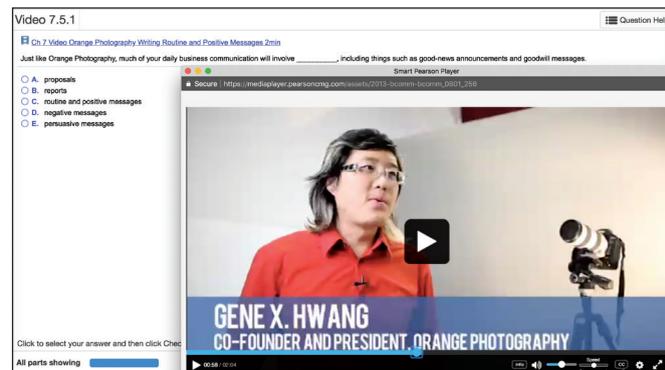


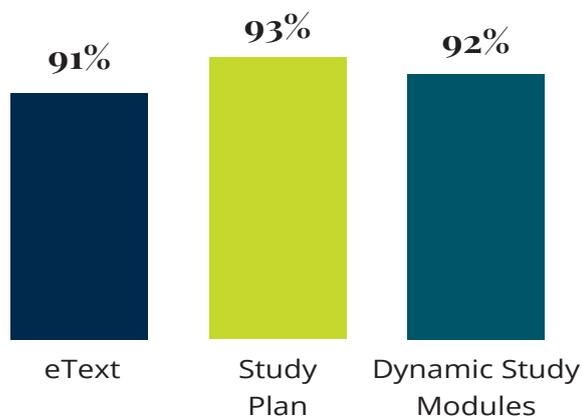
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# Preface

## New to This Edition

### MORE VALUABLE THAN EVER WITH NEW STUDENT-FOCUSED FEATURES

- **Build Your Career** activities help students create their employment-communication packages throughout the course, so they're ready to apply for jobs by the end of the course.
- **Apply Your Skills Now** highlight boxes help students apply their newly developing communication skills in other classes and in their personal lives.
- **Five-Minute Guides** serve as handy reminders of the steps needed to accomplish a variety of fundamental communication tasks, from resolving workplace conflict to writing business email to planning reports and presentations.

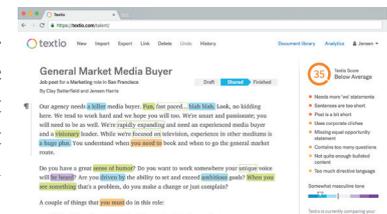
### DOUBLE THE COVERAGE OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

*Excellence in Business Communication* now has two chapters devoted to these important topics: listening, nonverbal communication, conversational skills, conflict resolution, negotiation, teamwork, collaborative communication, meeting skills, and business etiquette. (To keep the text at 16 chapters and a similar page count as the previous edition, the three chapters on report writing have been streamlined to two chapters.)



### THE ONLY TEXT THAT COVERS INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The digital transformation sweeping through business is creating a host of new communication tools and techniques that students will encounter during their job searches and in the workplace. A new four-page visual feature, “Empowering Communicators with Intelligent Communication Technology,” shows 15 applications of artificial intelligence and smart technology. New highlight boxes take a close look at innovations ranging from augmented writing tools to résumé bots.



### EXTENSIVE CONTENT ENHANCEMENTS

**All new On the Job vignette/simulation pairs.** These chapter-opening vignettes and end-of-chapter simulations show students how professionals apply the same skills they are reading about in the chapter. All 16 are new in this edition.

**Nearly 70 new figures.** The Thirteenth Edition has 71 annotated model documents, 31 examples of mobile communication in business communication, 16 examples of social media, and 15 examples of intelligent communication technology.

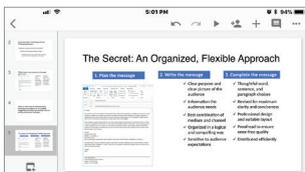
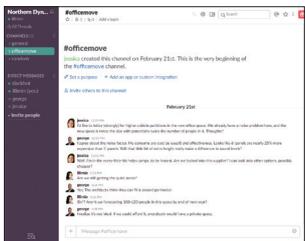
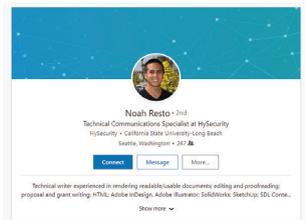
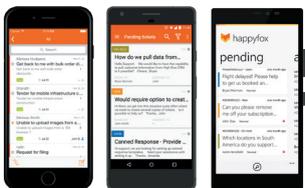
**Revised annotations in model document before/after pairs.** These revised notes make it easier for students to see the specific changes made to transform ineffective messages into effective ones.

**Nearly 300 new questions and student activities.** Every chapter has fresh project ideas and evaluation questions.

**Streamlined coverage of report writing and production.** To maintain the 16-chapter structure after the addition of a second chapter on interpersonal communication, the separate chapters on writing and completing reports have been merged into one chapter.



**Numerous revisions and updates.** Dozens of chapter sections are new, updated, or substantially revised to reflect the latest research and practices in business communication:



Understanding What Employers Expect from You  
 How Audiences Receive Messages  
 How Audiences Decode Messages  
 The Social Communication Model  
 The Potential Benefits of Communication Technology  
 The Spectrum of Contemporary Communication Technology  
 Social and Workgroup Communication Systems  
 Mobile Communication  
 Intelligent Communication Technology  
 Committing to Ethical and Legal Communication  
 Forms of Unethical Communication  
 Plagiarizing  
 Ensuring Ethical Communication  
 Improving Your Listening Skills  
 Understanding Why Listening Is Such a Complex Process  
 The Unique Challenges of Listening  
 Choices and Behaviors That Affect Listening Quality  
 Minimize the Barriers to Effective Listening  
 Improving Your Nonverbal Communication Skills  
 Developing Your Conversational Skills  
 Initiating Business Conversations  
 Maintaining a Positive Conversational Flow  
 Gracefully Concluding a Conversation  
 Handling Difficult Conversations  
 Managing Workplace Conflict  
 Why Conflict Arises in the Workplace  
 Steps to Resolve Conflict  
 Developing Your Skills as a Negotiator  
 Understanding the Principles of Negotiation  
 Preparing for a Negotiation  
 Engaging in Negotiation  
 Types of Teams  
 Characteristics of Effective Teams  
 Team Roles  
 Stages of Team Development  
 Benefits and Challenges of Virtual Teamwork  
 Tips for Success in Virtual Team Environments  
 Collaboration Arrangements  
 Writer-Editor Relationships  
 Full Collaboration  
 Collaboration Systems  
 AI-Enabled Collaboration  
 Conducting Virtual Meetings  
 Business Etiquette in the Workplace  
 Age Differences  
 Gender Differences  
 Factors to Consider When Choosing Media and Channels  
 Choosing Between Direct and Indirect Approaches

