Business Communication Today

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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.

Courtland L. Bovée
John V. Thill

Brief Contents

Preface xv
About the Authors xxviii
Prologue xxix

PART 1 Understanding the Foundations of Business Communication 1
- 1 Professional Communication in a Digital, Social, Mobile World 3
- 2 Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, and Business Etiquette 35
- 3 Communication Challenges in a Diverse, Global Marketplace 73

PART 2 Applying the Three-Step Writing Process 97
- 4 Planning Business Messages 99
- 5 Writing Business Messages 129
- 6 Completing Business Messages 159

PART 3 Digital, Social, and Visual Media 187
- 7 Digital Media 189
- 8 Social Media 215
- 9 Visual Media 247

PART 4 Brief Messages 279
- 10 Writing Routine and Positive Messages 281
- 11 Writing Negative Messages 307
- 12 Writing Persuasive Messages 343

PART 5 Reports and Proposals 371
- 13 Finding, Evaluating, and Processing Information 373
- 14 Planning Reports and Proposals 395
- 15 Writing and Completing Reports and Proposals 423

PART 6 Developing and Delivering Business Presentations 463
- 16 Developing Presentations in a Social Media Environment 465
- 17 Enhancing Presentations with Slides and Other Visuals 491

PART 7 Writing Employment Messages and Interviewing for Jobs 515
- 18 Building Careers and Writing Résumés 517
- 19 Applying and Interviewing for Employment 551

APPENDIX **A** Format and Layout of Business Documents 587
APPENDIX **B** Documentation of Report Sources 601
APPENDIX **C** Correction Symbols 608

Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 611
Name Index 641
Subject Index 644

Contents

Preface xv
About the Authors xxviii
Prologue xxix

Part 1
Understanding the Foundations of Business Communication 1

1 Professional Communication in a Digital, Social, Mobile World 3

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Affectiva** 3

Understanding Why Communication Matters 4
- Communication Is Important to Your Career 4
- Communication Is Important to Your Company 5
- What Makes Business Communication Effective? 6

Communicating as a Professional 6
- Understanding What Employers Expect from You 6
- Communicating in an Organizational Context 8
- Adopting an Audience-Centered Approach 10

Exploring the Communication Process 10
- The Conventional Communication Model 10
- Barriers in the Communication Environment 12
- Inside the Mind of Your Audience 12
- The Social Communication Model 15

Using Technology to Improve Communication 16
- The Potential Benefits of Communication Technology 16
- The Spectrum of Contemporary Communication Technology 17

Committing to Ethical and Legal Communication 24
- Forms of Unethical Communication 24
- Distinguishing Ethical Dilemmas from Ethical Lapses 25
- Ensuring Ethical Communication 25
- Ensuring Legal Communication 26

Developing Skills for Your Career 28

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Affectiva** 28
- Key Terms 29
- Summary of Learning Objectives 29
- Test Your Knowledge 30
- Apply Your Knowledge 30
- Practice Your Skills 30
- Expand Your Skills 32
- Build Your Career 32

APPLY YOUR SKILLS NOW Practice Your Professionalism 9

2 Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, and Business Etiquette 35

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Salesforce** 35

Communicating Effectively in Teams 36
- Types of Teams 36
- Advantages and Disadvantages of Teams 37
- Characteristics of Effective Teams 38
- Group Dynamics 38
- Virtual Teams 40

Collaborating on Communication Efforts 41
- Collaboration Arrangements 41
- Giving—and Responding to—Constructive Feedback 42
- Technologies for Collaborative Communication 43

Making Your Meetings More Productive 45
- Preparing for Meetings 46
- Leading and Contributing to Efficient Meetings 46
- Putting Meeting Results to Productive Use 49
- Conducting Virtual Meetings 51

Improving Your Listening Skills 52
- Understanding Why Listening Is Such a Complex Process 53
- Becoming a Better Listener 54

Improving Your Nonverbal Communication Skills 58
- Recognizing Nonverbal Communication 58
- Using Nonverbal Communication Effectively 60

Developing Your Business Etiquette 60
- Business Etiquette in the Workplace 61
- Business Etiquette in Social Settings 62
- Online Etiquette 63
- Telephone Etiquette 63
- Mobile Device Etiquette 64

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Salesforce** 64
- Key Terms 65
- Summary Of Learning Objectives 65
- Test Your Knowledge 66
- Apply Your Knowledge 66
- Practice Your Skills 67
- Expand Your Skills 68
- Build Your Career 68

ETHICS DETECTIVE Solving the Case of the Missing Team 37

INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY Hi, I'm an Algorithm, Your New Teammate 45

3 Communication Challenges in a Diverse, Global Marketplace 73
COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Kaiser Permanente** 73
Understanding the Opportunities and Challenges of Communication in a Diverse World 74
  The Opportunities in a Global Marketplace 74
  The Advantages of a Diverse Workforce 74
  The Challenges of Intercultural Communication 75
Developing Cultural Competency 75
  Understanding the Concept of Culture 75
  Overcoming Ethnocentrism and Stereotyping 76
Recognizing Variations in a Diverse World 76
  Contextual Differences 77
  Legal and Ethical Differences 77
  Social Norms and Customs 78
  Nonverbal Communication 79
  Age Differences 79
  Gender Differences 80
  Religious Differences 81
  Ability Differences 81
Adapting to Other Business Cultures 81
  Guidelines for Adapting to Any Business Culture 81
  Guidelines for Adapting to U.S. Business Culture 82
Improving Intercultural Communication Skills 83
  Studying Other Cultures 83
  Studying Other Languages 85
  Respecting Preferences for Communication Style 86
  Writing Clearly 87
  Speaking and Listening Carefully 90
  Helping Others Adapt to Your Culture 92
COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Kaiser Permanente** 92
  Key Terms 93
  Summary Of Learning Objectives 93
  Test Your Knowledge 93
  Apply Your Knowledge 94
  Practice Your Skills 94
  Expand Your Skills 95
  Build Your Career 95
INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY Real-Time Translation 91

Part 2 Applying the Three-Step Writing Process 97

4 Planning Business Messages 99
COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Wolff Olins** 99
Understanding the Three-Step Writing Process 100
  Optimizing Your Writing Time 101
  Planning Effectively 101
Analyzing the Situation 101
  Defining Your Purpose 102
  Developing an Audience Profile 102
Gathering Information 104
  Uncovering Audience Needs 104
  Finding Your Focus 105
  Providing Required Information 105
Selecting the Best Combination of Media and Channels 107
  The Most Common Media and Channel Options 107
  Factors to Consider When Choosing Media and Channels 111
Organizing Your Information 114
  Defining Your Main Idea 114
  Limiting Your Scope 115
  Choosing Between Direct and Indirect Approaches 116
  Outlining Your Content 116
  Building Reader Interest with Storytelling Techniques 118
COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Wolff Olins** 121
  Key Terms 122
  Summary Of Learning Objectives 122
  Test Your Knowledge 122
  Apply Your Knowledge 123
  Practice Your Skills 123
  Expand Your Skills 125
  Build Your Career 125
ETHICS DETECTIVE Solving the Case of the Missing Safety Warning 106
INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY Shaping Stories with the Help of Artificial Intelligence 120

5 Writing Business Messages 129
COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Lumen/Kaleigh Moore** 129
Adapting to Your Audience: Being Sensitive to Audience Needs 130
  Using the “You” Attitude 130
  Maintaining Standards of Etiquette 131
  Emphasizing the Positive 132
  Using Bias-Free Language 133
Adapting to Your Audience: Building Strong Relationships 134
  Establishing Your Credibility 134
  Projecting Your Company’s Image 135
Adapting to Your Audience: Controlling Your Style and Tone 136
  Creating a Conversational Tone 136
  Using Plain Language 137
  Selecting the Active or Passive Voice 137
Composing Your Message: Choosing Powerful Words 138
  Using Words Correctly 138
  Using Words Effectively 139
  Understanding Denotation and Connotation 141
  Balancing Abstract and Concrete Words 142
Composing Your Message: Creating Effective Sentences 142
  Choosing from the Four Types of Sentences 142
  Using Sentence Style to Emphasize Key Thoughts 144

Composing Your Message: Crafting Unified, Coherent Paragraphs 145
Creating the Elements of a Paragraph 145
Choosing the Best Way to Develop Each Paragraph 148
Writing Messages for Mobile Devices 149
COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Lumen/Kaleigh Moore** 151
Key Terms 151
Summary Of Learning Objectives 152
Test Your Knowledge 152
Apply Your Knowledge 153
Practice Your Skills 153
Expand Your Skills 155
Build Your Career 155
INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY Amplifying Your Writing with Augmented Writing Software 143
APPLY YOUR SKILLS NOW Think Now, Write Later 147

6 Completing Business Messages 159

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Type Together** 159
Revising Your Message: Evaluating the First Draft 160
Evaluating Your Content, Organization, Style, and Tone 160
Evaluating, Editing, and Revising the Work of Others 163
Revising to Improve Readability 163
Varying the Length of Your Sentences 164
Keeping Your Paragraphs Short 164
Using Lists and Bullets to Clarify and Emphasize 165
Adding Headings and Subheadings 166
Editing for Clarity and Conciseness 167
Editing for Clarity 167
Editing for Conciseness 168
Producing Your Message 170
Designing for Readability 170
Formatting Formal Letters and Memos 173
Designing Messages for Mobile Devices 174
Proofreading Your Message 176
Distributing Your Message 178
COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Type Together** 178
Key Terms 179
Summary of Learning Objectives 179
Test Your Knowledge 180
Apply Your Knowledge 180
Practice Your Skills 180
Expand Your Skills 183
Build Your Career 183
DEVELOPING AS A PROFESSIONAL Being Dependable and Accountable 165
APPLY YOUR SKILLS NOW Make QA Part of Your Communication Process 177

