Managerial Communication

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To our spouses and immediate family members:
Our heartfelt thanks for allowing unfettered time on weekends
to work on the book and for your patient support.

—Reginald and Jeanette

Abstract

Managerial Communication explores what the communication managers actually do in business across the planning, organizing, leading, and controlling functions. The top, middle, and frontline communications in which managers engage is also discussed. All of the levels of communication (intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational, and intercultural) play a role in managerial communication; therefore, these levels are explained thoroughly in Chapter 2, but are relevant in all chapters. As we expound, for example, on theories of communication we relate them to the theories of management such as crisis management, impression management, equity theory, and effective presentation skills. These are the skills that are invaluable to management; you will begin to appreciate the depth and breadth of the painstaking effort we took to explicate these important topics. Our book, therefore, brings communication to the forefront of management theory because it is our belief that management cannot function without the particular techniques of communication covered in *Managerial Communication.*

Keywords

Contents

Preface

Purpose

Managerial Communication is the first book of its kind to offer a unique functions approach to managerial communication. Readers are engaged by a focus on theory and application that will help managers and future managers understand the practices of management communication. *Managerial Communication* combines ideas from industry experts, popular culture, news events, and academic articles and books written by leading scholars. It merges popular communication theories with broadly accepted management theories to provide practical solutions to managerial problems that occur across the functional areas and tiers of management.

Contents

The book includes 12 chapters (5 appendixes are included in the instructor's manual) emphasizing the essentials of managerial communications for top, middle, and frontline managers engaged in the four functional areas of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling.

The book is especially useful for managers and mid-career working adults enrolled in MBA programs, as there are many examples to which they can relate. The materials will also serve as guideposts for professors doing research and teaching in the managerial communications field. Professors with little or no industry experience will find the chapters' contents replete with workplace examples. Professionals and future managers will find the contents of the book engaging and refreshing due to the real-world approach. Currently, there is a gap between academic research and business practice linking managerial problems to communications solutions. This book sheds light on particular techniques of management communication as they are used by people engaged in managing others at each level of the organization and across the various functional areas.

Managerial Communication Instructor's Manual

PowerPoint (PPT) slides for each chapter are included, which highlight the concepts of each chapter. The PPT is accessible from Business Expert Press by request from persons who will use the book for teaching purposes. In addition, the test questions are also available from Business Expert Press. Test items include structured-response and essay items. Questions and cases assessing mental abilities at the higher levels of the cognitive domain (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels) are emphasized.

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Acknowledgments

Thanks to our Editor

CHAPTER 1

The Nature of Managerial Communication

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. explain how management and communication formed managerial communication;
2. explain how managers use managerial communication to motivate;
3. explain the need for communication policies;
4. identify the processes of group or team communication in traditional and virtual environments.

Introduction

Your success as a manager depends on your ability to communicate effectively. In today's global economy, that is not easy due to technology producing more information, complicating the way people from different countries and cultures communicate, as well as how they communicate with people with various business specialities. The ability to sift through all of the information, cultures, disciplines, and understanding is time consuming, and the amount of information processed is but one of many barriers to communication that exist. This book is a guidepost through those barriers that will help you focus your managerial communication (MC) to make your organization as efficient as possible.

As a manager, you need strong communication competency to work with diverse groups of people in an ever-changing global work world. It takes a great deal of skill to both manage and communicate well. Understanding how the disciplines of management and communication have

come together to form MC will help you understand the importance of MC in the organization.

Origins of Managerial Communication

When people think of *management*, they think of it as something people do in an organization to get things done. *Management* is the "act or art of managing: the conducting or supervising of something (as a business)" or "the judicious use of a means to accomplish an end" (Merriam-Webster's online 2014). When people think of *communication*, they think of message exchanges between a source and a receiver. The basic definition of *communication* is "to make commonly understood." Therefore, MC is the use of management and communication skills to make information commonly understood in order to accomplish organizational goals.

The fields of management and communication continue to evolve through scientific investigation. The two fields were a fledgling collection of ideas in the 1900s. Compared to the more ancient fields, like philosophy or mathematics, management and communication are still infant fields of study. However, management and communication have advanced through scientific investigation.

Management

The management theories we use today developed over time. The field of management employs the classical approaches that include perspectives on scientific management principles, administrative management, bureaucratic management, behaviorism, human relations, and so on. Contemporary approaches include perspectives on quality circles, organizational behavior, quantitative analysis, and contingency theories. The classical perspective, pioneered by Frederick W. Taylor shown in the photo at the bottom left of this page, is often referred to as Theory X, where managers felt their

subordinates had nothing to offer the company except their manual labors. The behavioral perspective is referred to as Theory Y, where managers began to realize that the workers could be a source of assistance if encouraged to do so. The human relations perspective, Theory Z, involved the quality circle approach to managing.

Management scholars agree that contributions by people like Max Weber, Henri Fayol (shown in the photo at the top right of this page), Frederick W. Taylor, Chester I. Barnard, Herbert Simon (shown in the photo at the top left on the next page), Elton Mayo, and W. Edwards Deming helped to shape the field of management. In fact, their books are considered by many to be the most influential management books of the 20th century (Bedeian and Wren 2001). Frederick W. Taylor's work revolutionized early American industrial organizations leading to the scientific management approach. Elton Mayo's and Fritz Roethlisberger's work at the Hawthorne plant in Illinois is largely responsible for shaping managers' understanding of the direct effect that social interaction has on productivity in the workforce, thus ushering in the human relations movement. Edward Deming's research on quality circles and teams further revolutionized management theory. The field of management evolved largely from the ideas of these people.

Communication

Communication study grew out of the management field. The National Communication Association defines communication as "a group of instructional programs that focus on how messages in various media are produced, used, and interpreted within and across different contexts, channels, and cultures, and that prepare individuals to apply communication knowledge and skills professionally" (Morreale and Backlund 2002, 7). Peter F. Drucker (1954), shown in the photo at the bottom right of this page, argued that management was the effective use of motivation and communication, one of five basic tasks of the manager.

Moreover, it was in the 1950s that communication studies began to concentrate on an individual's relations with other individuals (Morreale and Backlund 2002). Along with management studies, communication studies revealed evidence that workers could help improve operations when their ideas were considered. Communication studies became more relationship oriented. Communication is so important that the International Organization for Standardization (ISO 9001) standards require an effective use of communication.

To gain and maintain ISO certification, an organization must demonstrate that effective communication is maintained. As study of the fields of management and communication evolved concurrently, practitioners became increasingly aware that communication is an essential competency for managers and their subordinates.

Managerial Communication

The study of management and communications theories that work together at all levels of the organization to inform, persuade, or entertain is MC. Morreale, Rubin, and Jones (1994) listed as part of interpersonal and group communication skills, the study of relationship management. Managers must control conflict, allow others to express different views, know how to effectively be assertive, analyze situations, and exchange information. Managers who practice these skills successfully are effective communicators. The role of effective MC in the workplace is to help the firm succeed.

The Role of Managerial Communication

In the workplace, managers play many complex roles: mind reader, detective, analyst, pundit, and fortune-teller. But managers are only human, and they need two-way communication to truly know what is happening in their workplace. A manager's worst communication error is to assume everyone has and understands the information that has been conveyed. On the flip side, as any help wanted ad will prove, a manager's most important competence—and the one most executives look for in college graduates—is the ability to communicate. Using writing, speaking, listening, and nonverbal skills effectively to translate organizational ideas into productive worker actions contributes directly to a healthy bottom line.

A successful communication is an understood message that achieves what the sender intended, and leaves the sender and receiver on good terms. These successful communication criteria are consistent with Barnard's (1968) view on coordinated systems of organizational control and the most important function of the executive (Zuboff 1988). In this role, managers assure the downward, horizontal, and upward exchange of

information, and transmission of meaning through informal or formal channels that enable goal achievement (Bell and Martin 2008).

Effective MC is imperative to achieving the mission of any company, and no manager can succeed in the classic management functions of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling without it. By communicating effectively at all levels—top, middle, and on the frontline, as well as across internal boundaries and interculturally—a manager can help the organization exert a positive influence on the community in which it is located and be as profitable as possible for its owners.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, communication theorists wrote articles that defined the boundaries of several professional disciplines in the field of communication (Shelby 1993). Because of scientific investigation in professional communication, the discipline is divided into four areas: organizational, business, corporate, and managerial communications. These areas are not exactly mutually exclusive (managers can be engaged in two or more of these types of communication simultaneously), but they are distinct enough to be considered separate disciplines within the field.

Four Types of Workplace Communication

Organizational communication is the study of how in a complex, system-oriented environment people send and receive information within the organization and the effect that it has on organizational structure. The type of communication focused on at the organizational level would include improving coordinated systems of control.

Business communication is focused on studying the basic use of both written and oral skills. For example, business communication will focus on developing the fundamental concepts of written communication principles, such as grammar, unity, emphasis, coherence, construction of standard documents used in a business environment—that is, bad news and good news letters—progress reports, reprimands, and such. Business communication overlaps with managerial and corporate communication in that these documents are what form the history of the corporation.

Corporate communication focuses on creating a desired world reputation and image of the organization. For example, the duties of a director of corporate communications would include the task of overseeing the writing of the company's external documents such as the annual report.
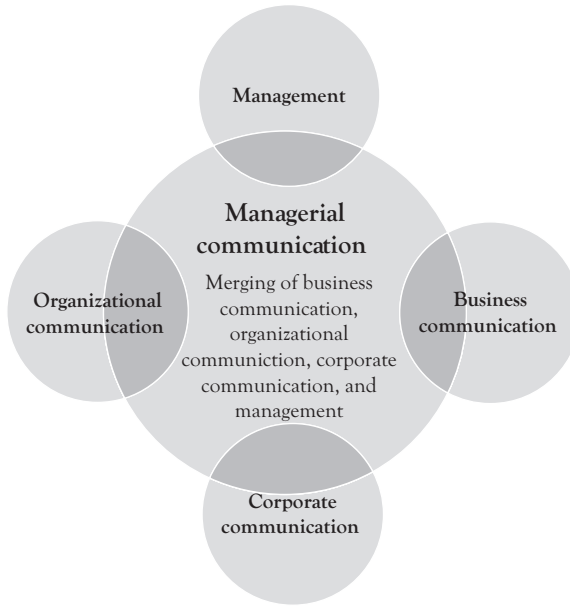
Figure 1.1 Managerial communication overlap

MC merges business communication, organizational communication, corporate communication, and management. Figure 1.1 illustrates how management and the other three communications are interdependent with MC emerging as the main communication in the workplace.

MC combines the management and communication theories in the workplace to help managers function as planners, organizers, leaders, and controllers of a company's limited resources to achieve the stated goals. In fact, it is impossible for any manager to function without MC at any level of management. Take one moment and try to plan, organize, lead, or control something without using communication on some level. Today most management scholars talk about four managerial functions, and textbooks define *management* generically as the process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling in order to achieve the stated goals.

Communicate to Motivate

Figure 1.2 illustrates the communicate to motivate model and its constituent parts. *Planning* sets up a blueprint for future actions needed to
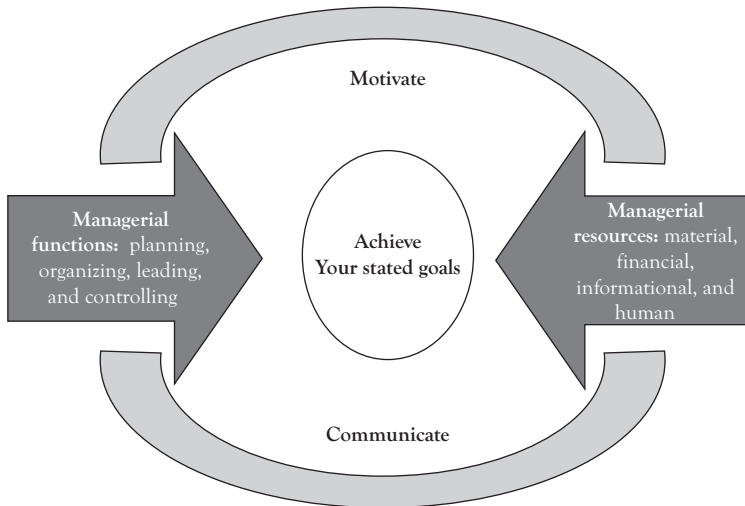
Figure 1.2 Communicate to motivate model—CMM

achieve agreed-upon goals. *Organizing* determines who will do what and why. *Leading* occurs when top managers share their vision of the future and then shape organizational culture to achieve that vision. *Controlling* systematically gauges the organization's actual performance against the established plans and goals and calibrates adjustments in areas of weakness.

Along with resources, managers use their functions to attain the goals of the organization. Imagine trying to accomplish any of these functions without goal-directed communication. Froschheiser argues that business leaders need to preach "communication, communication, communication" (2008, 9). Every employee should know the company's goals. No confusion. No exceptions. Communication is the "golden thread" tying all the management functions together. For example, you can conceive of a brilliant plan; however, successful interpersonal communication is necessary to implement it. To conceive a plan is to communicate on an intrapersonal level. In fact, most failed plans fail somewhere in the communication process.

Geneen, a former ITT executive, wrote that to "manage means to get something done, to accomplish something that you, or the team of managers, set out to do, which presumably is worthy of your effort" (1984, 105). What is implicit in all the previous definitions is that managers'

work for owners, especially in profit-seeking enterprises. Managers successfully operate businesses for owners to achieve the owner's goals, such as to dominate the market with the number one recognized brand. Whether owners bear the risk of failure or enjoy the safety of success, employees will expect them to provide the resources for them to do their jobs. Thus, we could say the real work of a manager is to help owners judiciously utilize resources to accomplish the owners' goals. (Nonprofit organizations may have benefactors and donors instead of owners, while government organizations have stakeholders such as voters and tax payers.) This managerial task requires motivating and communicating with employees.

Employees are the organization's most important resource because only human resources can be developed and improved in a way that makes them more productive (Drucker 1954). No nonhuman resource is capable of being the boss! Therefore, managers must always strive to continually improve their ability to motivate their employees. In management terms, motivating an employee means getting the employee to do a good job on his or her own with little help.

Motivation can be done with a stick (threat, punishment) or with a carrot (incentive, reward). The carrot approach is preferred for building an organization of employees who take initiative and are proactive in helping achieve the stated goals. Employees succeed when rewarded for good work. Because motivation is a large part of the leadership function, motivation theories are nearly always included in the leading part of management textbooks. Window into Practical Reality 1.1 shows a good example of managers leading employees through effective communication.

Window into Practical Reality 1.1

Managers Always Strive to Motivate through Communication

Even though managers understand explicitly that employees work for them, managers do not necessarily understand, implicitly, that employees working for them are a capital resource. Defined generically, capital is any form of wealth used to create more wealth. Imagine a large accounting firm that employs 250 certified public accountants

(CPAs) each within an average of 15 years of work experience. That firm would be considered by many to have a wealth of talent (human capital), even though most of those CPAs would probably not be owners of the business.

For the business to survive, managers must cultivate a rich pool of human talent by what is called "charge hours." The firm will charge the client an hourly rate three or four times that it paid a CPA working on the client's case. For example, a $25 per hour entry-level CPA salary would translate into $75 to $100 per hour billed to a client, depending on the complexity of the assignment. Moreover, these accountants expect that owners and managers will benefit from their talents. A regular paycheck will motivate most CPAs to get a degree; however, other incentives may raise their level of satisfaction and motivation.

In addition to receiving regular salaries, individuals also have emotional and personal needs (intrinsic) that when met inspire them to do their best job. External (extrinsic) rewards may also inspire those that seek approval, recognition, or tangible things from others that memorialize a public record of a "job-well-done." The art of managing motivation is getting people to excel on their own—with little coercion from the boss—by enhancing their desires to do a great job. For this reason, all successful managers need to be skilled communication motivators.

The manager helps the CPAs plan and control the amount of their paychecks by doing something extra, such as by finding write-offs and other deductions for the customer. Internally, a manager might pair a more experienced CPA with a younger CPA to teach them the tricks of the trade—where to look for ways to help the customer. By discussing situations with the CPAs, the manager builds a stronger working relationship with each of them; by having them work together, the manager builds a stronger team. Although managers must build a stronger working relationship with employees, this should not be confused with building a friendship because that is not the goal of effective communication.

A manager needs to do his job without bias or favoritism. Holding back constructive criticism on the basis of friendship is a sign of a weak manager.

Motivating a football player on a pro-team or motivating a food worker at McDonald's is accomplished through communicating with the employee what is expected of them; what their position does for the firm, the team, the customer, and for the employee; and by using positive reinforcement—saying a job well done, or thank you for caring about the customer. The manager is motivating the employee and molding the employee into the type of team player the manager wants in order to have a successful organization. Since most of us watch professional sports, or eat at fast-food restaurants, we can quickly identify the teams that seem to run like a machine and the ones that are very disjointed. Sports fans may avoid watching their favorite team play when they are not being managed well, meaning they are not winning. While lack of talent could be to blame, the problem could be that they are not being motivated properly and are not being talked with in such a way that they are motivated to win. Likewise, most people have their favorite fast-food restaurants that they return to because of the service. A manager through planning, organizing, leading, and controlling builds employee customer service skills and the loyalty of the customer.

Managerial Communication by Management Tier

We can use MC theories to explain communication responsibility across the three tiers of management (top, middle, and frontline). Figure 1.3 shows who starts the communications process and who carries out the directions. At the strategic level, top management deals with conceptual problems and direction-setting for the organization. At the tactical level, middle managers direct the human elements of the organization. At the operational level, the frontline managers use their technical skills on behalf of the organization.

While in theory the tiers make sense, the study by Harcourt, Richerson, and Wattier (1991) of 871 U.S. middle managers' communication practices showed information to be moving in and through middle managers as opposed to out. The middle managers did not always communicate
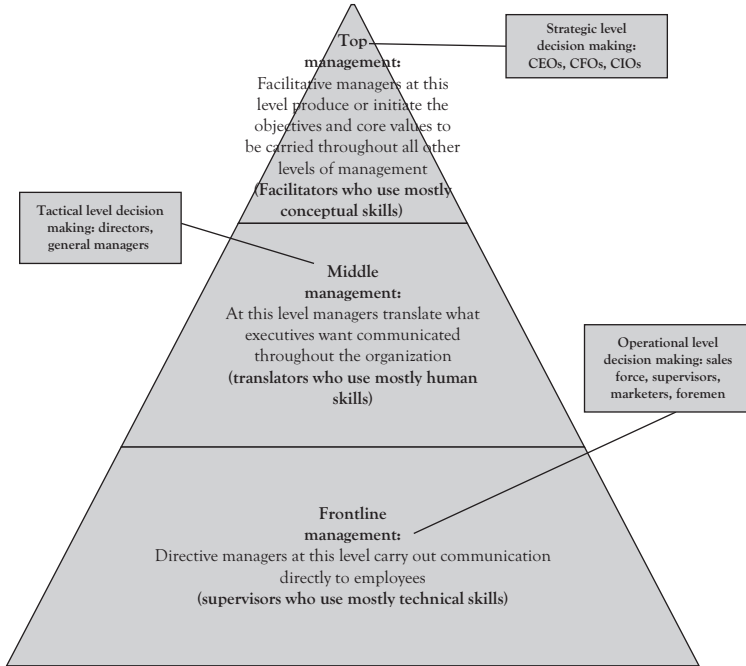
Figure 1.3 Managerial communication decision making by tier

to the subordinates the informaiton hem. In addition, Brownell (1990) provides evidence of middle managers' listening skills and how they rated themselves as listeners in the hospitality industry. While they rated themselves as good listeners, their subordinates did not (Lawler, Porter, and Tennenbaum 1968). A different study found 105 managers evaluated self-initiated interactions with other managers higher than those initiated by subordinates or nonmanagers. As the studies show, most managers have a lot of work to do in using communication to motivate and help subordinates do their jobs.

Information changes as it progresses through levels of management; therefore, the accuracy of information should always be questioned. Channels will be discussed in the next chapter, which is important to how top management communicates goals throughout the company.

One typical frontline management leading or motivating function is reprimanding an employee who is tardy. Most frontline managers will follow a prescribed system of progressive disciplinary actions—verbal

warning, first written warning, second written warning, and dismissal—to reinforce compliance and gain commitment (Frankel and Otazo 1992). What different kinds of communication could result? To what degree does an employee's frequency of communication with an immediate supervisor change pre- and post-reprimand? Does the employee openly complain about the supervisor, regardless of whether the reprimand was fair and accurate? Does his or her productivity change? How does the supervisor's choice of words affect employee behavior in the short and long term? Answers to testable questions like these add to the resources that management research can provide to practitioners. All of these questions are important.

After a frontline manager has reprimanded an employee, the most important question is "What to do in order to motivate the employee again after the reprimand?" A reprimand should not cause an employee to lose his or her motivation. In fact, Taylor, Fieldman, and Lahlou (2005) found blood pressure was significantly higher when recipients were reading a threateningly worded reprimand compared to a nonthreateningly worded reprimand.

In the past, MC was oriented more toward practicing managers who needed to understand communication theory from a more pragmatic perspective than toward the development of the basic skills, which are normally the focus of business communication; therefore, a background in management principles and basic communication skills developed in an undergraduate business communication course are helpful to the manager.

Communication competency is the use by a manager of a combination of knowledge, skill, behaviors, and attitudes. If a manager expects to make good decisions, the manager must understand the structure of the organization. The manager must be able to plan the goals within the organization for which he or she is responsible. The manager must then lead teams to perform tasks that will reach the stated goals of the organization and the subunit.

Finally, the manager must have a way to evaluate the performance and correct any shortcomings. One way of doing this is for the manager to develop a routine that includes frequent, in-depth discussions about performance with employees. Asking specific questions to help the

employee along can be important. Such questions might include: What have you accomplished? How did you measure accomplishments? What do you want to accomplish in the next few months? What measurements might you use for those accomplishments? What has to be done? And, how can I help?

Being a great manager at any level requires competency in many areas: communication, planning and administration, teamwork, strategic action, global awareness, and self-management. Communication competency includes informal and formal communication, and the ability to negotiate. Planning and administration competency involves the ability to gather information, analyze the information, and develop a solution to a problem. It also includes the ability to use time management, to be able to plan and organize multiple projects, and to do so within the budget.

Teamwork competency involves the ability to design an appropriate team, to motivate team members and support them with a creative environment, and to manage the dynamics of the team that will develop. Strategic action competency is understanding the environment in which you work including not only your organization but also the industry as a whole before you take a strategic position and put it into action. Global awareness competency is being knowledgeable about other cultures with whom you work, understanding of differences, and being open to discussions when cultural misunderstandings arise. Self-management competency includes your personal integrity and ethical beliefs, drive, resilience, self-awareness, personal development, and the ability to balance work and life issues (Hellriegel, Jackson, and Slocum 2007).

Picture managerial communicators as rational planners, decision makers, and commanders; they often work in harried environments switching in a few minutes from one person or problem to another person or problem. Many times it is anything but quiet. Finding the time to plan and thoughtfully consider every communication does not always happen as a manager would like. Being successful in the business world and in your career will not happen without good communication skills. Learn as much as possible about strategies that have been successful, identify your own weaknesses, and then work to correct those weaknesses. If you are an extrovert, you may talk too much and need to learn to listen more. If you

are an introvert, you may be a good listener but need to learn to talk more and to assume a greater leadership role in guiding people. Try out some of the other suggestions in this book to see if they work for you.

A major problem in business today is information overload. You will have to determine which messages require your time and which messages simply contain "nice to know" information that can be filed or deleted entirely. Becoming a user of information yourself and repackaging this information for others takes a great deal of time and communication. Communication policies help members of an organization understand to whom they should be communicating and when they should be communicating. For example, medication has benefits, but also has side effects, especially for a long-time user. A wealth of information creates a poverty of attention. That is why we must exercise selection when receiving and sharing information.

Communication Policies

How organizations use communication is somewhat individualized; all companies have an organizational culture and climate. While you may not find an organization's communication policies in published form, the culture of the firm reveals those policies. The culture and communication that takes place within the organization reflect the beliefs, values, and attitudes of the organization. The *organizational climate* is the environmental quality that the workers experience. Climates can be very supportive, defensive, positive, or negative. Generally, a supportive climate begins at the top by leaders who are nonjudgmental, open to ideas, trusting, and believe in participatory decision making. If you work in an organization where everyone works overtime, then you will probably feel that you should also work overtime. The culture and climate of the organization drive the organization's communication style and unconsciously controls the motivation to communicate.

Communication drives organizational culture, too. IBM began using a program called *JAMS* to allow employees to discuss ideas. With a program like *JAMS*, a data mining program can be used to analyze discussions for themes. This allows for very open discussions because *JAMS* participants join, exit, and rejoin ongoing discussions and very quickly see where the

discussion is going as they reenter an existing discussion. Moderators (those who lead and facilitate focus groups) can also separate out themes that emerge (Spangler, Kreulen, and Newswanger 2006).

Many organizations have had communication policies or a communication manual in place for a long time. Normally the policies integrate the mission statement and goals of the firm within the communication function. Important policy items include a crisis communication plan, public relations communication, human resources communication policies, how to treat proprietary information, communications etiquette, and the appropriate channels (formal documents, email, blogging, social media, etc.) for the different kinds of information disseminated. The fact remains that many companies do not take the time to build a policy book until something negative happens such as the example shown in the Window into Practical Reality 1.2.

Window into Practical Reality 1.2

The Risk of Too Much Honesty in a Crisis

Tony Hayward, former CEO of British Petroleum Oil Corporation in 2009 made the mistake of speaking too honestly following the Gulf of Mexico oil spill disaster when he said, "I want my life back." It upset the people in the Gulf region who were dealing with the disaster on a daily basis, the people who had lost loved ones when the rig exploded, and the general public. Eventually, this led to Hayward's reassignment to Russia and the appointment of a new CEO for BP. In a crisis communication situation, it is always a good idea to think through and practice what you plan to say to the public.

While communication policies may not work all of the time, they can be helpful when questions come up regarding what is the correct way to communicate certain kinds of information. For instance, organizations are governed by laws as well as company policy concerning what a company representative can say about an employee. The media often makes public statements that are said as an aside, or in confidence. It would be easy for a member of the press or the market competition to overhear a

salesman talking on the phone in a public area of the airport. Employees must know when and where they can talk about company business. Firms often allow only certain people to discuss company information outside of the company office building. If employees have a problem, you want them to come to someone inside of the company with their grievance and not to the press. Having employees sign a general confidentiality statement and explaining what the statement means is one way of making this message clear.

Communicating in Teams

Managers generally bring people together to solve a problem or assign a task and let the team work independently until they have a solution. Prior to the 1970s, formal communication was the standard approach in most businesses. The team-based management approach in the late 1970s moved firms from very formal to more informal communication. In this approach, teams participate more fully in company decision making through less formal communication channels and are highly involved with coordination between the functional teams they represent. They not only solve problems but also develop relationships between the functional areas of the company by supporting one another.

How do teams use formal and informal communication channels? First, it is necessary to define team. A *work team* is typically made up of a small number of people; they should have complementary skills, should share the common purpose of the team, should have the freedom to set their goals, and should have very little direct supervision. Effective teams also have the ability to solve problems, resolve conflict internally, distribute leadership among the team members, and evaluate their processes. Essential soft skills include understanding the feelings and needs of co-workers, communicating effectively, and dealing with any barriers that may appear. Teams can be formal or informal. *Formal teams* are often permanently appointed to carry out ongoing work assignments. *Informal teams* are a casual coming together of people to work on an informal basis throughout the organization. It is important to have different talents and specialties within a team, for instance, when introducing a new product. In this case, the team should be cross-functional, comprised of people

from different areas of the organization who can apply their varied expertise to the project.

Successful teams demonstrate emotional intelligence, quality interaction, and distributed leadership. Studies have shown that as a result of successful team interaction, workers are happy and empowered, efficiency increases, there is synergy between departments, and the lines of communication are more open. With people from different departments talking directly with each other, layers of management are eliminated, thereby increasing efficiency. The company is able to draw upon the skills, imagination, and creativity of the whole workforce for problem solving and developing new ideas.

A team must maintain good communication. Achieving the task assigned, maintaining the social morale of the team, and helping each member of the team to grow are essential to success. Effective teams must develop trust, make sure everyone understands their role on the team, and discuss shared goals and expectations. Such interactions aid in the development of synergy (a combined greater value of multiple ideas versus one person working on a project) among the members and distributed leadership. These team processes require open communication and strong verbal, nonverbal, and visual communication skills. Team members who lack good interpersonal communication skills jeopardize the success of the team. Team members should feel comfortable expressing concerns, and a healthy discussion should follow. Basically, team members train each other on how they can communicate with one another. Effective teamwork can enhance communication within the company as well as with customers and business partners, as redundancies can be eliminated.

Phases of Team Development

Effective teams move rather predictably through a series of phases as they blend their experiences, talents, and skills to complete their assigned task. Initial team assessment involves assessing the performance and characteristics of all members individually, looking at how they fit with the team, institution, culture, and technology as well as their skill in analyzing, documenting, implementing, and evaluating each other (Yarbrough 2003). It is important for the team to know what their strengths and

weaknesses are as individuals and as a team. There needs to be a climate of trust if members are to honestly share their information. This exercise is also a good way for members of the team, who do not know each other, to get to know one another as individuals and teammates.

- After completing the initial assessments, the team enters *Phase 1* of team development, which is forming roles and responsibilities. Time spent here will help the performance of the team later. Some of the things that should be done in *Phase 1* include deciding who will be the communication hub manager and being sure everyone has the information they need. Members also need to decide on a team manager who will be responsible for procedures, tasks, and assignments. One member needs to be responsible for all documents and the dissemination of those documents, and someone needs to maintain the database or website with accurate information for the team to access and use. The climate manager helps to maintain good relationships between team members and ensure full participation, and the conflict manager helps to reduce any conflicts that may happen between team members. In small teams, individual members may perform more than one of these discussed roles.
- *Phase 2* involves managing the procedures that have been set in place. During this phase the team members will negotiate and come to a consensus concerning the task and its subparts.
- *Phase 3* involves performing or finalizing tasks, training, updates, meetings, and reporting to the appropriate constituents.
- *Phase 4* is reporting back to management, and the team evaluating their abilities. It is good for teams to celebrate successes. This could be going to lunch together, having a drink after work, or something else. Generally, when you are part of a team, it is in addition to your normal job, which means it is extra work. Taking time to celebrate and receiving recognition from management makes it easier to do the work and will help the team perform in the future. Making use of the great

power of friendship can strengthen the team. Teams tend to be self-motivated and can also fall into groupthink.

Groupthink happens when a team stops generating new ideas, suppresses critical thinking, and squelches divergent thought. The best way to avoid groupthink is to use devil's advocacy—presenting an opposing view to stir discussion and clarification, and dialectic—a method that assures the team does not put a moral righteous spin on its decision making. The dialectic process involves debating. *Dialectic* is to debate two good ideas to determine the strengths and weaknesses of both before selecting one. Generally, when one person comes up with an idea, others will add to it or look at it from a different perspective. It is best to assign one or two members the task of asking the hard questions. To come up with the best solution, the group must look at many ideas. If the group is intercultural, you may have to ask people to give you their ideas. You also want to avoid letting one person dominate the discussions, and encourage many ideas and lots of feedback in discussions.

Work group time orientation is also influenced by the individual's view of flexibility, separation, and concurrency. *Flexibility* is the degree of rigidity placed upon the use of time. It can range from the avoidance of scheduling, to having rigid meeting times, to being fluid where time is concerned. *Separation* is allowing or eliminating extraneous factors when working on a task. *Concurrency* is the number of tasks a person feels comfortable completing at the same time. While team participation may take up a large segment of a worker's time, other work assignments may require the team member segregate team and individual work time. Ways to practice separation or inclusion include keeping your door closed or open; screening or taking calls, texts, and emails; and using nonverbal cues to indicate availability.

The discussed team behaviors generally work well when everyone is from one culture and is in the same room together; however, virtual teams do not often have the luxury of either. Time elements, or chronemics, for virtual teams can have major consequences. Not only are people frequently in different time zones but how they perceive and use time may be different. Whether you are monochronic (can do one thing at a time) or polychronic (can do multiple tasks at the same time), in today's

work world you have to be able to adjust to the other time culture. Working globally is part of most corporations today.

Currently, over 60 percent of professional employees participate in virtual teams (Kanawattanachai and Yoo 2007). It is possible for the members to be from only one national culture (such as the United States culture which is made up of multiple cultures); however, that is not what is normal in today's work world. Virtual teams by definition are geographically dispersed, electronically dependent, have dynamic structural arrangements, and are often nationally diverse. Virtual teams must overcome each of these elements in order to be innovative. Innovative organizations are adept at diversifying, adapting, and reinventing themselves to meet the changing global economy; and effective group interactions are critical to these processes. There is a great deal that virtual team members may not know about each other including their situation, how they acquire knowledge, and their resources. So it is important for virtual team members to learn about each other before they can be an effective team. Many virtual teams find that not being in real time makes it difficult to keep a dynamic-innovative platform moving forward due to time lags. Innovation tends to be better when teams do not have to just rely on electronic means of communication, though face-to-face opportunities may not be possible. Because interactions are structured and recorded, many times virtual groups feel they are micromanaged. When teams perceive a safer communication climate, more innovation takes place (Gibson and Gibbs 2006). Climate and culture will always influence the ethical practices of an organization and the types of moral problems managers will encounter.

Summary

Managerial communication (MC) is a combination of management and communication theory. Because it is a relatively new discipline, testing continues both academically and in corporations. Theory testing and the scientific process support that MC is the main communication in the workplace; it overlaps with management, corporate communication, business communication, and organizational communication. Managers

lead, plan, organize, and control the material, financial, informational, and human resources of a business by using MC.

The purpose of communicating in an organization is to get a message understood, see that the message accomplishes its purpose, and maintaining favorable relationships with the people involved. Managers communicate information according to their position on the hierarchical level. The three levels of management include the strategic level which is top management and deals with conceptual problems of the organization, the tactical level which is middle management and controls more of the human elements of the organization, and the operational level made up of frontline managers who generally are dealing with the technical skills of the organization.

MC is oriented more toward business management and communication theory than toward the skills of business communication. MC is the result of the merging of the professional communications in the workplace. Communication competency is the use by a manager of a combination of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes. Managers make decisions based on an understanding of the structure of the organization. One of the major problems today is an overabundance of information in the work world. Managers will need to sort through the information and be precise in the messages they send and receive.

Organizations can have formal communication policies or allow policies to develop ad hoc, or they may do both. The degree of formal or informal communication depends upon how the firm is organized. The introduction of team-based management in the late 1970s moved firms from very formal communication to more informal communication. Team-based management relaxed the formal communication structure in favor of more informal lines of communication. Organizations learned that the quicker information could travel to where decisions were made, or the actual work was being done, the more effective the organization became. The prevalence of virtual teams in today's innovative organizations has presented distinct challenges and opportunities for effective team communication and problem solving.

CHAPTER 2

The Managerial Communication Process

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. describe the levels of managerial communication;
2. explain the main components of the communication process model;
3. discuss barriers to communication in the communication process;
4. identify ways to improve the communicative process.

Introduction

Managers have very different ways of communicating with co-workers, subordinates, and superiors. Effective managers can be abrupt, kind, or even forceful with others when needed. Managers communicate on different levels inside and outside of the organizations as well throughout the global economy. It is impossible to plan, organize, lead, or control business resources without effective communication skills.

Communication competency includes the ability to decipher and respond to what others are saying, and to understand why they communicate the way they do, whether expressed directly or indirectly, and verbally or nonverbally. The communication process takes place on five levels: intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational, and inter-cultural. These levels are frequently not mutually exclusive in a given communication situation.

Levels of Managerial Communication

Imagine you just scored two free tickets to your favorite basketball team on Monday. If you do not use the tickets, there is no refund available. Thus, your unused tickets will go to waste. What will you do? Deciding on your own whether to attend the game or let the tickets go to waste is an example of intrapersonal communication. Texting your best friend to determine his or her desire to accompany you to the game is an example of interpersonal communication. Sending a tweet to six of your close friends, telling them the tickets are available, and that the first two to reply will receive the tickets is group communication. Offering your tickets to a business client who will be visiting from China on game day is an example of intercultural communication. In fact, if your first language is English and you practice a few sentences of Mandarin to use in offering the client the tickets, you are using several levels of communication. If your tone, quality, and pronunciation in Mandarin are exact, the gesture might payoff with your client in the future. Let us examine each level of communication in more detail.

Intrapersonal Communication

Intrapersonal communication is communicating within yourself. Intrapersonal communication involves the processes that occur inside an individual's brain. When you interpret ideas to clarify the meaning of what you see and hear, you are engaging in intrapersonal communication. Intrapersonal means that you ascribe meaning to symbols and cues that exist in your environment. We are constantly engaging in intrapersonal communication with ourselves in our minds and thoughts.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication requires interaction between you and another person. A dyad exists—two people communicating. During interpersonal communication you share a message with someone else. If both communicators share the same meaning, the message achieves its purpose and is understood. The message has to be both correctly intended and interpreted to be successful. Each person creates meaning in an

exchange process, and they may or may not ascribe the same meaning to the message. Interpersonal communication elevates the message exchange and adds complexity; it also introduces the possibility that information can be misinterpreted or not be received at all.

Group Communication

Group communication involves three or more people in the process. Managers engage in this type of communication when they have meetings. Groups are generally small so that everyone can participate in discussions. Nonverbal and cultural issues plague group communication. Consideration of the organizational climate is essential when there are international or host countries involved in the communication and decision making.

Generally groups learn to adapt, use structural intervention, and avoid the need for excessive managerial intervention, or they will part ways. Adaptation can be a problem. Adaptation happens when team members on both sides identify and acknowledge the differences they have and find ways to strategically work around those differences. Subdivision of the team's tasks happens with structural intervention, so that the tasks separate by discipline. With managerial intervention, the team can become overly dependent on the manager. When the members part ways, generally it is a loss for both sides. It is not easy to adjust to intercultural situations, but with the correct attitude, strong solutions are possible.

Organizational Communication

An organization is a social group of people who have different strengths but common goals. To achieve these goals, they interact through the organization's communication processes and develop successful patterns and practices. Effective organizational communication requires knowledge of structure. Many organizations, for instance, are virtual, multicultural, and multilingual. Technology is also changing how organizations communicate. To communicate effectively in an organization, you need to have knowledge about the channels through which the organization communicates. You must also have sensitivity to the organization's leadership styles.

Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication requires knowledge and understanding of culture. Managers who engage in effective intercultural communication must understand the norms and standards of the country, organizational norms, and the values and beliefs of the people within the culture. Intercultural communication also involves understanding of symbolic meanings that different cultures ascribe to nonverbal behaviors people exhibit in their social interactions. Many challenges exist for international work teams. Team members from one cultural group may use direct communication while others prefer indirect communication. U.S. citizens tend to be direct; however, Japanese are generally very indirect. Those from indirect cultures do not like to say no or make others lose face. Accents and fluency can be a problem, even if everyone is speaking English. Who does not have a story about calling a U.S. company's customer service telephone number and speaking to someone in India, Pakistan, or Indonesia? Also, attitudes toward hierarchy and authority are different around the world. Mexicans view their boss very paternalistically; while in the United States, workers look at their boss as a businessperson. Conflicting norms for decision making can also cause problems. While U.S. business people want to make decisions very quickly, the Koreans often want to revisit and discuss items for longer periods of time before making decisions. This may mean that they revisit issues the U.S. Americans think have already been decided.

Cultural differences often result in a bias that one's own culture is superior to any other culture: *ethnocentrism*. Communicators can sometimes have stereotypes of each other. *Stereotypes* may include overgeneralizations about the other person's interpretation of time, personal space requirements, body language, and translation limitations. One learns culture over time, and language transmits culture. Language controls thought processes; and therefore, variations of thought processes between cultures. Some are deductive in their reasoning processes and others are inductive. Recognizing that people from other cultures may have different thought patterns is important when communicating and negotiating. Because we know our own culture very well, we do not have to think about it; however, when communicating with someone from another culture, we need to think about the similarities and differences that exist between us.

While the numerous cultures in the United States can cause communication challenges, even more cultural dilemmas exist for international corporations. Cultural components are interrelated, so you have to learn as much as possible about the home country and the organizational cultures of the person with whom you are communicating. Those who live within a culture share an overriding set of customs that provide standards for behavior. If you unknowingly break a cultural rule, you could destroy a business relationship. Such snafus could be either verbal or nonverbal. *Nonverbals* include gestures, body language, facial expressions, dress, and other outward signs that tell us if verbals are believable. Some cultural norms that appear shocking to some may appear perfectly as normal, expected behaviors to others, as can be seen in the Window into Practical Reality 2.1.

Window into Practical Reality 2.1

Culturally Defined Rules for Behavior and Conduct

Religion is part of culture, and some religions state how men and women should greet each other. While in Western cultures, it is okay for a man to shake hands with a woman, for many Muslims and some religious figures this is not the case. In fact, in some Middle Eastern countries, a woman is not to be in the presence of a man who is not related without a male family member being with her. Therefore, when traveling internationally, it is generally best if the man waits for the woman to extend her hand for a handshake; and if she does not, it is important to understand why. Monks in some parts of the world must go through a ritual purification if they are touched by a female. So it is very important that females realize they should not touch or shake hands with them.

Your managerial success is largely determined by your mastery of seven nonverbal elements: (1) Chronemics, (2) Proxemics, (3) Oculesics, (4) Olfactics, (5) Haptics, (6) Facial Expressions, and (7) Chromatics.

How you view punctuality, the distance you stand from another person when you or they are speaking, the clothes you wear, your jewelry, and even your word choice can become a barrier to effective managerial

communication. *Nonverbal barriers* are anything other than words that distract the recipient or lead to distortions that interfere with reception of your intended message. Nonverbal differences happen across many dimensions of culture including language, gender, and generational divides. Basically, you have to learn what you might encounter and not be afraid to ask questions when there is a nonverbal action that you do not understand. For example, in many Asian cultures personal silence in meetings is a signal that you need to call on individuals to get them to express their ideas. Culturally, nonverbals can have very different and often opposing meanings. As such it is best to avoid as many nonverbals as possible when communicating with someone from another culture, unless you are very comfortable in your knowledge of the culture.

Chronemics involves attitudes toward time, which vary widely across cultures. When conducting business, whether the culture is monochronic or polychronic can be very important to the success of a business deal. People from *monochromic* cultures take deadlines and meeting commitments seriously; they are punctual. People in *polychronic* cultures are not as punctual and do not take deadlines as seriously. Cultural norms shape perceptions of the importance of time that differs between monochronic and polychronic cultures as seen in Figure 2.1. Some countries with monochronic cultures are the United States, England, Switzerland, and Germany. Some countries with polychronic cultures are Latin America, Southern Europe, and the Middle East.

Differences in the concept of time may cause problems when trying to schedule online meetings, as someone from a monochronic culture will typically be online early or on time, while someone from a polychronic culture may be engaged in something else they feel is important and not join the online discussion on time. These cultural norms are neither correct nor wrong; they are merely noncongruent for team participants.