Building Reader Interest with Storytelling Techniques  
 Using Words Correctly  
 The Emoji Question—Overcoming the Limitations of Lean Media  
 The Rise of Emojis  
 To Emoji or Not: Two Dilemmas  
 Using Emoticons and Emojis Effectively  
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 Business Communication Uses of Social Platforms  
 Communication Strategies for Business Social Networking  
 The Email Subject Line: Persuading People to Open Your Messages  
 Business Messaging  
 Categories of Business Messaging  
 Tips for Successful Messaging  
 Blogging  
 Business Applications of Microblogging  
 Tips for Effective Business Tweets  
 Podcasting  
 Asking for Recommendations  
 Writing Instructions  
 Refusing Requests for Recommendations and References  
 Giving Negative Performance Reviews  
 Terminating Employment  
 Using the Three-Step Writing Process for Persuasive Messages  
 Balancing the Three Types of Persuasive Appeals  
 Maintaining High Standards of Ethics, Legal Compliance, and Etiquette  
 Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing Information  
 Ensuring Successful Team Presentations  
 Planning a Team Presentation  
 Rehearsing and Delivering a Team Presentation  
 Addressing Areas of Concern (under Planning Your Résumé)  
 Keeping Your Résumé Honest  
 References  
 Building an Effective LinkedIn Profile  
 Writing Application Letters  
 Understanding the Interviewing Process  
 The Screening Stage  
 The Selection Stage  
 Structured Versus Unstructured Interviews  
 Behavioral Interview Questions  
 Case Interviews and Take-Home Assessments  
 Interviewing by Phone  
 Interviewing by Video  
 Preemployment Testing and Background Checks

# Solving Teaching and Learning Challenges

Communication is the most valuable skill that graduates can bring into the workforce, but it is one of the most challenging to teach. *Excellence in Business Communication* blends the timeless fundamentals of communication with contemporary media skills and contemporary business practices. To help students succeed from their first day on the job, *Excellence in Business Communication* presents the full range of on-the-job skills that today's communicators need, from writing conventional printed reports to using the latest digital, social, mobile, and visual media.

Each chapter opens with a brief vignette that describes a challenge or opportunity faced by a business professional, emphasizing concepts and valuable skills that students will explore in the chapter.

**ON THE JOB: COMMUNICATING AT STITCH FIX**

**The Never-Ending Need to Persuade**

Katrina Lake's path to entrepreneurship didn't start with the stereotypical urge to create a company. In fact, she kept waiting for someone else to create the company she had in mind so she could buy from it and invest in it. During the first two phases of her career, in a retail consulting firm and then a venture capital firm, she kept looking for someone to solve what she believed was the central problem of online fashion retailing: "How can we marry the ease of shopping online with what people want in clothes, which is really about fit and style?"

After waiting for someone else to pitch the right idea to her in the hopes of getting investment capital, she decided to launch it herself. She went back to school to pursue an MBA at Harvard, where her idea began to take real shape and Stitch Fix was born. The concept was a clothing retailer that would combine the convenience of online shopping with the individual touch of the stylists and personal shoppers available in higher-end shops and department stores. Customers could receive a small selection of items chosen by a personal stylist (with the help of some powerful artificial intelligence), then buy what they like and send back what they don't.

Lake believed in the idea from the outset, but the need to persuade others to believe in it began early and has been an



Stitch Fix cofounder and CEO Katrina Lake relied heavily on persuasive communication skills to secure funding and attract top talent to her start-up company.

Annotated model documents are perhaps the most important feature of a business communication text, and *Excellence in Business Communication* is packed with a balance of carefully chosen examples from real companies and original material created to illustrate specific concepts.

**ON THE JOB: SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT STITCH FIX**

You've joined Stitch Fix as a training and quality lead. You report to the supervisor of training and quality programs and lead a small team of specialists who help employees throughout the company deliver a satisfying customer experience. Use what you've learned in this chapter to address these challenges.

1. Stitch Fix emphasizes the "art of conversation" with its trainers and customer experience staff. You recently heard about a conversational training system that uses natural language processing. It appears to be advantageous to use in conversations with customers. It could be a great way to reduce the cost-effective than traditional training and it can be programmed to give a more personalized conversation to give a more personalized experience.
  - a. The appeal should be primarily logical in order to emphasize the business benefits of the new training approach. However, add the emotional appeal of making life easier for employees by reducing disruption to their schedules.
  - b. Conversing with a software robot is unavoidably going to be an emotional experience, so the proposal should emphasize that emotion shouldn't be the most effective way to train employees. The most effective way to train employees should give this

The chapter-opening story is picked up again at the end of the chapter in a unique simulation that has students imagine themselves in that company as they face four communication challenges that require them to use their new skills and insights.

**DURRBECK FINANCIAL GROUP** HOME OUR FIRM MEETING YOUR NEEDS SERVICES RESOURCE CENTER CONTACT

**JOLI FRIDMAN, CFP®, CPA**

Joli has been practicing comprehensive financial planning for over 20 years. Her areas of expertise include retirement planning, estate planning, tax planning, education funding, insurance planning, cash flow analysis and asset allocation. She is on the faculty at Northwestern University and is an academic affiliate of the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA). Joli received both her Bachelor's degree and Masters in Accountancy from University of Illinois. She is a Certified Financial Planner™ professional and Certified Public Accountant. Joli is also president of the Fred Outa Foundation.



*Fridman highlights her experience with specific areas of expertise, beginning with points likely to be of greatest interest to prospective clients.*

*Academic credentials enhance her credibility by letting readers know she not only attended a respected university but now teaches at one, too.*

*Professional credentials convey the message that she meets rigorous standards of knowledge, experience, and ethical performance.*

*Mentioning her charitable work further builds her credibility (as president of the organization) and promotes a positive reaction from readers.*

*A high-quality photograph (well lit, with no background distractions) also conveys the message of professionalism.*

To improve student results, we recommend pairing this text with **MyLab Business Communication**, which is the teaching and learning platform that empowers you to reach every student. By combining trusted author content with digital tools and a flexible platform, MyLab personalizes the learning experience and will help your students learn and retain key course concepts while developing skills that future employers are seeking in their candidates.

**Mini Sims—Real-world simulations that put students in professional roles and give them the opportunity to apply course concepts and develop decision-making skills through real-world business challenges.**

These **branching** Mini Sims strengthen a student’s ability to think critically, help students understand the impact of their decisions, engage students in active learning, and provide students with immediate feedback on their decisions.

Each decision point remediates to the Learning Objective in the eText.

The screenshots show a 'Marketing Mix' simulation with a progress bar at 7%. The background text discusses turmeric-based products and the need for a strong launch. Below this is a 'Decision Point: Choosing an Organizational Form' with a progress bar at 22%. The question asks for the best organizational form for Holden Evan. Three options are listed: mechanistic, 'it doesn't matter', and organic. A feedback message states that the chosen option was not the best choice and explains why. A 'Results' screen shows a score of 51% and a class average of 71%.

You selected that it doesn't matter which form; organizational forms are not important. **This was not the best choice.** Organizational forms can have a great effect on how employees function within a company, and it is important to choose an optimal form. Based on the organizational information, a form that allows flexibility and autonomy would allow the educated, professional Holden Evan employees latitude to make necessary decisions on their own, giving the company flexibility and the ability to respond quickly.

Click **Next** to continue.

Previous Next

**Chapter Warm-Ups**

Assessment helps you hold your students accountable for **READING** and demonstrating their knowledge of key concepts in each chapter before coming to class.

The screenshot shows the 'Homework: Chapter 2 Warm-up' interface. It displays a score of 0 of 1 pt, a progress bar for 1 of 14 questions, and a 'HW Score: 0%, 0 of 14 pts'. The question is 'Warm-up 2.1.1' and asks for the vision statement that answers which of the following questions. The options are: A. What are our markets?, B. What do we stand for?, C. What do we want to become?, D. Where do we want to operate?, and E. What is our purpose? There are buttons for 'All parts showing', 'Clear All', and 'Check Answer'.

**Chapter Quiz**

Every chapter has quizzes written by our authors so you can assess your students’ understanding of chapter learning objectives.

