URL allows you to make it shorter and more memorable and ultimately enhances your personal brand.

- **Include Multimedia.**
  Make your profile more visually appealing by adding photos, videos, or slideshow presentations. This gives a reader an opportunity to see examples of your work, similar to an online portfolio.
- **Build your connections through common interests and community.**
  Do not wait until you graduate to build up your connections, spend time increasing your contacts now. Aim for 50 as you are starting out, but the more connections the better. You can connect with friends, classmates, professors, or people that you have volunteered and worked with. Be proactive in your approach, you can start by syncing your email contacts to create a list of suggested connections. Only send invitations to those you are comfortable connecting with; avoid randomly adding people that you do not know so that you can keep up-to-date and help each other through recommendations and information about opportunities that are relevant to you.

8.10 USING LINKEDIN FOR YOUR JOB SEARCH

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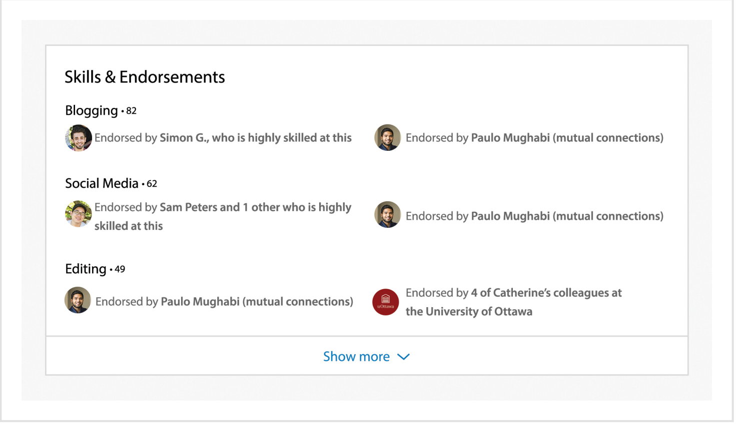
- **Customize your LinkedIn invitations and connect in a timely manner.**
  Always send a personalized message when you are interested in connecting with someone. If you have met them before, make sure to place yourself by reminding them of when and where you have met. If you have not met before, let them know why you would like to connect (i.e. I see that you are a graduate from the same program, I was wondering what advice you might have for a new graduate looking for work in the field?). After you have met someone, do not wait too long before sending an invitation, your timeliness will ensure that they remember who you are and show your interest.
- **Ask people for endorsements and recommendations and endorse and recommend others.**
  There is no better way to build your credibility than to have your connections attest to what you can do. Do not be afraid to ask your connections for endorsements and

recommendations, and always offer to reciprocate your request for them. People will be more likely to follow through with your request when they are gaining something out of it too. By having others authenticate your skills and qualifications, you are seen as a more credible professional in your network. When making a request you should be polite, personalize your invitation, and provide ideas of what you would like them to write about. Always send a thank you note afterward to show your appreciation.



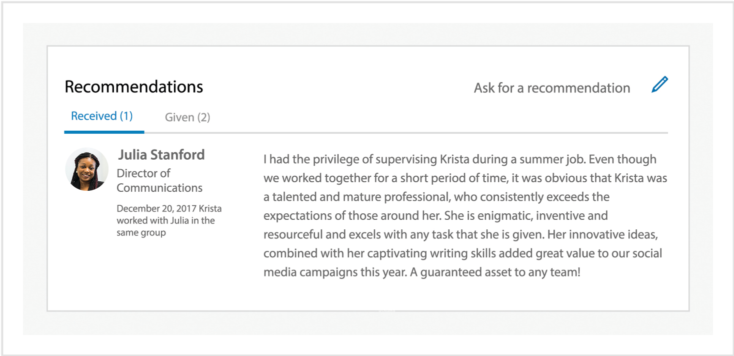
- **Search for jobs.**
  Look through LinkedIn's job bank and search for jobs of interest; some employers post exclusively on LinkedIn. Make a note of any existing connections that you have that work at the company you are applying to. Pay particular attention if you are connected to a hiring manager. For instance, are they a 1st or 2nd-degree

connection? If so, get in touch with them to show your interest in the role, and find out more about the job and company. Use the knowledge gained from your connections to tailor your job application and make yourself stand out. Under the Jobs tab, do not forget to set your career interests and let recruiters know you're open so recommendations will be more tailored to your goal.

- **Find alumni.**
  Narrow your search by date and program and explore where other graduates are working and what types of jobs they are in. This can be a good way to identify companies that have hired previous graduates from your program. Reach out to alumni to connect and ask them to provide you with advice on how they were successful in finding work in their field.
- **Conduct a people search.**
  Use LinkedIn to find professionals, and track the career paths of employees before they started working at the company that you are interested in. This information might give you a better idea of what kind of experience or skills the company wants in a new hire.
- **Follow companies.**
  Search for and follow companies of interest to learn more about a company and the people that they employ. Company Pages give you an excellent overview of an organization, list job openings, and indicate products

and services. For instance, the “Careers” tab allows you to see job postings and testimonials from current employees. This is a great way to get an “insider’s perspective” on a particular company. By following a company, updates about new jobs, products, or events will appear in your news feed on your LinkedIn home page. Use the company pages to help prepare you for your next interview.

- **Stay active.**
  It’s not just about who you know; it is about who knows you. Stay on your network’s radar by updating your LinkedIn status often; you can talk about what you’re reading, working on, and more. Additionally, you can create original content and publish articles on LinkedIn Publisher, you can actively post status updates that are relevant to your target market, and engage in conversations with your network about all kinds of different topics. React to other people’s posts, share, and like regularly.



- **Do not be a passive participant.**
  LinkedIn is meant to be a conversational platform where information and advice can be shared freely. When you create a post or share an article, engage with your network by posing open-ended questions that they can respond to in the comments section. Continue the conversation by replying to as many messages as possible. People want to get to know you, and when you engage with them this will increase your visibility and result in more followers. Similarly, spend time reacting and responding to other people's content as well, and thank them for sharing.
- **Join Groups.**
  The obvious benefits of joining groups include sharing knowledge and learning from other professionals with similar interest areas or expertise. A useful "Groups" feature is that group members can message each other for free, without being connected (with the exception of

certain privacy settings). In building rapport with group members by participating in collaborative discussions, you can invite them to connect on LinkedIn and continually grow your network.

- **Be reachable.**
  Include other ways you would like to be contacted, such as an email address or phone number. If you are active on other social media platforms, such as Twitter, you can sync your account. If you have your own website, indicate this in the Contact and Personal Info section as well.
- **Know when to go public.**
  You want to show your readers as much as possible to entice them to view your profile and make a connection. Make sure that you have adjusted your settings to show your readers the most important information. That being said, if you are revamping your profile and you want to launch when it is fully complete, think about going into private mode until you've made the changes.

8.11: DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

Rose Helens-Hart and Rachel Dolechek

8.11.1. Identifying Your Network

Use this worksheet to reveal the value of your network.

Part 1: Try to list at least 20 people you know across the categories provided below. Feel free to list more. Challenge yourself to not repeat names in multiple categories.

- Relatives & Friends (ex. parents, siblings, in-laws, cousins, neighbors, friends, etc.)
- Community Members (ex. doctors, lawyers, government officials, business owners, volunteer/community service organization members, etc.)

- Activities (ex. club members, athletic team members, coaches, religious organization members, etc.)
- Academics (ex. professors, classmates, fraternity/sorority members, alumni, Career Services staff, etc.)
- Employment (ex. supervisors, colleagues, customers, employees, etc.)

In addition, provide the following information:

- Include the occupation title for each person
- Explain how interested you are in their occupation, and how comfortable you would feel contacting them for career advice.
- Identify in what areas could you build your network

Part 2: Identify three people from the above networking worksheet that you would to have as a mentor. Utilizing the criteria from our reading, explain why these people would be ideal mentors for you.

1.
2.
3.

8.11.2 Discussion Questions

1. Why would a person open up their network to you?
2. What are the four stages of networking and why must they occur sequentially?
3. How do you follow up with new and old networking contacts? Describe three to four ways of doing so.
4. How can you build your network on an ongoing basis?
5. How can you reconnect with old contacts without seeming disingenuous?
6. What questions can you ask during networking events to help get the conversation started?
7. What strategies exist for building a network, even if you are shy?

8. How can you build a network on campus and with whom?
9. What social networking sites can help you network more effectively?
10. What is digital dirt and how can it hurt your job search strategies?

8.12: REFERENCES

Gallo, A. (2011). *Demystifying Mentoring*. https://hbr.org/2011/02/demystifying-mentoring.html

Mind Tools Content Team. (n.d.) *Mentoring*. http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCDV_72.htm

PART V
PART 5: WORKING WITH OTHERS

We have all been there. We have been assigned a task and have to work with others to accomplish it, but the group does not seem to function well. Or, there are others around us at work whose behavior or personalities we dislike. What are we to do if we do not want projects to fail or leave our jobs? Conflict is often seen as something to be avoided, but it is a normal part of interpersonal organizational interaction and can improve group, relationship, and organizational outcomes if handled well.

In this part, you will learn about team and group roles and dynamics as well as conflict management. You will get the opportunity to reflect on your own conflict style and consider how to leverage conflict to improve outcomes at work.

CHAPTER 9: TEAMS AND GROUPS

Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.
–Andrew Carnegie

We all have been a part of various teams and groups throughout our lives. Perhaps we have been a member of a sports team, a family, a school project, or a club or organization. As members of these groups, we learned what it meant to be an insider and what was important to that group. This socialization process either drew us closer or pushed us further away from the group. Organizational socialization as well as the lifecycle of working groups is the focus of this chapter. In addition, you will learn about various types of roles one might fill in a group and how the behaviors associated with that role can contribute to or detract from meeting shared goals.

Learning Objectives

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

1. Define groups and teams.
2. Identify the phases of Tuckman's group lifecycle.
3. Classify types of group members and group member roles.
4. Reflect on your group experiences.
5. Understand the stages of organizational socialization.
6. Identify organizational socialization activities.
7. Practice group problem-solving steps.

This chapter was adapted from the following Open Education Resource:

Adaptations included editing tone, images, removing content to align the chapter with BCOM210 course learning objectives, and revising examples for an FHSU student population, and adding some original exercises to align with course objectives.

9.1 WHAT IS A GROUP?

[Author removed at request of original publisher]

As humans, we are social beings. We naturally form relationships with others. In fact, relationships are often noted as one of the most important aspects of a person's life, and they exist in many forms. Interpersonal communication occurs between two people, but group communication may involve two or more individuals. Groups are a primary context for interaction within the business community. Groups may have heroes, enemies, and sages alongside new members. Groups overlap and may share common goals, but they may also engage in conflict. Groups can be supportive or coercive and can exert powerful influences over individuals.

Within a group, individuals may behave in distinct ways, use unique or specialized terms, or display symbols that have meaning to that group. Those same terms or symbols may be confusing, meaningless, or even unacceptable to another group. An individual may belong to both groups, adapting his or her communication patterns to meet group normative expectations. Groups are increasingly important across social media venues, and there are many examples of successful business ventures on the Web that value and promote group interaction.

Groups use words to exchange meaning, establish territory, and identify who is a stranger versus who is a trusted member. Are you familiar with the term "troll"? It is often used to identify someone who is not a member of an online group or community; does not share the values and beliefs of the group; and posts a message in an online discussion board to initiate flame wars, cause disruption, or otherwise challenge the group members. Members often use words to respond to the challenge that are not otherwise common in the discussions, and the less than flattering descriptions of the troll are a rallying point.

Groups have existed throughout human history and continue to follow familiar patterns across emerging venues as we adapt to technology, computer-mediated interaction, suburban sprawl, and modern life. We need groups, and groups need us. Our relationship with groups warrants attention on this interdependence as we come to know our communities, our world, and ourselves.

We form self-identities through our communication with others, and much of that interaction occurs in a group context. A group may be defined as three or more individuals who affiliate, interact, or cooperate in a familial, social, or work context. Group communication may be defined as the exchange of information with those who are alike culturally, linguistically, and/or geographically. Group members may be known by their symbols, such as patches and insignia on a military uniform. They may be known by their use of specialized language or jargon; for example, someone in information technology may use the term "server" in reference to the Internet, whereas someone in the food service industry may use "server" to refer to the worker who takes customer orders in a restaurant. Group members may also be known by their proximity, as in gated communities. Regardless of how the group defines itself, and regardless of the extent to which its borders are porous or permeable, a group recognizes itself as a group. Humans naturally make groups a part of their context or environment.

TYPES OF GROUPS IN THE WORKPLACE

As a skilled business communicator, learning more about groups, group dynamics, management, and leadership will serve you well. Mergers, forced sales, downsizing, and entering new markets all call upon individuals within a business or organization to become members of groups. Think of some of the professional (i.e., work-related) groups you interact with in order of frequency. What does your list include? Perhaps you noted your immediate coworkers, your supervisor and other leaders in your work situation, members of other departments with whom you communicate, and the colleagues who are also your personal friends during off-work times. Groups may be defined by function. They can also be defined, from a developmental viewpoint, by the relationships within them. Groups can also be discussed in terms of their relationship to the individual and the degree to which they meet interpersonal needs.

Some groups may be assembled at work to solve problems, and once the challenge has been resolved, they dissolve into previous or yet-to-be-determined groups. **Functional groups** like this may be immediately familiar to you. You take a class in business communication from a professor of business communication, who is a member of the discipline of business communication. To be a member of a discipline is to be a disciple, and adhere to a common framework for viewing the world. Disciplines involve a common set of theories that explain the world around us, terms to explain those theories, and have grown to reflect the advance of human knowledge. Compared to your BCOM210 business communication instructor, your health and physical performance instructor may see the world from a completely different perspective. Still, both may be members of divisions or schools, dedicated to teaching or research, and come together under the large group heading we know as the university.

In business, we may have marketing experts who are members of the marketing department, who perceive their tasks differently from a member of the sales staff or someone in accounting. You may work in the mailroom, and the mailroom staff is a group in itself, both distinct from and interconnected with the larger organization.

FIGURE 9.1

Groups and teams are an important part of business communication.

Relationships are part of any group and can be described in terms of status, power, control, as well as role, function, or viewpoint. Within a family, for example, the ties that bind you together may be common experiences, collaborative efforts, and even pain and suffering. The birth process may forge a relationship between mother and daughter, but it also may not. An adoption may transform a family. Relationships are formed through communication interaction across time and often share a common history, values, and beliefs about the world around us.

In business, an idea may bring professionals together and they may even refer to the new product or service as their "baby," speaking in reverent tones about a project they have taken from the drawing board and "birthed" into the real world. As in family communication, work groups or teams may have challenges, rivalries, and even "birthing pains" as a product is developed, adjusted, adapted, and transformed. Struggles are a part of relationships, both in families and business, and form a common history of shared challenges overcome through effort and hard work.

Through conversations and a shared sense that you and your coworkers belong together, you meet many of your basic human needs, such as the need to feel included, the need for affection, and the need for control (Schutz, 1966). In a work context, "affection" may sound odd, but we all experience affection at work in the form of friendly comments like "good morning," "have a nice weekend," and "good job!" Our professional lives also fulfill more than just our basic needs (i.e., air, food, and water, as well as safety). While your workgroup may be gathered together with common goals, such as delivering the mail in a timely fashion to the corresponding departments and individuals, your daily interactions may well go beyond this functional perspective.

In the same way, your family may provide a place for you at the table and meet your basic needs, but they also may not meet other needs. If you grow to understand yourself and your place in a way that challenges group norms, you will be able to choose which parts of your life to share and to withhold in different groups, and to choose where to seek acceptance, affection, and control.

Workgroups typically have the goal to complete a task or solve a problem. If you are a member of the sales department, your purpose is to sell. In terms of problem-solving, work groups can accomplish more than individuals can. People, each of whom has specialized skills, talents, experience, or education, come together in new combinations with new challenges to find new perspectives to create unique approaches that they themselves would not have formulated alone.

Group norms are customs, standards, and behavioral expectations that emerge as a group forms. If you post an update every day on your Instagram and your followers stop by to like and comment, not posting for a week will violate a group norm. They will wonder if you are sick or somewhere you have no access to your phone to keep them updated. If, however, you only post once a week, the group will come to naturally expect your customary post. Norms involve expectations that are self and group imposed and that often arise as groups form and develop.

If there are more than eight members in a group, it becomes a challenge to have equal participation, where everyone has a chance to speak, listen, and respond. Some will dominate, others will recede, and smaller groups will form. Finding a natural balance within a group can also be a challenge. Small groups (3 to 8 people) need to have enough members to generate a rich and stimulating exchange of ideas, information, and interaction, but not so many people that what each brings cannot be shared (Galanes, Adams & Brilhart, 2000).

9.2 SOCIALIZATION

Think about the last time you entered a new organization. What type of activities did you engage in to learn your role? What did the organization do to make you feel like part of a team? To teach you how to do your job and what was appropriate workplace behaviors? The process of learning the norms, values, and beliefs, of an organization and your expected role expectations is called "socialization." When we talk about organizational socialization (Jablin, 2001; Kramer, 2010a), we consider those ongoing behavioral and cognitive processes by which individuals join, become integrated into, and exit organizations and the teams and groups within them. It is the process of "learning the ropes" and acquiring a set of appropriate role behaviors. Through socialization, we develop work skills and attitudes and adjust to a group's norms and values.

Socialization is linked to employee and organizational success. Socialization processes are viewed as central to role-taking, newcomer acculturation, employee attitudes and behaviors, and the shaping of newcomer's identities (Jablin, 2001; Kramer, 2010a, 2010b). Those members who engage in successful socialization are often better at work tasks, are less likely to voluntarily leave the organization, and feel more connected at work. Socialization processes are also linked to enhanced commitment, innovation, and job satisfaction. Think about an organization to which you feel strongly committed. This could be a place you currently or have worked. It could be a place you volunteer, worship, or even the co-op where you buy your groceries. Information exchange between individuals is central to socialization. Individuals engage in acquiring, sharing, and processing information to learn what it means to be a member of the group.

Individuals are not simply molded by organizations and the groups they join. Instead, **socialization is a dual process.**

The organization may attempt to align new members to its organizational values in organizationally led ways such as employee training programs, handbooks, and social events (to name a few). FHSU's "40 Days at the Fort" events are socializing newcomers to campus life. This alignment can facilitate working group cohesion. Organizations and organizational representatives, like supervisors, also teach tasks and skills, and we get information about the people around us and about the organization from our new coworkers.

On the other hand, the **individual also influences the organization.** Individualization is the process in which a recruit makes a role their own – going beyond the scope of their assigned tasks or finding new ways to do things.

Part of the process of getting to be an insider is seeking information about tasks, relationships, and ourselves in the organization, and finding out how we fit in with the organization and the people around us.

While the literature on socialization varies, in this text, we will consider the four **stages of organizational socialization:** anticipatory, encounter, metamorphosis, and exit stage (Jablin 2001).

The anticipatory stage is the time before entering the organization when expectations for the "encounter" are set (Jablin 2001). Think about the time before you started your degree at FHSU. What did you imagine your experience would be like? What expectations did you set? Were you excited? Maybe a little nervous? When entering any new organization, a new member will try to picture what their experience will be like.

One aspect of the anticipatory stage starts from a very early age. **Vocational anticipatory socialization** (Kramer, 2010b) includes the choices we develop over our lifespan from information we gather from our family, peers, and friends. Consider the value placed on highly regarded jobs in our society like doctors, veterinarians, and lawyers. These notions can be reinforced by the media and by our education. Without knowing the specific organization we will be entering, we are still primed to know how organizations work and which organizational memberships are more valued in our society. We develop this by listening to people around us talk, by messages from the media, from our teachers, family, and friends.

Once we do know what organization we will be entering, we begin **Organizational anticipatory socialization** (Jablin, 2001). We gather information to help us set our expectations for the experience. The sources of this information can include organizational forums like websites, events, interpersonal communication with current or former employees and other organizational documents. Think about the information you sought out about FHSU before beginning classes. You most likely found out what classes you were taking, what your schedule would be like, what type of supplies you needed, and where you would be living if you attend class on campus. You might have also sought out information about your professors and made scheduling choices based on with whom you wanted to work.

While newcomers seek out information, the organization also attempts to provide newcomers with information that will excite the recruits. Traditional messages by the organization are typically aimed at selling the organization. The messages will highlight the beneficial aspects of working with the organization. For FHSU some of those highlights might have been, small class sizes, high-performing and attentive faculty, and how could we forget that it has some of the lowest tuition costs in the nation?

Other messages try to present a more realistic picture of the organization. The messages aim at an honest portrayal of organizations by sharing good and challenging aspects:

"College is a great experience, but you have to work hard to be successful."

A **realistic job preview** (RJP) is any method an organization uses to help prospective members get a balanced picture of the positive and negative aspects of the work they will be doing and the organizational climate, prior to joining the organization. Maybe some of you came for an on-campus visit and met professors, and sat in on classes.

A RJPs can be part of job interviews or conducted by visiting the organization prior to entry, by talking with current organizational members, and through internship experiences. An accurate RJP, combined with opportunities for prospective members to choose not to go further in pursuing membership, can reduce turnover and hiring and training costs by weeding out people who do not want the kind of work the agency has to offer. This often leads to higher levels of satisfaction during the encounter and metamorphosis stages.

The **Encounter Stage** is the initial introduction to the organization (Jablin, 2001). This can be the first day or days on the job and can last for weeks if not months. Often times, newcomers experience **"reality shock"**–what Hughes (1958) used to characterize the feeling that newcomers often experience in entering unfamiliar organizational settings. Those expectations we established before entering the organization most likely will not be the reality of the situation. We often have unrealistic expectations or an inflated idea of what the job is going to be and then face **unmet expectations** or experience less of something desirable than was anticipated. We might enter a **crisis period** where, because the individual is unfamiliar with the organization, they are constantly being bombarded with new messages from the organization. To navigate the choppy waters, we often rely on reference groups or peers to learn the ropes.

We engage in **sensemaking**: trying to figure out what is happening. We can engage in **social learning** that takes place by modeling the behaviors of others. We look to people who have been with the organization longer and model our own behavior to theirs. We also look for reinforcement. If we complete a task in the way we think best, we look for rewards to confirm that we are doing the right thing.