Proxemics, or the use of space, is another area of cultural difference. You might see differences in a meeting room seating arrangements depending upon the proxemics of a culture. People in the United States have an intimate zone of less than 18 inches for people they know very well, a social zone of 4 to 12 feet used with people with whom they work closely, and a public distance of over 12 feet for those they do not know. Cultural standards create different proxemics—some engage in hugging
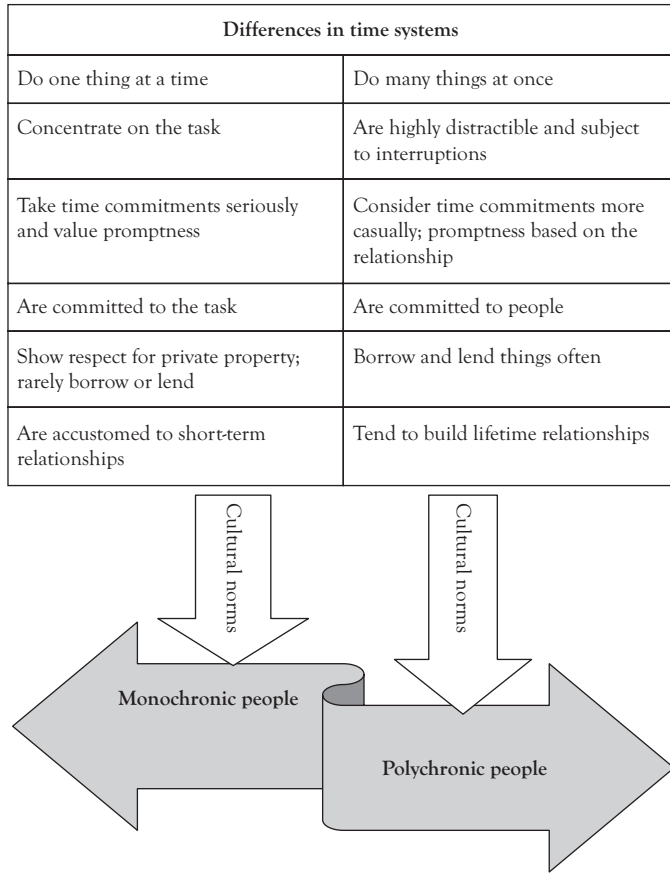
Differences in time systems	
Do one thing at a time	Do many things at once
Concentrate on the task	Are highly distractible and subject to interruptions
Take time commitments seriously and value promptness	Consider time commitments more casually; promptness based on the relationship
Are committed to the task	Are committed to people
Show respect for private property; rarely borrow or lend	Borrow and lend things often
Are accustomed to short-term relationships	Tend to build lifetime relationships

Cultural norms

Cultural norms

Monochronic people

Polychronic people

Figure 2.1 Time system differences between monochronic and polychronic cultures

Source: Chaney and Martin (2014, p. 118).

and cheek or air kisses. In the United States a private office is considered a status symbol, whereas in Japan there are only a few and even those are not used a great deal of the time. In France the boss sits in the middle of the work area, with his subordinates in offices around him or her.

Oculesics, or eye contact, is important because some cultures show respect by looking away, while others by almost staring, with many degrees in between. Unfortunately, very direct eye contact can be misinterpreted as hostility, aggressiveness, or intrusiveness when the intended meaning was just to appear interested. Minimal eye contact may be misinterpreted

as lack of interest, understanding, dishonesty, fear, or shyness when the intended meaning was to show respect or to avoid appearing intrusive. In some cultures, one shows respect to women by not looking them in the eye; even though a man would normally have direct eye contact with another male.

Olfactics, or smell, can significantly affect communications. Smell is very impressive on our memories and remains long after the person has gone. Hygiene, perfumes, and what one eats are the main sources of personal smell. In business situations, it is important to bath regularly, use breath fresheners, refrain from perfumes, and have an understanding that what you eat or drink is secreted through your skin for others to smell.

Haptics, or touch, is interpreted very differently around the world. Knowing the cultural norms and standards for how and where one may touch and whom one may touch is important. In many parts of the world, men greet each other with a hug of varying degrees rather than a handshake or a bow. In some countries touching the top of the head is inappropriate. While a slap on the back in the United States means you have done a good job, in Japan it has the opposite meaning. It is important to consider and understand what the correct touch etiquette is for the different cultures with whom you may come in contact. Senior clerics criticized President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran for hugging the mother of the deceased Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez at his funeral (Akbar 2013). Physical contact, considered a sin when touching an unrelated woman in the Islamic religion, is seen as empathetic in Venezuela where hugging is common. As was pointed out earlier, in many cultures it is not appropriate for a woman and man to shake hands.

Facial expressions may not always be what they appear. For instance, laughing when embarrassed is not unusual for Asians. Degree of animation has a deep cultural basis, as do gestures and the amount of gesturing that goes on during a conversation. Until you know how someone from another culture understands a gesture, you should refrain from using it or explaining it.

Chromatics, or the use and interpretation of color, can also be important. For example, black is the color of mourning to many Europeans and U.S. Americans, while white is normally worn for funerals in Japan, and red has funereal connotations in African countries. Purple is associated with royalty in many countries but with death in some Latin American

countries. Colors are particularly important when exporting products for sale in other countries and in selecting gifts for business associates.

The Managerial Communication Model

All the levels of managerial communication impact the managerial communication process model. Figure 2.2 illustrates nine components of the managerial communication model. The model depicts two layers: the macroenvironment and microenvironment. The macroenvironment has an indirect influence on the communication and includes (1) organizational culture and (2) situational context. The microenvironment has a direct influence on the communication and includes (3) information source, (4) encoding, (5) message over channel, (6) decoding, (7) destination, (8) barriers, and (9) feedback.

The first process model evolved from engineering practices of many years ago. Claude E. Shannon, an engineer for the Bell Telephone Company, introduced one of the most influential early models of the communication process to study issues of interdepartmental workflow (Weaver 1949). Later Shannon and Weaver (1949) added a corrective element to the model called feedback. Feedback makes this model an interpersonal process. The model has been changed over the years to reflect current research and practice.
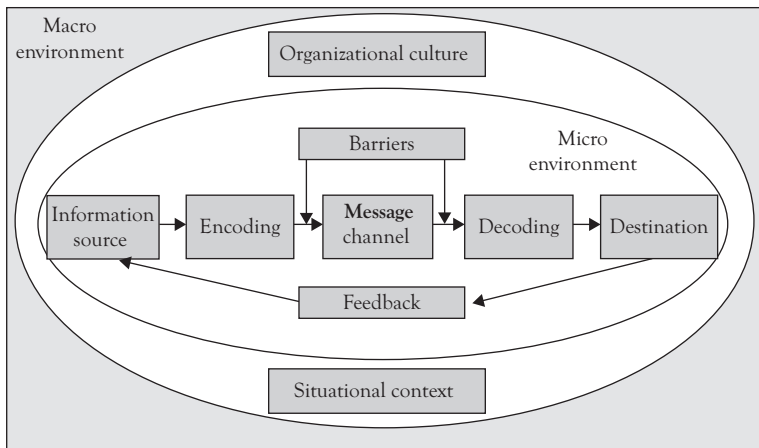

Figure 2.2 Managerial communication model

The managerial communication model has been very helpful in advancing communication theories in organizational, corporate, business, and managerial communication.

Organizational Culture

Culture is made of shared values, symbols, meanings, practices, customs and traditions, history, tacit understandings, habits, norms, expectations, common meanings, rites, and shared assumptions. Just as countries and regions of the world have their own cultures, so does each organization. *Organizational culture* includes the behaviors developed through rules, regulations, and procedures that promote goal attainment. People within an organization share organizational culture just as ethnic groups share ethnic culture. Organizational culture determines how to do things through common agreement. The way workers interact socially at work assists in defining organizational culture. Communication helps to disseminate cultural expectations and bind the organizational culture together.

Coordinating and directing employees involves trade-offs. The difficult part for management is to get all of the workers in an organization to view the direction or goals of the firm in the same way. This is why it is not unusual for there to be subcultures within an organization. If the subcultures intensify, effective communication is jeopardized. If subcultures diverge from the mission of the firm, they can actually be harmful to the organization. Generally, however, goals help individuals to learn their position within the firm and the firm's expectations. Managers must realize, however, that workers' perceptions of information, their thought patterns, and their values may be very different from the managers' perceptions. When an individual's values match those of the organization, job satisfaction increases.

Managers of international organizations must consider the cultural differences between the countries that are working together. This includes understanding the laws, culture, and working climate differences of the countries involved. When group norms are different, it is not always easy for the people to adapt to one another. However, if the

groups can be taught to recognize and appreciate these differences, it is easier for them to understand and work with one another. Language also plays a major role in developing our mindset and how we think. When someone is speaking a second language, they are often in the mindset of their first language. Therefore, people may not interpret messages the way they were intended by the sender. In fact, there may at times not be equivalent words to express some thoughts or ideas between the two languages.

In order to manage an organizational culture, top management must have a strategic plan, develop cultural leaders, share the culture by communicating effectively with staff, measure performance, communicate culture to employees, and motivate employees. Doing this requires trade-offs between the members of the organization at all levels. In order to accomplish the mission of the organization, some people will typically strive to gain power, while expecting others to surrender some of their flexibility and independence. Whenever working within the corporate culture, you will need to remember that you are working with social elements that may or may not be rational.

Continuing dialog will help all of us understand each other, but mistakes will happen. The larger the organization, the more opportunities there are for miscommunications due to cultural differences. Along with continuing dialog, we must also consider the particular situation in which the communication is happening.

Situational Context

The situational context is another component of the macroenvironment of the managerial communication process. Is the situation critical, meaning is it dangerous or imminent, or does it involve planning for the future? The situational context will often determine to whom the communication is made and what channel is chosen to achieve the communication. Situational factors include gender, age, cultural differences, as well as subordinate, peer, or superior relationships.

We will now continue our discussion with the seven components of the microenvironment involved in the managerial communication process.

Information Source

An *information source* is the person with whom the communication originates. When you call on a customer or an employee and give them a message, you are the information source. The *message* is the information you want the receiver to act upon. In creating a message, you encode.

Encoding

When you create meaning which will be sent to a targeted recipient, you are *encoding* the message. When encoding a message, you must consider many things about the person or persons receiving the message. The more you know about your audience, the easier it is to communicate with them because you have an idea of how they will respond to what you say. Audience characteristics include age, economic level, educational background, and culture.

Channel

A *channel* is the medium through which the message travels. Email, memorandum, letter, text, telephone, social media, fax, face-to-face, meeting, and company newspaper are examples of channels. *Channel selection* can be determined by how soon the recipients need the information, confidentiality of the information, the hierarchical relationship of the communicators, the location, gender, culture, and education level of the recipient.

Decoding

The person receiving the communication at the destination has to decode the message just as the information source encoded it. However, we all have different screens through which we filter messages. When you decode, you interpret and translate the message you have received according to your mindset. The more alike we are, the more likely our message will be understood as it was intended to be. The more different we are, the more room there is for mistakes in decoding, both in interpreting and in translating the message incorrectly.

Destination

The people receiving and interpreting the message are the *destination*. The recipient can be a person or a group receiving a message that you send. The recipient, or destination, of a message can be intended or unintended. No matter how hard you work to make the message perfect, there will be message distortion.

Barriers

Barriers are a given in any form of communication. *Barriers* are items that interfere with the message. Barriers include physical or psychological problems, language, gender issues, education-level issues, generational issues, and nonverbal differences.

Physical and *psychological* barriers can distort the message. Physical and psychological barriers may include disabilities, health problems, parental issues, eldercare issues, money problems, or mental issues. These barriers in particular can impact a person's work. How a manager handles the physical and psychological problems of subordinates is important. The ability to handle subordinates' issues is influenced by the manager's knowledge of the situation and the personalities of those involved. Given that people are going to have things happen to them during their lives, it is generally better for the manager to exhibit compassion and try to find a solution to problems than to put more pressure on employees for things beyond their control.

Language barriers happen even if both sides speak the same language. There are 18 different dialects of English spoken as a first language across the world. Many others are taught variations of those 18 dialects of English because English is the number one language used in business around the world. However, just because two people are speaking English does not mean they understand each other. The spelling, definition, and pronunciation of words can all be different. English is not the only language in which this happens, so if you learn another language you must realize that there are variations of languages used throughout the world. Translation from one language to another adds additional challenges, as it is not always possible to translate idiomatic expressions from one language to another.

Gender barriers arise even among those within the same culture. Problems are magnified by the fact that gender expectations for behavior and interaction vary widely. The gender barriers range from recognition of complete equality between the genders to very strict rules that separate the genders. In Japan, for example, women speak in a different tone than men. In some cultures, men and women consider silence to be an important part of communication, rather than speaking up during meetings. In China and Japan women speak in a different tone than men when expressing the same point of view. In strict Islamic areas of the world, girls and boys do not attend school together which means girls do not have the same resources available or subjects to study that boys do. In many cases, men and women are not allowed to work together in Islamic countries. Therefore, there are many communication strategies to be considered when communicating with an individual who is both culturally and gender different.

Research has shown that the gender of participants, the team's overall gender composition, and the gender orientation of the task influences the feedback-seeking behavior among team members (Miller and Karakowsky 2005). Because they are more concerned about interpersonal relationships and generally more compassionate, women are more open to feedback than men (London et al. 1999). The type of position and whether it is a traditional or nontraditional position has a direct effect on the method women use to obtain feedback (Holder 1996). As more women enter the workforce, fewer and fewer positions are considered to be female- or male-specific jobs.

The requirements of the task may emphasize gender-differentiated skills that increase gender differences within the group. Studies have shown that men seek feedback more on male-oriented task within a male group, and females are less likely to seek feedback in a female group performing a male-oriented task. Women in mainly male groups and masculine-oriented tasks are more likely to seek feedback than are women in male groups with female-oriented tasks. When expertise is clearly present between both genders, both groups seek feedback; however, men tend to not seek feedback in situations that are not involved with masculine-oriented tasks.

The *educational levels* between and among people can also be a barrier. You want to control your vocabulary and sentence structure when

communicating with people below or above you both inside and outside of the organization. The more you know about the people you are communicating with, the better you can choose words and sentence structure that will help them decode your messages correctly. A manager in a manufacturing plant where the workers typically have only a high school education would want to communicate at approximately an eighth-grade school level rather than at a college level. Most newspapers are written at a sixth- to eighth-grade school level. Did you know that you can check the grade level of your written messages when using Microsoft Word?

Generational differences are a large barrier to communication in organizations. As Table 2.1 illustrates, there are four generations of communicators in the workplace who impact the effectiveness of your success in the managerial communication process. If you were born between 1925 and 1945, you are a Traditionalist. If you were born between 1946 and 1965, you are a Boomer. If you were born between 1966 and 1979, you are a Gen Xer. If you were born between 1980 and 1999, you are a Millennial. Effective managers recognize generational issues and communication preferences that differentiate Traditionalists, Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials.

Intergenerational issues are the communication gaps that exist because of time and habits between various groups of individuals. These groups have habits that are broad and numerous. Boomers are more likely to use email and voice messaging rather than texting or sending tweets, which Millennials routinely do. Traditionalists might not even use computers on a daily basis. Imagine the barrier this habit alone would create if a millennial is attempting to tweet a traditionalist who probably does not even have a Twitter account.

The oldest generation cohort are the *Traditionalists*, born between 1925 and 1945. They are considered to be loyal, highly dedicated, and risk-averse employees (Jenkins 2008). They place a high emphasis on interpersonal communication, obey the rules, value a top-down management style, and rarely question authority (Kyles 2005). Therefore, traditionalists will expect face-to-face communication with their boss, will probably not carry a smartphone, and may only be involved with email and Facebook because of grandchildren.

Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1965. Boomers tend to be workaholics. Most have had to learn technology in the workplace but still

appreciate face-to-face conversations. They use smartphone, email, and text messaging, and many also use social media.

Gen Xers were born between 1966 and 1979 and represent the smallest generational cohort in numbers. Many were born into homes with two working parents and are considered the latchkey generation. They are self-reliant and have carried this characteristic into the workplace (Macon and Artley 2009). Unlike their Boomer parents, Xers place more emphasis on a work–life balance, often choosing personal life over work. Xers are pragmatic, adaptable, entrepreneurial, skeptical, and distrustful of authority (Arnsparger 2008).

Millennials were born between 1980 and 1999. Technology, September 11, 2001, the Columbine School shooting, and increasing ease of obtaining information via the Internet have helped to shape this generation. Some call them digital natives because they do not remember a time without technology. Millennials like structure, open communication, and direct access to senior management (Hershatter and Epstein 2010). Table 2.1 gives some ideas on the views and ways to communicate effectively among the four generations.

When communicating the corporate strategy, organizations expect everyone in the firm to share a common view of where the organization is going. However, if all levels of communication are not addressed, this may not be possible. Given the generational differences that exist in most work environments, it is important for a manager to employ various strategies including intergenerational education, succession planning, mentoring, and technology education. Managers who take the time to develop a multigenerational communication strategy generally experience greater cohesion, trust, innovation, and collaboration across generations.

The downward flow of communication should be offered in multiple formats to ensure everyone receives information in a timely manner. While Traditionalists and Boomers may prefer face-to-face verbal exchanges, Gen Xers and Millennials may prefer texting, email, or corporate broadcasts. As the younger generations replace Traditionalists and Boomers, mentoring between the generations becomes very important. This means that mentors need to be educated about how to communicate successfully with the Gen Xers and Millennials, and mentees need to understand when face-to-face and verbal communication is preferable to the

*Table 2.1 World views and communication efficacy between and among the four generations**

World views	Traditionalists	Boomers	Gen Xers	Millennials
Birth periods	1925 through 1945	1946 through 1965	1966 through 1979	1980 through 1999
View of work	Work is expected; hard work is good in itself	Work goal is to meet or surpass one's own expectations of success	Work considered self-fulfillment	Work synonymous with continuous learning and change
View of authority	Respectful	Love–hate	Unimpressed	Polite
View of change	Get it over with	Create it	Make it work for you	Recognize it as inevitable and increasing
View of decision making	Hierarchy	Consensus	Competence	Team cooperation
View of feedback	No news is good news	Yearly documented feedback	Lots of positive feedback	Instantaneous feedback
Communicating with	Do not expect them to share their thoughts immediately Focus on words rather than body language or inferences Use face-to-face or written communication Do not waste their time	Use body language when communicating with the "Show Me" generation Speak in an open, direct style; but avoid controlling language Answer questions thoroughly and expect to be pressed for details Present options to demonstrate flexibility in your thinking	Use email as a primary channel Talk in short sound bits to keep their attention Ask for their feedback and provide them with input Share information with them on a regular basis and strive to keep them in the loop Use an informal communication style	Use action words and challenge them at every opportunity Avoid talking down to them Use texts and Facebook IMs over email and email over face-to-face communication Seek feedback constantly and provide them with feedback Use humor and create fun learning environments Do not take yourself too seriously as they will not Encourage them to take risks to explore new ways of learning

Source: Snyder (2010).

technology-assisted channels. Corporate education is a must for all generations as can be seen in Window into Practical Reality 2.2.

Window into Practical Reality 2.2

Generational difference in information sharing and retrieval

Millennials may use libraries, but only through the Internet—many have never set foot in a library building. While Traditionalists and Boomers will generally opt for the newspaper for business news, Gen Xers and Millennials will want to read the news as it happens from their electronic devices. A factor for all generations to consider is whether a history of the communication is advisable; with texting you do not have a way to save the communication for historical purposes, but you do with email and other written forms of communication.

Generational issues present many problems for management including conflicts in the workplace that can result in reduced profitability, hiring challenges when different generations must interact, an increase in turnover, and a decrease in morale between the generations (Macon and Artley 2009).

Managers with a multigenerational staff need to be aware of the different preferred modes of communication. The Millenials are early adopters of new technology using texting first, phone second, email third, and other mediums after that. While Generation Xers are computer savvy, they are not attached to their computers and handhelds the way Millenials are. Boomers learned their computer knowledge on their own, on the job, and have the least amount of formal training in technology. Traditionalists have primarily learned enough about technology to communicate with their grandchildren.

While there are many differences, there are also similarities between the generations. All the members of the different generations want to feel valued, empowered, and engaged at work. While the Gen Xers and Millennials are more vocal about flexibility, Boomers and Traditionalists also want some flexibility. The ability to use computer-mediated

communication (CMC) is one of the main differences between the generations.

One of the main problems with CMC is that while it is quick, it is basically devoid of nonverbal communication. Some companies have instituted non-CMC days because people were using CMC to communicate with those sitting next to them. On technology-free days, people must get up and go see the person they need to communicate with if they are in the same building. Challenges can emerge when elitist attitudes develop among generational workers. Social Identity Theory recognizes that members of the various groups may see themselves as superior to other groups because of either their long-term knowledge of the company or their CMC knowledge.

Corporation memory is changing. Knowledge transfer methods are changing. Cross-generational teams offer the best avenue for moving organizations forward, though challenges exist in making them work effectively. Gen Xers and Millennials are more open to the informal nature of teamwork, whereas the Traditionalist and Boomers accustomed to working alone early in their careers have had to learn to work on teams. Millennials also tend to get bored very easily, which can cause increased turnover. As younger generational groups join the workforce, challenges for effective communication across generational divides will continue.

Feedback

When the destination receives your message and encodes a response, the process of *feedback* happens. While the destination may or may not give the feedback that is expected, the quality of the feedback will be determined by the level of barriers. If barriers are small, the destination will send correct or favorable feedback to the source. If barriers are large, the destination will send incorrect or unfavorable feedback. If a distorted message reaches the destination, the destination might not interpret the message properly and as such there will be no feedback or the feedback may not be applicable. However, you might construe no feedback at all an indication that the message was not received—or, if you are a bit paranoid, you might construe your message as being ignored. Never assume your

destination has ignored your message. For email and voice messages, give the recipient 24 hours to respond, and for old-fashioned USPS "snail" mail, give the recipient a week to respond. If possible, respond in kind in terms of the message channel. Return a call with a call, a text with a text, and email with an email. This assures that your channel selection will be correct, especially when the communication is with someone outside of your generational population.

Improving the Communicative Process

There are three main reasons messages can fail in the communication process: (1) framing effects, (2) illusion of control, and (3) discounting the future. *Framing effects* occur when the decision is influenced by the way the problem or issue is phrased, thus hurting any chance of selecting the correct alternative. When a manager argues, there is only a 30 percent chance we will lose on the venture, they are framing, because it is equally true that there is a 70 percent chance of winning; basically the odds are roughly two in three chances of succeeding.

Illusion of control refers to scenarios in which managers believe they can control the outcome or influence events even though they may not have control. When managers argue that they can control or predict all the variables, they are usually delusional. Experienced managers might know they have succeeded in the past, but they also should be aware that past success is no guarantee of a future outcome. Believing an outcome is guaranteed and selling this notion to others is illusion of control. The illusion of control is exhibited when a manager argues, vehemently, that the competition "could never…" or "I doubt very seriously that…" when there is no evidence other than emotional hunches.

Discounting the future occurs when managers use communication tactics that lead to a preference for short-term benefits at the expense of longer term cost and benefits. Nearly every corporate leader can fall victim to the pressures of making money for shareholders while distributing earning to owners. Nevertheless, pressure to impress can create a dangerous rhetoric that leads managers to value short-term profits over long-term competitive advantages for their business. Use the managerial communication model to dissect your own approach to business communication

and scrutinize positive and negative examples of the communication of others. Learning to decipher and understand what others are saying and perhaps why they communicate the way they do, whether they say it directly or indirectly, can be important to you personally and to your company. The communication process model reflects the theories that underlay communication and breaks the process into elements that helps managers navigate the challenging communication process.

Summary

There are five levels of managerial communication: intrapersonal, inter-personal, group, organizational, and intercultural. Intrapersonal com-munication involves the processes that occur inside an individual's thought processes. Interpersonal communication requires another per-son with whom you interact. Group communication requires three or more persons. Organizational communication requires knowledge of structural expectations. Intercultural communication requires knowl-edge of other cultures.

The nine components of the managerial communication process model depict two layers: the macroenvironment includes organizational culture and situational context; and the microenvironment includes information source, encoding, message over channel, decoding, destina-tion, barriers, and feedback. Communication barriers include physical or psychological issues, language barriers, gender issues, education-level issues, and generational issues.

CHAPTER 3

Power, Climate, and Culture

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. explain communication context;
2. explain the power of leaders;
3. explain organizational communication climate;
4. discuss established levels of organizational culture;
5. differentiate formal from informal communication networks.

Introduction

Context is the physical, social, and psychological environment where communication interaction takes place. Imagine a 45-year-old manager paying a compliment to a 22-year-old administrative assistant, just hired, on her wardrobe. He tells her, "You look very professional today and ideal for our company." Much to the manager's chagrin, the administrative assistant asks, in a rather scornful tone, "What are you looking at?" She is loud enough for others passing by to hear. The manager, feeling confused and embarrassed, immediately apologizes and tells the young woman, "I am looking at nothing more than your wardrobe," he continues, "Have a good day, Ms. Jones." In this hypothetical example, the physical environment is the hallway. The social environment is the organization's culture and climate, where the manager is comfortable enough to pay a compliment to a young woman he barely knows without fear of accusation.

Based on how an organization and its leaders view culture, behaviors can vary. Table 3.1 contains some very well-established definitions of organizational and corporate culture.

Table 3.1 Established definitions of organizational and corporate culture

Deal and Kennedy (1982, p. 4)	Schein (1992, p. 12)	Sherriton and Stern (1997, p. 26)
… *culture* is "the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thought, speech, action, and artifacts and depends on man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations" or informally *corporate culture* is "the way we do things around here."	… *culture* is "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid; and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."	… *corporate culture* is more prescriptively as "the environment or personality of the organization, with all its multifaceted dimensions."

The psychological environment exists individually inside the heads of the manager and the administrative assistant. It is possible the young woman harbors remnants of bad experiences. It is possible that she previously worked in an organization where sexual harassment existed in a climate of tolerance for such behavior. It is also possible the manager just harassed the administrative assistant. A history of one individual harassing another under the veil of good intention is not uncommon in business. Complimenting a woman's wardrobe while looking at her chest the whole time could be the reason for a young woman to react to a compliment with a scornful rebuke. When we cover employment communication responsibility in Chapter 9, we will discuss equal employment laws in more depth.

In this chapter the power of leaders, organizational communication climate (OCC), and culture will be discussed. First, as a manager you will need to understand the dynamics of the power different types of leaders have within the communication context. Secondly, you will need to understand the climate of the organization in which you work. Thirdly, you need to be able to navigate the levels of organizational culture and understand that culture is both visible and invisible.

We begin our discussion with brief definitions of leadership and leaders. We will then explore the five powers of leaders in context.

Power of Leaders

Leadership is a process to provide forward movement for the organization—visions for the future. *Managerial leadership* is a process used to influence employees to reach the common goals of the corporation. Reaching the firm's goals is easier when managers lead and strive to achieve common goals for the good of all. An organization must have both managers and leaders to succeed, though they are not always one and the same. Leaders need to be able to listen and hear in order to influence employees. They need to be verbal, informed, and ask others' opinions about new ideas. Leaders influence others to reach common goals—mostly through their communication efforts. The five bases of influence that gives leaders immense power are (1) referent power, (2) expert power, (3) legitimate power, (4) reward power, and (5) coercive power.

Referent Power

Referent power is based on the individual's personality. Power can be used for bad or good reasons, and some immoral communicators have led people to terrible ends by abusing their referent power. This was the case with Jim Jones in 1978. A preacher with incredible influence over his congregation, he convinced his followers that the end of days were happening. More than 900 of his followers either willingly or under duress drank a punch laced with the highly lethal poison cyanide. That tragedy is now infamously known as the Jonestown Massacre. On the other hand, Warren Buffet can merely mention a stock as a personal like and people will flock to buy that stock. Oprah Winfrey can talk favorably about a book she has read, and overnight that book becomes a best-seller. Many others have gained power based on their level of knowledge in a field or industry.

Expert Power

Expert power is based on competence. Expert power does not necessarily need to be explained; people just seem to know once a person with this type of power speaks. Many examples of this can be found in literature and in real life. The fictional character Sherlock Holmes had immense expert power. His reputation preceded him because he established a record of

solving nearly impossible cases using inductive and deductive reasoning. In real life, few people would question the contributions to physics made by Albert Einstein—$E = MC^2$; to literature made by Edgar Allen Poe—critical analysis of literature and the murder mystery and author of *The Raven*; or to mathematics made by René Descartes—known as father of analytical geometry and the Cartesian coordinate system. People with expert power are given respect through deference by others. A person like Warren Buffet has both referent and expert power. Some leaders, however, acquire power by attaining position or status within an organization.

Legitimate Power

Legitimate power is based on position or status earned or inherited. Some leaders have power because they earned it by climbing the corporate ladder and paying the price of hard work and sacrifice. Others might be born into a family that owns or has controlling shares of a business, and thus inherit a CEO position. In family-owned businesses, succession planning typically names heirs to positions of power. In some cases, the person might not be the best suited for the position, yet, could still be in control. Most organizations will have measures in place to ensure that only those who are competent are promoted within the structural hierarchy.

Reward Power

Reward power is based on the granting of stimuli to employees who work hard. A reward is a stimulus (negative or positive reinforcement, tangible or intangible—verbal praise, a bonus, a certificate, flex-time schedule, and more) used to stamp-in a desired behavior exhibited by a subordinate. Rewards are used to keep behaviors consistent within the context of organized work routines. Leaders have power when they control things others' want and the others are willing to behave in a desired way in order to receive the reward. Psychologists refer to this behavior as conditioning. The use of rewards to modify subordinates' behaviors gives leaders extraordinary power of control.

Coercive Power

Coercive power is based on penalizing or punishing an employee. A punishment is a consequence imposed on an individual because he or she has engaged in an undesired behavior. Leaders sometimes supervise subordinates who will not respond to rewards. Personal and family problems, drug abuse, apathy, or feelings of inequity can result in nonresponse to a system of rewards. Some managers will use punishment to influence behaviors they want subordinates to change. If a manager feels that a subordinate is unproductive or not supportive of the common goals, they may use coercive powers to get the person to either change or leave. "Two brains are better than one" is a cliché that is more often correct than incorrect, and this is why leaders often forge dyadic relationships with some employees. Leader–member exchange affords leaders power that can be very fruitful.

Climate

OCC includes degree of openness, trust, confidence, participation in decision making, and acceptance that exist in the work environment. OCC is what you feel, hear, and sense when you watch employees interact. Central to this humanistic approach to management is that subordinates participate in decision making. Superiors and subordinates talk to each other, rather than superiors talking down to subordinates. OCC is marked by reciprocity—the openness and honesty within the relationship; feedback perceptiveness—sensitivity of supervisors to feedback; feedback responsiveness—the degree to which a supervisor gives feedback to subordinates requests or grievances; and feedback permissiveness—the degree to which supervisors permit and encourage feedback from subordinates (Gibb 1961).

Basic to OCC is communication openness, information adequacy, and communication supportiveness. When information is open, employees have a grasp of what is happening in the organization. If an organization is open, adequate information is available for all employees. When leaders keep employees in the loop, they are being supportive. When
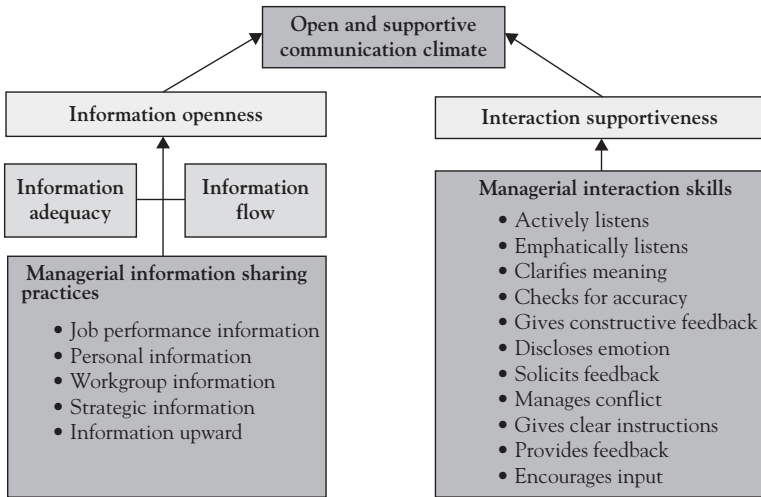
Figure 3.1 Comprehensive organizational communication climate model

Source: Robertson (2003, p. 32)

leaders leave employees out of the loop because of lack of trust or power hoarding, they are being defensive. Defensive behaviors are not conducive to building a positive OCC. Managers have the critical role in the communication process of keeping everyone informed. Executive management must empower, engage, and enable their subordinates to communicate and direct the flow of information in the organization. An OCC model presented in Figure 3.1 shows that information must flow smoothly between all levels of the organization and across functional areas (Robertson 2003).

A number of potential leadership traps exist in initial interpersonal communications between the manager and the employees, especially when the relationship is new. The best way for the executive to avoid the traps that result from failed leadership is to establish positive impressions with employees from the very beginning. Research has indicated that trust and commitment do not just happen automatically, but rather they are forged and maintained by managers communicating effectively (Appelbaum et al. 2013).

At times, it may be necessary to reshape some of the networks that have developed in a firm in order to have a better OCC. Changing the

OCC within a firm is not easy, and the ease of changing it depends on the number of subgroups or silos within the organization. You may also find that the structure of these silos differs because of the various types of work that occur within them. While workers communicate one way within their group, they may need to learn how to communicate effectively with other groups.

It is vital that managers know how information flows in the organization. An organization chart by design unintentionally promotes the formation of silos within the organization and impedes the flow of communication between functional areas. The need to facilitate communication increases with more involved organizational structures. Some organizations do not have an organization chart in an effort to enable employees to communicate with whomever they need. The Japanese developed what is known as the quality circle, where everyone is equal and can talk to other individuals no matter what their level is within the organization. Examining the organization chart and considering limitations it may inadvertently put on the employees is important to communication strategy. If the chart is making managing too bureaucratic, then a change may be necessary.

The Window into Practical Reality 3.1 exemplifies just how social experience in beliefs, values, and core assumptions affect the OCC.

Window into Practical Reality 3.1

Senator Carl Levin Blasts Goldman Sachs Over Email Calling Timberwolf Investment "One sh***y deal"

On April 27, 2010, U.S. Senator Carl Levin led the charge against the 17 Goldman Sachs executives called before Congress to testify as to their knowledge of the dirty dealings relating to the derivatives (bets against the products they sold) they purchased. Goldman Sachs was charged with knowingly selling defective products at extraordinary profits and then turning around and purchasing a sort-of insurance betting against the very products they were selling. In the two months that followed, the deal lost 80 percent of its value and was liquidated. Little did the Goldman Sachs executives know that Senator Levin

would be armed with email that memorialized the company's activities that contributed to the subprime mortgage meltdown. One email singularly captured the shared guilt of traders with braggadocios declarations of the "sh***y deals" they put together and sold (Mastrull and Johnston 2010). Where did the responsibility lie for the problems at Goldman Sachs? Should upper level management be held responsible when the corporate culture goes awry?

You can use the model in Figure 3.1 as a self-help tool to become a more effective manager. Many times employees speak past one another cross-functionally because their working vocabularies are different. Learning the talk of other functional areas takes time because departmental employees often have limited knowledge of what happens in the rest of the company. However, this lack of understanding decreases when employees listen, ask questions, and learn to rephrase technical information so that others can understand it. Working in cross-functional teams helps to open lines of communication across the organization.

If an organization has a supportive communication climate, its members will write and speak descriptive messages that are clear and specific without judgmental statements or words. In a supportive communication climate, problems will be posed as mutual problems to be worked on, communication will be open and honest in spontaneous messages, employees at all levels will be empathetic to the feelings and thoughts of others, messages will indicate an equality of worth between all levels of employees, and point-of-view messages will be posited as provisional and open to investigation. If an organization is not supportive, the climate will be defensive and not conducive to conducting business.

Supportive communication requires the ability to communicate and manage attitudes as well as information. Organizations can benefit from an examination of managers at all levels concerning their experience, judgment, intelligence, relationships, and insights, and then design training programs that help managers become better communicators. This may mean looking at "who does what," "where is it done," and "how is it done."

OCC starts with the CEO and Board of Directors and extends throughout the levels of management. Many managers are not only

dealing with people in their home country but also with employees, customers, or suppliers in other countries. They may be virtually supervising employees in other nations and cultures. Employees with different cultural backgrounds can also find it difficult to assimilate into the existing organization. It is necessary that their managers spend time learning about their cultural differences and help the person feel like a part of the overall organization. TheWindow into Practical Reality 3.2 exemplifies how poor OCC can be detrimental to business success.

Window into Practical Reality 3.2

The Rise and Fall of a Titan

CBS News reported on February 9, 2005, that Hewlett-Packard's board of directors had fired Carly Fiorina after a six-year reign as CEO. Fiorina's power-driven move to acquire Compaq was seen as too risky by many, and some charged her with inability to hear her constituents. This cited communication failure led to covert rebellion among the ranks and resulted in a very poor OCC during much of Fiorina's reign. The board accused Fiorina of failing to execute the planned strategy. She also had strained relationship with the son of one of HP's late cofounders, HP director Walter Hewlett who openly opposed the Compaq acquisition because he felt it was overpriced.

It was probably not so much that Fiorina did not perform as the board of directors expected, but that she would not or could not hear her dissenters' concerns. Media reported that Fiorina's drive to acquire Compaq interfered with her managerial interaction skills (Vries 2005).

Using the complete organizational communication climate model shown in Figure 3.1, can you identify some of the skills that Fiorina obviously used to climb to the top of Hewlett-Packard's hierarchy to become its CEO? Conversely, can you use the model to describe how her violating of these fundamentals led to her inevitable ouster?

As an organization grows, it generally will add departments and divisions, making communication connections grow exponentially. As a firm grows, the individuals joining the firm are likely to be more diverse, this

leads to managers having to learn about their employees' differences and how they communicate. These differences could be due to their ethnic background, native language, gender, or anything else that differentiates people. Many times as a firm grows, management must also consider new ways to organize processes.

External stakeholders gauge the organization's communication climate by media messages and the way employees talk about the firm. A firm's external prestige is a direct result of employees' buy-in to the goals, values, and achievements of the organization. The communication climate affects how employees identify with the firm and project their impressions externally.

Culture

Subordinates can undermine managerial authority. Failing to understand the cultural forces at play can jeopardize managerial authority and ultimately impact the bottom line (Manzoni and Barsoux 2009). When managers do not have knowledge of organizational culture, it makes it impossible for them to change the traditional, rigid organization of yesterday into one that is flexible and evolving for tomorrow (Flannery et al. 1996).

Very little was written on *corporate culture* prior to 1979 (Kotter and Heskett 1992). More recently, there has been a great deal of research on corporate culture. Studies have addressed how leaders should examine the artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions as layers of organizational culture. What is clear is the strong influence managerial communication has on shaping corporate culture by steering the entire direction of the organization toward prosperity or ruin.

The common managerial practice of attempting to decentralize decision making prior to assessing meaning in culture is not well advised. Attempts to change organizational culture cannot resolve business problems when there is incomplete knowledge of the current organizational culture. Changes in culture must accompany changes in values, beliefs, and core assumptions.

Even though an adaptive culture cannot account for 100 percent of corporate performance, developing successful strategies to deliver value to

major constituencies is very important. Culture can be either the brakes or the fuel for the engine of success of an organization and is just as important as the primary functions of finance and information technology (Rigsby and Greco 2003). Organizational culture influences employees' perspectives, just as societal cultural shapes citizens. Individuals learn their societal culture and share their culture first with their family and then the broader community in which they live. To continue the culture, the existing members of the culture must share their beliefs and values with the next generation or newcomers, so the new members understand what is required to be a member of the culture. Business culture is learned much the same way as is societal culture.

Established Layers of Culture

Weick (2001) argues that meaning is distinct from decision making by asserting meaning precedes decision making. He argues that managers must understand the nature of what is happening before they can decide on what to do about it. His assessment is that even though centralized and decentralized authority are both valuable in certain situations, understanding culture can make decentralized decision making more desirable. Being in the loop as culture is forming, reforming, and affecting outcomes is a way for top management to effectively gauge, anticipate, and dislodge the potential hazards of unhealthy communications (both symbolic and explicit), resulting in organizational cultures that go awry. Corporate culture can drive performance and the core values that comprise corporate culture. Meaning and interpretation of organization and corporate culture content can be broad, spanning all tiers and functions of management.

Other theorists have offered additional definitions essential to consideration of organizational culture. Schein (1992) argued (1) *artifacts* are all the phenomena that are visible, (2) *espoused values* are confirmed by shared social experiences of group members and this layer of conscious culture can be used to predict much of the behavior that can be observed at the artifactual level, and (3) *basic underlying assumptions* become embedded in culture when solutions to group problems work repeatedly.

Similarly, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) argued that the (1) *outer layer* is explicit products that are the observable reality of

culture such as food, language, or shrines; (2) the *middle layers* are norms and a mutual sense of a group's right and wrong, and values are those beliefs that determine or define what the group might think is good and bad; and (3) *the core* is made of assumptions about existence, which are implicit to the members of the culture to increase people's effectiveness at solving problems.

Shared meanings are man-made and transcend the people in the culture. The more visible the culture, the easier it is to change; the less visible the culture, the more resistant it is to change.

Formal and Informal Networks

Studies have shown that performance increases when the CEO and marketing vice president share the same vision and communicate that vision vertically to the rest of the firm. How to share that vision vertically, however, is not always clear. Top management must obviously communicate adequately with the functional managers, and the functional managers must communicate with their subordinates. Maintaining an organizational structure which promotes effective vertical communication of a company's vision requires formal processes.

Formal Networks

The communication structure of an organization is both formal and informal. The more formal the structure, the more messages have to follow channels depicted in the formal organization chart of the company; the more informal the structure, the easier it is to go directly to the person with whom you wish to communicate.

In very *formal networks*, information moves down the depicted lines of authority, and employees do not go around their bosses when communicating with others in the organization. The employee communicates upward through the direct supervisor, who then will send the message up the chain of command. Certain information is typically communicated more formally, such as common rules, regulations, standard operating procedures, plans, schedules, and forecasts. A formal organizational structure will often require that written channels of communication be used

for formalized decision making. Coordination must exist between the different groups within the organization in order to accomplish the overall goals of the organization.

Katz and Kahn (1966) are credited with identifying the three directions of communication flow: communications down the line—down to the workers; horizontal communications—between departments; and communication upward—up toward top management.

Upward communication is used to keep management informed. Upward communication may happen through reports, meetings, or informal communications. If top management encourages upward communication, a company's leadership is more likely to learn about the concerns and suggestions that employees have.

Downward communication is generally used to instruct workers, build and maintain the morale and goodwill of the workers, keep routine and special activities moving smoothly and efficiently, and to encourage upward communication. Employees want guidelines and information from management, and management wants input and feedback from employees.

