

Organizational Communication



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CMST 245 Dutton

Tresha Dutton

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Chapter 1: Communication & Organizational Communication

1.1 Defining Communication

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Learning Objectives

1. Define communication.
2. Discuss the history of communication from ancient to modern times.
3. List the forms of communication.
4. Distinguish among the forms of communication.
5. Review the various career options for students who study communication.

Before we dive into the history of communication, it is important that we have a shared understanding of what we mean by the word *communication*. For our purposes in this book, we will define communication as the process of generating meaning by sending and receiving verbal and nonverbal symbols and signs that are influenced by multiple contexts. This definition builds on other definitions of communication that have been rephrased and refined over many years. In fact, since the systematic study of communication began in colleges and universities a little over one hundred years ago, there have been more than 126 published definitions of communication. In order to get a context for how communication has been conceptualized and studied, let's look at a history of the field.

From Aristotle to Obama: A Brief History of Communication

While there are rich areas of study in animal communication and interspecies communication, our focus in this book is on human communication. Even though all animals communicate, as human beings we have a special capacity to use symbols to communicate about things outside our immediate temporal and spatial reality. For example, we have the capacity to use abstract symbols, like the word *education*, to discuss a concept that encapsulates many aspects of teaching and learning. We can also reflect on the past and imagine our future. The ability to think outside our immediate reality is what allows us to create elaborate belief systems, art, philosophy, and academic theories. It's true that you can teach a gorilla to sign words like *food* and *baby*, but its ability to use symbols doesn't extend to the same level of abstraction as ours. However, humans haven't always had the sophisticated communication systems

that we do today.

Some scholars speculate that humans' first words were onomatopoeic. You may remember from your English classes that *onomatopoeia* refers to words that sound like that to which they refer—words like *boing*, *drip*, *gurgle*, *swoosh*, and *whack*. Just think about how a prehistoric human could have communicated a lot using these words and hand gestures. He or she could use *gurgle* to alert others to the presence of water or *swoosh* and *whack* to recount what happened on a hunt. In any case, this primitive ability to communicate provided an evolutionary advantage. Those humans who could talk were able to cooperate, share information, make better tools, impress mates, or warn others of danger, which led them to have more offspring who were also more predisposed to communicate. This eventually led to the development of a "Talking Culture" during the "Talking Era." During this 150,000 year period of human existence, ranging from 180,000 BCE to 3500 BCE, talking was the only medium of communication, aside from gestures, that humans had.

The beginning of the "Manuscript Era," around 3500 BCE, marked the turn from oral to written culture. This evolution in communication corresponded with a shift to a more settled, agrarian way of life. As hunter-gatherers settled into small villages and began to plan ahead for how to plant, store, protect, and trade or sell their food, they needed accounting systems to keep track of their materials and record transactions. While such transactions were initially tracked with actual objects that symbolized an amount—for example, five pebbles represented five measures of grain—symbols, likely carved into clay, later served as the primary method of record keeping. In this case, five dots might equal five measures of grain.

During this period, villages also developed class systems as more successful farmers turned businessmen prospered and took leadership positions. Religion also became more complex, and a new class of spiritual leaders emerged. Soon, armies were needed to protect the stockpiled resources from others who might want to steal it. The emergence of elite classes and the rise of armies required records and bookkeeping, which furthered the spread of written symbols. As clergy, the ruling elite, and philosophers began to take up writing, the systems became more complex. The turn to writing didn't threaten the influential place of oral communication, however. During the near 5,000-year period of the "Manuscript Era," literacy, or the ability to read and write, didn't spread far beyond the most privileged in society. In fact, it wasn't until the 1800s that widespread literacy existed in the world.

The end of the "Manuscript Era" marked a shift toward a rapid increase in communication technologies. The "Print Era" extended from 1450 to 1850 and was marked by the invention of the printing press and the ability to mass-produce written texts. This 400-year period gave way to the "Audiovisual Era," which only lasted 140 years, from 1850 to 1990, and was marked by the invention of radio, telegraph, telephone, and television. Our current period, the "Internet Era," has only lasted from 1990 until the present. This period has featured the most rapid dispersion of a new method of communication, as the spread of the Internet and the expansion of digital and personal media signaled the beginning of the digital age.

The evolution of communication media, from speaking to digital technology, has also influenced the

field of communication studies. To better understand how this field of study developed, we must return to the “Manuscript Era,” which saw the production of the earliest writings about communication. In fact, the oldest essay and book ever found were written about communication. Although this essay and book predate Aristotle, he is a logical person to start with when tracing the development of the communication scholarship. His writings on communication, although not the oldest, are the most complete and systematic. Ancient Greek philosophers and scholars such as Aristotle theorized about the art of rhetoric, which refers to speaking well and persuasively. Today, we hear the word *rhetoric* used in negative ways. A politician, for example, may write off his or her opponent’s statements as “just rhetoric.” This leads us to believe that *rhetoric* refers to misleading, false, or unethical communication, which is not at all in keeping with the usage of the word by ancient or contemporary communication experts. While rhetoric does refer primarily to persuasive communication messages, much of the writing and teaching about rhetoric conveys the importance of being an ethical *rhetor*, or communicator. So when a communicator, such as a politician, speaks in misleading, vague, or dishonest ways, he or she isn’t using rhetoric; he or she is being an unethical speaker.

The study of rhetoric focused on public communication, primarily oratory used in discussions or debates regarding laws and policy, speeches delivered in courts, and speeches intended to praise or blame another person. The connections among rhetoric, policy making, and legal proceedings show that communication and citizenship have been connected since the study of communication began. Throughout this book, we will continue to make connections between communication, ethics, and civic engagement.



Much of the public speaking in ancient Greece took place in courtrooms or in political contexts. Karen Neoh - [Courtroom](#) - CC BY 2.0.

Ancient Greek rhetoricians like Aristotle were followed by Roman orators like Cicero. Cicero

contributed to the field of rhetoric by expanding theories regarding the five canons of rhetoric, which include invention, arrangement, style, delivery, and memory. *Invention* refers to the use of evidence and arguments to think about things in new ways and is the most studied of the five canons. *Arrangement* refers to the organization of speech, *style* refers to the use of language, and *delivery* refers to the vocal and physical characteristics of a speaker. *Memory* is the least studied of the five canons and refers to the techniques employed by speakers of that era to retain and then repeat large amounts of information. The Age of Enlightenment in the 1700s marked a societal turn toward scientific discovery and the acquisition of knowledge, which led to an explosion of philosophical and scientific writings on many aspects of human existence. This focus on academic development continued into the 1900s and the establishment of distinct communication studies departments.

Communication studies as a distinct academic discipline with departments at universities and colleges has only existed for a little over one hundred years. Although rhetoric has long been a key part of higher education, and colleges and universities have long recognized the importance of speaking, communication departments did not exist. In the early 1900s, professors with training and expertise in communication were often housed in rhetoric or English departments and were sometimes called “professors of speech.” During this time, tension began to build between professors of English who studied rhetoric as the written word and professors of speech who studied rhetoric as the spoken word. In 1914, a group of ten speech teachers who were members of the National Council of Teachers of English broke off from the organization and started the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking, which eventually evolved into today’s National Communication Association. There was also a distinction of focus and interest among professors of speech. While some focused on the quality of ideas, arguments, and organization, others focused on coaching the performance and delivery aspects of public speaking. Instruction in the latter stressed the importance of “oratory” or “elocution,” and this interest in reading and speaking aloud is sustained today in theater and performance studies and also in oral interpretation classes, which are still taught in many communication departments.

The formalization of speech departments led to an expanded view of the role of communication. Even though Aristotle and other ancient rhetoricians and philosophers had theorized the connection between rhetoric and citizenship, the role of the communicator became the focus instead of solely focusing on the message. James A. Winans, one of the first modern speech teachers and an advocate for teaching communication in higher education, said there were “two motives for learning to speak. Increasing one’s chance to succeed and increasing one’s power to serve”. Later, as social psychology began to expand in academic institutions, speech communication scholars saw places for connection to further expand definitions of communication to include social and psychological contexts.

Today, you can find elements of all these various aspects of communication being studied in communication departments. If we use President Obama as a case study, we can see the breadth of the communication field. Within one department, you may have fairly traditional rhetoricians who study the speeches of President Obama in comparison with other presidential rhetoric. Others may study debates between presidential candidates, dissecting the rhetorical strategies used, for example, by Mitt Romney and Barack Obama. Expanding from messages to channels of communication, scholars may study how different media outlets cover presidential politics. At an interpersonal level, scholars may study what

sorts of conflicts emerge within families that have liberal and conservative individuals. At a cultural level, communication scholars could study how the election of an African American president creates a narrative of post-racial politics. Our tour from Aristotle to Obama was quick, but hopefully instructive. Now let's turn to a discussion of the five major forms of communication.

Forms of Communication

Forms of communication vary in terms of participants, channels used, and contexts. The main forms of communication, all of which will be explored in much more detail in this book, are intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational, public, and mass communication. This book is designed to introduce you to all these forms of communication. If you find one of these forms particularly interesting, you may be able to take additional courses that focus specifically on it. You may even be able to devise a course of study around one of these forms as a communication major. In the following we will discuss the similarities and differences among each form of communication, including its definition, level of intentionality, goals, and contexts.

Intrapersonal Communication



Intrapersonal communication is communication with ourselves that takes place in our heads. Sarah - [Pondering](#) - CC BY 2.0.

Intrapersonal communication is communication with oneself using internal vocalization or reflective thinking. Like other forms of communication, intrapersonal communication is triggered by some internal or external stimulus. We may, for example, communicate with our self about what we want to

eat due to the internal stimulus of hunger, or we may react intrapersonally to an event we witness. Unlike other forms of communication, intrapersonal communication takes place only inside our heads. The other forms of communication must be perceived by someone else to count as communication. So what is the point of intrapersonal communication if no one else even sees it?

Intrapersonal communication serves several social functions. Internal vocalization, or talking to ourselves, can help us achieve or maintain social adjustment. For example, a person may use self-talk to calm himself down in a stressful situation, or a shy person may remind herself to smile during a social event. Intrapersonal communication also helps build and maintain our self-concept. We form an understanding of who we are based on how other people communicate with us and how we process that communication intrapersonally. The shy person in the earlier example probably internalized shyness as a part of her self-concept because other people associated her communication behaviors with shyness and may have even labeled her “shy” before she had a firm grasp on what that meant. We will discuss self-concept much more in Chapter 2 “Communication and Perception”, which focuses on perception. We also use intrapersonal communication or “self-talk” to let off steam, process emotions, think through something, or rehearse what we plan to say or do in the future. As with the other forms of communication, competent intrapersonal communication helps facilitate social interaction and can enhance our well-being. Conversely, the breakdown in the ability of a person to intrapersonally communicate is associated with mental illness.

Sometimes we intrapersonally communicate for the fun of it. I’m sure we have all had the experience of laughing aloud because we thought of something funny. We also communicate intrapersonally to pass time. I bet there is a lot of intrapersonal communication going on in waiting rooms all over the world right now. In both of these cases, intrapersonal communication is usually unplanned and doesn’t include a clearly defined goal. We can, however, engage in more intentional intrapersonal communication. In fact, deliberate self-reflection can help us become more competent communicators as we become more mindful of our own behaviors. For example, your internal voice may praise or scold you based on a thought or action.

Of the forms of communication, intrapersonal communication has received the least amount of formal study. It is rare to find courses devoted to the topic, and it is generally separated from the remaining four types of communication. The main distinction is that intrapersonal communication is not created with the intention that another person will perceive it. In all the other levels, the fact that the communicator anticipates consumption of their message is very important.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is communication between people whose lives mutually influence one another. Interpersonal communication builds, maintains, and ends our relationships, and we spend more time engaged in interpersonal communication than the other forms of communication. Interpersonal communication occurs in various contexts and is addressed in subfields of study within

communication studies such as intercultural communication, organizational communication, health communication, and computer-mediated communication. After all, interpersonal relationships exist in all those contexts.

Interpersonal communication can be planned or unplanned, but since it is interactive, it is usually more structured and influenced by social expectations than intrapersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is also more goal oriented than intrapersonal communication and fulfills instrumental and relational needs. In terms of instrumental needs, the goal may be as minor as greeting someone to fulfill a morning ritual or as major as conveying your desire to be in a committed relationship with someone. Interpersonal communication meets relational needs by communicating the uniqueness of a specific relationship. Since this form of communication deals so directly with our personal relationships and is the most common form of communication, instances of miscommunication and communication conflict most frequently occur here. Couples, bosses and employees, and family members all have to engage in complex interpersonal communication, and it doesn't always go well. In order to be a competent interpersonal communicator, you need conflict management skills and listening skills, among others, to maintain positive relationships.

Group Communication



Since many businesses and organizations are embracing team models, learning about group communication can help these groups be more effective. RSNY - [Team](#) - CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Group communication is communication among three or more people interacting to achieve a shared goal. You have likely worked in groups in high school and college, and if you're like most students, you didn't enjoy it. Even though it can be frustrating, group work in an academic setting provides useful experience and preparation for group work in professional settings. Organizations have been moving toward more team-based work models, and whether we like it or not, groups are an integral part of people's lives. Therefore the study of group communication is valuable in many contexts.

Group communication is more intentional and formal than interpersonal communication. Unlike interpersonal relationships, which are voluntary, individuals in a group are often assigned to their position within a group. Additionally, group communication is often task focused, meaning that members of the group work together for an explicit purpose or goal that affects each member of the group. Goal-oriented communication in interpersonal interactions usually relates to one person; for example, I may ask my friend to help me move this weekend. Goal-oriented communication at the group level usually focuses on a task assigned to the whole group; for example, a group of people may be tasked to figure out a plan for moving a business from one office to another.

You know from previous experience working in groups that having more communicators usually leads to more complicated interactions. Some of the challenges of group communication relate to task-oriented interactions, such as deciding who will complete each part of a larger project. But many challenges stem from interpersonal conflict or misunderstandings among group members. Since group members also communicate with and relate to each other interpersonally and may have preexisting relationships or develop them during the course of group interaction, elements of interpersonal communication occur within group communication too. Chapter 13 “Small Group Communication” and Chapter 14 “Leadership, Roles, and Problem Solving in Groups” of this book, which deal with group communication, will help you learn how to be a more effective group communicator by learning about group theories and processes as well as the various roles that contribute to and detract from the functioning of a group.

Organizational Communication

Organizational communication is the process whereby an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages. This definition stems primarily out of Deetz view of “organizational communication.” You’ll notice the similarities between this definition and the one we provided earlier for human communication. Let’s break this definition down by exploring the primary unique factor in this definition, organizational stakeholders.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary of Business Terms, a stakeholder is “any party that has an interest in an organization. Stakeholders of a company include stockholders, bondholders, customers, suppliers, employees, and so forth.” There are a range of different stakeholders that exist for an organization. Here is just a short list of some of the stakeholders within an organization: workers, managers, shareholders, etc... Every organization also has to be concerned with stakeholders who exist within the organization’s external environment: competitors, community members, governmental agencies, etc... Basically, every organization has a wide range of stakeholders that it must attend to in order to run itself smoothly.

In addition to stakeholders, organizational communication is also uniquely characterized by the systemic, hierarchical, goal-driven nature of the communication.

As communication evolves, research continues to develop, and organizational communication continues to redefine itself. In the early stages, this area focused on leaders giving public presentations. More recently emphasis has focused on all levels of interaction in organizations. Because interpersonal relationships are a large part of organizational communication, a great deal of research focuses on how interpersonal relationships are conducted within the framework of organizational hierarchies.

Public Communication

Public communication is a sender-focused form of communication in which one person is typically responsible for conveying information to an audience. Public speaking is something that many people fear, or at least don't enjoy. But, just like group communication, public speaking is an important part of our academic, professional, and civic lives. When compared to interpersonal and group communication, public communication is the most consistently intentional, formal, and goal-oriented form of communication we have discussed so far.

Public communication, at least in Western societies, is also more sender focused than interpersonal or group communication. It is precisely this formality and focus on the sender that makes many new and experienced public speakers anxious at the thought of facing an audience. One way to begin to manage anxiety toward public speaking is to begin to see connections between public speaking and other forms of communication with which we are more familiar and comfortable. Despite being formal, public speaking is very similar to the conversations that we have in our daily interactions. For example, although public speakers don't necessarily develop individual relationships with audience members, they still have the benefit of being face-to-face with them so they can receive verbal and nonverbal feedback. Later in this chapter, you will learn some strategies for managing speaking anxiety, since presentations are undoubtedly a requirement in the course for which you are reading this book. Then, in Chapter 9 "Preparing a Speech", Chapter 10 "Delivering a Speech", Chapter 11 "Informative and Persuasive Speaking", and Chapter 12 "Public Speaking in Various Contexts", you will learn how to choose an appropriate topic, research and organize your speech, effectively deliver your speech, and evaluate your speeches in order to improve.

Mass Communication

Public communication becomes mass communication when it is transmitted to many people through print or electronic media. Print media such as newspapers and magazines continue to be an important channel for mass communication, although they have suffered much in the past decade due in part to the rise of electronic media. Television, websites, blogs, and social media are mass communication channels that you probably engage with regularly. Radio, podcasts, and books are other examples of mass media. The technology required to send mass communication messages distinguishes it from the other forms of communication. A certain amount of intentionality goes into transmitting a mass communication message since it usually requires one or more extra steps to convey the message. This may involve pressing "Enter" to send a Facebook message or involve an entire crew of camera people,

sound engineers, and production assistants to produce a television show. Even though the messages must be intentionally transmitted through technology, the intentionality and goals of the person actually creating the message, such as the writer, television host, or talk show guest, vary greatly. The president's State of the Union address is a mass communication message that is very formal, goal oriented, and intentional, but a president's verbal gaffe during a news interview is not.



Technological advances such as the printing press, television, and the more recent digital revolution have made mass communication a prominent feature of our daily lives. Savannah River Site - [Atmospheric Technology](#) - CC BY 2.0.

Mass communication differs from other forms of communication in terms of the personal connection between participants. Even though creating the illusion of a personal connection is often a goal of those who create mass communication messages, the relational aspect of interpersonal and group communication isn't inherent within this form of communication. Unlike interpersonal, group, and public communication, there is no immediate verbal and nonverbal feedback loop in mass communication. Of course you could write a letter to the editor of a newspaper or send an e-mail to a television or radio broadcaster in response to a story, but the immediate feedback available in face-to-face interactions is not present. With new media technologies like Twitter, blogs, and Facebook, feedback is becoming more immediate. Individuals can now tweet directly "at" (@) someone and use hashtags (#) to direct feedback to mass communication sources. Many radio and television hosts and news organizations specifically invite feedback from viewers/listeners via social media and may even share the feedback on the air.

The technology to mass-produce and distribute communication messages brings with it the power for one voice or a series of voices to reach and affect many people. This power makes mass communication different from the other levels of communication. While there is potential for unethical communication at all the other levels, the potential consequences of unethical mass communication are important to consider. Communication scholars who focus on mass communication and media often take a critical approach in order to examine how media shapes our culture and who is included and excluded in various mediated messages. We will discuss the intersection of media and communication more in Chapter 15 "Media, Technology, and Communication" and Chapter 16 "New Media and

Communication”.

“Getting Real”

What Can You Do with a Degree in Communication Studies?

You’re hopefully already beginning to see that communication studies is a diverse and vibrant field of study. The multiple subfields and concentrations within the field allow for exciting opportunities for study in academic contexts but can create confusion and uncertainty when a person considers what they might do for their career after studying communication. It’s important to remember that not every college or university will have courses or concentrations in all the areas discussed next. Look at the communication courses offered at your school to get an idea of where the communication department on your campus fits into the overall field of study. Some departments are more general, offering students a range of courses to provide a well-rounded understanding of communication. Many departments offer concentrations or specializations within the major such as public relations, rhetoric, interpersonal communication, electronic media production, corporate communication. If you are at a community college and plan on transferring to another school, your choice of school may be determined by the course offerings in the department and expertise of the school’s communication faculty. It would be unfortunate for a student interested in public relations to end up in a department that focuses more on rhetoric or broadcasting, so doing your research ahead of time is key.

Since communication studies is a broad field, many students strategically choose a concentration and/or a minor that will give them an advantage in the job market. Specialization can definitely be an advantage, but don’t forget about the general skills you gain as a communication major. This book, for example, should help you build communication competence and skills in interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, group communication, and public speaking, among others. You can also use your school’s career services office to help you learn how to “sell” yourself as a communication major and how to translate what you’ve learned in your classes into useful information to include on your resume or in a job interview.

The main career areas that communication majors go into are business, public relations / advertising, media, nonprofit, government/law, and education. Within each of these areas there are multiple career paths, potential employers, and useful strategies for success.