The screenshot shows the 'Quiz: Chapter 2 Quiz' interface. It displays a score of 1 of 1 pt, a progress bar for 2 of 25 questions, and a 'This Quiz: 25 pts possible'. The question asks 'Why are both profit and vision needed to motivate a workforce effectively?'. The options are: A. Vision is viewed negatively by some stakeholders of a firm, B. Profit and vision statements are usually found in an Annual Report, C. Profit is viewed negatively by some stakeholders of a firm, D. Manager and employee bonuses are usually based on profit, and E. Top executive bonuses are sometimes based on accomplishing a mission and vision. There are buttons for 'Show completed problem', 'Submit Quiz', 'Question Help', and 'Check Answer'.

**Five-Minute Guide to Resolving Workplace Conflict**

Whenever you are resolution.

**00:01** De

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**00:02** Ex

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**00:03** Ide

- 1.

**00:01** De

Get every writin reviewing these fill in the missin

**00:01**

**00:02**

**00:03**

**00:01** Plan the message

Whenever you sit down to write an important email message, spend five minutes previewing the task to make sure you're ready to get started. Then you can use this guide to work your way through each step of the process.

1. Make sure email is the best medium/channel option.
2. Analyze the situation: Who is your audience, and what is your purpose?
3. Identify the information you'll need in order to accomplish your purpose.
4. Choose the direct or indirect approach. Can you open with the main idea, or do you need to build up to it indirectly?

**00:02** Draft the message

1. Unless you are sending short and simple m but professional style, with complete sente
2. Make your content easy to skim and easy
3. Use bulleted or numbered lists to break ou
4. Clarify how you would like the recipient to expect.

**00:03** Craft a compelling subject line

1. For routine communication with audiences and concise description of the message's
2. However, if the recipient might ignore your message or delay opening it, you need to get creative:

**Student-Friendly Features**

With multiple quick-reference tables and new Five-Minute Guides, the text serves as a valuable resource that students can use in other courses and take with them on the job.

**COMPOSITIONAL MODES FOR DIGITAL MEDIA**

As you practice using digital media in this course, focus on the principles of social media communication and the fundamentals of planning, writing, and completing messages, rather than on the specific details of any one medium or system.<sup>2</sup> Fortunately, the basic communication skills required usually transfer from one system to another. You can succeed with written communication in virtually all digital media by using one of nine *compositional modes*:

- **Conversations.** Although they take place via writing, some forms of communication function more like real-time conversations than the static documents. Much of Chapter 2's advice on conversations applies to the section on business messaging (see page 233) and explores this ever-expanding communication format.
- **Comments and critiques.** One of the most powerful aspects of social media is the opportunity for interested parties to express opinions and provide feedback. Leaving comments on a blog post or reviewing products on an e-commerce site. Sharing helpful tips and insightful commentary is also a great way to build your personal brand. To be an effective commenter, focus on short chunks of information that a broad spectrum of other site visitors will find helpful. And even if you're offering criticism, keep it constructive. Angry rants and insults won't help your brand or you as unprofessional.
- **Orientations.** The ability to help people find their way through an article or subject is a valuable writing skill and a talent that readers greatly appreciate. Summaries (see next item), orientations don't give away the key point or position of information, but rather tell readers where to find those points. Orientations can be a delicate balancing act because you need to know enough to guide others through it while being able to step back and view it from the inexperienced perspective of a "newbie."
- **Summaries.** At the beginning of an article or webpage, a summary functions as a miniature version of the material, giving readers all the key points while skipping over details (see Figure 8.1). At the end of an article or webpage, a summary functions as a review, reminding readers of the key points they've just read.

**Original Coverage**

Going beyond covering the tried-and-true, Bovée and Thill make unique contributions to the pedagogy and practice of business communication, such as the nine compositional modes required to succeed with digital and social media.

1 Plan	2 Write	3 Complete
<p><b>Analyze the Situation</b> Define your purpose and develop an audience profile.</p> <p><b>Gather Information</b> Determine audience needs and obtain the information necessary to satisfy those needs.</p> <p><b>Choose Medium and Channel</b> Identify the best combination for the situation, message, and audience.</p> <p><b>Organize the Information</b> Define your main idea, limit your scope, select the direct or indirect approach, and outline your content.</p>	<p><b>Adapt to Your Audience</b> Be sensitive to audience needs by using a "you" attitude, politeness, positive emphasis, and unbiased language. Build a strong relationship with your audience by establishing your credibility and projecting your company's preferred image. Control your style with a conversational tone, plain English, and appropriate voice.</p> <p><b>Compose the Message</b> Choose strong words that you create effective sentences and coherent paragraphs.</p>	<p><b>Revise the Message</b> Evaluate content and review readability; edit and rewrite for conciseness and clarity.</p> <p><b>Produce the Message</b> Use effective design elements and suitable layout for a clean, professional appearance.</p> <p><b>Proofread the Message</b></p>

**Reducing Stress and Uncertainty for Students**

Students sometimes flounder when faced with unfamiliar or difficult writing challenges because they don't know how to move a project forward. By following the proven three-step process described in *Excellence in Business Communication*, they never have to feel lost or waste time figuring out what to do next.

No other textbook comes close to offering the valuable resources the authors provide students and instructors—many of which are available exclusively to Bovée and Thill adopters:

- The unique Real-Time Updates system extends the textbook with thousands of online media items that complement the text's coverage with fresh examples and valuable insights
- Sponsored instructor communities on LinkedIn and Facebook with nearly 2,000 members
- Tips and techniques in Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Blog and Twitter feed
- The Bovée & Thill channel on YouTube
- Business Communication Headline News
- Videos and PowerPoint presentations on SlideShare
- Hundreds of infographics, videos, articles, podcasts, and PowerPoints in the Business Communication Pictorial Gallery on Pinterest
- The Ultimate Guide to Resources for Teaching Business Communication
- Nine curated magazines for business communication on Scoop.it

Links to all these services and resources can be found at [blog.businesscommunicationnetwork.com/resources](http://blog.businesscommunicationnetwork.com/resources).

**REAL-TIME UPDATES**  
LEARN MORE BY READING THIS ARTICLE

**Ten communication skills that will boost your career**

Employers will sit up and take notice if you master these skills. Go to [real-timeupdates.com/ebc13](http://real-timeupdates.com/ebc13) and select Learn More in the Students section.

## Developing Employability Skills

In addition to helping students develop a full range of communication skills, *Excellence in Business Communication* will enhance a wide range of other skills that experts say are vital for success in the 21st-century workplace:

- **Critical thinking.** In many assignments and activities, students need to define and solve problems and make decisions or form judgments.
- **Collaboration.** Team-skills assignments provide multiple opportunities to work with classmates on reports, presentations, and other projects.
- **Knowledge application and analysis.** From the basic communication process to strategies for specific message types, students will learn a variety of concepts and apply that knowledge to a wide range of challenges.
- **Business ethics and social responsibility.** Ethical choices are stressed from the beginning of the book, and multiple projects encourage students to be mindful of the ethical implications that they could encounter in similar projects on the job.
- **Information technology skills.** Projects and activities in every chapter help students build skills with technology, including document preparation tools, online communication services, presentation software, and messaging systems.
- **Data literacy.** Report projects in particular present opportunities to fine-tune data literacy skills, including the ability to access, assess, interpret, manipulate, summarize, and communicate data.

### Practice Your Skills

#### Exercises

Each activity is labeled according to the primary skill or skills you will need to use. To review relevant chapter content, you can refer to the indicated Learning Objective. In some instances, supporting information will be found in another chapter, as indicated.