Horizontal communication strengthens interpersonal relationships across departments and units within the company. Such exchange helps to minimize conflict, promote understanding, and increase coordination between departments or units. Getting others to communicate their needs is a two-way process and generally starts with how managers encourage and motivate their employees. It is helpful for managers to start conversations by sharing their skills and knowledge and empowering the employees to do the same.

Some organizations have a culture of everyone being allowed to communicate with anyone in the firm, at any level. Other organizations want communication to travel along established routes—subordinate to supervisor to superior. Of course, with the first type of culture, it is very easy to quickly let people at the top know what is happening and vice versa; however, people in the middle may be left out. The use of email has increased broad awareness in many organizations, as messages can be copied to multiple recipients simultaneously.

Given that organizations often make strategic changes due to internal or external pressures, top managers must skillfully use ways to quickly

communicate vertically to multiple recipients throughout the firm. Managers at all levels must help to build everyone's understanding, an identity with the company, and commitment to the strategy's formulation, dissemination, and implementation. It is also necessary that top management encourage and actually listen to responses from those at varying levels in the organization.

Informal Networks

In more *informal networks*, everyone can communicate directly with everyone else. You would still need to keep your boss informed of what you are doing, but there is no pressure on you to only tell your boss. The formality or informality of an organization generally starts at the top and depends upon the technical, political, and economic environment of the organization. You will find organizations like Microsoft that are very informal and organizations such as General Motors' that are more formalized.

Much of an organization's communication takes place through informal processes. Therefore, key linkages are essential. These linkages between the areas of the firm determine the frequency of communication: who receives the communication, and whether the meaning of the communication is shared. Informal communication networks are like spiderwebs because various areas are interconnected no matter how far they are from the top. Frequent communication between the functional areas and top management will impact both functional and organizational performance. If a firm does not have shared understanding, there will be barriers to successful strategic plan implementation (Rapert et al. 2002).

The grapevine is a form of informal communication. With Twitter, jamming, texting, email, and other technology, it is easy for information to be passed around a company very quickly. Gossip being transferred only at the water fountain is a thing of the past. What makes grapevines important to managers is that they typically carry more information than formal networks. While the grapevine may distribute gossip, rumors, and half-truths, it also frequently provides accurate information. This information can be useful to managers, who should know how and when to use the grapevine. A good example of using the grapevine is shown in the following Window into Practical Reality 3.3.

Window into Practical Reality 3.3

Gift Cards vs. the Prevalent Turkey!

The traditional free turkey had been given to employees at Thanksgiving for a number of years. Some managers had been hearing rumors that not everyone was happy with a turkey; either they were not having a Thanksgiving celebration at their home or they did not like turkey. The managers started to spread a rumor that the company was considering other options such as gift cards, either generic or for a specific grocery store. They then sat back and allowed the workers to let them know informally what they would prefer. The company could also have done a survey, but this informal process was much easier.

The managers decided to go with the gift cards and the turkey. What they discovered through the grapevine communication tactic was that 30 percent of their employees were from Asian countries where turkey was not eaten. Many of the Asian employees were not accustomed to the taste. Moreover, the Asian employees were from cultures where speaking out, especially to the boss, is taboo. The Asian employees loved the gift cards. The Americans loved the traditional turkey! Because modern organizations are comprised of people from various cultures, why is it prudent for managers to be sensitive to customs and habits of the people who work for them?

What makes individuals pass on certain information, yet desire other information? Typically, this decision is based on the salience or importance of the information to the individual, the effect of the channel chosen, and the cultural norms of the organization. Johnson et al. (1994) found that employees use informal channels more than formal channels in business. Roles tend to dictate the number of formal and informal communication channels that are used. Also, employees scrutinize formal communication for characteristics such as editorial tone more than they do with information from informal channels.

Figure 3.2 shows how important it is for managers to dial into the other jobs employees do in addition to their formal assignments (Bell 2009). It is essential that you as a manager know the quality of the
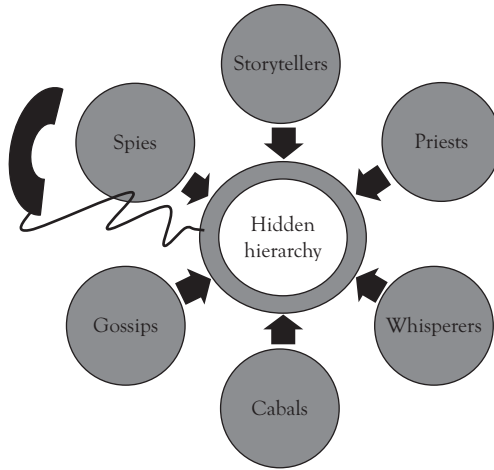
Figure 3.2 Cultural network of the hidden hierarchy

communications radiating from the hidden hierarchy. The phone connected directly to the hidden hierarchy in Figure 3.2 is a visual reminder to managers of the importance of being in the loop of informal corporate cultural communications.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) created the metaphors of spies, storytellers, priests, whisperers, cabals, and gossips to describe the various types of communication activities occurring in the cultural network of the hidden hierarchy. These metaphors describe each of the other jobs people do at work within a managerial communication (MC) context. *Spies* are people who are loyal in the network and those who keep others informed of what is going on. A *storyteller* is a person who can change reality by interpreting what goes on in a company to suit their own perception. *Priests* tend to be worriers responsible for guarding the company's values and keeping the flock together. *Whisperers* work like Machiavelli from behind the throne, but without a formal portfolio—the source of their power is the boss's ear. *Cabals* plot a common purpose by joining together in unions that provide personal gain and advancement. *Gossips* will name names, know dates, salaries, and events that take place, and they carry the day-to-day trivial information cautiously appreciated by most.

Values and styles affect the identification and management of ethical problems, causing unintentional ethical dilemmas. Unfortunately, leaders are sometimes the architects of negative cultures. Dent and Krefft

(2004) assert two cultures exist in any organization, the one that results from fear, dishonesty, and denial and the one that invigorates creativity and integrity. Management determines which culture dominates. Organizational cultures are paradoxical because they contain both productive and counterproductive elements of culture. This factor helps explain why the bankers discussed earlier in the chapter played hot potato with subprime mortgages, even though nearly every executive knew the risks. Questions emerge as to why some bankers behaved ethically while others did not: What elements in some financial institutions' cultures steered them toward fortitude amidst the subprime lending free-for-all, and what elements in other financial institutions' cultures steered them toward depravity (falsifying documents, hiding audit documents from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), repackaging bad debt, ostracizing whistle-blowers and those refusing to violate the law, policy, and procedure, and so on)?

Summary

Leadership is the process of providing forward movement for the organization and vision for the future. Leaders strive to achieve common goals for the good of all. Power can be used for the common good or for selfish purposes. Six bases of power are referent power, expert power, legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, and the leader–member exchange. The organizational communication climate (OCC) is determined by the degree of openness, trust, confidence, participation in decision making, and acceptance. OCC comprises both actions and attitudes and is highly influenced by how supervisors define their roles and the roles of subordinates within the firm.

The layers of culture include (1) artifacts, the most visible layer that contains all the phenomena that can be seen, heard, or felt when a person first encounters a new group with an unfamiliar culture; (2) espoused values, which are confirmed by shared social experiences of group members that can be used to predict much of the behavior observable at the artifactual level; and (3) basic underlying assumptions, which become embedded in a culture when solutions to group problems work repeatedly.

The three directions of communication flow are down the line communication that originates with managers and is directed down to the

workers, horizontal communication that occurs between members of different lateral departments, and upward communication that begins with employees and moves up toward top management.

In a company with a formal communication structure, employees avoid going around their bosses when communicating with others in the organization. In formal communication, an employee always tells the direct supervisor, who then will send the message up the chain of command. In informal organizations, everyone can communicate directly with everyone else. The grapevine is a form of informal communication that managers can use to their advantage. Technology facilitates the easy and fast movement of information around a company.

CHAPTER 4

Ethical Issues in Management Communication

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. define the theories of moral problems in business;
2. explain how moral philosophy develops;
3. differentiate between personal ethics and societal ethics;
4. identify ethical issues in lieu of codes of ethics;
5. determine appropriate situations for whistle-blowing;
6. explain the guidelines for ethical behavior.

Introduction

If people are to work together successfully, they must agree to share common customs and standards of conduct. If they cannot agree on the tenets of ethical conduct, there will be no consensus on the organization's behaviors. Many would defend the right of a sovereign society to govern itself. Therefore, the tenets of ethical conduct a society chooses for itself will inevitably spillover into the business environments. Bad choices by society are bad for business.

Unethical decisions are made all the time; why does this happen? People steal not only for themselves but also for their company. Power, greed, and values that are misplaced are the major causes of unethical decisions in business. The 2008 U.S. financial crisis was due in large part to the unethical decisions made by Fannie Mae leaders Franklin Raines, CEO and Chairman, and Tim Howard, CFO. They told banks to make

loans to unqualified people. They manipulated the earnings to trigger bonuses for themselves. The profit motive drove them to make bad decisions. When people in an organization learn that their leaders are dishonest, the credibility of leaders is destroyed.

Ethical issues that are very important for managerial communication effectiveness today include social responsibility, conflict of interest, payoffs, financial results, product safety, liability, whistle-blowing, organizational politics, training and development, ambivalence, bribery, and quid pro quo.

Moral Problems Common to Business

Philosophers over several centuries developed theories to explain how people respond to the ethical problems societies face.

Consequentialism

Consequentialism results when the profit motive or the success of the business supersedes the duty to do what is right for society. In fact, this theory could explain the ethical breaches of many businesses. A recipe for trouble can occur when results are more important than duty to society, to not cause harm, or to obey the federal and state laws that protect consumers and the public. If there is an opportunity for impropriety, then the choice requires the person to act according to an established code.

Decision Theory

Codes of ethics are justified by *decision theory* that applies when there is limited information to make a rational choice or to achieve an outcome that is optimal. These codes provide guidelines for acceptable actions. Some professionals refer to *decision theory* as the "sniff test." The code should be applied to ethical situations to be sure it is functional. If there is a code of ethics, all employees should have a copy and should be given instructions on its use. Top management must also use the code if it is

to be effective at lower levels in the organization. The code should also include guidelines concerning punishments for violations.

Deontology

Deontology refers to judging the morality of an action on that action's adherence to rules. Managers must effectively communicate ethical standards for employees to incorporate the ethical standard values into the organizational culture. However, deontology is concerned with a person feeling more loyalty to doing his or her duty than to any potential harm his or her actions will cause to others. Managers are an essential corporate tool for communicating ethical values. Fraud and misconduct often occur when duty to a company becomes more important than the consequences to society.

Teleology

Teleology is the notion that the universe has a purpose and that purpose is often prescribed by a divine being. Many people believe that there is one God, the Supreme Being, whose will provides purpose to human existence. According to Bell, Guyot, Martin, and Meier (2011) the strongest predictions of ethical behavior are the family (upbringing), friends, religious beliefs, personal values, and beliefs that are generally stronger than the company's values and beliefs.

Capitalism has been defined as the freedom of the individual to pursue his or her economic self-interest unrestrained by the government, corporations, labor, or vested interests of any kind. Ethical beliefs are largely rooted in history, which varies for each individual. For instance, global business is showing us that there are many different cultures and histories to consider in gauging business situations. But each of us as individuals has to discern through self-realization what ethics means, as well as understand that not everyone shares our view of ethics. A good example of how one man's teleological ethics has shaped the core values of the company he founded is presented in Window into Practical Reality 4.1.

Window into Practical Reality 4.1

A Founder's Teleological Ethics for Worship, Friendship, and Rest Supersedes the Need for Financial Gains

Truett Cathy's personal ethics shaped the moral code of Chick-fil-A, a company he founded in 1946, when he decided not to operate the first restaurant he opened in Hapeville, Georgia, on Sundays. Cathy had a firm belief that employees should be able to worship, be with family and friends, and get some rest on Sunday. Today thousands of Chick-fil-A restaurants currently operate in the United States and each of them forgoes hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenues by closing their doors on Sundays. At Chick-fil-A, adhering to the founder's personal ethics, is more important than making money on Sundays.

Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism theory supports making decisions based on the greatest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain for the greatest number of people; in other words, actions should improve the human experience in mass. Many of the moral problems to which utilitarianism is applied are broadly societal, rather than applications to businesses as regulatory mandates. The United States has historically been a society of competing ethical beliefs. In the absence of agreements or consensus on what behavior ought to be acceptable in society, its citizens historically have had violent conflicts that sometimes lasted for decades. Examples of contested societal ethics are legalized slavery, alcohol prohibition, voter I.D. laws, prohibition against women's voting, and Jim Crow laws (separate but equal laws) that lasted for decades. For every proponent of these types of laws, there was an unrelenting opponent whose belief in the unrighteousness of such laws was intractable. Society has imposed many of its societal values through laws and regulations on business operations and activities. In the United States, federal, state, county, and city governments regulate the societal ethics that are imposed on businesses, including equal protection and affirmative action laws. Some states imposed antimiscegenation laws until the Supreme Court struck them down in 1967 as described in the Window into Practical Reality 4.2.

Window into Practical Reality 4.2

Loving vs. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1 (1967)

Loving vs. Virginia was a landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling handed down in 1967 that marked a milestone in civil rights. The U.S. Supreme Court unanimously decided that Virginia's anti-miscegenation statute, the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, was unconstitutional. The ruling overturned the *Pace vs. Alabama* law of 1883, which ended the societal practice of recognizing only marriages between people deemed to be of the same race. This decision that ended the practice of anti-miscegenation in the United States took decades to happen and reflected both deontological ethics and utilitarianism thinking. Despite the outcry from proponents of these laws, the Supreme Court's decision seemed more to be predicated on duty to the entire U.S. society despite the expected immediate consequences of hate crimes and violence against black Americans as a result of the decision. For many younger U.S. citizens, it is hard to imagine that such laws existed in recent history.

How has the Supreme Court's decision to strike down anti-miscegenation statutes resulted in a greater (utilitarian) good for U.S. citizens as a whole?

Equal protection laws are essential in helping to root out racism, sexism, and ageism in the workplace so all U.S. citizens will have a better opportunity to prosper and advance in their careers. The need for such laws is a testament to the fact that personal values of hate and discrimination spillover into the workplace. They also reflect a utilitarian intention in regulating all U.S. businesses to ensure certain types of moral conduct in the workplace.

A recent study of MBA students by Zaremba (2000) found that the students' value systems varied widely. When the students discussed these differences, many were shocked to learn that people they were working with had such different values from their own. The majority of the students believed that if a statement was not prefaced with the qualifying statement "this is the truth," the receiver of the message was obligated to discover if the statement was in fact true.

Five moral problems	Common business examples
Consequentialism: The person believes he is moral when the result or consequence is the basis of acting out rather than duty to act. Sometimes duty comes into conflict with promoting public good.	A money manager invests the total assets under management in a high-risk deal knowing full-well that this action is against the wishes of his clients. If the deal pays off, the clients stand to gain 26% ROI. If not, they could lose half their total assets—or more!
Decision theory: A person uses scarce information to make a choice he or she believes will be optimal.	The CEO of a company that produces a cancer treatment drug has limited available human subjects for final-stage testing of its product. A competitor is moving to market in a month with a generic brand. The CEO orders the marketing team to launch the product within three weeks.
Deontology: A person feels more loyalty to doing his or her duty as opposed to considering the harm his or her actions will cause to others.	A comptroller was asked to inflate earnings by reporting factitious revenues. Doing so would improve public perception and possibly save the company from bankruptcy. The CEO is a good friend of the comptroller. The comptroller does so in violation of his oath to the CPA's code of ethics.
Teleology: A moral belief that there is one God, the Supreme Being, whose will provides purpose to human existence.	An entrepreneur who is a devout Christian starts a fast-food restaurant but refuses to open the business on Sundays in order for his employees to worship, relax, and spend time with their families and friends.
Utilitarianism: A person believes that his or her act will result in the greatest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain for the greatest number of people; in other words, these actions improve the larger human experience.	A very talented executive associated with millions of dollars in sales revenue does not seem to think women can be good sales people. The CEO has been served a subpoena in a sex-discrimination lawsuit involving that executive. After examining the facts, the CEO terminates the employment of the long-term, 20-years sales executive and orders the HR director to "Hire more women in the sales area!"

Figure 4.1 Five theories of moral problems common to the business environment

Source: Feinberg, J. (1996), ed.

Figure 4.1 illustrates moral problems and some hypothetical examples of why consequentialism, decision theory, deontology, teleology, and utilitarianism are moral problems common to business. Managers encounter a broad range of decisions daily where their choices can be detrimental to thousands if not millions of people.

The Central Issues of Moral Philosophy

The Greek word *philosophy* literally means the love of wisdom. Arguably, Socrates was sincere in his pursuit of wisdom. To Socrates, the question was not so much "What is?" but "What ought to be?" Socrates stated that "the unexamined life is not worth living." *Egoism* is the ability to

determine and do what is best for yourself; *altruism* is the ability to understand how your actions will affect others.

There are three main branches of western philosophy: *epistemology*—a view that humans can know about the world in which they exist, thus, people pursue answers to questions concerning phenomenon that can be tested and verified or refuted; *metaphysics*—a view that knowledge can be gained from abstraction (including religious beliefs); and *ethics*—a view of right and wrong conduct affecting others' welfare.

As one of three main branches of western philosophy, ethics has been examined for many centuries. Unalienable rights for individuals are guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. These rights include equal protection under the laws for free speech and a free press, a right to remain silent, and a freedom of religion. Rights like these are the basis of U.S. citizens societal ethics of these tenets are a culmination of centuries of western philosophy. Societies have embraced ethics differently.

When Socrates was alive, the Greeks worshiped many gods. Socrates routinely asked troubling questions concerning this belief system such as, "What happens when two gods of equal strength and power disagree?" When people's common beliefs cannot resolve their ethical dilemmas, people become frustrated and feel threatened. Socrates asked the Athenians so many poignant questions that his questions led to a saucer of hemlock that sent him to his grave. Values and beliefs are profound for individuals. Ordinary people, in situations where they feel a need to reflect consciously on decisions they honestly cannot determine immediately to be right or wrong, are in fact searching for wisdom.

Moral philosophy is the outcome of a process through which individuals reflect consciously on the precepts that govern their ordinary habits of moral choice. Reflection is required when precepts about what is right and what is wrong can no longer enable the person to automatically resolve ethical dilemmas. With old values rendered insufficient to aid in resolving the moral problem, a conscious reflection on those values is required of the individual. It is through this process of conscious reflection that an individual is elevated to a higher level of ethics called moral philosophy. Theologians, philosophers, and academicians alike have struggled for centuries to understand and explain these types of moral problems. Ethical decision making is predicated on the values and beliefs that influence the

philosophy supporting an individual's or culture's moral code. Therefore, values and ethics are both personal and societal.

The base of ethical judgments is right or wrong. A judgment based on what is easiest, best, or most effective to achieve an objective is based on practical ethics. Subjective judgments are measured by degrees rather than by absolutes of what is ethical or unethical in a society (Lewicki et al. 2007). Business morality consists of doing one's duty, in spite of concern for the probable outcomes of such choices. Individuals may at times perceive that their duty to their company is more important than the common good for the general society.

Employees usually learn more about company ethical values from fellow employees rather than from their supervisors. This reality indicates that managers should be more proactive in having ethical discussions with employees. Employees can also learn company ethical values through training and orientation programs as well as handbooks. The best ethical codes are the ones that employees intuitively act upon, making it important that values are interwoven throughout the organization's culture. Adding many cultures to the mix makes understanding ethics even more complex. Constraints when dealing with an ethical dilemma include international and domestic laws, internal or industry codes of ethics, the interest of the stakeholders, and personal values.

Many global business managers use *hypernorms* today, which are the transnational norms forming across cultures. The hypernorm would say that bribery is wrong although there are countries where bribery is practiced. Global organizations generally would like to have all employees follow the same values and beliefs around the globe; though this is not always possible, due to varying cultural and societal values and beliefs. Examples of current hypernorms are global standard accounting practices, and international regulations for the movement of goods and international safety standards.

Four approaches for working with ethics internationally include the foreign-country approach, empire approach, interconnection approach, and global approach. In the *foreign-country approach*, the organization conforms to the ethics of the host country. In the *empire approach,* home-based ethics are applied in the host situation. The *interconnection approach* considers the needs of both groups that are interacting. The *global approach*

looks at what is good for the world rather than the local ethical customs (Donaldson and Dunfee 1999).

Each of these methods has its challenges. With the foreign-country approach, the company has no oversight or restraints on the host-country's ethics; while the empire approach, does not take into account the cultural and personal values of those in the host country. Trying to balance multiple interests is challenging at best when applying the inter-connection or global approaches, though the rewards are great when efforts are successful.

Personal and Societal Ethics

There are distinctions between the terms personal values, personal ethics, societal values, and societal ethics, although they are interdependent. *Personal values* are the individual's trusted, closely held beliefs; *personal ethics* is an individual's philosophy that serves as a moral code of conduct. On the other hand, *societal values* are the trusted and closely held beliefs imposed on the individual by the society in which he or she lives. *Societal ethics* is the totality of individual philosophies that culminate into a systematic moral code of conduct agreed on by members of a society.

Ethics in business includes the rules, standards, principles, or codes that give the members of a firm a moral compass for determining the correct behavior in specific situations. The amount of accountability affects people's ethical behaviors. The stronger a personal relationship is, the more unlikely unethical behavior will be. Workers solve ethical dilemmas based on their culture, their individual beliefs (based on the ethical choices), the work situation, and relationships they have with other workers. Role systems theory has shown that firm accountability expectations and the consequences of noncompliance are important keys regarding choices employees will make.

Our ethical beliefs follow us to the workplace. Because of immigration from all over the world, there is probably more ethical difference between individuals in the United States than anywhere else in the world. Immigration originally was mainly from Europe and Africa but now has a broader base. Additionally, globalization of organizations involves the consideration of different ethical belief standards around the world. It is

not enough to speak the same language. We also need to understand what the others believe if we are to trust them to carry out the goals of the firm.

Conflicting values between workers are not unusual. Some workers will believe they are to simply obey authority no matter what the consequences might be. Other workers will believe they should question orders if something does not appear correct. When company and personal values clash, individuals will ask themselves who they owe loyalty to first—themselves or the company. For many people, loyalty to family and family beliefs may also be problematic. For others, societal concerns may be more important than company goals. A good example of personal values vis-à-vis company values is presented in Window into Practical Reality 4.3.

Window into Practical Reality 4.3

When is a lie not really a lie?

Ed had a very nice sales position with a firm. The rumor mill had been saying for some time that the company was going to be purchased. Ed had been approached by a headhunter who had a position with another firm for which Ed would be very qualified. Ed went to his boss, Harry, with the company rumors and asked him if they were true. Harry replied that the rumors were not true. Given Harry's response, Ed turned down the job. Two months later it was announced that the firm had merged with another company. Of course, there would be some layoffs due to duplicate positions. When Ed confronted Harry and asked why he had lied to him, Harry denied lying. He said that he was under strict orders not to say anything to anyone.

Do you feel Harry lied? What if Ed is one of the employees who is cut? Did Ed have a right to this information? Was Ed's intent devious or selfish? Was Harry's intent devious or selfish? How can Harry justify his conduct?

When faced with conflicting personal and work values, an employee can do nothing, quit, work to change the system, or blow the whistle. Part of the choice will depend on how the person sees the situation. Is

it partially wrong or completely wrong? Is it a direct lie or a lie to buy time? Is it illegal or just wrong? Is it unsafe? Ethics can be thought of as a continuum from white to black where many situations are in shades of gray. Some individuals see everything as one extreme or the other—either white or black. Most people see things as shades of gray based upon their ethical belief structure. Therefore, as a manager, it is important that your ethical and moral perceptions are similar to those of your workers. The more the two agree, the easier it will be for you to work together. Rules that govern the conduct of ordinary people in any society, including organizations that exist within that society, can make ethical decision making even more complex. If your ethics are questionable, wrong ethical decisions may be made such as paying yourself a bonus when the company is losing money. Sometimes it is good for people to disagree so that hard questions are asked and answered.

Codes of Ethics

Situations involving questionable business ethics have been frequently in the news in recent years. The negative news and the aftermath of the situations have been devastating to many individuals, from a loss of retirement funds in U.S. companies to a loss of loved pets from contaminated pet food from China.

We learn ethics and morals from those around us as we mature; ethics is very personal, cultural, and situational. Many professional organizations have attempted to govern the ethical conduct of their members, including these:

- American Bar Association Model Rules of Professional Conduct
- American Institute of Certified Public Accountants Code of Ethics (AICPA Code of Professional Conduct)
- American Nurses Association Code of Ethics
- National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. Code of Ethics
- National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE Code of Ethics for Engineers)

The ethical codes of these organizations are believed to make it easier for their members to gauge what is and what is not acceptable conduct within the respective profession. For example, the code of conduct for judges requires them to recuse themselves from cases in which a conflict of interest could raise questions of reasonable doubt or impropriety. Many of these codes of conduct provide strict consequences for members who violate the codes, such as a certified public accountant (CPA) losing their license for insider trading. Often companies have formal ethical statements, which make it easier for an employee to determine how he or she will handle ethical situations and dilemmas. But in our global world, the question of whose ethics or which ethical principles should be adopted is not an easy question to answer. Nevertheless, companies are in a serious position of responding to the perceived unethical atmosphere of business.

Another study found that 76 percent of workers had observed violations of the law or company policies during the prior 12 months. While nearly two-thirds of those surveyed did not feel their company would discipline guilty employees, they also did not think that management even knew the types of unethical behaviors that were occurring. In many cases, managers do not have enough information to make perfect decisions. Nevertheless, reporting wrongdoing is often predicated on urgency and devotion to doing what is perceived to be the right thing to do ("Conduct Unbecoming" 2000).

Appropriate Time for Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing has become more predominant in corporations and government in recent years. But how does an individual decide how and when to blow the whistle?

Ethical Dilemmas

Ethical dilemmas at work happen when people are asked to do, accept, or do things which they know are illegal, immoral, or simply wrong. Unethical behavior can stem from a number of common causes:

- Excessive emphasis on profits
- Misplaced corporate loyalty

- Obsession with personal advancement
- Expectation of not getting caught
- Unethical tone set by top management
- Uncertainty about whether an action is wrong
- Unwillingness to take a stand for what is right.

It is always important to consider the position of others when communicating decisions that affect their work life and personal life. *Put yourself in their shoes* and ask what would you want to know in their situation. Professional ethics is an evolving process of determining for ourselves what we believe to be right and wrong conduct, which includes values that combine to form our personal ethics. In some cases whistle-blowers are willing to end their careers (and in some cases their lives), to seek justice and punish wrongdoers for the greater good of the society. Frequently, whistle-blowing is the only option when the individual is confronted with seeking justice against a large organization.

A good example of a whistle-blowing dilemma is the situation in which top banks skipped the due diligence part of the home purchase and sale they financed. When sued by angry homeowners, banks produced fake documents created by document mills. Lynn Szymoniak, a fraud attorney foreclosed on by a big bank, who was also featured on 60 Minutes, won an $18 million share of a $95 million settlement after she blew the whistle on "robo-signing" fraud perpetuated by some of America's largest banks. Banks that lost crucial original assignment of mortgage documents hired teenagers to fraudulently create thousands of the critical documents. These documents were entered into court records as authentic, in some cases two years after the fact. Szymoniak researched 10,000 such documents and uncovered broad scale fraud perpetuated by the big banks (60 Minutes Overtime staff March 14 2012). Other forms of misconduct that should trigger whistle-blowing include situations in which you witness bribes exchanging hands or kickbacks.

Kickbacks and Bribery

Decision theory is applicable to situations in which managers take or give kickbacks when they fear losing a deal or when they believe the practice

is culturally necessary and acceptable. Managers may also engage in kick-backs and bribery when there is no real fear of getting caught.

Organizations such as Baxter and GM have policies that forbid employees from taking gifts or gratuities from suppliers. Some companies require vendors to sign pledges that they will not engage in bribes or kickbacks to employees. Employees learn about these ethics expectations through training programs, coaching, reading manuals, company communications, and ethical codes, watching other employees and managers, and meeting with managers.

To make ethical codes work, a firm must have them written down and tailored to fit the industry the firm is a part of. Codes must be communicated internally and externally, promoted, and updated regularly. Management from the top-down must live the code and ensure that the code is enforced.

Bribery refers to the act of influencing others by giving them something. In Mexico, bribes are known as mordida; in Southeast Asia, kumshaw; and in the Middle East, baksheesh. The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977 requires U.S. companies to account for and report international transactions accurately and prohibits bribes. The act states that companies found guilty of paying bribes to foreign officials can be fined up to $1 million, and individual employees may be fined up to $10,000. While considered unethical in the United States, bribery is in many countries considered an unofficial part of doing business.

People Who Blow the Whistle

Whistle-blowing generally involves an individual with unique knowledge of unethical actions who uses public communication to let others know what is happening. A *whistle-blower* can be someone who is internal to the organization or someone who is external to the firm such as suppliers, vendors, or professionals in the field. Whistle-blowers have saved lives, prevented injuries and disease, and stopped corruption that would otherwise threaten the public. Whistle-blowing is a personal act of conscientiousness, and the whistle-blower often puts himself or herself at personal risk. Retaliation is not unusual, which is why most whistle-blowers first try to rectify the problem internally before going public. Whistle-blowers

need credibility to deflect some of the retaliation and accusations that others may make against them.

Whistle-blowing is part of our democratic value system that promotes free dissemination of information which allows individuals to make informed decisions. Window into Practical Reality 4.4 illustrates whistle-blowing by an outsider (Johnson et al. 2004).

Window into Practical Reality 4.4

External Whistle-Blower

A technician at MeritCare Health Systems in Fargo, North Dakota, made the first observation that women taking Fen-Phen had more valvular abnormalities than other women of the same age. When he discussed the findings with the interventional cardiologist at MeritCare, the cardiologist called Mayo to discuss the findings. The two cardiologists wrote an article for the *New England Journal of Medicine* and broke the story to the press. Armed with the published risks, users of the drug could make an informed decision as to whether to continue taking Fen-Phen. A month later American Home Products withdrew fenfluramine and dexfenfluramine from the market. What if any risk did the technician take in reporting the adverse data?

So what influences a person to become a whistle-blower? Whistle-blowing happens when a member of an organization feels the organization is not acting in an ethical way. An ethical dilemma exists in that the employee's ethical code and the firm's ethical code do not match. Generally, the whistle-blower has a higher education, professional, and social status, a group affiliation that encourages a whistle-blowing mindset, and a culture with strong norms. Utilitarianism and strong moral beliefs compel the individual to tell authorities about the wrong doings. The whistle-blowing phenomenon has been increasing since the 1960s. Figure 4.2 illustrates the communicative act involved in whistle-blowing. Whistle-blowers often have a conflict between being loyal to the firm and doing what is best for the stakeholders of the firm. An employee may simply leave the firm and find another job; however, some choose to be a
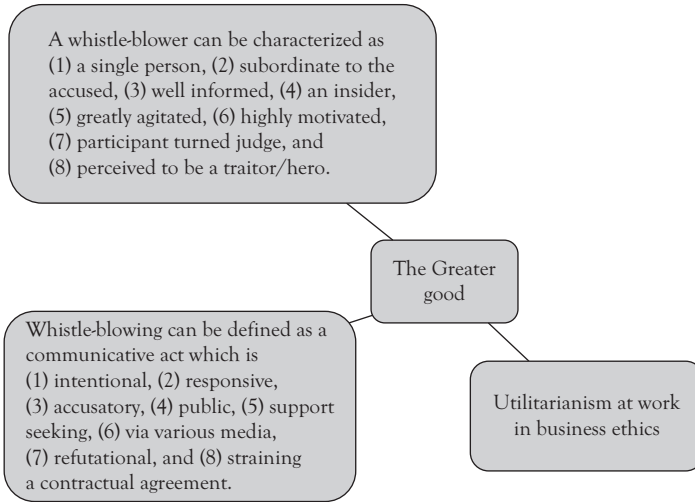
A whistle-blower can be characterized as (1) a single person, (2) subordinate to the accused, (3) well informed, (4) an insider, (5) greatly agitated, (6) highly motivated, (7) participant turned judge, and (8) perceived to be a traitor/hero.

The Greater good

Whistle-blowing can be defined as a communicative act which is (1) intentional, (2) responsive, (3) accusatory, (4) public, (5) support seeking, (6) via various media, (7) refutational, and (8) straining a contractual agreement.

Utilitarianism at work in business ethics

Figure 4.2 The communicative act of whistle-blowing for the greater good

whistle-blower while still employed by the firm. Culture influences the likelihood that whistle-blowing will occur. For example, in Japan where people are more loyal to the firm and culturally are collectivistic, you will see less whistle-blowing than in the United States, which is individualistic and where employees are more transient between companies.

Other conflicts the whistle-blower has to deal with are his or her ethical obligations to the profession, family, livelihood, and colleagues, as well as obligation to the public and one's personal moral obligations. It is clear that whistle-blowing is a utilitarian act with potentially severe consequences for the whistle-blower. For this reason, whistle-blowers often anonymously leak information to the media or regulatory authorities. For example, a whistle-blower at WorldCom leaked e-mails to the press and federal officials, as described in the Window into Practical Reality 4.5.

Window into Practical Reality 4.5

How Leaks of Hostile Emails Bought Worldcom to its Knees

Even though the company no longer exists, some WorldCom executives are still in prison serving lengthy sentences as a result of ethics violations.

David Meyers, a former WorldCom controller, tried to silence Steven Brabbs, a vice president for international finance, for questioning some accounting practices at WorldCom. The series of leaked emails that chronicled the ethical breach led to the downfall of the entire company. It is unclear who leaked the emails to the press and federal officials, yet, it is clear that the friction between Mr. Meyers and Mr. Brabbs was based on their entirely different values and personal ethics governing their conduct at work. On the one hand, Meyers could easily argue his behavior was rooted in a sense of duty for WorldCom's very survival; nevertheless, Brabbs could argue the same thing. Yet, both men experienced totally different outcomes as a result of their moral position on reporting the financial information of the publically traded company. Meyers' view on ethical conduct led to the downfall of the entire company. It appears the vast majority of the stakeholders in the WorldCom case believed that cooking the books is an immoral act (Feder 2002).

Another example of a publicized whistle-blower is Edward Snowden who blew the whistle on the National Security Agency (NSA) spying on emails and phone calls. Had he stayed in the United States after blowing the whistle, he probably would be in jail. He chose to leave the country with sensitive data and is now considered a traitor by some. Others are thankful that he brought out the fact that the U.S. government was in fact gathering information without legal jurisdiction to do so from the courts. No matter which side you are on in this case, it illustrates the difficulties that a whistle-blower must consider before speaking out.

Ethical Guidelines

When considering guidelines for making ethical judgments, a person begins with his or her personal values and beliefs. If the individual has been a member of a society for an extended period of time, the values of the society, which are generally in the form of laws, will provide the second set of guidelines. If the organization has a written code of ethics, that will serve as the third set of guidelines to consider when making ethical decisions.

Problems happen when these sets of guidelines are in conflict or when different interpretations exist. For instance, what do you do if you are in another country and need to run electrical service to operate a manufacturing plant, but the local person wants a bribe to do so and the local culture says this is okay? The U.S. government says it is wrong to pay a bribe, but you know that if your company does not do so, it will be months before the plant will actually be running. Some firms have been known to hire a local consultant and let the consultant pay the bribe so that they are not directly knowledgeable about the situation. In your own country, what is right and wrong is much clearer than in another country where values and beliefs can be very different from your own. When you are in another country, you are caught in the dilemma of whether to follow their values, beliefs, and laws rather than your own which may be quite different.

Analyzing an ethical dilemma can be done by identifying the legal implications of the situation, finding and applying an appropriate code of ethics to the situation, implementing an ethical solution, and then communicating that solution both internally and externally if necessary. The model shown in Figure 4.3 illustrates how people's ethical codes interact to determine behavior. Managers with *Machiavellian personalities* are
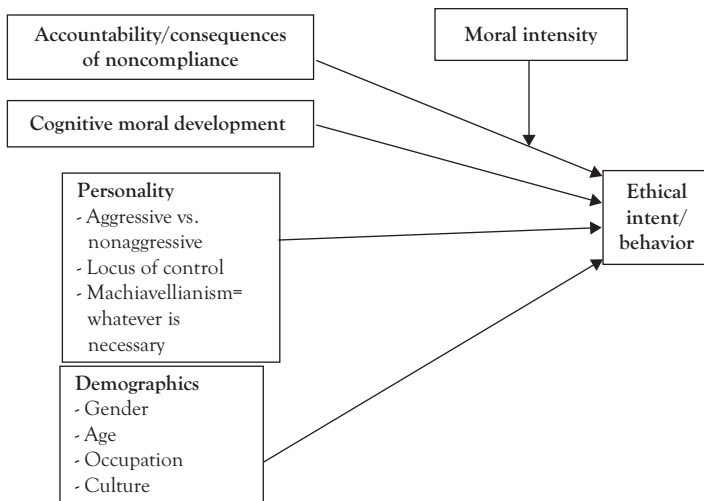
Figure 4.3 Ethical decision-making model

Adapted from: Beu et al., p. 90.

people who believe manipulating others purely for political or personal gain is acceptable conduct in business. Therefore, the model shows that *Machiavellianism* is managers who are willing to do whatever is necessary to achieve their goals. This type of manager has no compunction for wrongdoing because they feel such behavior is perfectly acceptable.

According to Kohlberg, a leading moral development theorist, employees with higher levels of cognitive moral development will make ethical decisions more often than those with lower levels of cognitive moral development (Kohlberg 1969). Individuals with a propensity toward higher hostility and aggression will have more unethical intentions than individuals with lower hostility and aggression (Beu et al. 2003). *Locus of control* is the employee's sense of how much control he or she has over events or outcomes they can attain. When an employee desires to control the situation, they have an internal locus of control and will be less satisfied with a directive or dictatorial leader. These employees behave more ethically than employees with external locus of control, people who feel less control over events and need to be told what to do (Trevino and Youngblood 1990). Employees with high Machiavellianism tend to engage in more unethical behavior than those with a low score. An employee who lives his or her religious faith will make moral choices based on their teleology.

Sometimes individuals' ethical values differ from those of their own culture, the company that employs them, or their managers' values. For example, a professional woman from the Middle East with an infant daughter might elect to immigrate to the United States because her home country prohibits women from voting, attending school, and driving cars. Many times such ethical dilemmas stem from cultural meanings that the individual does not share with the macroculture. When this happens, the individual may choose to compartmentalize his or her life using the corporate ethics at work, but using his or her cultural ethics at home and in the corresponding cultural community. The person could adopt the values of the host culture or completely deny the host-culture values.

Research has shown that many employees believe ethics is deteriorating due to worrying about the bottom line first and superiors who are only concerned with positive financial results. These expectations can lead employees to cut corners on quality control, cover up negative

issues, misuse sick days, deceive customers, steal, and pressure others into inappropriate actions. Other actions employees may consider that benefit them personally include cheating on expense accounts, discriminating against co-workers, paying or accepting kickbacks, fixing prices, and other types of fraud. In business, as in many other life actions, people are confronted with moral problems that their habitual responses cannot resolve easily, thus, they must reflect consciously on what they believe to be right and wrong responses to such dilemmas.

While deliberate dishonesty hurts relationships, many times milder expressions of dishonesty will be forgiven. Telling your spouse of 40 years that he or she still looks as good as the day you were married may be good medicine for the marriage. Unfortunately, little white lies can become big problems and lead to major consequences. Managerial communications reflect ethical ideals within the firm. When managers create job descriptions and then use those job descriptions to evaluate employees, they are setting the requirements for the position. If they chose to deviate from the job description to assess performance, the employees will probably feel they have not been treated fairly.

Mission statements are constructed to let stakeholders know the firm's mission. If the mission is aligned with the values of the organization, it can be useful for guiding the behavior of management and employees. Mission statements are useless; however, when they are disregarded or not understood. How a manager describes organizational or departmental achievements is important. Is credit given to the person or team that made the accomplishment or does the manager take credit for the achievement? Taking credit for another's work should never happen, as a manager will get credit by giving credit to his or her worker's accomplishments. After all, the manager hired the people and coached them. Employees respond better to a manager who is concerned about them as individuals. As important as sharing success, is the ability to accept responsibility for problems that develop and find solutions. For instance, when companies reduce employee benefits, the way the change is explained and how employees view the financial management of the firm have a lot to do with how well the changes are accepted. Marketing has the responsibility of selling what the firm offers, and public relations is charged with building goodwill for the organization and protecting its image. How marketing persuades

customers through advertising has an ethical dimension. The classic phrase "let the buyer beware" came about because of organizations that were not always ethical in the way they chose to produce and sell their products. The term "if it is too good to be true, it probably is," is another way of saying "buyer beware." While many companies are responsible in their product offerings and sales tactics, some are not. Investors with Stanford Financial who were getting better returns on their investments than they could get anywhere else should have asked more questions. As it is, many lost all they had invested at Stanford. The Federal Bureau of Investigation on its website in an article reported, "Former Executives of Stanford Financial Group Entities Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison for Roles in Fraud Scheme." The report shows clearly the high costs of financial fraud, with one former executive receiving a sentence of 110 years in prison (U.S. Department of Justice 2013).

Strategic ambiguity exists when someone is purposefully vague in order to derive personal or organizational benefit. Not everyone believes that organizations should always have open communication. Those individuals would argue that strategically ambiguous communication is required in certain situations. However, strategic ambiguity complicates communication:

- It allows the source to both reveal and conceal, and to save face if necessary.
- It allows policy interpretation that could do more harm than good, and then the interpretations could be denied.
- Statements that are strategically ambiguous can mean different things at different points in time (Eisenberg and Goodall 2001).

Unified diversity is giving different meanings to the same message. People will tend to interpret the message to fit their situation. While everyone would not interpret it the same, they would all embrace the message. For example, President Obama's campaign slogan for "Change" was interpreted differently among voters as the particular change they wanted individually. Ambiguity can foster organizational change and creativity by leaving the workers room to expand beyond direct

commands. Preserving privilege and deniability happen when things go wrong and the people in authority claim that people did not understand what was said. This allows them to deny the workers' interpretation, protect their own position, and deny personal culpability (Eisenberg and Goodall 2001).

Summary

Business ethics has been in the forefront of business professionals' minds recently due to the number of unethical business situations that have become public. Personal ethics and the ethics of the culture are at times divergent, and ethical values vary considerably from one culture to the other. Five theories applicable to understanding ethical dilemmas faced by business people are consequentialism, decision theory, deontology, teleology, and utilitarianism.

Personal ethics are never exactly the same for all employees. Clearly stated organizational standards can help companies alleviate some of the bad ethical choices employees make. Training employees on the ethical standards of the organization and modeling ethical behavior from the top-down are important elements of an ethical organization. Globalization involves consideration of different ethical perspectives. Unethical actions may be exposed by a whistle-blower who is not able to get people inside the company to listen and change the behavior.