- **Business.** Sales, customer service, management, real estate, human resources, training and development.
- **Public relations / advertising.** Public relations, advertising/marketing, public opinion research, development, event coordination.
- **Media.** Editing, copywriting, publishing, producing, directing, media sales, broadcasting.
- **Nonprofit.** Administration, grant writing, fund-raising, public relations, volunteer coordination.
- **Government/law.** City or town management, community affairs, lobbying, conflict negotiation / mediation.
- **Education.** High school speech teacher, forensics/debate coach, administration and student support services, graduate school to further communication study.

1. Which of the areas listed above are you most interested in studying in school or pursuing as a career? Why?
2. What aspect(s) of communication studies does/do the department at your school specialize in? What concentrations/courses are offered?
3. Whether or not you are or plan to become a communication major, how do you think you could use what you have learned and will learn in this class to “sell” yourself on the job market?

Key Takeaways

- Getting integrated: Communication is a broad field that draws from many academic disciplines. This interdisciplinary perspective provides useful training and experience for students that can translate into many career fields.
- Communication is the process of generating meaning by sending and receiving symbolic cues that are influenced by multiple contexts.
- Ancient Greeks like Aristotle and Plato started a rich tradition of the study of rhetoric in the Western world more than two thousand years ago. Communication did not become a distinct field of study with academic departments until the 1900s, but it is now a thriving discipline with many subfields of study.
- There are five forms of communication: intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, public, and mass communication.
 - Intrapersonal communication is communication with oneself and occurs only inside our heads.
 - Interpersonal communication is communication between people whose lives mutually influence one another and typically occurs in dyads, which means in pairs.
 - Group communication occurs when three or more people communicate to achieve a shared goal.
 - Public communication is sender focused and typically occurs when one person conveys information to an audience.
 - Mass communication occurs when messages are sent to large audiences using print or electronic media.

Exercises

1. Getting integrated: Review the section on the history of communication. Have you learned any of this history or heard of any of these historical figures in previous classes? If so, how was this history relevant to what you were studying in that class?
2. Come up with your own definition of communication. How does it differ from the definition in the book? Why did you choose to define communication the way you did?
3. Over the course of a day, keep track of the forms of communication that you use. Make a pie chart of how much time you think you spend, on an average day, engaging in each form of communication (intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational, public, and mass).

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["What Can I Do with This Major?"](#) Communication Studies.

1.2 The Communication Process

Learning Objectives

1. Identify and define the components of the transmission (linear) model of communication.
2. Identify and define the components of the interaction model of communication.
3. Identify and define the components of the transaction model of communication.
4. Compare and contrast the three models of communication.
5. Use the transaction model of communication to analyze a recent communication encounter.

Communication is a complex process, and it is difficult to determine where or with whom a communication encounter starts and ends. Models of communication simplify the process by providing a visual representation of the various aspects of a communication encounter. Some models explain communication in more detail than others, but even the most complex model still doesn't recreate what we experience in even a moment of a communication encounter. Models still serve a valuable purpose for students of communication because they allow us to see specific concepts and steps within the process of communication, define communication, and apply communication concepts. When you become aware of how communication functions, you can think more deliberately through your communication encounters, which can help you better prepare for future communication and learn from your previous communication. The three models of communication we will discuss are the transmission, interaction, and transaction models.

Although these models of communication differ, they contain some common elements. The first two models we will discuss, the transmission model and the interaction model, include the following parts: participants, messages, encoding, decoding, and channels. In communication models, the [participants](#) are the senders and/or receivers of messages in a communication encounter. The [message](#) is the verbal or nonverbal content being conveyed from sender to receiver. For example, when you say "Hello!" to your friend, you are sending a message of greeting that will be received by your friend.



Although models of communication provide a useful blueprint to see how the communication process works, they are not complex enough to capture what communication is like as it is experienced.

Chris Searle - [Blueprint](#) - CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

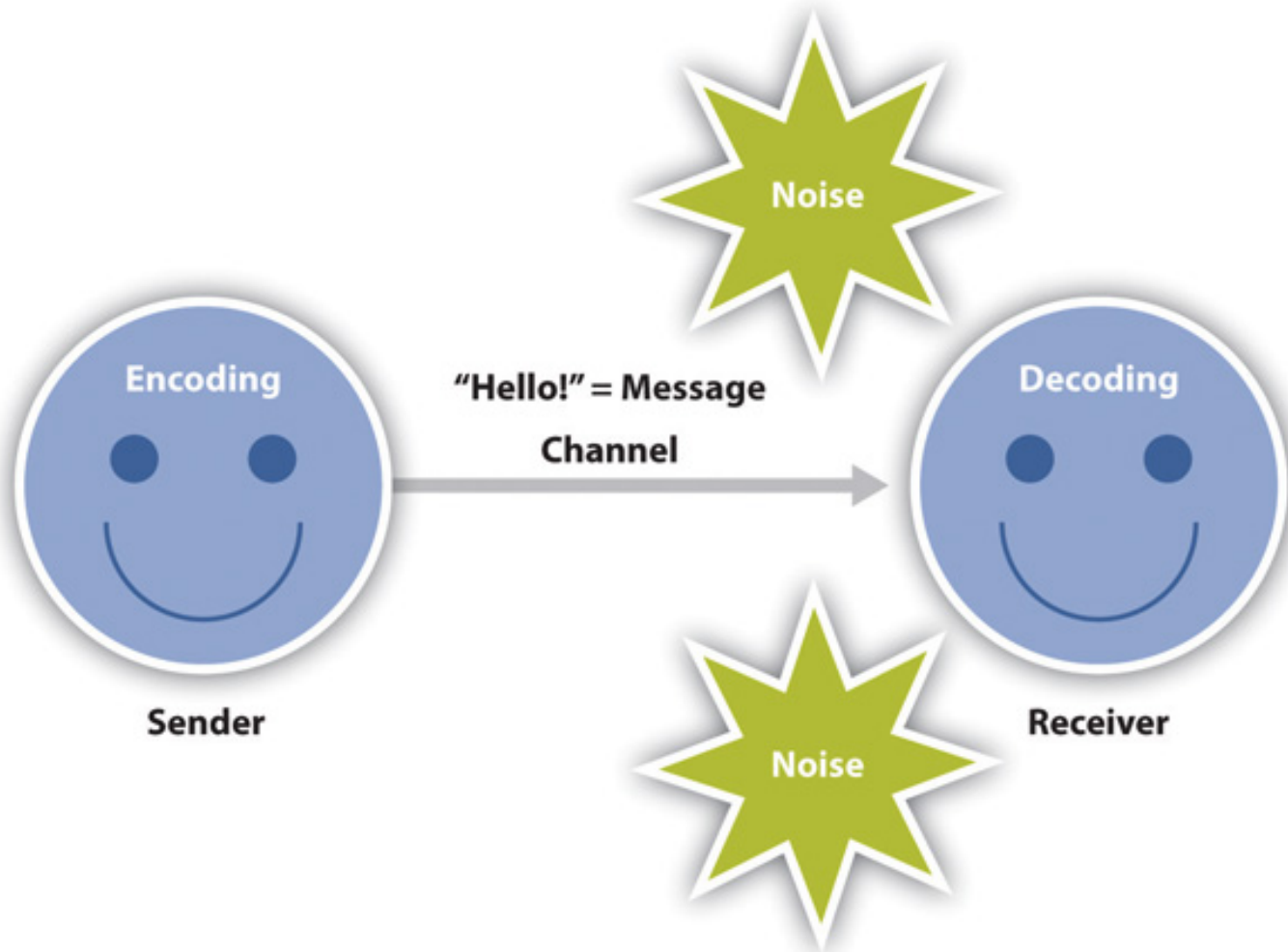
The internal cognitive process that allows participants to send, receive, and understand messages is the encoding and decoding process. [Encoding](#) is the process of turning thoughts into communication. As we will learn later, the level of conscious thought that goes into encoding messages varies. [Decoding](#) is the

process of turning communication into thoughts. For example, you may realize you're hungry and encode the following message to send to your roommate: "I'm hungry. Do you want to get pizza tonight?" As your roommate receives the message, he decodes your communication and turns it back into thoughts in order to make meaning out of it. Of course, we don't just communicate verbally—we have various options, or channels for communication. Encoded messages are sent through a [channel](#), or a sensory route on which a message travels, to the receiver for decoding. While communication can be sent and received using any sensory route (sight, smell, touch, taste, or sound), most communication occurs through visual (sight) and/or auditory (sound) channels. If your roommate has headphones on and is engrossed in a video game, you may need to get his attention by waving your hands before you can ask him about dinner.

TRANSMISSION (LINEAR) MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

The [transmission model of communication](#) describes communication as a linear, one-way process in which a sender intentionally transmits a message to a receiver (Ellis & McClintock, 1990). This model focuses on the sender and message within a communication encounter. Although the receiver is included in the model, this role is viewed as more of a target or end point rather than part of an ongoing process. We are left to presume that the receiver either successfully receives and understands the message or does not. The scholars who designed this model extended on a linear model proposed by Aristotle centuries before that included a speaker, message, and hearer. They were also influenced by the advent and spread of new communication technologies of the time such as telegraphy and radio, and you can probably see these technical influences within the model (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). Think of how a radio message is sent from a person in the radio studio to you listening in your car. The sender is the radio announcer who encodes a verbal message that is transmitted by a radio tower through electromagnetic waves (the channel) and eventually reaches your (the receiver's) ears via an antenna and speakers in order to be decoded. The radio announcer doesn't really know if you receive his or her message or not, but if the equipment is working and the channel is free of static, then there is a good chance that the message was successfully received.

Figure 1.1 The Transmission Model of Communication



Since this model is sender and message focused, responsibility is put on the sender to help ensure the message is successfully conveyed. This model emphasizes clarity and effectiveness, but it also acknowledges that there are barriers to effective communication. [Noise](#) is anything that interferes with a message being sent between participants in a communication encounter. Even if a speaker sends a clear message, noise may interfere with a message being accurately received and decoded. The transmission model of communication accounts for environmental and semantic noise. [Environmental noise](#) is any physical noise present in a communication encounter. Other people talking in a crowded diner could interfere with your ability to transmit a message and have it successfully decoded. While environmental noise interferes with the transmission of the message, [semantic noise](#) refers to noise that occurs in the encoding and decoding process when participants do not understand a symbol. To use a technical example, FM antennae can't decode AM radio signals and vice versa. Likewise, most French speakers can't decode Swedish and vice versa. Semantic noise can also interfere in communication between people speaking the same language because many words have multiple or unfamiliar meanings.

Although the transmission model may seem simple or even underdeveloped to us today, the creation of this model allowed scholars to examine the communication process in new ways, which eventually led to

more complex models and theories of communication that we will discuss more later. This model is not quite rich enough to capture dynamic face-to-face interactions, but there are instances in which communication is one-way and linear, especially computer-mediated communication (CMC). As the following “Getting Plugged In” box explains, CMC is integrated into many aspects of our lives now and has opened up new ways of communicating and brought some new challenges. Think of text messaging for example. The transmission model of communication is well suited for describing the act of text messaging since the sender isn’t sure that the meaning was effectively conveyed or that the message was received at all. Noise can also interfere with the transmission of a text. If you use an abbreviation the receiver doesn’t know or the phone autocorrects to something completely different than you meant, then semantic noise has interfered with the message transmission. I enjoy bargain hunting at thrift stores, so I just recently sent a text to a friend asking if she wanted to go thrifting over the weekend. After she replied with “What?!?” I reviewed my text and saw that my “smart” phone had autocorrected *thrifting* to *thrusting*! You have likely experienced similar problems with text messaging, and a quick Google search for examples of text messages made funny or embarrassing by the autocorrect feature proves that many others do, too.

“Getting Plugged In”

Computer-Mediated Communication

When the first computers were created around World War II and the first e-mails exchanged in the early 1960s, we took the first steps toward a future filled with computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Thurlow, Lengel, & Tomic, 2004). Those early steps turned into huge strides in the late 1980s and early 1990s when personal computers started becoming regular features in offices, classrooms, and homes. I remember getting our first home computer, a Tandy from Radio Shack, in the early 1990s and then getting our first Internet connection at home in about 1995. I set up my first e-mail account in 1996 and remember how novel and exciting it was to send and receive e-mails. I wasn’t imagining a time when I would get dozens of e-mails a day, much less be able to check them on my cell phone! Many of you reading this book probably can’t remember a time without CMC. If that’s the case, then you’re what some scholars have called “digital natives.” When you take a moment to think about how, over the past twenty years, CMC has changed the way we teach and learn, communicate at work, stay in touch with friends, initiate romantic relationships, search for jobs, manage our money, get our news, and participate in our democracy, it really is amazing to think that all that used to take place without computers. But the increasing use of CMC has also raised some questions and concerns, even among those of you who are digital natives. Almost half of the students in my latest communication research class wanted to do their final research projects on something related to social media. Many of them were interested in studying the effects of CMC on our personal lives and relationships. This desire to study and question CMC may stem from an anxiety that people have about the seeming loss or devaluing of face-to-face (FtF) communication. Aside from concerns about the digital cocoons that many of us find ourselves in, CMC has also raised concerns about privacy, cyberbullying, and lack of civility in online interactions. We will continue to explore many of these issues in the “Getting Plugged In” feature box included in each chapter, but the following questions will help you begin to see the influence that CMC has in your daily communication.

1. In a typical day, what types of CMC do you use?
2. What are some ways that CMC reduces stress in your life? What are some ways that

CMC increases stress in your life? Overall, do you think CMC adds to or reduces your stress more?

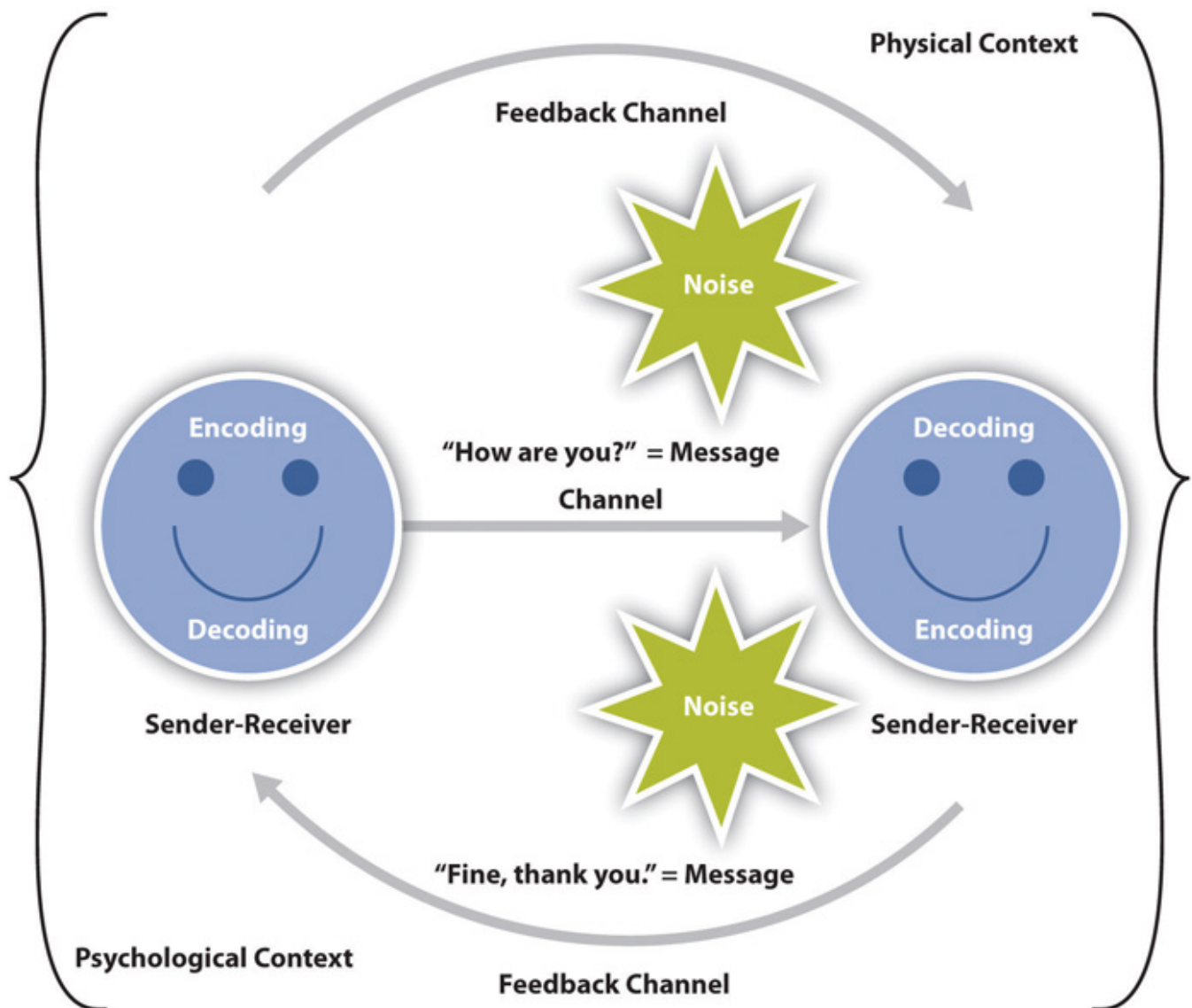
3. Do you think we, as a society, have less value for FtF communication than we used to? Why or why not?

INTERACTION MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

The [interaction model of communication](#) describes communication as a process in which participants alternate positions as sender and receiver and generate meaning by sending messages and receiving feedback within physical and psychological contexts (Schramm, 1997). Rather than illustrating communication as a linear, one-way process, the interaction model incorporates feedback, which makes communication a more interactive, two-way process. [Feedback](#) includes messages sent in response to other messages. For example, your instructor may respond to a point you raise during class discussion or you may point to the sofa when your roommate asks you where the remote control is. The inclusion of a feedback loop also leads to a more complex understanding of the roles of participants in a communication encounter. Rather than having one sender, one message, and one receiver, this model has two sender-receivers who exchange messages. Each participant alternates roles as sender and receiver in order to keep a communication encounter going. Although this seems like a perceptible and deliberate process, we alternate between the roles of sender and receiver very quickly and often without conscious thought.

The interaction model is also less message focused and more interaction focused. While the transmission model focused on how a message was transmitted and whether or not it was received, the interaction model is more concerned with the communication process itself. In fact, this model acknowledges that there are so many messages being sent at one time that many of them may not even be received. Some messages are also unintentionally sent. Therefore, communication isn't judged effective or ineffective in this model based on whether or not a single message was successfully transmitted and received.

Figure 1.2 The Interaction Model of Communication



The interaction model takes physical and psychological context into account. [Physical context](#) includes the environmental factors in a communication encounter. The size, layout, temperature, and lighting of a space influence our communication. Imagine the different physical contexts in which job interviews take place and how that may affect your communication. I have had job interviews on a sofa in a comfortable office, sitting around a large conference table, and even once in an auditorium where I was positioned on the stage facing about twenty potential colleagues seated in the audience. I've also been walked around campus to interview with various people in temperatures below zero degrees. Although I was a little chilly when I got to each separate interview, it wasn't too difficult to warm up and go on with the interview. During a job interview in Puerto Rico, however, walking around outside wearing a suit in near 90 degree temperatures created a sweating situation that wasn't pleasant to try to communicate through. Whether it's the size of the room, the temperature, or other environmental factors, it's important to consider the role that physical context plays in our communication.

[Psychological context](#) includes the mental and emotional factors in a communication encounter. Stress,

anxiety, and emotions are just some examples of psychological influences that can affect our communication. I recently found out some troubling news a few hours before a big public presentation. It was challenging to try to communicate because the psychological noise triggered by the stressful news kept intruding into my other thoughts. Seemingly positive psychological states, like experiencing the emotion of love, can also affect communication. During the initial stages of a romantic relationship individuals may be so “love struck” that they don’t see incompatible personality traits or don’t negatively evaluate behaviors they might otherwise find off-putting. Feedback and context help make the interaction model a more useful illustration of the communication process, but the transaction model views communication as a powerful tool that shapes our realities beyond individual communication encounters.

TRANSACTION MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

As the study of communication progressed, models expanded to account for more of the communication process. Many scholars view communication as more than a process that is used to carry on conversations and convey meaning. We don’t send messages like computers, and we don’t neatly alternate between the roles of sender and receiver as an interaction unfolds. We also can’t consciously decide to stop communicating, because communication is more than sending and receiving messages. The transaction model differs from the transmission and interaction models in significant ways, including the conceptualization of communication, the role of sender and receiver, and the role of context (Barnlund, 1970).