#### 2-6. Interpersonal Communication: Listening Actively

**[LO-1]** For the next several days, take notes on your listening performance during at least a half-dozen situations in class, during social activities, and at work, if applicable. Referring to the traits of effective listeners in Table 2.4, rate yourself using *always*, *frequently*, *occasionally*, or *never* on these positive listening habits. In a report no longer than one page, summarize your analysis and identify specific areas in which you can improve your listening skills.

#### 2-7. Nonverbal Communication: Analyzing Nonverbal Signals

**[LO-2]** Select a business letter and envelope you have received at work or home. Analyze their appearance. What nonverbal messages do they send? Are these messages consistent with the content of the letter? If not, what could the sender have done to make the nonverbal communication consistent with the verbal communication? Summarize your findings in a post on your class blog or in an email message to your instructor.

Hundreds of realistic exercises, activities, and cases offer an array of opportunities for students to practice vital skills and put newfound knowledge to immediate use.

These resources are logically sorted by learning category, from conceptual recall to situational analysis to skill development.

To help instructors zero in on specific learning needs, activities are tagged in multiple ways, from media usage to team skills.

### Cases

For all cases, feel free to use your creativity to make up any details you need in order to craft effective messages.

#### SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS

**8-30. Media Skills: Social Networking; Compositional Modes: Summaries [LO-2]** Many companies now have *voice of the customer* (VoC) programs to collect and analyze commentary and feedback from customers. The most comprehensive of these programs automatically gather data from social media, customer call records, technical support emails, online product reviews, and more. To extract insights from these large collections of text, marketers can use an intelligent communication technology called *text analytics*.

**Your task:** Review the text analytics information on the Clarabridge website at [www.clarabridge.com](http://www.clarabridge.com). (The company refers to its technology as CX Analytics, for customer experience analytics.) Write a 100- to 150-word summary of this technology that Clarabridge could use as a post on its Facebook page to explain the capability to potential customers.

#### SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS

**8-31. Media Skills: Social Networking; Online Etiquette [LO-2], Chapter 3** Employees who take pride in their work are a practically priceless resource for any business. However, pride can sometimes manifest itself in negative ways when employees come under criticism, and public criticism is a fact of life in social media. Imagine that your company has recently experienced a rash of product quality problems, and these problems have generated some unpleasant and occasionally unfair criticism on a variety of social media sites. Someone even set up a Facebook page specifically to give customers a place to vent

one evening and discovered that two engineers in your company's product design lab have been responding to complaints on their own. They identified themselves as company employees and defended their product design, blaming the company's production department and even criticizing several customers for lacking the skills needed to use such a sophisticated product. Within a matter of minutes, you see their harsh comments being retweeted and reposted on multiple sites, only fueling the fire of negative feedback against your firm. Needless to say, you are horrified.

**Your task:** You manage to reach the engineers by private message and tell them to stop posting messages, but you realize you have a serious training issue on your hands. Write a post for the internal company blog that advises employees on how to respond appropriately when they are representing the company online. Use your imagination to make up any details you need.

#### NETWORKING SKILLS / TEAM SKILLS

**8-32. Media Skills: Social Networking; Collaboration: Team Projects [LO-2], Chapter 3** Social media can be a great way to, well, socialize during your college years, but employers are increasingly checking up on the online activities of potential hires to avoid bringing in employees who may reflect poorly on the company.

**Your task:** Team up with another student and review each other's public presence on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, blogs, and any other website that an employer might check during the interview and recruiting process. Identify any photos, videos, messages, or other material that could raise a red flag when an employer is evaluating a job candidate. Write your teammate an email message that lists any risky material.

## Instructor Teaching Resources

This program comes with the following teaching resources.

Supplements available to instructors at <a href="http://www.pearsonhighered.com">www.pearsonhighered.com</a>	Features of the Supplement
<b>Instructor's Manual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter overview</li> <li>• Chapter outline</li> <li>• Lecture notes organized by learning objective, with class discussion questions</li> <li>• Answers to highlight box questions</li> <li>• Answers to Apply Your Knowledge questions</li> <li>• Answers to Practice Your Skills activities</li> <li>• Solutions to cases (complete example solutions for short-message cases; solution guidelines for long-message cases)</li> <li>• Lesson plan foundations from the Bovée and Thill QuickSwitch textbook transition system</li> </ul>
<b>Test Bank authored by Susan Schanne from Eastern Michigan University</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,660 multiple-choice, true/false, and essay questions</li> <li>• Answer explanations</li> <li>• Keyed by learning objective</li> <li>• Classified according to difficulty level</li> <li>• Classified according to learning modality: conceptual, application, critical thinking, or synthesis</li> <li>• Learning outcomes identified</li> <li>• AACSB learning standard identified (Written and Oral Communication, Ethical Understanding and Reasoning, Analytical Thinking Skills, Information Technology, Interpersonal Relations and Teamwork, Diverse and Multicultural Work Environments, Reflective Thinking, and Application of Knowledge)</li> </ul>
<b>Computerized TestGen</b>	<p>TestGen allows instructors to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• customize, save, and generate classroom tests.</li> <li>• edit, add, or delete questions from the Test Item Files.</li> <li>• analyze test results.</li> <li>• organize a database of tests and student results.</li> </ul>
<b>PowerPoints authored by Lauryn De George from University of Central Florida College of Business</b>	<p>Slides include all the graphs, tables, and equations in the textbook. PowerPoints meet accessibility standards for students with disabilities. Features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keyboard and screen reader access</li> <li>• Alternative text for images</li> <li>• High contrast between background and foreground colors</li> </ul>

## About the Authors

Courtland L. Bovée and John V. Thill have been leading textbook authors for more than two decades, introducing millions of students to the fields of business and business communication. Their award-winning texts are distinguished by proven pedagogical features, extensive selections of contemporary case studies, hundreds of real-life examples, engaging writing, thorough research, and the unique integration of print and digital resources. Each new edition reflects the authors' commitment to continuous refinement and improvement, particularly in terms of modeling the latest practices in business and the use of technology.

Professor Bovée has 22 years of teaching experience at Grossmont College in San Diego, where he has received teaching honors and was accorded that institution's C. Allen Paul Distinguished Chair. Mr. Thill is a prominent communications consultant who has worked with organizations ranging from Fortune 500 multinationals to entrepreneurial start-ups. He formerly held positions with Pacific Bell and Texaco.

Courtland Bovée and John Thill were recently awarded proclamations from the Governor of Massachusetts for their lifelong contributions to education and for their commitment to the summer youth baseball program that is sponsored by the Boston Red Sox.



Court Bovée

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John V. Thill  
Courtland L. Bovée

## Dedication

This book is dedicated to the many thousands of instructors and students who use Bovée and Thill texts to develop career-enhancing skills in business communication. We appreciate the opportunity to play a role in your education, and we wish you the very best with your careers.

John V. Thill  
Courtland L. Bovée

# Prologue

## BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL CAREER WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

### One Course—Three Powerful Benefits

You will invest considerable time and energy in this course, so it's fair to ask what you will get in return. The simple answer: *a lot*. If you practice the techniques you'll discover here and use this opportunity to develop those techniques with your instructor's guidance, we're confident this course will help you in three important ways:

1. It will help you succeed in college.
2. It will help you conduct a more successful job search.
3. It will help you succeed in your first job so you can build a thriving career.

The following sections expand on this promise and offer valuable career-planning advice. Table 1 on the next page highlights the specific features of this book that can help you at every stage.

### HOW THIS COURSE WILL HELP YOU

Take advantage of this opportunity to develop the single most important skill you'll need for a rewarding career: the ability to communicate. This textbook is designed to help you in three valuable ways.



#### 1. SUCCEED IN COLLEGE

Many of the skills you will learn in this course—writing, giving presentations, working in teams, resolving conflict, and more—can be applied in just about every course you take from now until graduation.