Through social learning and reinforcement, newcomers learn two types of information about the organization: Role-related information and organizational culture information. **Role-related** Information encompasses the information, skills, procedures, and rules that an individual must grasp to perform the job (task-related). **Organizational culture information** includes the unwritten rules and practices of those within the organization (relationship-oriented). We also pay attention to **memorable messages.** We socialize through the stories and short messages we hear during our entry into new organizations and try to assimilate into our roles. **Role development** begins at organizational entry and continues through metamorphosis.

The third stage of socialization is **metamorphosis.**

According to Kramer (2010a) this period represents the "time when an individual is an active, established, or full organizational member." During this stage, we know what our role within the organization encompasses and perform it with ease.

Role development involves three interrelated phases:

1. Role-taking is when the leader asks a newcomer to do a variety of things to assess the talents, skills, and motivation of employee; the superior gives the role and the subordinate takes it.
2. Role-making is when the member seeks to modify the nature of the role and the manner in which it is enacted – involves negotiation between leader and member, exchange of resources (time of employee and rewards of leader)
3. Role routinization is when the role of the subordinate and expected behaviors of the supervisor are well-understood by both parties. It becomes routine.

Each member may experience **turning points** (Bullis & Bach, 1989) or moments when they become more (or less) connected with the organization. Think of key moments when you either felt more or less connected with FHSU. How have those moments shaped your current view of the university and your place in it? What situations or experiences influenced how connected you felt to the organization? For instance, speaking with a professor during office hours might make you feel more connected with FHSU or receiving a promotion you might feel more connected to your job.

The last stage is the **exit stage** (Jablin, 2001). This is the disengagement or exit from the organization. This can either be voluntary or forced and relates to the issue of turnover in organizations. According to staffing professional James Del Monte (Greenwood, n.d.), the direct cost to fill a $60,000-a-year IT position ranges from $10,000 to $49,000 (including costs such as placement fees, interview costs, training fees, ads, and relocation). Indirect costs can be even higher, costing the company an estimated $200,000 dollars on average (including costs such as consulting fees, lost revenue, and lost training). When an organization spends that much money to train an employee, it is difficult to see employees leaving.

Employees begin to signal their intent to leave with reduced interaction with others, their communication begins to focus on differentiating themselves from the organization and by passing on knowledge to others (Jablin, 2001). When we think about the exit stage of socialization, we often think about those left behind and how the organization will function in the absence of a member. If that member was deeply engaged with the organization, it might be difficult to find a replacement. Socialization strategies during the exit stage may be geared at trying to keep the organizational member or to try to diagnose what went wrong during an exit interview.

We know that successful socialization strategies can lead to more engaged and committed organizational members. Therefore, it is important to carefully consider the ways in which new organizational members are socialized and what role each and every organizational member has in the process.

9.3 GROUP LIFECYCLES AND MEMBER ROLES

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Groups are dynamic systems in constant change. Groups grow together and eventually come apart. People join groups and others leave. This dynamic changes and transforms the very nature of the group. As you read in the previous section, socialization involves how group members interact with one another and form relationships. Just as you were once born and changed those who cared for you, they changed you. You came to know a language and culture, a value system, and a set of beliefs that influence you to this day. You came to be socialized, to experience the process of learning to associate, communicate, or interact within a group. A group you belong to this year—perhaps a soccer team or member of an investment club—may not be part of your life next year. And those who are in leadership positions may ascend or descend the leadership hierarchy as the needs of the group, and other circumstances, change over time.

GROUP LIFECYCLE PATTERNS

Your lifecycle is characterized by several steps, and while it does not follow a prescribed path, there are universal stages we can all recognize. You were born. At birth, you did not know your caregivers, your language, or your culture, but you came to know them through communication. You came to know yourself, learned skills, discovered talents, and met other people.

In the same way, groups experience similar steps and stages and take on many of the characteristics we associate with life (Moreland & Levine, 1982). They grow, overcome illness and dysfunction, and transform over time. No group, just as no individual, lives forever.

Your first day on the job may be comparable to the first day you went to school. At home, you may have learned some of the basics, like how to write with a pencil, but knowledge of that skill and its application are two different things. In school, people spoke and acted in different ways than at home. Gradually, you came to understand the meaning of recess, the importance of raising your hand to get the teacher's attention, and how to follow other school rules. At work, you may have had academic training for your profession, but the knowledge you learned in school only serves as your foundation—much as your socialization at home served to guide you at school.

On the job they use jargon terms, have schedules that may include coffee breaks (recess), have a supervisor (teacher), and have rules, explicit and understood. On the first day, it was all new, even if many of the elements were familiar.

To better understand group development and its lifecycle, many researchers have described the universal stages and phases of groups. While there are modern interpretations of these stages, most draw from the model proposed by Bruce Tuckman. This model, shown in Table 9.1 "Tuckman's Linear Model of Group Development", specifies the usual order of the phases of group development, and allows us to predict several stages we can anticipate as we join a new group.

TABLE 9.1 TUCKMAN'S LINEAR MODEL OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Stages	**Activities**
Forming	Members come together, learn about each other, and determine the purpose of the group.
Storming	Members engage in more direct communication and get to know each other. Conflicts between group members will often arise during this stage.
Norming	Members establish spoken or unspoken rules about how they communicate and work. Status, rank, and roles in the group are established.
Performing	Members fulfill their purpose and reach their goal.
Adjourning	Members leave the group.

Tuckman begins with the forming stage as the initiation of group formation. This stage is also called the orientation stage because individual group members come to know each other. Group members who are new to each other and cannot predict each other's behavior can be expected to experience the stress of uncertainty.

Uncertainty theory states that we choose to know more about others with whom we have interactions to reduce or resolve the anxiety associated with the unknown (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Berger, 1986; Gudykunst, 1995). The more we know about others and become accustomed to how they communicate, the better we can predict how they will interact with us in future contexts. If you learn that Monday mornings are never a good time for your supervisor, you quickly learn to schedule meetings later in the week. Individuals are initially tentative and display caution as they begin to learn about the group and its members.

If you do not know someone very well, it is easy to offend. Each group member brings to the group a set of experiences, combined with education and a self-concept. You will not be able to read this information on a nametag, but instead, you will only come to know it through time and interaction. Since the possibility of overlapping and competing viewpoints and perspectives exists, the group will experience a storming stage, a time of struggles as the members themselves sort out their differences. There may be more than one way to solve the problem or task at hand, and some group members may prefer one strategy over another. Some members of the group may be more senior to the organization than you, and members may treat them differently. Some group members may be as new as you are and just as uncertain about everyone's talents, skills, roles, and self-perceptions. The wise business communicator will anticipate the storming stage and help facilitate opportunities for the members to resolve uncertainty before the work commences. There may be challenges for leadership, and conflicting viewpoints. The sales agent sees things differently than someone from accounting. A manager who understands and anticipates this normal challenge in the group's lifecycle can help the group become more productive.

A clear definition of the purpose and mission of the group can help the members focus their energies. Interaction before the first meeting can help reduce uncertainty. Coffee and calories can help bring a group together. Providing the group with what they need and opportunities to know each other before their task can increase efficiency.

Groups that make a successful transition from the storming stage will next experience the norming stage, where the group establishes norms, or informal rules, for behavior and interaction. Who speaks first? Who takes notes? Who is creative, who is visual, and who is detail-oriented? Sometimes our job titles and functions speak for themselves, but human beings are complex. We are not simply a list of job functions, and in the dynamic marketplace of today's business environment, you will often find that people have talents and skills well beyond their "official" role or task. Drawing on these strengths can make the group more effective.

The norming stage is marked by less division and more collaboration. The level of anxiety associated with interaction is generally reduced, making for a more positive work climate that promotes listening. When people feel less threatened and their needs are met, they are more likely to focus their complete attention on the purpose of the group. If they are still concerned with who does what, and whether they will speak in error, the interaction framework will stay in the storming stage. Tensions are reduced when the normative expectations are known, and the degree to which a manager can describe these at the outset can reduce the amount of time the group remains in uncertainty. Group members generally express more satisfaction with clear expectations and are more inclined to participate.

Ultimately, the purpose of a workgroup is performance, and the preceding stages lead us to the performing stage, in which the group accomplishes its mandate, fulfills its purpose, and reaches its goals. To facilitate performance, group members cannot skip the initiation of getting to know each other or the sorting out of roles and norms, but they can try to focus on performance with clear expectations from the moment the group is formed. Productivity is often how we measure success in business and industry, and the group has to produce. Outcome assessments may have been built into the system from the beginning to serve as a benchmark for success. Wise managers know how to celebrate success, as it brings more success, social cohesion, group participation, and a sense of job satisfaction. Incremental gains toward a benchmark may also be a cause for celebration and support, and failure to reach a goal should be regarded as an opportunity for clarification.

It is generally wiser to focus on the performance of the group rather than individual contributions. Managers and group members will want to offer assistance to underperformers as well as congratulate members for their contributions. If the goal is to create a community where competition pushes each member to perform, individual highlights may serve your needs, but if you want a group to solve a problem or address a challenge as a group, you have to promote group cohesion. Members need to feel a sense of belonging, and praise (or the lack thereof) can be a sword with two edges: one stimulates and motivates while the other demoralizes and divides.

Groups should be designed to produce and perform in ways and at levels that individuals cannot, or else you should consider compartmentalizing the tasks. The performing stage is where the productivity occurs, and it is necessary to make sure the group has what it needs to perform. Missing pieces, parts, or information can stall the group, and reset the cycle to storming all over again. Loss of performance is inefficiency, which carries a cost. Managers will be measured by the group's productivity and performance. Make sure the performing stage is productive and healthy for its members.

Imagine that you are the manager of a group that has produced an award-winning design for an ecologically innovative four-seat car. Their success is your success. Their celebrations are yours even if the success is not focused on you. A manager manages the process while group members perform. If you were a member of the group that helped design the belt line, you made a fundamental contribution to the style of the car. Individual consumers may never consider the line from the front fender, across the doors, to the rear taillight as they make a purchase decision, but they will recognize beauty. You will know that you could not have achieved that fundamental part of car design without help from the engineers in the group, and if the number-crunching accountants had not seen the efficiency of the production process that produced it, it may never have survived the transition from prototype to production. The group came together and accomplished its goals with amazing results.

Now, as typically happens, all groups will eventually have to move on to new assignments. In the adjourning stage, members leave the group. The group may cease to exist or it may be transformed with new members and a new set of goals. Your contributions in the past may have caught the attention of the management, and you may be assigned to redesign the flagship vehicle, the halo car of your marque or brand. It is quite a professional honor, and it is yours because of your successful work in a group. Others will be reassigned to tasks that require their talents and skills, and you may or may not collaborate with them in the future.

You may miss the interactions with the members, even the more cantankerous ones, and will experience both relief and a sense of loss. Like life, the group process is normal, and mixed emotions are to be expected. A wise manager anticipates this stage and facilitates the separation with skill and ease. We often close this process with a ritual marking its passing, though the ritual may be as formal as an award or as informal as a "thank you" or a verbal acknowledgment of a job well done over coffee and calories.

On a more sober note, it is important not to forget that groups can reach the adjourning stage without having achieved success. Some businesses go bankrupt, some departments are closed, and some individuals lose their positions after a group fails to perform. Adjournment can come suddenly and unexpectedly, or gradually and piece by piece. Either way, a skilled business communicator will be prepared and recognize it as part of the classic group lifecycle.

LIFECYCLE OF MEMBER ROLES

Just as groups go through a lifecycle when they form and eventually adjourn, the group members fulfill different roles during this lifecycle. These roles, proposed by Richard Moreland and John Levine, are summarized in Table 9.2 "Lifecycle of Member Roles".

TABLE 9.2 LIFECYCLE OF MEMBER ROLES

1. Potential Member	Curiosity and interest
2. New Member	Joined the group but still an outsider, and unknown
3. Full Member	Knows the "rules" and is looked to for leadership
4. Divergent Member	Focuses on differences
5. Marginal member	No longer involved
6. Ex-Member	No longer considered a member

Suppose you are about to graduate from school and you are in the midst of an employment search. You have gathered extensive information on a couple of local businesses and are aware that they will be participating in the university job fair. You have explored their websites, talked to people currently employed at each company, and learned what you can from the public information available. At this stage, you are considered a potential member. You may have an electrical, chemical, or mechanical engineering degree soon, but you are not a member of an engineering team.

You show up at the job fair in professional attire and completely prepared. The representatives of each company are respectful, cordial, and give you contact information. One of them even calls a member of the organization on the spot and arranges an interview for you next week. You are excited at the prospect and want to learn more. You are still a potential member.

The interview goes well the following week. The day after the meeting, you receive a call for a follow-up interview that leads to a committee interview. A few weeks later, the company calls you with a job offer. However, in the meantime, you have also been interviewing with other potential employers, and you are waiting to hear back from two of them. You are still a potential member.

After careful consideration, you decide to take the job offer and start the next week. The projects look interesting, you will be gaining valuable experience, and the commute to work is reasonable. Your first day on the job is positive, and they have assigned you a mentor. The conversations are positive, but you feel lost at times, as if they are speaking a language you can not quite grasp. As a new group member, your level of acceptance will increase as you begin learning the group's rules, spoken and unspoken (Fisher, 1970). You will gradually move from the potential member role to the role of new group member as you learn to fit into the group.

Over time and projects, you gradually increase your responsibilities. You are no longer looked at as the new person, and you can follow almost every conversation. You cannot quite say, "I remember when" because your tenure has not been that long, but you are a known quantity and know your way around. You are a full member of the group. Full members enjoy knowing the rules and customs, and can even create new rules. New group members look to full members for leadership and guidance. Full group members can control the agenda and have considerable influence on the agenda and activities.

Full members of a group, however, can and do come into conflict. When you were a new member, you may have remained silent when you felt you had something to say, but now you state your case. There is more than one way to get the job done. You may suggest new ways that emphasize efficiency over existing methods. Coworkers who have been working in the department for several years may be unwilling to adapt and change, resulting in tension. Expressing different views can cause conflict and may even interfere with communication.

When this type of tension arises, divergent group members pull back, contribute less, and start to see themselves as separate from the group. Divergent group members have less eye contact, seek out each other's opinions less frequently, and listen defensively. At the beginning of the process, you felt a sense of belonging, but now you do not. Marginal group members start to look outside the group for their interpersonal needs.

After several months of trying to cope with these adjustments, you decide that you never really investigated the other two companies; that your job search process was incomplete. Perhaps you should take a second look at the options. You will report to work on Monday but will start the process of becoming an ex-member, one who no longer belongs. You may experience a sense of relief upon making this decision, given that you haven't felt like you belonged to the group for a while. When you line up your next job and submit your resignation, you make it official.

This process has no set timetable. Some people overcome differences and stay in the group for years; others get promoted and leave the group only when they get transferred to regional headquarters. As a skilled business communicator, you will recognize the signs of divergence, just as you have anticipated the storming stage, and do your best to facilitate success.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MEMBER ROLES

If someone in your group always makes everyone laugh, that can be a distinct asset when the news is less than positive. At times when you have to get work done, however, the class clown may become a distraction. Notions of positive and negative will often depend on the context when discussing groups. Table 9.3 "Positive Roles" (Beene & Sheats, 1948; McLean, 2005) and Table 9.4 "Negative Roles" (Beene &

Sheats, 1948; McLean, 2005) list both positive and negative roles people sometimes play in a group setting (Beene & Sheats, 1948; McLean, 2005).

TABLE 9.3 POSITIVE ROLES

Initiator-Coordinator	Suggests new ideas or new ways of looking at the problem
Elaborator	Builds on ideas and provides examples
Coordinator	Brings ideas, information, and suggestions together
Evaluator-Critic	Evaluates ideas and provides constructive criticism
Recorder	Records ideas, examples, suggestions, and critiques

TABLE 9.4 NEGATIVE ROLES

Dominator	Dominates discussion, not allowing others to take their turn
Recognition Seeker	Relates discussion to their accomplishments; seeks attention
Special-Interest Pleader	Relates discussion to special interest or personal agenda
Blocker	Blocks attempts at consensus consistently
Joker or Clown	Seeks attention through humor and distracts group members

Now that we have examined a classical view of positive and negative group member roles, let us examine another perspective. While some personality traits and behaviors may negatively influence groups, some are positive or negative depending on the context.

Just as the class clown can have a positive effect in lifting spirits or a negative effect in distracting members, a dominator may be exactly what is needed for quick action. An emergency physician does not have time to ask all the group members in the emergency unit how they feel about a course of action; instead, a self-directed approach based on training and experience may be necessary. In contrast, the pastor of a church may have ample opportunity to ask members of the congregation their opinions about a change in the format of Sunday services; in this situation, the role of coordinator or elaborator is more appropriate than that of dominator.

The group is together because they have a purpose or goal, and normally they are capable of more than any one individual member could be on their own, so it would be inefficient to hinder that progress. But a blocker, who cuts off collaboration, does just that. If a group member interrupts another and presents a viewpoint or information that suggests a different course of action, the point may be well taken and serve the collaborative process. But if that same group member repeatedly engages in blocking behavior, then the behavior becomes a problem. A skilled business communicator will learn to recognize the difference, even when positive and negative are not completely clear.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Groups and their members come together and grow apart in predictable patterns.

9.4 GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

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No matter who you are or where you live, problems are an inevitable part of life. This is true for groups as well as for individuals. Some groups—especially work teams—are formed specifically to solve problems. Other groups encounter problems for a wide variety of reasons. In a workgroup, a problem might be that some workers are putting in more effort than others, yet achieving poorer results. Regardless of the problem, having the resources of a group can be an advantage, as different people can contribute different ideas for how to reach a satisfactory solution.

Once a group encounters a problem, the questions that come up range from "Where do we start?" to "How do we solve it?" While there are many ways to approach a problem, the American educational philosopher John Dewey's reflective thinking sequence has stood the test of time. This seven-step process (Adler, R., 1996) has produced positive results and serves as a handy organizational structure. If you are a member of a group that needs to solve a problem and don't know where to start, consider these seven simple steps:

1. Define the problem
2. Analyze the problem
3. Establish criteria
4. Consider possible solutions
5. Decide on a solution
6. Implement the solution
7. Follow up on the solution

Let us discuss each step in detail.

DEFINE THE PROBLEM

If you do not know what the problem is, how do you know you can solve it? Defining the problem allows the group to set boundaries of what the problem is and what it is not and to begin to formalize a description or definition of the scope, size, or extent of the challenge the group will address. A problem that is too broadly defined can overwhelm the group. If the problem is too narrowly defined, important information will be missed or ignored.

In the following example, we have a Web-based company called Favorites that needs to increase its customer base and ultimately sales. A problem-solving group has been formed, and they start by formulating a working definition of the problem.

Too broad: "Sales are off, our numbers are down, and we need more customers."

More precise: "Sales have been slipping incrementally for six of the past nine months and are significantly lower than a seasonally adjusted comparison to last year. Overall, this loss represents a 4.5 percent reduction in sales from the same time last year. However, when we break it down by product category, sales of our nonedible products have seen a modest but steady increase, while sales of edibles account for the drop-off and we need to halt the decline."

ANALYZE THE PROBLEM

Now the group analyzes the problem, trying to gather information and learn more. The problem is complex and requires more than one area of expertise. Why do nonedible products continue selling well? What is it about the edibles that is turning customers off? Let us meet our problem solvers at Favorites:

Kevin is responsible for customer resource management. He is involved with the customer from the point of initial contact through purchase and delivery. Most of the interface is automated in the form of an online "basket model," where photographs and product descriptions are accompanied by "buy it" buttons. He is available during normal working business hours for live chat and voice chat if needed, and customers are invited to request additional information. Most Favorites customers do not access this service, but Kevin is kept quite busy, as he also handles returns and complaints. Because Kevin believes that superior service retains customers while attracting new ones, he is always interested in better ways to serve the customer. Looking at edibles and nonedibles, he will study the cycle of customer service and see if there are any common points—from the main webpage, through the catalog, to the purchase process, and to returns—at which customers abandon the sale. He has existing customer feedback loops with end-of-sale surveys, but most customers decline to take the survey and there is currently no incentive to participate.

Mariah is responsible for products and purchasing. She wants to offer the best products at the lowest price and to offer new products that are unusual, rare, or exotic. She regularly adds new products to the Favorites catalog and culls underperformers. Right now she has the data on every product and its sales history, but it is a challenge to represent it. She will analyze current sales data and produce a report that specifically identifies how each product—edible and nonedible—is performing. She wants to highlight "winners" and "losers" but also recognizes that today's "losers" may be the hit of tomorrow. It is hard to predict constantly changing tastes and preferences, but that is part of her job. It is not all science, and it is not all art. She has to have an eye for what will catch on tomorrow while continuing to provide what is hot today.

Suri is responsible for data management at Favorites. She gathers, analyzes, and presents information gathered from the supply chain, sales, and marketing. She works with vendors to make sure products are available when needed, makes sales predictions based on past sales history, and assesses the effectiveness of marketing campaigns.

The problem-solving group members already have certain information on hand. They know that customer retention is one contributing factor. Attracting new customers is a constant goal, but they are aware of the well-known principle that it takes more effort to attract new customers than to keep existing ones. Thus, it is important to ensure a quality customer service experience for existing customers and encourage them to refer friends. The group needs to determine how to promote this favorable customer behavior.

Another contributing factor seems to be that customers often abandon the shopping cart before completing a purchase, especially when purchasing edibles. The group members need to learn more about why this is happening.

ESTABLISH CRITERIA

Establishing the criteria for a solution is the next step. At this point, information is coming in from diverse perspectives, and each group member has contributed information from their perspective, even though there may be several points of overlap.

Kevin: Customers who complete the post-sale survey indicate that they want to know (1) what is the estimated time of delivery, (2) why a specific item was not in stock and when it will be available, and (3) why their order sometimes arrives with less than a complete order, with some items back-ordered, without prior notification.

He notes that a very small percentage of customers complete the post-sale survey, and the results are far from scientific. He also notes that it appears the interface is not capable of cross-checking inventory to provide immediate information concerning back orders so that the customer "buys it" only to learn several days later that it was not in stock. This seems to be especially problematic for edible products, because people may tend to order them for special occasions like birthdays and anniversaries. But we do not really know this for sure because of the low participation in the post-sale survey.