Part 3
Digital, Social, and Visual Media 187

7 Digital Media 189

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Slack** 189
Digital Media for Business Communication 190
Digital and Social Media Options 190
Compositional Modes for Digital and Social Media 191
The Emoji Question—Overcoming the Limitations of Lean Media 194
Email 195
Planning Email Messages 195
Writing Email Content 196
The Subject Line: Persuading People to Open Your Messages 197
Completing Email Messages 198
Business Messaging 200
Categories of Business Messaging 200
Tips for Successful Messaging 201
Website Content 202
Organizing Website Content 202
Drafting Website Content 204
Podcasting 205
COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Slack** 206
Key Terms 207
Summary Of Learning Objectives 207
Test Your Knowledge 208
Apply Your Knowledge 208
Practice Your Skills 208
Expand Your Skills 210
Build Your Career 210
APPLY YOUR SKILLS NOW Develop Professional-Grade Email Skills 196
INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY Nice Chatting with You 200

8 Social Media 215

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **ExterionMedia** 215
How Businesses Use Social Media for Internal and External Communication 216
Strategies and Tactics for Successful Social Media Use 220
Establishing a Social Media Strategy 220
Developing Social Media Content 222
Managing the Organizational Challenges of Social Media 227
Social Networking for Business Communication 227
Categories of Social Networking Platforms 228
Four Content Strategies for Business Social Networking 228
Successful Business Blogging 230
Business Applications of Blogging 230
Tips for Successful Blogging 231
Twitter and Other Microblogging Systems 234
Business Applications of Microblogging 235
Tips for Effective Business Tweets 236
Collaborative Writing on Wikis 236
Management and Design Considerations for Wikis 236
Tips for Successful Wiki Writing 237
COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **ExterionMedia** 238
Key Terms 238
Summary of Learning Objectives 239
Test Your Knowledge 239
Apply Your Knowledge 239
Practice Your Skills 240
Expand Your Skills 241
Build Your Career 241
INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY Monitoring the Social Media Sphere with Smart Listening Tools 222

9 Visual Media 247

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Tableau Software** 247

Understanding Visual Communication 248
- The Power of Images 248
- The Visual Evolution in Business Communication 249
- Visual Design Principles 250
- The Ethics of Visual Communication 251

Identifying Points to Illustrate 253

Selecting Visuals for Presenting Data 254
- Tables 254
- Line and Surface Charts 256
- Bar Charts, Pictograms, and Gantt Charts 257
- Scatter and Bubble Diagrams 257
- Radar Diagrams 259
- Pie Charts 260
- Data Visualization 261

Selecting Visuals for Presenting Information, Concepts, and Ideas 261
- Flowcharts and Organization Charts 261
- Maps 263
- Illustrations, Diagrams, and Photographs 263
- Infographics 264

Producing and Integrating Visuals 264
- Creating Visuals 265
- Integrating Visuals with Text 265
- Verifying the Quality of Your Visuals 266
- Visual Media on Mobile Devices 267

Producing Business Videos 268
- Step 1: Preproduction 268
- Step 2: Production 270
- Step 3: Postproduction 272

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Tableau Software** 272
- Key Terms 273
- Summary Of Learning Objectives 273
- Test Your Knowledge 274
- Apply Your Knowledge 274
- Practice Your Skills 274
- Expand Your Skills 276
- Build Your Career 277

INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality 249

ETHICS DETECTIVE Solving the Case of the Hidden Numbers 253

Part 4
Brief Messages 279

10 Writing Routine and Positive Messages 281

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Productivity Report** 281

Strategy for Routine Requests 282
- Open with Your Request 282
- Explain and Justify Your Request 282
- Request Specific Action in a Courteous Close 283

Common Examples of Routine Requests 283
- Asking for Information or Action 283
- Asking for Recommendations 283
- Making Claims and Requesting Adjustments 285

Strategy for Routine Replies, Routine Messages, and Positive Messages 288
- Open with the Main Idea 288
- Provide Necessary Details and Explanation 289
- End with a Courteous Close 289

Common Examples of Routine Replies, Routine Messages, and Positive Messages 290
- Answering Requests for Information and Action 290
- Granting Claims and Requests for Adjustment 290
- Providing Recommendations and References 291
- Sharing Routine Information 293
- Writing Instructions 294
- Announcing Good News 294
- Fostering Goodwill 294

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Productivity Report** 297
- Key Terms 298
- Summary Of Learning Objectives 298
- Test Your Knowledge 298
- Apply Your Knowledge 298
- Practice Your Skills 299
- Expand Your Skills 301
- Build Your Career 301

ETHICS DETECTIVE Solving the Case of the Imaginary Good News 288

DEVELOPING AS A PROFESSIONAL Maintaining a Confident, Positive Outlook 295

11 Writing Negative Messages 307

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **WELLS FARGO** 307

Using the Three-Step Writing Process for Negative Messages 308
- Step 1: Planning a Negative Message 308
- Step 2: Writing Negative Messages 309
- Step 3: Completing Negative Messages 310

Using the Direct Approach for Negative Messages 311
- Open with a Clear Statement of the Bad News 311
- Provide Reasons and Additional Information 311
- Close on a Respectful Note 312

Using the Indirect Approach for Negative Messages 312
- Open with a Buffer 312
- Provide Reasons and Additional Information 313
- Continue with a Clear Statement of the Bad News 314
- Close on a Respectful Note 315

Maintaining High Standards of Ethics and Etiquette 316

Sending Negative Messages on Routine Business Matters 317
- Making Negative Announcements on Routine Business Matters 317

Rejecting Suggestions and Proposals 317
Refusing Routine Requests 319
Handling Bad News About Transactions 319
Refusing Claims and Requests for Adjustment 320

Sending Negative Organizational News 321
Communicating Under Normal Circumstances 322
Responding to Negative Information in a Social Media Environment 324
Communicating in a Crisis 324

Sending Negative Employment Messages 325
Refusing Requests for Recommendations and References 325
Refusing Social Networking Recommendation Requests 326
Rejecting Job Applications 326
Giving Negative Performance Reviews 328
Terminating Employment 328

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Wells Fargo** 330

Key Terms 330
Summary Of Learning Objectives 330
Test Your Knowledge 332
Apply Your Knowledge 332
Practice Your Skills 332
Expand Your Skills 334
Build Your Career 334

ETHICS DETECTIVE Solving the Case of the Deceptive Soft Sell 316

APPLY YOUR SKILLS NOW PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION 322

12 Writing Persuasive Messages 343

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Stitch Fix** 343

Using the Three-Step Writing Process for Persuasive Messages 344
Step 1: Planning Persuasive Messages 344
Step 2: Writing Persuasive Messages 347
Step 3: Completing Persuasive Messages 347

Developing Persuasive Business Messages 348
Strategies for Persuasive Business Messages 348
Common Examples of Persuasive Business Messages 355

Developing Marketing and Sales Messages 357
Planning Marketing and Sales Messages 357
Writing Conventional Marketing and Sales Messages 358
Writing Promotional Messages for Social Media 358
Creating Promotional Messages for Mobile Devices 359

Maintaining High Standards of Ethics, Legal Compliance, and Etiquette 360

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Stitch Fix** 361

Key Terms 361
Summary Of Learning Objectives 361
Test Your Knowledge 362
Apply Your Knowledge 363
Practice Your Skills 363
Expand Your Skills 364
Build Your Career 364

APPLY YOUR SKILLS NOW Making Difficult Requests 352

ETHICS DETECTIVE Solving the Case of the Incredible Credibility 360

Part 5
Reports and Proposals 371

13 Finding, Evaluating, and Processing Information 373

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Strategyzer** 373

Planning Your Research 374
Maintaining Ethics and Etiquette in Your Research 375
Familiarizing Yourself with the Subject 375
Identifying Information Gaps 375
Prioritizing Research Needs 376

Conducting Secondary Research 376
Evaluating Sources 376
Locating Sources 377
Documenting Your Sources 380

Conducting Primary Research 381
Gathering Information with Surveys 381
Gathering Information with Interviews 383

Processing Data and Information 385
Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing 385
Analyzing Numeric Data 386

Applying Your Findings 388
Summarizing Your Research 388
Drawing Conclusions 389
Making Recommendations 389
Making Your Research Available to Others 389

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Strategyzer** 389

Key Terms 390
Summary of Learning Objectives 390
Test Your Knowledge 391
Apply Your Knowledge 391
Practice Your Skills 391
Expand Your Skills 393
Build Your Career 393

INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY Finding Meaning with Text Mining 385

14 Planning Reports and Proposals 395

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **John Deere** 395

Applying the Three-Step Writing Process to Reports and Proposals 396
Analyzing the Situation 396
Gathering Information 400
Selecting the Right Combination of Media and Channels 400
Organizing Your Information 401

Planning Informational Reports 402
Organizational Strategies for Informational Reports 403
Creating Successful Business Plans 403

Planning Analytical Reports 404
Organizational Strategies for Analytical Reports 405
Effective Analytical Reports: An Example 408

Planning Proposals 408
Organizational Strategies for Proposals 411
Effective Proposals: An Example 411

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **John Deere** 417

Key Terms 417
Summary Of Learning Objectives 417
Test Your Knowledge 418
Apply Your Knowledge 418
Practice Your Skills 418
Expand Your Skills 420
Build Your Career 420

ETHICS DETECTIVE Solving the Case of the Overblown Proposal 412

15 Writing and Completing Reports and Proposals 423

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **McKinsey & Company** 423

Writing Reports and Proposals: Adapting to Your Audience 424
Being Sensitive to Your Audience’s Needs 424
Building Strong Relationships with Your Audience 424
Controlling Your Style and Tone 424
Make Your Reports Easier to Read 425