#### 2. FIND THE RIGHT JOB

The entire job search process is really an extended exercise in communication, and the process gives you the chance to use your communication skills to stand apart from the competition.



#### 3. LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

The bulk of this course is devoted to the communication and media skills you will need to use as soon as you enter (or reenter) the workforce. Succeed in your first job, and you'll be on your way to a rewarding career!

TABLE 1 Textbook Features to Help You at Every Stage of College and Career

	Textbook Feature	Stage 1: Succeeding in College		Stage 2: Conducting a Successful Job Search	Stage 3: Succeeding in Your First Job
		In This Course	In Other Courses		
Beginning of chapter	<b>Learning Objectives</b>	Use these to focus your study and review			
	<b>On the Job vignette</b>	See how the pros use chapter concepts		Get a sense of life on the job in various professions	
Within the chapter	<b>Margin notes</b>	Scan to get a quick review of the chapter			
	<b>Real-Time Updates—Learn More (free media items)</b>	Explore for additional insights			
	<b>Figures</b>	Study model documents to see what works and what doesn't	Study reports and other model documents to improve your writing	Use model letters and résumés to build your job search package	Use model documents to craft better documents on the job
	<b>Mobile App highlights</b>	Many of these apps can help with schoolwork	Many of these apps can help with schoolwork	Use selected apps to help in your job search	Use the apps on the job
	<b>Checklists</b>	Confirm understanding of each section	Use for a quick review if needed when writing	Use for a quick review if needed when writing	Use for a quick review if needed when writing
	<b>Highlight boxes</b>	<i>Apply Your Skills Now</i> helps you apply communication skills in and out of class	<i>Apply Your Skills Now</i> helps you apply communication skills in and out of class	<i>Developing as a Professional</i> gets you ready for the world of work	<i>Intelligent Communication Technology and Practicing Ethical Communication</i> prepare you for the job
End of chapter	<b>Key Terms glossary</b>	Quickly refer to important terms			
	<b>Learning Objectives Checkup</b>	Test your recall of chapter content			
	<b>On the Job simulation</b>	Follow through on the chapter-opening vignette by visualizing yourself on the job		Get a sense of life on the job in various professions	
	<b>Apply Your Knowledge</b>	Analyze communication scenarios to hone your insights			
	<b>Practice Your Skills</b>	Practice chapter skills in a variety of challenges			
	<b>Expand Your Skills</b>	Critique professional communication efforts and find career advice			
	<b>Build Your Career</b>	Use the exercise in each chapter to build your employment package		By the time you get to the employment chapters, you'll have a head start on your résumé package	Use these techniques to adjust your employment package as you progress
	<b>Improve Your Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage</b>	Fine-tune the technical aspects of your writing	Fine-tune the technical aspects of your writing	Fine-tune the technical aspects of your writing	Fine-tune the technical aspects of your writing
<b>Cases</b> (selected chapters)	Practice crafting professional-quality messages and documents		Use the <i>Portfolio Builder</i> cases to expand your employment portfolio		

Textbook Feature	Stage 1: Succeeding in College		Stage 2: Conducting a Successful Job Search	Stage 3: Succeeding in Your First Job
	In This Course	In Other Courses		
<b>Five-Minute Guides</b> (selected chapters)	Get quick reminders of how to accomplish important tasks	Use these for communication tasks in other classes, too	Use the guide in Chapter 15 to prepare and update your résumé	Download the PDFs and take them with you on the job
Online <b>Real-Time Updates</b>	Subscribe online for weekly updates of free online media items			
<b>Student Assignments</b>	Download files for selected chapters			
<b>Web Search</b>	Use this metasearch engine to accelerate your research	Use for other classes for as long as your subscription is active		
<b>MyLab Business Communication</b>	Use this optional online system for customized learning and more			

## Stage 1: Succeeding in College

The first step in your career starts right now, with getting your degree and getting the most from all the courses you take between now and graduation. The communication skills you learn in this class can help you in virtually every other course. From brief homework assignments to complicated team projects to interactions with your professors, you will be able to communicate more effectively.

In addition to improving your communication effectiveness, this course will also improve your efficiency. Follow the writing process outlined in this book, and you can avoid the time-wasting uncertainty, dead ends, and rework that can make writing projects drag on forever.

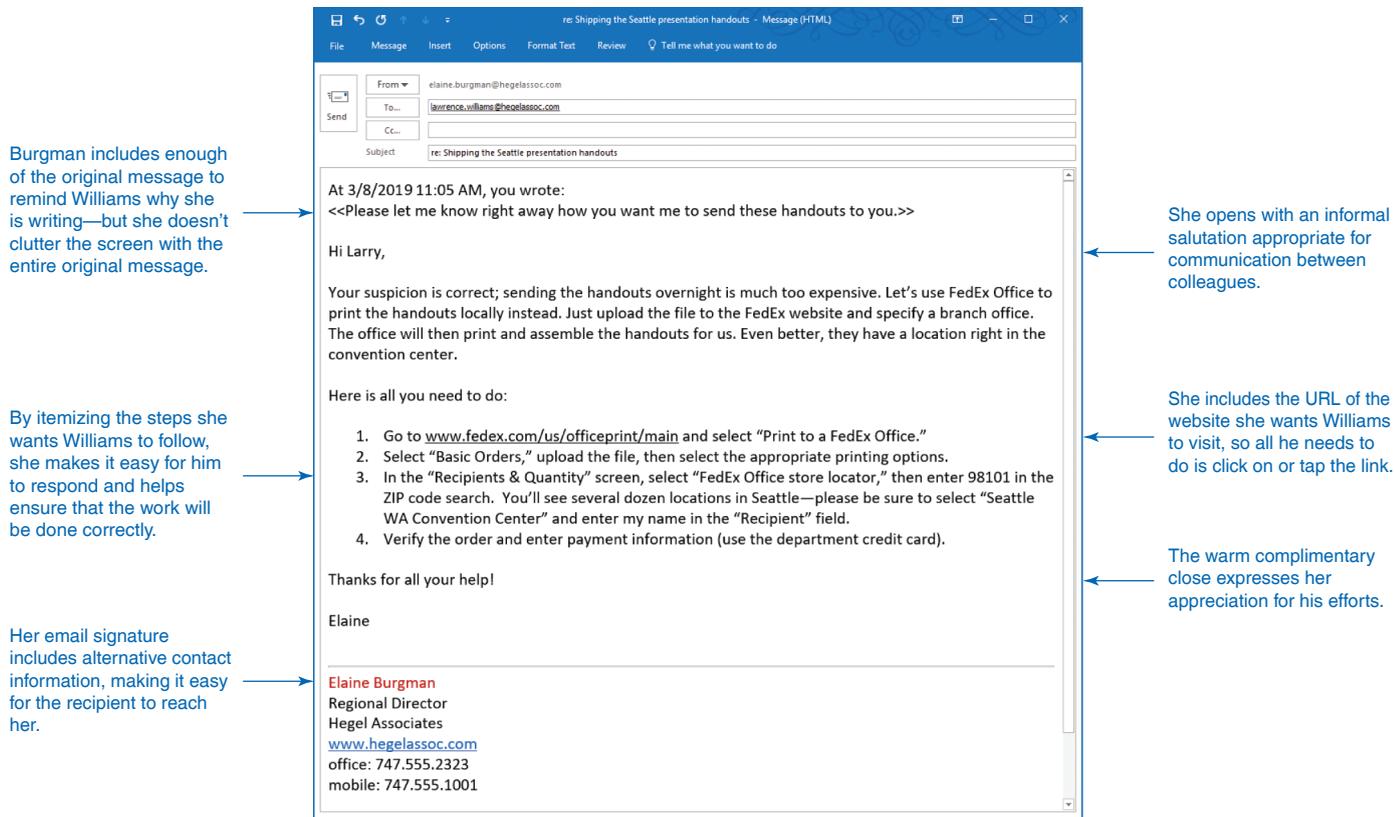
Keep an eye out for the special highlight boxes titled “Apply Your Skills Now,” which offer tips on using your new skills in all your college courses. Read these boxes and think about the situations in which you can apply the advice. If you need to have a difficult conversation with an instructor or resolve conflict in a project team, for example, these boxes can help. Many of these techniques can help you outside of the school environment, too, whenever you face communication challenges in any of your interpersonal relationships.