Mariah: There are four edible products that frequently sell out. So far, we have not been able to boost the appeal of other edibles so that people would order them as a second choice when these sales leaders are not available. We also have several rare, exotic products that are slow movers. They have potential but currently are underperformers.

Suri: We know from a zip code analysis that most of our customers are from a few specific geographic areas associated with above-average incomes. We have very few credit cards declined, and the average sale is over $100. Shipping costs represent on average 8 percent of the total sales cost. We do not have sufficient information to produce a customer profile. There is no specific point in the purchase process where basket abandonment tends to happen; it happens fairly uniformly at all steps.

CONSIDER POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM

The group has listened to each other and now starts to brainstorm ways to address the challenges they have addressed while focusing resources on those solutions that are more likely to produce results.

Kevin: Is it possible for our programmers to create a cross-index feature, linking the product desired with a report of how many are in stock? I would like the customer to know right away whether it is in stock, or how long they may have to wait. As another idea, is it possible to add incentives to the purchase cycle that won't negatively impact our overall profit? I'm thinking a small volume discount on multiple items, or perhaps free shipping over a specific dollar amount.

Mariah: I recommend we hold a focus group where customers can sample our edible products and tell us what they like best and why. When the best-sellers are sold out, could we offer a discount on related products to provide an instant alternative? We might also cull the underperforming products with a liquidation sale to generate interest.

Suri: If we want to know more about our customers, we need to give them an incentive to complete the postsale survey. How about a 5 percent off coupon code for the next purchase to get them to return and to help us better identify our customer base? We may also want to build in a customer referral rewards program, but it all takes better data in to get results out. We should also explore the supply side of the business by getting a more reliable supply of the leading products and trying to get discounts that are more advantageous from our suppliers, especially in the edible category.

DECIDE ON A SOLUTION

Kevin, Mariah, and Suri may want to implement all the solution strategies, but they do not have the resources to do them all. They will complete a cost-benefit analysis, which ranks each solution according to its probable impact. The analysis is shown in Table 9.5.

TABLE 9.5 COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Source	Proposed Solution	Cost	Benefit	Comment
Kevin	Integrate the cross-index feature	High	High	Many of our competitors already have this feature
	Volume discount	Low	Medium	May increase sales slightly
	Free shipping	Low	Low	This has a downside in making customers more aware of shipping costs if their order doesn't qualify for free shipping
	Hold a focus group to taste edible products	High	Medium	Difficult to select participants representative of our customer base
Mariah	Search for alternative products to high performers	Medium	Medium	We can't know for sure which products customers will like best
	Liquidate underperformers	Low	Low	Might create a "bargain basement" impression inconsistent with our brand

Source	Proposed Solution	Cost	Benefit	Comment
Suri	Incentive for post-sale survey completion	Low	Medium	Make sure the incentive process is easy for the customer
	Incentive for customer referrals	Low	Medium	People may feel uncomfortable referring friends if it is seen as putting them in a marketing role
	Find a more reliable supply of top-selling edibles	Medium	High	We already know customers want these products
	Negotiate better discounts from vendors	Low	High	If we can do this without alienating our best vendors, it will be a win-win

Now that the options have been presented with their costs and benefits, it is easier for the group to decide which courses of action are likely to yield the best outcomes. The analysis helps the group members to see beyond the immediate cost of implementing a given solution. For example, Kevin's suggestion of offering free shipping will not cost Favorites much money, but it also may not pay off in customer goodwill. And even though Mariah's suggestion of having a focus group might sound like a good idea, it will be expensive and its benefits are questionable.

A careful reading of the analysis indicates that Kevin's best suggestion is to integrate the cross-index feature in the ordering process so that customers can know immediately whether an item is in stock or on back order. Mariah, meanwhile, suggests that searching for alternative products is probably the most likely to benefit Favorites, while Suri's two supply-side suggestions are likely to result in positive outcomes.

IMPLEMENT THE SOLUTION

Kevin is faced with the challenge of designing the computer interface without incurring unacceptable costs. He strongly believes that the interface will pay for itself within the first year—or, to put it more bluntly, that Favorites' declining sales will get worse if the Web site does not have this feature soon. He asks to meet with top management to get budget approval and secures their agreement, on one condition: he must negotiate a compensation schedule with the Information Technology consultants that includes delayed compensation in the form of bonuses after the feature has been up and running successfully for six months.

Mariah knows that searching for alternative products is a never-ending process, but it takes time and the company needs results. She decides to invest time evaluating products that competing companies currently offer, especially in the edible category, on the theory that customers who find their desired items sold out on the Favorites Web site may have been buying alternative products elsewhere instead of choosing an alternative from Favorites' product lines.

Suri decides to approach the vendors of the four frequently sold-out products and ask point blank, "What would it take to get you to produce these items more reliably in greater quantities?" By opening the channel of communication with these vendors, she is able to motivate them to make modifications that will improve the reliability and quantity. She also approaches the vendors of the less popular products with a request for better discounts in return for their cooperation in developing and test-marketing new products.

FOLLOW UP ON THE SOLUTION

Kevin: After several beta tests, the cross-index feature was implemented and has been in place for thirty days. Now customers see either “in stock” or “available [mo/da/yr]” in the shopping basket. As expected, Kevin notes a decrease in the number of chat and phone inquiries to the effect of, “Will this item arrive before my wife’s birthday?” However, he notes an increase in inquiries asking, “Why isn’t this item in stock?” It is difficult to tell whether customer satisfaction is higher overall.

Mariah: In exploring the merchandise available from competing merchants, she got several ideas for modifying Favorites’ product line to offer more flavors and other variations on popular edibles. Working with vendors, she found that these modifications cost very little. Within the first thirty days of adding these items to the product line, sales are up. Mariah believes these additions also serve to enhance the Favorites brand identity, but she has no data to back this up.

Suri: So far, the vendors supplying the four top-selling edibles have fulfilled their promise of increasing quantity and reliability. However, three of the four items have still sold out, raising the question of whether Favorites needs to bring in one or more additional vendors to produce these items. Of the vendors with which Favorites asked to negotiate better discounts, some refused, and two of these were “stolen” by a competing merchant so that they no longer sell to Favorites. In addition, one of the vendors that agreed to give a better discount was unexpectedly forced to cease operations for several weeks because of a fire.

This scenario allows us to see that the problem may have several dimensions as well as solutions, but resources can be limited and not every solution is successful. Even though the problem is not immediately resolved, the group problem-solving pattern serves as a useful guide through the problem-solving process.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Group problem-solving can be an orderly process when it is broken down into seven specific stages.

9.5 TEAMWORK

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Two important aspects of group communication—especially in the business environment—are teamwork and leadership. You will work in a team and at some point may be called on to lead. You may emerge to that role as the group recognizes your specific skill set in relation to the task, or you may be appointed to a position of responsibility for yourself and others. Your communication skills will be your foundation for success as a member and as a leader. Listen and seek to understand both the task and your group members as you become involved with the new effort. Have confidence in yourself and inspire the trust of others. Know that leading and following are both integral aspects of effective teamwork.

TEAMWORK

Teamwork is a compound word, combining team and work. Teams are a form of group normally dedicated to production or problem-solving. That leaves us with the work. This is where our previous example on problem-solving can serve us well. Each member of the team has skills, talents, experience, and education. Each is expected to contribute. Work is the activity, and while it may be fun or engaging, it also requires effort and commitment, as there is a schedule for production with individual and group responsibilities. Each member must fulfill his or her own obligations for the team to succeed, and the team, like a chain, is only as strong as its weakest member. In this context we don't measure strength or weakness at the gym, but in terms of productivity.

Teams can often achieve higher levels of performance than individuals because of the combined energies and talents of the members. Collaboration can produce motivation and creativity that may not be present in single-contractor projects. Individuals also have a sense of belonging to the group, and the range of views and diversity can energize the process, helping address creative blocks and stalemates. By involving members of the team in decision-making, and calling upon each member's area of contribution, teams can produce positive results.

Teamwork is not without its challenges. The work itself may prove a challenge as members juggle competing assignments and personal commitments. The work may also be compromised if team members are expected to conform and pressured to go along with a procedure, plan, or product that they themselves have not developed. **Groupthink,** or the tendency to accept the group's ideas and actions in spite of individual concerns, can also compromise the process and reduce efficiency. Personalities and competition can play a role in a team's failure to produce.

We can recognize that people want to belong to a successful team, and celebrating incremental gain can focus the attention on the project and its goals. Members will be more willing to express thoughts and opinions and follow through with actions when they perceive that they are an important part of the team. By failing to include all the team members, valuable insights may be lost in the rush to judgment or production. Making time for planning, and giving each member time to study, reflect, and contribute can allow them to gain valuable insights from each other, and may make them more likely to contribute information that challenges the status quo. Unconventional or oppositional thinking may prove insightful and serve to challenge the process in a positive way, improving the production of the team. Respect for divergent views can encourage open discussion.

John Thill and Courtland Bovee (2002) provide a valuable list to consider when setting up a team, which we have adapted here for our discussion:

- Select team members wisely
- Select a responsible leader
- Promote cooperation
- Clarify goals
- Elicit commitment
- Clarify responsibilities
- Instill prompt action
- Apply technology
- Ensure technological compatibility
- Provide prompt feedback

Group dynamics involve the interactions and processes of a team and influence the degree to which members feel a part of the goal and mission. A team with a strong identity can prove to be a powerful force, but it requires time and commitment. A team that exerts too much control over individual members can run the risk of reducing creative interactions and encouraging tunnel vision. A team that exerts too little control, with attention to process and areas of specific responsibility, may not be productive. The balance between motivation and encouragement, and control and influence, is challenging as team members represent diverse viewpoints and approaches to the problem. A skilled business communicator creates a positive team by first selecting members based on their areas of skill and expertise, but attention to their style of communication is also warranted. Individuals that typically work alone or tend to be introverted may need additional encouragement to participate. Extroverts may need to be encouraged to listen to others and not dominate the conversation. Teamwork involves teams and work, and group dynamics play an integral role in their function and production.

9.6 DISCUSSION & ACTIVITIES

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9.6.1. UNDERSTANDING YOUR GROUP MEMBERSHIP

1. List the family and social groups you belong to and interact with on a regular basis—for example, within a twenty-four-hour period or

a typical week. Please also consider forums, online communities, and Web sites where you follow threads of discussion or post regularly. Discuss your results with your classmates.

2. List the professional (i.e., work-related) groups you interact with in order of frequency. Please also consider informal as well as formal groups (e.g., a BCOM210 study club and the colleagues you often share your communal living with). Compare your results with those of your classmates.
3. Identify one group to which you no longer belong. List at least one reason why you no longer belong to this group and discuss your experience in the Exist Stage of socialization. Compare your results with those of your classmates.
4. Think of the online groups you participate in. Forums may have hundreds or thousands of members, and you may have hundreds of connections on Snapchat, Facebook, or Instagram, but how many do you regularly communicate with? Exclude the "all-to-one" messages, such as a

general tweet to everyone (but no one person in particular). Do you find that you gravitate toward the group norm of eight or fewer group members? Discuss your answer with your classmates.

5. Are there times when it is better to work alone rather than in a group? Why or why not? Discuss your opinion with a classmate.

9.6.2. Group Considerations

1. Is it possible for an outsider (a nongroup member) to help a group move from the storming stage to the norming stage? Explain your answer and present it to the class.
2. Think of a group of which you are a member and identify some roles played by group members, including yourself. Have your roles, and those of others, changed over time? Are some roles more positive than others? Discuss

your answers with your classmates.

3. Thinking about the organizational socialization process, identify one or more formative moments in which you learned about how to be a professional or insider in a particular organization. What norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and/or ways of behaving would you share with a new member to help make the person feel more a part of the organization?
4. In the course where you are using this book, think of yourself and your classmates as a group. At what stage of group formation are you currently? What stage will you be at when the school year ends?
5. Think of a decision you will be making sometime in the near future. Apply the cost-benefit analysis framework to your decision. Do you find this method helpful? Discuss your results with classmates.

9.6.3. Group Problems

1. Think of a problem encountered in the past by a group of which you are a member. How did the group solve the problem? How satisfactory was the solution? Discuss your results with your classmates.
2. Consider again the problem you described above. In view of the seven-step framework, which steps did the group utilize? Would following the full seven-step framework have been helpful? Discuss your opinion with a classmate.

9.6.4. Your Role in a Group

1. Do you prefer working in a group or team environment, or working individually? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Discuss your thoughts with classmates.
2. Imagine that you could choose anyone you wanted to be on a team with you. Who would

you choose, and why? Write an explanation of why and share it with a classmate.

3. Think of a group you are currently a member of. In what stage of Tuckman's Linear Model of Group Development is the group in? Explain with examples why you have placed your group in that stage and what you might do to enter the "performing" stage.
4. Consider the positive, negative, and social team roles discussed in this chapter. Which roles do you most often fill when working in a team? Provide examples of how you assumed these roles. Are you satisfied with taking these roles? Why or why not? What can you do in your next team experience to help achieve team goals?

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CHAPTER 10: CONFLICT IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

[Author removed at request of original publisher]

Conflict among individuals and groups can arise for many reasons, and no workplace is immune from it. But conflict does not have to be destructive. In fact, having disagreements at and about work can lead to better relationships, discussion, decision-making, and innovation. The positive outcomes of conflict can only happen though if we know how to manage it and engage in it professionally. In this chapter, you will learn about the common causes of conflict at work, different conflict styles, and strategies for managing conflict.

Learning Objectives

- Identify common causes of conflict.
- Compare common types of conflict.
- Assess personal conflict style.
- Compare conflict styles.
- Assess conflict management strategies.
- Formulate a plan for engaging in a difficult conversation.

In addition to originally authored content, this chapter was adapted from the following Open Education Resource:

Adaptations included editing tone, images, removing content to align the chapter with BCOM210 course learning objectives, and revising examples for an FHSU student population, and adding some original exercises to align with course objectives.

10.1 WHAT IS CONFLICT?

The word "conflict" produces a sense of anxiety for many people, but it is part of the human experience. Just because conflict is universal does not mean that we cannot improve how we handle disagreements, misunderstandings, and struggles to understand or make ourselves understood. Joyce Hocker and William Wilmot (1991) offer us several principles on conflict that have been adapted here for our discussion:

- Conflict is universal.
- Conflict is associated with incompatible goals.
- Conflict is associated with scarce resources.
- Conflict is associated with interference.
- Conflict is not a sign of a poor relationship.
- Conflict cannot be avoided.
- Conflict cannot always be resolved.
- Conflict is not always bad.

<u>Conflict</u> is the physical or psychological struggle associated with the perception of opposing or incompatible goals, desires, demands, wants, or needs (McLean, S., 2005). When incompatible goals, scarce resources, or interference are present, conflict is a typical result, but it does not mean the

relationship is poor or failing. All relationships progress through times of conflict and collaboration. How we navigate and negotiate these challenges influences, reinforces, or destroys the relationship. Conflict is universal, but how and when it occurs is open to influence and interpretation. Rather than viewing conflict from a negative frame of reference, view it as an opportunity for clarification, growth, and even reinforcement of the relationship.

TYPES OF CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE

INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

Interpersonal conflict is among individuals such as coworkers, a manager and an employee, or CEOs and their staff. For example, in 2006 the CEO of Airbus S.A.S., Christian Streiff, resigned because of his conflict with the board of directors over issues such as how to restructure the company ([1] This example may reflect a well-known trend among CEOs. According to one estimate, 31.9% of CEOs resigned from their jobs because they had conflict with the board of directors ([2]CEOs of competing companies might also have public conflicts. In 1997, Michael Dell was asked what he would do about Apple Computer. "What would I do? I'd shut it down and give the money back to shareholders." Ten years later, Steve Jobs, the CEO of Apple Inc., indicated he had clearly held a grudge as he shot back at Dell in an e-mail to his employees, stating, "Team, it turned out Michael Dell wasn't perfect in predicting the future. Based on today's stock market close, Apple is worth more than Dell" ([3] In part, their long-time disagreements stem from their differences. Interpersonal conflict often arises because of competition, as the Dell/Apple example shows, or because of personality or values differences. For example, one person's style may be to "go with the gut" on decisions, while another person wants to make decisions based on facts. Those differences will lead to conflict if the individuals reach different conclusions. Many companies suffer because of interpersonal

1. Michaels, Power, & Gauthier-Villars, 2006). Airbus CEO's resignation reflects the company's deep structural woes.
2. Whitehouse, 2008).
3. Haddad, 2001).

conflicts. Keeping conflicts centered around ideas rather than individual differences is important in avoiding conflict escalation.

INTERGROUP CONFLICT

Intergroup conflict is conflict that takes place among different groups. Types of groups may include different departments or divisions in a company, an employee union and management, or competing companies that supply the same customers. Departments may conflict over budget allocations; unions and management may disagree over work rules; suppliers may conflict with each other on the quality of parts. Merging two groups together can lead to friction between the groups—especially if there are scarce resources to be divided among the group. For example, in what has been called "the most difficult and hard-fought labor issue in an airline merger," Canadian Air and Air Canada pilots were locked into years of personal and legal conflict when the two airlines' seniority lists were combined following the merger ([4]Seniority

4. Stoykewych, 2003).

is a valuable and scarce resource for pilots, because it helps to determine who flies the newest and biggest planes, who receives the best flight routes, and who is paid the most. In response to the loss of seniority, former Canadian Air pilots picketed at shareholder meetings, threatened to call in sick, and had ongoing conflicts with pilots from Air Canada. The conflicts with pilots continue to this day. The history of past conflicts among organizations and employees makes new deals challenging.

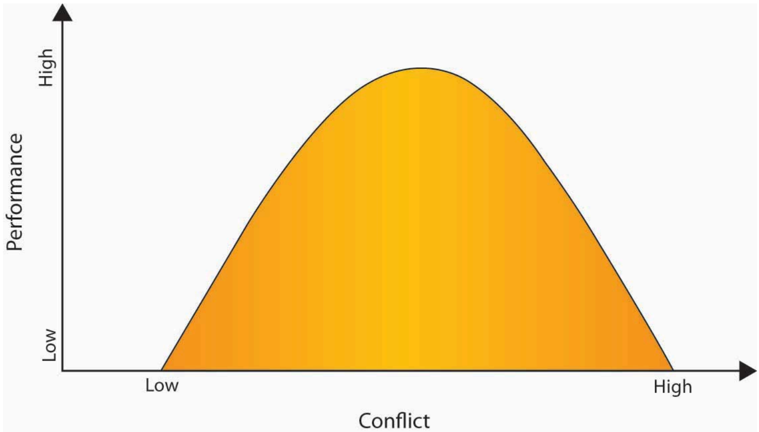
IS CONFLICT ALWAYS BAD?

Most people are uncomfortable with conflict, but is conflict always bad? Conflict can be dysfunctional if it paralyzes an organization, leads to less than optimal performance, or, in the worst case, leads to workplace violence. Surprisingly, a moderate amount of conflict can actually be a healthy (and necessary) part of organizational life ([5] To understand how to

5. Amason, 1996).

get to a positive level of conflict, we need to understand its root causes, consequences, and tools to help manage it. The impact of too much or too little conflict can disrupt performance. If conflict is too low, then performance is low. If conflict is too high, then performance also tends to be low. The goal is to hold conflict levels in the middle of this range. While it might seem strange to want a particular level of conflict, a medium level of task-related conflict is often viewed as optimal, because it represents a situation in which a healthy debate of ideas takes place.

FIGURE 10.1 THE INVERTED U RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND CONFLICT



Task conflict can be good in certain circumstances, such as in the early stages of decision-making, because it stimulates creativity. However, it can interfere with complex tasks in the long run ([6]Personal conflicts, such as personal attacks, are never healthy because they cause stress and distress, which undermines performance. The worst cases of personal conflicts can lead to workplace bullying. At Intel Corporation, all new employees go through a 4-hour training module to learn "constructive confrontation." The content of the training program includes dealing with others in a positive manner, using facts rather than opinion to persuade others, and focusing on the problem at hand rather than the people involved. "We don't spend time being defensive or taking things personally. We cut through all of that and get to the

6. De Dreu, & Weingart, 2003).

issues," notes a trainer from Intel University ([7]The success of the training remains unclear, but the presence of this program indicates that Intel understands the potentially positive effect of a moderate level of conflict. Research focusing on effective teams across time found that they were characterized by low but increasing levels of process conflict (how do we get things done?), low levels of relationship conflict with a rise toward the end of the project (personal disagreements among team members), and moderate levels of task conflict in the middle of the task timeline ([8]

KEY TAKEAWAY

Conflict is unavoidable and can be an opportunity for clarification, growth, and even reinforcement of the relationship. Conflict can be a problem for individuals and organizations. There are several different types of conflict, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup conflict. Moderate conflict can be a healthy and necessary part of organizational life.

7. Dahle, 2001).
8. Jehn, & Mannix, 2001).

10.2 CAUSES OF WORKPLACE CONFLICT

There are many potential root causes of conflict at work. We will go over six of them here. Remember, anything that leads to a disagreement can be a cause of conflict. Although conflict is common in organizations, some organizations have more than others.

FIGURE 10.2 POTENTIAL CAUSES OF CONFLICT

CAUSES OF CONFLICT

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Conflict tends to take different forms, depending on the organizational structure ([1]For example, if a company uses a matrix structure as its organizational form, it will have decisional conflict built in, because the structure specifies that each manager reports to two bosses. Global company ABB Inc. is organized around a matrix structure based on the dimensions of country and industry. This structure can lead to confusion as the company is divided geographically into 1,200 different units and by industry into 50 different units (T[2]

1. Jaffe, 2000).
2. aylor, 1991).

LIMITED RESOURCES

Resources such as money, time, and equipment are often scarce. Competition among people or departments for limited resources is a frequent cause of conflict. For example, cutting-edge laptops and gadgets such as a tablet or smartphone are expensive resources that may be allocated to employees on a need-to-have basis in some companies. When a group of employees have access to such resources while others do not, conflict may arise among employees or between employees and management. While technical employees may feel that these devices are crucial to their productivity, employees with customer contact such as sales representatives may make the point that these devices are important for them to make a good impression on clients. Because important resources are often limited, this is one source of conflict many companies have to live with.