Drafting Report Content 427
Provide Quality Content 427
Make Your Reports Easier to Write 428

Drafting Proposal Content 428
Define the Proposal’s Purpose 428
Select the Elements to Include in a Proposal 429

Completing Reports and Proposals 431
Producing Formal Reports and Proposals 432
Distributing Reports and Proposals 435

Writing Requests for Proposals 436

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **McKinsey & Company** 453

Key Terms 453
Summary Of Learning Objectives 453
Test Your Knowledge 454
Apply Your Knowledge 454
Practice Your Skills 454
Expand Your Skills 455
Build Your Career 455

Part 6
Developing and Delivering Business Presentations 463

16 Developing Presentations in a Social Media Environment 465

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Barnett International** 465

Planning a Presentation 466
Analyzing the Situation 466
Selecting the Best Combination of Media and Channels 468
Organizing a Presentation 469

Crafting Presentation Content 472
Adapting to Your Audience 472
Developing Your Presentation 474

Delivering a Presentation 477
Choosing Your Presentation Method 478
Practicing Your Delivery 478
Preparing to Speak 478
Overcoming Anxiety 478
Handling Questions Responsively 480
Giving Impromptu Speeches 481
Ensuring Successful Team Presentations 481

Incorporating Technology in Your Presentation 482
Embracing the Backchannel 483
Giving Presentations Online 483

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Barnett International** 485

Key Terms 485
Summary Of Learning Objectives 485
Test Your Knowledge 486
Apply Your Knowledge 486
Practice Your Skills 486
Expand Your Skills 487
Build Your Career 487

DEVELOPING AS A PROFESSIONAL Recovering from Disasters 480

17 Enhancing Presentations with Slides and Other Visuals 491

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Duarte** 491

Planning Your Presentation Visuals 492
Selecting the Type of Visuals to Use 492
Verifying Your Design Plans 493

Choosing Structured or Free-Form Slides 493
Advantages and Disadvantages of Structured Slides 494
Advantages and Disadvantages of Free-Form Slides 495

Designing Effective Slides 496
Designing Slides Around a Key Visual 496
Selecting Design Elements 496
Maintaining Design Consistency 499

Creating Effective Slide Content 499
Writing Readable Content 499
Creating Charts and Tables for Slides 500
Adding Animation and Multimedia 501
Using Presentation Software to Create Visual Reports 503
Using Mobile Devices in Presentations 504

Completing Slides and Support Materials 504
Creating Navigation and Support Slides 505
Creating Effective Handouts 506

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Duarte** 508

Key Terms 509
Summary Of Learning Objectives 509
Test Your Knowledge 510
Apply Your Knowledge 510
Practice Your Skills 510
Expand Your Skills 512
Build Your Career 512

DEVELOPING AS A PROFESSIONAL Being a Team Player 502

Part 7
Writing Employment Messages and Interviewing for Jobs 515

18 Building Careers and Writing Résumés 517

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Burning Glass** 517

Finding the Ideal Opportunity in Today's Job Market 518
- Writing the Story of You 519
- Learning to Think Like an Employer 519
- Researching Industries and Companies of Interest 519
- Translating Your General Potential into a Specific Solution for Each Employer 520
- Taking the Initiative to Find Opportunities 522
- Building Your Network 522
- Seeking Career Counseling 523
- Avoiding Career-Search Mistakes 524

Planning Your Résumé 524
- Analyzing Your Purpose and Audience 525
- Gathering Pertinent Information 526
- Selecting the Best Media and Channels 526
- Organizing Your Résumé Around Your Strengths 526
- Addressing Areas of Concern 527

Writing Your Résumé 528
- Keeping Your Résumé Honest 528
- Adapting Your Résumé to Your Audience 528
- Composing Your Résumé 529

Completing Your Résumé 533
- Revising Your Résumé 533
- Producing Your Résumé 535
- Proofreading Your Résumé 538
- Distributing Your Résumé 539

Building an Effective LinkedIn Profile 540

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Burning Glass** 543
- Key Terms 543
- Summary Of Learning Objectives 544
- Test Your Knowledge 544
- Apply Your Knowledge 544
- Practice Your Skills 545
- Expand Your Skills 546
- Build Your Career 546

DEVELOPING AS A PROFESSIONAL Striving to Excel 524

INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY Make Friends with the Résumé Bots 530

19 Applying and Interviewing for Employment 551

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT **Patreon** 551

Submitting Your Résumé 552
- Writing Application Letters 552
- Following up After Submitting a Résumé 558

Understanding the Interviewing Process 558
- The Typical Sequence of Interviews 558
- Common Types of Interviews and Interview Questions 560
- Interview Media 562
- What Employers Look For in an Interview 564
- Preemployment Testing and Background Checks 564

Preparing for a Job Interview 565
- Learning About the Organization and the Position 565
- Thinking Ahead About Questions 565
- Boosting Your Confidence 568
- Polishing Your Interview Style 568
- Presenting a Professional Image 570
- Being Ready When You Arrive 570

Interviewing for Success 571
- The Warm-Up 571
- The Question-and-Answer Stage 571
- The Close 573
- Interview Notes 573

Following Up After an Interview 574
- Follow-Up Message 574
- Message of Inquiry 574
- Request for a Time Extension 576
- Letter of Acceptance 576
- Letter Declining a Job Offer 576
- Letter of Resignation 576

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT **Patreon** 578
- Key Terms 579
- Summary Of Learning Objectives 579
- Test Your Knowledge 579
- Apply Your Knowledge 580
- Practice Your Skills 580
- Expand Your Skills 581
- Build Your Career 581

INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY
Getting Comfortable with AI-Assisted Recruiting and Interviewing 559

INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY
Improving Fairness and Finding Better Talent with Blind Auditions 564

Appendix **A**
Format and Layout of Business Documents 587

First Impressions 587
- Paper 587
- Customization 587
- Appearance 587

Letters 588
- Standard Letter Parts 588
- Additional Letter Parts 591
- Letter Formats 593

Envelopes 594
- Addressing The Envelope 595
- Folding To Fit 597
- International Mail 597

Memos 599

Reports 599
- Margins 599
- Headings 600
- Page Numbers 600

Appendix **B**

Documentation of Report Sources 601

Chicago Humanities Style 601
- In-Text Citation—*Chicago* Humanities Style 601
- Bibliography—*Chicago* Humanities Style 602

APA Style 604
- In-Text Citation—APA Style 604
- List Of References—APA Style 604

MLA Style 604
- In-Text Citation—MLA Style 604
- List of Works Cited—MLA Style 605

Appendix **C**

Correction Symbols 608

Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 611

Diagnostic Test of English Skills 611

Assessment of English Skills 613

Essentials of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage 613

1.0 Grammar 613
- 1.1 Nouns 614
- 1.2 Pronouns 615
- 1.3 Verbs 617
- 1.4 Adjectives 621
- 1.5 Adverbs 622
- 1.6 Other Parts Of Speech 623
- 1.7 Sentences 625

2.0 Punctuation 628
- 2.1 Periods 628
- 2.2 Question Marks 628
- 2.3 Exclamation Points 628
- 2.4 Semicolons 628
- 2.5 Colons 629
- 2.6 Commas 629
- 2.7 Dashes 630
- 2.8 Hyphens 631
- 2.9 Apostrophes 631
- 2.10 Quotation Marks 631
- 2.11 Parentheses and Brackets 632
- 2.12 Ellipses 632

3.0 Mechanics 633
- 3.1 Capitalization 633
- 3.2 Underscores and Italics 634
- 3.3 Abbreviations 635
- 3.4 Numbers 635
- 3.5 Word Division 636

4.0 Vocabulary 636
- 4.1 Frequently Confused Words 636
- 4.2 Frequently Misused Words 638
- 4.3 Frequently Misspelled Words 639
- 4.4 Transitional Words and Phrases 640

Name Index 641

Subject Index 644

Preface

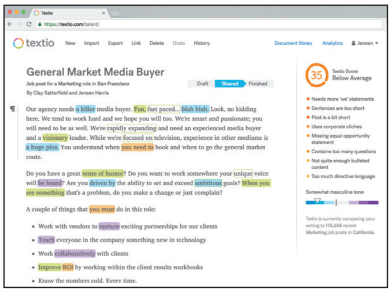
New to This Edition

ADDING VALUE 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 writing business email to planning reports and presentations.

KEEPING STUDENTS ON THE LEADING EDGE WITH *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.


Textio
https://textio.com/talent/
textio
New
Import
Export
Link
Delete
Undo
History
Document library
Analytics
Jensen
Draft
Shared
Finished
35
Textio Score
Below Average

General Market Media Buyer

Job post for a Marketing role in San Francisco

By Clay Satterfield and Jensen Harris

Our agency needs a killer media buyer. Fun, fast paced... blah blah. Look, no kidding here. We tend to work hard and we hope you will too. We're smart and passionate; you will need to be as well. We're rapidly expanding and need an experienced media buyer and a visionary leader. While we're focused on television, experience in other mediums is a huge plus. You understand when you need to book and when to go the general market route.

Do you have a great sense of humor? Do you want to work somewhere your unique voice will be heard? Are you driven by the ability to set and exceed ambitious goals? When you see something that's a problem, do you make a change or just complain?

A couple of things that you must do in this role:

- Work with vendors to nurture exciting partnerships for our clients
- Teach everyone in the company something new in technology
- Work collaboratively with clients
- Improve ROI by working within the client results workbooks
- Know the numbers cold. Every time.

- Needs more 'we' statements
- Sentences are too short
- Post is a bit short
- Uses corporate cliches
- Missing equal opportunity statement
- Contains too many questions
- Not quite enough bulleted content
- Too much directive language

Somewhat masculine tone

Textio is currently comparing your writing to 175,556 recent Marketing job posts in California.