### QUICK TIPS TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

Although this course explores a wide range of message types and appears to cover quite a lot of territory, the underlying structure of the course is rather simple. You’ll learn a few basic concepts, identify the key skills to use and procedures to follow—and then practice, practice, practice. Whether you’re writing a blog post in response to one of the real-company cases or drafting your own résumé, you’ll be practicing the same fundamental skills in a variety of scenarios. With feedback and reinforcement from your instructor and your classmates, your confidence will grow and the work will become easier and more enjoyable.

Some of the assignments will involve business topics that may be new to you or somewhat less than exciting, but view them all as opportunities to hone your craft. Visualize yourself in each scenario and imagine that you are trying to convince a skeptical boss, calm an angry customer, or accomplish whatever task is assigned.

As you read each chapter, take time to study the examples and model documents (see Figure 1). This book offers dozens of realistic examples of business messages, many with notes along the sides that explain strong and weak points. Some are messages from real companies; others were created to show specific points about writing. Study these documents and any other examples your instructor provides. Learn what works and what doesn’t, and then apply these lessons to your own writing.



**Figure 1** Learning from Model Documents and Messages

You will find a wide variety of model documents and messages throughout the book, everything from tweets to formal reports. Study the notes in the margins to understand why specific writing techniques work (or don't work, in some cases), and apply these lessons to your own writing.

Along the way, learn from the feedback you get from your instructor and from other students. Don't take the criticism personally; your instructor and your classmates are commenting about the work, not about you. Always view feedback as an opportunity to improve.

### QUICK TIPS FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS IN ANY COURSE

For assignments in this or any other course, particularly major projects such as reports and presentations, follow these suggestions to produce better results with less effort:

- **Don't panic!** If the thought of writing a report or giving a speech sends a chill up your spine, you're not alone. Everybody feels that way when first learning business communication skills, and even experienced professionals can feel nervous about big projects. Keep three points in mind. First, every project can be broken down into a series of small, manageable tasks. Don't let a big project overwhelm you; it's nothing more than a bunch of smaller tasks. Second, remind yourself that you have the skills you need. As you move through the course, the assignments are carefully designed to match the skills you've developed up to that point. Third, if you feel panic creeping up on you, take a break and regain your perspective.
- **Focus on one task at a time.** Don't try to organize and express your ideas while simultaneously worrying about audience reactions, grammar, spelling, formatting, page design, and a dozen other factors. Fight the temptation to do everything at once. Trying to get everything perfect on the first pass will make the process slow and frustrating. In particular, don't worry too much about word choices or overall writing style during your first draft. Concentrate on the organization of your ideas first, then the best way to express those ideas, and then finally the presentation and production of your messages. Following the three-step writing process is an ideal way to focus on one task at a time in a logical sequence.



The techniques you will learn in this course will help you become a more successful writer, and they will make the process of writing easier and faster, too.

- **Give yourself plenty of time.** As with every other school project, waiting until the last minute creates unnecessary stress. Writing and speaking projects are much easier if you tackle them in small stages with breaks in between, rather than trying to get everything done in one frantic blast. Moreover, there will be instances when you simply get stuck on a project, and the best thing to do is walk away and give your mind a break. If you allow room for breaks in your schedule, you'll minimize the frustration and spend less time overall on your homework, too.
- **Step back and assess each project before you start.** The writing and speaking projects you'll have in this course cover a wide range of communication scenarios, and it's essential that you adapt your approach to each new challenge. Resist the urge to dive in and start writing without a plan. Ponder the assignment for a while, consider the various approaches you might take, and think carefully about your objectives before you start writing. Nothing is more frustrating than getting stuck halfway through because you're not sure what you're trying to say or you've wandered off track. Spend a little more time planning, and you'll spend a lot less time writing.
- **Use the three-step writing process.** Those essential planning tasks are the first step in the three-step writing process, which you'll learn about in Chapter 5 and use throughout the course. This process has been developed and refined by professional writers with decades of experience and thousands of projects ranging from short blog posts to 600-page textbooks. It works, so take advantage of it.

## Stage 2: Conducting a Successful Job Search

Every activity in the job-search process relies on communication. The better you can communicate, the more successful you'll be at landing interesting and rewarding work. Plus, you can reduce the stress of preparing a résumé and going to job interviews.

Writing a résumé can be a big task, but you don't need to do it all at once if you give yourself plenty of time. The 16 Build Your Career activities (see the end of each chapter) show you how to build your job-search package one step at a time. Do the activity in each chapter, and by the time you finish the book, you'll have the materials you need to start your job search.

Chapter 15 and Chapter 16 are dedicated to various forms of employment-related communication. If your course doesn't cover these chapters, your college probably offers a workshop or other activity to help you get ready to apply and interview for jobs. No matter where you learn the skills related to résumés and interviewing, this section will help you

think about the career you want to craft for yourself, with advice on finding the best fit, developing an employment portfolio, and defining your personal brand.

## FINDING THE BEST FIT

Figuring out where and how you can thrive professionally is a lifelong quest. You don't need to have all the answers today, and your answers will no doubt change in the coming years. However, start thinking about it now so that you can bring some focus to your job search. Organize your strategic planning with three questions: what you want to do, what you have to offer, and how you can make yourself more valuable.

### What Do You Want to Do?

Economic necessities and the dynamics of the marketplace will influence much of what happens in your career, and you may not always have the opportunity to do the kind of work you would really like to do. Even if you can't get the job you want right now, though, start your job search by examining your values and interests. Doing so will give you a better idea of where you want to be eventually, and you can use those insights to learn and grow your way toward that ideal situation. Consider these factors:

- **What would you like to do every day?** Research occupations that interest you. Find out what people really do every day. Ask friends, relatives, alumni from your school, and contacts in your social networks. Read interviews with people in various professions to get a sense of what their careers are like.
- **How would you like to work?** Consider how much independence you want on the job, how much variety you like, and whether you prefer to work with products, systems, people, ideas, words, figures, or some combination thereof.
- **How do your financial goals fit with your other priorities?** For instance, many high-paying jobs involve a lot of stress, sacrifices of time with family and friends, and frequent travel or relocation. If other factors—such as stability, location, lifestyle, or intriguing work—are more important to you, you may have to sacrifice some level of pay to achieve them.
- **Have you established some general career goals?** For example, do you want to pursue a career specialty such as finance or manufacturing, or do you want to gain experience in multiple areas with an eye toward general management or entrepreneurship?
- **What sort of work culture are you most comfortable with?** Would you be happy in a formal hierarchy with clear reporting relationships? Or do you prefer less structure? Teamwork or individualism? Do you prefer a competitive environment or a more cooperative culture?



The day-to-day activities of different professions can vary widely. Do as much research as you can before you choose a career path to make sure it's the right path for you.