CHAPTER 5

Conflict Resolution

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. differentiate psychological conflict from social conflict;
2. identify levels of organizational conflict;
3. describe different conflict management styles;
4. describe various methods of exerting psychological and social influence;
5. apply techniques to successfully negotiate, mediate, and arbitrate conflict.

Introduction

Conflict often happens when there are opposing options from which to select. Conflict is inevitable in business activity. The handling of conflict both inside and outside of an organization depends on the personalities, history, and hierarchy of the firm. Lawyers and courts must at times become involved to settle conflicts that have gotten out of control simply because there were not sufficient guidelines for resolving issues internally. Precipitating events that were not handled effectively often lead to full-fledged conflicts. Courts are the last means of conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution depends on the predisposing elements and factors that reside within individuals and their communicative actions (intrapersonal, interpersonal, or group) during the attempted resolution. Do the individuals involved seek a resolution that is win–win, win–lose, lose–lose, or lose–win? The attractiveness of options and the willingness of all parties to seek a mutually agreeable solution influence the type of communication that will be most effective to resolve the conflict.

Psychological and Social Conflict

A conflict that occurs within the individual is a *psychological conflict*, and the confronted person has options that are either attractive or unattractive. An *attractive conflict* is one in which the individual has a decision to make that has options he or she likes, while an *unattractive conflict* is one in which the individual does not have a desirable option. A conflict that occurs between individuals or groups is a *social conflict*. Social conflict can also be either attractive or unattractive, depending on the desirability of the outcomes.

Conflict crosses the three levels of managerial communication discussed in Chapter 2: intrapersonal, interpersonal, or group communications. For example, when a manager can hire only one candidate from among three ideal candidates (these are attractive options), that manager can resolve the conflict through intrapersonal dialog. That same manager might also resolve the problem by asking a colleague for input on the matter. If three managers are in charge of allocating limited funds for employee bonuses and the managers assigned the task disagree on allocating the funds, the conflict will likely be resolved in face-to-face meetings. Figure 5.1 illustrates examples of the two levels of conflict and the three levels of managerial communication necessary to resolve them.

Personal conflicts exist when two or more people in the group do not get along with one another. Some people enjoy keeping everything in turmoil, while others prefer a more calm and nurturing environment. In many cases, just changing one person in a group can entirely alter how the group gets along. When one person does not like someone else in the group, the ensuing conflict affects not only the two individuals but also the entire group.

Substantive conflicts involve individuals not agreeing with the analysis of issues from others. Substantive conflict may actually result in creative ways of solving problems as the sides work through the substantive conflict issues.

Procedural conflict happens when written strategies and policy statements actually keep a group from carrying out their responsibilities effectively. Over utilization of rules is an example of a procedural conflict that results in hindrance of a group's ability to be creative or make changes. To avoid such a limitation, Apple made creativity the rule. Former CEO
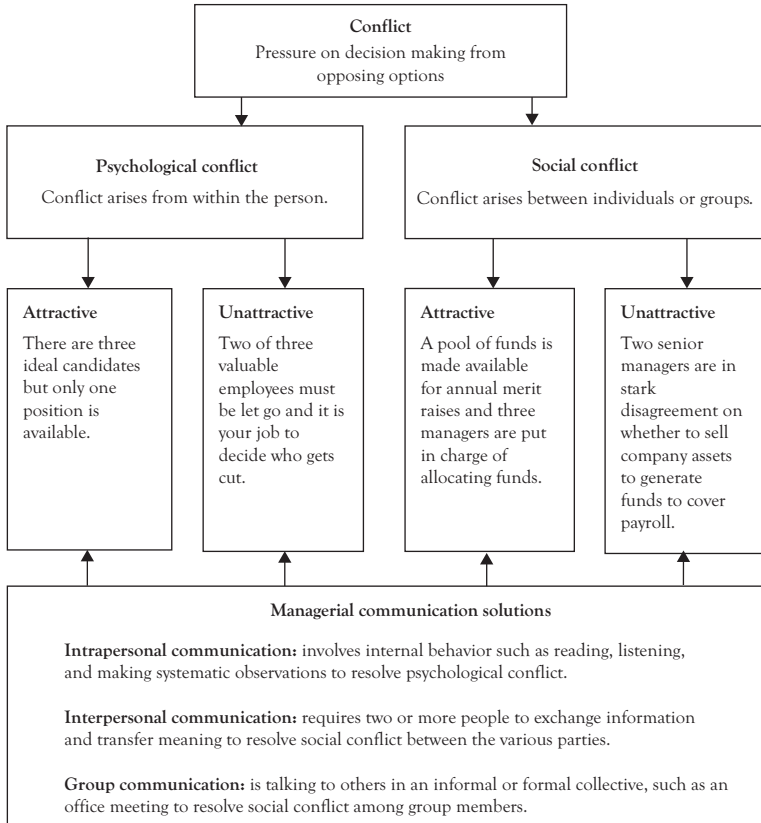
Figure 5.1 Levels of conflict and levels of managerial communication solutions

Steve Jobs once said when asked about the importance of market research, that it was useless because people did not know what new invention they wanted next. Jobs recognized the risk of following procedural expectations that resulted in the creation of me-too products, rather than completely new items that would revolutionize the market.

Managing Conflict

Conflict can be a good thing in some business situations. Out of conflict can come creativity, different values and perceptions, and new ways by which teams can be more productive. A phenomenon

known as *groupthink*, or failure to think outside the box due to group pressure or expectations for conformity, can negatively affect group decision making when the group suppresses or punishes objective critical thinking. *Dialectic inquiry* (a formal debate of opposing choices between members of the same group) and *devil's advocacy* (when one team member is assigned the task of criticizing and finding flaws in the team's choices) are good examples of constructive techniques used to avoid groupthink. Ideas that might otherwise never be considered are often discussed because of conflict. Typically, managers will use rich channels of communication (face-to-face, video-conferencing) for ambiguous messages and less rich channels (email, memos) for low-risk–oriented communications. A channel is richer when the receiver can understand the emotions behind the communication. The more cues available to the receiver, the more understanding there will be on the receiver's part. Problems arise when managers do not realize the ambiguity of a situation, which often happens in intercultural business communication situations; or when a common language or language variation, is not shared by the group. Window into Practical Reality 5.1 relates the challenges of using idioms that do not translate across culture.

Window into Practical Reality 5.1

The Use of Idiomatic Expressions Across Cultures

Global businesses are frequently challenged by the lack of equivalent word and meanings when translating from one language to another, as well as differences in the meaning of the same words in various languages. GM's automobile named Nova didn't sell well in Latin America where the word in Spanish means "doesn't go." A slogan used by Pepsi-Cola some years ago, "Come Alive with Pepsi," translated in Taiwanese to "Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the grave." And Electrolux, a Swedish manufacturer, used the slogan "Nothing sucks like an Electrolux," which did not work in the United States because of the negative slang meaning of "suck." What overtranslation issues can you recall?

Many companies use internal jargon and numbers as a common language internally. The military and government organizations are known for having their own expressions and acronyms, but so do many public and private firms, clubs, and special interest groups.

Influence Strategies

Influence strategies are the methods used by an organization's personnel when using the power given to a particular position within the firm. Influence strategies can be coercive or not coercive. When your boss is a dictator, you know that consideration of your ideas depends on whether they mirror his or her ideas. Employees tend to placate such bosses and avoid offering solutions that do not fit the dictator's preferences. A boss who is inclusive of others' ideas will receive many more possible solutions to problems. Conflict is minimized and influence strategies are stronger in relationship dyads where there is trust and solidarity. The power structure and influence strategies used between two individuals are largely dependent upon the firm's use of influence strategies overall, the overall trust levels within the firm, and how influence strategies are reciprocated between dyads in the firm.

Our socialization creates automatic triggers for responding to others in various ways. These triggers serve as rules that govern our responses. For example, when someone gives you a gift and you did not think to give the person one in return, the compulsion you feel to hurry out and get a gift of equal value for that person can be overwhelming and is explained by the *reciprocity rule*. Some business people will use gift giving to gain an advantage in negotiations. Social programming tells us to assign the quality of an item based on its cost. The *expensive equals good rule* applies when we assign a high quality to an item because of its cost. In reality, a $100 bottle of wine might not taste better than a $9 bottle.

The *commitment and consistency rule* teaches that once we start something, we should finish it. Logically speaking, abandoning some projects would be more sensible than seeing them through. Following the commitment and consistency rule has resulted in many disastrous management decisions and bankruptcies. For example, Coca Cola tried to

improve its taste in the 1980s and ended up nearly destroying the brand, even though preliminary consumer data discouraged the formula change. Ford went ahead with the release of the Ford Pinto against warnings from safety engineers, and cost itself millions of dollars in legal settlements and massive ad campaigns to assuage the public's distrust of its manufacturing capabilities. Managers, both nationally and internationally, must be on guard against using these "weapons of influence" when resolving conflicts. However, knowing how to use compliance psychology as a tool to influence positive behavior can strengthen your conflict resolution skills.

Conflict Management Styles

Conflict management styles can be categorized as avoidance, distributive, and integrative. *Avoidance style* involves minimizing or ignoring the conflict situation (Sillars et al. 1982) and is unassertive and uncooperative. *Distributive management style* is confrontational and generally one sided, with concession by one side to the other (Putnam and Wilson 1982). Window into Practical Reality 5.2 provides an illustration of distributive management style at work.

Distributive Conflict

Sean was a director who felt that ordering people around would make them respond. He also did not feel it was necessary for him to explain his actions to his subordinates. If he did not like someone, he would arrange his or her work hours to be exactly what the person did not want. When employees complained, they did not get a satisfactory answer. If the employee asked for a specific vacation time, the time was never available, again without any explanation. Employees also discovered that their work was never good enough. Sean would set objectives, but when the objectives were met, he made them redo the work according to new rules not given the first time. Managers like Sean change their minds and expect others to be able to read their minds and know what they want, and they enjoy treating subordinates as outsiders. Such people tend to have no real

friends because they do not develop lasting relationships, and people may be scared of them. Frequently employees do not like bosses like Sean and often will leave or transfer away from the "Seans" of the world.

Window into Practical Reality 5.2

Integrative style managers employ cooperative behaviors for a shared solution (Walton and McKersie 1965). How group conflict management norms evolve is particular to the members of the group and not easily forecasted (Kuhn 1998). The management style of the person in charge is very important to what a group can achieve.

Kuhn and Poole (2000) found that over time groups tend to repeatedly use the same conflict management style for their decision making. They also found a significant relationship between conflict style and decision-making effectiveness, with integrative groups rated as highly effective and avoidance and distributive style groups as less effective. Teams that manage conflict productively are also better facilitators and observers. Even when a topic was contentious and required a great deal of discussion, the integrative groups spent the time necessary to solve the disagreement. Conflict management involved both task and maintenance functions in the groups, with *task functions* including the completion of the assignment, and *maintenance functions* including taking care of the group members needs so that they work together effectively. The Window

Window into Practical Reality 5.3

FedEx Prepares Leaders for Conflict Resolution

FedEx is an example of an organization that strives to improve the conflict resolution skills of its managers through management communication training, media training, public speaking coaching, awards, the inclusion of communication as a component of performance appraisals, and performance of an annual communication audit of the corporation. What other company examples can you recall that illustrate preparation for conflict resolution?

into Practical Reality 5.3 illustrates how a large company prepares its leadership to achieve conflict resolution.

Another interesting study looked at departments in colleges and the management models that were followed. In the *bureaucratic model*, conflict happens but can be managed with roles and procedures. In the *political model*, conflict is viewed as inevitable and normal. While in the *collegial model*, conflict is perceived as abnormal and in need of elimination. The *anarchical model* is often seen when resources become scarce and management has to make difficult decisions, which leads to widespread conflicts. The type and degree of conflict tended to determine the management style applied, and most of the department chairs did not consistently follow a single conflict management style (Stanley and Algert 2007).

Organizations generally develop acceptable conflict management styles. However, appointment of new managers can result in change in the conflict management styles used. In recent years, we have seen a number of CEOs appointed to "clean house." For instance, Jack Welch, CEO at General Electric, fired the bottom 10 percent of managers every year based on their performance appraisals.

Cultural Elements in Conflict

Cultural distance can affect which channels are acceptable to use between a receiver and a sender. Managers of global operations quickly learn that the channels that work at home often do not work abroad due to the cultural distance between the dyads. Differences in personal constructs of belief systems and attitudes require the acceptance of a global mindset. One definition of a global mindset is:

> … the ability to develop and interpret criteria for personal and business performance that are independent from the assumptions of a single country, culture, or context: and to implement those criteria appropriately in different countries, cultures, and contexts (Maznevski and Lane 2003, p. 4).

Accomplishing this global mindset is often easier said than done because gaps in technology, business strategy, and economics compound

the challenge. Elements that affect cultural distance include language, distance, differences in religion, and social structure. Training both employees and managers who will work interculturally has been very successful in many organizations. Learning what is different between cultures, then watching for those trouble spots, gives a global manager an advantage over the untrained manager.

A number of factors affect global communication strategies. For instance, a *cosmopolitan orientation* refers to that managers' concern with issues and events in the world. *Cognitive world orientation* is the ability to differentiate between environmental events and elements that exist in various cultures. *Cultural intelligence* is an aptitude for understanding and dealing with cultural differences. *Universalists* tend to see the impact of an event beyond their own culture, versus particularists who tend to look only at how an event affects their own group. Even when managers possess global understanding, having supportive networks is imperative to being successful internationally.

Laws, Negotiation, Mediation, and Arbitration

Effective conflict management and organizational decision making are needed to deal with individuals and groups in conflict. An organization's history and hierarchy also control the handling of conflict both inside and outside of the organization. The communication pattern in conflict environments is often aggressive, which leads to the breakdown in the relationship. The voice, tone, word choice, and directness of the communication can also lead to conflict. When aggression, incivility, or uncommon interests have thwarted agreement and have created conflicts among individuals and groups that seem too difficult to resolve, then common goals and interest are essential. Humor, for example, can be an effective tool to reduce tension and enhance communication when applied with discretion during negotiation, mediation, or arbitration. Humor works best when everyone in the group is from the same culture, as what is perceived as humorous in one culture is not necessarily humorous in another culture. Many times, humor involves a play on words which does not translate well.

Laws and administrative principles often govern conflict resolution. Figure 5.2 illustrates the four main categories for adjudicating
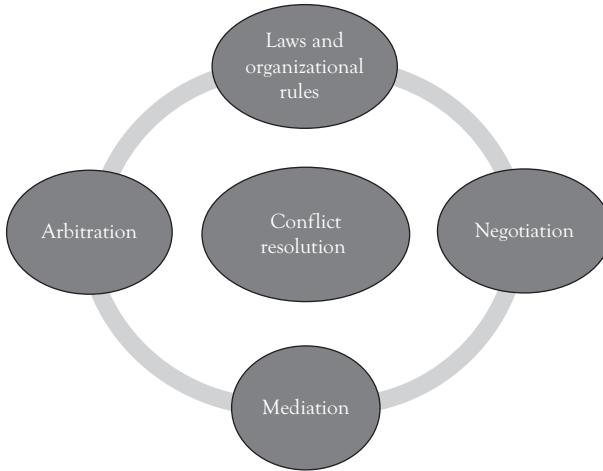
Figure 5.2 Conflict resolution governed by laws and organizational rules, negotiation, mediation, and arbitration

complex organizational issues that require conflict resolution: laws and organizational rules, negotiation, mediation, and arbitration.

Under the illustrated categories, rules for resolving conflicts are more formulaic, and the adjudication process will involve an uninterested (unbiased) third party such as a judge, mediator, or arbitrator. Some situations require going through all four types of conflict resolution, and others will only require one of the conflict resolution methods.

Laws and Organizational Rules

Laws are written by a government or the judicial system. What you write and say in conjunction with your job duties can have legal implications both for you personally and for the corporation. For example, it is important to realize that even deleted emails are traceable, and recorded phone conversations are the norm in many organizations.

In addition to laws that apply, firms often have guidelines on how to write or discuss hiring or firing decisions, claims, contracts, labor negotiations, pricing policies, reference letters, sales letters, warranties, or other information. Company rules may exist for communicating via email and

the phone and for using the Internet. For example, some employers have tried to restrict employee use of technology and the computer to business usage only, which has in some cases resulted in employees taking the employer to court.

Arbitrators and courts have upheld employer rules in many cases, relying on *stare decisis*, the Latin phrase meaning to stand by an earlier decision that creates a precedent. Webster defines *stare decisis* as "a doctrine or policy of following rules or principles laid down in previous judicial decisions unless they contravene the ordinary principles of justice." As an example, viewing pornography at work is widely recognized as reason for termination, as there are a number of cases in different states on this issue. Sending sexually harassing email messages is also reason for dismissal. On the other hand, dismissing workers for forwarding chain emails has been upheld; only when employees had been told prior to the offense that the practice was against company policy could they be fired. Hate language is also not permissible in most offices (Lichtash 2004).

The permanence of email chains often wreak havoc on careers. Window into Practical Reality 5.4 illustrates a recent example of the dangers of email.

The Bridgegate Scandal Uncovered via Email Communications

Governor Chris Christie of New Jersey found himself under investigation because of a leaked email written by his former Deputy Chief of Staff, Bridget Anne Kelly. The email stated, "It's time for some traffic jams." Her email was chained to dozens of recipients, which linked other staffers directly to what became known as "Bridgegate." Staffers in the Christie administration allegedly caused days of traffic jams on the George Washington Bridge—the busiest bridge in the world—as political retribution against a sitting mayor of a small New Jersey town who had not endorsed Christie's reelection. It is illegal for employees of the State of New Jersey to use State resources for personal or political gain. Many careers stand to be ruined by the Bridgegate scandal. What communication lessons can be learned from the scandal?

Window into Practical Reality 5.4

Communications are considered owned by the company when they are generated using the company's computer and email systems. Court cases have established that when a company has notified their employees that systems are being monitored and employees have given their consent, the company can legally use surveillance to monitor the use of such equipment. It is also acceptable for an employer to use a firewall to filter out websites that they deem unacceptable and to block sites that reduce productivity.

Negotiation

Negotiation is a process of give and take to resolve a conflict. Managers negotiate with upper management, subordinates, and other managers for sharing scarce resources, motivating workers to do more, getting more time to finish projects, and working out problems with other corporate departments. If a manager is not successful at negotiating, their department's productivity can be compromised, as well as the organization's overall. Failed negotiations can demoralize workers and create a hostile work situation. The ability to network is an essential skill when a manager needs to negotiate a solution to a given situation. New managers can assist in developing networks through mentoring. A mentor helps the mentee learn the ropes of the business and become familiar with who has the power to help achieve goals. When you negotiate as a manager, you must balance what is good for the corporation with what is good for your workers and yourself. If management assigns you additional work, you as the manager may need to negotiate if your unit can do the work effectively or not, if it will require overtime, if you will need to add additional personnel, or if you need additional funds.

When managers do not choose to negotiate with others in the firm, they make a choice to avoid the situation, comply with the situation, or co-opt and try to control the situation. While avoiding a situation may work for little problems, it generally allows major situations to get worse. *Complying* with the situation implies that the manager feels the situation is not major and not worth the effort involved in changing the mindset of others. Attempts to *co-opt and control* the situation result when the manager feels he or she knows the best solution and wants others to acquiesce.

When choosing to negotiate, the manager may merely communicate information, or attempt to engage the other side in a conversation. Once a manager decides what the outcomes should be, there is a tendency to communicate the information to the other party rather than engaging the people in a conversation and selling the idea. Smythe (2007) found that engaging employees increased company focus, performance, staff retention, morale, and profitability. Opening up decision making to include as many employees as is feasible in the decision-making process, as opposed to using a top-down model of decision making, can be very profitable for a firm. While the best negotiation model is a win–win strategy, sometimes that is not possible. Managers are continually negotiating salaries, budget increases or decreases, office space, technology usage, and various other operating funds. There may be limits to what they can offer or what they can pay for materials and maintain a positive bottom line. Window into Practical Reality 5.5 illustrates an example of negotiations at work.

GM and Production in China

The AFL-CIO has been a very strong union, with a long-standing reputation of having the memberships' interest at heart. When General Motors asked for concessions in the labor contract and the union did not budge, GM started planning for a future without the union. By building and selling cars in China, GM management did not have to deal with the union, and the union could not control or unionize the Chinese workers. GM saw the China solution as ideal, as Chinese workers were willing to work for less pay, and car sales were growing with a new Chinese middle class. GM could make more money for its stockholders by producing in China rather than in the United States.

In February 2012, GM announced it was adding a third line to the Flint, Michigan plant; however, at the same time it announced plans to build a $1.7 billion plant in China that would produce 300,000 cars a year. Why is GM making these decisions? Why are they willing to take so many jobs overseas? What are the unions missing? What part did the number of cars GM is selling in China play in these negotiations? Why did the union go for a win–lose strategy in the first place? Why did the union end up with a lose–win strategy?

Window into Practical Reality 5.5

Many negotiation errors are due to unthinking, rude, symbolic, and nonverbal cues associated with the behaviors of one or both of the parties involved in the negotiation. Table 5.1 illustrates commonly made errors during negotiation (Cellich 1997). These behaviors can have really costly consequences, as illustrated in Table 5.1.

Effective negotiators avoid these common mistakes, emphasize areas of agreement, and consider the long-term consequences of their agreements. Before going into a negotiation situation, it is important for managers to have a plan prepared from the facts as they know them, and then be willing to change their stance as new information surfaces. Conflict naturally includes a certain amount of ambiguity, adaptability, and apprehension. The ability to handle conflict successfully is the difference between a good leader and a placeholder.

Mediation

Mediators provide an unbiased and ethical point of view between two differing opinions. These individuals listen to both sides, while showing compassion, providing impartial leadership, and coaching the parties to a solution. They help develop a solution with which everyone can agree upon. Unless they develop a solution viewed as successful by all parties, the problem will come back. A mediator's job is more than settling the case or problem; it is satisfying the parties that they have a fair decision. In successful mediation, both parties feel that the mediator is fair, respectful, and sensitive during the process.

Personality traits such as extraversion and agreeableness may be the bases of a mediator's success. *Extraversion* means the person is talkative, sociable, and enjoys people. *Agreeableness* is the mediator's ability to be altruistic and cooperative. A mediator who is positive will find the participants to be more agreeable than one who is negative.

Teams within an organization base mediation on their identity within the organization and trust of their peers. When team members identify with the team, they are part of the "ingroup" and view themselves positively. The team members will also be motivated to protect their

Table 5.1 Negotiation errors and the interpretable consequences

Negotiation errors	Interpretable consequences			
	Unthinking	Rude	Symbolic	Nonverbal
Making a negative initial impression				X
Failing to listen and talking too much		X		
Assuming understanding by the other culture			X	
Failing to ask important questions	X			
Showing discomfort with silence			X	
Using unfamiliar and slang words	X	X		
Interrupting the speaker		X		
Failing to read the nonverbal cues	X		X	
Failing to note key points	X			X
Making statements that are irritating or contradictory		X	X	
Failing to prepare a list of questions for discussion	X			X
Being easily distracted			X	
Failing to start with conditional offers	X			
Failing to summarize and restate to ensure understanding	X		X	
Hearing only what they want to hear	X		X	
Failing to use first-class supporting materials	X		X	

group. If any members are not part of the ingroup, then they are part of the "outgroup," which reduces the performance of the team (Han and Harms 2010).

Social conflict can be categorized as either relationship conflict or task conflict. *Relationship* being between individuals of the group and *task* conflict refers to solution disagreement over the solution of an issue. While relationship conflict can reduce or negate a team's ability to solve a task, a task conflict can actually lead to a better solution if properly mediated. The more transparent communication is, the less likelihood there will be for task or relationship conflict.

Han and Harms (2010) found that trust mediated the relationship between team identification and team conflict. When trust is broken, mediation is needed. While professional mediators can be called in, managers often act as mediators. In the mediating role, the manager listens to both parties' stories, shows interest in all sides, provides leadership to the situation, immediately deescalates the conflict, assures everyone of a fair process, coaches the parties as necessary, assists the parties with their decisions pertaining to the situation, acts as a clearing house for information, discusses offers and counteroffers with the parties, is a reality check for all involved, and helps to reestablish an equilibrium (Noll 2009). The role of a mediator is important because if either or both parties feels slighted in anyway, the matter could go to court. The manager acting as mediator cannot appear threatening to the parties in any way. Much of what a mediator does is help the people involved to control their emotions, discuss what has happened, and determine what needs to happen to correct the situation. Communication skills are paramount in a mediation session, and addressing the situation as soon as possible is always important rather than thinking it will go away.

Mediators who are part of the firm must also live with the decisions reached. If the problem is not truly resolved, the manager will be mediating again on the same problem. After completing the mediation, the manager should follow-up to see that the parties are in fact satisfied with the decisions. The greater the trust and the higher the quality of information that is shared, the more likely the parties will have a lasting resolution of their problems.

Arbitration

Arbitration is done by an outside person who is hired to resolve the situation; the arbitrator's decision is binding on both parties. The arbitrator decides how the conflict arbitration will proceed. An arbitrator will (1) issue a comprehensive scheduling order which will have all of the deadlines for both sides; (2) set down the claims, damages, counterclaims, and defenses; and (3) establish discovery time limits (Chambers 2009).

Arbitration is normally the last chance to find a solution to a problem without legal action. However, arbitration does not always prevent a matter from going to court. In general, an arbitration case is resolved in eight months, while a court case may go on for two years. Employees generally fare better with arbitrators than with the courts in terms of settlements. Arbitration offers numerous advantages over litigation in court. With arbitration, the two sides have more control of the process than they do with litigation. Arbitration generally does not cost as much, is more flexible, gives the sides choices, provides a leveler playing field for both sides, and allows each side some self-determination. The main difference between arbitration and litigation is who makes the decision. During litigation, trial attorneys decide where to file, and a judge is blindly assigned. During arbitration the sides decide on the number of arbitrators and the qualifications of the arbitrators. Arbitrators follow the rules of the Federal Arbitration Act, and arbitration is more confidential than transactions in courts of law which tend to be public. While in court you can be held in contempt for failure to appear, that is not so in arbitration though you still must present your burden of proof just as in court. There is less paperwork involved with arbitration than with litigation.

Steps to Successful Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution involves a number of steps, as illustrated in Table 5.2.

The process of observing, analyzing, and evaluating must be completed for each step shown in Table 5.2. Following the steps will help you assure a win–win solution to the conflict. While resolving conflict requires a significant investment of time and energy, the resources are well spent when a satisfactory solution is reached.

Table 5.2 Eight steps to a successful resolution process

Step 1	Select a suitable location for the negotiations. A neutral site is usually the best location.
Step 2	Identify the agenda or policy issues in the negotiation, including the selection of negotiators, role of individual aspirations, concern with protocol, and significance of the type of issue.
Step 3	Prepare the preliminary statement and limitation considerations. Determine a means to communicate clearly, including the nature of persuasive argument, value of time, and appreciation of cultural differences—anticipation of their moves and, areas for mutual understanding.
Step 4	Determine areas for deliberation, potential solutions of some issues, and issues with no apparent agreement. Establish bases of trust, recognize risk-taking propensity, internal decision-making systems, and techniques for persuasion.
Step 5	Narrow down differences to achieve consensus, emphasize commonalities of interest, and systematically search for alternatives. Understand limitations of your counterparts and use empathy and conflict management.
Step 6	Direct final negotiations and facilitate give and take necessary in the bargaining process. Strive for a win–win outcome.
Step 7	Contract or confirm the agreement. Consider the requirements of the countries involved in the dispute resolution and the expectations for agreements and written documents.
Step 8	Implement the agreement. For negotiations to be successful, the negotiators must become adept through continual observation, analysis and evaluation, at catching the problems, and adapting negotiation strategy.

Source: Casse and Deol (1991).

Summary

Conflicts result when opposing options confront an individual. Conflict can occur on two levels: the psychological and the social. Psychological conflict occurs within the individual, and social conflict occurs between individuals or groups. The three levels of managerial communication required to resolve conflict are intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, and group communication.

Successful management of conflict within a firm is dependent upon the skills of its leaders. Conflict is not always negative, since creative ideas can emerge from it. When management uses richer channels of communication, employees are more likely to understand what they need to do. Responses to conflict can include things about conflict which can

include avoidance, distributive, or integrative styles of communication, and the use of these styles tends to be related to the degree of formality of the organization.

Socialization creates automatic triggers for how we respond to others. These triggers are based on rules that govern our responses, including the *reciprocity rule*, the *expensive equal good rule*, and the *commitment and consistency rule*. Managing conflict is greatly influenced by cultural differences. Managing people with various cultural orientations requires a universalist view.

Managers are often called upon to act as mediators for internal problems. In arbitration, someone from outside of the firm conducts the process, and the arbitrator's decision is binding on all the parties.

Laws, negotiation, mediation, and arbitration aid in providing a backdrop of trust necessary for solving conflicts in the workplace. Managers, as well as the parties involved, have to live with the decisions reached. If the problem is not truly resolved, the manager will continue to work on the problem in the future. Training managers in conflict resolution is a worthwhile investment for firms.

CHAPTER 6

Communication Technology

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. define communication technology;
2. identify proper and improper uses of communication technology in business;
3. describe three guidelines for conducting business meetings;
4. describe ways for conducting multicultural and virtual business meetings;

Introduction

Communication technology can be defined as any electronic system used by business people not physically present in the same location to exchange ideas or conduct business. The use of communication technology in today's society is viewed by many as excessive. Electronic devices appear as appendages to many people, and technology-assisted communication invades virtually every environment, including dinners, meetings, and even religious services. People often lose their sense of discretion while using mobile devices in public; they discuss business, personal, sensitive, and intimate details of their lives. Furthermore, massive amounts of critical data are carried from place to place on devices that can be easily stolen or hacked.

In this chapter, we will discuss how communication technology in business settings enables modern managers to be more efficient and effective, which includes: (1) proper uses of communication technology, (2) improper uses of communication technology, and (3) conducting multicultural and virtual business meetings.

Uses of Communication Technology

Communication technology affords many opportunities for communication in organizations but also poses various possibilities for exploitation and abuse.

Beneficial Uses of Communication Technology

Social media website such as Facebook and Twitter are popular among the millennial generation, and more and more baby boomers are also signing up to connect with friends and family. Companies also use social media communications to market their ideas and products. Software applications that utilize Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP) allow users to make voice calls over the Internet. When using a webcam-enabled device, users can see and talk in real time to individuals with similarly equipped hardware and software. Two common applications used for this purpose are Skype and Apple's FaceTime. Professionals use LinkedIn to stay in contact with friends and business associates. YouTube is used widely by individuals, businesses, educational institutions, and government agencies. In addition to enabling individuals to become overnight celebrities, it also enables businesses to reach the public with marketing information, testimonials of products, and messages from the CEO.

Many businesses allow access to their top executives through Twitter and use it for advertising purposes. People also like their smartphones, including the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama. When newly elected president Barack Obama insisted on keeping his Blackberry, the Secret Service immediately went into action to find solutions to keep the president's email communications private. The best solution was to mesh the president's Blackberry electronic identity signal, known as IMEI or MEID serial numbers, with the hundreds of employees' signals the president travels with under his command. These smartphone identity signals are known in broadcasting as their phone identities.

Smartphones are very useful for business because employees can send and receive complete emails, including downloads of attachments with excellent screen resolution. Thousands of phone apps are available that allow users to perform a varied assortment of work tasks, enjoy a host of leisure activities, and engage in a myriad of consumer activities. For instance, the popular barcode reader apps for real-time price comparison

shopping facilitate comparison pricing. Stores such as Sears with price guarantees find that thrifty shoppers utilize their smartphones to demand the lowest price or go elsewhere to shop for bargains.

Employees as well as citizens use corporate blogs to find out what is happening in companies. Companies can utilize blogs for sharing information with employees before making the information available to the public on the Internet or through other media sources. Jamming involves using an internal website to educate employees and create a positive company culture. Window into Practical Reality 6.1 discusses this current use of technology by one organization.

Window into Practical Reality 6.1

Jamming at IBM

IBM started jamming in the late 1990s by using their corporate intranet to engage employees in a live companywide conversation. The idea behind the technology is to get ideas and develop new possibilities, and participants can enter and add to a jam at any time. On one occasion, the company used jamming to develop a set of work values. For 72 hours, 50,000 IBMers followed the jam and 10,000 posted comments. IBM found that their employees trusted this informal jamming mechanism more than they did formal meetings, perhaps because of perceived anonymity and the view that everyone's voice was equal (Birkinshaw and Crainer 2007).

The Internet has revolutionized the job search process. For job seekers, corporate websites provide listings of available positions, along with the means to submit applications online. Resumes can often be submitted online by simply cutting and pasting into the format provided. The website also provide an easy way to find out about a company before going on an interview. The job of hiring agents is also simplified by having access to resumes that are arranged in the same format. Word searches can be used to identify candidates whose qualifications provide the closest match to job requirements. LinkedIn provides a convenient way for job seekers to share their credentials and also to be discovered by companies looking for potential hires who possess a specific skill set.

Smartphones do much more than provide users with the ability to make and receive phone calls. An expanding assortment of features enables users to communicate in multiple ways. Researchers have found that demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, or where users live (rural or urban community), can be used to predict their usage of some phone features. For instance, female college students tend to use the email feature significantly more than the game features. Tween and teenage users of communication technology devices are now the foci of targeted marketing from apparel retailers who realize this age group cannot be reached through the more traditional media outlets (Stark et al. 2008).

Victoria's Secret's PINK brand was developed and launched specifically for the tween demographic, and its marketing campaigns targeting this age group integrate electronic social networking to reach tweens with product offerings (Bell et al. 2011).

Obviously, the younger the employees, the more in tune they will likely be with technology. Managers must make an effort to keep up with new technology and learn how to use it properly in business settings. Some examples of popular communication technology applications and their uses for business are shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Business applications of communication technology

Communication technology	Associated brands	Business applications
Social networking sites	Facebook, Myspace, and Craigslist	Public awareness, broad audience, mass marketing or market segmentation, banner ads and commercials, streaming video, and employment vetting process
Person-to-person	Mobile devices (Sony, Motorola) and Smartphone (Blackberry, Droid, iPhone, Tablets)	Text messaging, bill payments, billing receipts, email, file downloads, attachments, alerts, and barcode readers for comparison shopping
Search engines	Google, Bing, and Yahoo	Access to billions of pages of information, government documents, and legacy systems can be integrated with search engine protocols, e.g., online banking

Table 6.1 (Continued)

Communication technology	Associated brands	Business applications
Blogging	Twitter	Brand awareness, real-time information direct to fans, or business associates
VoIP	Skype, Wimba	Conferencing, video, audio, and long-distance virtual meetings
eReaders	iPad, NOOK, and Kindle Fire	eBook downloads, extensive business eBook library in electronic files

A firm's ability to react quickly in providing current information to customers can be crucial to its image and reputation. For example, an insurance company can make use of social media after a natural disaster to provide policy holders with current claim contact phone numbers in the event the client has experienced a loss.

Companies can also interface more effectively with their internal constituents because of web 2.0 technologies that make it easy to develop wikis, blogs, podcasts, and online training programs. Younger generations tend to go to these sources for information more frequently than they do newspapers, magazines, or news programs.

Improper Uses of Communication Technology

Companies recognize the benefits of communication technologies for collaboration, communication, and networking. While recognizing the enormous potential for customer development externally and employee communication internally, they have legitimate concerns about risks to proprietary information, privacy, and security. One law that affords protection to electronic communication in the United States is the *Electronic Communications Privacy Act* (ECPA). The ECPA extended the provisions of the Federal Wiretap Act of 1968, which addressed interception of conversations using "hard" telephone lines, but this did not apply to interception of computer and other digital and electronic communications (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs 2013). The current law dictates that employers must notify their employees when Internet usage

is monitored. Once notified, employees who use the system have given their implied consent to the monitoring.

Using technology to steal information is relatively easy. Cyber stalkers and other Internet criminals are not limited to one geographic location. Hacking can occur in a wide variety of ways. Credit card information can be stolen when people swipe their cards at the point of sale, personal and financial information can be hacked from computers or mobile devices when using unsecured Internet connections or when lacking updated security software, and sensitive information can be intercepted by listening to conversations over wireless networks. Individuals must be aware their devices are susceptible to hacking and ensure adequate measures are taken to secure their data.

Some abuses of technology are not necessarily illegal, yet they pose serious ethical questions. An example of risky behavior involving technology is the practice of sexting. People forwarding nude photos of themselves to friends or complete strangers they find on the Internet. These photos can be repeatedly forwarded and also land on pornographic websites. A number of politicians and celebrities have suffered embarrassment and loss of status after being exposed through sexting. Another communication practice of ethical concern is cyber bullying—the use of electronic devices conveys messages of hate, hostility, and violence.

Cyber bullying at work can also occur when people use technology to say things that should be discussed in a face-to-face setting but instead are done behind someone's back. A person can be bullied at work by a supervisor who makes inappropriate comments (e.g., memorializing disparaging comments in a permanent record). It is amazing what people are willing to say using technology that they are not willing to say directly to someone. Communication technology misuse can have long-lasting negative effects on victims.

Texting is not used extensively in business because it does not produce a record of the exchange and messages can be misunderstood because of abbreviated language (i.e., using acronyms such as OOO [out of office], FYI [for your information], EOD or EOB [end of day or business]). Organizations typically require a record of communication for verification and historical reference. Other forms of written communication such as email provide such a record, and telephone conversations are easily recorded for historical purposes. Using proper grammar is important no matter what your communication channel, as it helps the receiver decode your message properly.

Abuses of technology take many forms, such as getting into email or texting arguments or using technology to layoff or fire employees rather than confront them face to face. Employees may make comments on their Facebook page about a manager or the company. While the company may not like such communication, courts have ruled in favor of the employee in several cases as illustrated in Window into Practical Reality 6.2.

Window into Practical Reality 6.2

A Woman is Illegally Fired for Remarks

A woman posted disparaging remarks about her manager on her Facebook page and was fired shortly afterward. The employee sued and won, with the court stating that the online post was no different than talking at the water cooler. Employees have a right to talk about their employers according to the Federal Labor Laws and states with employment-at-will laws do not necessarily have the right to arbitrarily fire-at-will for reasons that are not legal (Hananel 2010). While not necessarily deemed illegal, what are the potential implications of posting disparaging comments about one's employer on social media sites?

Communication technology abuse has also created hazards to the public's safety. Thousands of vehicular accidents are reported each year involving people texting while driving. Texting while driving poses a terrible hazard to public safety, and the U.S. Department of Transportation has recently suggested that all cell phone use by drivers not be allowed. People engrossed in text messages or other handheld communication functions while operating motor vehicles have caused injuries or death to themselves and others. Some companies, such as Dupont, have safety directives that do not allow their employees to use mobile devices while driving company vehicles. Some companies will fire individuals who have accidents while driving and using their cell phones for any purpose.

Another example of communication technology abuse is the sharing of classified and confidential information with unauthorized parties. A recent incident at the Pentagon posed a threat to U.S. national security when Bradley Manning, a 22-year-old soldier, allegedly leaked more than

90,000 classified U.S. intelligence reports to an internationally based public protest website called WikiLeaks. Manning confessed and pled guilty to dozens of charges. He was subsequently court-martialed and sentenced to serve decades in federal prison. Manning's theft is one on the most severe cases of communication technology abuses in recent memory.

Employee privacy and employer rights frequently clash. When employees use a company computer or device, the company will probably win a legal battle over disputed communication. When employees use their own computers or devices, however, protection of free speech will likely apply. An employee does not have a reasonable assumption of privacy when using work equipment, and the company has the right to block Internet sites. Firing people for abusing the Internet or using the Internet to go to inappropriate Internet sites is not unusual (Turri et al. 2008). Therefore, company email systems should not be used for personal messages, and personal emails using a private email address (Yahoo, Gmail, and so on) should only be sent and answered during breaks or lunchtimes and not during work hours.

Table 6.2 shows examples of proper uses and improper uses of communication technology usage.

Table 6.2 Proper and improper uses of communication technology

Uses of communication technology	
Proper uses	**Improper uses**
1. *Speed of transactions:* Use technology for ease of business transactions for better customer service. There is timeliness in transaction-dependent business relationships, e.g., business contract negotiations, credit card, and loan applications.	1. *Personal use:* Do not abuse company technology and hardware by using it in any way that can be construed as improper. Managerial monitoring is legal; current laws allow companies to read employees' emails and monitor other communications employees' produce using company property. The company does own the computers (Turri et al. 2008).
2. *File storage capacity:* Store large proprietary files only in locations that require layers of access and security for retrieval. Large files are easy to store, and electronic file copies reduce the need for stored hard-paper copies of files.	2. *Visiting pornographic websites at work:* Do not view sexually explicit websites using company property. Internet addiction and abuse of the Internet in the workplace (e.g. cyber sexual relationships, scandalous friendships, criminal abuses, and more) are common problems (Griffiths 2010).

Table 6.2 (Continued)

Uses of communication technology	
Proper uses	**Improper uses**
3. *Files sharing*: Follow directives from the team leader or project manager as to the protocol for coordination of file sharing and production schedules. Large teams can collaborate on complex projects, including employees from any geographic location with Internet access, by sharing files via email attachments, or other file downloads.	3. *Fraud:* Do your personal online business at home. Electronic information can be easily stolen and misused for crime, including swindling, money laundering, and terrorism (Choo 2009).
4. *Research and data processing*: Use free resources as a first step in information gathering and researching a topic. Search engines such as Google Scholar and Bing make it possible to gain access to and organize billions of pages of information from the Internet.	4. *Memorializing coarse language*: Do not put curse words, insults, or threats in writing. In divorce and bankruptcy proceedings and other highly emotionally charged business law cases, embarrassed clients have seen their obscene language become a part of the official written record (Schnelling 2009).
5. *Government information*: Use technology to access the plethora of information the U.S. Government has provided access to online, for free! Access to government information and documents and filing essential documents is practical; e.g., filing income tax returns with the IRS or an Affirmative Action Plan with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs.	5. *Pilfering privileged information*: Do not abuse or misuse other people's information by being careless with how you retrieve, store, and delete their information. Confidential records can be copied, distributed, and sold, which undermines consumer safety and protection (Choo 2008).

Conducting Technology-Assisted Meetings

One of the positive impacts of communication technology for internal business activity is its usefulness for planning and conducting meetings. Munter (1992) provided some guidelines for conducting a business meeting over 20 years ago that include: (1) preparation, (2) participation, and (3) decision making and follow-up. All are crucial for conducting a meeting successfully, whether in person or virtually. Furthermore, knowing when you should conduct a meeting and when you should not conduct a meeting is a skill that will help you preserve your reputation among your colleagues and peers. They will be more likely to participate in your meetings if they know you call meetings only when they are absolutely essential. Busy people do not like their time wasted.

Table 6.3 When should a business meeting be held?