ENSURING FRESH, UP-TO-THE-MINUTE CONTENT

Nearly 90 new figures. The Fifteenth Edition has 93 annotated model documents, 43 examples of mobile communication in business communication, 15 examples of social media, and 14 examples of intelligent communication technology.

Nearly 150 new questions and student activities. Every chapter has fresh project ideas and evaluation questions.

Revamped Communication Cases. Half the cases now feature real companies in a wide variety of industries, giving students multiple opportunities to create real-world messages and documents.

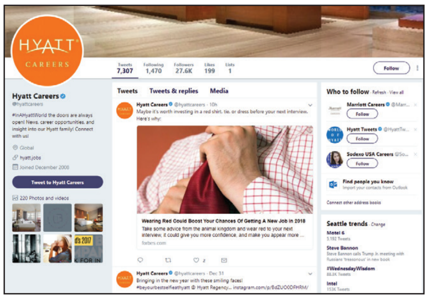
Ten new chapter-opening Communication Close-Ups. These chapter-opening vignettes and end-of-chapter challenges show students how professionals apply the same skills they are reading about in the chapter. The new Close-Ups in this edition include Affectiva, John Deere, Patreon, Stitch Fix, and Wells Fargo.

affectiva
DISGUST
JOY
SADNESS
SURPRISE
VALENCE
SMILE
BROW FURROW

Command Centre
Klipfolio
Social Media Followers
26,472
13,911
6,524
5,093
45,322
1,765
Page Views per Million Users
Marketing Expenses and Sales
Advertising & Promotion
$23,544
Amount Sold
$258,908
Wistia Video Stats
563
75%
49%
Salesforce Accounts by Country
Leads (This Month)
10,753
CallRail Today's Average Call Duration
10m:8s
Quickbooks & Salesforce: CAC (Last 30 Days)
$15,085
-29.99%
Load Time vs Response Time
Web Site
Facebook Demographics
Age Range

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER UPDATES

Chapter 1: Professional Communication in a Digital, Social, Mobile World	**New Communication Close-Up** describes how Affectiva uses artificial intelligence to improve the emotional aspects of digital communication. **Understanding Why Communication Matters** The many benefits of effective business communication are now organized in the three categories of *operations, intelligence*, and *relationships*. **Communicating as a Professional** Employer expectations regarding communication abilities have been simplified to four groups of related skills. **Exploring the Communication Process** Coverage of *selection perception* revised to address *selective attention*. **Using Technology to Improve Communication** The introductory coverage of communication technology has been extensively revised to explain its potential benefits and to highlight three important sets of tools: social and workgroup communication systems, mobile communication, and *intelligent communication technology* (the application of artificial intelligence to business communication). **Committing to Ethical and Legal Communication** Expanded coverage of unethical communication now categorizes it as withholding information, distorting information, or plagiarizing. **Developing Skills for Your Career** New section highlights six skills this course helps students develop in addition to communication. **New highlight box:** Apply Your Skills now: Practice Your Professionalism
Chapter 2: Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, and Business Etiquette	**New Communication Close-Up** featuring Salesforce's Marc Benioff and the importance of good listening skills. **Types of Teams** Revised coverage helps distinguish the most common types of business teams. **Characteristics of Effective Teams** Updated discussion includes the importance of *psychological safety* in team settings. **Stages of Team Development** Now covers the Tuckman model of team development. **Resolving Conflict in Teams** Expanded section includes a step-by-step process for resolving team conflict. **Virtual Teams** New section covers the benefits and challenges of virtual teamwork and offers tips for success in virtual team environments. **Improving Your Listening Skills** Section extensively revised and expanded to give students better insights into why listening is such a complex process, the choices and behaviors that affect listening quality, and how to become a better listener (including the five elements of active listening). **Improving Your Nonverbal Communication Skills** Expanded discussion debunks the myth that nonverbal signals carry most of the message in face-to-face communication. **Collaborating on Communication Efforts** Now includes advice for various collaboration arrangements, from writer-editor to full collaboration, and updates on technologies for collaborative communication. **Business Etiquette in the Workplace** Expanded coverage of workplace behavior and the four levels of business attire. **New highlight box:** Intelligent Communication Technology: Hi, I'm an Algorithm, Your New Teammate



Hyatt Careers
@hyattcareers
#InAHyattWorld the doors are always open! News, career opportunities, and insight into our Hyatt family! Connect with us!
Global
hyatt.jobs
Joined December 2008

Hyatt Careers @hyattcareers · 10h
Maybe it's worth investing in a red shirt, tie, or dress before your next interview. Here's why:

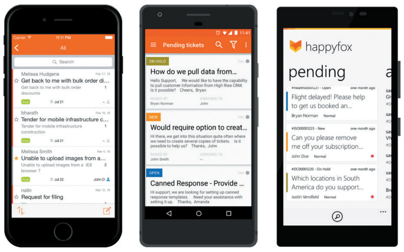
Wearing Red Could Boost Your Chances Of Getting A New Job In 2018
Take some advice from the animal kingdom and wear red to your next interview, it could give you more confidence, and make you appear more ...
forbes.com

Hyatt Careers @hyattcareers · Dec 31
Bringing in the new year with these smiling faces!
#beyourbestselfieathyatt @ Hyatt Regency... instagram.com/p/BdZUO0DFHRM/

Marriott Careers @Marr...
Hyatt Tweets @HyattTw...
Sodexo USA Careers @So...

Motel 6
5,192 Tweets
Steve Bannon
Steve Bannon calls Trump Jr. meeting with Russians 'treasonous' in new book
#WednesdayWisdom
88.3K Tweets
Intel
153K Tweets

Chapter 3: Communication Challenges in a Diverse, Global Marketplace	**Recognizing Variations in a Diverse World** Updated coverage of generational differences and ability differences. **New highlight box:** Intelligent Communication Technology: Real-Time Translation
Chapter 4: Planning Business Messages	**Choosing Between Direct and Indirect Approaches** Describes the three scenarios where the indirect approach is most likely to be helpful. **Building Reader Interest with Storytelling Techniques** Adds the use of storytelling in planning and decision-making. **New highlight box:** Intelligent Communication Technology: Shaping Stories with the Help of Artificial Intelligence
Chapter 5: Writing Business Messages	**New Communication Close-Up** featuring independent business writer Kaleigh Moore **Using Words Correctly** Expanded discussion of the dilemmas business communicators face regarding the evolution of language, such as the increasing acceptance of *they* as a singular pronoun. **New highlight box:** Intelligent Communication Technology: Amplifying Your Writing with Augmented Writing Software **New highlight box:** Apply Your Skills Now: Think Now, Write Later
Chapter 6: Completing Business Messages	**New highlight box:** Apply Your Skills Now: Make QA Part of Your Communication Process
Chapter 7: Digital Media	**The Emoji Question—Overcoming the Limitations of Lean Media** Comprehensive coverage of the complicated issue of emoji usage in contemporary business communication with practical advice for using or avoiding them. **The Email Subject Line: Persuading People to Open Your Messages** Expanded advice for writing compelling subject lines that encourage recipients to open messages. **Business Messaging** Updated coverage of the six categories of short-messaging services in use in business today and tips for successful messaging. **New highlight box:** Apply Your Skills Now: Develop Professional-Grade Email Skills **New highlight box:** Intelligent Communication Technology: Nice Chatting with You
Chapter 8: Social Media	**New Communication Close-Up** describing how ExterionMedia used an internal social network to improve organizational communication. **How Businesses Use Social Media for Internal and External Communication** Updated coverage of how businesses use social networking for both internal and external communication. **Establishing a Social Media Strategy** New section discusses the six sets of questions companies need to ask to craft an effective social media strategy. **Developing Social Media Content** Extensively revised and expanded coverage walks students through the process of planning, writing, and publishing social media content; includes advice on everything from identifying the types of social content that appeals to readers to improving the readability of social media content. **Managing the Organizational Challenges of Social Media** New section looks at the managerial challenges of using social media in business.



Melissa Hudgens Feb 17, 18
Get back to me with bulk order di...
Get back to me with bulk order discounts 1
Jul 21

bharath Feb 19, 18
Tender for mobile infrastructure c...
Tender for mobile infrastructure construction 1
Jul 21

Melissa Smith Mar 4, 18
Unable to upload images from a...
Unable to upload images from a IE8 browser ? 2
Jul 22 John D

nalin Mar 12, 18
Request for filing

How do we pull data from...
Hello Support, We would like to have the capability to pull customer information from High Rise CRM. Is it possible? Cheers, Bryan
Raised by: Bryan Norman Assigned to: John

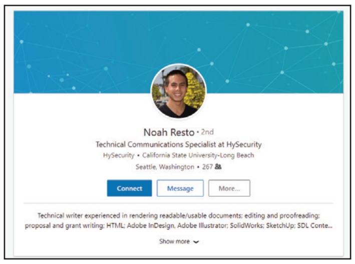
Would require option to creat...
Hi there, we get into this situation quite often where we need to create several copies of tickets. Is it possible to help us? Thanks, John
Raised by: John Smith Assigned to: –

Canned Response - Provide ...
Hi support, we are looking for setting up canned response templates. Need your assistance with setting it up. Thanks, Amanda

#ISO00001223 - New one month ago
Can you please remove me off your subscription...
John Doe Normal

#DC00001220 - On Hold one month ago
Which locations in South America do you support...
Justin Vensfield Normal

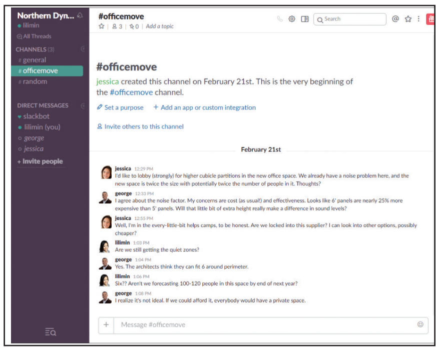
Flight delayed! Please help to get us booked an...
Bryan Norman Normal



Noah Resto • 2nd
Technical Communications Specialist at HySecurity
HySecurity • California State University-Long Beach
Seattle, Washington • 267

Technical writer experienced in rendering readable/usable documents; editing and proofreading; proposal and grant writing; HTML; Adobe InDesign, Adobe Illustrator; SolidWorks; SketchUp; SDL Conte...