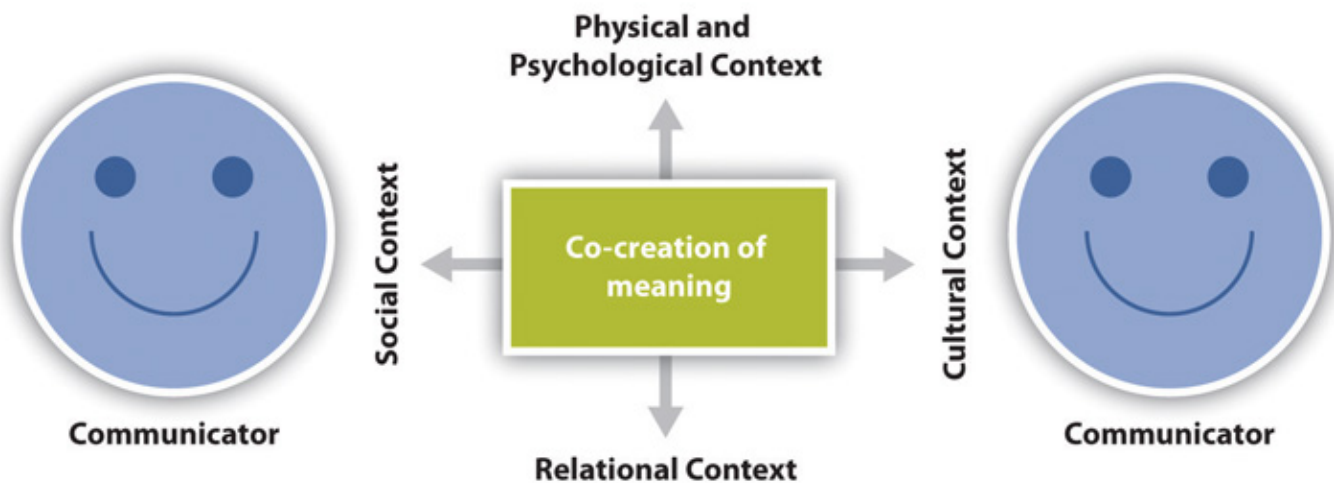
To review, each model incorporates a different understanding of what communication is and what communication does. The transmission model views communication as a thing, like an information packet, that is sent from one place to another. From this view, communication is defined as sending and receiving messages. The interaction model views communication as an interaction in which a message is sent and then followed by a reaction (feedback), which is then followed by another reaction, and so on. From this view, communication is defined as producing conversations and interactions within physical and psychological contexts. The transaction model views communication as integrated into our social realities in such a way that it helps us not only understand them but also create and change them.

The [transaction model of communication](#) describes communication as a process in which communicators generate social realities within social, relational, and cultural contexts. In this model, we don’t just communicate to exchange messages; we communicate to create relationships, form intercultural alliances, shape our self-concepts, and engage with others in dialogue to create communities. In short, we don’t communicate about our realities; communication helps to construct our realities.

The roles of sender and receiver in the transaction model of communication differ significantly from the other models. Instead of labeling participants as senders and receivers, the people in a communication encounter are referred to as *communicators*. Unlike the interaction model, which suggests that participants alternate positions as sender and receiver, the transaction model suggests that we are

simultaneously senders and receivers. For example, on a first date, as you send verbal messages about your interests and background, your date reacts nonverbally. You don't wait until you are done sending your verbal message to start receiving and decoding the nonverbal messages of your date. Instead, you are simultaneously sending your verbal message and receiving your date's nonverbal messages. This is an important addition to the model because it allows us to understand how we are able to adapt our communication—for example, a verbal message—in the middle of sending it based on the communication we are simultaneously receiving from our communication partner.

Figure 1.3 The Transaction Model of Communication



The transaction model also includes a more complex understanding of context. The interaction model portrays context as physical and psychological influences that enhance or impede communication. While these contexts are important, they focus on message transmission and reception. Since the transaction model of communication views communication as a force that shapes our realities before and after specific interactions occur, it must account for contextual influences outside of a single interaction. To do this, the transaction model considers how social, relational, and cultural contexts frame and influence our communication encounters.

[Social context](#) refers to the stated rules or unstated norms that guide communication. As we are socialized into our various communities, we learn rules and implicitly pick up on norms for communicating. Some common rules that influence social contexts include don't lie to people, don't interrupt people, don't pass people in line, greet people when they greet you, thank people when they pay you a compliment, and so on. Parents and teachers often explicitly convey these rules to their children or students. Rules may be stated over and over, and there may be punishment for not following them.

Norms are social conventions that we pick up on through observation, practice, and trial and error. We may not even know we are breaking a social norm until we notice people looking at us strangely or someone corrects or teases us. For example, as a new employee you may over- or underdress for the

company's holiday party because you don't know the norm for formality. Although there probably isn't a stated rule about how to dress at the holiday party, you will notice your error without someone having to point it out, and you will likely not deviate from the norm again in order to save yourself any potential embarrassment. Even though breaking social norms doesn't result in the formal punishment that might be a consequence of breaking a social rule, the social awkwardness we feel when we violate social norms is usually enough to teach us that these norms are powerful even though they aren't made explicit like rules. Norms even have the power to override social rules in some situations. To go back to the examples of common social rules mentioned before, we may break the rule about not lying if the lie is meant to save someone from feeling hurt. We often interrupt close friends when we're having an exciting conversation, but we wouldn't be as likely to interrupt a professor while they are lecturing. Since norms and rules vary among people and cultures, relational and cultural contexts are also included in the transaction model in order to help us understand the multiple contexts that influence our communication.

[Relational context](#) includes the previous interpersonal history and type of relationship we have with a person. We communicate differently with someone we just met versus someone we've known for a long time. Initial interactions with people tend to be more highly scripted and governed by established norms and rules, but when we have an established relational context, we may be able to bend or break social norms and rules more easily. For example, you would likely follow social norms of politeness and attentiveness and might spend the whole day cleaning the house for the first time you invite your new neighbors to visit. Once the neighbors are in your house, you may also make them the center of your attention during their visit. If you end up becoming friends with your neighbors and establishing a relational context, you might not think as much about having everything cleaned and prepared or even giving them your whole attention during later visits. Since communication norms and rules also vary based on the type of relationship people have, relationship type is also included in relational context. For example, there are certain communication rules and norms that apply to a supervisor-supervisee relationship that don't apply to a brother-sister relationship and vice versa. Just as social norms and relational history influence how we communicate, so does culture.

[Cultural context](#) includes various aspects of identities such as race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, and ability. Whether we are aware of it or not, we all have multiple cultural identities that influence our communication. Some people, especially those with identities that have been historically marginalized, are regularly aware of how their cultural identities influence their communication and influence how others communicate with them. Conversely, people with identities that are dominant or in the majority may rarely, if ever, think about the role their cultural identities play in their communication.



Cultural context is influenced by numerous aspects of our identities and is not limited to race or ethnicity.

[Wikimedia Commons](#) - public domain.

When cultural context comes to the forefront of a communication encounter, it can be difficult to manage. Since intercultural communication creates uncertainty, it can deter people from communicating across cultures or lead people to view intercultural communication as negative. But if you avoid communicating across cultural identities, you will likely not get more comfortable or competent as a communicator. Difference isn't a bad thing. In fact, intercultural communication has the potential to enrich various aspects of our lives. In order to communicate well within various cultural contexts, it is important to keep an open mind and avoid making assumptions about others' cultural

identities. While you may be able to identify some aspects of the cultural context within a communication encounter, there may also be cultural influences that you can't see. A competent communicator shouldn't assume to know all the cultural contexts a person brings to an encounter, since not all cultural identities are visible. As with the other contexts, it requires skill to adapt to shifting contexts, and the best way to develop these skills is through practice and reflection.

Key Takeaways

- Communication models are not complex enough to truly capture all that takes place in a communication encounter, but they can help us examine the various steps in the process in order to better understand our communication and the communication of others.
- The transmission model of communication describes communication as a one-way, linear process in which a sender encodes a message and transmits it through a channel to a receiver who decodes it. The transmission of the message may be disrupted by environmental or semantic noise. This model is usually too simple to capture FtF interactions but can be usefully applied to computer-mediated communication.
- The interaction model of communication describes communication as a two-way process in which participants alternate positions as sender and receiver and generate meaning by sending and receiving feedback within physical and psychological contexts. This model captures the interactive aspects of communication but still doesn't account for how communication constructs our realities and is influenced by social and cultural contexts.
- The transaction model of communication describes communication as a process in which communicators generate social realities within social, relational, and cultural contexts. This model includes participants who are simultaneously senders and receivers and accounts for how communication constructs our realities, relationships, and communities.

Exercises

1. Getting integrated: How might knowing the various components of the communication process help you in your academic life, your professional life, and your civic life?
2. What communication situations does the transmission model best represent? The interaction model? The transaction model?
3. Use the transaction model of communication to analyze a recent communication encounter you had. Sketch out the communication encounter and make sure to label each part of the model (communicators; message; channel; feedback; and physical, psychological, social, relational, and cultural contexts).

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1.3 Organizational Communication Overview

[Page Source](#)

Learning Objectives

- Define organizations and organizational communication.
- Explain how the study of organizational communication developed

If you have ever worked a part time job during the school year, worked a full time summer job, volunteered for a non-profit, or belonged to a social organization, you have experienced organizational communication. It's likely that you've been a job seeker, an interviewee, a new employee, a co-worker, or maybe a manager? In each of these situations you make various choices regarding how you choose to communicate with others in an organizational context.

We participate in organizations in almost every aspect of our lives. In fact, you will spend the bulk of your waking life in the context of organizations (March & Simon). Think about it, that means you'll spend more time with your co-workers than your family! At the center of every organization is what we've been studying throughout this book - Communication. Organizational communication is a broad and ever-growing specialization in the field of Communication. For the purpose of this chapter, we will provide a brief overview of the field, highlighting what organizational communication is and how it is studied.

What Is An Organization?

Before we define organizational communication let's look at what an organization is, and how pervasive they are in today's society. Etzioni states, "We are born in organizations, educated by organizations, and most of us spend much of our lives working for organizations" (1). Simply put, from birth to death, organizations impact every aspect of our lives (Deetz).

Organizational Communication Now Networking

The Half Moon Bay chapter of [BNI \(Business Network International\)](#) meets to promote local businesses and network with other businesses in the area. BNI is the largest business networking organization in the world, and each chapter acts as it's own organization.

Stephen P. Robbins defines an **organization** as a “*consciously coordinated social unit composed of two or more people, that functions on a relatively continuous basis to achieve a common goal or set of goals*” (4). Why have organizations in the first place? We organize together for common social, personal, political, or professional purposes. We organize together to achieve what we cannot accomplish individually.

When we study organizational communication our focus is primarily on corporations, manufacturing, the service industry, and for profit businesses. However, organizations also include not-for-profit companies, schools, government agencies, small businesses, and social or charitable agencies such as churches or a local humane society. Organizations are complicated, dynamic organisms that take on a personality and culture of their own, with unique rules, hierarchies, structures, and divisions of labor. Organizations can be thought of as systems of people (Goldhaber) who are in constant motion (Redding). Organizations are social systems (Thayer; Katz & Kahn) that rely on communication to exist. Simon puts it quite simply: “Without communication, there can be no organization” (Simon 57).

1.4. Characteristics of Organizational Communication

[Page Source](#)

Like defining communication, many definitions of organizational communication exist. Deetz argues that one way to enlighten our understanding of organizational communication is to compare different approaches. However, for the purpose of this class, we want to provide a definition of organizational communication so you have a frame of reference. Our definition is not definitive, but creates a starting point for understanding this specialization of communication study.

We define **organizational communication** as interactions among a stable system of individuals who work together to achieve, through a hierarchy of ranks and divisions of labor, common goals. This definition includes the following **key features of organizations** that affect communication:

- 1. Organizations are systemic:** They are large, have many parts, and have both internal (e.g., employees) and external (e.g., customers, competitors, vendors) constituents.
- 2. Organizations are hierarchical:** Because of their size and complexity, organizations have identifiable reporting structures.
- 3. Organizations have divisions of labor:** Organizations hire individuals to do jobs related to the mission of the organization.
- 4. Organizations must have collective action by employees:** The employees' and their jobs must all work together to perform the business of the organization.
- 5. Organizations have layers of goals:** Organizations have mission statements, policies and procedure to help with collective action, departmental goals, and even personal goals set during employee annual performance reviews.

Organizational communication helps us to 1) accomplish tasks relating to specific roles and responsibilities of sales, services, and production; 2) acclimate to changes through individual and organizational creativity and adaptation; 3) complete tasks through the maintenance of policy, procedures, or regulations that support daily and continuous operations; 4) develop relationships where "human messages are directed at people within the organization-their attitudes, morale, satisfaction, and fulfillment" (Goldhaber 20); and 5) coordinate, plan, and control the operations of the organization through management. Organizational communication is how organizations represent, present, and constitute their organizational climate and culture—the attitudes, values and goals that characterize the

organization and its members.

Organizational communication largely focuses on building relationships and interacting with internal organizational members and interested external publics. As Mark Koschmann explains in his animated YouTube video, we have two ways of looking at organizational communication. The conventional approach focuses on communication within organizations. The second approach is communication as organization — meaning organizations are a result of the communication of those within them. Communication is not just about transmitting messages between senders and receivers. Communication literally constitutes, or makes up, our social world. Much of our communication involves sending and receiving relatively unproblematic messages and acting on that information. Other times things are a bit more complex, such as when you need to resolve conflict with a close friend or family member. There is much more going on in these situations than merely exchanging information. You are actually engaging in a complex process of meaning and negotiating rules created by the people involved.

For organizations to be successful, they must have competent communicators. Organizational communication study shows that organizations rely on effective communication and efficient communication skills from their members. A number of surveys identify effective oral and written communication as the most sought after skills by those who run organizations. The U.S. Department of Labor reported communication competency as the most vital skill necessary for the 21st century workforce to achieve organizational success (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills). [The Public Forum Institute](#) maintained that employees need to be skilled in public presentation, listening, and interpersonal communication to flourish in an organization.

Organizations seek people who can follow and give instructions, accurately listen, provide useful feedback, get along with coworkers and customers, network, provide serviceable information, work well in teams, and creatively and critically solve problems and present ideas in an understandable manner. Developing organizational communication awareness and effectiveness is more than just having know-how or knowledge. Efficient organizational communication involves knowing how to create and exchange information, work with diverse groups or individuals, communicate in complicated and changing circumstances, as well as having the aptitude or motivation to communicate in appropriate manners.

How the Field of Organizational Communication Began

As you now know, communication study is deeply entrenched in the oral rhetorical traditions of ancient Rome and Greece. Similar to the many of the early concepts that shaped the discipline, some of the founding principles of organizational communication originated in the East. As early as the fourth century, Chinese scholars concentrated on the “problems of communicating within the vast government bureaucracy as well as between the government and the people”. Ancient eastern scholars focused on information flow, message fidelity, and quality of information within their governmental bureaucracy. These still remain areas of focus for organizational communication that you will learn in your classes today.

Organizational Communication and You. Good Communication

[The New York Times: Strikes Can Come Easier Than Words](#). Major League Baseball is trying to ease the language barrier, adopting a new rule that permits interpreters to join mound conversations when pitchers aren't fluent in English. This example shows just how important communication is for the success of a team.

[Good Communication Skills Maybe the Only Skill You Need?!](#) The 10 Skills Employers Most Want In 2015 Graduates, a news article from Forbes demonstrates the communication skills desired by most organizations.

Like most of our field's specializations, organizational communication began in the mid 20th century with the work of P. E. Lull and W. Charles Redding at the University of Purdue . During the industrial age, the focus of organizational communication was on worker productivity, organizational structure, and overall organizational effectiveness. Through this work people were interested in higher profits and managerial efficiency. Follett is often referred to as the first management consultant in the United States . She focused specifically on message complexity, appropriate channel choice, and worker participation in organizations. Bernard placed communication at the heart of every organizational process, arguing that people must be able to interact with each other for an organization to succeed.

As a specialization in our field, organizational communication can arguably be traced back to Alexander R. Heron's 1942 book, *Sharing Information With Employees* that looked at manager-employee communication. Putnam and Cheney stated that the specialization of "organizational communication grew out of three main speech communication traditions: public address, persuasion, and social science research on interpersonal, small group, and mass communication" . Along with public-speaking training for corporate executives as early as the 1920's , early works like Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* in 1936 focused on necessary oral presentation and written communication skills for managers to succeed in organizations.

Redding and Thompkins identify three periods in the development of organizational communication. During the **Era of Preparation** (1900 to 1940) much of the groundwork was laid for the discipline that we know today. Scholars emphasized the importance of communication in organizations. The primary focus during this time was on public address, business writing, managerial communication, and persuasion. The **Era of Identification and Consolidation** (1940-1970) saw the beginnings of business and industrial communication, with certain group and organizational relationships being recognized as important. During the **Era of Maturity and Innovation** (1970-present), empirical research increased, "accompanied by innovative efforts to develop concepts, theoretical premises, and philosophical critiques" .

As with other specializations over the last century, organizational communication has evolved dramatically as dialogue between business and academic contexts. Redding and Thompkins conclude that “by 1967 or 1968, organizational communication had finally achieved at least a moderate degree of success in two respects: breaking from its ‘business and industrial’ shackles, and gaining a reasonable measure of recognition as an entity worthy of serious academic study” .

Organizational Communication Today

As communication evolves, research continues to develop, and organizational communication continues to redefine itself. In the early stages, this area focused on leaders giving public presentations. More recently emphasis has focused on all levels of interaction in organizations. Because interpersonal relationships are a large part of organizational communication, a great deal of research focuses on how interpersonal relationships are conducted within the framework of organizational hierarchies.

Modern organizational communication research has been summarized into eight major traditions: 1) Communication channels, 2) Communication climate, 3) Network analysis, 4) Superior-subordinate communication, 5) the information-processing perspective, 6) the rhetorical perspective, 7) the cultural perspective, and 8) the political perspective. Since the 1980s, this specialization has expanded to include work on organizational culture, power and conflict management, and organizational rhetoric. If you were to take an organizational communication course at your campus, much of the time would be spent focusing on developing your skills in organizational socialization, interviewing, giving individual and group presentations, creating positive work relationships, performance evaluation, conflict resolution, stress management, decision making, and communicating with external publics.

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• Survey of Communication Study. **Authored by:** Scott T Paynton and Linda K Hahn. **Provided by:** Humboldt State University. **Located at:** https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Survey_of_Communication_Study/Preface. **License:** [C BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike](#)

Katz & Kahn; Redding; Thayer
Davis & Miller; Holter & Kopka; Perrigo & Gaut
Murphy, Hildebrandt & Thomas 4
Krone, Garrett & Chen; Paraboteeah
Putnam & Cheney
Stohl

Redding & Tompkins; Meyers & Sadaghiani

131

Putnam & Cheney

Redding & Thompson 7

18

Putnam and Cheney; Kim

Chapter 2: Groups In Organizations

2.0 What is small group communication?

Learning Objectives

1. Define small group communication.
2. Discuss the characteristics of small groups.
3. Discuss advantages and disadvantages of small groups.

When you think of small groups, you probably think of the much dreaded “group assignment” that you’ve endured in high school and college. You are less likely to think of the numerous other groups to which you belong that bring more positive experiences, such as your family and friendship groups or shared-interest groups. Group communication scholars are so aware of this common negative sentiment toward group communication that they coined the term *group hate* to describe it. Susan M. Sorensen, “Group-Hate: A Negative Reaction to Group Work” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Minneapolis, MN, May, 1981). Small groups, however, aren’t just entities meant to torture students; they have served a central purpose in human history and evolution. Groups make it easier for us to complete a wide variety of tasks; help us establish meaningful social bonds; and help us create, maintain, and change our sense of self. Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice*, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 433. Negative group experiences are often exacerbated by a lack of knowledge about group communication processes. We are just expected to know how to work in groups without much instruction or practice. This lack of knowledge about group communication can lead to negative group interactions, which creates a negative cycle that perpetuates further negative experiences. Fortunately, as with other areas of communication, instruction in group communication can improve people’s skills and increase people’s satisfaction with their group experiences. **Small group communication** refers to communication among three or more people who interact verbally and nonverbally, perform certain informal roles with respect to one another, feel a sense of belonging and collaborate to achieve a desired goal.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALL GROUPS

Different groups have different characteristics, serve different purposes, and can lead to positive, neutral, or negative experiences. While our interpersonal relationships primarily focus on relationship building, small groups (as studied by communication scholars) usually focus on some sort of task completion or goal accomplishment. A college learning community focused on math and science, a campaign team for a state senator, and a group of local organic farmers are examples of small groups that would all have a different size, structure, identity, and interaction pattern.