TASK INTERDEPENDENCE

Another cause of conflict is task interdependence; that is, when accomplishment of your goal requires reliance on others to perform their tasks. For example, if you are tasked with creating advertising for your product, you are dependent on the creative team to design the words and layout, the photographer or videographer to create the visuals, the media buyer to purchase the advertising space, and so on. The completion of your goal (airing or publishing your ad) is dependent on others.

INCOMPATIBLE GOALS

Sometimes conflict arises when two parties think that their goals are mutually exclusive. Within an organization, incompatible goals often arise because of the different ways department managers are compensated. For example, a sales manager's bonus may be tied to how many sales are made for the company. As a result, the individual might be tempted to offer customers "freebies" such as expedited delivery in order to make the sale. In contrast, a transportation manager's compensation may be based on how much money the company saves on transit. In this case, the goal might be to eliminate expedited delivery because it adds expense. The two will butt heads until the company resolves the conflict by changing the compensation scheme. For example, if the company assigns the bonus based on profitability of a sale, not just the dollar amount, the cost of the expediting would be subtracted from the value of the sale. It might still make sense to expedite the order if the sale is large enough, in which case both parties would support it. On the other hand, if the expediting negates the value of the sale, neither party would be in favor of the added expense.

PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES

Personality differences among coworkers are common. By understanding some fundamental differences in the way people think and act, we can better understand how others see the world. Knowing that these differences are natural and normal lets us anticipate and mitigate interpersonal conflict—it is often not about "you" but simply a different way of seeing and behaving. For example, Type A individuals have been found to have more conflicts with their coworkers than Type B individuals ([3]

COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

Sometimes conflict arises simply out of a small, unintentional communication problem, such as lost e-mails or dealing with people who do not return phone calls. Giving feedback is also a case in which the best intentions can quickly escalate into a conflict situation. When communicating, be sure to focus on behavior and its effects, not on the person. For example, say that Jeff always arrives late to all your meetings. You think he has a bad attitude, but you do not really know what Jeff's attitude is. You do know, however, the effect that Jeff's behavior has on you. You could say, "Jeff, when you come late

3. Baron, 1989).

to the meeting, I feel like my time is wasted." Jeff cannot argue with that statement, because it is a fact of the impact of his behavior on you. It's indisputable because it is your reality. What Jeff can say is that he did not intend such an effect, and then you can have a discussion regarding the behavior.

In another example, the Hershey Company was engaged in talks behind closed doors with Cadbury Schweppes about a possible merger. No information about this deal was shared with Hershey's major stakeholder, the Hershey Trust. When Robert Vowler, CEO of the Hershey Trust, discovered that talks were underway without anyone consulting the Trust, tensions between the major stakeholders began to rise. As Hershey's continued to underperform, steps were taken in what is now called the "Sunday night massacre," in which several board members were forced to resign and Richard Lenny, Hershey's then-current CEO, retired ([4]This example shows how a lack of communication can lead to an escalation of conflict. Time will tell what the lasting effects of this conflict will be, but in the short term, effective communication will be the key. Now, let's turn our attention to the outcomes of conflict.

4. Jargon, Karnitschnig, & Lublin, 2008).

OUTCOMES OF CONFLICT

One of the most common outcomes of conflict is that it upsets parties in the short run ([5]However, conflict can have both positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, conflict can result in greater creativity or better decisions. For example, as a result of a disagreement over a policy, a manager may learn from an employee that newer technologies help solve problems in an unanticipated new way.

Positive outcomes include the following:

- Consideration of a broader range of ideas, resulting in a better, stronger idea
- Surfacing of assumptions that may be inaccurate
- Increased participation and creativity
- Clarification of individual views that build learning

On the other hand, conflict can be dysfunctional if it is excessive or involves personal attacks or underhanded tactics.

Examples of negative outcomes include the following:

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5. Bergman & Volkema, 1989). Understanding and managing interpersonal conflict at work: Its issues, interactive processes and consequences (Kolb & Kolb, 1991.).

- Increased stress and anxiety among individuals, which decreases productivity and satisfaction
- Feelings of being defeated and demeaned, which lowers individuals' morale and may increase turnover
- A climate of mistrust, which hinders the teamwork and cooperation necessary to get work done

Given these negative outcomes, how can conflict be managed so that it does not become dysfunctional or even dangerous? We'll explore this in the next section.

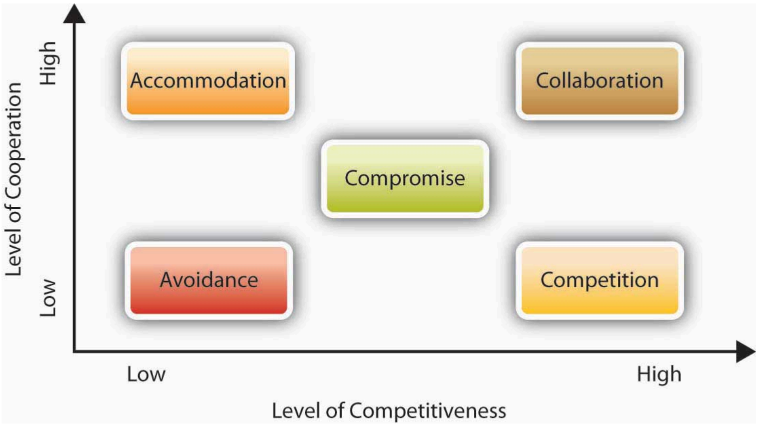
KEY TAKEAWAY

Conflict has many causes, including organizational structures, limitations on resources, task interdependence, goal incompatibility, personality differences, and communication challenges. Outcomes of well-managed conflict include increased participation and creativity, while negatives of poorly-managed conflict include increased stress and anxiety. Jobs that deal with people are at higher risk for conflict.

10.3 CONFLICT STYLES

A number of different ways individuals tend to approach conflict are highlighted in this section. There are five common styles of handling conflicts. These styles can be mapped onto a grid that shows the varying degree of cooperation and assertiveness each style entails. Let us look at each in turn.

FIGURE 10.3 CONFLICT-HANDLING STYLES



AVOIDANCE

The avoiding style is uncooperative and unassertive. People exhibiting this style seek to avoid conflict altogether by denying that it is there. They are prone to postponing any decisions in which a conflict may arise. People using this style may say things such as, “I don’t really care if we work this out,” or “I don’t think there’s any problem. I feel fine about how things are.” Conflict avoidance may be habitual to some people because of personality traits such as the need for affiliation. While conflict avoidance may not be a significant problem if the issue at hand is trivial, it becomes a problem when individuals avoid confronting important issues because of a dislike for conflict or a perceived inability to handle the other party's reactions.

ACCOMMODATION

The accommodating style is cooperative and unassertive. In this style, the person gives in to what the other side wants, even if it means giving up one's personal goals. People who use this style may fear speaking up for themselves or they may place a higher value on the relationship, believing that disagreeing with an idea might be hurtful to the other person. They will say things such as, "Let's do it your way" or "If it's important to you, I can go along with it." Accommodation may be an effective strategy if the issue at hand is more important to others compared to oneself. However, if a person perpetually uses this style, that individual may start to see that personal interests and well-being are neglected.

COMPROMISE

The compromising style is a middle-ground style, in which individuals have some desire to express their own concerns and get their way but still respect the other person's goals. The compromiser may say things such as, "Perhaps I ought to reconsider my initial position" or "Maybe we can both agree to give in a little." In a compromise, each person sacrifices something valuable to them. For example, in 2005 the luxurious Lanesborough Hotel in London advertised incorrect nightly rates for £35, as opposed to £350. When the hotel received a large number of online bookings at this rate, the initial reaction was to insist that customers cancel their reservations and book at the correct rate. The situation was about to lead to a public relations crisis. As a result, they agreed to book the rooms at the advertised price for a maximum of three nights, thereby limiting the damage to the hotel's bottom line as well as its reputation ([1]

1. Horowitz, et al., 2006).

COMPETITION

People exhibiting a competing style want to reach their goal or get their solution adopted regardless of what others say or how they feel. They are more interested in getting the outcome they want as opposed to keeping the other party happy, and they push for the deal they are interested in making. Competition may lead to poor relationships with others if one is always seeking to maximize their own outcomes at the expense of others' well-being. This approach may be effective if one has strong moral objections to the alternatives or if the alternatives one is opposing are unethical or harmful.

COLLABORATION

The collaborating style is high on both assertiveness and cooperation. This is a strategy to use for achieving the best outcome from conflict—both sides argue for their position, supporting it with facts and rationale while listening attentively to the other side. The objective is to find a win–win solution to the problem in which both parties get what they want. They will challenge points but not each other. They will emphasize problem-solving and integration of each other's goals. For example, an employee who wants to complete an MBA program may have a conflict with management when they want to reduce their work hours. Instead of taking opposing positions in which the employee defends their need to pursue their career goals while the manager emphasizes the company's need for the employee, both parties may review alternatives to find an integrative solution. In the end, the employee may decide to pursue the degree while taking online classes, and the company may realize that paying for the employee's tuition is a worthwhile investment. This may be a win–win solution to the problem in which no one gives up what is personally important, and every party gains something from the exchange.

WHICH STYLE IS BEST?

Like much of organizational behavior, there is no one "right way" to deal with conflict. Much of the time it will depend on the situation. However, the collaborative style has the potential to be highly effective in many different situations.

We do know that most individuals have a dominant style that they tend to use most frequently. Think of your friend who is always looking for a fight or your coworker who always backs down from a disagreement. Successful individuals are able to match their style to the situation. There are times when avoiding a conflict can be a great choice. For example, if a driver cuts you off in traffic, ignoring it and going on with your day is a good alternative to "road rage." However, if a colleague keeps claiming ownership of your ideas, it may be time for a confrontation. Allowing such intellectual plagiarism to continue could easily be more destructive to your career than confronting the individual. Research also shows that when it comes to dealing with conflict, managers prefer forcing, while their subordinates are more likely to engage in avoiding, accommodating, or compromising ([2] It is also likely that individuals will respond similarly to the person engaging in conflict. For example, if one person is forcing, others are likely to respond with a forcing tactic as well.

WHAT IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH

2. Howat & London, 1980). Attributions of conflict management strategies in supervisor-subordinate dyads.

CONFLICT OVER IDEAS?

Part of effective conflict management is knowing when proper stimulation is necessary. Many people think that conflict is inherently bad—that it undermines goals or shows that a group or meeting is not running smoothly. In fact, if there is no conflict, it may mean that people are silencing themselves and withholding their opinions. The reality is that within meaningful group discussions, there are usually varying opinions about the best course of action. If people are suppressing their opinions, the final result may not be the best solution. During healthy debates, people point out difficulties or weaknesses in a proposed alternative and can work together to solve them. The key to keeping the disagreement healthy is to keep the discussion focused on the task, not the personalities. For example, a comment such as "Jack's ideas have never worked before. I doubt his current idea will be any better" is not constructive. Instead, a comment such as "This production step uses a degreaser that's considered a hazardous material. Can we think of an alternative degreaser that's nontoxic?" is more productive. It challenges the group to improve upon the existing idea.

Traditionally, Hewlett-Packard Development Company LP was known as a "nice" organization. Throughout its history, HP viewed itself as a scientific organization, and its culture valued teamwork and respect. But over time, HP learned that you can be "nice to death." In fact, in the 1990s, HP found it difficult to partner with other organizations because of its cultural differences. During role plays created to help HP managers be more dynamic, the trainers had to modify several role-plays, because participants simply said, "That would never happen at HP," over the smallest conflict. All this probably played a role in the discomfort many felt with Carly Fiorina's style as CEO and the merger she orchestrated with Compaq Computer Corporation, which ultimately caused the board of directors to fire Fiorina. On the other hand, no one is calling HP "too nice" anymore.

OB TOOLBOX: HOW CAN YOU STIMULATE CONFLICT?

- *Encourage people to raise issues and disagree with you or the status quo without fear of reprisal*. An issue festering beneath the surface, when brought out into the open, may turn out to be a minor issue that can be easily addressed and resolved.

- *Assign a devil's advocate to stimulate alternative viewpoints*. If a business unit is getting stagnant, bring in new people to "shake things up."
- *Create a competition among teams, offering a bonus to the team that comes up with the best solution to a problem*. For example, have two product development teams compete on designing a new product. Or, reward the team that has the fewest customer complaints or achieves the highest customer satisfaction rating.
- *Build some ambiguity into the process*. When individuals are free to come up with their own ideas about how to complete a task, the outcome may be surprising, and it allows for more healthy disagreements along the way.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Conflict management techniques include changing organizational structures to avoid built-in conflict, changing team members, creating a common "enemy," using majority rules, and problem-solving. Conflict management styles include accommodating others, avoiding the conflict, collaborating, competing, and compromising. People tend to have a dominant style. At times it makes sense to build in some conflict over ideas if none exists.

10.4 MANAGING WORKPLACE CONFLICT

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

As professional communicators, we can acknowledge and anticipate that conflict will be present in every context or environment where communication occurs. To that end, we can predict, anticipate, and formulate strategies to address conflict successfully. How you choose to approach conflict influences its resolution. Joseph DeVito (2003) offers us several conflict management strategies that we have adapted and expanded for our use.

AVOIDANCE

You may choose to change the subject, leave the room, or not even enter the room in the first place, but the conflict will remain and resurface when you least expect it. Your reluctance to address the conflict directly is a normal response and one which many cultures prize. In cultures where independence is highly valued, direct confrontation is more common. In cultures where the community is emphasized over the individual, indirect strategies may be more common. Avoidance allows for more time to resolve the problem, but can also increase costs associated with the problem in the first place. Your organization or business will have policies and protocols to follow regarding conflict and redress, but it is always wise to consider the position of your conversational partner or opponent and to give them, as well as yourself, time to explore alternatives.

DEFENSIVENESS VERSUS SUPPORTIVENESS

Jack Gibb (1961) discussed defensive and supportive communication interactions as part of his analysis of conflict management. Defensive communication is characterized by control, evaluation, and judgments, while supportive communication focuses on the points and not personalities. When we feel judged or criticized, our ability to listen can be diminished, and we may only hear the negative message. By choosing to focus on the message instead of the messenger, we keep the discussion supportive and professional.

FACE-DETRACTING AND FACE-SAVING

Communication is not competition. Communication is the sharing of understanding and meaning, but does everyone always share equally? People struggle for control, limit access to resources and information as part of territorial displays, and otherwise use the process of communication to engage in competition. People also use communication for collaboration. Both competition and collaboration can be observed in communication interactions, but there are two concepts central to both: face-detracting and face-saving strategies.

Face-detracting strategies involve messages or statements that take away from the respect, integrity, or credibility of a person. Face-saving strategies protect credibility and separate the message from the messenger. For example, you might say that "sales were down this quarter," without specifically noting who was responsible. Sales were simply down. If, however, you ask, "How does the sales manager explain the decline in sales?" you have specifically connected an individual with the negative news. While we may want to specifically connect tasks and job responsibilities to individuals and departments, in terms of language each strategy has distinct results.

Face-detracting strategies often produce a defensive communication climate, inhibit listening, and allow for little room for collaboration. To save face is to raise the issue while preserving a supportive climate, allowing room in the conversation for constructive discussions and problem-solving. By using a face-saving strategy to shift the emphasis from the individual to the issue, we avoid power struggles and personalities, providing each other space to save face (Donohue & Klot, 1992).

In collectivist cultures, where the community's well-being is promoted or valued above that of the individual, face-saving strategies are common communicative strategies. In Japan, for example, to confront someone directly is perceived as humiliation, a great insult. In the United States, greater emphasis is placed on individual performance, and responsibility may be more directly assessed. If our goal is to solve a problem and preserve the relationship, then consideration of a face-saving strategy should be one option a skilled business communicator considers when addressing negative news or information.

EMPATHY

Communication involves not only the words we write or speak but how and when we write or say them. The way we communicate also carries meaning, and empathy for the individual involves attending to this aspect of interaction. Empathetic listening involves listening to both the literal and implied meanings of a message. For example, the implied meaning might involve understanding what has led this person to feel this way. By paying attention to feelings and emotions associated with content and information, we can build relationships and address conflict more constructively. In management, negotiating conflict is a common task and empathy is one strategy to consider when attempting to resolve issues.

GUNNYSACKING

George Bach and Peter Wyden (1968) discuss gunnysacking (or backpacking) as the imaginary bag we all carry into which we place unresolved conflicts or grievances over time. If your organization has gone through a merger, and your business has transformed, there may have been conflicts that occurred during the transition. Holding onto the way things used to be can be like a stone in your gunnysack, and influence how you interpret your current context.

People may be aware of similar issues but might not know your history, and cannot see your backpack or its contents. For example, if your previous manager handled issues in one way, and your new manager handles them in a different way, this may cause you some degree of stress and frustration. Your new manager cannot see how the relationship existed in the past, but will still observe the tension. Bottling up your frustrations only hurts you and can cause your current relationships to suffer. By addressing, or unpacking, the stones you carry, you can better assess the current situation with the current patterns and variables.

We learn from experience but can distinguish between old wounds and current challenges, and try to focus our energies where they will make the most positive impact.

MANAGING YOUR EMOTIONS

Have you ever "seen red," or perceived a situation through rage, anger, or frustration? Then you know that you cannot see or think clearly when you are experiencing strong emotions. There will be times in the work environment when emotions run high. Your awareness of them can help you clear your mind and choose to wait until the moment has passed to tackle the challenge.

"Never speak or make a decision in anger" is one common saying that holds true, but not all emotions involve fear, anger, or frustration. A job loss can be a sort of professional death for many, and the sense of loss can be profound. The loss of a colleague to a layoff while retaining your position can bring pain as well as relief, and a sense of survivor's guilt. Emotions can be contagious in the workplace, and fear of the unknown can influence people to act in irrational ways. The wise business communicator can recognize when emotions are on edge in themselves or others, and choose to wait to communicate, problem-solve, or negotiate until after the moment has passed.

EVALUATIONS AND CRITICISM IN THE WORKPLACE

Mary Ellen Guffey (2008) wisely notes that Xenophon, a Greek philosopher, once said, "The sweetest of all sounds is praise." We have seen previously that appreciation, respect, inclusion, and belonging are all basic human needs across all contexts, and are particularly relevant in the workplace. Efficiency and morale are positively related, and recognition of good work is important. There may come a time, however, when evaluations involve criticism. Knowing how to approach this criticism can give you peace of mind to listen clearly, separating subjective, personal attacks from objective, constructive requests for improvement. Guffey offers us seven strategies for giving and receiving evaluations and criticism in the workplace that we have adapted here.

LISTEN WITHOUT INTERRUPTING

If you are on the receiving end of an evaluation, start by listening without interruption. Interruptions can be internal and external, and warrant further discussion. If your supervisor starts to discuss a point and you immediately start debating the point in your mind, you are paying attention to yourself and what you think they said or are going to say, and not that which is actually communicated. This gives rise to misunderstandings and will cause you to lose valuable information you need to understand and address the issue at hand.

External interruptions may involve your attempt to get a word in edgewise and may change the course of the conversation. Let them speak while you listen, and if you need to take notes to focus your thoughts, take clear notes of what is said, also noting points to revisit later. External interruptions can also take the form of a telephone ringing, a "text message has arrived" chime, or a coworker dropping by in the middle of the conversation.

As an effective business communicator, you know all too well to consider the context and climate of the communication interaction when approaching the delicate subject of evaluations or criticism. Choose a time and place free from interruption. Choose one outside the common space where there may be many observers. Turn off your cell phone. Choose face-to-face communication instead of an impersonal e-mail. By providing a space free of interruption, you are displaying respect for the individual and the information.

DETERMINE THE SPEAKER'S INTENT

We have discussed previews as a normal part of a business presentation, and in this context, they play an important role too. People want to know what is coming and generally dislike surprises, particularly when the context of an evaluation is present. If you are on the receiving end, you may need to ask a clarifying question if it does not count as an interruption. You may also need to take notes and write down questions that come to mind to address when it is your turn to speak. As a manager, be clear and positive in your opening and lead with praise. You can find one point, even if it is only that the employee consistently shows up to work on time, to highlight before transitioning to a performance issue.

INDICATE YOU ARE LISTENING

In mainstream U.S. culture, eye contact is a signal that you are listening and paying attention to the person speaking. Take notes, nod your head, or lean forward to display interest and listening. Regardless of whether you are the employee receiving the criticism or the supervisor delivering it, displaying listening behavior engenders a positive climate that helps mitigate the challenge of negative news or constructive criticism.

PARAPHRASE

Restate the main points to paraphrase what has been discussed. This verbal display allows for clarification and acknowledges receipt of the message.

If you are the employee, summarize the main points and consider steps you will take to correct the situation. If none come to mind or you are nervous and are having a hard time thinking clearly, state out loud the main point and ask if you can provide solution steps and strategies at a later date. You can request a follow-up meeting if appropriate, or indicate you will respond in writing via e-mail to provide the additional information.

If you are the employer, restate the main points to ensure that the message was received, as not everyone hears everything that is said or discussed the first time it is presented. Stress can impair listening, and paraphrasing the main points can help address this common response.

IF YOU AGREE

If an apology is well deserved, offer it. Communicate clearly what will change or indicate when you will respond with specific strategies to address the concern. As a manager, you will want to formulate a plan that addresses the issue and outlines responsibilities as well as time frames for corrective action. As an employee you will want specific steps you can both agree on that will serve to solve the problem. Clear communication and acceptance of responsibility demonstrate maturity and respect.

IF YOU DISAGREE

If you disagree, focus on the points or issues and not personalities. Do not bring up past issues and keep the conversation focused on the task at hand. You may want to suggest, now that you better understand their position, a follow-up meeting to give you time to reflect on the issues. You may want to consider involving a third party, investigating to learn more about the issue, or taking time to cool off.

Do not respond in anger or frustration; instead, always display professionalism. If the criticism is unwarranted, consider that the information they have may be flawed or biased, and consider ways to learn more about the case to share with them, searching for a mutually beneficial solution.

If other strategies to resolve the conflict fail, consider contacting your human resources department to learn more about due process procedures at your workplace. Display respect and never say anything that would reflect poorly on yourself or your organization. Words spoken in anger can have a lasting impact and are impossible to retrieve or take back.

LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE

Every communication interaction provides an opportunity for learning if you choose to see it. Sometimes the lessons are situational and may not apply in future contexts. Other times the lessons learned may well serve you across your professional career. Taking notes for yourself to clarify your thoughts, much like a journal, serve to document and help you see the situation more clearly.