Hold the meeting if you need to:	Do not hold the meeting when there is:
1. resolve conflicts	1. a lack of a clear objective
2. reach group consensus	2. no need for group decision
3. identify problems or solve them	3. a scheduled meeting but it is not needed
4. discuss sensitive information	4. a lack of key personnel who can attend
5. solicit support	5. a higher cost to holding the meeting than its benefit
6. generate fresh ideas or concepts	6. no negative affect if the meeting is not held
7. report on a project's progress	
8. demonstrate something project related	

Preparation

Before calling any business meeting, there should always be a valid reason to meet. People in business loathe their time being wasted. Therefore, it is good to know if a meeting should be called or if an alternative to a meeting would suffice. Drew (1994) suggests several reasons when you should conduct a meeting and reasons when you should not conduct a meeting. Presented in Table 6.3 is a summary of her reasons.

Once you have decided that a meeting is necessary, you must prepare for the meeting. A crucial part of meeting preparation includes writing an agenda which requires that five questions be answered: Who should attend your meeting? What will be discussed and accomplished at your meeting? When will the meeting take place? Where will the meeting take place—face-to-face or virtually? Why is the meeting essential or necessary? An illustration of answers to these questions is presented in Table 6.4, which is developed in preparation for a meeting of design engineers and a senior design editor, Jennifer Jones. Answering the aforementioned questions will save you a lot of time as you plan.

People need to know the meetings they attend are necessary and what will be accomplished that otherwise could not be accomplished without a meeting; these are important whether the meeting is face-to-face or virtual. Be sure whenever possible that the meeting is not more than one hour. Break the total time into allotments. Make sure that each person is aware he or she will need to come prepared for the meeting by associating each name with a topic or allotment of time. Distribute the agenda, and give each person a 24-hour deadline to make suggested changes to it.

Table 6.4 First meeting matrix for the Antonio's Bizzare project with a tentative outline

Things to consider as you plan your meeting	
Who should attend? Jennifer Jones, *senior design editor* and (meeting chairperson) Frank Mays, *senior engineer* Fred Williams, *market analyst* Rene Alexander, *web designer* Mary Wells, *assistant web designer*	**Meeting time: 60 minutes maximum** Individual talk time: 25 minutes Brainstorming time: 15 minutes Group consensus time: 15 minutes New business time: 5 minutes
What will we discuss and accomplish? We will discuss the Antonio's Bizzare project's feasibility, image, and brand.	Jennifer Jones (5 minutes) Frank Mays (5 minutes) Fred Williams (5 minutes) Rene Alexander (5 minutes) Mary Wells (5 minutes)
When will we meet? January 10, 20_ _, at 3:00 p.m. EST	Subject to confirmation from all.
Where will we meet? First floor conference room located in the New Drake Building	Meeting place will be confirmed 24 hours after the agenda is finalized.
Why are we meeting? There needs to be a group consensus and agreement on the feasibility of the new changes to the Antonio's Bizzare project.	Brainstorming discussion will require approximately 15 minutes. Consensus building will take approximately 15 minutes.
The tentative agenda outline you distribute should look something like this: 1. The meeting will be called to order at 3:00 p.m. EST in the Conference room on the first floor in the New Drake Building. 2. Those tentatively present: Jennifer Jones (meeting chairperson), Frank Mays, Fred Williams, Rene Alexander, and Mary Wells. 3. Jennifer Jones (meeting chairperson), Frank Mays, Fred Williams, Rene Alexander, and Mary Wells each will spend 5 minutes sharing their ideas on the feasibility of the proposed communication technologies for Antonio's Bizarre project parameters and branding components (this will take 25 minutes). 4. The Antonio's Bizzare project team will brainstorm for 15 minutes to narrow the ideas most plausible for the integration of the proposed communication technologies on the ideas shared (this will take 15 minutes). 5. The project team will strive to reach a consensus on the ideas shared (this will take 15 minutes). 6. Any new business will be discussed for 5 minutes at most. 7. The meeting will be adjourned at 4:00 p.m. EST.	

Finalize the agenda once everyone expected to attend has made comments, or after the 24-hour deadline has lapsed. When possible, plan your meeting at least one week in advance of the scheduled meeting time.

Finalize the agenda once the meeting time and place is reserved. In the event situations change or the meeting place is unavailable, you might need to reschedule the meeting, but the agenda action items can stay the same.

Participation

The agenda action items become the meeting minutes. Taking the minutes for a meeting is the chairperson's responsibility, although this can be assigned to another member of the committee or team or to an administrative assistant. Meeting minutes are different from transcription notes. Only the key points of the discussion and the items agreed upon should be reflected in the meeting minutes. For example, people speak at a rate of 150 words per minute on average. A 60-minute meeting means if all words were recorded the minutes would be the size of a novella. Thus, a 60-minute meeting should result in about one page of minutes. Each of the action items on the agenda represents a line item in the meeting minutes. Record only the key points of the discussion and what points were agreed upon.

Ask questions directly to those who are not actively participating. For those persons who talk too much or dominate the discussion, politely remind them that they will have or have had their five minutes. Then, politely ask the person whose turn it is to speak. This encouragement may be especially needed for persons from cultures where speaking out of turn or being too forward is considered rude behavior. During brainstorming, it is the chairperson's responsibility to be sure criticisms of ideas are avoided and that good ideas are being generated. When it is time to narrow the ideas, ask each person to write down his or her top two or three. Then, hear from each person as the group narrows the ideas. If necessary, use Robert's Rules of Order for deciding on issues. Using voting and majority rule is a good strategy for formal meetings.

Decision Making and Follow-Up

When it is necessary to make a decision, it can be done either by a secret ballot or by raising hands for a yea or nay vote. If it is a sensitive matter, it is probably best to use a secret ballot; if it is not sensitive, then raising hands tends to be faster. Meeting management software can be used in

face-to-face and virtual meetings to facilitate the capture and presentation of ideas and anonymous voting.

Once something is decided, then the person who will implement the idea will need to be told, and there needs to be a follow-up that the idea was actually put into action.

Conducting Multicultural Business Meetings

Most cultural differences occur because the things people hold dear, value, and believe are not universally accepted. Conducting a multicultural business meeting means managers must deal effectively with the tensions caused by competing cultures. Managers must also anticipate and reasonably accommodate cultural sensitivities and expectations. Finally, managers will need to recognize and overcome barriers to communication spawned from language idioms, expressions that cannot be translated, and nonverbal behaviors and cues.

In order to manage tensions, speak slower than normal, but not louder than normal. Asking questions is a way to be sure that others understand you and you understand them. Be sure that all individuals express their views. Those from some cultures will not share information unless the leader asks for their ideas. Realize that in certain cultures it is rude to give someone credit individually and that it is only correct to credit the whole group. Language will always be a problem in intercultural meetings. Though English might be the official choice, remember that it may be a second or third language for some of the people in the meeting. Using visuals is important so that people can see and read as well as hear what is being said. Remember that meanings of words can be very confusing. A case in point is the expression *to table*. When we table something in the United States, it means we are putting it aside to take up at a later time. In England, *to table* means to take the matter up immediately. Take nothing for granted and ask lots of questions to clarify anything that does not seem correct.

Anticipating and accommodating cultural sensitivities means being aware that everyone is not like you. If you are a female, this may entail wearing concealing clothing. Or if people eat with their fingers, you might resist requesting a fork and eating with your fingers as well. Learning to eat

with chop sticks will impress your Asian counterparts. Respect customs that are important to members of other cultural groups. For instance, if you are working with Muslims, they will be praying five times during the day; and during Ramadan they will be fasting, so not eating in front of them would be considerate. Talk to people and ask them about their culture; most people enjoy educating others about their country and people. Most importantly, if you make a mistake apologize and do not be afraid to laugh at yourself. Removing communication barriers means learning what the other culture expects. Asking questions of your counterpart will show an interest on your part and encourage the other person to ask questions of you.

Conducting Virtual Business Meetings

Virtual meetings save on travel time and expense and are becoming increasingly popular in global business organizations. To a large degree, virtual meetings are like face-to-face meetings; and therefore, should follow the guidelines previously discussed. Global teams, however, have all the usual communication challenges, plus there may be team members who have never met face-to-face, who are in different time zones, and for which the technology may not be equivalent. It is difficult to establish relationships through technology, so meetings will probably not flow as easily as they do when everyone is face-to-face in the same meeting room. As a leader of a virtual team, take extra time to greet the members as they join the meeting, using small talk and showing personal interest, much as you would in a live meeting. Remember when you are setting up meetings that holidays around the world are different, so have a calendar of each country handy as you plan. Additionally, consider the time zone differences. While there may be no one time that works well for everyone, alternate so that the same people will not consistently have to meet in the middle of the night or the wee hours of the morning.

Because attention is harder to keep during virtual meetings, ask all participants to set their phones on mute so they can hear but will not cause distraction with background noises or coughing. Use the whiteboard feature in your meeting management software to encourage all participants share ideas. Consider the use of webcams, so that everyone can

have a face attached with the name. Be sure to take notes and send them to everyone to be sure they are complete and that everyone understands what was discussed and what actions need to be taken.

You may need to poll people to get them into the discussion. Some may feel their English is not good enough or that their opinions are not important. Allow people to use the whiteboard and type responses if they feel more comfortable doing that. If individuals are from different layers within the company, you may need to level the playing field by emphasizing that everyone's ideas are important and critical to what is being discussed.

Virtual meetings do require more effort than face-to-face meetings if they are to be successful. Many organizations provide virtual meeting rooms that attendees can use while engaged in a virtual meeting, complete with a computer that has a camera, as well as Wimba, Skype, or a similar application that allows participants to be seen and heard. Other screen-sharing technologies are available for hosting online meetings such as Cisco's Telepresence.

When people do not participate in discussion, they are only accepting information rather than exchanging it. If they have something to say, it should be shared with the entire group. Making people feel a part of a team is very important in virtual meetings.

Summary

A broad definition of communication technology is electronic systems used for communication between individuals or groups. We define *communication technology* narrowly because of its usage by business persons for business reasons as *any electronic system used by business persons that fosters improved communication in their goal achievements.*

Technology affords a wide array of opportunities for improving and enhancing communication, yet it is not without its pitfalls. People are making wide use of technology to impact their social exchanges, their consumer activities, and their employment endeavors. Businesses use technology to carry their marketing message and to communicate more effectively with employees and other stakeholders. Some general pitfalls of communication technology usage are that people seem to lose their sense of discretion when using mobile devices in public; they discuss the

personal, sensitive, and intimate details of their lives. Some people using technology to engage in sexting, which can result in embarrassment and remorse. Cyber bullying can be used by people in the workforce as well as by people in the private sector to insult, belittle, or threaten others.

Technology can be assistive to business meetings, whether face-to-face or virtual. Three guidelines for conducting a business meeting include: (1) preparation, (2) participation, and (3) decision making and follow-up. Multicultural and virtual meetings pose additional challenges. Conducting a multicultural business meeting means managers must deal with the tensions caused by competing cultures, anticipate and reasonably accommodate cultural sensitivities and expectations, and effectively remove communication barriers. Virtual meetings saved companies significant time and money by making it possible for people in different parts of the world to meet. Virtual teams must overcome the challenges of loss of personal contact, time differences, and technology insufficiencies to bring about favorable outcomes.

CHAPTER 7

Effective Presentation Skills

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. describe the parts of a presentation;
2. explain the elements of presentation purpose, preparation, and delivery;
3. discuss how to use emotional intelligence to make presentations more effective;
4. identify patterns of speech that can make language more inspiring and persuasive;
5. design effective charts, graphs, and tables.

Introduction

While giving an oral presentation is the number one fear of many people, mastering the art of the presentation is essential to becoming a successful leader. Doing so will allow you to be a leader who possesses the ability to connect positively with your employees or audience. If you know what is important, and you get that message across, you are on your way to effective leading. To be a good leader, you must understand your strengths and weaknesses, have a vision and passion that others can see, be willing to take risks, be a good communicator, and produce results. It is not easy to persuade, inform, and entertain your audience in order to reach their emotions or to move the audience to action. Developing this ability will take lots of preparation and perseverance. Remember that a presentation is only effective if the audience will, as a result, change their beliefs or actions, obtain more information, or merely enjoy being entertained.

Managers need to know what to do when they are required to give a presentation. In this chapter, we will discuss presentation fundamentals: (1) presentation purpose, preparation, and deliver; (2) speech dangers and filled pauses (FP); (3) presenting with emotional intelligence; (4) figures of speech usage; and (5) proper uses of charts, graphs, and tables.

Purpose, Preparation, and Delivery

The three essential elements of an effective presentation are purpose, preparation, and delivery. Each is critical to achieving effective results. As you begin thinking about a planned presentation, you must first understand the purpose for your presentation. What do you want the audience to know? Then select the appropriate type of presentation for that purpose.

Purpose

Your purpose can be to persuade, inform, or entertain your audience. Each of these purposes has a corresponding objective. When you *persuade*, you convince someone to believe what you are telling him or her—you are changing his or her mind. When you *inform*, you are giving the individual information or facts that they need. When you *entertain*, you are making someone feel good, such as telling a joke or finding something of common interest to talk about.

Busy customers, clients, and company personnel will give up moments of their precious time to listen to your presentations. Delivering an effective presentation every time is imperative. There is an old cliché to which many business people still relate: "If you don't have time to do it right the first time, where will you find the time to do it right a second time!" The measure of any good presentation is the accomplishment of the speaker's purpose.

Let us consider the possible objectives of each presentation type:

- Persuasive presentations can be designed with an objective to
  - cause a change in belief
  - cause a change in immediate actions

- Informative presentations can be designed with
  - a narrative objective
  - a descriptive objective
  - an explanatory objective
- Entertainment presentations have a gratification objective, achieved when your audience experiences a sense of satisfaction.

Your audience will need to feel a sense of satisfaction, regardless of the presentation purpose. When the audience is unsatisfied, achieving your purpose and objective is jeopardized. Table 7.1 shows examples of a presenter's purposes and objectives for various speaking occasions.

In climbing the managerial ladder, most people eventually reach a level of responsibility where they are required to give a presentation from time to time. Motivating lethargic and even demoralized employees with vivid and vital language is often times required. Presenting a business

Table 7.1 Purposes, objectives, and occasions for differing oral presentations

Presentation purposes	Presentation objectives	Presentation occasions
Persuasive	To cause a change in belief by persuasion To cause a change in action by persuasion	Legal arguments Political arguments Debates Group conferences Sales/promotional talks Proposals
Informative	To inform by describing To inform by explaining To inform by narrating	Classroom lecture Oral reports (eulogy, dedication, commemoration, acceptance, introduction, acknowledgment, etc.) Factual reports Manufacturing reports Annual reports
Entertainment	To cause gratification. Overlaps all three purposes of presentation	After-dinner presentations Lectures on popular themes Travel talks Monologs Award presentations

plan before a review board to secure financing for a project is part of many managers' positions. In both cases, the manager must use language applicable to the audience.

One example of an effective persuasive presentation might be an appeal for approval of an increase in the budgeted amount for pay increases. Giving the presentation to a budget committee for a large, nonprofit organization just before an annual budget review is very common. The desired result of the presentation would be board approval of an increase in the line-item amount for employee salaries. The presenting manager's purpose would be persuasive, the objective would be targeting a change in the board members' actions (the board actually approving the raises), and the occasion is selling or promoting the pay raise idea.

An example of an effective informative presentation is for a middle manager seeking to inform all 25 frontline supervisors about a crucial procedural change for an assembly line operation. The stated purpose is informative. The objective in this case would be explanatory, showing the benefits of a change in the ways of doing things. The occasion would be a conference room setting or small classroom. This personal approach would be more effective than sending an email message.

If the speaker's purpose is merely to entertain, the rules governing that purpose are somewhat different. An example would be a two-minute after-dinner presentation congratulating a colleague on a promotion or extraordinary accomplishment. While the primary objective of an entertaining presentation is audience gratification, the element of gratification is present in all three types of presentations. Do not leave your audience unsatisfied, regardless of your purpose.

Sometimes the news delivered in a presentation is dreadful, such as in Franklin D. Roosevelt's war address. But the speech did not come without gratification which was the president's planned response to Japan's aggression. Later in this chapter, we will look more closely at FDR's war presentation.

Preparation

Preparation requires organization because too much disorganized information can be overwhelming for both the presenter and audience.

All presentations have three main elements. The *introduction's* function is to **t**ell **t**hem **w**hat **y**ou **w**ill **t**ell **t**hem(TTWYWTT). An example would be: "Today we are going to discuss the development of the new production line for Crispy Treats." The *body's* function is to tell them (TT). An example would include covering the main points known about the production line for Crispy Treats. Finally, the *conclusion's* function is to TT what you just told them: TTWYJTT. The example here would include a summary by the presenter of the major points, and then the floor would open for a discussion. The acronyms for these three major elements are helpful when you organize your presentation materials.

Good organization is essential for an effective presentation. Getting organized includes brainstorming, researching your topic, and developing an outline. Before you research the topic, organize your ideas into a rough draft of main points (MP). Develop the first-draft outline by talking aloud and writing down what you already know about the topic. Thoroughly research the topic to refine your knowledge on that subject. Researching articles and books, performing interviews, or finding information on the Internet can increase your knowledge on your targeted topic. Developing your outline helps you organize your ideas into a rough draft of MP. Subordinate points (SP) extend the logical unfolding of the MP, as shown in Figure 7.1.

Roman numerals precede MP; capital letters of the English alphabet precede SP; Arabic numerals precede sub-subordinate points (SSP); and lowercase letters of the English alphabet precede sub-sub-subordinate points (SSSP). In the rare case, a SSSP would need to be extended use lower case Roman numbers to precede SSSSPs. The outline in Figure 7.2 illustrates an MP on financing a small business startup. Note that each MP should have at least two sublevels of the logical extension reflected by its SPs.

After you have determined your presentation purpose and organization of content, you need to determine how best to deliver the material. There are four traditional methods for preparing information for presentation: memory, manuscript (read), impromptu, and extemporaneous (Sandford and Yeager 1942).

The *memory method* is used for a presentation learned word-for-word and committed totally to memory. Forgetting information is a

Example –

*Introduction—**TTWYWTT**

O
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I.   First Main Point (MP)
        A. SP
        B. SP
II.   Second Main Point (MP)
        A. SP
        B. SP
III. Third Main Point (MP)
        A. SP
        B. SP
IV.   Fourth Main Point (MP)
        A. SP
        B. SP }— Subsequence
        C. SP
V.   Fifth Main Point (MP)
        A. SP
        B. SP
              1. SSP
              2. SSP
                    a. SSSP
                    b. SSSP

A subordinate point must extend the logical meaning of the point to which it is subordinate.

Body—**TT**

Conclusion—**TTWYJTT**
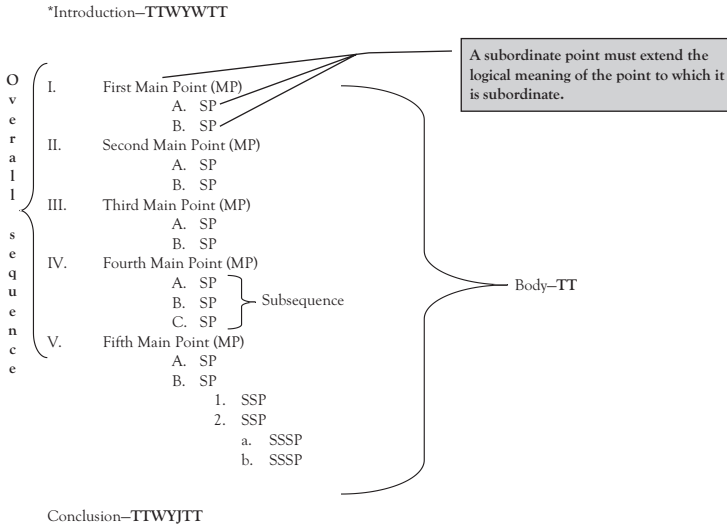
Figure 7.1 The main parts of a presentation

disadvantage of the memory method. When you try to memorize an entire presentation, forgetting key parts will lead to problems. Skipping key parts of the presentation make it difficult to get back on track. Managers who memorize their presentations will often find themselves out of control when they forget key parts due to distractions or interruptions. Adjusting to audience's needs is also difficult with memorized delivery. When you need to recite information, it may be good to memorize it first.

The *manuscript method* involves writing out your presentation and reading it to your audience, sometimes with the help of a teleprompter. Normally dignitaries, prime ministers, presidents of nations, and other high-level diplomats and political leaders use this method because it allows for careful word choice with a decreased chance of forgetting information or inserting an errant word. For example, when the president of the United States speaks on the subject of aggression toward nations in the Middle East, it can have serious effects on how those nations view the United States. Words are carefully chosen in advance, and there can be no variation in the content. Misstatements can lead to disastrous results.

The *impromptu method* applies to casual conversations in business meetings and to more relaxed presentation situations. Holding a

Introduction: get the attention, preview what will come.

I. Money is always needed to start a small business.

    A. The most common way small businesses are financed is by owners tapping into their personal savings.

    B. The next best way to get the business financed is by selling off some of the ownership in the business for cash.

II. The small business owner needs to know where the business will be located.

    A. A poor location can starve a small business into bankruptcy.

    B. A very good location can help even a mediocre business stay afloat.

III. The small business owner will need to know if licensures or permits are required.

    A. In cases where food and alcoholic beverages are sold, permits and licensures from cities and states where the businesses will be located are required.

    B. Failing to procure a license can mean the business is breaking laws and owners can be fined or worse, the city could force the small business to be closed!

IV. The small business owner needs to know who the customers will be.

    A. The main reason small businesses fail is they have no customers.

    B. Failing to understand the needs and wants of people who will be patrons of the business is a typical error among small business startups.

V. The small business owner will need to spend a lot of money on marketing in the first year.

    A. An affordable marketing strategy needs to be developed first.

    B. Once a marketing strategy is developed a marketing plan can be developed.

        1. A marketing plan includes a strategy for segmenting customers.

        2. A marketing plan includes a target of customers within a segment.

            a. Once a customer group is targeted, the marketing mix can be designed specifically to meet the needs of that group.

            b. The plan should be suitable for the targeted customers.

Conclusion: Summarize what you just told them; leave a lasting impression on the audience.

Figure 7.2 A formal sentence outline for a presentation on starting a small business

question-and-answer session after a planned presentation is an application of the impromptu method. The impromptu method is characterized by nonscripted delivery. This does not mean the presenter is unprepared. In fact, good speakers are always prepared, should the opportunity arise.

Impromptu speakers rely on their bank of knowledge and the use of commonly known arguments, or stock arguments, to add flavor and interest to their presentation.

The *extemporaneous method* involves the use of a formal outline, a defined purpose, detailed research, organized MP, and SP. The speech is delivered conversationally and naturally with enthusiasm and poise. It is the most commonly used presentation method in business and is the most effective method for achieving a persuasive purpose. It typically begins with an outline that includes main ideas and subordinate ideas, and it requires multiple practice sessions to enhance both vocal and nonverbal delivery skills. Although main ideas are committed to memory, the word-for-word presentation is not committed to memory. The speaker is free to use spontaneous words and phrases for a more conversational delivery and maximum flexibility.

The *elevator presentation* is the name given to very short presentations that can be delivered in the time required for a typical elevator ride. Usually, 30 seconds to 1 minute in length, elevator presentations contain all the elements of an effective oral presentation and are delivered in close proximity to a small captive audience. Since the average rate of speech for most Americans is 150 words per minute, the total words in the presentation should be planned accordingly. Preparing the elevator presentation in advance should not take away the conversational quality of the delivery. The audience normally will be one or a few persons who can influence an important decision affecting the presenter. The action-oriented elevator presentation means you will need to know clearly your persuasive intent. Though you should not memorize the presentation, practice thoroughly and be prepared to discuss fully your main ideas or selling points, should the opportunity arise.

Delivery

The delivery of your presentation is what the audience sees, hears, and what ultimately determines if your message is believable. A good delivery makes for an effective presentation and includes both vocal and nonverbal cues. Practicing both elements of your presentation is fundamental to a good delivery. When practicing, do not stop each time you think you

have made a mistake; instead, keep going, and take mental notes as you progress. Practice in increments of 30 minutes. If you have three hours to practice, divide that time into six separate sessions for practice.

Delivery is fundamental because no amount of preparation, content, and planning will overcome poor delivery skills. Window into Practical Reality 7.1 relates one of the most important speeches in history; one that asked soldiers in World War II to give their lives on behalf of their country.

Window into Practical Reality 7.1

General Patton's 1944 Normandy Invasion Speech

Men, this stuff some sources sling around about America wanting to stay out of the war and not wanting to fight is a lot of baloney! Americans love to fight, traditionally. All real Americans love the sting and clash of battle. America loves a winner. America will not tolerate a loser. Americans despise a coward; Americans play to win. That's why America has never lost and never will lose a war.

You are not all going to die. Only two percent of you, right here today, would be killed in a major battle.

Death must not be feared. Death, in time, comes to all of us. And every man is scared in his first action. If he says he's not, he's a goddamn liar. Some men are cowards, yes, but they fight just the same, or get the hell slammed out of them.

The real hero is the man who fights even though he's scared. Some get over their fright in a minute, under fire; others take an hour; for some it takes days; but a real man will never let the fear of death overpower his honor, his sense of duty, to his country and to his manhood.

All through your Army careers, you've been bitching about what you call "chicken-shit drills." That, like everything else in the Army, has a definite purpose. That purpose is instant obedience to orders and to create and maintain constant alertness! This must be bred into every soldier. A man must be alert all the time if he expects to stay alive. If not, some German son-of-a-bitch will sneak up behind him with a sock full of shit! There are 400 neatly marked graves somewhere

in Sicily, all because one man went to sleep on his job—but they are German graves, because we caught the bastards asleep!

An Army is a team, lives, sleeps, fights, and eats as a team. This individual hero stuff is a lot of horse shit! The bilious bastards who write that kind of stuff for the *Saturday Evening Post* don't know any more about real fighting under fire than they know about f**king! Every single man in the Army plays a vital role. Every man has his job to do and must do it. What if every truck driver decided that he didn't like the whine of a shell overhead, turned yellow and jumped headlong into a ditch? What if every man thought, "They won't miss me, just one in millions?" Where in Hell would we be now? Where would our country, our loved ones, our homes, even the world, be?

No, thank God, Americans don't think like that. Every man does his job, serves the whole. Ordnance men supply and maintain the guns and vast machinery of this war, to keep us rolling. Quartermasters bring up clothes and food, for where we're going, there isn't a hell of a lot to steal. Every last man on K.P. has a job to do, even the guy who boils the water to keep us from getting the G.I. shits!

Remember, men, you don't know I'm here. No mention of that is to be made in any letters. The USA is supposed to be wondering what the hell has happened to me. I'm not supposed to be commanding this Army, I'm not supposed even to be in England. Let the first bastards to find out be the goddamn Germans. I want them to look up and howl, "Ach, it's the goddamn Third Army and that son-of-a-bitch Patton again!"

We want to get this thing over and get the hell out of here, and get at those purple-pissin' Japs!!! The shortest road home is through Berlin and Tokyo! We'll win this war, but we'll win it only by showing the enemy we have more guts than they have or ever will have!

There's one great thing you men can say when it's all over and you're home once more. You can thank God that 20 years from now, when you're sitting around the fireside with your grandson on your knee and he asks you what you did in the war, you won't have to shift him to the other knee, cough, and say, "I shoveled shit in Louisiana."

Source: www.speeches-usa.com

General George S. Patton's speech "Invasion of Normandy" was a final *pep-talk* delivered to his troops on May 17, 1944. It is the prototypical persuasive speech to stir the audience to immediate action, and Patton's delivery was key. We are sure that General Patton thought about what he was going to say, but he did not deliver this as a written speech but as an extemporaneous speech with no notes!

A presenter such as General Patton will also look for cues the audience has received and interpreted the encoded message correctly. The speaker must interpret those cues from observations while presenting. The audience will send the source an encoded message in the form of applause, nodding, eye contact, and so on. This nonverbal body language is feedback about the audiences' understanding of the message and will help the speaker to make the necessary adjustments.

Proper understanding by the audience is crucial if your presentations are to achieve your intended purpose. You will refine your message throughout your presentation based on receiving and responding to verbal and nonverbal cues from your audience. Extraneous side-bar conversations, restlessness, and nodding are good indications that you should immediately shift to a more appropriate tone, pitch, topic, or delivery method.

Speech Dangers and Filled Pauses

Eye contact with the audience is essential to giving an effective presentation, as it engages individuals and causes them to feel as if you are talking directly to them. Most people will form their impressions about the presenter within about a minute, and effective eye contact is key to making a favorable impression.

Nervous speech and actions early in your presentation can lead to a negative first impression on your audience. These distractions that generally happen at the beginning of a presentation are caused by the speaker's nervousness and the accompanying adrenalin rush. Many times we are not even aware of our nonverbal habits (McKenzie 2002). A great idea is to have someone video record you while you are giving a presentation then critique it with someone you respect. Watch the audience as well as yourself to gauge the effectiveness of your presentation.

Table 7.2 Tips from Bender and Detz for improving the oral presentation

Bender (1991) offers 12 tips on making powerful presentations	Detz (2007) offers 12 tips to help improve the oral presentation
1. Touch the audience's emotions.	1. Focus your topic.
2. Move the audience to action.	2. Analyze your audience.
3. Use familiar language to build rapport and trust.	3. Use interesting research.
4. Use shorter words and phrases.	4. Organize your material.
5. Maintain an idea file.	5. Use simple language.
6. Keep the structure as simple as possible.	6. Give your presentation some style.
7. Monitor the reaction of the audience.	7. Use a light touch of humor.
8. Make the audience participants, rather than just spectators.	8. Practice your delivery.
9. Use an unusual statistic.	9. Consider your "vocal personality."
10. Make a realistic promise and follow through.	10. Use body language that reinforces your words.
11. Show a short video or use an overhead transparency.	11. Get good media coverage.
12. Vary the voice.	12. Evaluate the merits of each speaking invitation.

Note: www.PeterUrsBender.com

Observing the body language of your audience can reveal much about their acceptance of your ideas. If they are shuffling their feet, furrowing their brow, or not looking at you, they probably are not following you. In response to a controversial topic, audience members may grimace, turn their head and upper torso away from you, clench their teeth, or take a confrontational stance such as putting their hands on their hips. Recognition of body language is very important for the audience to understand what the speaker is saying but also so the speaker understands what the audience is receiving or rejecting.

Bender (1991) and Detz (2007) each presented twelve solutions to better enable managers to deliver effective presentations. In Table 7.2, note the similarities of each authors' views concerning the elements of effective presentations. Detz (2014) offers a plethora of good delivery tips in her recent book titled, *How to Write & Give a Speech.*

Missteps

"Winging" important speeches or media interviews

Underestimating the importance of public speaking to your career

Leaving it all to the speechwriters

Forgetting the audience

Not answering the question

Blowing the easy questions

Not knowing when to hold 'em, and when to fold 'em

Forgetting the humor

Tips to overcome missteps

Speak at every opportunity.

Talk about big ideas.

Tell stories.

Respect the wisdom of the audience.

Tell them something they do not know.

Polish your presence.

Figure 7.3 Missteps and solutions to common problems in executive presentations

Effective oral presentations do not have to be perfect, but presenters must be prepared. Figure 7.3 provides a convenient list of executive oral presentations missteps and solutions for those missteps (Bates 2007).

The FP describes a situation in which the presenter uses repetitious, irrelevant words or phrases without being consciously aware it is happening. Examples of fillers include um, uh, like, you see, or any other repetitive word or sound. Howell and Sackin (2001) argue that using FP in abundance contributes to what they call "fluency failure" in recognized speech. In a very interesting article, Schachter et al. (1991) referred to the "agrammatical" use of FP among university lecturers as "disfluency." Speakers appear to be uncertain and lack confidence when using needless repetitious words or phrases in abundance to fill pauses. In addition, it breaks the audience's attention.

One study of communication behaviors showed that females engaged in more justifiers, intensifiers, and agreement than males; whereas, males engaged in more vocalized pauses and also received more vocalized pauses than females (Turner and Dindia 1995). To eliminate FP from your oral presentation requires three steps: (1) learn to hear yourself using FP by undergoing some type of sensitivity training, such as recording and critiquing your presentations or having an expert critique with you; (2) practice FP reduction by paying close attention to its usage—create a cognitive transformation; and (3) practice being silent each time a pause is required for grammar, emphasis, and mental deliberation (Bell 2011).

Presenting with Emotions

Audiences are turned off when presenters lack emotions. Emotions are a part of any delivery, including business presentations. Being excited about your presentation is the surest way to exude emotion while presenting.

Too often, presenters fail to understand that the single most important job of the presenter is to convey facts and ideas in a way that the audience will understand benefits in an engaging manner. A *humdrum talker* delivers presentations in a monotone voice, and this type of behavior will more than guarantee an in-kind reaction from your audience. People resent presenters who lack enthusiasm, strong feelings, or sincerity in their presentation.

Sincerity is a quality that reflects an honest attempt to reach the audience and achieve the identified purpose. If listeners find a speaker to be sincere, they will trust and follow. Sincerity includes the qualities of

honesty and passion for the topic. Emotions that are sincere and honest will help you connect with your audience.

Emotional Intelligence

So what makes one person a better presenter than another? If two people are intellectual equals, why would they not be equally effective speakers? If both speakers read and applied the same tips, you would think both presentations would be equally impressive. However, we are not all created equal in every respect. In recent years, attention has focused on measures of intelligence that go beyond traditional "cognitive" or "school ready" indicators. Newer measures focus on verbal, mathematical-logical, spatial, artistic or architect, kinesthetic, and musical genius (Gardner 1993).

Emotional intelligence is the ability to read others and respond in a way that matches their emotional reaction. Five identified domains of emotional intelligence include: (1) knowing your own emotions, (2) managing your emotions, (3) motivating yourself, (4) recognizing emotions in others, and (5) handling relationships. While all five domains are applicable to delivering effective oral presentations, recognizing and managing your own feelings and those of others are key aspects of effective delivery. Smart people can appear socially and emotionally inept when they do not interpret their own and others' emotions correctly. On the other hand, people who are emotionally intelligent know their true emotions, practice to control and manage fierce emotions, remain motivated by gaining control over their emotions, anticipate and balance theirs and others' emotions, and foster fruitful relationships by communicating intelligently (Goleman 1995).

Persuasive Patterns of Speech

Throughout history, a few remarkable leaders have demonstrated such amazing oratory powers that they were able to convince an entire nation to follow them. These incredibly gifted speakers used stylistic touches as vehicles by which they drove their messages home, convincing people to change both their beliefs and actions.

Patrick Henry's "Liberty or Death" presentation is such an example. Evoking emotion was the intent of his hammered down and chiseled

stylistic words. Like a chef's blade, Henry's words sliced deep into the widely held truths and helped lawmakers see that young America's independence could only be achieved through defiance of tyrannical control. There can be no doubt Henry's purpose was to persuade lawmakers to take immediate action toward inevitable war. The resistance of the colonies to the attempts of England to tax them culminated in the Boston Tea Party of December 16, 1773, which resulted in the closing of the Port of Boston to British ships. The phrase Liberty or Death stands as a timeless antithesis and as an impassioned hyperbole. Henry was able to paint vivid, colorful pictures of inevitable doom as a certain result of American complacency. He skillfully used irony and antithesis to forge extreme psychic images of gloom for inaction and splendor of independence for immediate action. His phrase, "for my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery" (Parrish and Murphy 1947, p. 35) captured the thrust of his central thought. Window into Practical Reality 7.2 illustrates another masterful use of speech by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) in his state of war address on the occasion of the United States entry into World War II.

Window into Practical Reality 7.2

Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 8, 1941 (FDR) Declares "A State Of War" Against Japan

Yesterday, December 7, 1941—(a) a date which will live in infamy— the (b) United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation, and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific.

(c) Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American island of Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. While this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. I regret to tell you that very many Americans lives have been lost. In addition, American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday the Japanese government also launched an attack against Malaya.

Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.
Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam.
Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands.   } (d)
Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island.
And this morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has therefore undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions, and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

Always will we remember the character of the onslaught against us. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people, in their righteous might, will win through to absolute victory. I believe I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us.

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger.

> With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph, so help us God.
>
> (e) I ask that the Congress declare that, since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

FDR delivered his moving presentation to the nation and Congress the day after the Pearl Harbor attack. Needing the permission from Congress to declare war on Japan, FDR went to the people to get the necessary support. You can clearly see the power of language in FDR's address. He uses (a) *personification*, an attribution of personal form, character, or representation of a thing or abstraction as a person. He uses (b) *synecdoche*, a part is put for the whole or the whole for a part. He uses (c) *antithesis*, the contrasting of words, as when placed at the beginning and end of a single sentence or clause. He uses (d) *tautology*, repetition of the same words or use of synonymous words in close succession. He uses (e) *interrogation-rhetorical question*, a question not intended to elicit an answer, where the answer is understood.

Using Charts, Graphs, and Tables

Visual aids often are beneficial to presentation effectiveness and to conveying persuasive meanings. Body movement, eye contact, facial expression, mechanical devices, color usage in slides, electronic equipment (including PowerPoint or Prezi), and nontechnical devices (flip chart, chalkboard, transparency, etc.) are all examples of visual aids used to enhance the effectiveness of a presentation. Visual messages help reinforce the verbal message, which shifts an audience's beliefs and actions toward the presenter's purpose. Furthermore, people learn by hearing, seeing, and doing so engaging the audience is important.

Charts and graphs are types of visual aids that help convey meaning. Six variations of charts can help you convey your presentation message; these include pie charts, bar charts, line charts, area charts, pictograms, and tables.

Pie charts compare parts of a whole or pieces of a pie. A slice represents a portion of the whole, for example, total sales by quarter. The whole pie represents the total sales for a given year. Chart 7.1 illustrates the quarterly percent of sales for four quarters.

Note that each quarter's sales is shown as a proportionate or percentage slice. The percentages must equal 100 percent, and the starting point of a pie chart is 12:00 noon. Pie charts should not be presented in 3D as this distorts the graph.

Bar charts, also known as column charts, compare or correlate data. Chart 7.2 illustrates a correlation of consumption of soybeans, wheat, and corn for four quarters of a year.

A bar chart may be oriented horizontally or vertically, and both axes must be labeled clearly. Numbers may be shown at the top or end of the columns to mitigate any difficulty in interpreting each bar's value. Again 3D distorts these graphs and should not be used.
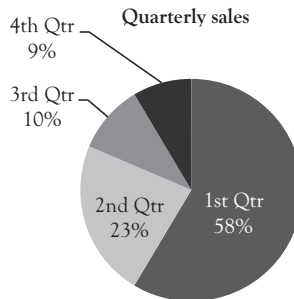
Chart 7.1 Use of a pie chart to depict quarterly sales
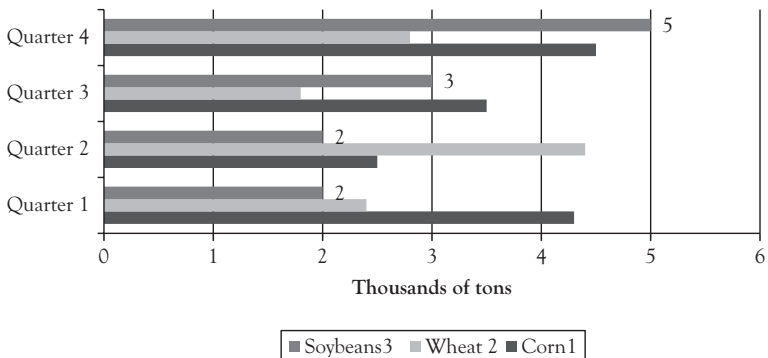
Chart 7.2 Use of a bar chart (column chart) for comparing crop production

Line graphs compare time series data or frequency data. Line graphs show relative differences in quantities or changes in value over time, for example, enrollment trends among three business schools over a three-year period. Chart 7.3 illustrates quarterly trends for the hypothetical quantities of soybeans, wheat, and corn sold in a year.

Area graphs compare geographic, spatial, or time data. Chart 7.4 illustrates a hypothetical comparison of the population of people facing starvation in a less developed country, and its correlation with economic prosperity in the United States.
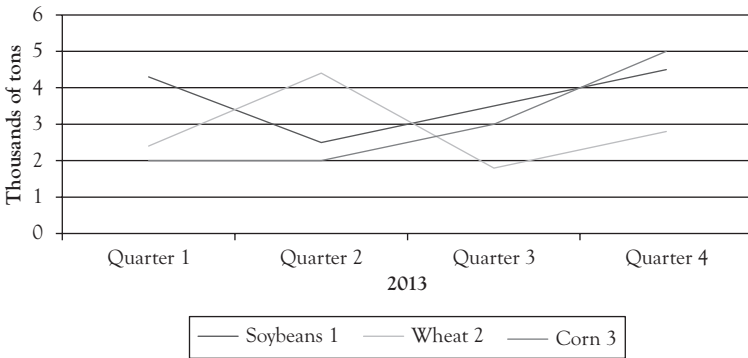
Chart 7.3 Use of a line chart to depict multiple crop trends
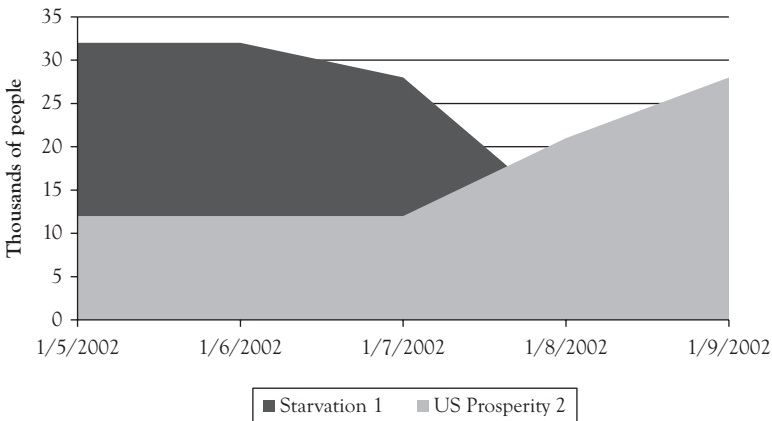
Chart 7.4 Use of an area chart to compare a less developed country starvation with U.S. prosperity
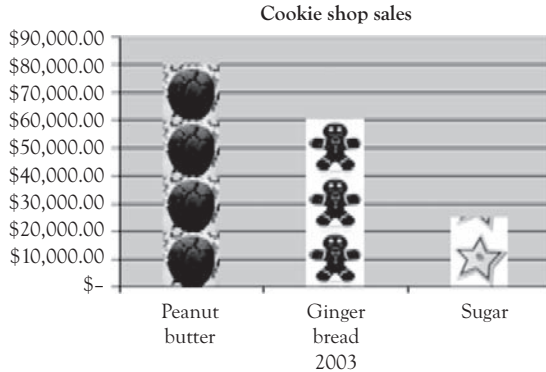
Chart 7.5 Use of a pictogram to compare sales of three products

Source: Creating Pictographs (2010).