SIZE OF SMALL GROUPS

There is no set number of members for the ideal small group. A small group requires a minimum of three people (because two people would be a pair or dyad with a different communication pattern), but the upper range of group size is contingent on the purpose of the group. When groups grow beyond fifteen to twenty members, it becomes difficult to consider them a small group based on the previous definition. An analysis of the number of unique connections between members of small groups shows that they are deceptively complex. For example, within a six-person group, there are fifteen separate potential dyadic connections, and a twelve-person group would have sixty-six potential dyadic connections (Hargie, 2011). As you can see, when we double the number of group members, we more than double the number of connections, which shows that network connection points in small groups grow exponentially as membership increases. So, while there is no set upper limit on the number of group members, it makes sense that the number of group members should be limited to those necessary to accomplish the goal or serve the purpose of the group. Small groups that add too many members increase the potential for group members to feel overwhelmed or disconnected.

STRUCTURE OF SMALL GROUPS

Internal and external influences affect a group's structure. In terms of internal influences, member characteristics play a role in initial group formation. For instance, a person who is well informed about the group's task and/or highly motivated as a group member may emerge as a leader and set into motion internal decision-making processes, such as recruiting new members or assigning group roles, that affect the structure of a group (Ellis & Fisher, 1994). Different members will also gravitate toward different roles within the group and will advocate for certain procedures and courses of action over others. External factors such as group size, task, and resources also affect group structure. Some groups will have more control over these external factors through decision making than others. For example, a commission that is put together by a legislative body to look into ethical violations in athletic organizations will likely have less control over its external factors than a self-created weekly book club.



A self-formed study group likely has a more flexible structure than a city council committee.

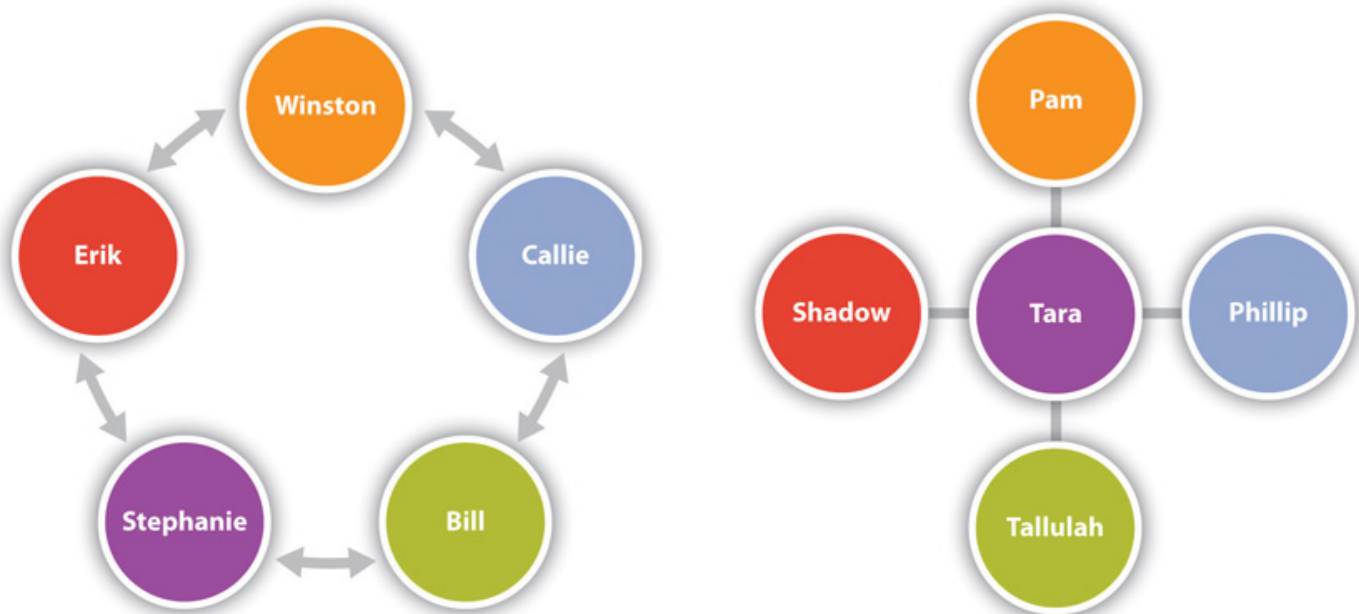
William Rotza - [Group](#) - CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Group structure is also formed through formal and informal network connections. In terms of formal networks, groups may have clearly defined roles and responsibilities based on their organizational role (i.e., job description). The group itself may also be a part of an organizational hierarchy that networks the group into a larger organizational structure. This type of formal network is especially important in groups that have to report to external stakeholders. These external stakeholders may influence the group's formal network, leaving the group little or no control over its structure. Conversely, groups have more control over their informal networks, which are connections among individuals within the group and among group members and people outside of the group that aren't official. For example, a group member's friend or relative may be able to secure a space to hold a fundraiser at a discounted rate, which helps the group achieve its task. Both types of networks are important because they may help facilitate information exchange within a group and extend a group's reach in order to access other resources.

Size and structure also affect communication within a group (Ellis & Fisher, 1994). In terms of size, the more people in a group, the more issues with scheduling and coordination of communication.

Remember that time is an important resource in most group interactions and a resource that is usually strained. Structure can increase or decrease the flow of communication. Reachability refers to the way in which one member is or isn't connected to other group members. For example, the "Circle" group structure in Figure: "Small Group Structures" shows that each group member is connected to two other members. This can make coordination easy when only one or two people need to be brought in for a decision. In this case, Erik and Callie are very reachable by Winston, who could easily coordinate with them. However, if Winston needed to coordinate with Bill or Stephanie, he would have to wait on Erik or Callie to reach that person, which could create delays. The circle can be a good structure for groups who are passing along a task and in which each member is expected to progressively build on the others' work. A group of scholars coauthoring a research paper may work in such a manner, with each person adding to the paper and then passing it on to the next person in the circle. In this case, they can ask the previous person questions and write with the next person's area of expertise in mind. The "Wheel" group structure in Figure: "Small Group Structures" shows an alternative organization pattern. In this structure, Tara is very reachable by all members of the group. This can be a useful structure when Tara is the person with the most expertise in the task or the leader who needs to review and approve work at each step before it is passed along to other group members. But Phillip and Shadow, for example, wouldn't likely work together without Tara being involved.

Figure: Small Group Structures



Looking at the group structures, we can make some assumptions about the communication that takes place in them. The wheel is an example of a centralized structure, while the circle is decentralized. Research has shown that centralized groups are better than decentralized groups in terms of speed and efficiency (Ellis & Fisher, 1994). But decentralized groups are more effective at solving complex problems. In centralized groups like the wheel, the person with the most connections, person C, is also

more likely to be the leader of the group or at least have more status among group members, largely because that person has a broad perspective of what's going on in the group. The most central person can also act as a gatekeeper. Since this person has access to the most information, which is usually a sign of leadership or status, he or she could consciously decide to limit the flow of information. But in complex tasks, that person could become overwhelmed by the burden of processing and sharing information with all the other group members. The circle structure is more likely to emerge in groups where collaboration is the goal and a specific task and course of action isn't required under time constraints. While the person who initiated the group or has the most expertise in regards to the task may emerge as a leader in a decentralized group, the equal access to information lessens the hierarchy and potential for gatekeeping that is present in the more centralized groups.

INTERDEPENDENCE

Small groups exhibit interdependence, meaning they share a common purpose and a common fate. If the actions of one or two group members lead to a group deviating from or not achieving their purpose, then all members of the group are affected. Conversely, if the actions of only a few of the group members lead to success, then all members of the group benefit. This is a major contributor to many college students' dislike of group assignments, because they feel a loss of control and independence that they have when they complete an assignment alone. This concern is valid in that their grades might suffer because of the negative actions of someone else or their hard work may go to benefit the group member who just skated by. Group meeting attendance is a clear example of the interdependent nature of group interaction. Many of us have arrived at a group meeting only to find half of the members present. In some cases, the group members who show up have to leave and reschedule because they can't accomplish their task without the other members present. Group members who attend meetings but withdraw or don't participate can also derail group progress. Although it can be frustrating to have your job, grade, or reputation partially dependent on the actions of others, the interdependent nature of groups can also lead to higher-quality performance and output, especially when group members are accountable for their actions.

SHARED IDENTITY

The shared identity of a group manifests in several ways. Groups may have official charters or mission and vision statements that lay out the identity of a group. For example, the Girl Scout mission states that "Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place" (Girl Scouts, 2012). The mission for this large organization influences the identities of the thousands of small groups called troops. Group identity is often formed around a shared goal and/or previous accomplishments, which adds dynamism to the group as it looks toward the future and back on the past to inform its present. Shared identity can also be exhibited through group names, slogans, songs, handshakes, clothing, or other symbols. At a family reunion, for example, matching t-shirts specially made for the occasion, dishes made from recipes passed down from generation to generation, and shared stories of family members that have passed away help establish a shared identity and social

reality.

A key element of the formation of a shared identity within a group is the establishment of the in-group as opposed to the out-group. The degree to which members share in the in-group identity varies from person to person and group to group. Even within a family, some members may not attend a reunion or get as excited about the matching t-shirts as others. Shared identity also emerges as groups become cohesive, meaning they identify with and like the group's task and other group members. The presence of cohesion and a shared identity leads to a building of trust, which can also positively influence productivity and members' satisfaction.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF SMALL GROUPS

As with anything, small groups have their advantages and disadvantages. Advantages of small groups include shared decision making, shared resources, synergy, and exposure to diversity. It is within small groups that most of the decisions that guide our country, introduce local laws, and influence our family interactions are made. In a democratic society, participation in decision making is a key part of citizenship. Groups also help in making decisions involving judgment calls that have ethical implications or the potential to negatively affect people. Individuals making such high-stakes decisions in a vacuum could have negative consequences given the lack of feedback, input, questioning, and proposals for alternatives that would come from group interaction. Group members also help expand our social networks, which provide access to more resources. A local community-theater group may be able to put on a production with a limited budget by drawing on these connections to get set-building supplies, props, costumes, actors, and publicity in ways that an individual could not. The increased knowledge, diverse perspectives, and access to resources that groups possess relates to another advantage of small groups—synergy.

Synergy refers to the potential for gains in performance or heightened quality of interactions when complementary members or member characteristics are added to existing ones (Larson Jr., 2010). Because of synergy, the final group product can be better than what any individual could have produced alone. When I worked in housing and residence life, I helped coordinate a "World Cup Soccer Tournament" for the international students that lived in my residence hall. As a group, we created teams representing different countries around the world, made brackets for people to track progress and predict winners, got sponsors, gathered prizes, and ended up with a very successful event that would not have been possible without the synergy created by our collective group membership. The members of this group were also exposed to international diversity that enriched our experiences, which is also an advantage of group communication.

Participating in groups can also increase our exposure to diversity and broaden our perspectives. Although groups vary in the diversity of their members, we can strategically choose groups that expand our diversity, or we can unintentionally end up in a diverse group. When we participate in small groups, we expand our social networks, which increase the possibility to interact with people who have different cultural identities than ourselves. Since group members work together toward a common goal, shared identification with the task or group can give people with diverse backgrounds a sense of commonality

that they might not have otherwise. Even when group members share cultural identities, the diversity of experience and opinion within a group can lead to broadened perspectives as alternative ideas are presented and opinions are challenged and defended. One of my favorite parts of facilitating class discussion is when students with different identities and/or perspectives teach one another things in ways that I could not on my own. This example brings together the potential of synergy and diversity. People who are more introverted or just avoid group communication and voluntarily distance themselves from groups—or are rejected from groups—risk losing opportunities to learn more about others and themselves.



A social loafer is a dreaded group member who doesn't do his or her share of the work, expecting that others on the group won't notice or will pick up the slack.

Henry Burrows - [Sleeping On The Job](#)- CC BY-SA 2.0.

There are also disadvantages to small group interaction. In some cases, one person can be just as or more effective than a group of people. Think about a situation in which a highly specialized skill or knowledge is needed to get something done. In this situation, one very knowledgeable person is probably a better fit for the task than a group of less knowledgeable people. Group interaction also has a tendency to slow down the decision-making process. Individuals connected through a hierarchy or chain of command often work better in situations where decisions must be made under time constraints. When group interaction does occur under time constraints, having one "point person" or leader who coordinates action and gives final approval or disapproval on ideas or suggestions for actions is best.

Group communication also presents interpersonal challenges. A common problem is coordinating and planning group meetings due to busy and conflicting schedules. Some people also have difficulty with the other-centeredness and self-sacrifice that some groups require. The interdependence of group members that we discussed earlier can also create some disadvantages. Group members may take advantage of the anonymity of a group and engage in social loafing, meaning they contribute less to the group than other members or than they would if working alone (Karau & Williams, 1993). Social loafers expect that no one will notice their behaviors or that others will pick up their slack. It is this potential for social loafing that makes many students and professionals dread group work, especially those who have a tendency to cover for other group members to prevent the social loafer from diminishing the group's productivity or output.

Key Takeaways

- Getting integrated: Small group communication refers to interactions among three or more people who are connected through a common purpose, mutual influence, and a shared identity. Small groups are important communication units in academic, professional, civic, and personal contexts.
- Several characteristics influence small groups, including size, structure, interdependence, and shared identity.
 - In terms of size, small groups must consist of at least three people, but there is no set upper limit on the number of group members. The ideal number of group members is the smallest number needed to competently complete the group's task or achieve the group's purpose.
 - Internal influences such as member characteristics and external factors such as the group's size, task, and access to resources affect a group's structure. A group's structure also affects how group members communicate, as some structures are more centralized and hierarchical and other structures are more decentralized and equal.
 - Groups are interdependent in that they have a shared purpose and a shared fate, meaning that each group member's actions affect every other group member.
 - Groups develop a shared identity based on their task or purpose, previous accomplishments, future goals, and an identity that sets their members apart from other groups.
- Advantages of group communication include shared decision making, shared resources, synergy, and exposure to diversity. Disadvantages of group communication include unnecessary group formation (when the task would be better performed by one person), difficulty coordinating schedules, and difficulty with accountability and social loafing.

Exercises

1. Getting integrated: For each of the follow examples of a small group context, indicate

what you think would be the ideal size of the group and why. Also indicate who the ideal group members would be (in terms of their occupation/major, role, level of expertise, or other characteristics) and what structure would work best.

- A study group for this class
- A committee to decide on library renovation plans
- An upper-level college class in your major
- A group to advocate for more awareness of and support for abandoned animals

2. List some groups to which you have belonged that focused primarily on tasks and then list some that focused primarily on relationships. Compare and contrast your experiences in these groups.

3. Synergy is one of the main advantages of small group communication. Explain a time when a group you were in benefited from or failed to achieve synergy. What contributed to your success/failure?

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2.1 Group Formation

[Page Source](#)

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the process of group development.
2. Discuss the characteristics of each stage of group development.

Small groups have to start somewhere. Even established groups go through changes as members come and go, as tasks are started and completed, and as relationships change. In this section, we will learn about the stages of group development, which are forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. As with most models of communication phenomena, although we order the stages and discuss them separately, they are not always experienced in a linear fashion. Additionally, some groups don't experience all five stages, may experience stages multiple times, or may experience more than one stage at a time.

Forming

During the forming stage, group members begin to reduce uncertainty associated with new relationships and/or new tasks through initial interactions that lay the foundation for later group dynamics. Groups return to the forming stage as group members come and go over the life span of a group. Although there may not be as much uncertainty when one or two new people join a group as there is when a group first forms, groups spend some time in the forming stage every time group membership changes.

Given that interpersonal bonds are likely not yet formed and people are unfamiliar with the purpose of the group or task at hand, there are high levels of uncertainty. Early stages of role negotiation begin and members begin to determine goals for the group and establish rules and norms. Group cohesion also begins to form during this stage. Group cohesion refers to the commitment of members to the purpose of the group and the degree of attraction among individuals within the group. The cohesion that begins in this stage sets the group on a trajectory influenced by group members' feelings about one another and their purpose or task. Groups with voluntary membership may exhibit high levels of

optimism about what the group can accomplish. Although the optimism can be motivating, unrealistic expectations can lead to disappointment, making it important for group members to balance optimism with realism. Groups with assigned or mandatory membership may include members that carry some degree of resentment toward the group itself or the goals of the group. These members can start the group off on a negative trajectory that will lessen or make difficult group cohesiveness. Groups can still be successful if these members are balanced out by others who are more committed to and positive in regards to the purpose of the group.

Many factors influence how the forming stage of group development plays out. The personalities of the individuals in the group, the skills that members bring, the resources available to the group, the group's size, and the group's charge all contribute to the creation of the early tone of and climate within a group. For example, more dominant personalities may take early leadership roles in the group that can affect subsequent decisions. Group members' diverse skill sets and access to resources can also influence the early stages of role differentiation. In terms of size, the bonding that begins in the forming stage becomes difficult when the number of people within the group prevents every person from having a one-on-one connection with every other member of the group. Also, in larger groups, more dominant members tend to assert themselves as leaders and build smaller coalitions within the group, which can start the group on a trajectory toward more conflict during the upcoming storming stage.

When a group receives an external charge, meaning that the goal or purpose of the group is decided by people outside the group, there may be less uncertainty related to the task dimensions of the group. Additionally, decisions about what roles people will play including group leaders and other decisions about the workings of the group may come from the outside, which reduces some of the uncertainty inherent in the forming stage. Relational uncertainty can also be diminished when group members have preexisting relationships or familiarity with each other. Although the decreased uncertainty may be beneficial at this stage, too much imposed structure from the outside can create resentment or a feeling of powerlessness among group members. So a manageable amount of uncertainty is actually a good thing for group cohesion and productivity.

Storming

During the storming stage of group development, conflict emerges as people begin to perform their various roles, have their ideas heard, and negotiate where they fit in the group's structure. The uncertainty present in the forming stage begins to give way as people begin to occupy specific roles and the purpose, rules, and norms of a group become clearer. Conflict develops when some group members aren't satisfied with the role that they or others are playing or the decisions regarding the purpose or procedures of the group. For example, if a leader begins to emerge or is assigned during the forming stage, some members may feel that the leader is imposing his or her will on other members of the group. As we will learn in our section on group leadership, leaders should expect some degree of resentment from others who wanted to be the leader, have interpersonal conflicts with the leader, or just have general issues with being led.



Benjamin Benson - Lightning Storm - CC BY 2.0.

Although the word storming and the concept of conflict have negative connotations, conflict can be positive and productive. Just like storms can replenish water supplies and make crops grow, storming can lead to group growth. While conflict is inevitable and should be experienced by every group, a group that gets stuck at the storming stage will likely not have much success in completing its task or achieving its purpose. Influences from outside the group can also affect the conflict in the storming stage. Interpersonal conflicts that predate the formation of the group may distract the group from the more productive idea- or task-oriented conflict that can be healthy for the group and increase the quality of ideas, decision making, and output.

Although we often have negative connotations of storming and conflict, the group conflict that happens in this stage is necessary and productive.

Norming

During the norming stage of group development, the practices and expectations of the group are solidified, which leads to more stability, productivity, and cohesion within the group. Group norms are behaviors that become routine but are not explicitly taught or stated. In short, group norms help set the tone for what group members ought to do and how they ought to behave. Many implicit norms are derived from social norms that people follow in their everyday life. Norms within the group about politeness, lateness, and communication patterns are typically similar to those in other contexts. Sometimes a norm needs to be challenged because it is not working for the group, which could lead a group back to the storming stage. Other times, group members challenge norms for no good reason, which can lead to punishment for the group member or create conflict within the group.

At this stage, there is a growing consensus among group members as to the roles that each person will play, the way group interactions will typically play out, and the direction of the group. Leaders that began to emerge have typically gained the support of other group members, and group identity begins to solidify. The group may now be recognizable by those on the outside, as slogans, branding, or patterns of interaction become associated with the group. This stage of group development is key for the smooth operation of the group. Norms bring a sense of predictability and stability that can allow a

group to move on to the performing stage of group development. Norms can also bring with them conformity pressures that can be positive or negative. In general, people go along with a certain amount of pressure to conform out of a drive to avoid being abnormal that is a natural part of our social interaction. Too much pressure, however, can lead people to feel isolated and can create a negative group climate. We will learn more about pressure as a group dynamic later in this chapter.

Explicit rules may also guide group interaction. Rules are explicitly stated guidelines for members and may refer to things like expected performance levels or output, attitudes, or dress codes. Rules may be communicated through verbal instructions, employee handbooks, membership policies, or codes of conduct. Groups can even use procedures like Robert's Rules of Order to manage the flow of conversations and decision-making procedures. Group members can contest or subvert group rules just as they can norms. Violations of group rules, however, typically result in more explicit punishments than do violations of norms.