Recognize that some aspects of communication are intentional, and may communicate meaning, even if it is hard to understand. Also, know that some aspects of communication are unintentional, and may not imply meaning or design. People make mistakes. They say things they should not have said. Emotions are revealed that are not always rational, and not always associated with the current context. A challenging morning at home can spill over into the work day and someone's bad mood may have nothing to do with you.

Try to distinguish between what you can control and what you cannot, and always choose professionalism.

10.5 DISCUSSION & ACTIVITIES

10.5.1. Reflecting on Conflict

1. Write a description of a situation you can recall where you came into conflict with someone else. It may be something that happened years ago or a current issue that just arose. Using the principles and strategies in this section, describe how the conflict was resolved or could have been resolved. Discuss your ideas with your classmates.
2. Of the strategies for managing conflict described in this section, which do you think are the most effective? Why? Discuss your opinions with a classmate.
3. Can you think of a time when a conflict led to a new opportunity, better understanding, or

another positive result? If not, think of a past conflict and imagine a positive outcome. Write a description of what happened, or what you imagine could happen. Share your results with a classmate.

4. What are the types of conflicts that individuals may have at work? Which type have you experienced the most?
5. What are some primary causes of conflict at work?
6. Explain how miscommunication might be related to a conflict at work

10.5.2. Approaches to Conflict Management

1. List three ways to decrease a conflict situation. What are some pros and cons of each of these approaches?

2. Do you deal with conflict differently with friends or family than you do at work? If so, why do you think that is?
3. What is your usual conflict-handling style at work? Do you see it as effective or ineffective?
4. Describe a situation in which not having enough conflict can be a problem.

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PART VI

PART 6: ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE & DIVERSITY

CHAPTER 11: ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Change is or will be a part of all of our organizational lives. Organizations rise, stagnate, and potentially decline unless they are able to adapt to evolving environments. Change is related to professionalism because we need to react to change in productive ways and know when and how to support, spearhead, or possibly resist change. In this chapter, you will learn more about the driving forces for organizational change, an organizational change model, managing others' resistance to change, participating in organizational dissent, and consider your own preparedness for change.

Learning Objectives

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

1. Identify the forces driving organizational change.
2. Identify strategies for communicating organizational change.
3. Describe the phases of Lewin's change model.
4. Understand why people resist change.
5. Identify strategies for managing resistance to change.
6. Conceptualize organizational dissent.

7. Compare organizational dissent strategies.

11.1 ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE DRIVERS

[Authors removed at request of original publisher]

WHY DO ORGANIZATIONS CHANGE?

Organizational change is the movement of an organization from one state of affairs to another. A change in the environment often requires change within the organization operating within that environment. Change in almost any aspect of a company's operation can be met with resistance, and different cultures can have different reactions to both the change and the means to promote the change. To better facilitate necessary changes, several steps can be taken that have been proven to lower the anxiety of employees and ease the transformation process. Often, the simple act of including employees in the change process can drastically reduce opposition to new methods. In some organizations, this level of inclusion is not possible, and instead, organizations can recruit a small number of opinion leaders to promote the benefits of coming changes. Including employees in change and then implementing change both require strategic communication and collaborative problem-solving for change to be supported.

Organizational change can take many forms. It may involve a change in a company's structure, strategy, policies, procedures, technology, or culture. The change may be planned years in advance or may be forced on an organization because of a shift in the environment. Organizational change can be radical and swiftly alter the way an organization operates, or it may be incremental and slow. In any case, regardless of the type, change involves letting go of the old ways in which work is done and adjusting to new ways. Therefore, fundamentally, it is a process that involves effective people management and communication.

Managers carrying out any **planning, organizing, leading, and controlling** (P-O-L-C) functions often find themselves faced with the need to manage organizational change effectively. Oftentimes, the planning process reveals the need for a new or improved strategy, which is then reflected in changes to tactical and operational plans. Creating a new organizational design (the organizing function) or altering the existing design entails changes that may affect a single employee up to the entire organization, depending on the scope of the changes. Effective decision-making takes into account the change-management implications of decisions, planning for the need to manage the implementation of decisions. Finally, any updates to controlling systems and processes will potentially involve changes to employees' assigned tasks and performance assessments, which will require astute change management skills to implement. In short, change management is an important leadership skill that spans the entire range of P-O-L-C functions.

WORKPLACE DEMOGRAPHICS

Organizational change is often a response to changes to the environment. For example, agencies that monitor workplace demographics such as the U.S. Department of Labor and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development have reported that the average age of the U.S. workforce will increase as the baby boom generation nears retirement age and the numbers of younger workers are insufficient to fill the gap (Lerman and Schmidt, 2006). What does this mean for companies? Organizations may realize that as the workforce gets older, the types of benefits workers prefer may change. Work arrangements such as flexible work hours and job sharing may become more popular as employees remain in the workforce even after retirement. It is also possible that employees who are unhappy with their current work situation will choose to retire, resulting in a sudden loss of valuable knowledge and expertise in organizations. Therefore, organizations will have to devise strategies to retain these employees and plan for their retirement. Finally, a critical issue is finding ways of dealing with age-related stereotypes which act as barriers to the retention of these employees.

TECHNOLOGY

Sometimes change is motivated by rapid developments in technology. Moore's law (a prediction by Gordon Moore, co-founder of Intel) dictates that the overall complexity of computers will double every 18 months with no increase in cost (Anonymous, 2008). Such change is motivating corporations to change their technology rapidly. Sometimes technology produces such profound developments that companies struggle to adapt. A recent example is from the music industry. When music CDs were first introduced in the 1980s, they were substantially more appealing than traditional LP vinyl records. Record companies were easily able to double the prices, even though producing CDs cost a fraction of what it cost to produce LPs. For decades, record-producing companies benefited from this status quo. Yet when peer-to-peer file sharing through software such as Napster and Kazaa threatened the core of their business, companies in the music industry found themselves completely unprepared for such disruptive technological changes. Their first response was to sue the users of file-sharing software, sometimes even underage kids. They also kept looking for a technology that would make it impossible to copy a CD or DVD, which has yet to emerge. Until Apple's iTunes came up with a new way to sell music online, it was doubtful that consumers would ever be willing to pay for music that was otherwise available for free (albeit illegally so). Only time will tell if the industry will be able to adapt to the changes forced on it (Lasica, 2005).

GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is another threat and opportunity for organizations, depending on their ability to adapt to it.

Because of differences in national economies and standards of living from one country to another, organizations in developed countries are finding that it is often cheaper to produce goods and deliver services in less developed countries. This has led many companies to outsource (or "offshore") their manufacturing operations to countries such as China and Mexico. In the 1990s, knowledge work was thought to be safe from outsourcing, but in the 21st century, we are also seeing many service operations moved to places with cheaper wages. For example, many companies have outsourced software development to India, with Indian companies such as Wipro and Infosys emerging as global giants. Given these changes, understanding how to manage a global workforce is a necessity. Many companies realize that outsourcing forces them to operate in an institutional environment that is radically different from what they are used to at home. Dealing with employee stress resulting from jobs being moved overseas, retraining the workforce, and learning to compete with a global workforce on a global scale are changes companies are trying to come to grips with.

CHANGES IN THE

MARKET CONDITIONS

Market changes may also create internal changes as companies struggle to adjust. For example, as of this writing, the airline industry in the United States is undergoing serious changes. Demand for air travel was reduced after the September 11 terrorist attacks. At the same time, the widespread use of the Internet to book plane travel made it possible to compare airline prices much more efficiently and easily, encouraging airlines to compete primarily based on cost. This strategy seems to have backfired when coupled with the dramatic increases in the cost of fuel that occurred beginning in 2004. As a result, by mid-2008, airlines were cutting back on amenities that had formerly been taken for granted for decades, such as the price of a ticket including meals, beverages, and checking luggage. Some airlines, such as Delta and Northwest Airlines, merged to stay in business.

How does a change in the environment create change within an organization? Environmental change does not automatically change how business is done. Whether the organization changes or not in response to environmental challenges and threats depends on the decision-makers' reactions to what is happening in the environment.

GROWTH

It is natural for once small start-up companies to grow if they are successful. An example of this growth is the evolution of the Widmer Brothers Brewing Company, which started as two brothers brewing beer in their garage to become the 11th largest brewery in the United States. This growth happened over time as the popularity of their key product—Hefeweizen—grew in popularity and the company had to expand to meet demand growing from the two founders to the 11th largest brewery in the United States by 2008. In 2007, Widmer Brothers merged with Redhook Ale Brewery. Anheuser-Busch continues to have a minority stake in both beer companies. So, while 50% of all new small businesses fail in their first year (Get ready, 2008), those that succeed often evolve into large, complex organizations over time.

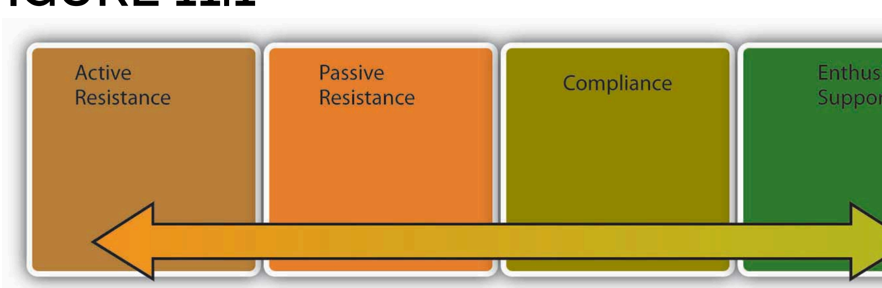
POOR PERFORMANCE

Change can also occur if the company is performing poorly and if there is a perceived threat from the environment. In fact, poorly performing companies often find it easier to change compared with successful companies. Why? High performance actually leads to overconfidence and inertia. As a result, successful companies often keep doing what made them successful in the first place. When it comes to the relationship between company performance and organizational change, the saying "nothing fails like success" may be fitting. For example, Polaroid was the number one producer of instant films and cameras in 1994. Less than a decade later, the company filed for bankruptcy, unable to adapt to the rapid advances in one-hour photo development and digital photography technologies that were sweeping the market. Successful companies that manage to change have special practices in place to keep the organization open to changes. For example, Finnish cell phone maker Nokia finds that it is important to periodically change the perspective of key decision-makers. For this purpose, they rotate heads of businesses to different posts to give them a fresh perspective. In addition to the success of a business, change in a company's upper-level management is a motivator for change at the organizational level. Research shows that long-tenured CEOs are unlikely to change their formula for success. Instead, new CEOs and new top management teams create change in a company's culture and structure (Barnett & Carroll, 1995; Boeker, 1997; Deutschman, 2005).

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Changing an organization is often essential for a company to remain competitive. Failure to change may influence the ability of a company to survive. Yet employees do not always welcome changes in methods. According to a 2007 survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), employee resistance to change is one of the top reasons change efforts fail. In fact, reactions to organizational change may range from active resistance to compliance to enthusiastic support of the change, with the latter being the exception rather than the norm (Anonymous, 2007; Huy, Q. N., 1999).

FIGURE 11.1



Reactions to change may take many forms.

Active resistance is the most negative reaction to a proposed change attempt. Those who engage in active resistance may sabotage the change effort and be outspoken objectors to the new procedures. In contrast, passive resistance involves being disturbed by changes without necessarily voicing these opinions. Instead, passive resisters may dislike the change quietly, feel stressed and unhappy, and even look for a new job without necessarily bringing their concerns to the attention of decision-makers. Compliance, however, involves going along with proposed changes with little enthusiasm. Finally, those who show enthusiastic support are defenders of the new way and actually encourage others around them to give support to the change effort as well.

To be successful, any change attempt will need to overcome resistance on the part of employees. Otherwise, the result will be a loss of time and energy as well as an inability on the part of the organization to adapt to the changes in the environment and make its operations more efficient. Resistance to change also has negative consequences for the people in question. Research shows that when people react negatively to organizational change, they experience negative emotions, use sick time more often, and are more likely to voluntarily leave the company (Fugate, Kinicki, & Prussia, 2008). These negative effects can be present even when the proposed change clearly offers benefits and advantages over the status quo.

The following is a dramatic example of how resistance to change may prevent improving the status quo. Have you ever wondered why the keyboards we use are shaped the way they are? The QWERTY keyboard, named after the first six letters in the top row, was actually engineered to slow us down. When the typewriter was first invented in the 19th century, the first prototypes of the keyboard would jam if the keys right next to each other were hit at the same time. Therefore, it was important for manufacturers to slow typists down. They achieved this by putting the most commonly used letters to the left-hand side and scattering the most frequently used letters all over the keyboard. Later, the issue of letters being stuck was resolved. In fact, an alternative to the QWERTY developed in the 1930s by educational psychologist August Dvorak provides a much more efficient design and allows individuals to double traditional typing speeds. Yet the Dvorak keyboard never gained wide acceptance. The reasons? Large numbers of people resisted the change. Teachers and typists resisted because they would lose their specialized knowledge. Manufacturers resisted due to costs inherent in making the switch and the initial inefficiencies in the learning curve (Diamond, 2005). In short, the best idea does not necessarily win, and changing people requires understanding why they resist.

WHY DO PEOPLE RESIST CHANGE?

DISRUPTED HABITS

People often resist change for the simple reason that change disrupts our habits. When you hop into your car for your morning commute, do you think about how you are driving? Most of the time probably not, because driving generally becomes an automated activity after a while. You may sometimes even realize that you have reached your destination without noticing the roads you used or having consciously thought about any of your body movements. Now imagine you drive for a living and even though you are used to driving an automatic car, you are forced to use a stick shift. You can most likely figure out how to drive a stick, but it will take time, and until you figure it out, you cannot drive on autopilot. You will have to reconfigure your body movements and practice shifting until you become good at it. This loss of a familiar habit can make you feel clumsy; you may even feel that your competence as a driver is threatened. For this simple reason, people are sometimes surprisingly outspoken when confronted with simple changes such as updating to a newer version of a particular software or a change in their voicemail system.

PERSONALITY

Some people are more resistant to change than others. One of the Big Five personality traits is openness to experience; obviously, people who rank high on this trait will tend to accept change readily. Research also shows that people who have a positive self-concept are better at coping with change, probably because those who have high self-esteem may feel that whatever the changes are, they are likely to adjust to it well and be successful in the new system. People with a more positive self-concept and those who are more optimistic may also view change as an opportunity to shine as opposed to a threat that is overwhelming. Finally, risk tolerance is another predictor of how resistant someone will be to stress. For people who are risk-avoidant, the possibility of a change in technology or structure may be more threatening (Judge et. al., 2000; Wanberg & Banas, 2000).

FEELINGS OF UNCERTAINTY

Change inevitably brings feelings of uncertainty. You have just heard that your company is merging with another. What would be your reaction? Such change is often turbulent, and it is often unclear what is going to happen to each individual. Some positions may be eliminated. Some people may see a change in their job duties. Things may get better—or they may get worse. The feeling that the future is unclear is enough to create stress for people because it leads to a sense of lost control (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989; Fugate, Kinicki, & Prussia, 2008).

FEAR OF FAILURE

People also resist change when they feel that their performance may be affected by the new system. People who are experts in their jobs may be less than welcoming of the changes because they may be unsure whether their success would last under the new system. Studies show that people who feel that they can perform well under the new system are more likely to be committed to the proposed change, while those who have lower confidence in their ability to perform after changes are less committed (Herold, Fedor, & Caldwell, 2007).

PERSONAL IMPACT OF CHANGE

It would be too simplistic to argue that people resist all change, regardless of its form. In fact, people tend to be more welcoming of change that is favorable to them on a personal level (such as giving them more power over others or change that improves the quality of life such as bigger and nicer offices). Research also shows that commitment to change is highest when proposed changes affect the work unit with a low impact on how individual jobs are performed (Fedor, Caldwell, & Herold, 2006).

PREVALENCE OF CHANGE

Any change effort should be considered within the context of all the other changes that are introduced in a company. Does the company have a history of making short-lived changes? If the company structure went from functional to product-based to geographic to matrix within the past five years and the top management is in the process of going back to a functional structure again, a certain level of resistance is to be expected because employees are likely to be fatigued as a result of the constant changes. Moreover, the lack of a history of successful changes may cause people to feel skeptical toward the newly planned changes. Therefore, considering the history of changes in the company is important to understanding why people resist. Another question is, how big is the planned change? If the company is considering a simple switch to a new computer program, such as introducing Microsoft Access for database management, the change may not be as extensive or stressful compared with a switch to an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system such as SAP or PeopleSoft, which require a significant time commitment and can fundamentally affect how business is conducted (Labianca, Gray, & Brass, 2000; Rafferty & Griffin, 2006).

PERCEIVED LOSS OF POWER

One other reason people may resist change is that change may affect their power and influence in the organization. Imagine that your company moved to a more team-based structure, turning supervisors into team leaders. In the old structure, supervisors were in charge of hiring and firing all those reporting to them. Under the new system, this power is given to the team. Instead of monitoring the progress the team is making toward goals, the job of a team leader is to provide support and mentoring to the team in general and ensure that the team has access to all resources to be effective. Given the loss in prestige and status in the new structure, some supervisors may resist the proposed changes even if it is better for the organization to operate around teams.

In summary, there are many reasons individuals resist change, which may prevent an organization from making important changes.

IS ALL RESISTANCE

BAD?

Resistance to change may be a positive force in some instances. In fact, resistance to change is a valuable feedback tool that should not be ignored. Why are people resisting the proposed changes? Do they believe that the new system will not work? If so, why not? By listening to people and incorporating their suggestions into the change effort, it is possible to make a more effective change. Some of a company's most committed employees may be the most vocal opponents of a change effort. They may fear that the organization they feel such a strong attachment to is being threatened by the planned change effort and the change will ultimately hurt the company. In contrast, people who have less loyalty to the organization may comply with the proposed changes simply because they do not care enough about the fate of the company to oppose the changes. As a result, when dealing with those who resist change, it is important to avoid blaming them for a lack of loyalty (Ford, Ford, & D'Amelio, 2008).

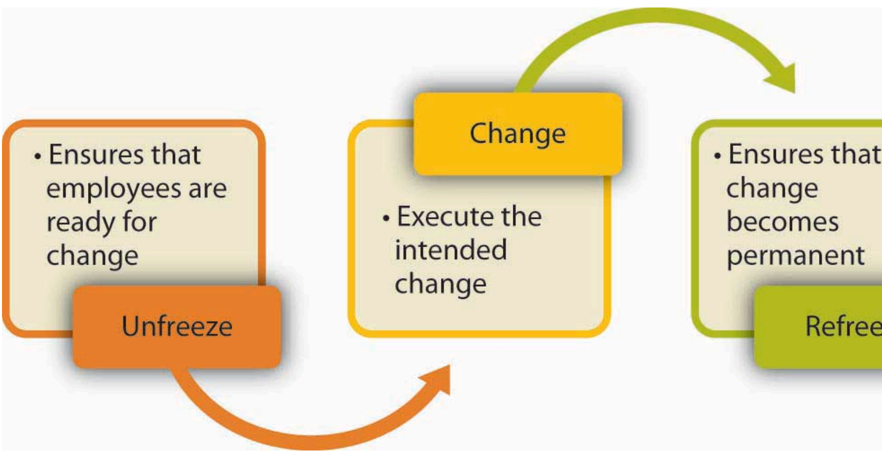
11.2 PLANNING AND EXECUTING CHANGE EFFECTIVELY

[Authors removed at request of original publisher]

How do you plan, organize, and execute change effectively? Some types of change, such as mergers, often come with job losses. In these situations, it is important to remain fair and ethical while laying off otherwise exceptional employees. Once change has occurred, it is vital to take any steps necessary to reinforce the new system. Employees can often require continued support well after an organizational change.

One of the most useful frameworks in this area is the three-stage model of planned change developed in the 1950s by psychologist Kurt Lewin (Lewin, 1951). This model assumes that change will encounter resistance. Therefore, executing change without prior preparation is likely to lead to failure. Instead, organizations should start with unfreezing, or making sure that organizational members are ready for and receptive to change. This is followed by change, or executing the planned changes. Finally, refreezing involves ensuring that change becomes permanent and the new habits, rules, or procedures become the norm.

FIGURE 11.2 LEWIN'S THREE-STAGE PROCESS OF CHANGE



UNFREEZING BEFORE

CHANGE

Many change efforts fail because people are insufficiently prepared for change. When employees are not prepared, they are more likely to resist the change effort and less likely to function effectively under the new system. What can organizations do before change to prepare employees? There are a number of things that are important at this stage.

COMMUNICATING A PLAN FOR CHANGE

Do people know what the change entails, or are they hearing about the planned changes through the grapevine or office gossip? When employees know what is going to happen, when, and why, they may feel more comfortable. Research shows that those who have more complete information about upcoming changes are more committed to a change effort (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Moreover, in successful change efforts, the leader not only communicates a plan but also an overall vision for the change (Herold, et. al., 2008). When this vision is exciting and paints a picture of a future that employees would be proud to be a part of, people are likely to be more committed to change.

Ensuring that top management communicates with employees about the upcoming changes also has symbolic value (Armenakis, et. al., 1993). When top management and the company CEO discuss the importance of the changes in meetings, employees are provided with a reason to trust that this change is a strategic initiative. For example, while changing the employee performance appraisal system, the CEO of Kimberly Clark made sure to mention the new system in all meetings with employees, indicating that the change was supported by the CEO.

When an organization is moving through change, those communicating about the change should be sure to explain the basic purpose for the change, describe how the change will look and feel, lay out the step-by-step plan for the change and give people a part to play in the change (Bridges & Bridges, 2016). Clear, frequent, and strategic communication about change will help organizations preempt or reduce resistance to change.