By using the quantitative comparison and the contrasting colors, Chart 7.4 depicts an inverse relationship between the starvation in the less developed country and the economic progress in the United States.

Pictograms are much like pie charts or bar graphs; however, they use icons to exemplify the differences between the elements. Chart 7.5 illustrates the difference in cookie shop sales for peanut butter, ginger bread, and sugar cookies.

Managers use tables to report results for complex information that would require an unnecessary amount of written text to communicate the same information. Chart 7.6 illustrates a hypothetical example of in-store sales for peanut butter, ginger bread, and sugar cookies at five different store locations.

The table data include actual sales of each type of cookie and the total sales, per location. Each location's sales percentage, in proportion to the total sales of all five locations, is also shown. While Chart 7.6 emphasizes store location, Chart 7.7 emphasizes the types of cookies sold.

Frequency information and percent will help your managerial decision making. For example, if a type of cookie should represent at least 10 percent of sales for all five store locations combined, Chart 7.6 is much better at helping you determine which cookie type must be eliminated at particular store locations. In our example, location three should not sell sugar cookies, and location five should not sell peanut butter and ginger

In-store sales by location for three types of cookies by frequency and percent						
for the year ending 2013						
Stores	Peanut butter	Ginger bread	Sugar	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Location 1	2,200	3,000	1,500	6,700	23.8	23.8
Location 2	1,800	2,800	1,800	6,400	22.7	46.5
Location 3	1,200	1,200	300	2,700	9.6	56.1
Location 4	3,000	2,800	3,000	8,800	31.2	87.3
Location 5	200	500	2,900	3,600	12.8	100.0
Total	8,400	10,300	9,500	28,200	100	
	Percent	Percent	Percent			
Location 1	26.2	29.1	15.8			
Location 2	21.4	27.2	18.9			
Location 3	14.3	11.7	3.2			
Location 4	35.7	27.2	31.6			
Location 5	2.4	4.9	30.5			

Chart 7.6 Frequency and percent of sales by store locations in table form

In-store sales by cookies for three types of cookies by frequency and percent								
for the year ending 2013								
Cookies	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3	Location 4	Location 5	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Peanut butter	2,200	1,800	1,200	3,000	200	8,400	29.8	29.8
Ginger bread	3,000	2,800	1,200	2,800	500	10,300	36.5	66.3
Sugar	1,500	1,800	300	3,000	2,900	9,500	33.7	100.0
Total	6,700	6,400	2,700	8,800	3,600	28,200	100.0	
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent			
Peanut butter	32.8	28.1	44.4	34.1	5.6			
Ginger bread	44.8	43.8	44.4	31.8	13.9			
Sugar	22.4	28.1	11.1	34.1	80.6			

Chart 7.7 Frequency and percent of sales by cookie sales in table form

bread cookies. On the other hand, Chart 7.7 illustrates that for in-store sales, peanut butter cookies are problematic for location five only if the criterion is that a cookie type should represent 10 percent of total sales for a single store location.

Following a few common-sense rules will aid you in the design of effective graphics. Choose themes and slide design to match the subject or occasion, and use complimentary background and foreground colors. Be sure that red, blue, and green colors do not touch each other because

color-blind people cannot see the differences between the colors. Limit the number of visuals in your presentation with only one idea per slide, and limit each slide to one idea. Make sure text labels in graphics are large enough to be easily read by the audience.

Be aware that graphics can be used for unethical purposes. Graphics can be used to support a lie or to stretch the truth. It is important when making graphics to be sure the proportions are correct. The "three-quarter high" is a rule-of-thumb stating that the emphasis of any graph should be on the x-axis–horizontal axis (width), thus, the y-axis–vertical (height) of the graph should be three-fourths the length of the x-axis. Ensure that the axes, bars, and pies are all labeled completely to provide the audience a full understanding of the graphic without a verbal explanation. It is also always important to explain in words exactly what the graphic shows, unless it is easily apparent. The graphic should be sandwiched between the introduction of the graphic and the explanation of the graphic.

Summary

In effective oral presentations, the presenter selects and accomplishes the intended *purpose.* Second, effective oral presentation requires adequate *preparation.* Third, effective oral presentation incorporates good vocal and bodily *delivery.* Possible objectives for a presentation include belief, action, narrative, descriptive, explanation, and gratification.

The general styles for presentation delivery are memory, manuscript (read), impromptu, and extemporaneous. The elevator presentation is a special type of extemporaneous presentation that is short and to the point. Practicing your presentation, regardless of delivery style, is fundamental to success.

The introduction, body, and conclusion are the three main portions of a presentation. The introduction's function is to tell them what you will tell them, the body's function is to tell them, and the conclusion's function is to tell them what you just told them.

A filled pause is any overused, meaningless sound or phrase that results when a nervous speaker tries to fill the silent void. Effective speakers recognize their own filler tendencies and overcome the habit by pausing for emphasis or audience deliberation.

Emotions are feelings that the presentation elicits from both you as the presenter and your audience. Humdrum speakers elicit boredom and irritability from their audiences. Sincerity is perceived by the audience as an honest attempt to connect and achieve your speaking purpose. Studying the patterns of speech of great presentations can be helpful in learning how to inspire and change peoples' points of view. Various types of charts and graphs are visual aids to help convey meaning and clarity for your presentation message.

CHAPTER 8

Impression Management

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. delineate the nuances of impression management theory;
2. describe the specifics of nonverbal impression management;
3. explain how your dress, behaviors, and personal environment influence impressions;
4. explain how you can use impression management to manage others.

Introduction

Celebrities manage impressions by what they purchase, what they wear, what they do to their bodies, and how they present themselves to the public. Some celebrities' attempts at self-presentation can be ridiculous. Guyism.com listed the top 10 ridiculous celebrity purchases, ranging from an $850 purse for Suri Cruise (just a child), Michael Vick's $85,000 fish pond, Beyonce's $100,000 pair of leggings, to Rachel Hunter's $15,000 doghouse (Guyism 2013). Although these purchases are extremes for ordinary people, celebrities know that the right kind of image portrayed to the public can be lucrative and irresistible.

Another example of this obsession with celebrity image is the $32,000 appearance fee paid to Snooki from *Jersey Shore* by Rutgers University, which was $2,000 more than the amount Rutgers paid famed Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison for an appearance (Snooki 2011)! Even though outrage followed Snooki's visit, why do you suppose the Rutgers University Programming Association was willing to pay Snooki that kind of fee? Why do we know about Suri Cruise's purse in the first place? Is it accidental or deliberate that we know these unimportant facts? Why do we care about Beyonce's leggings? Why do ordinary people live beyond their

means, drive cars they cannot afford, purchase homes out of their price range, or adorn their bodies with expensive suits they do not truly like?

In his seminal analysis, Goffman (1959) captured the essence of what celebrities and common people are trying to achieve through their attempts at being noticed. Goffman described what people do in public as akin to a theatrical performance. Individuals act in a manner that will create a desirable public image among their peers on a daily basis. Individuals in everyday life use expressive personal items to enhance their persona. Goffman also believed that when individuals are outside of the public's view, on a hypothetical backstage, they can be themselves and shed their public personas.

Managers, too, use impressionist behavior to enhance their leadership effectiveness. There are a variety of impression management qualities (verbal and nonverbal, dress, environment, and so on) within the broader framework of managerial communication (MC). The impression you make every day at work affects your credibility with those above you in the organization, equal to you in the organization, and below you in the organization. An impression is very difficult to change and that is why first impressions are important. While we typically form an impression of someone in less than a minute, it could take years to change that first impression.

Impression Management Theory

Some people in the corporate world deliberately try to cause others to see them in a particular way through staging or acting (Goffman 1959); however, everyone leaves an impression on others even if not intentional. *Impression management* is concerned with the organization's or individual's attempt to influence the impression others have of them (Nelson and Quick 2003). Impression management can include both verbal and nonverbal behaviors as well as physical appearance. *Symbolic interactionism theories* explain that individuals select and create their friendships and social activity environments to reinforce who they are—dispositions, preferences, attitudes, and self-views (Buss 1987; Snyder and Ickes 1985; Swann 1987). People decorate their personal and work spaces to fit their personal tastes. The personal materials are a direct reflection of the individual's personality and give the area a sense of identity. People base

impressions on one's physical appearance such as skin tone, age, and hair; or on social roles such as professional, blue collar, or retired; and on their personal biases.

Research has shown that impression management is pervasive throughout organizations, and that there are risks and rewards of using the technique. Window into Practical Reality 8.1 illustrates how Disney World uses assertive impression management to shape public perception.

Window into Practical Reality 8.1

Disney's Grand Illusion

An example of a company that works hard to develop a favorable impression on their customers is Disney. All employees are called cast members, all of whom receive extensive training in scripting their performances for their audiences at the theme parks, hotels, and restaurants. Think about all of the characters and the detail that goes into their clothing. Then remember the detail that goes into the rides in the theme parks. You will see cast members smiling a great deal because that makes the customers think Disney World is a happy place. If you have ever been to Disney World in Orlando, Florida, you are certain to have witnessed first-hand the effect of this grand illusion on children—as they squirm to be first to hug Mickey when he appears!

Assertive Strategies

A manager's use of *assertive strategies* can lead to images that are either desirable or undesirable. Five assertive strategies include (1) ingratiation, (2) self-promotion, (3) exemplification, (4) supplication, and (5) intimidation. Figure 8.1 illustrates the assertive strategies, associated behaviors, and their desired or undesired image outcomes.

An ingratiating person is one who frequently compliments people without any real reason for doing so. *Ingratiation* as a strategy may at times be effective. For example, it has been found to positively influence performance evaluations and individual likeability (Kacmar and Carlson 1999; Seiter 2007), though effectiveness is influenced by the

<table>
<tr><td>

**Assertive strategy—
ingratiation**
Behavior: Flattery, favor-doing
Desired image: Likeable
Undesired image: Self-serving

</td><td>

**Assertive strategy—
self-promotion**
Behavior: Performance claims, boasting
Desired image: Competent
Undesired image: Conceited

</td></tr>
</table>

Assertive strategy—exemplification
Behavior: Going beyond call of duty, appearing busy
Desired image: Dedicated
Undesired image: Feels superior

<table>
<tr><td>

**Assertive strategy—
supplication**
Behavior: Asking for help, playing dumb
Desired image: Needy
Undesired image: Lazy

</td><td>

**Assertive strategy—
intimidation**
Behavior: Making threats, displaying anger
Desired image: Intimidating
Undesired image: Bossy

</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 8.1 Five assertive strategies for impression management and image outcomes

Source: Crane and Crane (2002), p. 28.

type of ingratiation tactic used, its transparency, and with whom it is used (Gordon 1996).

Ingratiation is risky because it is so transparent, and for it to work effectively it must be subtle and not obvious. *Self-promotion* includes boasting about one's work and being associated with positive individuals. When an organization engages in self-promotion, it normally does this in the form of what marketers call puffery, that is the best burger in town, or you will never have a better night's sleep. However, you will want to be careful with boasts and not exaggerate; otherwise, others will tend to disregard your claims. Because *exemplification* can be seen as going beyond what is required in one's job, it can be viewed as hypocritical since the person saw what needed to be done and others perhaps were not aware. People tend not to like those who have a superiority complex. When used properly by a manager, exemplification can be viewed by employees as indicating the person is a worthy role model and an effective leader who is a transformational force in the organization.

Using *supplication* as an impression management tool occurs when the user indicates that someone else is more qualified for a task or assignment. Most people enjoy having others look up to them, so this technique often works to the supplicant's advantage to get the resources he or she needs. However, it can also make the supplicant appear unqualified which means while it may be effective short term, it can be quite ineffective in the long run.

The use of *intimidation* is most often utilized in nonvoluntary or contractual relationships. The intimidator has the ability to inflict hardship on the recipient, such as in the military. The strategy can be effective when immediate action is necessary; however, in most organizations it leads to fear and distrust among recipients. Window into Practical Reality 8.2 illustrates the risks involved with the use of intimidation**.**

Window into Practical Reality 8.2

The Angry Waitress Makes an Impression

A waitress was very distressed when she did not get a sufficient tip from a dining group. As a result, she used a little intimidation for future diners by posting a picture and the story of the cheap tipper on YouTube for the world to see. Current tax rules require restaurants and bars to show wages (tips) for waiters and waitresses at 8 percent of what is served whether it is received or not. Customers often do not realize that the hourly rate for a server in most states is approximately $2.15 per hour, a rate that has persisted for several decades. In other words, restaurant servers would starve to death if all they received was their hourly rate.

What do you suppose was the self-image of the waitress? By using an intimidation strategy, what do you suppose is the impression she has made on her future customers? What about her fellow servers?

Defensive Strategies

Managers can use *defensive strategies* in their impression management that can lead to both desirable and undesirable image outcomes. Five common defensive strategies include: (1) innocence, (2) excuses, (3) justifications,

Defense strategy–innocence
Behavior: Denial of involvement or connection to situation
Desired image: Face saving/repair of image
Undesired image: Liar and deceitful

Defense strategy–excuses
Behavior: Admission of actions but with claims that one is not as responsible as it seems
Desired image: Face saving/repair of image
Undesired image: Liar and incompetent

Defense strategy–justifications
Behavior: Acceptance of responsibility but denial that actions led to adverse outcomes, or ends justify the means
Desired image: Face savings/repair of image
Undesired image: Liar and incompetent

Defense strategy–apologies
Behavior: Taking responsibility, falling on sword, asking for punishment
Desired image: Face saving and repair of image
Undesired image: Insincere and weak

Defense strategy–accounts
Behavior: Situational and can be seen as strong or weak
Desired image: Based on past experience
Undesired image: Strong if matches manager's views, impairing if different from manager's views

Figure 8.2 Five defensive strategies for impression management and image outcomes

Source: Crane and Crane (2002), p. 28.

(4) apologies, and (5) accounts (Gardner 1992; Gardner and Martinko 1988; Jones and Pittman 1982). Figure 8.2 illustrates these defensive strategies and their associated behaviors and desired or undesired image outcomes.

Innocence, excuses, and justification all involve face-saving and an attempt to repair the image of the user; however, many times the receiver sees the person as a liar, deceitful, or incompetent. With the use of *innocence* (also called denial or refusal) the user denies responsibility, denies that the event occurred, blames others, or says blame cannot be apportioned. The individual using an *excuse* tries to reduce responsibility by providing evidence that mitigates his or her responsibility for the actions that caused the situation. *Justification* by the person responsible for the situation is an attempt to reduce the undesirability of the situation. In other words, the person accepts responsibility but denies the need for punishment.

Accounts include questionable actions or situations based upon the responsibility and outcome of a particular person. The effectiveness of

such accounts depends upon the credibility of the account giver, how normative the account is, and the perceived degree to which the content of the account is true. The most important components are the content and the story being told depending upon the circumstances. The more truthful, reasonable, and normal the people are perceived to be, the more likely their content quality will be seen as positive; however, the less truthful, unreasonable, and abnormal the individuals, the more likely their content quality will be interpreted negatively.

By using the defensive strategy of an *apology* (also called a concession), the user wants others to see him or her as out of character with what happened, though the user agrees that what happened was wrong. In some cases, the person will also offer compensation. Recipients often view such actions as insincere, especially if the user chose to lie about the situation in the first place. Representative Anthony Weiner's apology strategy illustrates a liar's paradox as explained in the Window into Practical Reality 8.3**.**

Window into Practical Reality 8.3

Anthony Weiner and the Liar's Paradox

U.S. Representative Anthony Weiner from New York discovered that denying then apologizing for sending explicit sexual pictures and sexual text messages to women as young as 17 did not make people react favorably toward him. Due to his inappropriate behavior, many of his constituents and fellow representatives asked for his resignation. However, instead of resigning, he decided to try getting counseling and taking time off from his duties. This corrective attempt fell short and he eventually was pressured into resigning.

The problem spilled over further into his subsequent bid for the job as New York City mayor. Investigation revealed that the lewd behavior described above continued for an entire year after the original debacle happened, leading to his defeat in 2013 for the mayor's job. To some, Anthony Weiner will always be a liar—not to be trusted. What, if anything, could Weiner have done following the first incident of sexting to restore the trust and confidence of voters?

Managers' views are shaped by experience, norms, and social protocol in a given situation. If the account chosen conflicts or deviates from the manager's view the effectiveness of the account will be impaired. The user of the account must select what they perceive to be the best possible account for the context of the situation.

Nonverbal Impression Management

People clearly develop impressions of others from the nonverbal cues they perceive. Despite advancing technology, many cultures in the world still prefer to develop face-to-face business relationships rather than relying on electronic solutions. When you are face-to-face with someone for the first time, within one-tenth of a second the other person is judging your attractiveness, likability, trustworthiness, competence, and aggressiveness, among other things. Technology can facilitate similar connections among individuals. For example, video conferencing can allow a similar judgment to be made about attractiveness, likability, and other characteristics. Because of the constant sizing up that occurs from first impressions, introductions can be threatening, whether occurring face to face or virtually.

You can do a number of things to ease fear and discomfort. Having a positive frame of mind is essential. Before an encounter, do something to relax such as taking a few deep breaths. Study the nonverbal elements of the presentation situation. For example, if you are not sure how much space to give the other party, give more than you think is adequate. In the United States one full arms-length generally works well. The initiation of eye contact is crucial because maintaining eye contact generally communicates sincerity and honesty. In some cultures, however, rules for eye contact differ, especially when involving a male and a female or people of different ages. However, eye contact does not mean the same thing as staring which can be interpreted as somewhat offensive even among those who expect strong eye-to-eye contact. Speaking in a low tone of voice and controlling your movements is also important. Always remember, there is only one chance to make a first impression (Reiman 2008).

Self-confidence and empathy are associated with control; therefore, talking and moving less generally makes a better first impression. There

are certain postures that may hold meaning for some people, but trying to interpret what someone is saying through these positions may not always be reliable. You will need to learn an individual's nonverbals to be sure you are interpreting unspoken messages correctly. Strong first impressions take place when the message and the nonverbals align, and when they are both believable. In situations where the two do not align or are not believed, our reaction is often that we could not read the person or that there was something unsettling about him or her. Window into Practical Reality 8.4 reveals the consequence of an unintended gesture.

Window into Practical Reality 8.4

The Ambiguity of a Misinterpreted Gesture

An example of a posture about which you may have a self-conceived notion would be crossed arms. Many people believe that if someone crosses his arms that the person has already made up his mind or that he is not listening any longer. However, if the room is cold, perhaps the person is crossing his arms in an attempt to keep warm. Additionally, many men cross their arms simply because they are more comfortable that way. Also if you see someone else cross his or her arms, you are more likely to do so. People often mimic gestures in social interactions. What postures and gestures do you use that people may misread? With a partner, observe and comment on each other's postures and gestures and how they might be perceived.

Nonverbal impressions are very strong during the job interview process. Both the decision of the interviewer to make a job offer and the decision of the candidate to accept a job offer are largely based on the impressions that were formed by the initial interview. The behaviors of both parties will include the use of eye contact, facial expression, posture, interpersonal distance, and body orientation. When the interviewer and candidate, hit it off during the interview, a positive connection has occurred between the two people.

Impressions Conveyed by Dress and Behaviors

It is amazing the amount of money college students spend on preparation for the GMAT, GRE, or LSAT and how little is spent on preparing to get the job after college. Even when career coaching is offered, very few college students take advantage of it. One firm ceremoniously dismissed a college applicant for wearing flip-flops to the interview, and another applicant was dismissed when he was asked why he wanted to work in the field and he responded, "It beats flipping burgers." While business norms are shifting, being a serious job candidate is still necessary. Appropriate attire and behavior convey a meaning and influence your impression on others.

If you have not recently listened to yourself or observed your mannerisms on video, record and analyze yourself. Is what you are seeing, what you thought you were doing? How would you react to you? How do you think others will react? During that first impression are others seeing you as knowledgeable, flexible, enthusiastic, and sincere? Even if grooming is not important to you, it may be to others as a sign of your professionalism as well as attention to detail. If you want others to feel confident in regards to your abilities, you must establish eye contact while shaking hands. A posture that is animated but relaxed will appear inviting to the other person. If the position requires authoritative dress, then you need to dress the part.

In one study, subjects self-reported on their personality, communication skills, emotion sending ability, and physical attractiveness. The video recorded subjects' nonverbals were measured by trained coders for likability, speaking effectiveness, and expressivity confidence. Male subjects, who were nonverbally skilled and extroverted and displayed outwardly focused and fluid expressive behaviors were more favorably received. Females who displayed more facial expressiveness made better impressions. A conclusion of the research is that behaviors that make a favorable impression can differ for males and females (Riggio and Friedman 1986).

Impressions Conveyed by the Office Environment

Office design is a form of object language. Personality revealed in the way one arranges and accessorizes his or her office can say a lot to others implicitly. People may initially decide if you are extraverted, conscientious,

and open just by looking at your office. A desk against the wall forms a more open arrangement, and the occupant is seen as friendlier and more extroverted then those offices with a closed-desk arrangement. One study looked at the effect of wood furniture and wood floors and found that people perceive offices with wood floors or wood desks and furniture to be warmer and the people who occupied them to be more successful (Ridoutt et al. 2002).

Research has also indicated that observers' perceptions of office holders whose stacks are organized were more favorable than those with very messy or very clean offices. A recent study found that the portability of the technology the office holder has contributes to the office holder being seen as more extraverted and open to new possibilities (Scheibe et al. 2009). Customers also base their image of a company not only on how employees treat them but on their perceptions of the employee's appearance and behavior. For example, Best Buy has their Geek Squad members drive a cute Volkswagon Bug when visiting clients.

Using Your Impressions to Manage Others

Now that we have covered the nuances of impression management, let's examine how you can use these nuances to influence the impressions others will have of you. *Self-monitoring* is being able to control your own cues and read the cues of others. Some researchers consider this part of an individual's personality. Males and females are taught that certain expressive behaviors are okay for one gender but not for the other gender. Research has also shown that in initial interactions, physically attractive people are judged more favorably.

During negotiation situations, if you make a favorable impression and are seen as cooperative, you maintain your ability to use impression to influence the other negotiators. However, if during the negotiations you change from cooperative to competitive, the other's impression of you will become increasingly negative. The impression of the other negotiator changes less, though, when they start with a positive impression of you.

Managers must be able to identify honest and manipulative impression management strategies and determine their appropriate use. Organizations and managers must work together to reduce and discourage

undesirable strategies, and employees must be conscious of the images they are projecting and understand the audience as well as the situation. It is easy for managers to have a deluded view of their own leadership abilities (self-deception). When in a leadership position, a manager often will exaggerate personal strengths and deny common faults in order to project a positive self. The more their employees buy into the manager's position, the more they will believe their manager is a good leader. In order to be viewed as a positive leader, the leader must impress employees with promises and actions that are seen as successful by the employees. Therefore, managers strive to use a combination of impression management and interpretation of follower expectations to become charismatic leaders.

Managers in every organization carry and change the corporate culture on a daily basis. They cannot just use email and texts to communicate values but must interact and have a physical presence with their employees. While internal publications and electronic communications can effectively distribute information, nothing replaces a charismatic, caring manager in making employees feel important to the company.

Summary

The acts people perform in their daily lives can be compared to theatrical performances in which actors perform in front of an audience on a hypothetical front stage. The acting is designed to elicit a desired positive self-image. When not in public view, people can get rid of their personas and be themselves. Impressions are made and solidified continually, either on purpose or by accident. Some people try to direct how others perceive them by using impression management. Impression management involves various elements, including verbal and nonverbal effects, dress and behavior, personal environments, physical appearance, and social roles. Assertive impression management strategies include ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, supplication, and intimidation. Defensive impression management strategies include innocence, excuses, accounts, justifications, and apologies.

Your verbal or nonverbal behaviors lead people to decide if you are being truthful or untruthful, sincere or manipulative. Eye contact and

posture carry strong messages about your motives and intents, though cultural expectations differ about these elements. Male and female behaviors and expectations for dress are often viewed differently, and members of a society have preconceived notions of how each gender should interact and communicate particularly in the work environment. Office environments and other work environment details impress people either negatively or positively. People do make judgments about their superiors based on such nonverbal characteristics, and customers judge organizations on such factors as well. Managing the impressions you make on others can help you to successfully impress your superiors and subordinates, and influence your firm's clients and customers.

CHAPTER 9

Employment Communication

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. describe the steps in hiring the correct people;
2. explain the five aspects of communication in the personnel selection process;
3. write a postinterview job offer letter and a postinterview rejection letter;
4. discuss motivation theories that can be used as communication tools;
5. explain why managerial reprimand should be used as a teaching tool;
6. conduct proper layoffs and firings.

Introduction

Although we call the people working in business organizations human resources, people are unlike the other resources used in the production function: material, financial, or informational. Employees can, and sometimes do, hold grudges, engage in political sabotage, idle down, do the bare minimum just to keep their jobs, and question your authority when aggravated. People can do a host of other things at work that are hard to detect and that can be devastatingly harmful to productivity. The Window into Practical Reality 9.1 is a historic depiction of how early American workers used subterfuge power to unify others in restricting labor output. Many early 20th century workers were hostile toward scientific management for what they perceived to be a threat to their job security.

Window into Practical Reality 9.1

Soldiering: How Taylor Used the Piecework Incentive to Improve Worker Morale

Most who have studied business have heard about Frederick W. Taylor's book *Principles of Scientific Management.* According to Gabor (2000), Taylor was both revered and despised by workers at Bethlehem Steel in the early 1900s for fear that his methods would create efficiencies that would result in reduced need for workers.

Taylor observed that soldiering, or loafing, by workers was being used as a passive communication strategy to express dissatisfaction with work standards determined through scientific management calculations. The slowdown effort occurred at both the individual level and the systematic level, resulting in lowered productivity for the entire unit (Taylor 1998). In examining the soldiering that occurred from the business communication perspective, three observations were apparent:

- Workers shared their fears with one another that producing more output would result in less work for fewer workers.
- Workers shared their fears with one another that the pay structure was not directly linked to the work they actually did, thus, management did not know how to systematically link incentives to a worker's productivity.
- Workers shared their views with each other concerning their lack of confidence that the increased productivity would be equally distributed throughout the workforce.

Workers had little trust for management, even when management's perspective was predicated on the assumption that increased demand of goods would be a direct result of the efficiencies proposed by Taylor's designs. In response to the soldiering that was occurring, Taylor instituted a piecework incentive system to encourage increased individual effort, which was facilitated by a production scheduling calendar (Gantt chart) developed by his assistant, Henry L. Gantt. Worker morale improved as a result of Scientific Management. Taylor's

methods resulted in changes in business processes that are still prac-
ticed today. For instance, modern food preparation techniques used at
McDonald's restaurants and other fast-food operations are based on
Taylor's efficiency principles (Bell and Martin 2012).

Human resource activities pose various challenges for managers. First,
as a manager you will need to know how to communicate legally during
personnel selection. Second, you will need to know how to select suitable
candidates from a sufficiently large pool of applicants and then communi-
cate and coordinate with others to actually hire the person selected. Third,
you will need to know how to write effective offer letters and rejection let-
ters. Fourth, when you have actually hired a person, you will need to know
how to motivate the person you hired to consistently perform well. Finally,
you will need to know how to conduct layoffs and firings appropriately.

People are the most important managerial resource and the most com-
plicated to manage because people are living, breathing entities who harbor
a slew of emotions—that can be positive or negative. From Chapter 1, you
learned about the functional areas of management: planning, organizing,
leading, and controlling. You learned that the four scarce resources of a firm
are physical, information, financial, and human. Notwithstanding, improv-
ing the human resource is your employment communication responsibility.

Improving Human Capital

Human flight, moon landings, submarine missions to the bottom of the
ocean, or drilling for oil 5,000 feet below sea level would not have been
possible without fully developed human capital. Peter Drucker (1954)
said that enlarging human resources permits profit-seeking enterprises to
prosper. The manager's job is to use good communication to improve
on human capital by making people more productive. Despite Drucker's
optimism, today's human resources are more difficult to manage than
any of the other resources. Managing human resources is—and always
will be—predicated on two-way communications and relationship
building. Managers must create a productive enterprise by using human
resources. Human resource is the only resource that is capable of being
improved because people can grow intellectually and be developed into

managers (Drucker 1954). Incidentally, Drucker (1974) appears to be the first business philosopher to use the phrase managerial communication.

Successful employment communication begins when a manager has grasped the elements of employment communication responsibility. Thus, hiring and retaining excellent people is paramount in improving human capital.

Hiring the Right People

Hiring a new person involves four aspects: (1) adhering to equal employment opportunity laws, (2) being familiar with essential and preferred job qualifications for the posted position, (3) conducting productive and legal interviews, and (4) writing an effective job offer and rejection letter.

Equal Employment Opportunity Laws

Before any of the aspects of personnel selection can happen, you need to be aware of the equal employment opportunity laws enforced by the federal government, which is knowledge essential for crafting the job description (features of which more than likely will be advertised to the public) and conducting the interview. Knowledge of equal opportunity employment law is required to protect the organization against discrimination complaints and litigation. In the United States, the organization responsible for investigating and enforcing equal employment opportunity laws is the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). This government body has a broad range of authority and can investigate complaints against employers brought against them by former or current employees. The equal employment laws enforced by the EEOC are shown in Figure 9.1.

After the EEOC has investigated a complaint, it can issue the complainant a letter called a Right to Sue Letter. Once issued, in many cases, a former or current employee who believes he or she has been the victim of discrimination (when at least one of the laws enforced by the EEOC has been violated) can bring a cause of action against the employer in the appropriate court of jurisdiction. A Right to Sue Letter strengthens the legal arguments for a party or parties bringing forth a cause of action claiming discrimination; nevertheless, these lawsuits can be expensive for both parties and take many years to be resolved.

The EEOC can also file an independent lawsuit against an employer on behalf of workers it deems to have suffered from disparate treatment or disparate impact. According to the EEOC, there were 99,922 workplace

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Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
This law makes it illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate applicants' and employees' sincerely held religious practices, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business.

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act
This law amended Title VII to make it illegal to discriminate against a woman because of pregnancy, childbirth, or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

The Equal Pay Act of 1963 (EPA)
This law makes it illegal to pay different wages to men and women if they perform equal work in the same workplace. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADA)
This law protects people who are 40 or older from discrimination because of age. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)
This law makes it illegal to discriminate against a qualified person with a disability in the private sector and in state and local governments. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or employee, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's busines

Sections 102 and 103 of the Civil Rights Act of 1991
Among other things, this law amends Title VII and the ADA to permit jury trials and compensatory and punitive damage awards in intentional discrimination cases.

Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
This law makes it illegal to discriminate against a qualified person with a disability in the federal government. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or employee, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business.

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA)
This law makes it illegal to discriminate against employees or applicants because of genetic information. Genetic information includes information about an individual's genetic tests and the genetic tests of an individual's family members, as well as information about any disease, disorder or condition of an individual's family members (i.e., an individual's family medical history). The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

Figure 9.1 Equal employment opportunity laws

Source: EEOC (2014).

discrimination lawsuits filed between October 2009 and September 2010, mostly based on race and sex discrimination complaints. The reputation and image of the accused organization is always hurt when discrimination lawsuits become public knowledge, as illustrated in the Window into Practical Reality 9.2.

Window into Practical Reality 9.2

Walmart in the Courts

Retail giant Walmart gained a lot of negative attention from the facts surrounding a class-action lawsuit filed on behalf of former female employees in 1998. U.S. District Court Judge Martin Jenkins granted a class-action status to 1.6 million current and former female Walmart employees who charged that the company was paying women less and promoting them proportionately less often. Lower court cases had already been heard and decided in favor of the workers. [*Dukes vs. Walmart Stores, Inc.*, No. C01-02252 MJJ (U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California).] The main facts presented to the court as evidence of discrimination were produced by Dr. Richard Drogin a Professor Emeritus from California State University-Hayward:

- The hourly rate for female workers was up to 37 cents less than their male counterparts.
- Full-time female employees earned on average nearly $5,000 less than male employees in yearly salary working more than 45 hours per week.
- Only 33 percent of managers were female, yet females made up 72 percent of the workforce.
- Only 14 percent of Walmart store managers were women but women made up 92 percent of the company's cashiers.

The Supreme Court, in June of 2011, reversed the lower court rulings and ruled in favor of Walmart stating that the group of approximately 1.6 million females included in the class-action lawsuit was

unmanageable and did not give Walmart a fair opportunity to adjudicate all of the numerous noncohesive claims as they pertain to EEOC laws and the precedent already established by the lower courts. The plaintiffs had failed to establish the glue that held so many separate claims together. Nevertheless, with so many women in Walmart's workforce and customer base, the alleged charges of gender disparity in pay and promotions did not sit well with many and hurt the company's public reputation (Walmart 2011).

As a hiring manager, you will have to be familiar with *necessary job qualifications*: a set of skills essential for success in the job so that you can conduct a productive and legal interview and eventually hire an applicant. After analyzing a job, the job description and the job specifications are composed. The *job description* is the detailed explanation of what a person in that position actually does. The *job specifications* are the listings of mental and physical skills and abilities required to perform the job, that is, educational level, certification, training, and more. When a job opening is posted, it will normally include both necessary qualifications and preferred qualifications.

The interviewing manager should have a written job description that clearly lists the responsibilities of the position. The job description items can also be used when composing advertising for the position. Current law requires that hiring managers select for interview only those candidates who possess all of the *necessary qualifications* listed in the advertised position pertaining to what the employee will be doing, tasks, and duty responsibilities. This is an effort to make hiring practice more systematic and fair among all employers. Under EEOC guidelines, it is illegal to invite a candidate for an interview who does not have all the advertised necessary qualifications.

The manager should also have knowledge of the *preferred job qualifications*: an optimal set of skills desired by an employer of a job applicant but not required for an interview. Organizations often utilize search committees, whose job it is to write the advertisements, place the advertisements, review the applications, invite the candidate in for an interview,

and recommend hiring or not hiring the individual. In some instances, the search process is managed in the HR department, while in others the search process is more decentralized and may occur in the department where the opening exists or in conjunction with HR personnel. Current EEOC guidelines do not require managers to select candidates for interview who possess all or some of the preferred qualifications listed in the advertised position. Nonetheless, a person who possesses all of the necessary qualifications and most of the preferred qualifications would stand a good chance of being interviewed. In fact, a sufficiently large group of candidates should be selected for prescreening for the position based on the stated qualifications, as some typically will be excluded or drop out of the search.

Conducting a Legal Interview

As manager, you must compose appropriate interview questions that are legally compliant and conduct effective and legally compliant interviews. Both the interviewer and the interviewee have objectives. The interviewer has three main goals: (1) to collect information—is the applicant qualified to do the job and will the applicant do the job, (2) to provide information—give the candidate a realistic preview of the company and job to entice them to accept the job, and (3) to check the personal chemistry or candidate's fit with the organizational culture. The interviewer can then determine if the candidate is capable of doing the job and if he or she has a personality that fits the organization. On the flip side, the interviewee has the objectives of (1) presenting information, (2) collecting information, and (3) checking personal chemistry to assess the personalities and styles of people with whom they might be working. Figure 9.2 provides a summary of the proper steps to take in the interview selection process.

It is important that you ask legal questions that adhere to the EEOC guidelines. Inexperienced managers can cause their employers much grief and embarrassment by asking illegal and inappropriate interview questions. Figure 9.3 presents some common hiring dilemmas and provides answers and strategies to help you plan and carry out interviews more effectively.

Step 1 **Plan and prepare for the interview.**	1. Assure that interviewers have a firm grasp of the objectives of the interview. 2. Plan the interview around the determined objectives. 3. Study the requirements of the job and the characteristics of an ideal candidate.
Step 2 **Build the interview prior to considering each candidate.**	1. Custom build the interview around the job description. 2. Make sure all relevant topics are covered during the interview. 3. Keep complete files that include supporting documents of each candidate.
Step 3 **Be sure the evaluation process is job related.**	1. Carefully evaluate the applicant's credentials in light of the job's requirements. 2. Make a proper determination of the applicant's willingness and fit. 3. Take notes during the interview to assist in later deliberation.
Step 4 **Make sure all interviewers abide by EEOC guidelines.**	1. Be sure to consult with legal counsel if you have doubt about the legality of a question. 2. Be sure each question has a job related purpose. 3. Be sure that your selection decision is and properly documented.

Figure 9.2 Steps in the selection interview

Situation	Response
Situation 1. George is a history professor who struggles to speak Spanish as a second language. He is working on a book, subsidized by the university where he has tenure, about a particularly old border town in Texas near the Mexico border. He wants to hire an assistant to help him when he interviews local residents who have lived in the area for more than 45 years. Because many of these older residents speak Spanish only, George asks applicants routinely, "Do you speak Spanish?" Is this an appropriately legal interview question? Which law in Figure 9.1 might or might not be violated?	**Answer 1.** If the individual needs to be able to speak Spanish to do the job, then it should be a requirement in the job postings for the position. This is called a bona fide occupational qualification. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is applicable
Situation 2. Simon is interviewing Mary for an administrative assistant position. Mary's cell phone rings and she answers the call during the interview. Mary's face changes from smiling to a cautioned shocked look. From the tone of the conversation, Simon can pick out bits and pieces from what the other person is saying to Mary. Simon infers that a boyfriend has just broken-off a relationship with Mary. Simon wonders what this could lead to if Mary is hired. She is also thick around her waist-area and appears pregnant. Would it be appropriate for Simon to try to find out more about Mary's crisis? What law in Figure 9.1 governs this situation between Mary and Simon?	**Answer 2.** It would be illegal for Simon to ask Mary any personal questions about the call and whether she is pregnant. The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of the EEOC law covers this. Mary also should have had her phone turned off and never taken the call.
Situation 3. Jennifer has completed the application and review processes for hiring for an outside sales position and is now in the midst of interviewing candidates selected for interviews. She clearly states, as a part of the interviewing process, that the candidates must be able to load and unload a truck with boxes weighing approximately 30 pounds each at least twice each day. Therefore, she asks each candidate, "Will you need a reasonable accommodation to do the job as described?" Is this question a legally appropriate question? Why? What federal law makes it so?	**Answer 3.** The question is appropriate. The lifting requirement can be considered a bona fide occupational requirement at the time of hire. However, if the health status of the individual changes after being hired in the position, you have to make reasonable accommodations as a company. However, this does not mean that you must reduce the standards to accommodate the person who has a documented legal disability. Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is applicable.
Situation 4. Jim has completed interviews with three candidates for a sales representative position. One interviewee, Fred, was very boastful of his sales performance at a previous job. Jim's curiosity was aroused during the interview so he called the previous employer and spoke with Fred's former direct supervisor to get more clarification on Fred's job performance. Was Jim within his legal rights to seek and confirm information about Fred's job performance with a previous employer?	**Answer 4.** It is against the law to call a current employer without the applicant's consent, as you might endanger the person's livelihood. However, if he listed the current supervisor as a reference, you may call that person. You may call any former employer for whom the applicant is no longer working.

Figure 9.3 Employment process dilemmas and suggested strategies

Correspondence with Candidates

Once a decision has been reached as to whom to hire, the manager or his designated person would then write a job offer letter or a rejection letter to each candidate. An example of an effective offer letter and an effective rejection letter are presented in Figures 9.4 and 9.5.

Ms Jane Smith
62 Sessions Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63111

Dear Ms Smith:

Thank you for coming in and interviewing with our search team on January 13, 20__.
We would like to offer you a position as an entry-level sales associate. Your start date will be February 20, 20__, with a salary of $45,000 plus sales bonuses. You are also eligible to receive health insurance and have the option to participate a 401(K) plan. The benefit programs will be described to you more fully on your first day on the job. Please plan to report to work at 8:30 am for your orientation and initial training.

Please respond with your acceptance of the job offer by January 20, 20__. If we do not hear from you by that date, we will assume you are not interested in the position. If you have any questions about the position, please call me at 901-222-9103. We are looking forward to having you join our team.

Sincerely,

Maxine Patterson
Sales Director

Figure 9.4 The post interview offer letter

Ms. Jane Smith
62 Sessions Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63111

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you for taking the time to come in and interview with us on January 13, 20__.
We have finished the interviewing process for the entry-level sales position and have found another candidate whose qualifications more closely match the requirements of the job.

While we have only one position to fill at this time, please feel free to apply again when other positions become available.

Sincerely,

Maxine Patterson
Sales Director

Figure 9.5 The post interview rejection letter

It is important that all interviewees receive a communication from the firm as quickly as possible after the interview. Send the offer letter before you send the rejection letters, and wait for a reply from the candidate that you wish to hire. A formal rejection letter should then be sent to all applicants who applied but did not get the job. While you are waiting on the response to your job offer, you may want to go ahead with sending rejection letters to those candidates you are certain you will not be hiring.

Motivating Human Capital

Many of the best theories in management come from applications of sociology and psychology in the management environment. Even though these fields of study have a foundation in reinforcement theory and other aspects of personal and social behavior, their business application is impossible without using good communication. No matter how a manager might view theories of motivation, keeping employees motivated means managers will need to observe and talk to their employees to find out what types of rewards and punishments make them tick! Three theories have immediate employment communication applicability: (1) equity theory, (2) expectancy theory, and (3) the formal reprimand.

Equity Theory

An important part of a manager's job is to always be aware of the feelings of inequity in pay or responsibilities among workers. These feelings of inequity often lead to loafing, employees doing the minimum just to keep their jobs, or high levels of unexplained turnover—meaning employees' leaving their jobs for apparently no good reason. Frustrated workers may at times abuse customers and clients as well as fellow workers. Adams's (1963) *Equity Theory* is predicated on three assumptions applicable to most employment communication situations (Bell and Martin 2012):

- The equity norm is a social assumption that an employee will expect a fair return for the contribution to the job they do.
- The social comparison is a determination that an employee will make as to whether their return for the work they do is equitable in comparison to others' inputs and outcomes.

- When employees feel their equity is less than others' equity, they will seek to reduce the inequity in three ways: (1) cognitively distorting inputs and outcomes known as cognitive distortion, (2) altering their inputs and outputs, and (3) quitting the organization.

Pay equity can be assessed by comparing your employees' salaries with industry averages for pay standards. Manpower.com publishes an *Annual Salary Guide* free to the public available online that includes approximately 200 job titles. The United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, publishes an annual reference book, available for free online, entitled the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* that includes several hundred job titles with industry outlooks, earnings, and educational requirements. Also, be sure that every employee is regularly evaluated and rewarded for good work. Remember that perceptions of fairness and equity are always a two-way employment communication responsibility.

Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theory is a motivational model that seeks to explain or predict task-related effort. It assumes conscious choices among alternatives. The theory suggests motivation is determined by two individual beliefs: (1) effort and performance have a relationship and (2) desirable work outcomes are associated with differing performance levels (Vroom 1964). Motivation is then viewed as a function of the perceived relationship between an individual's effort, his or her performance, and the desired consequence of the outcomes of performance. The key terms to understanding the model are: *expectancy*—a belief that effort is followed by performance, *instrumentality*—a mental calculation that an achieved task performed will lead to a work outcome, and *valence*—the value the individual places on the outcome.