Chapter 8: Social Media	**Four Content Strategies for Business Social Networking** New section outlines the four key ways communicators can ensure a steady flow of quality content. **Successful Business Blogging** Updated coverage of blogging includes tips on choosing the types of posts that tend to interest readers the most. **Business Applications of Microblogging** Includes new advice on writing compelling and effective business tweets. **Collaborative Writing on Wikis** New advice on the managerial issues of using wikis for internal and external communication. **New highlight box:** Intelligent Communication Technology: Monitoring the Social Media Sphere with Smart Listening Tools
Chapter 9: Visual Media	**New Communication Close-Up** discusses how Tableau Software is making data visualization tools easily accessible to business professionals who must work with increasingly complex sets of data. **Selecting Visuals for Presenting Data** New coverage of radar diagrams **New highlight box:** Intelligent Communication Technology: Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality
Chapter 10: Writing Routine and Positive Messages	**Writing Instructions** New section with tips for writing effective user guides and other instructional material. **Asking for Recommendations** Expanded information on this challenging communication task.
Chapter 11: Writing Negative Messages	**New Communication Close-Up** on Wells Fargo's efforts to recover from its massive accounts scandals. **Using the Direct Approach for Negative Messages** Coverage of apologies expanded with a four-step decision process. **Refusing Requests for Recommendations and References** Updated with clear guidance on how to sensitively refuse these requests. **Giving Negative Performance Reviews** Updated with latest advice from industry experts. **Terminating Employment** Updated with latest advice from industry experts. **New highlight box:** Apply Your Skills Now: Prepare Yourself for a Difficult Conversation
Chapter 12: Writing Persuasive Messages	**New Communication Close-Up** on Katrina Lake's use of persuasive communication to help launch the revolutionary clothing company Stitch Fix. **Balancing the Three Types of Persuasive Appeals** Expanded with an introduction to the three classical appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos. **New highlight box:** Apply Your Skills Now: Making Difficult Requests
Chapter 13: Finding, Evaluating, and Processing Information	**Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing** Offers expanded step-by-step advice for paraphrasing source materials. **New highlight box:** Intelligent Communication Technology: Finding Meaning with Text Mining
Chapter 14: Planning Reports and Proposals	**New Communication Close-Up** that highlights how John Deere uses its annual reports to communicate effectively with its diverse stakeholders.



#officemove

jessica created this channel on February 21st. This is the very beginning of the #officemove channel.

February 21st

jessica 12:29 PM
I'd like to lobby (strongly) for higher cubicle partitions in the new office space. We already have a noise problem here, and the new space is twice the size with potentially twice the number of people in it. Thoughts?

george 12:33 PM
I agree about the noise factor. My concerns are cost (as usual!) and effectiveness. Looks like 6' panels are nearly 25% more expensive than 5' panels. Will that little bit of extra height really make a difference in sound levels?

jessica 12:55 PM
Well, I'm in the every-little-bit helps camps, to be honest. Are we locked into this supplier? I can look into other options, possibly cheaper?

lilimin 1:03 PM
Are we still getting the quiet zones?

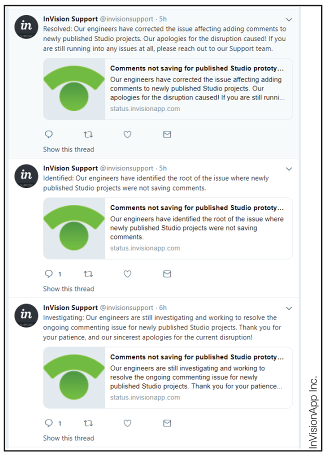
george 1:04 PM
Yes. The architects think they can fit 6 around perimeter.

lilimin 1:06 PM
Six?? Aren't we forecasting 100-120 people in this space by end of next year?

george 1:08 PM
I realize it's not ideal. If we could afford it, everybody would have a private space.

Courtesy of Panasonic

Chapter 15: Writing and Completing Reports and Proposals	**New Communication Close-Up** on McKinsey & Company's innovative *Five Fifty* report format, which combines mobile-friendly five-minute overviews with in-depth analytical reports.
Chapter 16: Developing Presentations in a Social Media Environment	**Ensuring Successful Team Presentations** New section on planning, rehearsing, and delivering team presentations.
Chapter 17: Enhancing Presentations with Slides and Other Visuals	**Using Presentation Software to Create Visual Reports** New section with advice on creating visual reports using presentation software.
Chapter 18: Building Careers and Writing Résumés	**Finding the Ideal Opportunity in Today's Job Market** Updated with advice on dealing with AI during the job search and cleaning up one's digital footprint. **Building Your Network** Updated with more advice on becoming a valued career networker. **Addressing Areas of Concern** Updated advice on handling frequent job changes and a criminal record when writing one's résumé. **References** New section on the three types of references every job seeker needs to prepare. **Building an Effective LinkedIn Profile** Major new section on preparing a compelling LinkedIn presence. **New highlight box:** Intelligent Communication Technology: Make Friends with the Résumé Bots
Chapter 19: Applying and Interviewing for Employment	**New Communication Close-Up** featuring Erica Joy Baker's efforts to encourage companies to adopt more-inclusive and better-informed hiring practices. **Understanding the Interviewing Process** Streamlined to two stages, *screening* and *selection*. **Common Types of Interviews and Interview Questions** Reorganized to clarify various types of interviews and interview questions. **Behavioral Interview Questions** Updated with new examples and coverage of the STAR tactic for answering questions. **Case Interviews and Take-Home Assessments** New coverage of these assessment methods. **Interviewing by Phone** Extensive advice on successful phone interviews. **Interviewing by Video** Extensive advice on successful video interviews. **New highlight box:** Intelligent Communication Technology: Getting Comfortable with AI-Assisted Recruiting and Interviewing **New highlight box:** Intelligent Communication Technology: Improving Fairness and Finding Better Talent with Blind Auditions



InVision Support @invisionsupport · 5h

Resolved: Our engineers have corrected the issue affecting adding comments to newly published Studio projects. Our apologies for the disruption caused! If you are still running into any issues at all, please reach out to our Support team.

Comments not saving for published Studio prototy...

Our engineers have corrected the issue affecting adding comments to newly published Studio projects. Our apologies for the disruption caused! If you are still runni...

status.invisionapp.com

Show this thread

InVision Support @invisionsupport · 5h

Identified: Our engineers have identified the root of the issue where newly published Studio projects were not saving comments.

Comments not saving for published Studio prototy...

Our engineers have identified the root of the issue where newly published Studio projects were not saving comments.

status.invisionapp.com

1

Show this thread

InVision Support @invisionsupport · 6h

Investigating: Our engineers are still investigating and working to resolve the ongoing commenting issue for newly published Studio projects. Thank you for your patience, and our sincerest apologies for the current disruption!

Comments not saving for published Studio prototy...

Our engineers are still investigating and working to resolve the ongoing commenting issue for newly published Studio projects. Thank you for your patience...

status.invisionapp.com

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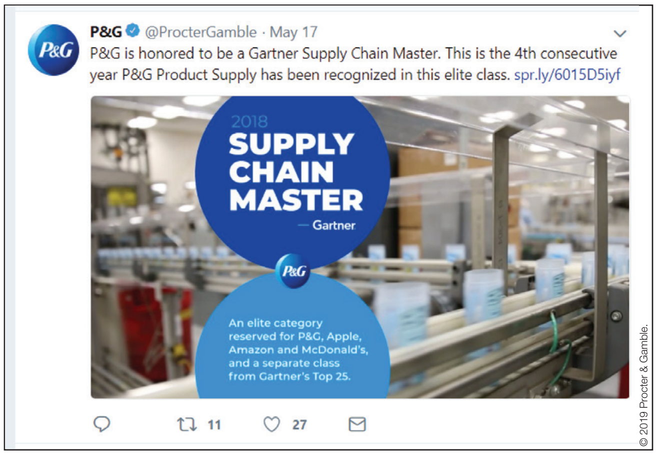
Show this thread

InVisionApp Inc.



P&G @ProcterGamble · May 17

P&G is honored to be a Gartner Supply Chain Master. This is the 4th consecutive year P&G Product Supply has been recognized in this elite class. spr.ly/6015D5iyf

2018
SUPPLY CHAIN MASTER
— Gartner
P&G
An elite category reserved for P&G, Apple, Amazon and McDonald's, and a separate class from Gartner's Top 25.