Well-planned change announcements achieve the following:

- Explains why the change is necessary
- Describes the vision (big-picture)
    - Explains how the change will affect relevant audiences

    - Identify both the benefits and challenges of the change
- Describes a plan for implementation
    - Provides the "who, what, when, where" details of the change
    - Provides flexible milestones rather than hard due dates, if possible
- Provides a pathway for employee participation, feedback, and involvement
- Acknowledges the difficulty of change and any setbacks
- Avoids being overly enthusiastic about the change, which could sound disingenuous
- Provides regular updates on the change and responses to employee concerns

DEVELOP A SENSE OF URGENCY

People are more likely to accept change if they feel that there is a need for it. If employees feel their company is doing well, the perceived need for change will be smaller. Those who plan the change will need to make the case that there is an external or internal threat to the organization's competitiveness, reputation, or sometimes even its survival and that failure to act will have undesirable consequences. For example, Lou Gerstner, the former CEO of IBM, executed a successful transformation of the company in the early 1990s. In his biography *Elephants Can Dance*, Gerstner highlights how he achieved cooperation as follows: "Our greatest ally in shaking loose the past was IBM's imminent collapse. Rather than go with the usual impulse to put on a happy face, I decided to keep the crisis front and center. I didn't want to lose the sense of urgency" (Gerstner, 2002).

BUILDING A COALITION

To convince people that change is needed, the change leader does not necessarily have to convince every person individually. In fact, people's opinions toward change are affected by opinion leaders or those people who have a strong influence over the behaviors and attitudes of others (Burkhardt, 1994; Kotter, 1995). Instead of trying to get everyone on board at the same time, it may be more useful to convince and prepare the opinion leaders. Understanding one's own social networks as well as the networks of others in the organization can help managers identify opinion leaders. Once these individuals agree that the proposed change is needed and will be useful, they will become helpful allies in ensuring that the rest of the organization is ready for change (Armenakis, et. al., 1993). For example, when Paul Pressler became the CEO of Gap Inc. in 2002, he initiated a culture change effort in the hope of creating a sense of identity among the company's many brands such as Banana Republic, Old Navy, and Gap. For this purpose, employees were segmented instead of trying to reach out to all employees at the same time. Gap Inc. started by training the 2,000 senior managers in "leadership summits," who in turn were instrumental in ensuring the cooperation of the remaining 150,000 employees of the company (Nash, 2005).

PROVIDE SUPPORT

Employees should feel that their needs are not ignored. Therefore, management may prepare employees for change by providing emotional, informational, and instrumental support (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008). Emotional support may be in the form of frequently discussing the changes, encouraging employees to voice their concerns, and simply expressing confidence in employees' ability to perform effectively under the new system. Information support is more than providing employees with all information on the change–hoping they can sort out what information they need. It is providing employees the most relevant information based on their roles in the change and how they are affected by it. Instrumental support may be in the form of providing a training program to employees so that they know how to function under the new system. Effective leadership and motivation skills can assist managers to provide support to employees.

ALLOW EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE

Studies show that employees who participate in planning change efforts tend to have more positive opinions about the change. Why? They will have the opportunity to voice their concerns. They can shape the change effort so that their concerns are addressed. They will be more knowledgeable about the reasons for change, alternatives to the proposed changes, and why the chosen alternative was better than the others. Finally, they will feel a sense of ownership of the planned change and are more likely to be on board (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Participation may be more useful if it starts at earlier stages, preferably while the problem is still being diagnosed. For example, assume that a company suspects there are problems with manufacturing quality. One way of convincing employees that there is a problem that needs to be solved would be to ask them to take customer calls about the product quality. Once employees experience the problem firsthand, they will be more motivated to solve the problem.

EXECUTING CHANGE

The second stage of Lewin's three-stage change model is executing change. At this stage, the organization implements the planned changes in technology, structure, culture, or procedures. The specifics of how change should be executed will depend on the type of change. However, there are three tips that may facilitate the success of a change effort.

CONTINUE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT

As the change is underway, employees may experience high amounts of stress. They may make mistakes more often or experience uncertainty about their new responsibilities or job descriptions. Management has an important role in helping employees cope with this stress by displaying support, patience, and continuing to provide support to employees even after the change is complete.

CREATE SMALL WINS

During a change effort, if the organization can create a history of small wins, change acceptance will be more likely (Kotter, 1996; Germann, 2006). If the change is large in scope and the payoff is a long time away, employees may not realize change is occurring during the transformation period. However, if people see changes, improvements, and successes along the way, they will be inspired and motivated to continue the change effort. For this reason, breaking up the proposed change into phases may be a good idea because it creates smaller targets. Small wins are also important for planners of change to make the point that their idea is on the right track. Early success gives change planners more credibility while early failures may be a setback (Hamel, 2000).

ELIMINATE OBSTACLES

When the change effort is in place, many obstacles may crop up along the way. There may be key people who publicly support the change effort while silently undermining the planned changes. There may be obstacles rooted in a company's structure, existing processes, or culture. It is the management's job to identify, understand, and remove these obstacles (Kotter, 1995). Ideally, these obstacles would have been eliminated before implementing the change, but sometimes unexpected roadblocks emerge as change is underway.

REFREEZING

After the change is implemented, the long-term success of a change effort depends on the extent to which the change becomes part of the company's culture. If the change has been successful, the revised ways of thinking, behaving, and performing should become routine. To evaluate and reinforce ("refreeze") the change, there are a number of things management can do.

PUBLICIZE SUCCESS

To make change permanent, the organization may benefit from sharing the results of the change effort with employees. What was gained from the implemented changes? How much money did the company save? How much did the company's reputation improve? What was the reduction in accidents after new procedures were put in place? Sharing concrete results with employees increases their confidence that the implemented change was the right decision.

REWARD CHANGE ADOPTION

To ensure that change becomes permanent, organizations may benefit from rewarding those who embrace the change effort (an aspect of the controlling function). The rewards do not necessarily have to be financial. The simple act of recognizing those who are giving support to the change effort in front of their peers may encourage others to get on board. When the new behaviors employees are expected to demonstrate (such as using a new computer program, filling out a new form, or simply greeting customers once they enter the store) are made part of an organization's reward system, those behaviors are more likely to be taken seriously and repeated, making the change effort successful (Gale, 2003).

EMBRACING CONTINUOUS CHANGE

While Lewin's three-stage model offers many useful insights into the process of implementing change, it views each organizational change as an episode with a beginning, middle, and end. In contrast with this episodic change assumption, some management experts in the 1990s began to propose that change is—or ought to be—a continuous process.

The learning organization is an example of a company embracing continuous change. By setting up a dynamic feedback loop, learning can become a regular part of daily operations. If an employee implements a new method or technology that seems to be successful, a learning organization is in a good position to adopt it. By constantly being aware of how employee actions and outcomes affect others as well as overall company productivity, the inevitable small changes throughout organizations can be rapidly absorbed and tailored for daily operations. When an organization understands that change does indeed occur constantly, it will be in a better position to make use of good changes and intervene if a change seems detrimental.

11.3 BUILDING YOUR CHANGE MANAGEMENT SKILLS

[Authors removed at request of original publisher] and Rose Helens-Hart

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Change Readiness Skills

In their popular guide to corporate change, professional change coach Robert Kriegel and clinical psychologist David Brandt (1998), identify seven traits of change readiness:

1. Resourcefulness
2. Optimism
3. Confidence
4. Adventurousness
5. Adaptability
6. Tolerance for Ambiguity (Acceptance of the Unknown)
7. Passion/Drive

You can assess your aptitude for these traits by taking the Change Readiness Assessment, which is highlighted in the Discussion and Activities section of this chapter. Meanwhile, each of these traits and how they influence one's approach to change is described below.

Resourcefulness: Resourceful people know where to find answers and support during change. They are creative problem solvers and look for new ways to use available resources. People who are not resourceful during change may resist and try to do things the old way. They get stuck and frustrated. Those who are highly resourceful might over-investigate and involve others, overlooking the simple solution or plan of action.

Optimism: Optimistic people will see change as an opportunity and believe things will turn out alright. They may be more positive and optimistic about change, even if the process is difficult and the benefits of change are not immediately realized. Those who are pessimist about change will see only potential problems associated with change. Those who are overly optimistic, however, may overlook problems and need to engage in more critical evaluation of change.

Confidence: Confidence (or self-confidence in particular) is the belief one will be able to handle the changing situation. A confident person does not have to be positive about a change. They may not like a change, even think it ill-advised, but they know they will be able to handle the problems or what is required from them. Those who are too confident, however, may be seen as cocky, and not receive feedback well. Those who are not confident may require more social support and assistance.

Adventurousness: Those who are adventurous are happy to take risks. Since every change requires some amount of risk, accepting results may not be ideal, adventurous people are needed to initiate and execute change. Overly adventurous individuals may be reckless but those not willing to take any risks will be complacent, which can create a barrier to much-needed organizational change.

Adaptability: Adaptable individuals are flexible and resilient. They are flexible in their goals and plans, and recover from failure or mistakes quickly. If their plans do not work out, they are comfortable trying something else. Change requires individuals to adapt to new situations but also not to give up if something is difficult.

Tolerance for Ambiguity (Acceptance of the Unknown): If adaptability is being able to meet the demands of a changing situation, then tolerance for ambiguity is the level of comfort one has knowing nothing is certain. All aspects of life are subject to change so some amount of tolerance for ambiguity is needed to feel comfortable, otherwise, change could be terrifying. Those who have too much tolerance for ambiguity, however, may have a hard time making decisions, because they see everything in flux.

Passion / Drive: Passion and drive are the maximizer traits–those with passion and drive will stick with the difficult tasks associated with change. They will be determined and enthusiastic. Too much passion and drive, however, can lead to obsession or burnout as a person's work consumes them and their sense of self.

Organizations do not need all employees to optimally possess each of these traits. They need self-aware individuals who can support each other. Being able to identify the traits you and your coworkers possess and do not possess, will help you ask for and offer help during change.

OVERCOMING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

You feel that a change is needed. You have a great idea. But people around you do not seem convinced. They are resisting your great idea. How do you make change happen?

- *Listen to naysayers*. You may think that your idea is great, but listening to those who resist may give you valuable ideas about why it may not work and how to design it more effectively.
- *Is your change revolutionary*? If you are trying to change dramatically the way things are done, you will find that resistance is greater. If your proposal involves

incrementally making things better, you may have better luck.

- *Involve those around you in planning the change*. Instead of providing the solutions, make them part of the solution. If they admit that there is a problem and participate in planning a way out, you would have to do less convincing when it is time to implement the change.
- *Assess your credibility*. When trying to persuade people to change their ways, it helps if you have a history of suggesting implementable changes. Otherwise, you may be ignored or met with suspicion. This means you need to establish trust and a history of keeping promises over time before you propose a major change.
- *Present data to your audience*. Be prepared to defend the technical aspects of your ideas and provide evidence that your proposal is likely to work.
- *Appeal to your audience's ideals*. Frame your proposal around the big picture. Are you going to create happier clients? Is this going to lead to a better reputation for the company? Identify the long-term goals you are hoping to accomplish that people would be proud to be a part of.
- *Understand the reasons for resistance*. Is your audience resisting because they fear change? Does the change you propose mean more work for them? Does it affect them in a negative way? Understanding the consequences of your proposal for the parties involved may help you tailor your pitch to your audience (McGoon, 1995;

Michelman, 2007; Stanley, 2002).

11.4 ORGANIZATIONAL DISSENT

Rose Helens-Hart

Conceptualizing Dissent

A potential source of conflict and change in organizations is when individuals speak out against managerial policies or practices. But just as conflict has to potential to break down an organizational environment, dissent can help businesses and employees thrive by creating more inclusive and innovative organizations.

Organizational dissent can be described as a process where we first feel apart from an organization (Kassing, 1998)—we might feel distanced or at odds because of something that is happening, and then we express disagreement or contradictory opinions. Another way to think about organizational dissent is that it is a form of corrective feedback to an organization.

You might be wondering what the difference between "dissent" and "complaint" is. In fact, dissent is a form of complaint, one that is specifically directed toward managerial policies and practices. Often, "complaining" seems to have a negative connotation but "dissenting" seems to have a more professional connotation. Think about adding the term "dissent" to your vocabulary because it might just change the way you think about, respond to, and offer contradictory opinions and corrective feedback.

Organizational dissent can be understood as a form of resistance to unfair policies or oppressive organizational forms. Historically, bureaucratic organizations, or the ones that have highly structured hierarchies with many levels, have suppressed dissent from those low on the organizational chart (Kassing, 2001). This is one of the premises for the popular reality show *Undercover Boss*. In bureaucratic organizations, it may be rare that good ideas or just "complaints" make it to the people who can effect change. Sometimes this may be an unintended consequence of the way an organization is structured but it can also be deliberate—a company policy or norm perhaps that pressures people into keeping opinions and complaints to themselves.

Organizations of all kinds, however, are realizing that greater employee participation in organizations can lead to increased employee satisfaction, commitment, and organizational innovation (Kassing, 1997). As more and more people participate and have a say in the way an organization conducts its business, the more opportunities there are for people to express dissent.

Dissent increases because when people have access to more information and more discussion there is a larger domain of issues for them to consider and form opinions on. Increasing employee participation and inviting more dissent can be difficult to initiate and sustain though. Leaders may provide the means for involvement like holding planning meetings, even adding suggestion boxes in break rooms, but if leaders do not respond to dissent, employees can become frustrated and the benefits of dissent to employees and organizations might not materialize. Dissent can be an important and valuable part of the organizational change process.

Dissent Triggers

Much has been written on common reasons why people dissent in organizations (employee treatment, inefficiencies, role responsibility, resources, preventing harm, and decision-making) (Kassing & Armstrong, 2002). Kassing (1997) argues that people dissent about things that affect them personally and with which they have a moral conflict. This first type of dissent can be described as a **personal-advantage dissent message** (Kassing, 2001). Maybe you feel as if you are consistently given less desirable shifts to work, that you are paid too little, or that common space is too messy for your taste. These would be issues related to your personal position or the working conditions of your organization.

Principled dissent messages, however, are those about unethical or questionable business practices and it is easy to see how the examples just mentioned could turn into more principled dissent (Kassing, 2001). Perhaps it is not just you who gets the bad shifts or paid little, maybe there is a pattern of discrimination against people who share particular characteristics. Perhaps work areas go beyond messy to unsafe or unsanitary. Now you might be speaking out about something that affects a lot of employees and is unethical to ignore.

Dissent Audiences

In general, there are two main groups of people to which you could dissent—those that can do something about your problem and those who cannot (Kassing 2001). If you are expressing dissent to people who can effect change in your organization (such as managers, supervisors, heads of departments) then you are engaging in **articulated dissent.**

Whistle-blowing is an extreme form of articulated dissent where you express dissent to public audiences like professional organizations or the media and alert them to the problem (Kassing, 2001). These audiences may be powerful enough to effect change by placing public pressure on organizations to change their practices. You all might be familiar with Edward Snowden as he had extensive global media coverage. Snowden was a system administrator of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and leaked classified information about National Security Agency surveillance programs he felt were an undue invasion of privacy. Although he was a government worker, he "blew the whistle" on governmental practices he felt were unjust and immoral. Many whistleblowers end up leaving the organizations they work for though some manage to stay anonymous to avoid potential organizational retaliation.

One can also dissent to ineffectual audiences or people who can not fix your problem (Kassing, 2001). Dissenting to ineffectual audiences within your organization is called **latent dissent**. For example, you might complain to a co-worker at the desk next to you about how outdated your computer is and how that limits your productivity. That coworker might not be able to get you a new computer but might sympathize and commiserate because she too has an old computer. Sometimes this type of "complaining" can be cathartic and bring people closer together but it can also lead to a negative work environment if undesirable conditions continue.

Displaced dissent is expressing dissent to ineffectual audiences who are not members of your organization like friends, partners and family. While ineffectual at changing practices and policies, it too can have a cathartic effect.

Constructing Dissent Messages

How you go about dissenting is affected by who you are as a person and in your organization (Kassing, 2000, 2001)—do you feel empowered/disempowered at your job? What is your conflict orientation? What is your role in your organization? Are you satisfied with your work? Are you aggressive or passive by nature? All of these things can affect what dissent strategy you choose.

Your choice of dissent message strategies may also be influenced by your relationships with others. Research has shown that in American organizations, those with high-quality relationships with effective audiences are more comfortable with articulated dissent, but if they have poor relationships with those effective audiences they would prefer latent dissent (Kassing, 2000, 2001).

The culture and norms of an organization can also influence dissent strategy choice. Does the organization encourage dissent and have communication channels set up to receive dissent? Does the employee feel invested in bettering the organization? A bureaucratic organization in particular might not have a clear policy on dissent but if there is no easy way of providing feedback it may become a norm not to attempt to express it. This structural issue may suppress articulated dissent and lead to more cases of latent dissent.

The **direct-factual appeal** strategy is when one focuses on proving a condition exists with evidence rather than blaming someone for that condition (Kassing, 2005). For example, if you are denied vacation time repeatedly you might dissent to your manager that in the employee handbook, you are allowed to take a vacation day as long as you submit your request with two week's notice thus you would like to know how you could obtain vacation time since you have already followed the proper procedure. This would probably be better received than dissent that blamed your manager for your denied requests.

The **solution presentation** strategy is often referred to as the most effective articulated dissent strategy (Kassing, 2005). When using this strategy you would provide a possible realistic solution to the issue you are dissenting about. For example, let us say you work in a warehouse that did not have air-conditioning and all employees used to be provided with free sports drinks to keep hydrated. But because of some financial issues, now the fridge is locked and employees only get free drinks when the temperature hits 90 degrees outside. A possible dissent message using this strategy might provide an inexpensive solution to the problem like requesting large dispensers where you can dissolve powdered sports drink mix. Employees can bring water bottles and fill up when they need to at a fraction of the cost (and waste) of individual sports drinks. You might even couple this with a direct factual appeal and say, "Even when it is lower than 90 degrees outside, the temperature in the warehouse can be very high. Last week it was 80 outside but in the warehouse, it hit 90 degrees. For our health and safety, it is important to make it easy for employees to stay hydrated."

The **coalition** strategy is self-explanatory (Kassing, 2005). Rather than dissenting individually, your message might be more powerful if a group of people present a collective message. You can think of this sort of like a tiny union.

These three dissent strategies are generally seen as fairly effective and respected (Kassing, 2005). Now, let us talk about some of the less effective strategies. Although the following strategies might be seen as less effective, depending on your relationships, the personal factors of the people you are dealing with, or the nature of the issues, they might be necessary or your only choice so it is good to think about when they might be useful.

The **circumvention** strategy is when you break the chain of command and go above the head of a direct supervisor or manager (Kassing, 2005). Breaking chain of command might be necessary if the relationship between the employee and their supervisors is quite poor or the dissent message has been repeatedly ignored. The risk with this strategy, however, is that the action can further damage the relationship between the employee and supervisor or the new authority may pass the issue back down the chain.

Threatening resignation is a strategy where you threaten to quit your job or appointed task if an issue is not addressed (Kassing, 2005). For this to be an effective strategy, someone would need to have a lot of power in the organization. Perhaps the person using this strategy is the only one with specialized knowledge or for some other reason is seen as irreplaceable at the time.

Finally, we come to **repetition** (Kassing, 2005). This strategy probably sounds the most like complaining where you give the same dissent message over and over again. Really, all of the previous strategies could be repeated if they go unaddressed but you can imagine if someone repeats a poorly worded or unreasonable request over and over it is probably not going to improve the way people think about them and the issue.

Practical Application

Here are some tips to help you think more proactively about expressing dissent in organizations.

First, know your goal—do you just want to vent some frustration or do you want to solve a problem or change something? If you just want to vent, latent or displaced dissent may be the best approach for you. Talk to your best friend for a while and see if the issue still bugs you. Knowing and being able to defend your ethical standards will help you decide if you want to move forward with a form of articulated dissent. Also, having an idea about the quality of your relationships at work and the organizational climate and attitudes toward dissent will help you pick a dissent strategy.

When in doubt, use a direct-factual appeal and offer a reasonable solution to the problem to start a dialog about the issue.

Finally, think critically about issues—there may be more going on than you know about so finding out why things are the way they are before trying to fix them may be useful so that you understand whose egos and jobs may be on the line. Dissent can be a very good thing. It can help organizations be more innovative, help you stand out as an employee invested in the betterment of your organization, and lead to a more positive and collaborative working environment.

11.5 DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

11.5.1. Reflecting on Change

1. Think of an organizational or personal change that you had to go through where you encountered resistance (either from yourself or others). What were the reasons for the resistance and how was it dealt with?
2. How would you deal with employees or colleagues who are resisting change that you support because:
    - Their habits are threatened
    - They fear of failure
    - They are uncertain about new processes or procedures
3. What are the benefits of employee

participation in change?
4. What issues might lead you to engage in organizational dissent? To whom would you voice this dissent and what strategy would you use? Use specific terms from this chapter.
5. In response to safety concerns, imagine that you are introducing a new system to college students where they would have to use a keycard to access campus buildings and classrooms. How would you plan and implement the change? Explain using Lewin's three-stage framework.

11.5.2. Change Readiness Assessment

Take and score the Change Readiness Assessment and briefly describe your results of the assessment.

- Did your results surprise you or do they resonate with what you believed about your response to and readiness for change? It is OK to disagree with results but let us hear about why you disagree.
- Provide examples from your experience with workplace change in your reflection to identify who you or others may or may not have displayed these traits. Finally, consider the change management strategies presented in this module, were any used in the examples you just presented? If not, which could have benefited the situation?

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CHAPTER 12: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Workforce demographics are changing organizational landscapes and how we work and communicate with others. What might be professional in one cultural context may not be seen as professional in another. We need to be adaptable and open to understanding others' values and preferences to adhere to the platinum rule in business–treat others as they wish to be treated. In this chapter, you will expand your concept of culture to see how intercultural communication does not just happen between people who are from different countries, and no one is immune to cultural bias. We will also think locally about how our language can influence organizational climate and affect our relationships with colleagues.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define and identify the effects of ethnocentrism.
- Identify common cultural characteristics.
- Compare divergent cultural characteristics.
- Practice speaking in culturally aware and inclusive ways.
- Recognize microaggressions and their influence on organizational climate.

This chapter was adapted from the following Open Education Resource:

Adaptations included editing tone, images, removing content to align the chapter with BCOM210 course learning objectives, and revising examples for an FHSU student population, and adding some original exercises to align with course objectives.

12.1 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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As a professional in the modern business community, you need to be aware that communication, both oral and written, links communities. Agrarian, industrial, and information ages gave way to global business and brought the importance of communication across cultures to the forefront. The Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist Thomas Friedman calls this new world "flat" (Friedman, 2005), noting how the integration of markets and community had penetrated the daily lives of nearly everyone on the planet, regardless of language or culture.