Experienced managers know the best application of this theory is in the recognition that all expectations can be shaped through good, honest communication. As a manager, do not create faulty expectations or implied promises. Do as you say you will do. Evaluate your employees fairly. You can understand what your employees expect and value only by

talking honestly with them about what they want versus what you can realistically deliver, when they perform as they said they would.

Reprimanding to Motivate

A *formal written reprimand* is a punishment that can include both negative and positive reinforcements as aversive controls over undesirable employee behaviors. Reprimands deter employees from engaging in future workplace behaviors that could pose a hazard to a company's profitability. The ideal reprimand should stamp out unproductive workplace behaviors and stamp in productive behaviors (Bell and Ramdass 2010). An effectively written reprimand can also be a useful teaching tool. The manager's goal is to write a three-paragraph reprimand that will help modify the rule breakers' behavior, while at the same time avoiding hostility, enmity, and other forms of emotional baggage normally associated with poorly constructed and administered reprimands.

Normally, a tiered system of progressive discipline (verbal warning, first-written warning, second-written warning, and dismissal) is used to punish rule-breaking behavior. For example, an employee's failure to read the shift schedule has resulted in that employee's tardiness—a direct violation of company policy. Let us imagine that the employee's supervisor will reprimand the tardiness infraction. Can the reprimanding supervisor anticipate the employee's answers to the following questions? Can the employee who has just received the reprimand answer the following questions, after the fact?

- How did my actions result in the *incident* leading to my being reprimanded?
- What is the managerial *rationale* for my being reprimanded; in other words, how did my actions pose a hazard to the bottom line (any goal the manager is trying to achieve)?
- Is there accuracy and fairness in the reprimand that I received?
- What is the consequence for my rule breaking and what is the *remedy* for my corrected action?

Once the manager has thought about and answered the aforementioned four essential questions, the writing process can begin. It can

also become a very important legal document for attorneys if a termi-
nated worker decides to litigate after receiving a Right to Sue Letter
from the EEOC (Balloch 2010). Figure 9.6 illustrates the pattern for
writing the reprimand which includes three paragraphs: the incident, the
rationale, and the remedy.

Having to reprimand an employee, particularly in today's litigious
environment, is very difficult for most managers. However, putting eve-
rything down in writing and having both people sign it with a human

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TO: Jack Johnson, employee number 155333

FROM: Jane Doe, Frontline Supervisor

RE: Tardy for a Scheduled Shift

DATE: January 20, 20__

The first paragraph, describe the incident, such as "On such date, Mr. or Ms. John or Jane
Doe did not..." Avoid your own emotional spin and keep the content objective. The
incident description is merely a summary of the facts: date of occurrence, place, time,
persons involved, policy violated, and so on. State all the facts in this paragraph, but, be
brief. First person language (I, me, my) and second person language (you, your) is acceptable
in your final draft reprimand as long as emotions are kept neutral.

Construct the second paragraph in order to explain management rationale for the write-up
and the effect the incident had on the department or unit or on the bottom line.
An example might be, "Jane or John, your behavior resulted in a $3,000 loss in sales due
to..." Most frontline workers will not be thinking in these terms: often, they do not know
how or why their behavior is unproductive. You must use the reprimand as a teaching tool.
This is the paragraph to emphasize your rationale to the employee. Most workers should be
assumed moral; furthermore, when told of the hazards of their behaviors to achieving
profitability or safety or something other goal, most employees will change for the better.

In paragraph three, you will impose a required remedy to correct the behavior. An example
might be, "You will notify the immediate supervisor (insert name) in the event you cannot
..." The document will have a place for the employee and the supervisor or manager to
sign.. On your first draft, avoid first and second person language to keep your own feelings
in check. Once you know what you want to say and how to say it, then first and second
person writing is fine. Use unambiguous language throughout.

Employee,   Supervisor,

_____   _____
Jack Johnson   Jane Doe

Figure 9.6 The three-paragraph reprimand overview

Source: Bell and Martin (2010, April).

resources representative present generally works very well. Many states have laws that deal with how you must document the infractions of employees who are not performing satisfactorily before you can fire them. While the manager's hope is that the person will cease the actions that led to the reprimand, sometimes it does not, which then leads to a second and third reprimand letter and subsequent discussions before the person can be legally fired. Figure 9.7 is an example of a well-written reprimand that clearly states the (a) incident, (b) rationale, and (c) remedy.

TO: Jack Johnson, employee number 155333

FROM: Jane Doe, Frontline Supervisor

RE: Tardy for a Scheduled Shift

DATE: January 20, 20__

(a) On January 3, 2010, our client James Erin with Hadley Enterprises tried to contact the office to obtain information and layouts for an advertisement that was needed that day. Since there was no notification that you would not be at work, the expectation was that you would be covering the office while I was traveling. As you were not in the office, Mr. Erin could not reach anyone, resulting in his inability to get the information he needed for his advertisement, lack of contact with his customers, and loss of potential sales.

(b) While it is always important to make me aware of when you will not be in the office, it is particularly important when I also am out of the office. Your position requires you to work from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. unless other arrangements are made with me in advance. If I am not available by phone or email to make an exception to your work hours, then it is expected you will be at your desk as the position requires. The position you hold is essential to our customers obtaining critical advertisement materials that help them and us sell product which in turn pays our salaries. When employees fail to fulfill their responsibilities, there is no income to pay salaries and the company closes.

(c) In the future, please give me advance notice when you need to change your hours. If the reasons are sufficient, I will do what I can. However, when I am traveling, it is essential that you are at your desk. This is a warning letter concerning this behavior. Now that you understand the importance of your position, it is expected this will not happen again.

Employee   Supervisor,

_____   _____
Jack Johnson   Jane Doe

Figure 9.7 A three-paragraph reprimand example

Source: Bell and Martin (2010).

Layoffs and Firings

Part of a manager's job is layoffs of people when economic times are difficult for a company. In a *layoff*, employees are not allowed to continue working presently, but there is an option of reemployment when economic times improve for the company that laid them off. A corporation may have to downsize for a number of reasons including economics, restructuring of the organization, competitive environment, domestic or international changes, mergers, acquisitions, or divestitures. Whatever the reason, many times the workers being laid off are good employees and the circumstance causing their layoff is beyond the control of the manager having to communicate the situation.

One of the main considerations during layoffs is how to keep the rest of the employees motivated who are not being laid off as well as telling those who are being laid off why they have been selected. Layoffs are like funerals: you must be clear in your choice of words; you must be sympathetic in your tone; and, above all, consistent in what you say to everyone. It is helpful if the firm has a plan. Some firms hire professional communicators to write, script, and review the messages that are to be directed to people being laid off, as well as other constituents. Of course, the first thing a company should do is eliminate all contract and temporary employees before terminating permanent employees. Be honest about your company's situation before the layoffs so that the people are not surprised. Keeping employees' loyalty and trust should be of the utmost importance to the managers.

It is also necessary for top management to understand that the managers who lay off people and the employees who survive the layoffs will often have feelings of guilt, fear, anger, distrust, and depression. Survivors will need a great deal of information before, during, and after reductions in the workforce. Top management and managers need to communicate to employees on all levels, which can help to minimize the confusion, panic, and rumors that typically occur during times of layoffs or downsizing. The more management can reduce the stress through communication, the more the survivors are likely to help keep the organization healthy (Pfeil et al. 2003).

Laying off an employee is a very delicate transaction. It is painful for the recipient and should be done by the immediate supervisor, not by the human resources department. It is also difficult for the manager, however, because many times there is a long-term friendship involved. Managers who will be doing the layoffs should be coached to be sure they have the answers they need for the employees. It is important that the employees affected be told about their layoff before other workers or the media are made aware of the situation. After employees involved in a significant layoff are told, the news media should be made aware of what has happened and why. Many times local, state, and federal government officials also need to be informed. For a publicly traded company, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) requires that large layoffs be disclosed in writing and submitted to the SEC. Notifying customers and suppliers may also be necessary (Pfeil et al. 2003).

Employees should be told of their layoffs face-to-face; it is the only channel that is acceptable. Phone, email, or third-party consultants should never be used. If the company can afford a severance package, it should be offered and explained at the time of the layoff. Generally the higher the employee is in the organization and the longer the employee has been employed, the more inclusive the severance package is. Severance packages tell an individual how much the company truly appreciated his or her work, and say a lot to the employees who remain. Of course the timing of a layoff can be very important. Holidays or the day of return from vacation are not good times to lay off workers. Some companies practice escorting the people laid off out of the building, though this can have negative consequences. Layoffs affect many lives in the organization and can have a tremendous emotional drain on the remaining employees. Try to inform all people being laid off at the same time rather than dragging out the situation.

As with a crisis response plan and other strategic plans, having a formal layoff plan developed in advance of crisis is good preparation for the rainy day when you have to use it. Once the layoffs are completed the managers must then cope with the remaining employees to bring stability to the workplace. Survivor's guilt is a real phenomenon that requires appropriate response from management. Open two-way communication is essential

to rebuilding and strengthening the credibility of the leadership. Taking a measure of the organizational climate after the event and pinpointing problems and handling them is very important to the future of the firm.

Firing, terminating the employment of a person for cause, should always be put in writing. No matter how careful we are in hiring employees, sometimes the arrangement just does not work out. Either the employee is not equipped to handle the position or the behavior of the employee makes termination necessary.

Firing is unpleasant, which is why you must abide by the appropriate laws and have a fair, consistent policy to follow. It may be a good idea to meet with your corporate attorney or legal counsel in advance of the firing to be sure all laws are being followed, especially when an illegal behavior has been committed by the employee. Generally, firings are preceded by reprimands. As much as is possible, all reprimands and the firing should be done through face-to-face communications. It is generally a good idea to have someone else present when the firing occurs, such as a human resources representative or another manager. As with a layoff, your tone of voice should be firm but empathetic, and you should explain the specific reason the firing is taking place, and state the news of the firing unequivocally. The employee should be told when he or she will receive the last paycheck and how you will respond to calls for references. The individual should be allowed to collect personal items, and you will need to collect keys, computers, cell phones, and other corporately owned objects. Following the firing, you may wish to have the individual escorted from the building.

After the employee leaves the office, squelch rumors by informing the staff of the action taken. This can be done by email to speed the delivery and make sure everyone receives it quickly. Because the details of the separation should remain private due to legal requirements, the statement may simply say that the employee is no longer with the company.

Summary

Human resources are always the most important type of managerial resource and the most complicated to manage. Employees can, and sometimes do, become disgruntled, idle down and do the bare minimum,

question managerial authority, and negatively influence colleagues as well as customers and clients. Despite the negatives, when employees are properly motivated through good communication, organizations can achieve remarkable goals. Acquiring human resources requires managers to use communication appropriately in the personnel selection process; the manager's job is to improve human capital, that is, to attract and develop people through effective communication.

The personnel selection process includes: (1) knowing about equal employment opportunity laws, (2) identifying essential and preferred qualifications being sought, (3) conducting legal interviews, and (4) writing effective job offer and rejection letters.

The organization responsible for investigating and enforcing equal employment opportunity laws is the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Necessary job qualifications are written job description that clearly lists the responsibilities of the position. Current law requires that all hiring managers select only those candidates who possess all of the necessary qualifications listed in the advertised position. Preferred job qualifications being sought are not essential but they are desired over and beyond the necessary qualifications.

Inexperienced managers can cause their employers much grief and embarrassment by asking illegal and inappropriate interview questions. Both the interviewer and the interviewee have objectives and goals, and each is trying to determine if a good fit exists. An offer letter will be sent to the candidate selected for the job after the interview. A formal rejection letter should be sent to all the applicants who applied and were interviewed but did not get the job.

Equity theory is predicated on three assumptions applicable to most employment communication situations: equity norms, social comparison, and cognitive distortion. *Expectancy theory* suggests motivation is determined by the two individual beliefs that (1) effort and performance have a relationship and (2) desirable work outcomes are associated with differing performance levels.

The managerial reprimand is a teaching tool used as an aversive control measure for rule breakers. It has three parts: incident, rationale, and remedy. While the manager's hope is that the person will cease the actions that have led to the reprimand, sometimes it does not, leading to a

second and third reprimand letter and discussion before the person can be legally fired, known as progressive discipline. Properly written reprimands should stamp out unproductive behaviors in employees.

Layoffs and firing of people present a very delicate challenge. Layoffs are difficult because good people must often be let go due to adverse situations. Firing is unpleasant, which is why you have to follow the laws and have as fair and consistent a policy as will be possible. Firings should always be put in writing. Once layoffs or firings have occurred, management must communicate effectively with remaining employees to maintain stability in the workplace.

CHAPTER 10

Change Communication

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. define change communication;
2. explain change communication strategy in lieu of the management functions;
3. discuss how receptivity to change is possible;
4. dislodge ingrained behaviors in yourself and others so change is possible;
5. lead a change communication process;
6. explain the demands, perceptions, and expectations of change communication.

Introduction

Imagine that you have purchased auto insurance from a leading company for the last 10 years. Another agent, from a competing firm approaches you with an offer the agent says covers a much better broader range of damages than your existing policy—and at half the cost because you are married and have no speeding tickets or accidents in 10 years! Nevertheless, loyalty to your old company and the agent you have worked with for many years makes it very difficult for you to switch companies. Six months after you decide not to switch insurers, you collide with another vehicle. Your existing insurance company covers only half the damage to your car and the other driver's car. Now the other driver is threatening you with a lawsuit because you received a ticket (violation) from the officer on the scene. Moreover, the person you hit also has an

inferior policy and his bodily injury claims are not completely covered by his own insurer. You call the agent from the competing company who offered to insure you, just for clarification purposes. The agent tells you that under the offered policy you would have been fully covered regardless of who was at fault. How would you feel about your decision not to change your insurance policy after such an experience? Would you change companies for your future insurance needs? This hypothetical example illustrates, perhaps in an exaggerated manner, the tendency of people to resist change and how the lack of receptivity to change can bring harm to those people and possibly others.

The difficulty of changing an entire organization largely resides in individuals' experiences with change agendas. When confronted with altering from a comfortable habit to a state in which they have no experience, most people have difficulty saying yes, the change is necessary. For the individual, change can be something as mundane as selecting a new menu item that substitutes for a favorite item that the person has been eating for five years. Will the change be better than the status quo?

Change communication is a dynamic, deliberate process that managers use to shift the entire organization from one state of existence to a more desired state of existence, thus affecting every stakeholder of the organization. The change process can be difficult because employees know that change makes demands and that they cannot be sure what the end result will be. They only know what they have already experienced, and those situations frame their attitudes about change. Employees typically expect to receive something in return for complying with demands placed upon them by change agents.

Change for an organization is difficult for many of the same reasons that personal change is challenging. Nevertheless, change and the effective communication of it to constituents are essential for an organization's survival. Four aspects of change communication will be discussed: (1) applying change communication strategy in lieu of the four management functions; (2) understanding the demands, perceptions, and expectations of change communication; (3) leading the change communication process; and (4) dislodging ingrained practices so receptivity of organizational members to change is possible. We begin our discussion with change communication strategy.

Change Communication Strategy

Barrett (2002) demonstrated that during organizational change employee communication can mean the success or failure of the organizational initiative. The input and output mechanisms (open systems theory assumes organizations are dependent on their environments to transform inputs into outputs—goods and service to be sold) happen regardless of whether change comes from a process improvement approach, acquisition, new venture, or merger. Barrett's (2002) model is an attempt to synthesize organizational information into communication.

Figure 10.1 illustrates the application of Barrett's original three-phased change communication model. Figure 10.1 shows both feed-forward loops and feedback loops. Feed-forward represents communications that take place before the fact (encoding and initiating at every level). Feedback refers to communications taking place after the fact (decoding and interpreting at every level). These loops connect each phase of the change communication effort back to managers at each organizational level and across the functional areas, enabling managers to constantly refine their efforts at shaping employee communications.

Application of the model depicted in Figure 10.1 can help you as a manager achieve your strategic goals in initiating change through
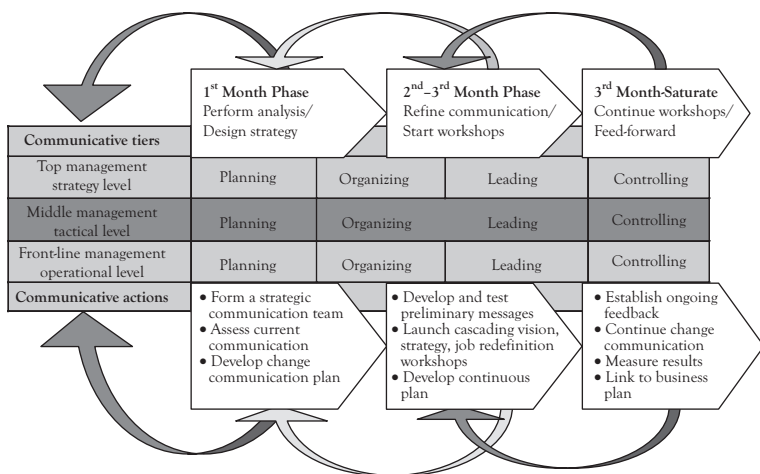
Figure 10.1 The managerial functions and the three-phased communication strategy plan

employee communication. In high-performing companies, *goals* are usually statements of particular points to be achieved in the short term or long term. Goals tend to be statements of what we want. *Plans* are blueprints for actions needed to achieve the stated goals.

Strategic planning and goal setting serve to (1) illustrate effective employee communications in the context of the high-performing organization, (2) provide a tool to analyze and diagnose a company's communication strengths and weaknesses, and (3) frame the change program to improve employee communications to help drive change. The three-phase model functions as an analytical tool that helps managers diagnose a company's strengths and weaknesses in employee communication so the company can effectively use communication to facilitate the overall change process.

Receptivity to Change

A well-implemented change strategy requires that stakeholders are receptive to the change though not every employee will necessarily be supportive. When an organization is involved with continuous change implementation, stakeholders may develop change fatigue or change resistance. Researchers Frahm and Brown (2007) spent 100 days at Tech D, a public sector organization where many of the employees felt that there were limited feedback channels and that communication flowed downwards with little care about information flow upwards. Their study was a case study, and therefore limited to a single firm. Nevertheless, *receptivity* to change is a measure of acceptance by the person, group, or organization to change. Change receptivity can range from negative, to neutral, to positive. Negative responses to change can include contempt, frustration, change fatigue, and fear. The neutral response includes passive acceptance, limited change readiness, and ambivalence. Positive responses include pro-innovation, change commitment, and excitement.

Receptivity of individuals often changes during the process of the change, which can be for the better or for worse. Recognizing that the formal communication was breaking down, people began focusing on rumors and grapevine information which, of course, affected productivity negatively. Tech D employees were very satisfied with the CEO's personal communication style; however, middle managers tended not to pass on information. The organization culture was affecting the flow of

information. Tech D management knew they needed to shift their cultural values to improve the organizational communication quality. In many cases, they needed to presell change so that the people involved would understand why the change is happening. The people who had access to higher levels of reliable informal communication were more accepting of the changes. Another finding of the study was that people preferred the term *continuous improvement* over the term *change*. The word *change* often carries the connotation of *change for change sake*, *not secure or positive*, and *personnel turnover* (Frahm and Brown 2007).

During periods of change, however, some people chose to leave the organization rather than engage in the change (Douglas et al. 2006). Many times people are not ready for change or they do not like the new responsibilities the changes may call for.

Rampant rumors are often associated with unsuccessful change communication efforts, and rumors are often the result of management's poor communication strategies (Burlew et al. 1994; Smeltzer 1991; Smeltzer and Zener 1992).

Employees will respond more positively to organizational change when they are satisfied with management's communication, and cynicism is greatly reduced when the communication is on employees' own terms. Change agents will have a better chance at achieving effective and successful organizational change when they consider the needs of different organizational groups (Jones et al. 2008).

To change communication practices within a firm, you as a manager will need to do the following (Suchan 2006):

- Learn about the people who will be making the change and decide what the triggers are that will make those people trust you and cooperate with the change.
- Describe the change in a broad way and what you see the change achieving.
- Use dialog to help coach changes in cognitive knowledge to develop new knowledge structures.
- Use training and feedback often to develop the new communication skills that you desire.
- Support for the changes by assuring that all organizational systems are aligned.

Quadrant 1:	Quadrant 2:
Is when the employees find out about the news and want information.	Is when the news becomes real and the employees need support.

Change curve communication

Quadrant 3:	Quadrant 4:
Is where employees begin to focus on the future and need a vision.	Employees have accepted the changes and see themselves as part of the goal and part of the team that will make the change.
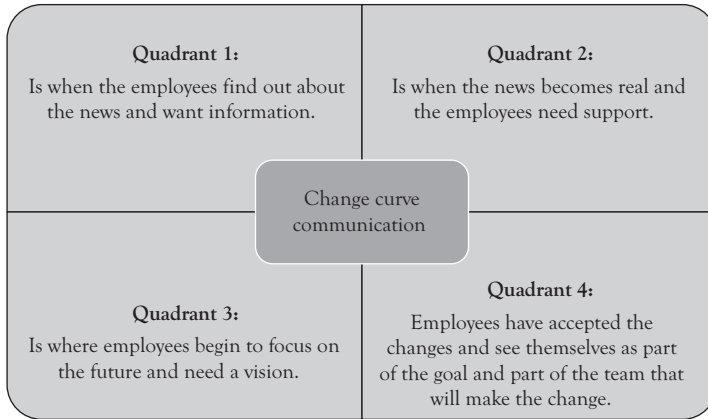
Figure 10.2 Wiggin's change curve communication quadrants

A change communication model developed by Wiggins for use in her communication consulting business is illustrated in Figure 10.2 (Wiggins 2008).

As shown in Figure 10.2, employees demand for information changes over time.

- In the first phase (quadrant 1), employees find out about the news and want information. This is the time when holding town halls and Q & A sessions at multiple locations using video conferencing would be useful. It is difficult at this time for employees to hear both what management is saying and to listen to their own inner voices with such questions as "Will I lose my job? I have a mortgage!" and so forth.
- In the second phase (quadrant 2), the news becomes real and the employees need support. Management should concentrate on individuals and small groups to make sure the changes and their impact are understood. Venting is important during this time period, so email back to managers, scrawl walls, egg timers, or drawings of bubble people can help employees relieve stress.
- In the third phase (quadrant 3), employees begin to focus on the future and need a vision. Long-term and short-term

goals need to be made with the input of all employees. Management needs to be communicating about the future and employee involvement. Communication interventions should be steady with good information and frequent progress reports, which serve to squelch the rumor mill. Use communication circles to discuss rumors, news stories, and anything else the employees have heard. Basically, stop the rumor mill.

- In the fourth phase (quadrant 4), employees will ideally have accepted the changes and now see themselves as part of the goal and part of the team that will make the change. Strategies in phase four are unique: management should continue the strategies used in the third phase; however, receptivity and acceptance of the change agenda are assumed in phase four. Managers need to communicate about the future and employee involvement. Communication interventions should be steady with good information and progress reports.

As a manager, you will have to provide employees with a reason to change, and they have to believe that the organization truly wants change. If employees believe this is merely another fly-by-night idea, they will not give it credence and will not support it.

Dislodging Ingrained Practices

An example of an ingrained practice was a situation in which a governor of Michigan had distributed information on a study of the volumes of material in filing cabinets in the various state offices, and the fact that much of the information had not been used for a long time. The governor was concerned because office floor space was much more expensive than storage floor space. All offices were instructed to box up old files and send them to the storage facility. One manager was extremely upset with the request, and he would not take part in determining the materials that should be stored. The manager's employees followed the guidelines and emptied six legal filing cabinets in just one department

office. The manager did adjust eventually and of course did not miss any of the materials that were moved. This story illustrates that people require adequate time to adapt to change.

Changing how we communicate is often part of changing a corporation. Altering the way workers express their ideas in writing and speaking is challenging at best. Expect questions (and complaints) while change to the new standards is taking place, and employees get adjusted to new writing and speaking styles, designs, and message strategies in due time. Standardized communication patterns are important to an organization; however, it takes time to make changes to them. The more overlap between the new communication structures and the old, the easier it will be to make the change.

Cognitive underpinnings for communication strategies that are too simplistic can lead to dysfunctional communication practices and habits, such as documents that are not reader focused in style, organization, or tone; lack of appropriate media (channel) choice; communication distortion caused by too many organizational layers; and not knowing the appropriate feedback channel.

Changes in cognitive underpinnings, organizational performance, and professional self-worth may be necessary to get the message across. Items that can cause inertia to changing the communication in the organization include past and current successes, plentiful resources, systems and structures that are so intertwined that it is difficult to focus, inefficient external feedback loops, and negative information from customers and external stakeholders that may be ignored (Suchan 2006).

Demands, Perceptions, and Expectations

Communication makes demands and creates expectations because communication and information are different, and largely opposite, yet, interdependent. According to Peter Drucker, managers must talk to recipients in their own language or in their own terms; that is, one has to use a carpenter's metaphors when talking to carpenters.

Information and communication differ—information is logic and communication is perception. Information is formal, has no meaning, and is impersonal. On the other hand, communication is interpersonal.

Information becomes communication when there is shared meaning, thus, giving shared experiences primacy over logic (Drucker 1974).

Managers leading the change process need to understand that effective managerial communication is associated with less cynicism, fewer harsh feelings, and fewer negative employee perceptions. Direct supervisors have historically been the preferred sources of implementation-related and job-relevant information sharing during change; while senior managers have historically provided avenues for strategic information to be shared throughout the organization.

Change Makes Demands

Changing the way an organization communicates or using communication to change an organization is not easy. Organizations such as Blockbuster, Borders Books, and Montgomery Ward have gone out of business because they were not able to change rapidly enough. They were not able to motivate stakeholders to do something, become something, or believe something different from the status quo. Generally if changes are needed, the changes must be organizationwide, making demands of all involved, including external stakeholders. Two examples of corporate responses to change are presented in the Window into Practical Reality 10.1.

Window into Practical Reality 10.1

The change decision outcomes for two of America's top companies

IBM was a very successful mainframe computer company from the 1950s through the 1980s. Then desktop computers hit the market. IBM was able to use communication to change what the company's business was all about and find success in the PC market. Then just a few years ago, IBM decided to exit the PC business. IBM still sells hardware and software, but they also do a lot of consulting with companies on how to make their businesses more productive through the use of software, hardware, and systems solutions. IBM has effectively

ridden the wave of change in the computer technology industry for more than six decades.

General Motors (GM) has not been so successful in weathering change. In 2009, GM took bailout money from the federal government, rather than go through bankruptcy proceedings. For years, GM had yielded to union demands related to retirement, salary, and fringe benefits. As a result, the cost of producing a car in the United States became much higher than in China. While GM has been very successful in China and some other countries, it has lost market share to auto imports in the United States.

If you revisit the situation with GM, you can see how efforts to change can be counteracted by inertia. Change involves five stages: (1) a trigger that is linked with a strategic intent, (2) framed change within the goals to be achieved, (3) dialog to help employees understand and use the change, (4) training programs with feedback to develop the new communication skills, and (5) organizational systems that are aligned in support of the communication changes (Suchan 2006).

Selling individuals on change requires considerable persuasion. That often means meeting one-on-one with those that can help promulgate change, and larger scale meetings with all of the employees. The use of jamming (technology-assisted collaboration) helped IBM make the changes because it was a familiar and trusted media.

Change Is Perception

U.S. airlines were doing relatively well financially prior to government deregulation in 1978. Following deregulation, however, many have gone bankrupt or have been acquired by other airlines. In an attempt to remain solvent, various airlines have changed their operations and practices. For example, many flight attendants are no longer permanent employees but part-time employees, which means fewer benefits and lower pay. One might question the long-term benefit of this change, in terms of employee morale and passenger satisfaction. Other changes by the airlines have directly impacted the delivery of service to passengers.

Charging for checked baggage is one such example. Charging passengers for checked bags has encouraged them to carry more bags onto crowded planes, thus increasing boarding time and leading to more late takeoffs. Most customers' perceptions based on past experience are that checked bags should be part of the flight price, rather than an add-on expense. Customers' negative reactions and outrage, therefore, should not have been unexpected for airline executives. Automakers have also been known to miss the mark on customer perceptions, as described in the Window into Practical Reality 10.2.

Window into Practical Reality 10.2

When Asking for $25 Billion in Handouts, Don't Fly There in Corporate Jets.

On November 18, 2008, three auto manufacturing executives went to Washington D.C. to beg for relief. Their message fell on deaf ears. Why? The imagery their actions invoked was similar to a bum wearing a tuxedo on the corner of Fifth Avenue in New York City while begging for a dollar. Members of Congress and the American people did not appreciate the show of extravagance at the same time they were begging for money.

CEOs of the big three automakers created a flurry of criticism when they flew to the nation's capital on three separate, private, luxurious jets to make their case to Congress that the auto industry was running out of cash and needed $25 billion in taxpayer money to avoid bankruptcy. Had all three CEOs—Rick Wagoner of GM, Alan Mulally of Ford, and Robert Nardelli of Chrysler—known that actions form a message and set the tone for the communications that follow they may have thought twice about "exercising their perks" by flying in separate corporate jets to D.C. Perhaps they might have been able to anticipate what disdain their actions would arouse from Congress and U.S. taxpayers.

ABC reported that "Wagoner flew in GM's $36 million luxury aircraft to tell members of Congress that the company is burning through cash, while asking for $10 to $12 billion for GM alone"

(Ross and Rhee 2008). Spending $20,000 on a roundtrip flight to ask for a handout illustrates well that what we do, as well as how we do it communicates powerful information to the observer. Oftentimes, the observer's perceptions mean more than the communicator's actions. In hindsight, the three airline CEOs certainly would not have flown to DC in separate jets to beg for relief!

Many doubt the wisdom of changes the airlines have made in recent years. Sagging employ morale resulting from low wages and benefits impacts interaction with customers. Additionally, passenger perception of the unfairness of add-on fees has led to additional problems for the airlines. As a manager, you will need to consider every employee, customer, and stakeholder when communicating organizational change.

Change Is Expectation

Top-down communication provides subordinate with information needed for understanding. Upper management initiates the change communication process at all levels. When a union is involved, the company should bring them into the change process early on. If the union does not buy in, the organization will have workers who will not buy into the change. In many cases, unions and their members have good reasons to resist proposed change. It may mean the company is replacing jobs with robots or shifting operations overseas. While such cost-savings measures may make sense to the firm, it is hard to convince displaced workers that they are improvements. How is it an improvement if they are losing their positions? Do managers know what the union is expecting to see and hear?

One of the most important skills you can apply as a manager seeking to bring about change is the ability to recognize the uncertainty that your people are experiencing and understand it from their perspective. In times of uncertainty, rumors begin to spread quickly through the grapevine and misinformation abounds. Be sure all employees are receiving the same message during times of change. Formal and informal communication controls need to be in place to control the rumor mill. Because most rumors start because of a vacuum of information from management, it

is better to provide more information rather than too little. A no comment management policy simply spurs the rumor mill on faster! Another important point to remember is that the more employees are involved in solving the problems associated with the change, the less disenfranchised the employees will feel and the more productive your organization will be. If you do not know what is going to happen, say that and ask if the employees would like to work on a solution. Window into Practical Reality 10.3 illustrates how change communication can build expectation.

Window into Practical Reality 10.3

Garnering Trust at FedEx by Communicating Expectations

FedEx has gone through numerous changes since its inception. One has been to become a technologically driven company; another was to change from air freight to an air and truck freight corporation. The technological aspect of the company has grown and serves the organization globally. But as the company changed, the types of employees needed changed, as well as where they were needed. To make room for new employees with the functional talents that were needed, the company allowed existing employees to take early retirement. The first round of retirements did not take into account that the company would lose some employees whose talents were sorely needed. At the time of the second retirement incentive, the company limited the number and types of workers who could take advantage of early retirement.

At another point in FedEx history, the pilots from Flying Tiger, who FedEx had bought out, wanted to organize with a union because Flying Tiger had been a union company. Fred Smith, CEO, wrote a letter to the pilots that he would make it a truck freight corporation if they carried through with their plans. FedEx indeed ships a lot of freight today by truck. One wonders if FedEx would have ever become a trucking company at all if the Flying Tigers had not tried to unionize. When the needs of a company change, the company must think through how to bring about the necessary changes. It is also interesting to note that UPS, which was initially a trucking company,

now also uses planes. Competition generally calls for companies in the same industry to respond to changes made by their competition. What industry changes can you think of that started with one company and led to other companies in the industry following suit?

Change Channel Choices

The type of communication channel chosen by a leader for sharing messages is an important component in the change communication process. Sending an email to all personnel with an attachment may not get the workforce sufficiently motivated. However, selling the line managers on the program and having them present it to their workers may work better in some situations; while, holding a series of small meetings with subsets of the workforce, may be preferred in other cases. Whatever the selected channel, allowing employees to have input as the change develops is essential to their buying into the changes. Research shows that two of three change initiatives fail due to the failure to present them properly to the people who have the power to make the change happen.

Four key factors in the change communication process are (1) duration, (2) integrity, (3) commitment, and (4) effort. *Duration* is the time it will take to implement the change and the frequency of reviews while the process is going on. *Integrity* involves choosing the correct people to carry out the change. *Commitment* is the dedication of top management and employees affected by the change to the enactment of the change. Finally, *effort* refers to the amount of time and energy over the normal work that will be required to make the initiative happen effectively.

The role of the CEO in both profit and nonprofit organizations in bringing about the desired change is to determine both the direction and strategy for change. Strategic management is a dynamic process that over time determines the long-run performance of an organization. The concept of hierarchy of goals theorizes that strategic-level goal achievement is dependent upon first achieving both operational and tactical-level goals, respectively. According to Edwards, CEOs can only implement a strategy for change with a dependency upon aligning organizational parameters properly at the system level. System-level parameters include

organizational structure, culture, training and development, recruitment and hiring, resource allocation, leadership, information systems, reward systems, coordination mechanisms, and control systems (Edwards 2000).

Managers throughout the organization must talk the talk, and walk the walk if they want the players to make the change. Managers must assure the congruency of the information broadcast through the formal channels of the organization and the information distributed through the informal channels. It is important that the management team at all levels spend less time writing emails and texting, and spend more time developing relationships with their employees by sharing stories of what is happening in the organization, thus developing trust. Some organizations have actually set aside specified days when employees have to communicate with one another in ways other than by emails and text messages.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) argue that leaders shape social architecture (organizational culture) by managing meaning through communication. Architects design things that engineers then build. Using this type of simile, executives can apply their leadership to build different types of organizational culture or social architecture. Universities or engineering firms typically use the *collegial style,* with the dominant emphasis on consensus, peer-group membership, and teamwork. *Personalistic style emerges when a* founder's personality personifies the organization, for example Fred Smith at FedEx. With this style, the locus of decision making is within a given individual. The *formalistic style* is at play in government bureaucracy or other hierarchical organizations that drive decisions through explicit rules and policies. Each of these styles is characterized by elements that define an organization's social architecture.

Skilled leaders can manage the meaning of communication by changing people through activities such as sharing a vision by analogy, metaphor, or vivid illustration and using deeply textured, rich agendas. Their success is built on the capacity to transmit image-compelling ideas to the organizational members to work toward; effective leaders induce enthusiasm and commitment in others, build trust, and foster positive emotions through their communication and actions.

Successful leaders know that helping the company's leadership to become better communicators is one of the most valuable legacies organizations can leave. Improving communication skills through training is

about developing a natural, human, and authentic style. It is about being able to connect with and interest other people. Window into Practical Reality 10.4 provides an example of how presidential rhetoric was used to evoke change in a nation.

Window into Practical Reality 10.4

President Reagan Evokes Change through Powerful Rhetoric

Former U.S. president Ronald Reagan provides a fascinating example of rhetorical power. Before his election as president, he was an actor by trade and served as governor of the State of California. His presidency saw the fall of the Berlin Wall, the fall of communism in Russia, and the challenge of the Iran hostage situation. Possessing charm and charisma, he was viewed by many as a very effective communicator who knew how to use empathy to develop strong persuasion. He also knew how to surround himself with talented people, who he trusted to do their jobs.

Remember that as an engaging leader, you will need to be authentic and honest in your communication. Jargon-filled corporate language does not effectively impact employees, and the most convenient channel is not necessarily the most effective. Dewhurst and Fitzpatrick (2007) state that when communicating for change, you should be able to answer the following questions before you form your message:

- Why am I communicating?
- What my team will think?
- What do I want to say?
- What is the best way to say it?

With your answers determined, you will be ready to say what you need to say in the best way possible. Finally, you will want to ask yourself if your communication was successful.

Summary

Effective managers recognize that the recipient's experience shapes the reality of what they see and hear. If managers are to successfully initiate change, they need to mesh the employee communication change program with the functional areas of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. Five essential actions for an effective strategic communication change program include (1) forming a strategic communication team (SCT); (2) assessing current communication practices; (3) conducting cascading vision, strategy, and job redefinition workshops; (4) monitoring the results; and (5) tie the change communication strategy into the management functions across the management tiers with feedback and feed-forward.

Successfully leading change can include understanding three styles of social architecture: (1) collegial—universities, engineering firms, (2) personalistic—a founder's personality personifies the organization, and (3) formalistic—explicit rules. Leaders manage meaning through vivid and lively communicative actions, and they talk to recipients in their own language and in their own terms.

Managers leading a change program will need to understand that sufficient managerial communication is associated with less cynicism, harsh feelings, and negative employee perceptions. Direct supervisors are the preferred sources of implementation-related and job-relevant information during change, while senior management provides strategic information.

CHAPTER 11

Crisis Communication

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. define crisis communication;
2. identify causes of crises and lessons for managing crises;
3. apply the uses of argument in crises;
4. discuss the dangers of managers' talking off the cuff;
5. discuss the implications of management failure to identify public sentiment;
6. explain ways in which managers fail to unify empathy.

Introduction

Crises tend to take the form of natural disasters; problems with products or services; issues with personnel, political, or social upheavals; or ethical breaches. Regardless of the root cause, the organization has to work its way out of the crisis successfully if it is to survive. The terror attack of September 11, 2001, tested companies housed in the New York Twin Towers on their responsiveness to a crisis. Fortunately, many of those companies had crisis management plans.

Crisis by definition is a turning point, with momentum heading toward a debacle. Fink (1986) describes this turning point from a business-oriented point of view. He argues any *prodromal*, or a precursor situation runs the risk of: (1) escalating emotions, (2) drawing harsh media or government scrutiny, (3) disrupting daily business operations, (4) tarnishing the business's image or the image of its executives, or (5) causing profits to plummet.

Crisis communication occurs when stakeholders look at the organization in crisis to determine if they are victims, if the crisis was accidental, or if the crisis was preventable (Coombs 2007), and then how management responds to the crisis variables. When a crisis happens, people often base their responses on emotion, on who is responsible for the crisis, history of responsible parties, and the reputation of those responsible. If stakeholders believe the organization caused the crisis, they will hold the organization and its management responsible. If the firm has had prior crises, stakeholders tend to be unsympathetic. If the firm has a good reputation, it may be given more leeway to make things right.

Meyers and Holusha's (1986) nine types of crises are shown in Table 11.1, contrasted with nine lessons of managing crises offered by Witt and Morgan (2002).

Meyers and Holusha's advice is focused more on crises affecting larger firms, based on Meyers extensive experience as Chairman of American Motors. On the other hand, Witt and Morgan's examples are derived from experiences with both small and large companies. Some similarities can be noted, however, in the two bodies of thought concerning crisis management.

Companies in crisis must quickly find out how much the crisis has hurt their constituents and consequently their organization. They must efficiently correct the problem and calculate how much they are willing to pay or will have to pay to make things right with stakeholders. If the management team or part of the management team is a part of the problem, management needs to swiftly make changes. Advice to managers involved in a crisis response includes these steps:

- Figure out how to rectify the problem without having to go out of business.
- Try to protect your stakeholders.
- Negotiate from strength as much as possible. Go for a win–win outcome, but be careful about emotions getting in the way. Find people who can understand and turn the situation around.
- Always look at all of your options and make new plans for the future.

Table 11.1 Nine types of crises and nine lessons for managing crises

Meyers and Holusha's (1986) nine types of crises	Witt and Morgan's (2002) nine lessons for managing crises
Public perception: Quickly take charge, pinpoint the perception problem, get another opinion, construct your best case; cage your lawyers; communicate, establish a spokesperson, accommodate the media; tell your story, fix the problem, and get Satan behind you!	**Find your roots:** Prepare a triage plan based on your knowledge of your organization's values.
Sudden market shift: Quiz your customers, find the problem, and respond.	**Market the storm:** Early warning systems and effective communication networks should be set-up immediately.
Product failure: Adjust production; revise the numbers, fix the problem, and return.	**A river's gonna go where a river's gonna go:** Assess the consequences of walking away from recurring crises.
Top management succession: Smoke out the hidden agenda, assess your options, shelve the boss, announce the successor, observe and support the successor, and enforce the exit.	**Reconsider the three pigs:** Do not trigger a crisis by the changes you make in projects and priorities.
Cash: Take control of the cash, listen hard, stop the hemorrhaging, find the positive, make a plan, raise new cash, reestablish credibility, improve attitudes, and show a profit.	**Twine is stronger than string:** Clients, suppliers, partners, and stakeholders hit by the crisis need synergy identifiers.
Industrial relations: Size up the climate, open up dialog, isolate the essentials, construct an offer, resume negotiations, reach agreement, and prepare for the next round.	**Treat the heart without losing your head:** When things are going wrong, the team should be confident and productive.
Hostile takeover: Repel the attacker, assemble your team, activate specialists, consider the offer, reject the offer, inform your public, invoke protection, gather friends, exhaust your attacker, eliminate the attraction, and set up a new defense plan.	**Tear down the stovepipes:** Be sure the lines of reporting are customized for emergencies.
Adverse international events: Understand the causes, determine the gravity, move swiftly, take the long look, be patient, and return to the market	**A lightning rod works both ways:** Find good people with whom you can delegate duties.
Regulation and deregulation: Assess the changed climate, co-opt the power spots, exploit the inevitable, change vigorously, and settle down for tomorrow.	**You are stronger in the broken places:** The future crisis plan is dependent on collecting knowledge of failures and successes.

The Use of Argument in Crises

As a manager responding to crises, you must persuade stakeholders to advocate what management advocates—an end to the crisis and preservation of the company's good image. When speaking to the public during a crisis, you will need to use techniques of argument effectively, including (1) basic argument, (2) persuasion, (3) syllogism, (4) enthymeme, and (5) Toulmin's model.

To *argue* is to declare. Consequently, a basic argument can be any simple declarative sentence the speaker uses to make a claim that requires proof; for example, Jane has a cute baby; Mark will eventually get cancer because he smokes a pack of cigarettes each day; that quick rabbit will always elude that dumb hound. All the aforementioned declaratives need further proof to convince others to advocate the same sentiment. To *persuade*, moreover, is to convince outside listeners to advocate that which you advocate. The Greek philosopher Aristotle devised methods for testing claims.