11

27

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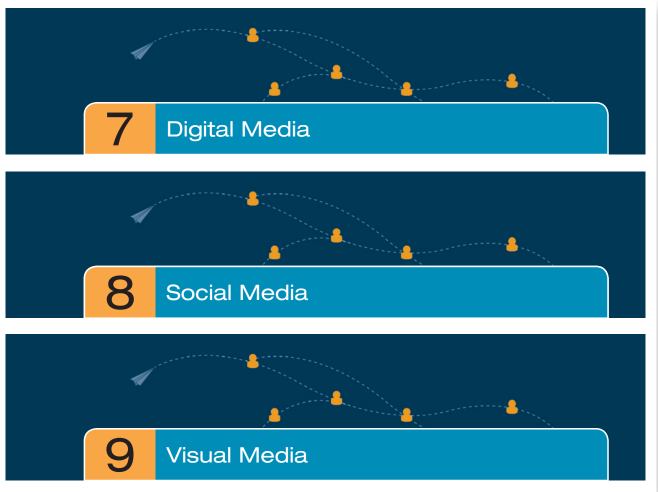
Solving Learning and Teaching Challenges

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

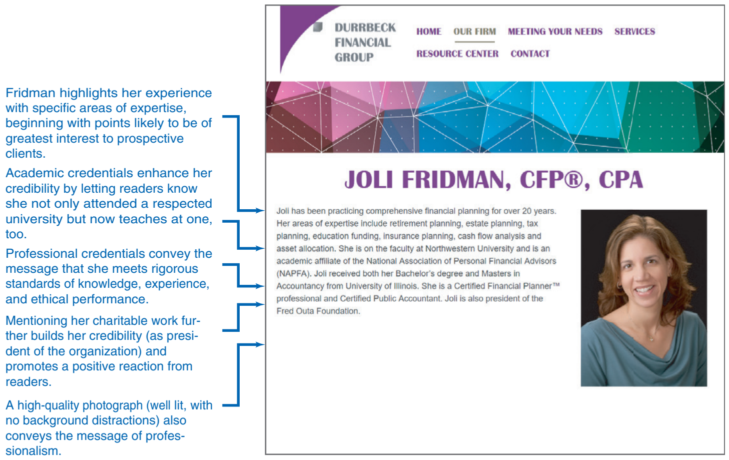


Helping Students Adapt Their Media Habits to the Demands of the Work Environment

Today's students have plenty of experience with digital, social, and visual media, but not all that experience translates well to the business world. *Business Communication Today* shows students how to apply what they already know about media usage—and which habits they need to develop or change to succeed as professionals.

Providing Detailed Opportunities to Learn by Example

Annotated model documents show students the specific ways that communication efforts can succeed or fail, making it easy to apply these lessons to their own messages. *Business Communication Today* is packed with a mix of carefully chosen examples from professional communicators and original material created to illustrate specific concepts.



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.

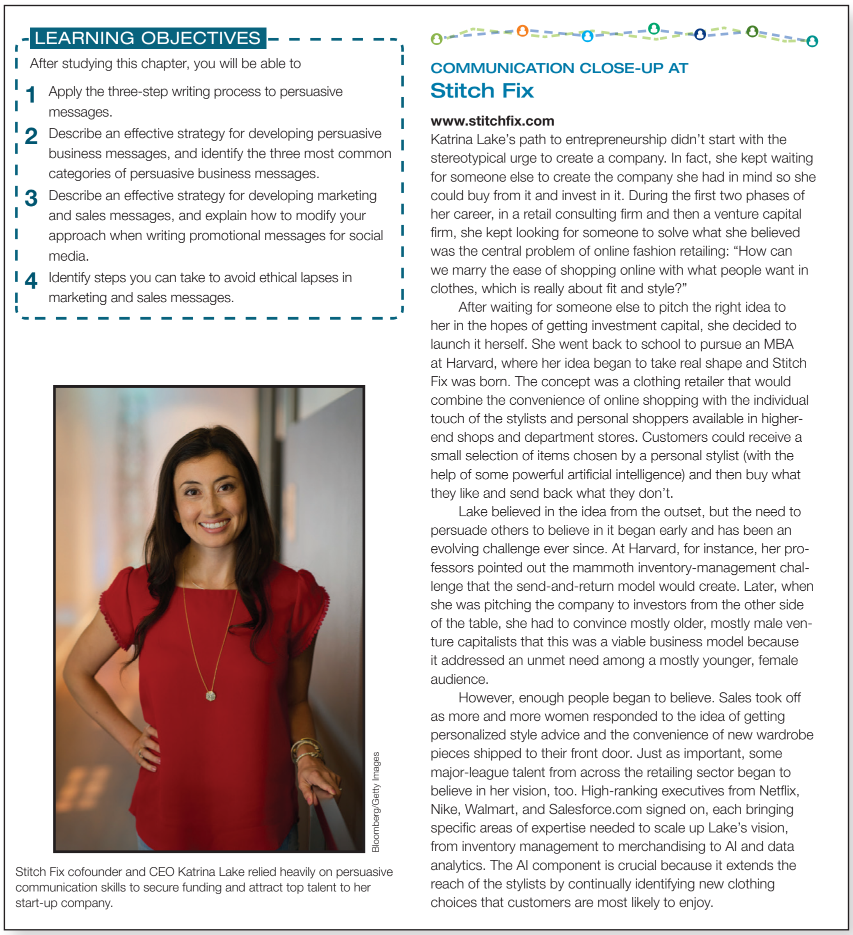
Mentioning her charitable work further builds her credibility (as president of the organization) and promotes a positive reaction from readers.

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

Figure 5.2 Building Credibility
In her profile page on her company's website, financial advisor Joli Fridman builds her credibility with a variety of specific, concrete statements. Notice how every statement packs a punch; there is no filler or "fluff."

Giving Students Real-Life Skills and Real-Life Perspectives

All the skills guidance in the text is presented in the context of real-life applications, often featuring companies that students already know. Students can see how today's professionals use the same skills they will learn in the course.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

1. Apply the three-step writing process to persuasive messages.
2. Describe an effective strategy for developing persuasive business messages, and identify the three most common categories of persuasive business messages.
3. Describe an effective strategy for developing marketing and sales messages, and explain how to modify your approach when writing promotional messages for social media.
4. Identify steps you can take to avoid ethical lapses in marketing and sales messages.

Bloomberg/Getty Images

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.

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT

Stitch Fix

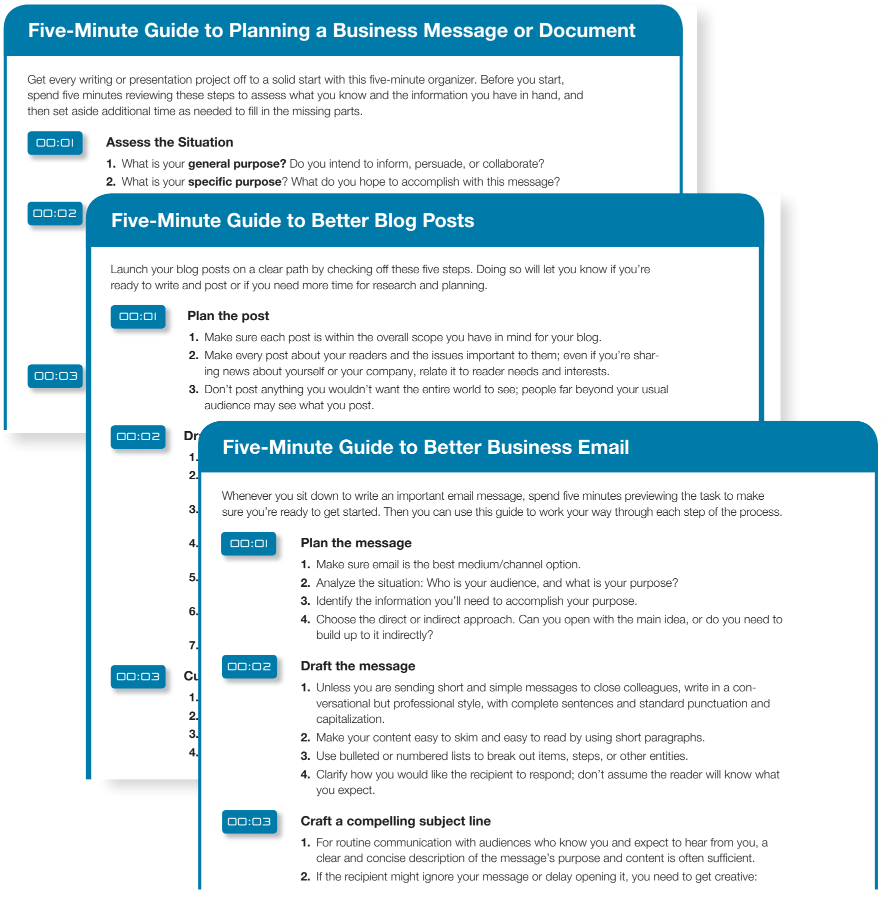
www.stitchfix.com

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) and 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 evolving challenge ever since. At Harvard, for instance, her professors pointed out the mammoth inventory-management challenge that the send-and-return model would create. Later, when she was pitching the company to investors from the other side of the table, she had to convince mostly older, mostly male venture capitalists that this was a viable business model because it addressed an unmet need among a mostly younger, female audience.

However, enough people began to believe. Sales took off as more and more women responded to the idea of getting personalized style advice and the convenience of new wardrobe pieces shipped to their front door. Just as important, some major-league talent from across the retailing sector began to believe in her vision, too. High-ranking executives from Netflix, Nike, Walmart, and Salesforce.com signed on, each bringing specific areas of expertise needed to scale up Lake's vision, from inventory management to merchandising to AI and data analytics. The AI component is crucial because it extends the reach of the stylists by continually identifying new clothing choices that customers are most likely to enjoy.



Five-Minute Guide to Planning a Business Message or Document

Get every writing or presentation project off to a solid start with this five-minute organizer. Before you start, spend five minutes reviewing these steps to assess what you know and the information you have in hand, and then set aside additional time as needed to fill in the missing parts.

00:01 **Assess the Situation**

1. What is your **general purpose?** Do you intend to inform, persuade, or collaborate?
2. What is your **specific purpose**? What do you hope to accomplish with this message?

00:02

00:03

Five-Minute Guide to Better Blog Posts

Launch your blog posts on a clear path by checking off these five steps. Doing so will let you know if you're ready to write and post or if you need more time for research and planning.

00:01 **Plan the post**

1. Make sure each post is within the overall scope you have in mind for your blog.
2. Make every post about your readers and the issues important to them; even if you're sharing news about yourself or your company, relate it to reader needs and interests.
3. Don't post anything you wouldn't want the entire world to see; people far beyond your usual audience may see what you post.