You might need some time in the workforce to figure out what you really want to do, but it's never too early to start thinking about where you want to be. Filling out the assessment in Table 2 might help you get a clearer picture of the nature of the work you would like to pursue in your career.

### What Do You Have to Offer?

Knowing what you want to do is one thing. Knowing what companies or clients are willing to pay you to do is another thing entirely. You may already have a good idea of what you can offer employers. If not, some brainstorming can help you identify your skills, interests, and characteristics. Start by listing achievements you're proud of and experiences that were satisfying, and identify the skills that enabled these achievements. For example, leadership skills, speaking ability, and artistic talent may have helped you coordinate a successful class project. As you analyze your achievements, you may begin to recognize a pattern of skills. Which of these would be valuable to potential employers?

**TABLE 2 CAREER PLANNING SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Activity or Situation	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	No Preference
1. I want to work independently.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. I want variety in my work.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. I want to work with people.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. I want to work with technology.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. I don't want to be stuck in an office all day.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. I want mentally challenging work.	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. I want to work for a large organization.	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. I want to work for a nonprofit organization.	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. I want to work for a small business.	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. I want to work for a service business.	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. I want to start or buy a business someday.	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. I want regular, predictable work hours.	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. I want to work in a city location.	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. I want to work in a small town or suburb.	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. I want to work in another country.	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. I want to work from home, even if I'm employed by someone else.	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. I want to work in a highly dynamic profession or industry, even if it's unstable at times.	_____	_____	_____	_____
18. I want as much career stability as possible.	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. I want to enjoy my work, even if that means making less money.	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. I want to become a high-level corporate manager.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Next, look at your educational preparation, work experience, and extracurricular activities. What do your knowledge and experience qualify you to do? What have you learned from volunteer work or class projects that could benefit you on the job? Have you held any offices, won any awards or scholarships, mastered a second language? What skills have you developed in nonbusiness situations that could transfer to a business position?

Take stock of your personal characteristics. Are you assertive, a born leader? Or are you more comfortable contributing under someone else's leadership? Are you outgoing, articulate, and comfortable around people? Or do you prefer working alone? Make a list of what you believe are your four or five most important qualities. Ask a relative or friend to rate your traits as well.

If you're having difficulty figuring out your interests, characteristics, or capabilities, consult your college career center. Many campuses administer a variety of tests that can help you identify interests, aptitudes, and personality traits. These tests won't reveal your "perfect" job, but they'll help you focus on the types of work best suited to your personality.

### How Can You Make Yourself More Valuable?

While you're figuring out what you want from a job and what you can offer an employer, you can take positive steps toward building your career. First, look for opportunities to develop skills, gain experience, and expand your professional network. These might involve internships, volunteer work, freelance projects, part-time jobs, or projects that you initiate on your own. You can look for freelance projects on Craigslist and numerous other websites; some of these jobs have only nominal pay, but they do provide an opportunity for you to display your skills. Also consider applying your talents to *crowdsourcing* projects, in which companies and nonprofit organizations invite the public to contribute solutions to various challenges. Look for ways to expand your *employment portfolio* and establish your *personal brand* (see the following sections).

Second, learn more about the industry or industries in which you want to work, and stay on top of new developments. Join networks of professional colleagues and friends who can help you keep up with trends and events. Follow the leading voices in a profession on social media. Many professional societies have student chapters or offer students discounted memberships. Take courses and pursue other educational or life experiences that would be difficult while working full time.



Whether you call it your personal brand or your professional promise, figure out what you want to be as a professional and how you should communicate that to others.

## BUILDING AN EMPLOYMENT PORTFOLIO

Employers want proof that you have the skills to succeed on the job, which can be challenging if you don't have a lot of relevant work experience in your target field. Fortunately, you can use your college classes, volunteer work, and other activities to assemble compelling proof by creating an *employment portfolio*, a collection of projects that demonstrate your skills and knowledge.

Your portfolio is likely to be a multimedia effort, with physical work samples (such as reports, proposals, or marketing materials), digital documents, web content, blog posts, photographs, video clips, and other items. As appropriate, you can include these items in your LinkedIn profile, bring them to interviews, and have them ready whenever an employer, client, or networking contact asks for samples of your work.

You have a variety of options for hosting a portfolio online. Your LinkedIn profile (see page 507) can function as your portfolio home, your college may offer portfolio hosting, or you might consider one of the many commercial portfolio hosting services. To see a selection of student e-portfolios from colleges around the United States, go to [real-timeupdates.com/ebc13](http://real-timeupdates.com/ebc13), select Student Assignments, and locate the link to student e-portfolios.

Throughout this course, pay close attention to the assignments marked “Portfolio Builder,” which start in Chapter 8. These items can make good samples of your communication skills and your ability to understand and solve business-related challenges. By combining these projects with samples from your other courses, you can create a compelling portfolio when you're ready to start interviewing. Your portfolio is also a great resource for writing your résumé because it reminds you of all the great work you've done over the years. Moreover, you can continue to refine and expand your portfolio throughout your career; many independent professionals use portfolios to advertise their services.

As you assemble your portfolio, collect anything that shows your ability to perform, whether it's in school, on the job, or in other venues. However, you *must* check with employers before including any items that you created while you were an employee, and check with clients before including any *work products* (anything you wrote, designed, programmed, and so on) they purchased from you. Many business documents contain confidential information that companies don't want distributed to outside audiences.

For each item you add to your portfolio, write a brief description that helps other people understand the meaning and significance of the project. Include such items as these:

- **Background.** Why did you undertake this project? Was it a school project, a work assignment, or something you did on your own initiative?
- **Project objectives.** Explain the project's goals, if relevant.
- **Collaborators.** If you worked with others, be sure to mention that and discuss team dynamics if appropriate. For instance, if you led the team or worked with others long distance as a virtual team, point that out.
- **Constraints.** Sometimes the most impressive thing about a project is the time or budget constraints under which it was created. If such constraints apply to a project, consider mentioning them in a way that doesn't sound like an excuse for poor quality. If you had only one week to create a website, for example, you might say that “One of the intriguing challenges of this project was the deadline; I had only one week to design, compose, test, and publish this material.”
- **Outcomes.** If the project's goals were measurable, what was the result? For example, if you wrote a letter soliciting donations for a charitable cause, how much money did you raise?
- **Learning experience.** If appropriate, describe what you learned during the course of the project.

Keep in mind that the portfolio itself is a communication project, so be sure to apply everything you'll learn in this course about effective communication and good design. Also, assume that potential employers will find your e-portfolio site, even if you don't tell them about it, so don't include anything that doesn't represent you at your professional best.

## BUILDING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

You have probably heard the advice to develop a “personal brand” but might not know how to proceed or might not be comfortable with the concept of “branding” yourself. This section presents five steps that can make the task easier and more authentic.

Note that the process outlined here isn’t about coming up with three or four words that are supposed to describe you, such as *visionary*, *creator*, *problem solver*, or things like that, as you may come across in some discussions of personal branding. This is a much more practical and comprehensive process that identifies the specific qualifications that you can bring to the job, backs them up with solid evidence, and makes sure you are ready with a concise answer when an employer asks, “So, tell me about yourself.”

### Don’t Call It Personal Branding If You Don’t Care for the Term

Some people object to the term personal branding, with its associations of product marketing, the implied need to “get out there and promote yourself,” and perhaps the unseemly idea of reducing something as complex as yourself to an advertising slogan. If you are just starting your career, you might also wonder how to craft a meaningful brand when you don’t have any relevant work experience.

Moreover, although personal branding makes obvious sense for professional speakers, authors, consultants, entrepreneurs, and others who must promote themselves in the public marketplace, those who aspire to professional or managerial positions in a corporate structure may rightly wonder why they need to “brand” themselves at all.