Performing

During the performing stage of group development, group members work relatively smoothly toward the completion of a task or achievement of a purpose. Although interactions in the performing stage are task focused, the relational aspects of group interaction provide an underlying support for the group members. Socialization outside of official group time can serve as a needed relief from the group's task. During task-related interactions, group members ideally begin to develop a synergy that results from the pooling of skills, ideas, experiences, and resources. Synergy is positive in that it can lead group members to exceed their expectations and perform better than they could individually. Glitches in the group's performance can lead the group back to previous stages of group development. Changes in membership, member roles, or norms can necessitate a revisiting of aspects of the forming, storming, or norming stages. One way to continue to build group cohesion during the performing stage is to set short-term attainable group goals. Accomplishing something, even if it's small, can boost group morale, which in turn boosts cohesion and productivity.

Adjourning

The adjourning stage of group development occurs when a group dissolves because it has completed its purpose or goal, membership is declining and support for the group no longer exists, or it is dissolved because of some other internal or external cause. Some groups may live on indefinitely and not experience the adjourning stage. Other groups may experience so much conflict in the storming stage that they skip norming and performing and dissolve before they can complete their task. For groups with high social cohesion, adjourning may be a difficult emotional experience. However, group members may continue interpersonal relationships that formed even after the group dissolves. In reality, many bonds, even those that were very close, end up fading after the group disbands. This doesn't mean the relationship wasn't genuine; interpersonal relationships often form because of proximity and shared task interaction. Once that force is gone, it becomes difficult to maintain friendships, and many fade

away. For groups that had negative experiences, the adjourning stage may be welcomed.

To make the most out of the adjourning stage, it is important that there be some guided and purposeful reflection. Many groups celebrate their accomplishments with a party or ceremony. Even groups that had negative experiences or failed to achieve their purpose can still learn something through reflection in the adjourning stage that may be beneficial for future group interactions. Often, group members leave a group experience with new or more developed skills that can be usefully applied in future group or individual contexts. Even groups that are relational rather than task focused can increase members' interpersonal, listening, or empathetic skills or increase cultural knowledge and introduce new perspectives.

Key Takeaways

- Small groups have to start somewhere, but their course of development varies after forming based on many factors. Some groups go through each stage of development in a progressive and linear fashion, while other groups may get stuck in a stage, skip a stage, or experience a stage multiple times.
- The five stages of group development include forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning.
 1. During the forming stage, group members engage in socially polite exchanges to help reduce uncertainty and gain familiarity with new members. Even though their early interactions may seem unproductive, they lay the groundwork for cohesion and other group dynamics that will play out more prominently in later stages.
 2. During the storming stage, conflict emerges as group members begin to perform their various roles, have their ideas heard, and negotiate where they fit in the group's structure. Conflict is inevitable and important as a part of group development and can be productive if it is managed properly.
 3. During the norming stage, the practices and expectations (norms and rules) of the group are solidified, which leads to more stability, productivity, and cohesion within the group.
 4. During the performing stage, group members work relatively smoothly toward the completion of a task or the achievement of their purpose, ideally capitalizing on the synergy that comes from the diverse experiences group members bring to the decision-making process.
 5. During the adjourning stage, a group dissolves because its purpose has been met, because membership has declined or the group has lost support, or due to some other internal or external cause. It is important that groups reflect on the life of the group to learn any relevant lessons and celebrate accomplishments.

Exercises

1. Recall a previous or current small group to which you belonged/belong. Trace the group's development using the five stages discussed in this section. Did you experience all the stages? In what order? Did you stay in some stages more than others?
2. During the norming stage of group development, interaction patterns and group expectations solidify. Recall a current or former group. What were some of the norms for the group? What were some rules? How did you become aware of each?
3. Many people don't think about the importance of the adjourning stage. What do you think is the best way to complete the adjourning stage for a group that was successful and cohesive? What about for a group that was unsuccessful and not cohesive.

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2.2 Group Role Types

If all the world is a stage, then we each play distinct roles, whether we know it or not, when we are members of a group, team, family, or community. If we are aware of our roles, then we can know our lines, our responsibilities, and perform. When we do not know what we are supposed to do it is awfully hard to get the right job done correctly the first time. In this chapter we will explore the many facets to group membership.

The performance of a team or group is often influenced, if not determined, by its members' roles.

We can start our analysis of member roles with the work of Benne and Sheats (1948). They focused on studying small discussion groups that engaged in problem-solving activities. From their observations they proposed three distinct types of roles: task, building and maintenance, and self-centered. *Task roles* were identified by facilitating and co-coordinating behaviors such as suggesting new ideas or ways of solving problems. *Relational/ maintenance roles* involved encouragement, including praise, statements of agreement, or acceptance of others and their contributions nonverbally or verbally. *Individualistic/Self-centered roles* involved ego-centric behaviors that call attention to the individual, not the group, and distract or disrupt the group dynamic.

Table: Group Roles

Task Roles	Initiator: propose goals, plans of action or activities Information giver: offers facts, information, evidence, personal experiences Information seeker: asks others for facts, information evidence, personal experiences. Evaluator-critic: analyzes suggestions for strengths and weaknesses Clarifier: makes ambiguous statements clearer, interpretes issues Elaborator: develops an idea previously expressed by giving examples, illustrations, explanations. Recorder: takes notes on the group discussions, important decisions, and commitments to action
Relational/ Maintenance Roles	Supporter: Encourages everyone, making sure they have what they need to get the job done Gatekeeper: Helps members gain the floor and have opportunities to speak. Harmonizer: Helps manage conflict within the group, facilitating common ground, helping define terms, and contributing to consensus Tension-releaser: Uses humor and light-hearted remarks, as well as nonverbal demonstrations (brings a plate of cookies to the group), to reduce tensions and work-related stress Compromiser: Focuses on common ground, common points of agreement, and helps formulate an action plan that brings everyone together towards a common goal, task, or activity Standard Setter: Sets the standard for conduct and helps influence the behavior of group members
Individualistic/Self-Centered Roles	Aggressor: Belittles other group members Block: Frequently raises objections Deserter: Abandons group or is very unreliable Dominator: Demand control and attention Recognition-seeker: Frequently seeks praise Confessor: Uses the group to discuss personal problems Joker or Clown: Frequent use of distracting humor, often attention-seeking behavior.

Three important points result from considering Benne & Sheets Group Role Behaviors. First, an effective group will have both task and relational/maintenance behaviors reflected in its discussions. Both of these group role types, and their behaviors, are important for groups to function effectively. Next, individuals can perform more than one group role type during a group discussion. Nimble group members will recognize when a task related behavior might be needed (e.g., getting the group to start a process), and also recognize when a relationally oriented behavior is needed (e.g., gatekeeping to ensure everyone has an opportunity to contribute). Finally, effective group role behaviors done at an inappropriate time, or to excess, can turn into individualistic/self serving behaviors.

For example, if someone in your group always makes everyone laugh, that can be a distinct asset when the news is less than positive. At times when you have to get work done, however, the group clown may become a distraction. Notions of positive and negative will often depend on the context when discussing groups.

Just as the groupclown can have a positive effect in lifting spirits or a negative effect in distracting members, so a dominator may be exactly what is needed for quick action. An emergency physician doesn't have time to ask all the group members in the emergency unit how they feel about a course of

action; instead, a self-directed approach based on training and experience may be necessary. In contrast, the pastor of a church may have ample opportunity to ask members of the congregation their opinions about a change in the format of Sunday services; in this situation, the role of coordinator or elaborator is more appropriate than that of dominator.

The group is together because they have a purpose or goal, and normally they are capable of more than any one individual member could be on their own, so it would be inefficient to hinder that progress. But a blocker, who cuts off collaboration, does just that. If a group member interrupts another and presents a viewpoint or information that suggests a different course of action, the point may be well taken and serve the collaborative process. If that same group member repeatedly engages in blocking behavior, then the behavior becomes a problem. A skilled communicator will learn to recognize the difference, even when positive and negative aren't completely clear.

Key Takeaway

- Group members perform distinct roles that impact and influence the group in many ways.

Exercises

1. Think of a group of which you are currently a member. Create a list of the members of your group and see if you can match them to group roles as discussed in this section. Use describing words to discuss each member. Share and compare with classmates.
2. Think of a group of which you are no longer a member. Create a list of the members of the group and see if you can match them to group roles as discussed in this section. Use describing words to discuss each member. Share and compare with classmates.

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2.3 Norms & Ground Rules

Group Norms & Ground Rules

[Section Source](#)

Learning Objectives

1. Distinguish between group norms and ground rules
2. Create ground rules
3. Explain how to change future ineffective norms.

A new vice president came into an organization. At the end of her first weekly meeting with her staff members, she tossed a nerf ball to one of them and asked the person to say how she was feeling. When that person finished, the vice president asked her to toss the ball to someone else, and so on, until everyone had expressed himself or herself. This process soon became a regular feature of the group's meetings.

In our earlier section on group life cycles, you learned about Bruce Tuckman's model of forming, storming, norming, and performing. Along with roles, status, and trust, which we'll encounter in the next chapter, norms are usually generated and adopted after a group's "forming" and "storming" stages.

As a group moves from "forming" toward "performing," then, norms help guide its members along the way. Whether we see them or not, norms are powerful predictors of a group's behavior.

What Norms Are?

Group norms are informal expectations about of how group members should act and interact. They identify what behaviors are acceptable or not; good or not; right or not; or appropriate or not (O'Hair & Wieman, p. 19).

Norms may relate to how people look, behave, or communicate with each other. Tossing a nerf ball around a circle of workers is perhaps a peculiar way to start a meeting, and it probably doesn't contribute directly to achieving substantive goals, but it did represent a norm in the vice president's group we described—which, by the way, was a real group and not a product of imagination!

Some norms relate to how a group as a whole will act—e.g., when and how often it will meet, for instance. Others have to do with the behavior of individual group members and the roles those members play within the group.

By identifying what social behavior lies within acceptable boundaries, norms can help a group function smoothly and face conflict without falling apart (Hayes, p. 31).. Thus, they can constitute a potent force to promote positive interaction among group members.

Origin of Norms

In a new group, norms organically as members settle into their relationships and start to function together. People often assume that certain norms exist and accept them “by unspoken consent” (Galanes & Adams, p. 162),. in which case they are implicit norms.

Consider “same seat syndrome,” for example. How often have you found that people in a college classroom seem to gravitate every day to exactly the same chairs they’ve always sat in? Nobody says, “Hey, I’ve decided that this will be my chair forever” or “I see that that’s your territory, so I’ll never sit there,” do they?

Often norms are difficult for group members to express in words. What topics are okay or not okay to talk about during informal “chit-chat” may be a matter of unstated intuition rather than something that people can readily describe. Nevertheless, implicit norms may be extremely powerful, and even large groups are apt to have at least some implicit norms.

The cultural background each member brings to a group may lie beneath conscious awareness, yet it may exert a powerful influence on both that person’s and the group’s behavior and expectations. Just as a fish is unaware that it lives in water, a person may easily go through life and participate in group interactions without perceiving that he or she is the product of a culture.

Ground rules

As a group begins to go about their assigned work, it is important that the members discuss explicitly discuss their expectations, and create a set of group ground rules. **Ground rules** are explicit, agreed-on description of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Group ground rules are analogous to an organizations’ set of policies and procedure: they identify how members should act. For example, an organization may have a workplace policy involving wearing a uniform or answering the telephone in a certain way. For groups, it is important for groups to create their own set of expectations (i.e. ground rules). The creation of ground rules performs the following important functions:

1. Help groups keep order so that meaningful work can be accomplished,
2. Identify what the group values, wants and needs,
3. Promotes effective communication via shared expectations

Manuals, and even books, have been composed to provide members of groups with guidelines of how to behave. A manager in one organization we know wrote a policy in response to almost every problem or difficulty his division experienced. Because the manager served for more than 15 years in his position, the collection of these incident-based policies eventually filled a large tabbed binder. The bigger the group, the more likely it is that its norms will be rigid and explicit like these (Lamberton, L., & Minor-Evans, L., 2002).

Interaction, Procedure, Status, and Achievement Ground Rules

Ground rules can relate to 4 aspects of group work: interaction, procedure, status, and achievement (Engleberg & Wynn, p. 37) Let's look at each of these kinds of norms.

Interaction ground rules specify how people communicate in the group. Is it expected that everyone in the group should have an opportunity to speak about any topic that the group deals with? How long is it okay for one person to speak? Are political jokes ok? What are expectations regarding how we communicate disagreement?

Procedure-oriented ground rules identify how the group functions. Does it hold meetings according to an established schedule? Who speaks first when the group gets together? Does someone distribute a written record of what happened after every time the group gets together?

Status ground rules indicate the degree of influence that members possess and how that influence is obtained and expressed. Who decides when a group discussion has concluded? When and how are officers for the group elected?

Achievement ground rules relate to standards the group sets for the nature and amount of its work. Must members cite readings or the comments of authorities when they make presentations to the group? What happens to a group member who completes tasks late or fails to complete them at all?

Creating Effective Ground Rules

When groups go about the business of creating ground rules, they should use the following guidelines:

1. **Ground rules should be created by the group members.** Even though there are manuals and lists of ground rules that abound, effective group ground rules reflect the uniqueness of each group. Members might suggest ground rules that worked in another group, but each group has its own personality based on the memberships. There is no one size fits all list of ground rules. They should be discussed and agreed upon by the group members.
2. **Ground rules should be sufficient but not excessive.** The goal of creating ground rules is

to establish a foundation for the group work. Things will emerge, unplanned situations will arise. You cannot predict everything that might happen during the course of your group work, and that's not the goal of creating ground rules. A group's ground rules should sufficiently address the 4 aspects of group work identified above, but be succinct enough so that the members can remember the ground rules as they go about the group's work. So what does this mean? Well, having 2-3 ground rules isn't sufficient, and having 8+ ground rules is probably too excessive.

3. Ground rules should use concrete, measurable language. It is important to remember that everyone doesn't interpret words like "on time", "contribution" or "effective" in the same way. Misunderstandings and those dreaded group experiences many of us have had can often times be traced back to differences in how people interpret expectations. Good ground rules are concrete and measurable. Everyone knows if a ground rule has been followed or not. Below are some examples of ineffective and effective ground rule statements:

Ineffective Ground Rule	Effective Ground Rule
Meeting will start on time	Meetings will start within 5 minutes of the established meeting time.
Everyone will contribute to the project.	Members will provide at least one piece of new research during each meeting.
Members will interact via email.	Members are expected to check their emails daily, and respond to a group discussion within 24 hours of its initiation.

While some of you may be reading these statements and thinking to yourself, "Really?? We know what to do to be effective group members", I can tell you from my 20+ years in academia that what we think is "common sense" is not so common. What it means to be "respectful" varies. Your group doesn't need to try to document *all* the behaviors that qualify as "respectful", but have a conversation about the concept and identify what respectful might look like to your group members (e.g., "Members will be respectful and not interrupt one another.")

Even when groups establish effective ground rules at the start of their work, norms will continue to emerge. It is important for group members to identify emergent norms, and consider whether a new ground rule needs to be established.

Responding to Emerging Group Norms

What does it mean to you if you say something is "normal"? Probably it means that you feel it's usual and right—correct? Part of your reaction to something you consider "normal," therefore, is likely to be a

sense of comfort and assurance. Furthermore, you wouldn't want to intentionally engage in or be around someone who engages in behavior which you don't consider to be normal. The term for such behavior is, after all, "abnormal." Consider the following example:

In a large organization, a male colleague told a joke while he and some other employees waited for a staff meeting to start. In the joke, a man who thought he had cleverly avoided being executed found that he had been outsmarted and was going to be raped instead. The people who heard the joke laughed, work-related topics came up, and the staff meeting commenced.

Sometimes differences of opinion in groups deal with inconsequential topics or norms and therefore cause no difficulty for anyone. Who cares, for instance, whether people bring coffee with them to morning meetings or not, or whether they wear bright-colored articles of clothing?

Up to a certain point, we all tend to accommodate differences between ourselves and others on a daily basis without giving it a second thought. We may even pride ourselves on our tolerance when we accept those differences.

On the other hand, we know that things which are customary aren't always right. Slavery was once considered normal throughout the world, for instance, and so was child labor. Obviously, we may find it challenging to confront norms that differ significantly from our personal beliefs and values.

Think back to the story about the colleague at the staff meeting. Evidently, he thought that the norms of the organization permitted him to tell his joke. When his fellow employees laughed, he probably also assumed that they found the joke to be amusing.

After the meeting, however, as four or five people lingered in the room, one of the female staffers spoke. "It's really hard for me to say this," she said, "but I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't tell jokes about rape."

The woman who expressed herself to the group made clear that she felt its norms needed to be changed if jokes about rape were considered acceptable. The woman was right in two respects. First, rape is no laughing matter, and a group norm which condones jokes about it ought to be rejected. Second, when she told her colleagues "It's really hard for me to say this," she illustrated that it's difficult to confront other people to propose that they change the norms they operate under.

In this case, one group member submitted a polite request to her fellow group members. As it turned out, those members accepted her request. The man who told the joke apologized, and to our knowledge no more jokes about rape were told in the group.

Things aren't always this straightforward, though. Therefore, adopting a systematic approach may prepare you for the wide-ranging situations in which you or your fellow group members want to change your norms. What principles and behaviors, then, should you follow if you feel a group norm is ineffective, inappropriate, or wrong?

Lamberton and Minor-Evans (pp. 226-227) recommend that you follow these steps:

1. Confirm whether everyone in the group agrees on the purpose of the group. Different norms will arise from different assumptions about the group's purpose and will fit the different assumptions on which they are based. Misunderstandings or disagreements about the purpose of the group need to be identified and worked through.
2. See if other people's understanding of the group's current norms is the same as yours. Again, it's important to know whether other members of the group agree on what norms the group actually has.

Remember the examples at the beginning of this section, in which a small daughter thought that holding hands before dinner was a time for silent counting and a man thought it was okay to bring charts and graphs to a social occasion? They illustrate that it's possible to completely misconstrue a group norm even in close, ongoing relationships and at any age.

3. Explain to the group why you feel a particular norm ought to be changed.
4. Offer a plan for changing the norm, including a replacement for it which you feel will be better, drawing upon the full potential of each member.
5. If necessary, change the composition and role assignments of the group.

Key Takeaway

- Group norms and ground rules affect almost all aspects of a group's activities.
- It is important for new groups to spend time creating ground rules.
- Even groups who create ground rules will need to continue to monitor the patterns of behaviors (i.e., norms) that emerge throughout their group work.
- When a destructive or ineffective norm emerges, group members should address this concern so that the group can continue their work in a productive environment.

Exercises

1. Think of an unusual norm you've encountered in a group you were part of. Do you know how and from whom it originated? If not, what is your speculation about its origin?
2. Identify an implicit norm in a group you were part of. Would it have been a good idea to make the norm explicit instead? Why or why not?
3. Describe a group ground rule you've experienced that dealt with either interaction, procedure, status, or achievement.
4. Identify two norms that you've encountered in a group setting. Did you observe the norms being enforced in some way? If so, what kind of enforcement was employed, and by whom?
5. Describe a time when you were part of a group and believed that one of its norms needed to be changed. What made you feel that way? Was your view shared by anyone else in the group?
6. What steps have you taken to challenge a group norm? How did the other members of the

group respond to your challenge? If you had a chance to go back and relive the situation, what if anything would you change about your actions? (If you don't recall ever having challenged a group norm, describe a situation in which someone else did so).

O'Hair, D. & Wiemann, M.O. (2004). *The essential guide to group communication*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

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Galanes, G., & Adams, K. (2013). *Effective group discussion: Theory and practice*. New York: McGraw-Hill

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.Engleberg, I.N., & Wynn, D. R. (2013). *Working in groups* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

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2.4 Leadership

Page Source

What is Leadership?

Leadership is probably the single most discussed topic in business literature today. An effective leader can inspire an organization to produce better quality products, ensure first-rate service to its customers, and make amazing profits for its stockholders. An ineffective leader, on the other hand, can not only negatively impact products, services, and profits, but ineffective leaders can also bring down an organization to the point of ruin. There should be no surprise that organizational leaders are very important and leave a lasting legacy not just on the companies they run but also on society as a whole. The following is a list of some important business leaders (you may or may not have heard of) from the 20th and 21st centuries along with a brief description of what they accomplished. This amazing list of business leaders run the gamut from the small-town entrepreneur to people taking the helm at large international organizations. All of them are leaders, but their organizations vary greatly in what they deliver and their general purpose (both for-profit and non-profits).

