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
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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.

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

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.
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<tr>
<td>Chapter 16: Developing Presentations in a Social Media Environment</td>
<td>Ensuring Successful Team Presentations New section on planning, rehearsing, and delivering team presentations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 17: Enhancing Presentations with Slides and Other Visuals</td>
<td>Using Presentation Software to Create Visual Reports New section with advice on creating visual reports using presentation software.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 18: Building Careers and Writing Résumés</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

**Solving Learning and Teaching Challenges**

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.
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

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

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 gaining 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 liked 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 the 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.

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?

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 any post or if you need more time for research and planning.

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, make it reader need 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.

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 walk your way through each step of the process.

1. Make sure the 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?

Draft the message

1. Unless you are sending short and simple messages to close colleagues, write in a conventional 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. Avoid long blocks of text.
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.

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.
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. 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:

1. **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.

2. **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.

3. **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.”

4. **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.

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.

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.
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; Online Etiquette [LO-3], Chapter 2 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.

Your task: Readers of your pop culture blog have been asking for your recommendation about attending Comic-Con in San Diego that highlights a wide variety of pop culture and entertainment media. 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.

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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

Acknowledgments

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REVIEWERS OF THE CURRENT EDITION

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Courtland L. Bovée
John V. Thill
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 the 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.
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 designed to help you in three valuable ways.

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

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

3. LAUNCH YOUR CAREER
The bulk of this course is devoted to the communication and media skills you will need to use as soon as you enter (or reenter) the workforce. Succeed in your first job, and you’ll be on your way to a rewarding career!
# TABLE 1 Textbook Features to Help You at Every Stage of College and Career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textbook Feature</th>
<th>Stage 1: Succeeding in College</th>
<th>Stage 2: Conducting a Successful Job Search</th>
<th>Stage 3: Succeeding in Your First Job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Objectives</strong></td>
<td>Use these to focus your study and review</td>
<td>Get a sense of life on the job in various professions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Close-Up</strong></td>
<td>See how the pros use chapter concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Margin notes</strong></td>
<td>Scan to get a quick review of the chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Figures</strong></td>
<td>Study model documents to see what works and what doesn’t</td>
<td>Use model letters and résumés to build your job search package</td>
<td>Use model documents to craft better documents on the job</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tables</strong></td>
<td>Get quick summaries of important topics, such as writing effective email messages</td>
<td>Get quick summaries of important topics</td>
<td>Get quick summaries of important topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobile App highlights</strong></td>
<td>Many of these apps can help with school work</td>
<td>Many of these apps can help with school work</td>
<td>Use selected apps to help in your job search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Checklists</strong></td>
<td>Confirm understanding of each section</td>
<td>Use for a quick review if needed when writing</td>
<td>Use for a quick review if needed when writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highlight boxes</strong></td>
<td>Apply Your Skills Now helps you apply communication skills in and out of class</td>
<td>Apply Your Skills Now helps you apply communication skills in and out of class</td>
<td>Developing as a Professional gets you ready for the world of work</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Challenges</strong></td>
<td>Solve realistic challenges from the company profiled in the chapter-opening Close-Up</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key Terms glossary</strong></td>
<td>Quickly refer to important terms</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Summary of Learning Objectives</strong></td>
<td>Test your recall of chapter content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Test Your Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Confirm your recall of essential ideas from the chapter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Apply Your Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Analyze communication scenarios to hone your insights</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Practice Your Skills</strong></td>
<td>Practice chapter skills in a variety of challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expand Your Skills</strong></td>
<td>Critique professional communication efforts and find career advice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Build Your Career</strong></td>
<td>Use the exercise in each chapter to build your employment package</td>
<td>By the time you get to the employment chapters, you’ll have a head start on your résumé package</td>
<td>Use these techniques to adjust your employment package as you progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cases (selected chapters)</strong></td>
<td>Practice crafting professional-quality messages and documents</td>
<td>Use the Portfolio Builder cases to expand your employment portfolio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Five-Minute Guides</strong></td>
<td>Get quick reminders of how to accomplish important tasks</td>
<td>Use these for communication tasks in other classes, too</td>
<td>Use the guide in Chapter 18 to prepare and update your résumé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MyLab Business Communication</strong></td>
<td>Use this optional online system for customized learning and more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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
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.
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 a time. Do the activity in each chapter, and by the time you finish the book, you’ll have the materials you need to start your job search.

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.
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.
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.

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**TABLE 2 Career Planning Self-Assessment**

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

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**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.

**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.