However, the underlying concept of branding as a *promise* applies to everyone, no matter the career stage or trajectory. A brand is fundamentally a promise to deliver on a specific set of values. For everyone in business, that promise is critical, whether it extends to a million people in the online audience for a TED talk or a half-dozen people inside a small company. And even if you never think about your personal brand, you are continuously creating and re-creating it by the way you conduct yourself as a professional. In other words, even if you reject the idea of personal branding, other people will form an opinion of you and your “brand” anyway, so you might as well take charge and help create the impression that you want others to have of you.

As an alternative to a personal brand, think of your *professional promise*. Frame it this way: When people hear your name, what do you want them to think about you and your professional attributes and qualifications?

### Write the “Story of You”

When it’s time to write or update your résumé, step back and think about where you’ve been in your life and your career and where you’d like to go. Helpful questions include *Do you like the path you’re on, or is it time for a change? Are you focused on a particular field, or do you need some time to explore?*

This is also a great planning tool for developing a personal brand. In Chapter 15, you’ll see this referred to as writing the “story of you,” and it’s divided into three sections:

- **Where I have been**—the experiences from my past that give me insight into where I would like to go in the future
- **Where I am now**—where I currently stand in terms of education and career, and what I know about myself (including knowledge and skills, personal attributes, and professional interests)
- **Where I want to be**—the career progress and experiences I want to have, areas I want to explore, and goals I want to achieve

Think in terms of an image or a theme you’d like to project. *Am I academically gifted? A daring innovator? A well-rounded professional with wide-ranging talents? A technical wizard? A dependable, “go-to” problem solver that people can count on? A “connector” who can bring people and resources together?*

Writing this story arc is a valuable planning exercise that helps you think about where you want to go in your career. In essence, you are clarifying who you are professionally and defining a future version of yourself—and these are the foundations of your personal brand/professional promise. Another important benefit is that it makes the personal branding effort authentic, because it is based on your individual interests and passions.

### Construct Your Brand Pyramid

With your professional story arc as a guide, the next step is to construct a *brand pyramid* that has all the relevant support points needed to build a personal brand message (see Figure 2).

Start by compiling a *private inventory* of skills, attributes, experience, and areas for improvement. This should be a positive but realistic assessment of what you have to offer now and a “to-grow” list of areas where you want to develop or improve. Obviously, this inventory isn’t for public consumption. As much as possible, provide evidence to back up each quality you list. If you are diligent and detail oriented, for instance, identify a time that you saved a project by methodically analyzing the situation to find a problem that others had overlooked. If you are a creative thinker, identify a time when you came up with an unusual new idea at work. Employers want to know *how* you can apply your skills, attributes, and experience; the more evidence you can provide, the better.

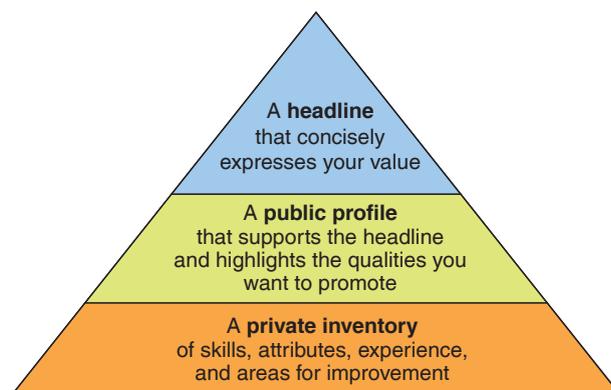
Next, select the appropriate materials from your inventory to develop a *public profile* that highlights the qualities you want to promote. As “Put Your Promise to Work” explains, this profile can take on a variety of forms for different communication platforms.

Finally, distill your professional promise down to a single, brief headline, also known as a *tagline* or *elevator pitch*. The headline should be a statement of compelling value, not a generic job title. Instead of “I’m a social media specialist,” you might say, “I help small companies get the same reach on social media as giant corporations.”

Of course, many students won’t have the relevant job experience to say something like that, and your personal brand might be more an expression of potential. Even if you have no relevant professional experience, you still have personal attributes and educational qualifications that are the foundations of your brand. The key is to make sure it’s realistic and suggests a logical connection between the present and the future. Someone pursuing an MBA in finance can reasonably claim to have a strong toolset for financial analysis, but someone with no corporate work experience can’t claim to be a bold, high-impact executive.

Here’s a good example: “I am a data science major ready to make numbers come alive through leading-edge techniques in deep learning, data mining, and visualization.”

Note that both your public profile and your headline should use relevant *keywords* from target job descriptions (see page 496).



**Figure 2** Your Personal Brand Pyramid

Build your personal brand at three levels: a *private inventory* of your skills and assets, a *public profile* based on that inventory and how you want to present yourself to the world, and a *headline* that encapsulates what you can do for employers or clients.

### Reduce or Eliminate Factors That Could Damage Your Brand

Every brand, no matter how popular and powerful, can be damaged by negative perceptions or performance issues. After identifying all the positives, do an objective analysis of areas that could undermine your career-building efforts. For example, someone who tends to overpromise and underdeliver is going to develop a reputation for unreliability that could outweigh whatever positive qualities he or she can bring to the job. Other concerns might be related to specific skills that you need to develop in order to progress toward your career goals.

Be constantly mindful of the “multimedia you” that the world sees—your online presence, your personal appearance, your conduct in business and social settings, the way you sound on the phone, your mannerisms, your vocabulary, and anything else that shapes your reputation. Careers can be derailed by a single misjudged social media post, so always be putting the best “you” on display.

### Put Your Promise to Work

Now it’s time to put the branding message to work. Your public profile could be expressed in a variety of ways—as a conventional résumé, the summary section on LinkedIn, an infographic résumé, or the introductory section of a personal webpage or e-portfolio.

The headline can be adapted and used in multiple ways as well, including the headline field on LinkedIn, the qualifications summary on your résumé, your Twitter profile, and as a ready answer to the common interview question “So, tell me about yourself.”

Naturally, your brand message should be consistent across all the platforms and conversations where it is used. For instance, an employer reviewing your résumé is likely to visit your LinkedIn profile as well, so it’s important that the messages match. If you complete your branding pyramid first, it’ll be easy to adapt it to a variety of different purposes while keeping your message consistent.

As you progress through your career, bear in mind that all this planning and communication is of no value if you fail to deliver on your brand promise. Remember that branding is only a *promise*—it’s your *performance* that ultimately counts. When you deliver quality results time after time, your talents and professionalism will speak for you.

Lastly, your branding pyramid should be a “living document” that is updated whenever you acquire new skills or job experiences or want to move in a different direction. In addition, periodically revisiting it can be a good way to recapture the passion that initially launched you down your career path.

## Stage 3: Succeeding in Your First Job

Your first job sets the stage for your career and gives you an opportunity to explore how you want to position yourself for the long term. If you are already working or are changing careers, you can combine these skills with the work-life perspective you already have to take your career to a new level.

As you progress along your career path, the time and energy you have invested in this course will continue to yield benefits year after year. As you tackle each new challenge, influential company leaders—the people who decide how quickly you’ll get promoted and how much you’ll earn—will be paying close attention to how well you communicate. They will observe your interactions with colleagues, customers, and business partners. They’ll take note of how well you can collect data, find the essential ideas buried under mountains of information, and convey those points to other people. They’ll observe your ability to adapt to different audiences and circumstances. They’ll be watching when you encounter tough situations that require careful attention to ethics and etiquette. The good news: Every insight you gain and every skill you develop in this course will help you shine in your career.