Name	Company	Accomplishment(s)
Jeff Bezos	Amazon.com	Revolutionized how people buy products using the internet and then spurred a secondary revolution in the use of electronic books with the Amazon Kindle.
Cynthia Carroll	Anglo American	After becoming CEO of Anglo American in 2007, a large international energy company based out of London, Carroll became very concerned over the number of fatalities in its South African mining facility. After another fatality, she shut the mining operation down for indefinitely shut down the operation and invited all relevant stakeholders to the table to discuss mining safety. Her leadership ultimately led to a complete retraining of mine workers and a revolution in mining safety in South Africa. Her leadership on the topic led to a 62% reduction in fatalities within her own company in just five years.
Ruth Handler	Mattel & Nearly Me	Cofounder of the giant children's toy empire Mattel. Her most lasting legacy is probably the creation of the Barbie and Ken dolls. After retiring from Mattel, she heads the Nearly Me company, which sold prosthetic devices for victims of breast cancer.
Joan Ganz Cooney	Sesame Workshop	Founded the Children's Television Workshop (now Sesame Workshop) and invited the collaboration of Jim Henson. Today, there are 145 Sesame Workshop locations around the world creating unique and culturally specific programs for young children. Sesame Street has won 118 Emmys, more than any other show in history, and 8 Grammys over the years.
Hu Maoyuan	SAIC Motor Corporation	Maoyuan is the CEO of the SAIC Motor Corporation, the largest state-run automotive manufacturer in China. Historically, the organization has used partnerships with other automotive giants (e.g., GM, Volkswagon, etc.) to fuel its automotive needs. Under Maoyuan's leadership he is now trying to be an exporter of Chinese engineered and built cars around the world.

While the above list of diverse leaders is interesting, examining what others have done (and are doing) is not necessarily the best way to help us understand what “leadership” actually is. However, before we can explain what “leadership” is, we need to differentiate between two terms that are often confused for each other: management and leadership.

Management

When one hears the word “management,” there is an immediate corporatization of the concept that tends to accompany the term. However, management (the noun) or managing (the verb) are very important parts of any organization. With the rise of the modern corporation during the industrial revolution, there was a decent amount of research examining how one should manage. For our purposes, we define the term **manage** as the communicative process where an individual or group of individuals helps those below them in an organizational hierarchical structure accomplish the organization's goals. Notice that the term is communication focused and active. Meaning that managing is something that is active and ongoing. Therefore, **management** would refer to those individuals who use communication to help an organization achieve its goals through the proper utilization organizational resources (e.g., employees, facilities, etc...). Levitt (1976) describes management as follows: “Management consists of the rational assessment of a situation and the systematic selection of goals and purposes (what is to be done?); the systematic development of strategies to achieve these goals; the marshaling of the required resources; the rational design, organization, direction, and control of the activities required to attain the selected purposes; and, finally, the motivating and rewarding of

people to do the work” (p. 72). Notice that management is focused on the day-to-day accomplishing of an organization’s goals. Furthermore, management must rally their employees to accomplish these goals through motivation, rewards, and/or punishments. Lastly, management must ensure that they have the necessary resources to enable their employees to accomplish the organization’s goals.

Leadership

Whereas management is focused on accomplishing the organization’s goals, leadership is ultimately envisioning and articulating those goals to everyone. Hackman and Johnson define leadership from a communication perspective in this fashion, “**Leadership** is human (symbolic) communication, which modifies the attitudes and behaviors of others in order to meet shared group goals and needs.”

Management vs. Leadership

So, how do we distinguish between management and leadership. One of the first researchers to really distinguish between management and leadership was Abraham Zaleznik who wrote that organizations often are caught between two conflicting needs, “one, for managers to maintain the balance of operations, and one for leaders to create new approaches and imagine new areas to explore”(Zaleznik, 1977, p. 67). Notice that Zaleznik argues that management is about maintaining the path of the organization and about handling the day-to-day operations of the organization. Leadership, on the other hand, is about creativity, innovation, and vision for the organization. Look back at the list of leaders profiled, all of these leaders had a clearly vision for their organization that was articulated to their followers. If these followers hadn’t been persuaded by their leader, none of these leaders’ accomplishments would be known today. While leaders often get the bulk of notoriety, we would be remiss to remind you that every effective leader has a team of managers and employees that help the leader accomplish the organization’s goals. As such, leadership and management are symbiotic and both are highly necessary for an organization to accomplish its basic goals. In a study by Shamus, the researcher set out to empirically investigate the difference between leadership and management by asking 49 leaders and senior executives in the construction industry in Singapore to differentiate between the concepts of leadership and management. Overall, four clear difference themes emerged in his research: definition, conceptual, functional, and behavioral.

Definitional Differences

The first differences noted in this research are what Toor called “definitional differences.” In essence, while there is no clearly agreed upon definition for the term “leadership,” Toor (2011) noted that management was “described by fundamental functions that include planning, organizing, leading, and controlling organizational

resources” (p. 313). In essence, leadership tends to be characterized by terms like vision, inspiration, and motivation, while management was defined by terms like action, day-to-day running of the

organization, and the mundane aspects of making an organization function. In essence, leadership is defined by the ability to create a vision for the organization that managers can then carry out on a day-to-day basis.

Conceptual Distinctions

Toor admits that often people have a hard time clearly distinguishing between the terms “leadership” and “management” because there is a thin line between the two concepts. As one member of Toor’s (2011) study noted, “Leadership is something that subordinates or followers look up to. A leader would be able to manage well, too. But managers are not necessarily good leaders, and subordinates look up to them for instructions, not guidance” (p. 314). In essence, leadership encompasses management but is seen as “more than” just management. Many of Toor’s research participants suggest that all good leaders would have to be good managers, but not all good managers make good leaders.

Functional Divergences

When interviewing the various Singapore leaders, functional divergences also emerged in Toor’s research. Leadership was characterized by two primary functions: challenging and empowering. In essence, leaders should challenge their followers to do more and then empower them to take chances, make decisions, and

innovate. Whereas, management was characterized by two different functions: imposing and stability/order. From this perspective, management should impose guidelines and ideas that are generated by organizational leadership on their followers in an attempt to create some semblance of stability and order within the

organization. In essence, management is not making the “big” decisions, but rather relaying those decisions to their subordinates and then ensuring that those decisions get implemented within the organization itself.

Behavioral Differences

Lastly, Toor found what he termed “behavioral differences,” or there are clearly two different behavioral sets that govern management and leadership. Managers manage their subordinates work and leaders lead by example. While these explanations are not overtly concrete, one of the participants in Toor’s study put it

this way, “Maybe the difference is basically that you just manage in management, and you lead in

leadership. In management, you enforce the regulations, whereas in leadership, you lead by example. In management, people don't follow you; they obey you. In leadership, people follow you by their own choice." Overall, there are clear distinctions (although admittedly convoluted) between the two terms "leadership" and "management." We hope this brief discussion of this research has at least grasped that there are fundamental differences between the two concepts. The rest of this chapter is really devoted to leadership.

Theoretical Approaches to Leadership

As with most major academic undertakings, there is little agreement in what makes a leader. Since the earliest days of the study of business, there have been discussions of leadership. However, leadership is hardly a discussion that was originated with the advent of the academic study of Communication Studies. In fact, the oldest known text in the world, *The Precepts of Ptah-hotep*, was a treatise written for the Pharaoh Isesi's son (of the fifth dynasty in Egypt) about being an effective Pharaoh (or leader). Although it's relatively easy in hindsight to

look at how effective an organizational leader was based on her or his accomplishments, determining whether or not someone will be an effective leader prior to their ascension is a difficult task. To help organizations select the "right" person for the leadership role, numerous scholars have come up with a variety of

ways to describe and explain leadership. According to Hackman and Johnson (2000), "Over the past 100 years, five primary approaches for understanding and explaining leadership have evolved: the *traits approach*, the *situational approach*, the *functional approach*, the *relational approach*, and the *transformational approach*

[emphasis in original]" (p. 72). The rest of this section is going to explore these different approaches to leadership.

Trait Approach

The first major approach to leadership is commonly referred to as the **trait approach**. This approach looks for a series of physical, mental, or personality traits that effective leaders possess that neither non-leaders nor ineffective leaders possess. We start with this approach to leadership predominantly because it's the oldest of the major approaches to leadership and is an approach to leadership that is still somewhat in existence today. The first major study to synthesize the trait literature was conducted by Ralph Stogdill in 1948. In 1970, Stogdill reanalyzed the literature and found six basic categories of characteristics that were associated with leadership: physical, social background, intelligence and ability, personality, task related, and social. Research has found a variety of different traits associated

with leadership over the years.. In fact, one of the fundamental problems with the trait approach to leadership is that research has provided a never-ending list of personality traits that are associated with leadership, so no clear or replicable list of traits exists.

Even communication researchers have examined the possible relationship between leadership and various communication traits. In an experimental study conducted by Limon and La France (2005), the researchers set out to see if an individual's level of three communication traits could predict leadership emergence within a group. The three communication traits of interest within this study were communication apprehension, argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness. Ultimately, the researchers found that an individual's level of argumentativeness positively predicted an individual's likelihood of emerging as a leader while an individual's communication apprehension negatively predicted an individual's likelihood of emerging as a leader. Verbal aggression, in this study, was found to have no impact on an individual's emergence as a leader. In other research, leader verbal aggression was found to negatively impact employee level of satisfaction and organizational commitment while argumentativeness positively related to employee level of satisfaction and organizational commitment.

These three communication traits demonstrate that an individual leader's communication traits can have an impact on both an individual's emergence as a leader and how followers will perceive that leader. The original notion that leaders were created through a magic checklist of

personality traits has fallen out of favor in the leadership community. However, more recent developments in leadership theory have been reintegrating the importance of personality traits as important aspects of the process of leadership. Shane (2010) he argues that while genetics may not cause humans to become leaders or entrepreneurs, one's genetic makeup probably influences the likelihood that someone would become a leader or entrepreneur in the first place. In the same vein, Dinh and Lord (2007) have argued that personality traits should be examined within specific leadership events instead of as fundamental aspects of some concrete phenomenon called "leadership." In essence, Dinh and Lord argue that an individual's personality traits may impact how they behave within specific leadership situations but that specific personality traits may not be seen across all leaders in all leadership contexts.

Situational Approach

As trait approaches became more passé, new approaches to leadership began emerging that theorized that leadership was contingent on a variety of situational factors (e.g., task to be completed, leader-follower relationships/interactions, follower motivation/commitment, etc.). These new theories of leadership are commonly referred to as the **situational approaches**. While there are numerous leadership theorists who fall into the situational approach, we're going to briefly examine one: Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory.

Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory

The basic model proposed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard is also divided into task (leader directive behavior) and relational (leader supportive behavior) dimensions. However, Hersey and Blanchard's theory of leadership starts with the basic notion that not all followers need the same task or relationship-based leadership, so the type of leadership a leader should utilize with a follower depends on the follower's

readiness (e.g., experience, motivation, ability). In the basic model seen in the figure below, you have both dimensions of leadership behavior (supportive and directive). Based on these two dimensions, Hersey and Blanchard propose four basic types of leadership leaders can employ with various followers depending on the situational needs of the followers: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating (Hersey & Blanchard, 2000).



Directing (Telling)

The first type of leader discussed in Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory is the **directing leader** (originally termed telling). A directing leader is needed by followers who do lack both the skill and the motivation to perform a task. Hersey and Blanchard recommend against supportive behavior at this point because the supporting behavior may be perceived as a reward by the follower. Instead, these followers need a lot of task-directed communication and oversight.

Coaching (Selling)

The second type of leader discussed in Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory is the **coaching leader** (originally termed selling). The coaching leader is necessary when followers have a high need for direction and a high need of support. Followers who are unable to perform or lack the confidence to perform the task but are committed to the task and/or organization need a coaching leader. In this case, the leader needs to have more direct control over the follower's attempt to accomplish the task, but the leader should also provide a lot of encouragement along the way.

Supporting (Participating)

Next, you have followers who still require low levels of direction from leaders but who need more support from their leaders. Hersey and Blanchard see these followers as individuals who more often than not have requisite skills but still need their leader for motivation. As such, **supporting leaders** should set about creating organizational environments that foster these followers' motivations.

Delegating (Delegating)

Lastly, when a follower is both motivated and skilled, he or she needs a **delegating leader**. In this case, a leader can easily delegate tasks to this individual with the expectations that the follower will accomplish the tasks. However, leaders should not completely avoid supportive behavior because if a follower feels that he or she is being completely ignored, the relationship between the leader and follower could sour.

Functional Approach

In both the trait and situational approaches to leadership, the primary outcome called "leadership" is a series of characteristics that help create the concept. The **functional approach**, on the other hand, posits that it's not a series of leadership characteristics that make a leader, but rather a leader is someone who looks like, acts like, and communicates like a leader. To help us understand the functional approach to leadership, we'll examine Benne and Sheats' Classification of Functional Roles in Groups.

Benne and Sheats' Classification of Functional Roles in Groups

Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats did not exactly set out to create a tool for analyzing and understanding the functional aspects of leadership. Instead, their 1948 article titled "Functional Roles of Group

Members” was designed to analyze how people interact and behave within small group or team settings. The basic premise of Benne and Sheat’s 1948 article was that different people in different group situations will take on a variety of roles within a group. Some of these roles will be prosocial and help the group accomplish its basic goals, while other roles are clearly antisocial and can negatively impact a group’s ability to accomplish its basic goals. Benne and Sheats categorized the more productive roles as belonging to one of two groups: task and group building and maintenance roles. **Task roles** are those taken on by various group members to ensure that the group’s task is accomplished. **Maintenance roles**, on the other hand, are those roles people take on that are “designed to alter or maintain the group way of working, to strengthen, regulate and perpetuate the group as a group.” (Benne & Sheats, 2007, p. 30-35)). The more **individualistic (unproductive) roles** are roles group members take on that aren’t relevant or helpful to the group and its work. Individuals embodying these roles will actually prevent the group from accomplishing its task in a timely and efficient manner. So, you may be wondering how these actually relates back to the notion of leadership. To help us understand why these roles are functions of leadership, let’s turn to the explanation provided by Hackman and Johnson (2009):

Roles associated with the successful completion of the task and the development and maintenance of group interaction help facilitate goal achievement and the satisfaction of group needs. These roles serve a leadership function. Roles associated with the satisfaction of individual needs do not contribute to the goals of the group as a whole and are usually not associated with leadership. By engaging in task-related and group-maintenance role behaviors (and avoiding individual role behavior), a group member can perform leadership functions and increase the likelihood that he or she will achieve leadership status with the group. (p. 89).

In essence, leaders are people who perform task and relational roles while people who are non-leaders tend to focus on their own desires and needs and not the needs of the group itself. As such, each of the task and maintenance roles can be considered functions of effective leadership.

Task Role Behaviors	Description of Communication Behavior
Initiator/Orienting	Proposing goals, plans of action, activities
Information Seeker-Giver	Asking for or giving information
Opinion Seeker-Giver	Asking for or giving opinions
Clarifier	Making ambiguous statements clearer, interpreting issues
Summarizer	Reviewing/paraphrasing what was said
Procedural	Suggesting agenda or process, sequence or flow.

Maintenance	Role Behaviors	Description of Communication Behavior
Gatekeeper		Helps all members take turns speaking
Harmonizer		Reduces tension by reconciling disagreements, suggesting compromises
Tension reliever		Reduces status differences, encourages informality and joking
Supporter		Agreement or otherwise expressing support for another's' comment.

Individual	Role Behaviors	Description of Communication Behavior
Withdrawer		Avoids participating, refuses to take a stand or give a response
Blocking		Prevents progress by raising objections without providing alternative.
Recognition Seeking		Seeks spotlight and bosting on personal achievements
Self-Confessor		Uses group as audience to report on personal matters
Dominator		Manipulates group and tries to take over direction of group
Joker		Lack of involvement by telling stories and jokes that don't help the group

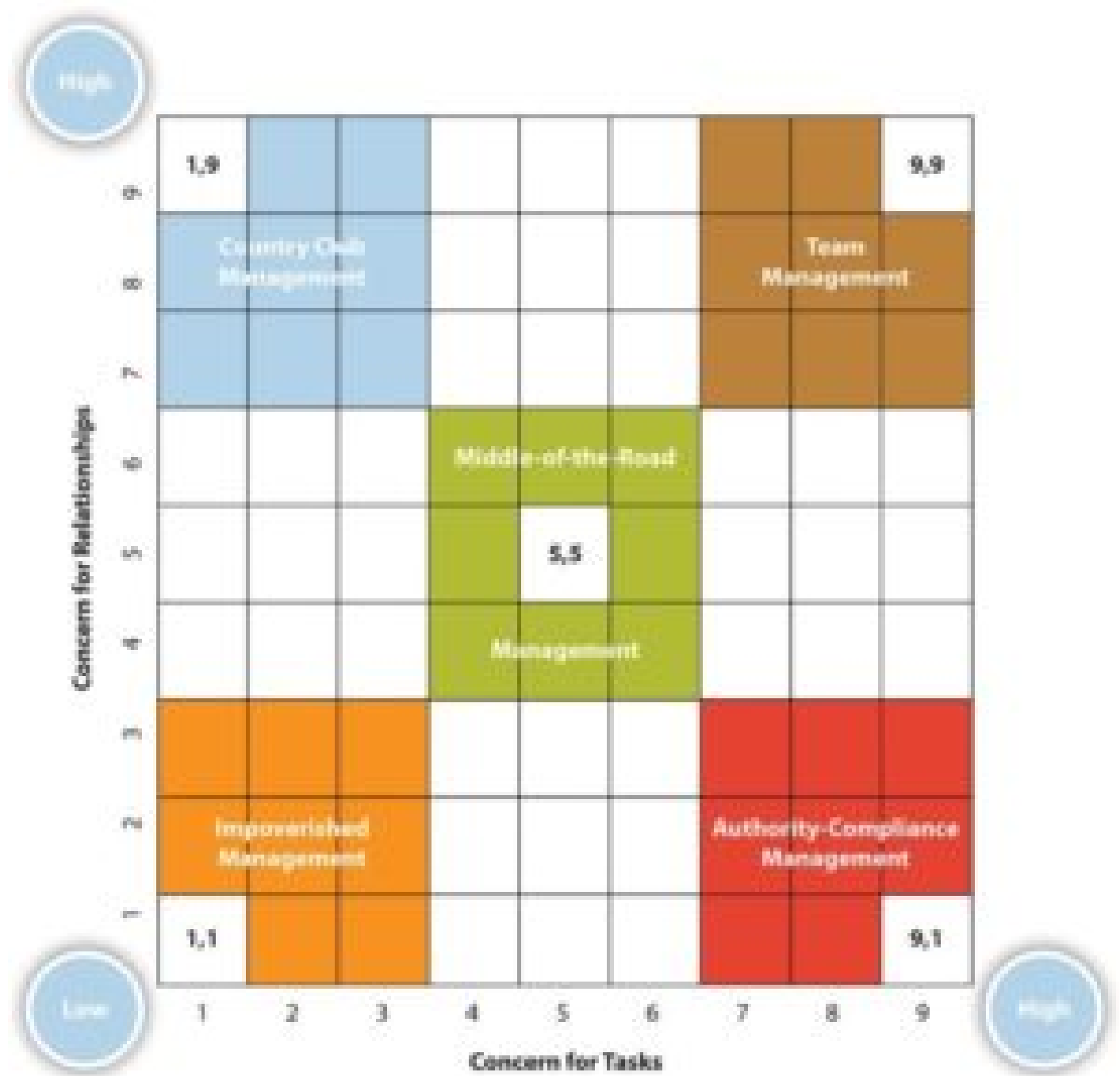
Relational Approach

The next approach to leadership is called the **relational approach** because it focuses not on traits, characteristics, or functions of leaders and followers, but instead the relational approach focuses on the types of relationships that develop between leaders and followers. To help us understand the relational approach to leadership, let's examine Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid.

Robert Blake & Jane Mouton's Managerial Grid

While the grid is called a "management" grid, the subtitle clearly specifies that it is a tool for effective leadership. In the original grid created in 1965, the two researchers were concerned with whether or not a leader was concerned with her or his followers or with production. In the version we've recreated for you, we've relabeled the two as concern for relationships and concern for tasks to keep consistent with other leadership theories we've discussed in this chapter. The basic idea is that on each line of the axis (x-axis refers to task-focused leadership; y-axis refers to relationship-focused leadership) there are nine steps. Where an individual leader's focus both for relationships and tasks will dictate where he or she falls as a leader on the Managerial Grid. As such, we end up with five basic management styles: impoverished, authority compliance, country club, team, and middle-of-the-road. Let's look at each of

these in turn.



Impoverished Management

The basic approach a leader takes under the **impoverished management style** is completely hands off. This leader places someone in a job or assigns that person a task and then just expects it to be accomplished without any kind of oversight. In Blake and Mouton's (2011) words, "the person managing 1,1 has learned to 'be out of it,' while remaining in the organization... [this manager's]

imprint is like a shadow on the sand. It passes over the ground, but leaves no permanent mark.”(p. 308-322).

Authority-Compliance Management

The second leader is at the 9,1 coordinates in the leadership grid. The **authority compliance management style** has a high concern for tasks but a low concern for establishing or fostering relationships with her or his followers. Consider this leader the closest to resemble Fredrick Taylor’s scientific management style of leadership. All of the decision-making is made by the leader and then dictated to her or his followers. Furthermore, this type of leader is very likely to micromanage or closely oversee and criticize followers as they set about accomplishing the tasks given to them.