00:02 **Dr**

00:03 **Cu**

Five-Minute Guide to Better Business Email

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.

00:01 **Plan the message**

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 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 messages to close colleagues, write in a conversational but professional style, with complete sentences and standard punctuation and capitalization.
2. Make your content easy to skim and easy to read by using short paragraphs.
3. Use bulleted or numbered lists to break out items, steps, or other entities.
4. Clarify how you would like the recipient to respond; don't assume the reader will know what you expect.

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

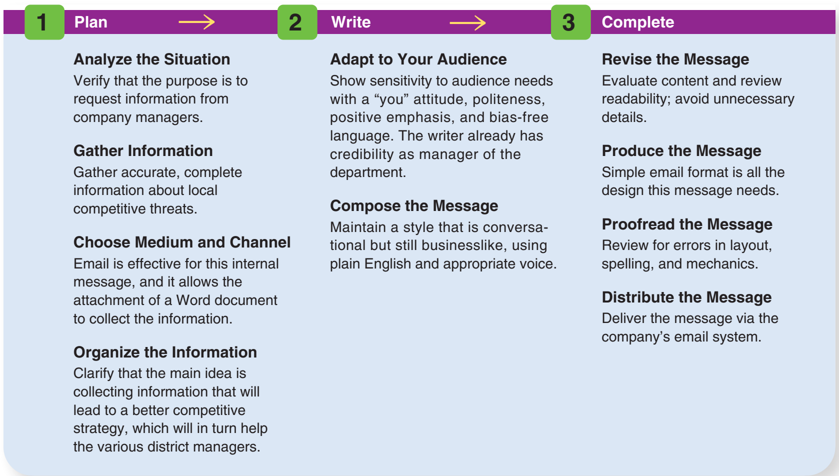
1. For routine communication with audiences who know you and expect to hear from you, a clear and concise description of the message's purpose and content is often sufficient.
2. If the recipient might ignore your message or delay opening it, you need to get creative:

Helping Students Apply Their Skills in Other Courses and on the Job

Remembering the essential steps of a task months or years after learning them is always a challenge. 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.

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 *Business Communication Today*, they never have to feel lost or waste time figuring out what to do next.



1 Plan →

Analyze the Situation
Verify that the purpose is to request information from company managers.

Gather Information
Gather accurate, complete information about local competitive threats.

Choose Medium and Channel
Email is effective for this internal message, and it allows the attachment of a Word document to collect the information.

Organize the Information
Clarify that the main idea is collecting information that will lead to a better competitive strategy, which will in turn help the various district managers.

2 Write →

Adapt to Your Audience
Show sensitivity to audience needs with a "you" attitude, politeness, positive emphasis, and bias-free language. The writer already has credibility as manager of the department.

Compose the Message
Maintain a style that is conversational but still businesslike, using plain English and appropriate voice.

3 Complete

Revise the Message
Evaluate content and review readability; avoid unnecessary details.

Produce the Message
Simple email format is all the design this message needs.

Proofread the Message
Review for errors in layout, spelling, and mechanics.

Distribute the Message
Deliver the message via the company's email system.

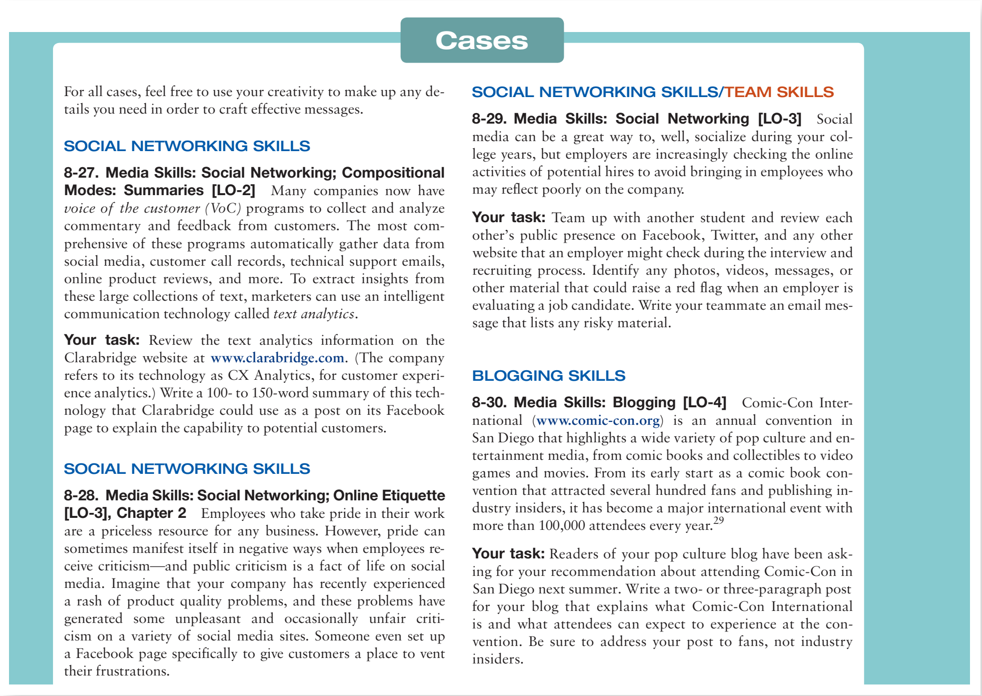
Providing Unique Insights with Original Coverage

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.

COMPOSITIONAL MODES FOR DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

As you practice using various media and channels in this course, it's best to focus on the fundamentals of planning, writing, and completing messages, rather than on the specific details of any one medium or system.[2] 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 or more of nine *compositional modes*:

- **Conversations.** Although they take place via writing, some forms of digital communication function more like real-time conversations than the sharing of written documents. "Business Messaging," starting on page 200, explores this important and growing 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, whether it's 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 are offering criticism, keep it constructive. Angry rants and insults won't help anyone, and they brand you as unprofessional.
- **Orientations.** The ability to help people find their way through an unfamiliar system or subject is a valuable writing skill and a talent that readers greatly appreciate. Unlike summaries (see the next item), orientations don't give away the key points in the collection of information but rather tell readers where to find those points. Writing effective orientations can be a delicate balancing act because you need to know the material well 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 document, giving readers all the key points while skipping over details (see Figure 7.1). At the end of an article or webpage, a summary functions as a review, reminding readers of the key points they've just read.



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

8-27. 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. (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

8-28. Media Skills: Social Networking; Online Etiquette [LO-3], Chapter 2 Employees who take pride in their work are a priceless resource for any business. However, pride can sometimes manifest itself in negative ways when employees receive criticism—and public criticism is a fact of life on 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 their frustrations.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS/TEAM SKILLS

8-29. Media Skills: Social Networking [LO-3] Social media can be a great way to, well, socialize during your college years, but employers are increasingly checking 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, 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.

BLOGGING SKILLS

8-30. Media Skills: Blogging [LO-4] Comic-Con International (www.comic-con.org) is an annual convention in San Diego that highlights a wide variety of pop culture and entertainment media, from comic books and collectibles to video games and movies. From its early start as a comic book convention that attracted several hundred fans and publishing industry insiders, it has become a major international event with more than 100,000 attendees every year.[29]

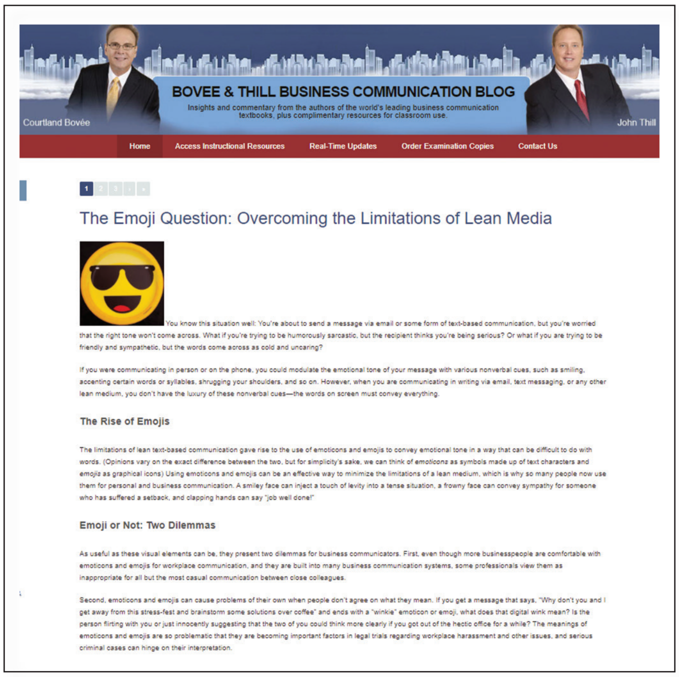
Your task: Readers of your pop culture blog have been asking for your recommendation about attending Comic-Con in San Diego next summer. Write a two- or three-paragraph post for your blog that explains what Comic-Con International is and what attendees can expect to experience at the convention. Be sure to address your post to fans, not industry insiders.

Offering a Wide Range of Assessment and Skill-Development Opportunities

Hundreds of realistic exercises, activities, and cases give students multiple opportunities 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, including media usage and team skills.


BOVEE & THILL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION BLOG
Insights and commentary from the authors of the world's leading business communication textbooks, plus complimentary resources for classroom use.
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John Thill
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1 2 3 › »

The Emoji Question: Overcoming the Limitations of Lean Media

You know this situation well: You're about to send a message via email or some form of text-based communication, but you're worried that the right tone won't come across. What if you're trying to be humorously sarcastic, but the recipient thinks you're being serious? Or what if you are trying to be friendly and sympathetic, but the words come across as cold and uncaring?