Intercultural and international business communication has taken on a new role for students as well as career professionals. Knowing when the European and Asian markets open has become mandatory; so has awareness of multiple time zones and their importance in relation to trade, shipping, and the production cycle. Managing production in China from an office in Chicago has become common. Receiving technical assistance for your computer often means connecting with a well-educated English speaker in New Delhi. Communities are linked in the daily trade of goods and services.

In this chapter, we explore this dynamic aspect of communication. Major corporations are no longer affiliated with only one country or one country's interests but instead perceive the integrated market as team members across global trade. Local companies should expect to see increasingly diverse talent pools as US demographics shift.

Global business is more than trade between companies located in distinct countries; indeed, that concept is already outdated. Intercultural and international business focuses less on the borders that separate people and more on the communication that brings them together. Business communication values clear, concise interaction that promotes efficiency and effectiveness. You may perceive your role as a business communicator within a specific city, business, or organization, but you need to be aware that your role crosses cultures, languages, value and legal systems, and borders.

Culture involves beliefs, attitudes, values, and traditions that are shared by a group of people. Thus, we must consider more than the clothes we wear, the movies we watch, or the video games we play as culture. Culture also involves the psychological aspects of our expectations of the communication context. For example, if we are raised in a culture where males speak while females are expected to remain silent, the context of the communication interaction governs behavior, which in itself is a representation of culture. From the choice of words (message), to how we communicate (in person, or by e-mail), to how we acknowledge understanding with a nod or a glance (nonverbal feedback), to the internal and external interference, all aspects of communication are influenced by culture.

In defining intercultural communication, we have eight components) the source, receiver, message, channel, feedback, context, environment, and interference) of communication to work with and yet we must bridge divergent cultures with distinct values across languages and time zones to create meaning. It may be tempting to consider only the source and receiver within an interaction as a representation of intercultural communication, but if we do that, we miss the other six components—the message, channel, feedback, context, environment, and interference—in every communicative act. Each component influences and is influenced by culture. Is culture context? Environment? Message? Culture is represented in all eight components every time we communicate. All communication is intercultural.

We may be tempted to think of intercultural communication as interaction between two people from different countries. While two distinct national passports may be artifacts (nonverbal representations of communication), what happens when two people from two different parts of the same country communicate? From high and low Germanic dialects, to the perspective of a Southerner versus a Northerner in the United States, to the rural versus urban dynamic, our geographic, linguistic, educational, sociological, and psychological traits influence our communication.

It is not enough to say that someone from rural Hays, Kansas and someone from Wichita, Kansas both speak English, so communication between them must be **intra**cultural communication (communication within the same culture). What is life like for the rural Kansan? For the city dweller? Were their educational experiences the same? Do they share the same vocabulary? Do they value the same things? To a city dweller, all the cows may look the same. To the rural Kansan, the cows may be distinct, with unique markings; they have value as a food source and in their numbers they represent wealth. Even if both Kansans speak the same language, their socialization will influence how they communicate and what they value, and their vocabulary will reflect these differences.

Let us take this **intra**national comparison a step further. Within the same town, organization, or even family, can there be intercultural communication? If all communication is intercultural, then the answer would be yes, but we still have to prove our case. Imagine a three-generation farming operation. The grandparents may represent another time and have different values from the grandchildren. The parents may have a different level of education and pursue different roles in the operation from the grandparents; the schooling the grandchildren are receiving may prepare them for yet another career. From music, to food preferences, to how work is done may vary across time. The communication across generations represents intercultural communication, even if only to a limited degree.

But suppose we have a group of students who are all similar in age and educational level. Do gender and societal expectations of roles influence interaction? Of course. And so we see that among these students not only do genders communicate in distinct ways but also not all those who identify as a certain gender are the same. We are each shaped by our upbringing and it influences our worldview, what we value, and how we interact with each other. We create culture, and it creates us.

Everett Rogers and Thomas Steinfatt (1999) define intercultural communication as the exchange of information between individuals who are "unalike culturally." If you follow our discussion and its implications, you may arrive at the idea that ultimately we are each a "culture of one"—we are simultaneously a part of a community and its culture(s) and separate from it in the unique combination that represents us as an individual. All of us are separated by a matter of degrees from each other even if we were raised on the same street or by caregivers of similar educational backgrounds and professions, and yet, we have many other things in common.

Culture is part of the very fabric of our thought, and we cannot separate ourselves from it, even as we leave home, defining ourselves anew in work and achievements. Every business or organization has a culture, and within what may be considered a global culture, there are many subcultures or co-cultures. For example, consider the difference between the sales and accounting departments in a company. We can quickly see two distinct groups with their own symbols, vocabulary, and values. Within each group, there may also be smaller groups, and each member of each department comes from a distinct background that in itself influences behavior and interaction.

Intercultural communication is a fascinating area of study within business communication, and it is essential to your success. One idea to keep in mind as we examine this topic is the importance of considering multiple points of view. If you tend to dismiss ideas or views that are "unalike culturally," you will find it challenging to learn about diverse cultures.

Ethnocentrism is the process of judging other cultures against the values and practices of one's own, leading to the tendency to view other cultures as inferior to one's own. Another culture is deemed inferior because it does not meet the standards set within one's own culture. Having pride in your culture can be healthy, but history has taught us that having the predisposition to discount other cultures simply because they are different can be hurtful, damaging, and dangerous. Ethnocentrism makes us far less likely to be able to bridge the gap with others and often increases intolerance of difference. Business and industry are no longer regional, and in your career, you will necessarily cross borders, languages, and cultures. You will need tolerance, understanding, patience, and openness to difference. A skilled business communicator knows that the process of learning is never complete, and being open to new ideas is a key strategy for success.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Intercultural communication is an aspect of all communicative interactions, and attention to your perspective is key to your effectiveness. Ethnocentrism is a major obstacle to intercultural communication.

12.2 HOW TO UNDERSTAND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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The American anthropologist Edward T. Hall is often cited as a pioneer in the field of intercultural communication (Chen, G. and Starosta, W., 2000). Born in 1914, Hall spent much of his early adulthood in the multicultural setting of the American Southwest, where Native Americans, Spanish-speakers, and descendants of pioneers came together from diverse cultural perspectives. He then traveled the globe during World War II and later served as a U.S. State Department official. Where culture had once been viewed by anthropologists as a single, distinct way of living, Hall saw how the perspective of the individual influences interaction. By focusing on interactions rather than cultures as separate from individuals, he asked us to evaluate the many cultures we ourselves belong to or are influenced by as well as those with whom we interact. While his view makes the study of intercultural communication far more complex, it also brings a healthy dose of reality to the discussion. Hall is generally credited with eight contributions to our study of intercultural communication (Chen & Starosta, 2000; Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990; McLean, 2005):

1. *Compare cultures*. Focus on the interactions versus general observations of culture.
2. *Shift to a local perspective*. Local level versus global perspective.
3. *You don't have to know everything to know something*. Time, space, gestures, and gender roles can be studied, even if we lack a larger understanding of the entire culture.
4. *There are rules we can learn*. People create rules for themselves in each community that we can learn from, compare, and contrast.
5. *Experience counts*. Personal experience has value in addition to more comprehensive studies of interaction and culture.
6. *Perspectives can differ*. Descriptive linguistics serves as a model to understand cultures, and the U.S. Foreign Service adopted it as a base for training.
7. *Intercultural communication can be applied to international business*. U.S. Foreign Service training yielded applications for trade and commerce and became a point of study for business majors.

8. *It integrates the disciplines*. Culture and communication are intertwined and bring together many academic disciplines.

Hall shows us that emphasis on a culture as a whole, and how it operates, may lead us to neglect individual differences. Individuals may hold beliefs or practice customs that do not follow their own cultural norms. When we resort to the mental shortcut of a stereotype, we lose these unique differences. **Stereotypes** can be defined as a generalization about a group of people that oversimplifies their culture (Rogers & Steinfatt, 1999).

The American psychologist Gordon Allport (1958) explored how, when, and why we formulate or use stereotypes to characterize distinct groups. His results may not surprise you. When we do not have enough contact with people or their cultures to understand them well, we tend to resort to stereotypes.

As Hall notes, experience has value. If you do not know a culture, you should consider learning more about it firsthand if possible. The people you interact with may not be representative of the culture as a whole, but that is not to say that what you learn lacks validity. Quite the contrary; Hall asserts that you can, in fact, learn something without understanding everything, and given the dynamic nature of communication and culture, who is to say that your lessons will not serve you well? Consider a study abroad experience if that is an option for you, or learn from a classmate who comes from another country or an unfamiliar culture. Be open to new ideas and experiences, and start investigating. Many have gone before you, and today, unlike in generations past, much of the information is accessible. Your experiences will allow you to learn about another culture and yourself, and help you to avoid prejudice.

Prejudice involves a negative preconceived judgment or opinion that guides conduct or social behavior (McLean, 2005). As an example, imagine two people walking into a room for a job interview. You are tasked to interview both, and having read the previous section, you know that Allport (1958) rings true when he says we rely on stereotypes when encountering people or cultures with which we have had little contact. Will the candidates' dress, age, or gender influence your opinion of them? Will their race or ethnicity be a conscious or subconscious factor in your thinking process? Allport's work would indicate that those factors and more will make you likely to use stereotypes to guide your expectations of them and your subsequent interactions with them.

People who treat others with prejudice often make assumptions, or take preconceived ideas for granted without question, about groups or communities. As Allport (1958) illustrated for us, we often assume characteristics about groups with which we have little contact. Sometimes we also assume similarity, thinking that people are all basically similar. This denies cultural, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and many other valuable, insightful differences.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Ethnocentric tendencies, stereotyping, and assumptions of similarity can make it difficult to learn about cultural differences.

12.3 COMMON CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

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While we may be members of many different cultures, we tend to adhere to some more than others. Perhaps you have become friendly with several of your fellow students as you have pursued your studies in college. As you take many of the same classes and share many experiences on campus, you begin to have more and more in common, in effect forming a small group culture of your own. A similar cultural formation process may happen in the workplace, where coworkers spend many hours each week sharing work experiences and getting to know each other socially in the process.

Groups come together, form cultures, and grow apart over time. How does one become a member of a community, and how do you know when you are full member? What aspects of culture do we have in common and how do they relate to business communication? Researchers who have studied cultures around the world have identified certain characteristics that define a culture. These characteristics are expressed in different ways, but they tend to be present in nearly all cultures. Let us examine them.

RITES OF INITIATION

Cultures tend to have a ritual for becoming a new member. A newcomer starts as a nonentity, a stranger, an unaffiliated person with no connection or even possibly awareness of the community. Newcomers who stay around and learn about the culture become members. Most cultures have a rite of initiation that marks the passage of the individual within the community; some of these rituals may be so informal as to be hardly noticed (e.g., the first time a coworker asks you to join the group to eat lunch together or the first time you stay up until the early morning working on a term paper), while others may be highly formalized (e.g., new student orientation or a managerial training program). The nonmember becomes a member, the new member becomes a full member, and individuals rise in terms of responsibility and influence.

Business communities are communities first, because without communication interaction, no business will occur. Even if sales and stock are processed by servers that link database platforms to flow, individuals are still involved in the maintenance, repair, and development of the system. Where there is communication, there is culture, and every business has several cultures.

Across the course of your life, you have no doubt passed several rites of initiation but may not have taken notice of them. Did you earn a driver's license, register to vote, or acquire permission to purchase alcohol? In North American culture, these three common markers indicate the passing from a previous stage of life to a new one, with new rights and responsibilities. As a child, you were not allowed to have a driver's license. At age fourteen to eighteen, depending on your state and location (rural versus urban), you were allowed to drive a tractor, use farm equipment, operate a motor vehicle during daylight hours, or have full access to public roads. With the privilege of driving comes responsibility. It is your responsibility to learn what the signs and signals mean and to obey traffic laws for common safety. For stop signs to work, we all have to agree on the behavior associated with them and follow that behavior.

Sometimes people choose to ignore a stop sign, or accidentally miss one, and it places the public in danger. Law enforcement officials reinforce that common safety as representatives of the culture, empowered by the people themselves based on a common agreement of what a stop sign means and what a driver is supposed to do when approaching one. Some people may argue that law enforcement serves some while it prosecutes others. This point of debate deserves consideration, but across cultures, there are rules, signs, and symbols that we share.

Rites of initiation mark the transition of the role or status of the individual within the group. Your first day on the job may have been a challenge as you learned your way around the physical space, but the true challenge was to learn how the group members communicate with each other. If you graduate from college with a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree, you will already have passed a series of tests, learned terms and theories, and possess a symbol of accomplishment in your diploma, but that only grants you the opportunity to look for a job—to seek access to a new culture.

In every business, there are groups, power struggles, and unspoken ways that members earn their way from the role of a "newbie" to that of a full member. The newbie may get the tough client, the office without a window, or the cubicle next to the bathroom, denoting low status. As the new member learns to navigate through the community—establishing a track record and being promoted—they pass the rite of initiation and acquire new rights and responsibilities.

Over time, the person comes to be an important part of the business, a "keeper of the flame." The "flame" may not exist in physical space or time, but it does exist in the minds of those members in the community who have invested time and effort in the business. It is not a flame to be trusted to a new person, as it can only be earned with time. Along the way, there may be personality conflicts and power struggles over resources and perceived scarcity (e.g., there is only one promotion and everyone wants it). All these challenges are to be expected in any culture.

COMMON HISTORY AND TRADITIONS

Think for a moment about the history of a business like Ford Motor Company—what are your associations with Henry Ford, the assembly line manufacturing system, or the Model T? Or the early days of McDonald's? Do you have an emotional response to mental images of the "golden arches" logo, Ronald McDonald, or the Big Mac sandwich? Traditions form as the organization grows and expands, and stories are told and retold to educate new members on how business should be conducted. The history of every culture, of every corporation, influences the present. There are times when the phrase "we've tried that before" can become a stumbling block for members of the organization as it grows and adapts to new market forces. There may be struggles between members who have weathered many storms and new members, who come armed with new educational perspectives, technological tools, or experiences that may contribute to growth.

COMMON VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Cultures all hold values and principles that are commonly shared and communicated from older members to younger (or newer) ones. Time and length of commitment are associated with an awareness of these values and principles, so that new members, whether they are socialized at home, in school, or at work, may not have a thorough understanding of their importance. For example, time (fast customer service) and cleanliness are two cornerstone values of the McDonald's corporation. A new employee may take these for granted, while a seasoned professional who inspects restaurants may see the continued need to reinforce these core values. Without reinforcement, norms may gradually change, and if this were the case it could fundamentally change the customer experience associated with McDonald's.

COMMON PURPOSE AND SENSE OF MISSION

Cultures share a common sense of purpose and mission. Why are we here and whom do we serve? These are fundamental questions of the human condition that philosophers and theologians all over the world have pondered for centuries. In business, the answers to these questions often address purpose and mission, and they can be found in mission and vision statements of almost every organization. Individual members will be expected to acknowledge and share the mission and vision, actualize them, or make them real through action. Without action, the mission and vision statements are simply an arrangement of words. As a guide to individual and group behavioral norms, they can serve as a powerful motivator and a call to action.

COMMON SYMBOLS, BOUNDARIES, STATUS, LANGUAGE, AND

RITUALS

Most of us learn early in life what a stop sign represents, but do we know what military stripes represent on a sleeve, or a ten-year service pin on a lapel, or a corner office with two windows? Cultures have common symbols that mark them as a group; the knowledge of what a symbol stands for helps to reinforce who is a group member and who is not. You may have a brand on your arm from your fraternity, or wear a T-shirt with a club logo on it—symbols that represent groups you affiliate with temporarily, while you are a student. They may or may not continue to hold meaning to you when your college experience is over. Cultural symbols include dress, such as the Western business suit and tie, the Scottish kilt, or the Islamic headscarf. Symbols also include slogans or sayings, such as "you're in good hands" or "you deserve a break today." The slogan may serve a marketing purpose but may also embrace a mission or purpose within the culture. Family crests and clan tartan patterns serve as symbols of affiliation. Symbols can also be used to communicate rank and status within the group.

Space is another common cultural characteristic; it may be a nonverbal symbol that represents status and power. In most of the world's cultures, a person occupying superior status is entitled to a physically elevated position—a throne, a dais, a podium from which to address subordinates. Subordinates may be expected to bow, curtsy, or lower their eyes as a sign of respect. In business, the corner office may offer the best view with the most space. Movement from a cubicle to a private office may also be a symbol of transition within an organization, involving increased responsibility as well as power. Parking spaces, the kind of vehicle you drive, and the transportation allowance you have may also serve to communicate symbolic meaning within an organization.

The office serves our discussion on the second point concerning boundaries. Would you sit on your boss's desk or sit in their chair with your feet up on the desk in their presence? Most people indicate they would not because doing so would communicate a lack of respect, violate normative space expectations, and invite retaliation. Still, subtle challenges to authority may arise in the workplace. A less-than-flattering photograph of the boss at the office party posted to the recreational room bulletin board communicates more than a lack of respect for authority. By placing the image anonymously in a public place, the prankster clearly communicates a challenge, even if it is a juvenile one. Movement from the cubicle to the broom closet may be the result for someone who is found responsible for the prank. Again, there are no words used to communicate meaning, only symbols, but those symbols represent significant issues.

Communities have their own vocabulary and way in which they communicate. Consider the person who uses a sewing machine to create a dress and the accountant behind the desk;

both are professionals and both have specialized jargon used in their field. If they were to change places, the lack of skills would present an obstacle, but the lack of understanding of terms, how they are used, and what they mean would also severely limit their effectiveness. Those terms and how they are used are learned over time and through interaction. While a textbook can help, it cannot demonstrate use in live interactions. Cultures are dynamic systems that reflect the communication process itself.

Cultures celebrate heroes, denigrate villains, and have specific ways of completing jobs and tasks. In business and industry, the emphasis may be on effectiveness and efficiency, but the practice can often be "because that is the way we have always done it." Rituals serve to guide our performance and behavior and may be limited to small groups or celebrated across the entire company. A pink Cadillac has a special meaning for a Mary Kay cosmetics representative. How that car is received is ritualistic, recognizing current success while honoring past performances across the company.

Rituals can serve to bind a group together or to constrain it. Institutions tend to formalize processes and then have a hard time adapting to new circumstances. While the core values or mission statement may hold true, the method of doing things that worked in the past may not be as successful as it once was. Adaptation and change can be difficult for individuals and companies, and yet all communities, cultures, and communication contexts are dynamic, or always changing. As much as we might like things to stay the same, they will always change—and we will change with (and be changed by) them.

KEY TAKEAWAY

All cultures have characteristics such as initiations, traditions, history, values and principles, purpose, symbols, and boundaries.

12.4 DIVERGENT CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

[Author removed at request of original publisher]

We are not the same. We are born light- or dark-skinned, to parents of education or parents without access to education, and we grow up short or tall, slender or stocky. Our life chances or options are in many ways determined by our birth. The Victorian "rags to riches" novels that Horatio Alger wrote promoted the ideal that individuals can overcome all obstacles, raising themselves up by "their bootstraps." Some people do have amazing stories, but even if you are quick to point out that Microsoft founder Bill Gates became fabulously successful despite his lack of a college education, know that his example is an exception, not the rule. We all may use the advantages of our circumstances to improve our lives, but the type and extent of those advantages vary greatly across the planet.

Cultures reflect this inequality, this diversity, and the divergent range of values, symbols, and meanings across communities. Can you tie a knot? Perhaps you can tie your shoes, but can you tie a knot to secure a line to a boat, to secure a heavy load on a cart or truck, or to bundle a bale of hay? You may not be able to, but if you were raised in a culture that places a high value on knot-tying for specific purposes, you probably would have. We all have viewpoints, but they are shaped by our interactions with our communities. Let us examine several points of divergence across cultures.

INDIVIDUALISTIC VERSUS COLLECTIVIST CULTURES

People in individualistic cultures value individual freedom and personal independence, and cultures always have stories to reflect their values. You may recall the story of Superman, or John McLean in the Diehard series, and note how one person overcomes all obstacles. Through personal ingenuity, despite challenges, one person rises successfully to conquer or vanquish those obstacles. Sometimes there is an assist, as in basketball or football, where another person lends a hand, but, still the story repeats itself again and again, reflecting the cultural viewpoint.

The Dutch researcher Geert Hofstede explored the concepts of individualism and collectivism across diverse cultures (Hofstede, 1982; Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, 2005). He found that in individualistic cultures like the United States, people perceived their world primarily from their own viewpoint. They perceived themselves as empowered individuals, capable of making their own decisions, and able to make an impact on their own lives.

Cultural viewpoint is not an either/or dichotomy, but rather a continuum or range. You may belong to some communities that express individualistic cultural values, while others place the focus on a collective viewpoint. Collectivist cultures (Hofstede, 1982), including many in Asia and South America, focus on the needs of the nation, community, family, or group of workers. Ownership and private property is one way to examine this difference. In some cultures, property is almost exclusively private, while others tend toward community ownership. The collectively owned resource returns benefits to the community. Water, for example, has long been viewed as a community resource, much like air, but that has been changing as businesses and organizations have purchased water rights and gained control over resources. Public lands, such as parks, are often considered public, and individual exploitation of them is restricted. Copper, a metal with a variety of industrial applications, is collectively owned in Chile, with profits deposited in the general government fund. While public and private initiatives exist, the cultural viewpoint is our topic. How does someone raised in a culture that emphasizes the community interact with someone raised in a primarily individualistic culture? How could tensions be expressed and how might interactions be influenced by this point of divergence?

EXPLICIT-RULE CULTURES VERSUS IMPLICIT-RULE CULTURES

Do you know the rules of your business or organization? Did you learn them from an employee manual or by observing the conduct of others? Your response may include both options, but not all cultures communicate rules in the same way. Carley Dodd (1998) discusses this difference and has found quite a range of difference. In an explicit-rule culture, where rules are clearly communicated so that everyone is aware of them, the guidelines and agenda for a meeting are announced prior to the gathering. In an implicit-rule culture, where rules are often understood and communicated nonverbally, there may be no agenda. Everyone knows why they are gathered and what role each member plays, even though the expectations may not be clearly stated. Power, status, and behavioral expectations may all be understood, and to the person from outside this culture, it may prove a challenge to understand the rules of the context.