Country Club Management

The third type of manager is called the **country club management style** and is the polar opposite of the authority-compliance manager. In this case, the manager is almost completely concerned about establishing or fostering relationships with her or his followers, but the task(s) needing to be accomplished disappears into the background. When assigning tasks to be accomplished, this leader empowers her or his followers and believes that the followers will accomplish the task and do it well without any kind of oversight. This type of leader also adheres to the advice of Thumper from the classic Disney movie *Bambi*, “If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all.”

Team Management

The next leadership style is at the high ends of concern for both task and relationships, which is referred to as the **team management style**. This type of leader realizes that “effective integration of people with production is possible by involving them and their ideas in determining the conditions and strategies of work. Needs of people to think, to apply mental effort in productive work and to establish sound and mature relationships with one another are utilized to accomplish organizational requirements.” (Blake & Mouton, 2011, p. 317). Under this type of management, leaders believe that it is their purpose as leaders to foster environments that will encourage creativity, task accomplishment, and employee morale/motivation.

Middle-of-the-Road Management

The final form of management discussed by Blake and Mouton was what has been deemed the **middle-**

of-the-road management style. The reasoning behind this style of management is the assumption that “people are practical, they realize *some* effort will have to be exerted on the job. Also, by yielding some push for production and considering attitudes and feelings, people accept the situation and more or less

‘satisfied’ [emphasis in original].” (Blake & Mouton, 2011, p. 308-322). In the day-to-day practicality of this approach, these leaders believe that any kind of extreme is not realistic, so finding some middle balance is ideal. If, and when, an imbalance occurs, these leaders seek out ways to eliminate the imbalance and get back to some state of moderation.

Transformational Approach

The final approach to leadership is one that clearly is popular among organizational theorists. Although the term “transformational leadership” was first coined by Downtown in 1973, the term was truly popularized by political sociologist James MacGregor Burns in 1978. In a 2001 study conducted by Lowe and Gardner, the researchers examined the types of articles that had been published in the premier academic journal on the subject of leadership. The researchers examined the types of research published in the journal over the previous ten years, which found that one-third of the articles published within the journal examined transformational leadership. To help understand leadership from this approach, it’s important to understand the two sides of leadership: transactional and transformational leadership. On the one hand you have **transactional leadership**, which focuses on an array of exchanges that can occur between a leader and her or his followers. The most obvious way transactional leadership is seen in corporate America is the use of promotions and pay raises. Transactional leaders offer promotions or pay raises to those followers who meet or exceed the leader’s goals. Rewards are seen as a tool that a leader utilizes to get the best performance out of her or his followers. If the rewards no longer exists, followers will no longer have the external motivation to meet or exceed goals.

Transformational leadership, on the other hand, can be defined as the “process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower.” (Northhouse, 2007, p. 176). In essence, transformational leadership is more than just getting followers to meet or exceed goals because the leader provides the followers rewards. Bass (1985) proposed a more complete understanding of transformational leadership and noted three factors of transformational leadership: charismatic and inspirational leadership, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

• Charismatic and Inspirational Leadership

The first factor Bass described for transformational leaders was charismatic and inspirational

leadership. **Charisma** is a unique quality that not everyone possesses. Those who are charismatic have the ability to influence and inspire large numbers of people to accomplish specific organizational goals or tasks. Where the transactional leader rewards followers for accomplishing tasks, transformational leaders inspire their followers to accomplish goals and tasks with no promise of rewards. Instead, followers are inspired by a transformational leader to accomplish goals and tasks because they share the leader's vision for the future. Bass later made inspirational motivation a unique factor unto itself to clearly separate its impact from charismatic leadership.

- **Intellectual Stimulation**

The second characteristic of transformational leaders is intellectual stimulation. In essence, transformational leaders "stimulates followers to be creative and innovative and to challenge their own beliefs and values as well as those of the leader and the organization." (Northhouse, 2007, p. 183). While both transactional and transformational leaders engage in intellectual stimulation themselves, the purpose of this intellectual stimulation differs. Transactional leaders tend to focus on how best to keep their organizations and the systems within their organizations functioning. Very little thought to innovation or improving the organization occurs because transactional leaders focus on maintaining everything as-is. Transformational leaders, on the other hand, are always looking for new and innovative ways to manage problems. As such, they also encourage those around them to "think outside the box" in an effort to make things better.

- **Individualized Consideration**

The last factor of transformational leadership is individualized consideration, or seeing followers as individuals in need of individual development. Transformational leaders evaluate "followers' potential both to perform their present job and to hold future positions of greater responsibility. The leader sets examples and assigns tasks on an individual basis to followers to help significantly alter their abilities and motivations as well as to satisfy immediate organizational needs." (Bass, 1985). The goal of this individualized consideration is to help individual followers maximize their potential, which maximizes the leader's use of her or his resources at the same time.

Summary Remarks

The topic of leadership has a long and varied history within the field of communication studies. There are a variety theoretical approaches used to explain leadership, a small handful of which were described above. Each of these theory attempts to isolate and explain certain features (e.g., goals, membership relationships, etc), that affect the demonstration of leadership within a group and an organization. Leaderships is a complex communicative phenomena that can have powerful positive and negative effects on an organization.

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Levitt, T. (1976). Management and the post industrial society. The Public Interest, summer, 69-103, pg. Hackman, M. S., & Johnson, C. E. (2009). Leadership: A communication perspective (5th ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland, pg. 11.

2.5 Self Managed Work Teams

[Page Source](#)

Self-managed work teams have been described as one of the more important approaches to improving team performance in recent years. Other teams with this style of team organization are described as 'self-directed teams' and 'semi-autonomous work groups', which gives some sense of how a self-managed team manages itself.

A **self-managed work team** is a team in which the members take collective responsibility for ensuring that the team operates effectively and meets its targets. Typically, members of self-managed teams are employees within an organization who work together, within a broad framework of aims and objectives, to reach a common goal. When setting up the team, two of the parameters that have to be defined are the levels of **responsibility** and **autonomy** that are given to the self-managed team. So teams can have varying degrees of autonomy, from teams who have considerable control over their work, and the boundaries within which they operate, to self-managed teams that are set boundaries by team leaders. (Some authors give different names to teams at different ends of this spectrum. In this course we use the same term.)

In general, self-managed work teams have considerable discretion over:

- the work done and setting team goals
- how work is achieved – which processes are used and how work is scheduled
- internal performance issues – distributing the work and the contribution made by each member of the team
- decision making and problem solving.

Benefits of self-managed work teams

Individual team members may have the opportunity to use their skills and experience outside their specified remit (or job title) within an organization. Since team roles within self-managed work teams are much more fluid than in hierarchical teams, team members may have increased discretion over their work, which can lead to greater motivation and improved performance. Team members may also have greater freedom to complement each other's skills. Finally, team leaders can act more strategically, resulting in fewer surprises and purposeful team development, since they are freed from some of the management tasks required of team leaders in hierarchical teams.

The benefits of self-managed teams include (based on Howell, 2001):

- *Cost savings*: Organizations such as RCAR Electronics in the USA reported annual savings of \$10 million following the implementation of self-managed teams.
- *Innovation*: Team members have the freedom to review and improve working practices.
- *Effective decision making*: Self-managed teams can develop quicker or more effective decision-making skills.
- *Increased productivity*: Teams work towards a common goal and are responsible for their own actions. When successful, self-managed teams can be 15–20 per cent more productive than other types of team.
- *Improved customer satisfaction*: Self-managed teams benefit organizational performance through improved sales figures and customer service. Companies have reported significantly lower customer returns and complaints.
- *Commitment*: Team members can become more involved in projects as a direct result of having increased autonomy and responsibility.
- *Motivation*: Team members have shared or equal responsibility so members are accountable for their actions.
- *Increased compatibility between employers and employees*: Self-managed teams can relieve stress for the leader, who is then able to concentrate on other tasks. The team is mutually supportive and members learn from each other instead of approaching the team leader for advice.

Leading a self-managed team

The leadership role in a self-managed work team is very different from that of a team leader in a traditional hierarchical team. In a hierarchical team the team leader allocates work. In contrast, in a self-managed work team, the leadership role involves taking on more of a supporting role, which includes identifying the long-term career and personal development needs of the team within the context of the overall organization. Table 2 compares the roles of a team leader in these two types of team.

Table 2 The roles of a team leader in a hierarchical team and a self-managed team

[Alternative version of table](#)

The team leadership role in a:	
Hierarchical team	Self-managed team
The role is vested in one individual.	The role may be shared.
To manage the team.	To support the team by providing (or arranging others to provide) coaching and advice.
To plan and allocate the work done by the team.	To agree, in discussion with the team, the standard of work and the aims, objectives and targets of the team.
To monitor and appraise the performance of team members in carrying out the tasks allocated to them.	To monitor the achievement of the team as a unit. To appraise individual performance.
To motivate the team members.	To provide the conditions for high motivation.
To act as the main contact point for communication between the team and the rest of the organization.	To facilitate the creation of channels of communication with the rest of the organization.

(Based on the Self-directed Teams topic, Good Practice Ltd.)

Potential problems with self-managed work teams

For all their potential benefits, successful self-managed teams are not without their problems. They can be difficult to set up, particularly if there is not a culture of using self-managed work teams in an organization. For example, the team may find it difficult to interact with other parts of the organization because of their different working practices. Individuals new to self-managed teams may be anxious if they perceive that they may be given extra responsibility. Conversely, team leaders may feel that their role is threatened by having some responsibility taken away from them. Everyone may need additional training to give them the extra skills that they may require in their new team. There can be more redundant communication in self-managed teams because there is often no clear structure for communication, obtaining guidance or making decisions. Consequently, guidance may be sought from the entire team and decisions will be made by discussion, rather than by reference to a team leader who is empowered to make decisions, as would be the norm in a project or operational team. The team leader must provide an initial structure until the team has established its rules and norms. Finally, an ever-present problem with teams is that of 'freeloaders'. If a member of a team does not meet their responsibilities this will impact upon the work of the other team members, and hence the productivity of the team as a whole.

Planning, preparation, ongoing communication and follow-up are all necessary for a transition towards self-managed work team working. For a self-managed work team to remain successful, its members must be tolerant of errors and allow for learning, and there must be trust both within the teams and between the team members and team leader. This will allow risks to be taken and information to be shared, and will foster a willingness to accept change

2.6a Facilitating Meetings

Meetings in Organizations

[Section Source](#)

One author wrote:

Once I ran across something in a book that really agitated me. The volume presented lists of ideas for living a happy and fulfilled life. One of the lists was headed "Five Great Ways to Find a Friend." Its first four ideas were to find a cause, find a church, find a class, and find a club. All those ideas seemed reasonable to me. Recommendation #5, however, was "find a committee." When I saw this, I immediately asked myself, "What were the authors of this book eating, drinking, or smoking when they wrote this? Who with more sense than a pencil eraser would suggest actually LOOKING FOR A COMMITTEE TO JOIN for any reason whatsoever?"

Phil Venditti

Are you lonely?

Tired of working on your own?
Do you hate making decisions?

HOLD A MEETING!

You can —

- See people
- Show charts
- Feel important
- Point with a stick
- Eat donuts
- Impress your colleagues

All on company time!



MEETINGS

THE PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO WORK

Are you lonely?

Source: <http://www.codinghorror.com/blog/2012/02/meetings-where-work-goes-to-die.html>

Getting Started

A college administrator we know overheard her seven-year-old daughter and another little girl talking about their parents. “What does your mother do?” asked the other child. “She goes to meetings,” replied the administrator’s child.

Whether in educational settings or business or elsewhere, meetings dominate the way many groups operate in American society. Estimates of the number of meetings that take place every day in our country range from 11 million to more than 30 million. One authority claims that the average chief executive officer spends 17 hours per week in meetings, whereas the average senior executive spends 23 hours per week.

If the average number of people in each of these meetings is only five and the average meeting lasts only one hour, this means that between 55,000,000 and 150,000,000 person-hours each day are being consumed by meetings. Assuming a 50-week work year, then, the total time devoted to meetings each year amounts to at least fifteen billion person-hours. As for you, yourself, one estimate is that you'll spend 35–50% of every workweek in meetings, for a total of more than 9,000 hours over the course of your lifetime.

If meetings are so central to what groups do, and so time-consuming, it makes sense to pay attention to how they're conducted. Like any other course of action, the process of engaging in meetings has a beginning, a middle, and an end. In our first section we'll consider the beginning—the planning part. Later we'll look at techniques for facilitating a meeting, the use of *Robert's Rules of Order*, and the best ways to follow up after a meeting.

Planning a Meeting

"Aller Anfang ist schwer." German saying ("All beginnings are difficult.")

"The beginning is half the job". Korean saying

"Meetings should be viewed skeptically from the outset, as risks to

productivity.” Jeff Atwood

Whether and how carefully you plan any undertaking will determine in large part how well it turns out. Bad planning makes it harder to achieve your goals; good planning makes it easier. This certainly applies to meetings of groups, so it’s wise for us to examine how to plan those meetings effectively. Before we consider the ins and outs of that planning, however, let’s reflect on the proper role of meetings.

What Are Meetings for?

Office equipment and supplies constitute tools to support the work of most modern groups such as student teams in college classes, employees and executives in businesses, and collections of people in other organizations. None of those groups would say, however, that using copy machines and staplers is one of their goals. And none of them would visit a copy machine unless they had something they needed to reproduce. They wouldn’t grab a stapler, either, unless they had some papers to attach to each other.

Meetings resemble office supplies in at least one way: they can help a group accomplish its goals. But meetings are like office supplies in another way, too: they’re only a means toward reaching group goals, not an end in themselves. And sometimes they’re even antithetical to the efficient functioning of a group. One statistical analysis of workers’ reactions to meetings discovered a significant positive relationship between the number of meetings attended and both the level of fatigue and the sensation of being subjected to a heavy work load.

Remember these truths, therefore: If it is operating well, your group at some point probably adopted goals for itself. It may even have ranked those goals in order of importance. Members of a student team might, for example, decide that their joint goals are to earn a high grade on their group project, to have fun together, and to ensure that all of them can secure a positive recommendation from the instructor when they look for a job after graduation.

“To meet” is not one of the goals of any group, though, is it? No; your goals involve doing things, not meeting—not even meeting to decide what you’re going to do and whether you’re doing it. Therefore, you should not meet until and unless doing so will clearly contribute to a real goal of your group.

What this means in practical reality is that many, many regularly-scheduled meetings probably ought to be canceled, postponed, or at the very least substantially shortened. It means that meetings which aren’t part of an official, ongoing series should be conducted only if the people who would be participating agree that having the meetings is necessary to answer a question, solve a problem, make a decision, or ensure that people know what it is they are and should be doing. It means, in short, that a group’s “default position” should be never to meet.

If you’re in a position to decide whether and when a meeting will take place, you’re in control of what

some might consider other people's most valuable possession: their time. If you take this responsibility seriously and act on it wisely, your fellow group members will appreciate it—especially since many group leaders don't do so.

To Meet or Not to Meet: Criteria for calling a meeting (or not)

In the twenty-first century, technology offers techniques for accomplishing many group goals without meeting face to face. A helpful website called "Lifehacker" suggests that you follow these steps before scheduling in-person meetings:

- Get done what you can by email. If email doesn't accomplish your aims, use the telephone. Only if neither email nor the phone works should you meet face to face.
- Calculate the opportunity cost of a potential meeting. What task(s) that you could be engaged in at the time of the meeting will you have to postpone, or forgo entirely, because of the meeting? Is it worth it?
- Ask yourself what bad results, if any, will come to pass if you don't meet. What about if you don't meet this time, but later instead? If the bad things which you expect to arise if you don't meet are minimal or can be dealt with easily, don't meet, or at least not now.
- Ask if it's essential for everyone in the group to be at the same physical location at the time of the meeting. Assess whether the chore of just moving people's molecules from one place to another could render a face-to-face meeting undesirable.

If It's "to Meet," Then What?

Once you've decided that you should hold a meeting of some sort, you should do your best to make sure it will run well. Part of this undertaking is to ensure that all the members of your group understand the significance of the time they'll be devoting to getting together. To this end, you may want to create a list of basic obligations you feel everyone should fulfill with respect to all meetings. These obligations might include the following items:

- If you can't make it to a meeting, let the person who's organizing it know in a timely fashion. If you were expected to make a report or complete a task of some sort by the time of the meeting, either submit the report through someone else who will be there or inform the organizer of when you'll finish what you're committed to be doing. If you can find someone to fill in for you at the meeting, do it.
- If you can attend the meeting, prepare for it. Read meeting announcements and agendas. Take necessary and appropriate information and tools with you to each meeting. Come to meetings with an open mind and with a mental picture of what you may contribute to the discussion.
- Pay attention. Avoid side conversations or other actions that might keep you from understanding what's going on in a meeting.
- Be clear and concise. Seek parsimonious discourse. Don't speak unless you're sure you'll

improve over silence by doing so.

- Wait to express your own opinion until you're sure you understand others' views.
- Challenge assumptions, but stick to the topic and offer constructive rather than destructive criticism.
- Know when to give in on a matter of disagreement. Stick to your convictions, but consider carefully whether you need to have your way in any particular situation.

Guidelines for Planning a Meeting

Again, first of all: don't meet at all unless you need to. Once you've determined that a meeting will promote rather than hinder productivity, preparing for it well will give you a head start on maximizing its effectiveness. Here are six guidelines to take into account as you plan a meeting:

Identify the specific goals.

Identify the specific goals you plan to achieve in the meeting and the methods you'll use to decide if you've achieved them. Write the goals down. Reread them. Let them sit a while. Read them again to see if they're still appropriate and necessary.

If the goals of the meeting still look as though they're all valuable, remember Dwight Eisenhower's dictum that "What is important is seldom urgent, and what is urgent is seldom important." If you're not sure you can get everything done that you hope to in the time you'll have available, set priorities so that the most urgent items are taken care of quickly and you can postpone others without endangering what's most important to get done.

1. Decide carefully who needs to attend.

At one point, Amazon Corporation implemented a "two-pizza guideline" whereby it limited the number of people who composed its teams to the quantity that could be fed with two pizzas. If you calculate that the people you plan to invite to your meeting constitute larger than a two-pizza group, ask yourself if all of them really, really, really need to be there.

2. Produce a clear, brief, thorough, informative agenda.

Don't spring surprises on people. To give them a solid idea of what to expect, **divide the meeting's agenda into simple categories**. For each item, **name the individual in charge of it**, indicate **whether it will require action by the group**, and provide a **brief (1-2 sentence) explanation of the item**, and an **estimated length of time** for the discussion. (You'll need to confirm these estimates with the responsible parties, of course). If you expect some or all of the group's members to complete a **task before they arrive**, such as reading a report or generating possible solutions to a problem, **tell them so clearly**. Here's a [link](#) to a Google search for "meeting agenda". As you can see, there are a wide variety of examples you can modify to include the information above.

Here's a special note, too: Don't plan to stretch the contents of a meeting to fit a preordained time. Strive to cut down on how long you spend to handle each item on your agenda as much as you can so that members of your group can get back to their other responsibilities as soon as possible. **A shorter-than-expected meeting is usually a thing of joy.**

3. Pick a good venue.

If you have a choice, plan to gather in a place with plenty of light, comfortable furniture, and a minimum of distracting sounds or sights. You should be able to adjust the temperature, too, if people get too hot or cold. Make sure that any technological tools you think will be available to you are actually going to be on hand when you meet and that they're all functioning. Even if you expect to have access to a laptop computer and a projector, plan to bring a flip chart and markers so that people will be able to express and record ideas spontaneously during the meeting. And all other things being equal, find a place to meet regularly which is large enough and secure enough to allow your group members to store the "tools of their trade" there—flipcharts, writing supplies, reference books, etc.—between gatherings.

4. Make sure the participants receive the agenda.

Make sure people receive the agenda you've prepared in a timely fashion so they'll know why, when, where, and for how long the group is expected to meet. Agendas can be sent via email, and/or in a shared folder.

One college president from a Southern state maintained that he'd gotten his board of trustees to act "like trained seals," partly through thorough preparation for their meetings. In fact, the president actually ran practice meetings with the board to make sure there would be no surprises when the real meetings took place. You should practice, too, at gently, repeatedly, and clearly notifying other group members of the time and agenda of each meeting. For every person who thinks you're being repetitive, two or three will thank you for keeping them from overlooking the meeting.

If you're planning to meet in a place for the first time, or if you're expecting someone to attend your meeting for the first time, be sure to provide clear and complete directions to the location. With online tools such as mapquest.com and [google maps](http://google.com/maps) at your disposal, it should cost you very little time to locate such directions and send them to members of your group.