The *deductive syllogism* is a logical argument in which primary and secondary premises include all the information (facts or truths) needed to form a necessary logical conclusion. If the primary and secondary premises are true, the conclusion is certain. As can be seen in Figure 11.1, in a deductive syllogism one can argue certainty.

The problem with a deductive syllogism is that in reality rarely do we find ideal situations in which information upon which we draw conclusions is complete.

The *enthymeme* was Aristotle's solution to the problem he recognized with the deductive syllogism: it is not completely realistic because people do not tend to argue that way. Deductive conclusions require perfect information in the premises, which rarely exists in real life. The

Deductive argument	Primary premise:	*All men will age and die.*
	Secondary premise:	*George is a man.*
	Conclusion:	*George will age and die.*
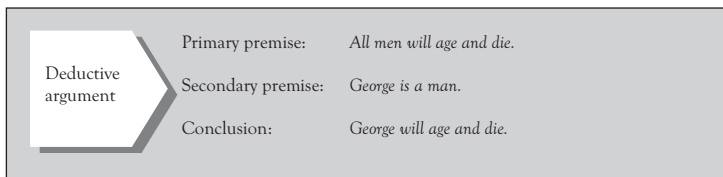
Figure 11.1 The deductive syllogism

enthymeme is a form of *inductive syllogism* in which the premises include "visible links," and "missing links" are provided by the audience of outside listeners. The conclusion, therefore, is only probable and can never be certain. The assumption is that audiences are reasonable and thus worthy to supply the missing links of the argument (see Aristotle, Rhetoric, I, 1-2). In more modern terms, audiences connect the dots.

The links between the data and claim are easily broken in the enthymeme shown in Figure 11.2.

To invalidate that claim, all we need is a counter example or proof to the contrary. For example, if we can establish that Frank, Laura's husband, took the umbrella five minutes earlier than when Laura left for work, the conclusion is invalid. Therefore, the illustrated enthymeme allows one to argue inductively with merely probable conclusions.

Toulmin (1969) found the enthymeme to be lacking in several important ways and created an extension of the argument that differs from Aristotle's enthymeme. Toulmin considers reservations or counter arguments contrary to the advocate's claims. Not all outside listeners will be in favor of the advocate's argument. In some cases, audiences will fill in the missing links to show proof to the contrary of the argument—the media or government can be counted on to provide this type of rebuttal. While Aristotle's enthymeme did not account for this consideration, Toulmin developed a way to incorporate these elements into an inductive argument.

Let us examine a declarative sentence made by the president of a hypothetical company—XYZ—that is in crisis communication mode. It has been accused of illegal dumping of a banned toxin. The main elements of the Toulmin model are (d) data, the facts of the argument; (q) a qualifier,
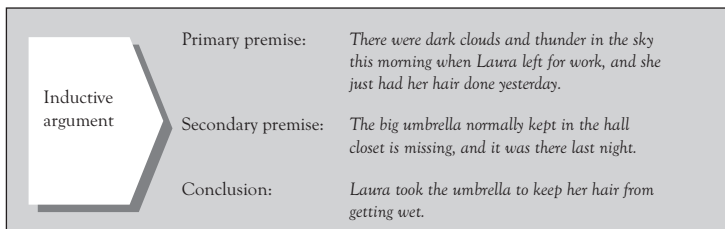
Figure 11.2 The enthymeme or inductive syllogism

which is an estimate of the degree of certainty attributed to a claim; (c) claims, which are conclusions to be established; (w) warrants, which are general statements authorizing the inductive leap from data to claim; (b) backing, which is more specific information that helps support the warrant; and (r) reservation, which is a possible exception to a claim or warrant (Sproule 1980). The main line of proof in the Toulmin model is derived from data, warrants, and qualifiers. What is different in the Toulmin model from Aristotle's enthymeme is the additional attention given to the links between the data and claim. Figure 11.3 illustrates Toulmin's extended argument.

In Figure 11.3, the invalidation of the president's conclusion is by the reservation argument. If the reservation argument is found to be true, notice how the reservation weakens both the president's warrant (a nearly perfect Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] record) and his backing (polluting risks the company's reputation). In a crisis, managers are attempting to influence outside listeners, though journalists' statements or testimony from whistleblowers can break the links between data and claims made by leaders of organizations under fire. Reservations will likely come from intense media and government scrutiny. During a crisis, managers should assume the public is a group of outside listeners who are
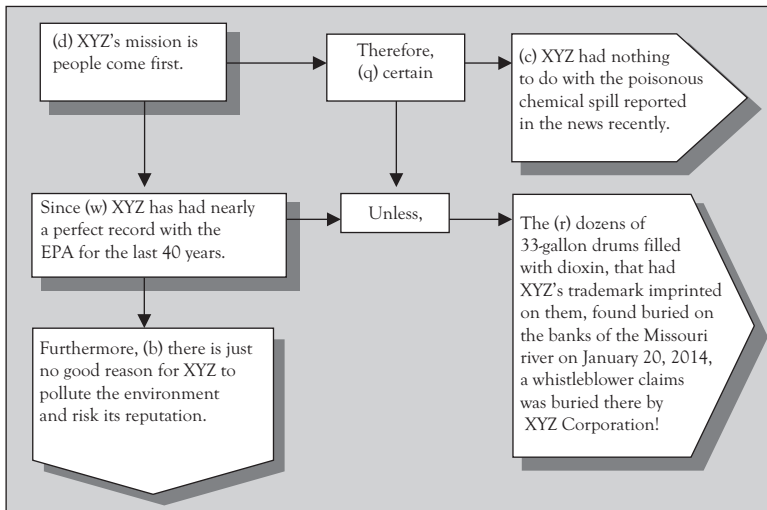
Figure 11.3 The Toulmin model of an extended argument

not themselves advocates of the company's side. Crisis communication arguments, therefore, require managers to prove their claims.

Crisis Communication Mistakes

People who run large companies are intelligent people. Nevertheless, these intelligent people often make avoidable common mistakes when crises occur. Common mistakes in crisis communication include: (1) talking off the cuff to the media, (2) failing to identify the public's sentiment, and (3) failing to unify empathy.

Talking Off the Cuff to the Media

Managers often are not poised to be proactive, but are rather reactive after being shocked into response by the tumult of a crisis. Even though history has shown that off-the-cuff speaking is often detrimental during a crisis, managers continue to make such mistakes when talking to journalists (Hoffman and Moyer 2007). Because of the replaying of management errors by intense media attention and government scrutiny, the public typically offers little sympathy and even harsh rebuke. Eventually, managers who make mistakes in speaking off the cuff lose rhetorical credibility. When this happens, the crisis takes a turn for the worst. Window into Practical Reality 11.1 shares an example of how a British Petroleum executive's off-the-cuff remarks made the BP crisis worse.

Window into Practical Reality 11.1

CEO Tony Hayward's Comments to the Media

Following the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2011, CEO Tony Hayward's comments to the media escalated emotions, drew harsh media response, and intensified government scrutiny. The result was further disruption in BP's daily business operations, a tarnished personal and company image, and a serious plunge in BP's stock prices. Hayward's slip-of-the-lip, off-the-cuff conversation caused enormous negative publicity for BP. When he uttered the words "There's no one

who wants this thing over more than I do, you know, I'd like my life back" during the worst oil-related off-shore environmental disaster in American history, a domino effect was triggered leading to his ouster as BP's CEO. His ouster was not surprising. According to a 2006 study by the Hill and Knowleton public relations firm, 85 percent of those surveyed said that a CEO should leave the company after engaging in behavior that has a negative impact on the company's reputation (Valentine 2007).

CEO Hayward failed to acknowledge that the American public had been bombarded by the media coverage of the tragedy and devastation of the oil spill. While eleven people had lost their lives and enormous damage had been done to the ecosystem and to the livelihoods of thousands, his utterance signaled to the public that Hayward clearly did not understand the depth of pain BP had caused the people in the Gulf region.

Failing to grasp the magnitude of the public's sentiment is a pitfall for many executives reacting to a crisis-turned mega-tsunami. Following Hayward's calloused statement, he was demonized by the American public.

When managers recognize that a negative turning point has occurred, it is time for them to undertake targeted internal and external communication, before a debacle can occur. When managers make mistakes talking to journalists before a strategy is in place, they inadvertently increase the risk that a prodromal crisis will occur, with even more devastating consequences.

Failing to Identify the Public's Sentiment

The public's receptivity to managerial arguments hinges on how management responds in an attempt to influence sentiment, while at the same time resolving the crisis. As a manager, it is important that you understand how to structure messages to manage crises from both the internal and the external perspectives. When an organization is in crisis mode, it is easy for managers to forget that internal communications can be as important as external communications. Managerial crisis communication

fails most often when managers misconstrue the public's true sentiment surrounding a crisis. Managers fail to influence outside listeners—the public—when they do not understand the use of argument in crisis situations. Window into Practical Reality 11.2 shares an example of football star Michael Vick's interview with the media which ended in disaster for the athlete.

Window into Practical Reality 11.2

Underestimating the Passion People Have for Their Pets

On April 2007, 51 pit bulls were seized from Michael Vick's compound, and the star was charged with operating an illegal dog fighting operation. Although Michael Vick had been picked first in the NFL draft in 2001, his athletic stardom did little to diminish the outcry from the public once they learned of the extent of cruelty shown to the animals. Vick made public denials to the press and appeared to lack understanding of the seriousness of his personal crisis. Vick was under the faulty impression that his celebrity status might save him from public outcry for justice for the dogs. Although Michael Vick served some jail time over the crime, he signed in a lucrative six-year contract with the Philadelphia Eagles in 2011 worth $100 million and is back in the NFL (Gorant 2008).

Do you suppose that Mr. Vick is wiser and more keen to public response? How important is Vick's management team in gauging public sentiment?

Public officials from the local to the federal levels were held in disdain by the American public due to their actions in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The media largely drives what people think, even when supporting facts are lacking. Illustrating this phenomenon are the media reports of New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin stating that someone had allegedly fired on a rescue helicopter; while not proven, the report stopped rescue attempts for many hours (Garnett and Kouzmin 2007).

President George W. Bush received his share of the public's ire in regard to his handling of relief efforts following Katrina. When President Bush prematurely praised the then Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) director Michael Brown by saying, "Brownie, you're doing a heck-of-a-job," the casual sounding statement started a domino effect of negative response. The public's view was that he appeared disconnected from the magnitude of the Hurricane Katrina disaster. President Bush's declaration that Michael Brown was "doing a heck-of-a-job" failed to resonate well with outside listeners who saw so much human suffering continuing.

President Bush describes in his memoirs that one of the worst days in his presidency was when he heard hip-hop star Kanye West tell journalists, during the height of the Katrina disaster that "George Bush doesn't care about Black people." Although West never directly called Bush a racist, Bush and many others interpreted West's argument to mean just that.

In commenting on the Hurricane Katrina disaster, Cole and Fellows (2008) noted that when certain types of communications fail and a crisis has become chronic, the situation evolves into a mega-tsunami. They drew several conclusions for responding effectively to a crisis: (1) effective care communication is of little value if the subsequent actions and crisis messages are inadequate, (2) message preparation before the crisis is essential, (3) messages must be credible to their recipient audiences, and (4) adaptation for ethnicity, class, gender, and similar demographic characteristics must occur if risk communication messages are to be effective. They concluded that during the Hurricane Katrina disaster, message clarity was frequently lacking, and those speaking with journalists often lacked sufficient credibility. Post Katrina interviews by company spokespersons and government officials illustrate a classic failure to properly adapt to critical audiences, resulting in overall ineffective crisis communication.

A good example of responding appropriately to the public's sentiment occurred when the Obama-appointed Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Tom Vilsack, had to eat-crow over the Shirley Sherrod matter. Public officials had accused Sherrod of being racist, and Vilsack terminated her employment with the USDA

without legal due process. It was learned that the charge was based on misinformation stemming from a two-minute excerpt of a speech Sherrod had delivered nearly 20 years earlier. Vilsack immediately publically apologized to Sherrod and offered her job back. His actions were possibly driven by his own moral fortitude, but certainly by his sensitivity to the public's sentiment. The public outcry was calmed when Vilsack (1) admitted fault, (2) acknowledged the truth, and (3) publically apologized. President Obama also made it public knowledge that he had called Sherrod and apologized.

The prodromal crisis surge in the Sherrod case never did evolve into a mega-tsunami because of strategic actions taken by Vilsack and Obama. Argenti and Forman (2002) argue that a crisis has the elements of high-drama and catharsis, craved by journalists and readers alike. If Sherrod had been resolute in her anger toward the two government officials who assumed responsibility for her wrongful termination, it is possible the public's ire would have turned on her for being unreasonable.

Failing to Unify Empathy

The best way to avoid being insensitive during a crisis is to refocus managerial thinking into collective empathy. *Empathy* is having a direct emotional connection to the feelings and experiences of others' suffering. Every single manager in the organization should read and understand the crisis plan, and general agreement should be reached among them about the internal perspective of the public's sentiment (Wester 2009). Executives must make an attempt to genuinely feel a personal consequence for the problems their firm is associated with causing. Being empathetic means investigating and relating to hurt with a deeper understanding of those who are hurting, regardless of culpability. It is likely BP CEO Hayward never would have uttered those infamous words had he and his team of managers huddled around a singular message of empathy for the families of the 11 people who died on the drilling platform.

Window into Practical Reality 11.3 provides an example of how the public's distraction from a true crisis greatly benefitted Australian American business magnate Rupert Murdoch.

Window into Practical Reality 11.3

Murdock, a Pie and What a Wife!

In July 2011, media mogul Rupert Murdoch, faced allegations that his companies, including the *News of the World*, owned by News Corporation, had been regularly hacking the phones of celebrities, royalty, and public citizens. He faced police and government investigations into bribery and corruption by the British government and FBI investigations. The embattled Rupert Murdoch, speaking before the British Parliament in July 2011, in hearings before the House of Commons Culture Committee, was protected by his wife and an attorney who apparently blocked the shot of a shaving-cream-pie-wielding man, set on humiliating the media mogul.

Ineffective internal communication is credited with contributing to the scandal taking place at *News of the World*. Rebekah Brooks, News International CEO and *News of the World* editor, should have had a better handle on directing the internal crisis communications taking place which might have prevented Murdock's embarrassment (Rupert 2011). The public's empathy, however, turned in Murdoch's favor when an opponent's attempt to hit him with a pie was thwarted by his apparently brave wife. After the incident, the fervor surrounding the *News of the World* scandal was reduced greatly.

The formulation of an effective internal communication strategy is essential to survival of an organizational crisis. Figure 11.4 shows four major areas that management should consider as a process when developing an internal communication strategy, each of which requires careful thought and planning.

Figure 11.5 shows four communication techniques needed while implementing the strategy (Gasser 1989).

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of internal communications, an integrated approach to internal communication is beneficial to maintain crucial knowledge sharing between the organization units. An integrated perspective draws from the domains of business, management,
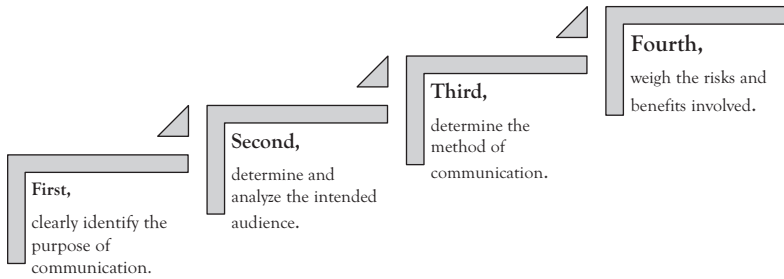
Figure 11.4 Four-step process for an internal communication strategy
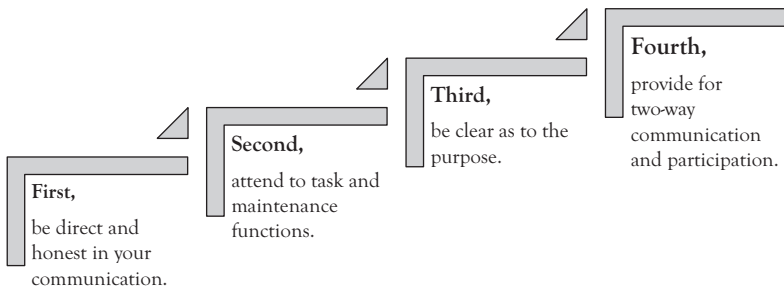
Figure 11.5 Four communication techniques while implementing strategy

corporate, and organizational communications. Both practical and theoretical knowledge is essential, as well as understanding the types of formal and informal communications taking place within the organization (Kalla 2005).

CEOs should not count on organizational spokespersons to single-handedly quash negative publicity. When Caliero et al. (2009) examined the image repair tactics of 17 fraud-related and mismanaged crises, they found that news releases posted on organizations' websites were effective in responding to media news reports of the crises, thus giving organizations an opportunity to tell their sides of the stories.

Risk communication can be seen as a sister process to crisis communication, and achieving goals for both processes is dependent on a well-written risk and crisis communication plan (Ferrante 2010). Additionally, businesses that have engaged in socially responsible rhetoric appear better

able to use this social responsibility history to their advantage. Companies with an established reputation for corporate social responsibility (CSR) have a better chance of integrating the crisis communication message aspects of their CSR message, and the public better receives this integration than companies that do not have an established record of CSR. Moreover, the length of a company's involvement in CSR matters when it uses CSR claims during crisis communication to counter negative publicity. It also appears religion, similarity, and sensitivity impact the repair and rebuilding of the public's perception in crisis management (Legg 2009; Heath et al. 2009).

Crisis management plans should address how the organization will control the situation, gather information quickly, set up a centralized crisis management center, communicate early and often to the different constituents, and use the media to help, all while keeping the business operating. The plan should also address how to include local first-response teams.

Steps for maintaining continual back-up of all IT and communications systems in an offsite location must be part of the comprehensive crisis management plan. When the Twin Towers went down, as well as in Hurricane Katrina, what saved many of the affected companies were their offsite back-up systems. Using the web to get accurate information to the public as soon as possible is also a good idea. Some of the worst things a company can do during a crisis are pretending nothing is going on, letting your reputation take care of the situation, and treating the media as the enemy. Other response errors include using language the stakeholders do not understand and addressing issues only and not feelings. While prompt response is desirable, an organization should avoid guessing at the damages and wait for factual information. Probably the two most deadly errors an organization can make in a crisis are continuing to do the same thing when it is not working and being reactive rather than proactive in their response (Bernstein 2004).

The prepared organization will develop a crisis communication plan, assemble a crisis team, and go through mock crisis situations that could happen to the firm. The team, which should include members from all of the areas of the firm, should be tested in mock crisis situations to see how they would respond. As a manager, you may find that certain individuals are not good at being on the firing line during a crisis and must

be replaced. Once your plan is in place, review it at least yearly to be sure that the key people are still in place and that nothing major has changed. Every couple of years, do another mock simulation, including constituents that the firm may have to work with such as wholesalers, retailers, employees, shareholders, legal counsel, the public, the media, and others impacted by the crisis. Being prepared for the crisis is in itself important; furthermore, being prepared to reestablish your firm's reputation in the minds of the constituents after the crisis has passed is even more important. Having good media relationships prior to a crisis can be helpful when a crisis does happen.

As presented in Window into Practical Reality 11.4, the *Gettysburg Address* can be viewed as a two-minute crisis management speech that served two purposes: honoring fallen heroes and appealing to the citizenry that they should continue support for fighting the Civil War.

Window into Practical Reality 11.4

President Abraham Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* in *Pennsylvania, November 19, 1863*

(a) *Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent*, a new nation, (b) *conceived in liberty*, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. (c) *Now we are engaged in a great civil war*, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense, (d) *we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate— we cannot hallow*—this ground.

The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to

the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—(e) *that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.*

Lincoln used allusion, litotes, tautology, metaphor, and impassioned hyperbole to forcefully make his memorable points. *Allusion* is defined as a reference to an historical event. A *metaphor* compares by referring to one thing as another. A *litotes* states the obvious as if denying its opposite or makes a deliberate understatement of the factual happenings. *Tautology* is the repetitious use of a word or phrase in close succession, and an *impassioned hyperbole* is a rhetorical exaggeration used to heighten emotional meaning. Can you think of other speeches in which these techniques were used to influence the audience positively?

President Abraham Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* can be described as his recovery speech for the American Civil War. With the creative use of figures of speech (words that heighten rhetorical effect), Lincoln honored in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the 45,000 dead while at the same time attempted to persuade the North to continue on with a very unpopular war. Lincoln used language devices to spark such visual clarity in the minds of his hearers that it became impossible for them to deny the truth value of his declarative sentences. One declarative sentence is sufficient to be an argument and a collection of simple sentences is sufficient to constitute an extended argument. In other words, a great speech is persuasive because it appears to be a collection of undeniable declarative sentences that influences many people, even beyond its immediate end.

Lincoln was able to influence outside listeners through argument. It is apparent that Lincoln also understood the nature of proof-by-example and the importance of figures of speech in argument. Lincoln's planned use of pictorial language is similar to the mental images executives should be attempting to impose on the minds of their hearers during a crisis in order to sway influence to the point of view they advocate. The best way to avoid drab unemotional language is to plan for the use of stylistic touches when talking to journalists.

As unpopular as the Civil War was for Lincoln, with a nation on the brink of collapse, Lincoln was able to use an oratory opportunity to salvage commitment. When he uttered the declarative sentences "… dedicated here to the unfinished work … resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain" these sentences collectively represent what is now an immortal extended argument.

Summary

Crisis from a business-oriented point of view is a negative turning point. Crisis begins with a prodromal situation that runs the risk of (1) escalating emotions, (2) drawing harsh media or government scrutiny, (3) disrupting daily business operations, (4) tarnishing the business's image or the image of its executives, or (5) causing profits to plummet.

The BP oil spill disaster evolved into a much larger crisis because of the various communication mistakes that gave the impression to the public that BP was uncaring and unresponsive. When President Bush used casual language to praise FEMA director Michael Brown's response to Hurricane Katrina, the public's view was that he was disconnected with the magnitude of the disaster.

Managers who make mistakes when speaking to the media run the risk of losing their rhetorical credibility. This fact strikes at the heart of the importance of proper communication techniques in crises situations. Managers who address the public during such crises must not only be armed with facts but also be sure they have correctly identified with the feelings of the people involved and that they adequately project empathy.

USDA secretary Vilsack and President Obama were able to avoid the escalation of a prodromal situation to a full-blown crisis by (1) admitting fault, (2) acknowledging the truth, and (3) publically apologizing.

Abraham Lincoln used various language devices to spark visual clarity in the minds of the listeners and inspire their acceptance of his declarative sentences. Managers engaged in crisis communication can learn valuable lessons from those who have successfully maneuvered through difficult situations by using carefully planned responses and masterfully crafted public messages.

CHAPTER 12

Communication Audits

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. describe the purpose and process of a communication audit;
2. determine appropriate communication audit goals and activities;
3. explain how to conduct reliable and valid communication audits;
4. write an effective communication audit report;
5. explain the strategic implications of communication audit results for goal achievement;
6. identify potential pitfalls of communication audits.

Introduction

Organizations routinely evaluate the effectiveness of programs and employees; however, they rarely evaluate the communication that takes place within the firm. Such audits are seldom done, even though communication networks are the mechanism by which employees receive information as to how to do their jobs. Without good communication practices, firms will be challenged in getting their products to market, making a profit, or keeping their employees. Communication affects the organizational structure and management success of a firm.

A *communication audit* is "a comprehensive and thorough study of communication philosophy, concepts, structure, flow, and practice within an organization" (Emmanuel 1985, 50). A communication audit typically includes an assessment of the quality of communication within an organization, as well as communication goals and activities. The audit can be thought of as a type of test. Different types of communication audits are recognized by the International Communication Association

(ICA). Managers conduct communication audits to discover how information flows, how information gets blocked, and how people perceive and react to the information they receive. The questions asked during a communication audit are critical, as they determine the information we receive. When conducting an audit, caution should be exercised to make sure that the information sought does not mask communication problems that exist.

In this chapter, we will discuss the necessary steps in conducting proper communication audits, which include: (1) defining the communication audit, (2) conducting a reliable and valid communication audit, (3) selecting appropriate communication audit goals and activities, (4) writing a report of the communication audit results, (5) analyzing the strategic implication of audit results on goal achievement, and (6) anticipating the pitfalls of communication audits.

Selecting Audit Methods

The communication audit is a way of gathering data to analyze the communication that takes place within the firm. It provides management with insight as to what is actually happening rather than what they think is happening during communications. The value of communication audits to organizations have been verified in numerous studies. A communication audit should include five processes (Gordon 2001):

- Develop a picture of the communication in the organization including major topics, sources, and channels of communication.
- Look at specific communication tools and describe their value and relevance.
- Determine if employees are receiving messages: downward, upward, horizontally, and externally—whether those experiences are positive or negative.
- Provide information to develop a strategic plan for improving communication quality.
- Provide a process to continually measure communication effectiveness in the organization.

A company must gather the information that will help improve communications within the organization. Once the parameters of the audit have been determined, it is possible to select the correct audit activities and determine who should conduct the communication audit. Should internal or external people do the audit? Employees may share information more truthfully with outsiders. The organization must determine how the information will be gathered in order to get the most accurate information—questionnaire, interviews, communication logs, and such. Employees will need assurance that all information collected will be confidential, and sometimes this is easier done with external auditors. Management should be engaged in the process and willing to make changes that are indicated. If management is not willing to act on the data, then there is no reason to collect it. Careful interpretations and presentation of the findings by the researchers is essential so that managers can weigh results properly.

Reliable and Valid Measures

Communication audits must measure accurately the multidimensional aspects of constructs being measured. A *construct* is a latent (also known as a hidden) variable, and normally measured psychologically. Constructs, moreover, will have one or more dimensions. Dimensions are the independent component parts that when combined are the construct. For example, if you are conducting a communication audit and wish to measure managerial listening skills practiced within an organization as part of your audit, measuring whether managers engage in good or bad listening behaviors would be a hidden variable with two dimensions. A manager's ability to listen well would naturally be the hidden variable of the listening construct. You cannot directly observe whether listening taking place in the head of the manager is good or bad; therefore, the best way for you to understand good and bad managerial listening practices is for you to develop a reliable and valid questionnaire.

A *reliable* measure is one that is trustworthy and consistent and does not show inconsistent degrees or magnitudes with each application—an inch is always an inch regardless of what is being compared. A measure that is *valid* measures what it is purported (designed) to measure. It would

Communication audit goals	C	Information gathering activities
Develop a picture of the communication.	o m m u n i c a t i o n	Determine who should conduct the communication audit.
Look at specific communication tools.		Determine how the information will be gathered.
Determine if employees are receiving messages.		Assure employees all information collected will be confidential.
Provide information to develop a strategic plan.	a u d i t	Engage managers who are willing to make changes.
Continue to measure communication effectiveness.		Guide managers in weighing results through careful interpretation of facts.

Quality of Communication

Figure 12.1 Essential communication audit goals and information-gathering activities

not be valid to measure social drinking, for example, with a questionnaire that you designed specifically to measure managerial listening. Therefore, communication audits must measure multidimensional constructs accurately. Figure 12.1 illustrates the essential goals and the information-gathering activities used in a successful communication audit to assess the quality of communication.

Communication Audit Approaches

The approach used in the communication audit should be selected based upon the outcomes the audit will provide, the process the audit will take, and the perspectives of the multiple stakeholders. Managers may want to improve an aspect of communication or develop an intervention for a problem. They may want to examine and analyze the communication processes that are occurring, or they may want to identify the views of employees concerning communication (Hogard and Ellis 2006).

After determining the communication facets that should be studied, management will need to select the instruments to be used, choose an appropriate research method, collect, and analyze the data. A number of approaches exist for conducting communication audits, which include the use of focus groups, communication logs, direct observation, interviews, surveys, content analysis, skills testing, and blended approaches that use combined methods.

Focus groups consist of members of the organization who are brought together to discuss the organization's communication issues. The data collector may be the group facilitator or another individual designated for that purpose. The researchers compile and compare the information to draw conclusions. In cases where there are large amounts of information involved or many personnel, *communication logs* may be necessary to capture and catalog communication activities. All participating individuals are to be instructed to keep a log, or diary, in which they record meetings, telephone conversations, texts, emails, face-to-face meetings, and any documents that are read. At the conclusion of the designated logging period, the researchers examine and code the diaries and analyze the frequency of various types of communication.

Direct observation involves following a subject around and recording information about the person's communications. Then a researcher codes and statistically analyzes the participant's communication activities. Observation is generally more reliable than communication logs because someone else is watching and recording rather than the individual self-reporting. It is easy for someone keeping a diary to forget to write things down, and some may feel that the activity is a waste of time and not take the task seriously.

During *interviews*, a researcher meets with individuals and discusses communication issues using a set of prepared questions. It is important to use the same set of questions for all interviewees so that comparison of responses is possible. A particular type of interview is the *critical incident interview*, in which employees are asked about a given real or hypothetical communication incident.

Surveys conducted through questionnaires are easy for researchers to analyze and can be the easiest and least expensive method of gathering data from a large group of people. Another positive of this method is the

anonymity it offers the survey respondent. The wording of questions is very important, and allowing participants to provide written comments can provide additional information for consideration in the audit.

Content analysis involves the careful examination of documents produced by the employees of a firm. Content analysis can be performed on a wide array of communications including email messages, letters, memos, recorded meetings, employee newsletters, policies, job advertisements, posted in-house signs, contracts and forms, invoices, and orientation and training materials. Content analysis can be coupled with interviews or surveys to yield even more information.

Skill testing involves designing a means for evaluating the communication skill levels of workers. Once the skill level of employees is determined, goals can be established for increasing worker effectiveness. The *blended approach* is a combination of two or more of the aforementioned audit approaches. Most communication audits involve multiple methods to gain as much information as possible. Who should perform the analysis is also a question that management must consider. Will people respond better to outsiders or insiders? Figure 12.2 summarizes seven essential elements in a thorough communication audit (Dodd 2008).

Dodd's seven items	1. Leadership and administrative style—X, Y, or Z leadership style: are people or tasks more important, and what contingencies are used (for example, X are autocratic managers, Y are managers who will listen, and Z is an inclusive management style)
	2. Structural elements—flat or tall organization chart, bureaucratic or team-oriented management, span of control, and information flow
	3. Interpersonal communication and relationships—trust, expectations, feedback, information disclosure, listening, and feeling part of a team
	4. Nonverbal issues—image, informational signage, lighting, colors, smells, status conveyed, open versus closed body language, and employee dress and image
	5. Employee issues—communication satisfaction, safety, benefits, and complaints
	6. Customer issues—product quality, delivery and timing, and service
	7. Competition—new products and services, customer preferences, and retaining of customers

Figure 12.2 Dodd's seven items to include in a communication audit

Communication Audit Instruments

The ICA's questionnaire audit has been widely used for the study of organizational communication. The comprehensive instrument has 13 sections and includes five measurement tools: surveys, interviews, network analyses, communication experiences, and communication diaries. The completion of the instrument is dependent on the recollection and reporting of critical communication incidents by the responder. The nine topic areas of the ICA questionnaire are shown in Figure 12.3.

The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) is another survey to measure the relationship between communication and productivity. Figure 12.3 also illustrates the eight dimensions of the CSQ which have been found to be reliable and valid (Crino and White 1981; Hecht 1978). The questionnaire links communication satisfaction and productivity across eight dimensions. Clampitt and Downs (1993) tested the CSQ in two organizations and found that communication was perceived to have an above-average impact on productivity and that communication satisfaction factors differentially impacted productivity. Personal feedback had a significant impact on productivity in both companies. While it was interesting that communication with co-workers, meetings, memos, and corporate-wide information had relatively low impacts on productivity, supervisors' information was critical. Employees in higher level positions said that receiving information about the corporation significantly impacted their productivity more than nonsupervisory employees.

Optimizing the Communication Audit

The climate within an organization impacts information flows freely within the firm. A communication audit will help determine if the culture of the organization is supportive or defensive about news and ideas. If managers are indifferent, manipulative, or superior in their attitudes toward subordinates, the subordinates will stop trying to communicate. If managers promise items and do not carry through on their promises, their credibility will quickly erode. Employees generally want openness and transparency in information and are much more likely to share information if they feel supported. If employees are included in decisions and

ICA survey: nine topic areas

- Information needed from others
- Information sent to others
- Follow-up or action taken and needed sent to others
- Information received and needed from specific sources
- Timeliness of the information received
- Amount of information received and needed by channel
- Quality of communication relationships
- Satisfaction with major organizational outcomes
- Demographic information

CSQ: eight dimensions

- Communication climate
- Supervisory communication
- Organizational integration
- Media quality
- Co-worker communication
- Corporate information
- Personal feedback
- Subordinate communication

Figure 12.3 Comparison of two communication audit instruments: ICA and CSQ

not just told what to do, they feel much more a part of the organization. Figure 12.4 illustrates Daly's (1992) seven tests of communication skills needed for optimal audits.

Public speaking capabilities
How good are the speaking abilities of an employee? Can the employees organize and deliver a message, answer questions, use visual aids effectively, and discuss the information in understandable terms both internally and externally?

Knowledge of communication principles
Do the employees know how to analyze the audience and determine who needs to know? Do the employees know for a given communication which channel would be most successful?

Interviewing skills
Has the company taken the time to train employees how to interview correctly and legally?

Predisposition to communicate
Are the networks working properly? Is everyone communicating information to those who need it?

Listening skills
Can employees comprehend and synthesize information? Do the employees have the critical thinking skills necessary to determine what is important and what is not important?

Communicating in small groups
Teams are important in organizations, the ability to participate fully in teams is essential

Conversational performance
Can the employees adapt to different audiences, deal with difficult individuals, and use persuasion when necessary?

Figure 12.4 Daly's (1992) seven tests for communication skills needed for optimal audits

Each of the seven tests involves answering key questions about communication within the organization:

- *Knowledge of communication* principles is predicated on answering key questions.
- *Predisposition to communicate* refers to whether the networks function properly. Is everyone communicating information to those who need it? Do the employees know how to analyze the audience and determine who needs to know? Do the employees know for a given communication which channel would be most successful?

- *Communicating in small groups.* How important are teams to organization? How capable are employees of participating fully on teams as necessary?
- *Conversational performance.* Can the employees adapt to different audiences, deal with difficult individuals, and use persuasion when necessary?
- *Listening skills.* Can employees comprehend and synthesize information? Do the employees have the critical thinking skills necessary to determine what is important and what is not important?
- *Interviewing skills.* Has the company taken the time to train employees how to interview correctly and legally?
- *Public speaking capabilities.* How good are the employees' speaking abilities? Can the employees organize and deliver a message, answer questions, use visual aids effectively, and discuss the information in understandable terms both internally and externally?

Managers and employees must have the correct mindset and skills in order to improve the quality of communication internally and externally. Transformational factors include charismatic leadership, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, increase perceived unit effectiveness, and subordinate satisfaction.

Communication Audit Report Writing

As with any test, the validity and reliability of a communication audit instrument is important. For the results to be useful, you must report the results to the people who can use the information to make changes. It is helpful to give users recommendations and a suggested implementation schedule, along with the findings. Obviously, positive information is easier to convey than negative information, which may be met with defensiveness. No one in the organization wants to be told that they are the problem. A communication audit is only valuable if the individuals within the firm are willing to accept criticism, and the organization culture affirms embracing the criticism and making the changes necessary to improve.

In sharing results of a communication audit, it is important to have meetings with employees at the various levels within the organization. Results must be reported in a way that everyone understands what the communication audit has revealed about the organization and its relationships.

Group discussions should then be reaffirmed in other ways, such as through newsletters or individual meetings with personnel. Buy-in is imperative if changes are to be made. Recommendations may be structural in nature, such as changing reporting structures, or centralizing or decentralizing communication functions. Recommendations may include adjusting priorities of the firm to give more resources and attention to particular areas of the operation. Suggestions for changing reporting requirements also may come out of the audit. Many times such actions are recommended to end turf wars that cause barriers within the firm. Recommendations may also suggest new processes or solutions to the problems. It is important to actually implement the recommended, and not just recognize the problems.

Strategic Implications of Audit Results

The results of communication audits allow mangers to develop communication strategies discussed in earlier chapters. Communication strategies directly relate to the communication climate of a firm, the management orientation of firm, and whether it is bureaucratic or team oriented. Management orientation refers to whether the leader is a micromanager or a micromanager. The more micromanagement oriented a leader is, the less say others have in the communication that happens in the firm. The more macro-oriented the leader is, the more others are free to communicate in the firm. Changing strategies and goals is not easy as people tend to resist change. If you are successful at changing the climate, however, it will be because you have effectively anticipated employees' reactions to the changes, and you have communicated honestly and openly with them.

Some executives's personalities make it easier for them to successfully implement strategy changes because they naturally inspire employees to follow them. However, all executives can educate their employees through

training, helping employees to develop their own goals and linking them to corporate goals, distinguishing fact from rumor, and developing a positive climate. If a climate of common purpose is developed, and all employees understand their part in that purpose, then they feel a rapport and relationship with other employees and management. Addressing the effectiveness of the total spectrum of communication—upwards, downwards, horizontally, internally, and externally—is imperative to changing the communication climate of an organization. Change, however, is not always achieved without a price, as shown in Window into Practical Reality 12.1.

Window into Practical Reality 12.1

The Fallout of Change

A few years ago an organization decided it wanted to empower its employees and become more team oriented rather than bureaucratic in its management approach. While some employees embraced the concept, others did not believe that the managers would change. Others did not want to take on the responsibility of making decisions, just wanting to come in and do their jobs and leave. Trust was a major issue between some employees and management. In following the changes over a period of time, the people who stayed with the firm, both management and workers, liked the team environment. However, the company lost some managers and workers who could not make the switch. Sometimes an organizational change is so dramatic to individuals that they must leave and find a position elsewhere.

What makes a communication change strategy successful? First, the people who have to implement the changes must give legitimacy to the goals and process. Workers must have a way of relating what is working and not working concerning the new communication strategies in an environment of mutual trust. Employees must see how it affects them personally. Many times this means working through the confusion and ambiguity of a new communication structure.
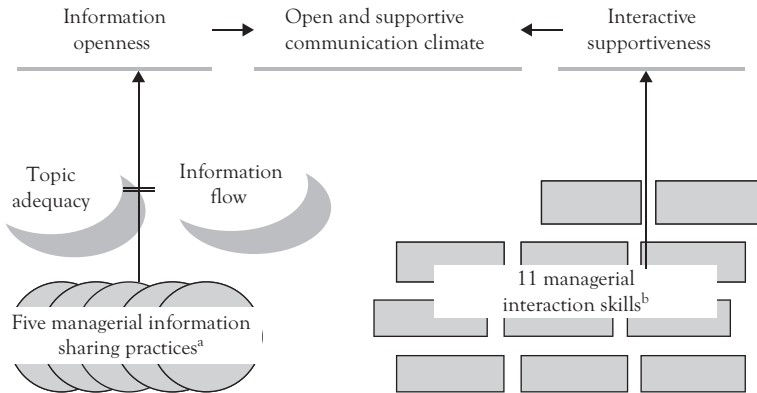
Figure 12.5 Robertson's managerial communication climate model

[a] Job information, personal information, operational information, strategic information, and upward information.
[b] Active listening, empathic listening, checking accuracy, clarifying meaning, disclosing emotions, encouraging input, providing feedback, soliciting feedback, giving instructions, managing conflict, and constructive feedback.

Figure 12.5 illustrates a strategic model developed by Robertson (2005) to measure managerial communication climate. The model includes five major elements: information openness, open and supportive communication climate, interactive supportiveness, five managerial information sharing practice, and eleven managerial interaction skills.

Information openness refers to the mechanical process that happens as information moves from sender to receiver and back. Topic adequacy addresses the ability of information to flow when needed. Information flow is the free exchange of ideas, issues, and opinions. The five information sharing practices include communicating job information, personal information, operational information, strategic information, and upward information. Interaction supportiveness refers to how people communicate and whether their interactions are affirming or disaffirming. The 11 managerial interaction skills include active listening, empathic listening, checking accuracy, clarifying meaning, disclosing emotions, encouraging input, providing feedback, soliciting feedback, giving instructions, managing conflict, and providing constructive feedback. The Robertson model illustrates how managerial communication competence can create open and supportive communication, understanding, meaning, and good relationships.

Implementation of change strategies is important, and managers often discover that redundancy and repetition can help people retain the message. Another strategy is to identify and utilize opinion leaders, as they are influential in getting others to follow. Managers must be careful in identifying actual problems and describing them accurately. Mislabeling issues can lead to attempting to solve the wrong problems (Minter 2010). A little emotional intelligence and common sense can go a long way in implementing new communication strategies!

Pitfalls of Communication Audits

While audits can be used to improve communication and thus increase morale and productivity, they do not always produce positive results. If management uses the results of an audit to punish employees, the overall health of the organization will suffer. If there are hidden agendas, employees will know soon enough, and many may leave the organization, or worse, sabotage projects. Avoid common pitfalls by clearly notifying everybody of the objectives, goals, and scope of the audit before it is conducted and assuring them that the overall intent is to improve the communication within the firm.

Summary

Over time, most firms will have problems with communication because of changes in personnel, poor training, growth, structural changes, or other internal factors. A communication audit is an assessment of the quality of communication within the organization. The audit assists in determining what and where problems exist. While there are many communication audit tools available, a firm first needs to know its own needs in order to select or customize the communication audit that will work best for them. It is generally best to use outside consultants to gather, analyze, and suggest corrections to the communications of the organization, as employees may feel freer to share their perceptions, and anonymity is better protected. Finding where the bottlenecks are in the communication networks and reducing them can be very beneficial to an organization. Communication climate and the willingness of individuals to work

toward improving their communication skills are essential to progress. Without a mindset of improvement by employees at all levels, it will be difficult for the organization to implement communication change.

When conducting a communication audit, the facets of communication to be tested must be determined, an appropriate instrument selected and modified if necessary, appropriate research methods used, the information collection carefully completed, and an analysis of the data accurately performed. Formulating and implementing a strategy is possible once these steps are completed. Developing a strategic plan for improvement that fits the situation and that is supported by employees at all levels is essential to the process of change. Everyone who is impacted by the audit should be informed of the objectives, goals, and scope of the audit before it is conducted and assured that the overall intent is to improve the communication within the firm.

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Managerial Communication

Reginald L. Bell • Jeanette S. Martin

The first book of its kind to offer a unique functions approach to managerial communication, *Managerial Communication* explores what the communication managers actually do in business across the planning, organizing, leading, and controlling functions. Focusing on theory and application that will help managers and future managers understand the practices of management communication, this book combines ideas from industry experts, popular culture, news events, and academic articles and books written by leading scholars.

All of the levels of communication (intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational, and intercultural) play a role in managerial communication and are discussed thoroughly. The top, middle, and frontline communications in which managers engage are also addressed. Expounding on theories of communication, the authors relate them to the theories of management—such as crisis management, impression management, equity theory, and effective presentation skills. These are the skills that are invaluable to management.

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