Outsiders often communicate their "otherness" by not knowing where to stand, when to sit, or how to initiate a conversation if the rules are not clearly stated. While it may help to know that implicit-rule cultures are often more tolerant of deviation from the understood rules, the newcomer will be wise to learn by observing quietly—and to do as much research ahead of the event as possible.

UNCERTAINTY-ACCEPTING CULTURES VERSUS UNCERTAINTY-REJECTING CULTURES

When we meet each other for the first time, we often use what we have previously learned to understand our current context. We also do this to reduce our uncertainty. Some cultures, such as the United States and Britain, are highly tolerant of uncertainty, while others go to great lengths to reduce the element of surprise. Cultures in the Arab world, for example, are high in uncertainty avoidance; they tend to be resistant to change and reluctant to take risks. Whereas a U.S. business negotiator might enthusiastically agree to try a new procedure, the Egyptian counterpart would likely refuse to get involved until all the details are worked out.

Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese (1975) developed **uncertainty reduction theory** to examine this dynamic aspect of communication. Here are seven axioms of uncertainty:

1. There is a high level of uncertainty at first. As we get to know one another, our verbal communication increases and our uncertainty begins to decrease.
2. Following verbal communication, nonverbal communication increases, uncertainty continues to decrease, and more nonverbal displays of affiliation, like nodding one's head to indicate agreement, will start to be expressed.
3. When experiencing high levels of uncertainty, we tend to increase our information-seeking behavior, perhaps asking questions to gain more insight. As our understanding increases, uncertainty decreases, as does

the information-seeking behavior.

4. When experiencing high levels of uncertainty, the communication interaction is not as personal or intimate. As uncertainty is reduced, intimacy increases.
5. When experiencing high levels of uncertainty, communication will feature more reciprocity, or displays of respect. As uncertainty decreases, reciprocity may diminish.
6. Differences between people increase uncertainty, while similarities decrease it.
7. Higher levels of uncertainty are associated with a decrease in the indication of liking the other person, while reductions in uncertainty are associated with liking the other person more.

TIME ORIENTATION

Edward T. Hall and Mildred Reed Hall (1987) state that monochronic time-oriented cultures consider one thing at a time, whereas polychronic time-oriented cultures schedule many things at one time, and time is considered in a more fluid sense. In monochronic time, interruptions are to be avoided, and everything has its own specific time. Even the multitasker from a monochronic culture will, for example, recognize the value of work first before play or personal time. The United States, Germany, and Switzerland are often noted as countries that value a monochronic time orientation.

Polychronic time looks a little more complicated, with business and family mixing with dinner and dancing. Greece, Italy, Chile, and Saudi Arabia are countries where one can observe this perception of time; business meetings may be scheduled at a fixed time, but when they actually begin may be another story. Also note that the dinner invitation for 8 p.m. may in reality be more like 9 p.m. If you were to show up on time, you might be the first person to arrive and find that the hosts are not quite ready to receive you.

When in doubt, always ask before the event; many people from polychronic cultures will be used to foreigners' tendency to be punctual, even compulsive, about respecting established times for events. The skilled business communicator is aware of this difference and takes steps to anticipate it. The value of time in different cultures is expressed in many ways, and your understanding can help you communicate more effectively.

SHORT-TERM VERSUS

LONG-TERM ORIENTATION

Do you want your reward right now or can you dedicate yourself to a long-term goal? You may work in a culture whose people value immediate results and grow impatient when those results do not materialize. Geert Hofstede (1982) discusses this relationship of time orientation to a culture as a "time horizon," and it underscores the perspective of the individual within a cultural context. Many countries in Asia, influenced by the teachings of Confucius, value a long-term orientation, whereas other countries, including the United States, have a more short-term approach to life and results. Native American cultures are known for holding a long-term orientation, as illustrated by the proverb attributed to the Iroquois that decisions require contemplation of their impact seven generations removed.

If you work within a culture that has a short-term orientation, you may need to place greater emphasis on reciprocation of greetings, gifts, and rewards. For example, if you send a thank-you note the morning after being treated to a business dinner, your host will appreciate your promptness. While there may be a respect for tradition, there is also an emphasis on personal representation and honor, a reflection of identity and integrity. Personal stability and consistency are also valued in a short-term-oriented culture, contributing to an overall sense of predictability and familiarity.

Long-term orientation is often marked by persistence, thrift and frugality, and an order to relationships based on age and status. A sense of shame for the family and community is also observed across generations. What an individual does reflects on the family and is carried by immediate and extended family members.

MASCULINE VERSUS FEMININE ORIENTATION

There was a time when many cultures and religions valued a female figurehead, and with the rise of Western cultures we have observed a shift toward a masculine ideal. Each carries with it a set of cultural expectations and norms for gender behavior and gender roles across life, including business.

Hofstede (1982) describes the masculine-feminine dichotomy not in terms of whether men or women hold the power in a given culture, but rather the extent to which that culture values certain traits that may be considered masculine or feminine. Thus, "the assertive pole has been called 'masculine' and the modest, caring pole 'feminine.' The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in the masculine countries they are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so these countries show a gap between men's values and women's values" (Hofstede, G., 2009).

We can observe this difference in where people gather, how they interact, and how they dress. We can see it during business negotiations, where it may make an important difference in the success of the organizations involved. Cultural expectations precede the interaction, so someone who doesn't match those expectations may experience tension. Business in the United States has a masculine orientation—assertiveness and competition are highly valued. In other cultures, such as Sweden, business values are more attuned to modesty (lack of self-promotion) and taking care of society's weaker members. This range of difference is one aspect of intercultural communication that requires significant attention when the business communicator enters a new environment.

DIRECT VERSUS INDIRECT

In the United States, business correspondence is expected to be short and to the point. "What can I do for you?" is a common question when a business person receives a call from a stranger; it is an accepted way of asking the caller to state his or her business. In some cultures, it is quite appropriate to make direct personal observations, such as "You've changed your hairstyle," while for others it may be observed, but never spoken of in polite company. In indirect cultures, such as those in Latin America, business conversations may start with discussions of the weather, or family, or topics other than business as the partners gain a sense of each other, long before the topic of business is raised. Again, the skilled business communicator researches the new environment before entering it, as a social faux pas, or error, can have a significant impact.

MATERIALISM VERSUS RELATIONSHIPS

Does the car someone drives say something about them? You may consider that many people across the planet do not own a vehicle and that a car or truck is a statement of wealth. But beyond that, do the make and model reflect their personality? If you are from a materialistic culture, you may be inclined to say yes. If you are from a culture that values relationships rather than material objects, you may say no or focus on how the vehicle serves the family. From rocks that display beauty and wealth—what we call jewelry—to what you eat—will it be lobster ravioli or prime rib?—we express our values and cultural differences with our purchase decisions.

Members of a materialistic culture place emphasis on external goods and services as a representation of self, power, and social rank. If you consider the plate of food before you, and consider the labor required to harvest the grain, butcher the animal, and cook the meal, you are focusing more on the relationships involved with its production than the foods themselves. Caviar may be a luxury, and it may communicate your ability to acquire and offer a delicacy, but it also represents an effort. Cultures differ in how they view material objects and their relationship to them, and some value people and relationships more than the objects themselves. The United States and Japan are often noted as materialistic cultures, while many Scandinavian nations feature cultures that place more emphasis on relationships.

LOW-POWER VERSUS HIGH-POWER DISTANCE

How comfortable are you with critiquing your boss's decisions? If you are from a low-power distance culture, your answer might be "no problem." In low-power distance cultures, according to Hofstede (1982), people relate to one another more as equals and less as a reflection of dominant or subordinate roles, regardless of their actual formal roles as employee and manager, for example.

In a high-power distance culture, you would probably be much less likely to challenge the decision, to provide an alternative, or to give input. If you are working with people from a high-power distance culture, you may need to take extra care to elicit feedback and involve them in the discussion because their cultural framework may preclude their participation. They may have learned that less powerful people must accept decisions without comment, even if they have a concern or know there is a significant problem. Unless you are sensitive to cultural orientation and power distance, you may lose valuable information.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Cultures have distinct orientations when it comes to rules, uncertainty, time and time horizon, masculinity, directness, materialism, and power distance.

12.5 UNDERSTANDING MICROAGGRESSIONS TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

"Yea, but where are you really from?"

"I don't see color. I treat everyone equally"

"Why would I hire a woman if she is just going to get pregnant?"

"You're being too sensitive. Not everything is about race."

Take a moment to read and consider these statements. Do any of these phrases sound familiar? Do any of them make the hair on the back of your neck stand up? Each of these comments demonstrates subtle forms of bias that demean groups such as immigrants, racial minorities, and women, who have a history of marginalization in the United States.

Some of you may be thinking some of these statements are obviously problematic. It is illegal to discriminate against women for their general capacity to become pregnant. But some statements, such as the statement, "I treat everyone equally," may be more difficult to recognize as hiding forms of bias. So to understand why all of these statements, which can be classified as **microaggressions**, had the effect of embarrassing, frustrating, and flat-out insulting the parties they were directed to, let us take a closer look a what microaggressions are. This section will be focusing mostly on racial microaggressions but will also touch upon microaggressions levied to non-racially-based identities. We will discuss common microaggressions and how to recognize them; the effect they may have on people and workplace climate; and finally how perpetrators of microaggressions can attempt to change their behavior so as to better respond to the needs of increasingly diverse work environments.

Forms of Bias

The first thing we need to recognize is that no one is immune from social conditioning that tells us to value groups and ways of life differently. It is a process identifiable in any society but it does not mean that the outcomes of that social conditioning are unchangeable or what we are conditioned to believe is "natural." What IS and ISN'T racism and discrimination is a significant social and political conversation in the United States but few of us have received specific training on how to have difficult conversations on these topics. As a consequence, many of us fear these conversations, think they are not allowed, assume they negatively affect relationships, attempt to avoid them, or dismiss them quickly when they occur. Furthermore, this aversion to talking about the "isms" such as racism and sexism, in a truly inclusive way with people who hold a variety of opinions, has led many to think if one just attempts to treat everyone the same way, they can avoid discriminating against others and being labeled, specifically, "a racist."

Forms of overt racism, such as using racial stereotypes as evidence of racial inferiority are easy to spot. It is the subtle and contemporary forms of bias that occur in everyday conversation that are focused on in this section. We can refer to these actions as the outcomes of "aversive racism" (Sue, 2010). Aversive racism is difficult for people to recognize in themselves because aversive racists often sympathize with victims of past injustice, support principles of racial equality, and genuinely regard themselves as non-prejudiced, but at the same time they possess conflicting, often unconscious, negative feelings and that promote racial bias. They would never consciously discriminate and believe in an egalitarian way of life. Egalitarian values may seem contrary to racism but an overreliance on egalitarianism can deny groups' unique experiences that have situated them as disadvantaged or marginalized in areas of society.

For example, a study that examined data from public schools in Boston and New York City found girls of color, and especially black girls, were subjected to harsher and more frequent discipline, and were six times more likely to be suspended than their white female peers (Bates, 2015). One can imagine how these conditions would make it so obtaining a high school diploma was more challenging for black girls than their white peers or more so yet, white students enrolled in private high schools in the suburbs of those same cities.

In addition, aversive racists may over-emphasize differences and attempt to project their acceptance of them (Sue, 2010). For example, one might be excited to have a foreign, person of color in their otherwise domestic white, employee pool. Always going to this person, however, to speak as a representative of their race and country focuses on how they are different than others, even an outsider, and can make them feel as if other elements of their personality and professional ability are not valued. In other words, they have been reduced to an exemplar of their race and nationality, rather than a unique person.

As previously mentioned, one may find it uncomfortable to confront the topic of racism at work (Sue, 2010). Some additional reasons why this may be the case for individuals in the white majority are because they may fear realizing their own bias and admitting to and confronting their racial privilege. They may fear being perceived as racist/sexist/etc. and/or think they do not have the right to talk about minority issues because they themselves are not a minority. All of these elements compound the fear of taking action against injustices.

Taking a more contextualized approach to microaggression in the workplace, in addition to the fears mentioned previously, managers and supervisors may fear taking action against microaggressions in their workplaces because they fear an inability to recognize microaggressions or deal with intense emotions (their own and subordinates) (Sue, 2010). They may also fear losing control of the workspace, personal failure, or feeling incompetent in managing discussions or relationships.

Conceptualizing Microaggressions

So what is a microaggression? Microaggressions are verbal, behavioral, or environmental slights, often automatic and unintentional, which occur in brief instances on a daily basis (Sue, 2010). They communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative viewpoints but as mentioned before, the perpetrator is probably unaware that they are offending. You'll be presented with common microaggressions in a moment to help you recognize if you have been hearing them or are in the habit of using them.

If we are going to try to disrupt the use of macroaggressions in the workplace, and anywhere else in our lives, we need to be aware of how these communication interactions typically go. First, when a microaggression occurs there is a clash of realities between the perpetrator of the microaggression and the target or targets. The perpetrator is often unaware they have done anything wrong or even when it becomes evident the other party has been disturbed by what is said the perpetrator sees the macroaggression as a minor slight so "no big deal."

The target may think they lose if they say something as well as lose if they do not say something (Sue, 2010). If they do confront the perpetrator, this may result in negative consequences such as being berated that they are being too sensitive, or more aggressive forms of discrimination or punishment. Sometimes, there is even just the concern that if something is said the target will be labeled a "complainer" or others may limit interaction with them so as to avoid future confrontations. Conversely, if the target does nothing about the macroaggressions, they will continue, and have to endure the frequent diminishment of their identities. Not a pleasant situation either way.

Perpetrators of microaggressions might think their comments are not "a big deal" and that people are too sensitive. The "drops in a bucket" metaphor will help you see microaggressions in a different way if that thought is going through your mind at this point. One microaggression alone probably will not have devastating effects, but there are varying degrees of microaggressions, which we will consider in a moment. What is more important to keep in mind, however, is that targets will never experience just one microaggression. They experience them throughout their lives. One drop in the bucket may not have a significant effect but people may be carrying buckets filled to the brim with drops from well-meaning but uninformed individuals, or worse, drops from those who have intentionally attempted to hurt, insult and oppress them.

In a more visceral description of what it is like to be the target of microaggressions, Gurnham Singh, a lecturer in social work in the UK, explained microaggressions are "like death by a thousand cuts. When you experience them all the time, those microaggressions have a cumulative effect."

Microassults, Microinsults, and Microinvalidations

The most injurious microaggression is the microassult (Sue, 2010). These are easier to spot because they are overt, deliberate, conscious, and explicit. The intention is to hurt, oppress, or discriminate against others.

Some examples of these on college campuses might be an unspoken policy to refuse students of color admission into certain fraternities or sororities. Or, when someone says "That's so gay!" to connote that something is weird or disagreeable. In this example, the person is aware of the words that they choose; however, they may not think that using such language is considered homophobic and offensive because the exclamation is, unfortunately, so common.

The other two lesser categories are microinsults and microinvalidations (Sue, 2010). They are, again, often unintentional and typically occur due to underlying biases and prejudices outside of awareness.

Microinsults convey insensitivity, are rude, or demean an individual's identity or heritage (Sue, 2010). For example, in 2015, The University of Louisville apologized after President James Ramsey was criticized for a photo in which he and other university staffers were depicted at a Halloween party wearing stereotypical "Mexican" costumes with sombreros and large false mustaches and beards (Kenning, 2015). This act was criticized as treating Mexicans are costumes instead of people. A children's costume from the Disney film Moana brought on similar criticism (Stevens, 2016). A brown, tattooed bodysuit turned skin into a costume. This culturally insensitive costume was pulled from sale, demonstrating the financial cost of this type of insensitivity.

Another example is when a person might tell an Asian American that she or he "speaks good English" as a compliment. However, in reality, such a statement can be offensive, implying that Asian persons, as a group, do not speak clearly. Instances like these can be especially upsetting to Asian Americans who do not speak any other language besides English, or whose families have been in the US for generations.

Microinvalidations exclude, negate, or nullify an individual's thoughts or feelings (Sue, 2010). For example, some contend that everyone in the United States is given the equal opportunity to succeed and be anything they want to be–this is the "American Dream." These comments paint people's experiences with discrimination as untrue and insignificant. Similarly, when someone tells a woman that she is "being too sensitive" when she asks not to be called a "girl" in the workplace, or that an LGBT person should "stop complaining" when state education or health forms refuse to change language to accept families with same-gender parents, they invalidate the reality of discrimination in these people's lives.

For a closer look at common types of microaggressions and the messages they send, access the following tool from the University of California Santa Cruz: Recognizing Microaggressions and the Messages They Send

Effects of Microaggressions

So what are the realized consequences of drops in the bucket, what does a death by a thousand cuts look like? Studies have demonstrated that microaggressions can cause individuals to have high levels of anxiety, depression, diminished confidence, feelings of helplessness and a loss of drive (Sue, 2010). These consequences are very real and very rotten. It is unsurprising then that a person feeling this way, having put up with or confront microaggressors, may choose to exit the situation. In a workplace, this could mean disengaging with coworkers and duties, taking additional leave or even quitting a job.

When people experience the previously mentioned psychological consequences, their workplaces are impacted (Sue, 2010). You may see disengagement, and turnover, as previously mentioned as well as low productivity, and poor leader-member relationships, all of which cultivate a poor and unwelcoming workplace culture and climate. Reputations form and spread and applicants from minority groups may be difficult to recruit.

Now that you have an understanding of what a microaggression is and why they are harmful, click this link to review common categories of microaggressions and their examples. You will likely have heard statements that fit multiple categories.

When You Are The Perpetrator

Now that you have a vocabulary to describe and identify microaggressions, here are some ways you can try to prevent microaggressions in the workplace as well as in other areas of your life (Nadal, 2014).

1. Recognize that dismissive attitudes are harmful but often unintentional.
2. Engage in self-reflection. Admit to yourself when you did something that could offend and commit to bettering your interactions.
3. Identify those you feel comfortable discussing issues with (e.g., family members, coworkers, mentors) to check in on your communication and behavior.
4. As you interact with others, avoid making assumptions and labeling individuals.
5. Participate in continuing educational activities such as taking college courses on diversity and inclusion or ask your human resources offices about upcoming workshops.

If you detect that you may have committed a microaggression, perhaps an individual winced or clearly reacted negatively–take responsibility. It is important to admit when we commit microaggressions, learn from the wrongdoing, apologize, and do better.

If someone confronts you, listen to what they are trying to tell you and try not to be defensive. Do not deny that another is hurt or offended otherwise you invalidate their experience, which would be considered an additional microaggression. We cannot change how others feel but we can understand how we have influenced their feelings. In a workplace situation, you have little to lose by modifying your communication to avoid offense. You may be familiar with the "Golden Rule" of "treat others as you would like to be treated" but in a business situation, the rule is often modified to "treat others as they want to be treated."

When You Are The Target Or An Ally

We may try to prevent microaggressions but since they are often unconscious slights, we need to prepare ourselves to respond when we recognize a microaggression has been perpetrated against us or others (Nadal, 2014). Some individuals may respond passive aggressively as a way to communicate they are upset or annoyed, or actively by perhaps venting anger. Individuals can also react in an assertive way and address how the microaggression made them feel with the perpetrator.

1. Remember that offense was probably not the intent and if we are upset we can take a moment to re-center ourselves.
2. Choose to speak to the microaggressor privately and maybe enlist the help of a supervisor or human resources representative. Depending on the relationship with the perpetrator, it might also be appropriate to discuss what was said immediately and in front of others to correct

the behavior immediately.

3. Describe the incident objectively and state your feelings to avoid blaming or judging.
4. Be direct in your communication so that the offense is unambiguous.
5. If the perpetrator denies having been offensive, determine if further conversation will be beneficial and productive. If this happens, human resources or third-party intervention may help.
6. Be open to their expression of feelings to engage in a two-way conversation.

12.6 DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

12.6.1. Reflecting on Culture

1. List five words to describe your dominant culture. Now, list five words to describe a culture with which you are not a member, have little or no contact, or have limited knowledge. Now, compare and contrast the terms noting their inherent value statements.
2. Reflect on the experience you have engaging with others who are culturally different from you in some way. Describe the differences but then what you have in common. What could you do in future interactions to come to shared understanding.
3. Identify a country, other than the US and/or your home country, in which you would like

to do business. Research the country and find three interesting business communication norms one would encounter there and share them with the class.

4. People sometimes assume that learning about other cultures is unnecessary if we simply treat others as we would like to be treated. To test this assumption, try answering the following questions.

    - When receiving a gift from a friend, should you open it immediately, or wait to open it in private?
    - When grocery shopping, should you touch fruits and vegetables to evaluate their freshness?
    - In a conversation with your instructor or your supervisor at work, should you maintain direct eye contact?

    Write down your answers before reading further. Now let us explore how these questions might be answered in various cultures.

    - In Chile, it is good manners to open a

gift immediately and express delight and thanks. But in Japan, it is a traditional custom to not open a gift in the giver's presence.
    - In the United States, shoppers typically touch, hold, and even smell fruits and vegetables before buying them. But in northern Europe, this is strongly frowned upon.
    - In mainstream North American culture, people are expected to look directly at each other when having a conversation. But a cultural norm for many Native Americans involves keeping one's eyes lowered as a sign of respect when speaking to an instructor or supervisor.

No one can be expected to learn all the "dos and don'ts" of the world's myriad cultures; instead, the key is to keep an open mind, be sensitive to other cultures, and remember that the way you'd like to be treated is not necessarily the way others would appreciate.

12.7 REFERENCES

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12.8 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Author removed at request of original publisher]

Visit the Web site of culture scholar Edward T. Hall. http://www.edwardthall.com/index.html

Learn about intercultural awareness in the classroom by reading this article by Mark Pedelty — Pedelty, M. (2001). Self as Other: An Intercultural Performance Exercise. Multicultural Education, 8, 29-32.

Visit these sites to explore the history and traditions of some famous American businesses. http://corporate.ford.com/company/history.html; http://www.aboutmcdonalds.com/content/mcd/our_company/mcdonalds-history.html

Learn more about Geert Hofstede's research on culture by exploring his Web site. http://geert-hofstede.com/

Read advice from the U.S. Department of State on living abroad http://travel.state.gov/

Visit ExpatExchange: A World of Friends Abroad to learn about the opportunities, experiences, and emotions of people living and working in foreign countries and cultures worldwide. http://www.expatexchange.com/newsarchiveall.cfm