If you were communicating in person or on the phone, you could modulate the emotional tone of your message with various nonverbal cues, such as smiling, accenting certain words or syllables, shrugging your shoulders, and so on. However, when you are communicating in writing via email, text messaging, or any other lean medium, you don't have the luxury of these nonverbal cues—the words on screen must convey everything.

The Rise of Emojis

The limitations of lean text-based communication gave rise to the use of emoticons and emojis to convey emotional tone in a way that can be difficult to do with words. (Opinions vary on the exact difference between the two, but for simplicity's sake, we can think of *emoticons* as symbols made up of text characters and *emojis* as graphical icons) Using emoticons and emojis can be an effective way to minimize the limitations of a lean medium, which is why so many people now use them for personal and business communication. A smiley face can inject a touch of levity into a tense situation, a frowny face can convey sympathy for someone who has suffered a setback, and clapping hands can say "job well done!"

Emoji or Not: Two Dilemmas

As useful as these visual elements can be, they present two dilemmas for business communicators. First, even though more businesspeople are comfortable with emoticons and emojis for workplace communication, and they are built into many business communication systems, some professionals view them as inappropriate for all but the most casual communication between close colleagues.

Second, emoticons and emojis can cause problems of their own when people don't agree on what they mean. If you get a message that says, "Why don't you and I get away from this stress-fest and brainstorm some solutions over coffee" and ends with a "winkie" emoticon or emoji, what does that digital wink mean? Is the person flirting with you or just innocently suggesting that the two of you could think more clearly if you got out of the hectic office for a while? The meanings of emoticons and emojis are so problematic that they are becoming important factors in legal trials regarding workplace harassment and other issues, and serious criminal cases can hinge on their interpretation.

Supporting Instructors with Free Resources

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

- Sponsored instructor communities on LinkedIn and Facebook with nearly two thousand members
- Tips and techniques in *Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Blog* and Twitter feed
- The Bovée & Thill channel on YouTube
- Videos and PowerPoint presentations on SlideShare
- Hundreds of infographics, videos, articles, podcasts, and PowerPoints on the Business Communication Pictorial Gallery on Pinterest
- The Ultimate Guide to Resources for Teaching Business Communication
- Eleven curated magazines for business communication on Scoop.it

Links to all these services and resources can be found at blog.businesscommunicationnetwork.com/resources.

DEVELOPING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

In addition to helping students develop a full range of communication skills, *Business Communication Today* boosts 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.

For more information and resources, please visit www.pearson.com

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About the Authors

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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.

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 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 desiged 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

		Stage 1: Succeeding in College			
	Textbook Feature	**In This Course**	**In Other Courses**	**Stage 2: Conducting a Successful Job Search**	**Stage 3: Succeeding in Your First Job**
Beginning of chapter	**Learning Objectives**	Use these to focus your study and review			
	Communication Close-Up	See how the pros use chapter concepts		Get a sense of life on the job in various professions	
Within the chapter	**Margin notes**	Scan to get a quick review of the chapter			
	Figures	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
	Tables	Get quick summaries of important topics, such as writing effective email messages	Get quick summaries of important topics	Get quick summaries of important topics	Get quick summaries of important topics
	Mobile App highlights	Many of these apps can help with school work	Many of these apps can help with school work	Use selected apps to help in your job search	Use the apps on the job
	Checklists	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
	Highlight boxes	*Apply Your Skills Now* helps you apply communication skills in and out of class	*Apply Your Skills Now* helps you apply communication skills in and out of class	*Developing as a Professional* gets you ready for the world of work	*Intelligent Communication Technology* and *Practicing Ethical Communication* prepare you for the job
End of chapter	**Communication Challenges**	Solve realistic challenges from the company profiled in the chapter-opening Close-Up			
	Key Terms glossary	Quickly refer to important terms			
	Summary of Learning Objectives	Test your recall of chapter content			
	Test Your Knowledge	Confirm your recall of essential ideas from the chapter			
	Apply Your Knowledge	Analyze communication scenarios to hone your insights			
	Practice Your Skills	Practice chapter skills in a variety of challenges			
	Expand Your Skills	Critique professional communication efforts and find career advice			
	Build Your Career	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
	Cases (selected chapters)	Practice crafting professional-quality messages and documents		Use the *Portfolio Builder* cases to expand your employment portfolio	
	Five-Minute Guides (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 18 to prepare and update your résumé	
Online	**MyLab Business Communication**	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.

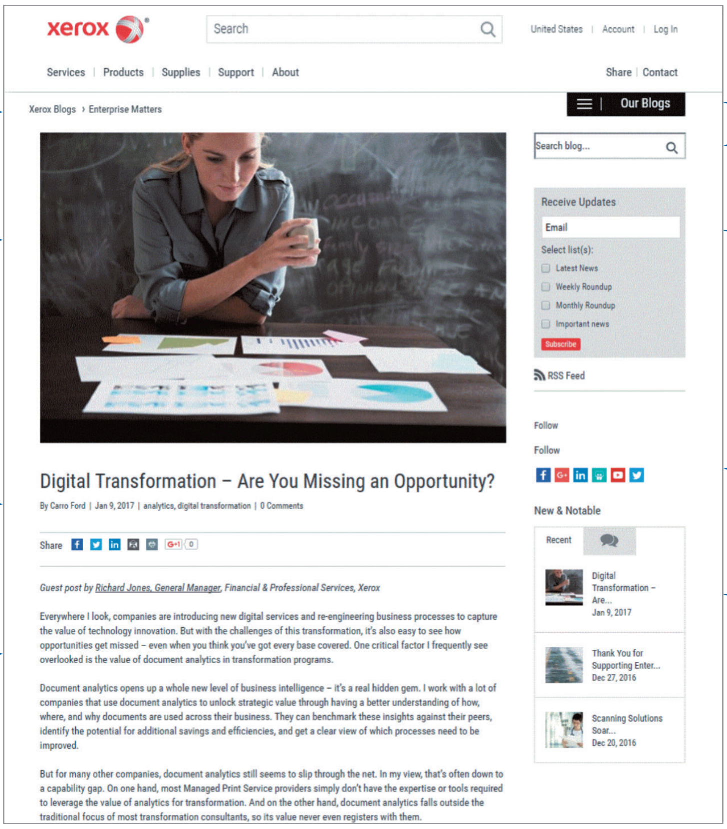
As you read each chapter, take time to study the examples and model documents (see Figure 1 on the next page). This book offers dozens of realistic examples of business messages, many with notes along the sides that explain strong and weak points. Some are messages from real companies; others were created 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.

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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Digital Transformation – Are You Missing an Opportunity?

By Carro Ford | Jan 9, 2017 | analytics, digital transformation | 0 Comments

Guest post by Richard Jones, General Manager, Financial & Professional Services, Xerox

Everywhere I look, companies are introducing new digital services and re-engineering business processes to capture the value of technology innovation. But with the challenges of this transformation, it's also easy to see how opportunities get missed – even when you think you've got every base covered. One critical factor I frequently see overlooked is the value of document analytics in transformation programs.

Document analytics opens up a whole new level of business intelligence – it's a real hidden gem. I work with a lot of companies that use document analytics to unlock strategic value through having a better understanding of how, where, and why documents are used across their business. They can benchmark these insights against their peers, identify the potential for additional savings and efficiencies, and get a clear view of which processes need to be improved.

But for many other companies, document analytics still seems to slip through the net. In my view, that's often down to a capability gap. On one hand, most Managed Print Service providers simply don't have the expertise or tools required to leverage the value of analytics for transformation. And on the other hand, document analytics falls outside the traditional focus of most transformation consultants, so its value never even registers with them.

The "bread crumb" navigation trail helps visitors see where they are in the website.

A color photo and a compelling headline invite readers into the post.

Readers can click on this post's tags (*analytics* and *digital transformation*) to find other posts on these topics.

The writing style is "business casual," hitting the balance between formal and informal.

This menu provides quick links to other Xerox blogs.

The prominent search box makes it easy to find posts on a particular topic.

Visitors can opt in to receive updates in a variety of formats.

Social media links make it easy to follow the company on a variety of platforms.

Visitors can explore the most-recent and most-discussed posts on the blog.

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.

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.

- **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 4 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.

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.

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 19 Build Your Career activities (see the end of each chapter) show you how to build your job-search package one step at 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.

Chapters 18 and 19 are dedicated to employment-related communication, including writing your résumé and preparing for interviews. 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 these skills, 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.

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.

- **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?

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 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?

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.

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 to have 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.	______	______	______	______

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 employers, colleagues, and clients.

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 540) can function as your portfolio home, your college may offer portfolio hosting, or you might consider one of the many commercial portfolio hosting services.

Throughout this course, pay close attention to the assignments marked "Portfolio Builder," which start in Chapter 7. 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 you 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 18, 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.

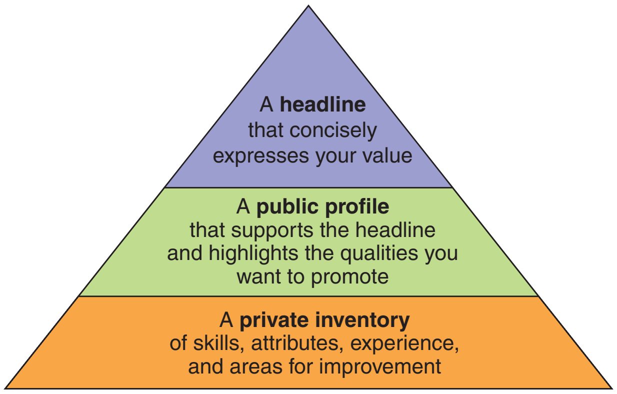
A **headline** that concisely expresses your value
A **public profile** that supports the headline and highlights the qualities you want to promote
A **private inventory** of skills, attributes, experience, and areas for improvement

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.

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 529).

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 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.