5. Arrive early.

Arrive early to size up and set up the place where you're meeting. Rooms sometimes get double-booked, furniture sometimes gets rearranged, technological tools such as LCD projectors and laptop computers sometimes break down or get taken away to be repaired, and so on and on. If you're the person in charge of leading the meeting, you need to know first if unexpected happenings like these have taken place.

Following these half-dozen guidelines won't guarantee that your meetings will be as successful as you wish them to be. If you don't heed them, however, you're apt to encounter considerable difficulty in

achieving that aim.

Facilitating a Meeting

Phil Venditti said:

Most committees I've served on have been inefficient, superfluous, repetitive, sluggish, unproductive, erratic, rancorous, or boring—or all of the above. By and large, they've wasted my time and the time of many other people. Frequently, everyone in the group eagerly helped identify jobs that needed to be accomplished, but just a few members ended up shouldering the burdens and completing the tasks. The rest did their best to avoid the group entirely and had to be cajoled or badgered to take part in meetings and work. Most of the meetings oscillated between tedium, dreariness, and fruitless conflict. In short, the meetings were cesspools of futility.

Preparing for group meetings well takes you a third of the way toward ensuring their productivity, and follow-up takes care of another third. The rest of the process is to run the meetings efficiently.

Make no mistake: facilitating a meeting well is difficult. It requires care, vigilance, flexibility, resilience, humility, and humor. In a way, in fact, to run a meeting effectively calls upon you to act the way a skilled athletic coach does, watching the action, calling plays, and encouraging good performance. Furthermore, you need to monitor the interaction of everyone around you and “call the plays” based on a game plan that you and your fellow group members have presumably agreed upon in advance. Finally, like a coach, you sometimes need to call timeouts—breaks—when people are weary or the action is starting to get raggedy or undisciplined.

Perils of Poor Facilitation

Unfortunately, many people lack effective meeting facilitation skills. As a result, a variety of negative results can take place as they fail to act capably as meeting facilitators. Here are some signs that there's “Trouble in River City” in a meeting:

- An argument starts about an established fact.
- Opinions are introduced as if they were truths.
- People intimidate others with real or imaginary “knowledge.”
- People overwhelm each other with too many proposals for the time available to consider them.
- People become angry for no good reason.
- People promote their own visions at the expense of everyone else's.
- People demand or offer much more information than is needed.
- Discussion becomes circular; people repeat themselves without making any progress toward

conclusions.

If you've experienced any of these symptoms of a poorly-facilitated meeting, you realize how demoralizing they can be for a group.

Important Skills for Facilitating a Meeting

So how you you facilitate a productive meeting? Here are some important skills for an effective meeting facilitator.

1. Start promptly...always.

Some time, calculate the cost to your group—even at minimum-wage rates—for the minutes its members sit around waiting for meetings to begin. You may occasionally be delayed for good reasons, but if you're chronically late you'll eventually aggravate folks who've arrived on time—the very ones whose professionalism you'd particularly like to reinforce and praise. Consistently starting on time may even boost morale: "Early in, early out" will probably appeal to most of a group's members, since they are likely to have other things they need to do as soon as a meeting ends.

2. Involve everyone in the conversation by using various question strategies.

One way to do this is by having members **take turn sharing out** (e.g., "Let's go around and update each other..."). Another way to get conversation flowing is by asking an **overheard question** (e.g., "What do people think about the marketing proposal?"). If you notice a specific group member hasn't had a turn to talk, you might employ a "gatekeeping" technique of asking a **direct question** (e.g., "Alice, did you have anything you wanted to add before we move on?"). As the meeting facilitator, you want to be careful not to answer all the questions posed by others in the group, as they may begin to see you as the default decision-maker. To avoid this, you can use **reverse questions** (e.g., "That's a great question, Jack, what do you think?") or **relay questions** (e.g., "Stacey raises a good question. What do y'all think?")

3. Keep the discussion on track.

Conversations that wander off topic for a few minutes can be ok (sometimes they are bonding moments for the group). You don't want to waste members' time, however, by spending too much time talking about irrelevant topic. If you need get the discussion back on track you might **remind the group of time pressures** (e.g., "I see we have 10 minutes left today so we should probably get back to deciding on..."), **summarizing and redirecting** (e.g., "Sounds like folks had a nice weekend. Let's move on to the next agenda item, however."), **using relevance challenges** (e.g., "I'm confused, you suggesting we are required to create a video to go along with our media

campaigning?”), and/or **promise deal with good ideas later** (e.g., “I love the idea of a shared Google drive for our documents. Lets talk more about that once we’ve settled on a project topic.”).

4. Keep your eyes open for nonverbal communication.

As a meeting progresses, people’s physical and emotional states are likely to change. As the facilitator, you should do your best to identify such change and accommodate it within the structures and processes your group has established for itself. When people do something as simple as crossing their arms in front of them, for instance, they might be signaling that they’re closed to what others are saying—or they might just be trying to stay warm in a room that feels too cold to them.

When one person in the meeting has the floor and is talking, it’s a good idea to watch how the rest of the group seems to be responding. You may notice clues indicating that people are pleased and receptive, or that they’re uninterested, skeptical, or even itching to respond negatively. You may want to do a **perception check** to see if you’re interpreting nonverbal cues accurately. For instance, you might say, “Terry, could we pause here a bit? I get the impression that people might have some questions for you.” As an alternative, you might **address the whole group and ask** “Does anyone have questions for Terry at this point?”

5. Create a positive tone.

Since many people dread meetings, it is helpful to create a positive and collaborative tone in a meeting. One way to do this by demonstrating you’ve listened to a group member by **paraphrasing what you heard them say** (e.g., “So what I heard you suggest is that we...”). Alternatively, you can create a positive environment by **praising their contributions**(e.g., “That’s a great idea”, “ I’m so glad your brought that up because I was concerned about that too’).

Finally, you can appeal to people’s tummies and funnybones. Provide something to eat or drink, even if it’s just coffee or peanuts in a bowl. Glenn Parker and George Hoffman’s book on how to run meetings well includes a chapter titled “Eating Well=Meeting Well,” and it also refers to the fact that the American Cancer Society offers [a program to help groups organize meetings](#) and other events with good health in mind.

Tips For Virtual Meetings

Meetings conducted via Skype, Zoom, Google Duo or other synchronous technologies can function as efficiently as face-to-face ones, but only if the distinctive challenges of the virtual environment are taken into account. It’s harder to develop empathy with other people, and easier to engage in unhelpful multitasking, when you’re not in the same physical space with them. To make it more likely that a virtual meeting will be both pleasant and productive, then, it makes sense to tell people up front what your expectations are of their behavior. If you want them to avoid reading email or playing computer solitaire on their computers while the meeting is underway, for example, say so.

A major goal of most meetings is to reach decisions based on maximum involvement, so it pays to keep in mind that people work best with other people whom they know and understand. With this in mind, you might choose to email a photo of each person scheduled to be in the meeting and include a quick biography for everyone to look over in advance. This communication could take place along with disseminating the meeting's agenda and other supporting documentation.

Here are some further tips and suggestions for leading or participating in virtual meetings, each based on the unique features of such gatherings:

1. Get all the participants in a meeting to say something brief at the start of the meeting to verify the sound is working.
2. Remind people of the purpose of the meeting and the agenda.
3. Listen/watch for people who aren't participating and ask them periodically if they have thoughts or suggestions to add to the discussion.
4. Summarize the status of the meeting from time to time.
5. Encourage participants to mute their microphone when not speaking, to avoid distracting background noise.

In summary, sloppy minutes degrade the value of the work and time people invest together. They can also weaken a group's morale. Professional minutes, on the other hand, may even make people who weren't at a meeting wish they had been—although that's perhaps asking a lot, unless you served pizza!—and can strengthen your group's pride and solidarity.

Take Away: In this chapter we have reviewed mechanisms and approaches to handling meetings. We have explored the purposes of meetings and discovered that alternatives to meetings can often yield satisfactory results within a group.

Exercises

1. Identify a group of which you're a member. What percentage of its meetings in the past year do you feel contributed significantly to its stated objectives? What role did pre-meeting planning play in producing that outcome?
2. Think about a time when a group you were part of canceled or postponed a meeting. On what grounds did it reach that decision? Why do you approve or disapprove of the decision?
3. What do you consider to be the pros and cons of limiting the number of people invited to a group meeting?
4. Which instances of "Trouble in River City" have you experienced in group meetings? Describe two or three such instances. What action might the group leader have taken to prevent or resolve the episodes?
5. Some cultures value exact punctuality differently from others. If you were leading a series of meetings comprising members of several cultural groups, what steps, if any, would you take to

accommodate or modify people's habits and expectations concerning the starting and ending times of the meetings?

6. Imagine that you're the new chairperson of a group which got seriously off track in the first of its meetings that you presided over. You tried gently redirecting people to discuss pertinent issues, but they first ignored and then resisted your attempts. What steps might you take to address the situation?
7. If you've participate in a virtual meeting which reached a decision of some sort, what elements of the medium do you feel contributed positively to making the decision? What elements, if any, made it more challenging for you to achieve your aims?
8. Think of a problem at your college that you and some of your fellow students feel needs to be addressed. Imagine that you've been told you have two weeks to present a proposal to the president of the college for remedying the problem. Draft an agenda for as many meetings as you feel would be necessary to involve the proper people in confronting the problem. Describe how the meetings would take place, including what rules you would follow, who would be invited, and what specific items would be dealt with in what sequence.

Additional Resources

Books and Articles

Mosvick, R.K., & Nelson, R.B. (1996). *A guide to successful meeting management*. Indianapolis, IN: Park Avenue. Includes information about business meetings, along with suggestions on how to improve them.

Silberman, M. (1999). *101 ways to make your meetings active*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Provides fun activities and exercises to help prepare people to conduct meetings effectively.

Streibel, B.J. (2003). *The manager's guide to effective meetings*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Includes advice on conducting virtual meetings, as well as useful examples and checklists related to meeting management.

Facilitation at a Glance; Ingrid Bens

A wonderful pocket guide to facilitation, filled with tools and techniques useful to both novice and advanced facilitators. Great set of tools for problem solving.

Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making; Sam Kaner

An excellent resource for ideas on facilitation, with a focus on decision-making tools and techniques. The book includes excellent illustrations, which can be reproduced to help explain facilitation concepts to others.

Other Meeting Design and Facilitation Resources

The International Association of Facilitators (IAF)

The IAF promotes, supports and advances the art and practice of professional facilitation through methods exchange, professional growth, practical research, collegial networking and support services.

Interaction Associates

Interaction Associates is the creator and distributor of the Mastering Meetings: Tools for Collaborative Action and Essential Facilitation classes which MIT is licensed to teach. The Tips and Techniques section at their Web site is particularly useful.

Amos, J. (2002). *Making meetings work* (2nd ed.). Oxford, England: Howtobooks.

Doyle, M., & Straus, D. (1993). *How to make meetings work: The new interaction method*. New York: Jove Books.

Luong, A., & Rogelberg, S.G. (2005). Meetings and more meetings: The relationship between meeting load and the daily well-being of employees. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 9(1), 58-67.)

Material in this section adopted, in part, by Adler, R. B., Elmhorst, J. M. & Lucas, K. (2013).

Communicating at work: Strategies for success in business and the professions. (11Th Ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Parker, G., & Hoffman, R. (2006). *Meeting excellence: 33 tools to lead meetings that get results*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

2.6b Using Robert's Rules of Order

In the previous section, we considered a number of practical planning, human relations, and communication guidelines to help you get ready for a meeting and facilitate it. Now we'll discuss a system of formal rules called "[*parliamentary procedure*](#)" which you may follow as you facilitate a meeting to save lots of time, prevent ill feelings, promote harmony, and ensure that everyone's viewpoints can be expressed and discussed democratically.

WHY PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE?

It's easy to make fun of individuals or groups who follow procedures "to the letter," especially in a country like the United States where we at least say that we prize spontaneity and self-determination. When it comes to most groups you work in or lead as a student or employee, you'll probably be able to get away with conducting their meetings fairly informally, or even "by the seat of your pants." In such groups—"among friends," as it were—parliamentary procedure may seem boring or unnecessary. You may just assume, for instance, that you'll observe the will of the majority in cases of disagreement and that you'll keep track of what you do by taking a few simple notes when you get together.

But what about when you're asked to chair your children's PTA some day? Or when you're elected president of a community service group like Kiwanis or Rotary? Or when you become an officer in a professional society? Under those circumstances, you'll have entered a "[*deliberative assembly*](#)"—a body that considers options and reaches decisions—and you'll benefit from knowing at least the rudiments of parliamentary procedure in order to fulfill your duties within it. When you're in charge of running such a group's meetings, you should be able to ensure that things run smoothly, efficiently, and fairly. As odd as it sounds, under those circumstances you'll probably actually find that imposing regulation on the group is necessary to preserve its freedom to act.

On a very practical level, parliamentary procedure can help you answer these common, important questions as you lead a meeting:

- Who gets to speak when, and for how long?
- What do we do if our discussion seems to be going on and on without any useful results?
- When and how do we make decisions?
- What do we do if we're not ready yet to say yes or no to a proposal but need to move on to something else in the meantime?
- What do we do if we change our minds?

Learning some parliamentary procedure promises at least two personal benefits, as well. First, you'll

probably discover that the structures you become familiar with through using parliamentary procedure boost your confidence in general. Second, you're apt to find that you've laid the foundations for establishing yourself as a solid, reliable leader. Third, although you shouldn't be stricter or more formal than is good for your group, using parliamentary procedure regularly and as a matter of course should contribute to the impression that you care about consistency, equity, and efficiency in your dealings with other people in general.

BACKGROUND OF ROBERT'S RULES

Henry Martyn Robert was an engineer who rose to the rank of brigadier general in the U.S. Army and first put together his *Rules of Order* in 1876. His aim was to keep that publication to 50 pages, but its first edition contained 176 pages. The eleventh edition now runs nearly four times as long—more than 650 pages. This current edition, abbreviated as “RONR” (*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*), was formulated by a team of [parliamentarians](#) which includes Robert's grandson.

A shorter summary, also prepared in part by Henry Martyn Robert III, comprises the most important features of RONR. It includes the contention that “at least 80 percent of the content of RONR will be needed less than 20 percent of the time” in even the largest, most complicated groups (Robert, Evans, Honemann, & Balch, 2011, p. 6; Robert, H.M., Evans, W.J., Honemann, D.H., & Balch, T. J. (2011). *Robert's rules of order newly revised, in brief*. Philadelphia: Da Capo Press.). Thus, a formal group which adopts RONR as its parliamentary authority may decide to use the summary volume to help it get through most common operational situations, since the summary's sections are all linked item-by-item to more detailed portions of RONR itself.

Elements of a meeting using RONR

Robert's Rules offers guidance for all the essential processes a group is apt to conduct. It suggests that a group select a chairperson (“chairman” in Robert's original language) and a secretary, that it decide on what proportion of its membership constitutes a [quorum](#) and is thus able to conduct substantive business, and that it follow at least a “[simplified standard order of business](#)” which may be as straightforward as this:

1. **Reading and approval of minutes.** Deciding whether notes of the previous meeting, generally taken by the group's secretary, can be accepted as written or need to be modified.
2. **Reports.** Statements by officers and heads of committees, along with any recommendations associated with them. For instance, the finance committee of a student government association might propose that the association as a whole spend money from a particular budget to send a student representative to a professional conference or purchase new bookkeeping software for the association's treasurer.
3. **Unfinished business.** Some groups use the term “old business” in this part of their agendas and allow members to bring up any topics that have occupied the body's attention throughout

its history, but RONR discourages this. Instead, it insists that “unfinished business” be restricted to items which were left incomplete at the conclusion of the previous meeting or which were scheduled to be considered in the previous meeting but could not be because of insufficient time and were therefore specifically postponed to the next one. Robert, H.M., Evans, W.J., Honemann, D.H., & Balch, T. J. (2011).

4. **New business.** This part of a meeting revolves around motions introduced by members and considered by the group as a whole.

AGENDAS

Although a bare-bones standard order of business may satisfy the requirements of RONR, most groups decide to make use of an agenda such as the ones discussed in the previous section. Such agendas, if and when they are approved by groups at the outset of their meetings, may be individualized to name the persons who are to give reports and make recommendations. They may also include timelines that refer to specific topics, offer background information, and say when breaks will take place. RONR recognizes that every group has a personality of its own and should have the flexibility to express that personality through a well-crafted agenda tailored to meet its needs.

MAKING DECISIONS

Generally speaking, RONR specifies that decisions about proposals should be made as soon as possible after the proposals are made. For instance, if a recommendation is made during an officer’s report, it should be handled at that time.

Nothing may be decided in RONR unless a [motion](#)—a formal proposal put forth orally by a participant in the meeting—has been made. The proper way to submit a motion is to say, “I move that...” (not “I make a motion that...”). Some groups may decide that any motion raised by a member will be deliberated, but RONR requires that nearly all motions receive a [second](#) before the chairperson can proceed with the next step. That step is for the chairperson to “[state the question](#)”—that is, announce to the group that a motion has been made and seconded and is open for debate. Details on exceptions to this process can be found in RONR itself, but the basic reason for requiring a second is to ensure that more than a single individual would like to consider a proposal.

Assuming that the person who submits a motion has done so according to the procedures of the group, the motion is considered to be [pending](#), and its initial form it is referred to as the “[main motion](#).” The chairperson is responsible for soliciting and guiding debate about any motion.

In the course of debate, the main motion may be amended or withdrawn, in part according to [subsidiary motions](#) and in part according to the will of the person who originally proposed it. It’s also possible for a group to refer a matter to a subgroup or postpone discussion of it to a set time.

Generally, members should be recognized by the chairperson in the order in which they make it clear that they wish to speak. RONR stipulates that a speaker has up to 10 minutes each time he or she speaks and that the speaker isn't permitted to "save" time or transfer it to another person. If a motion being considered in a large group is particularly controversial, the chairperson should make an effort to recognize proponents and opponents back and forth so as to ensure balance in the presentations.

When debate ceases on a motion, the chairperson should say "The question is on the adoption of the motion that..." and put the question to a vote of the membership. When the vote has been observed or tallied, the chairperson announces which side "has it"—that is, which side has won the vote. He or she then declares that the motion has been adopted or lost and indicates the effect of the vote, as necessary.

For instance, someone in a student committee might move that \$250 be spent toward sending Jamie, its vice president, to a conference in New York City. After the motion has been seconded and debated, you as the chairperson might call for a vote and announce afterward, "The 'ayes' have it. The motion carries, and Jamie will receive \$250 toward expenses for the trip to New York. Jamie, you'll need to talk to Cameron, our treasurer, to get a check cut for you in advance of your travel."

BEING CIVIL

The point of following *Robert's Rules* is to preserve order, decorum, and civility so that a group can make wise decisions. RONR allows a group's chairperson to rule people's comments [out of order](#) if the comments are irrelevant (not "germane") or are considered to be personal attacks.

Robert's Rules even makes provisions for group members to avoid direct attack. It attempts to accomplish this by allowing members of a group to refer to each other in the third person—e.g., "the previous speaker" or "the treasurer"—rather than by using each other's names. Unfortunately, in long-established organizations such as the US Congress people sometimes get away with incivility even within such tight interpretations of the strictures of RONR. Consider the story, which may or may not be historically accurate, of two US Senators. Senator Smith had just spoken passionately in favor of earmarking funds to build a bridge across a certain river in his state. Senator Jones said, "That's ridiculous. We don't need a bridge there. I could pee halfway across that river!" Senator Smith retorted, "The previous speaker is out of order!" to which Senator Jones replied, "I suppose I am. Otherwise I could pee all the way across it."

MORE DETAILS

How punctiliously a particular group observes the requirements of RONR will depend on the group's purposes, its level of formality, and sometimes even on the personalities of its members and leaders. One statewide college faculty organization in the Pacific Northwest prides itself on operating according to what it jocularly calls "Bobby's Rules of Order," although its bylaws stipulate that it is governed by

RONR. The faculty organization has found for nearly 40 years that it can achieve its aims and maintain civility without observing many of the official trappings of RONR. Your group, on the other hand, may want and need the consistency and specificity of RONR to get its work done.

In any case, knowing the basic nature of *Robert's Rules* and how to get guidance on its finer points can be advantageous to anyone who wants to promote efficient operations and decision-making by a group. In addition to referring to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised In Brief*, you may want to consult the website of the American Institute of Parliamentarians at <https://aipparl.org/> for further information.

Key Takeaway: Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR), a thorough and well-established system of parliamentary procedure, can be followed in greater or lesser detail as a group attempts to ensure civility, fairness, and efficiency in the conduct of its business.

Exercises

1. Watch a broadcast on C-SPAN television of either the opening of a session of the US House of Representatives or of debate on legislation in the House or Senate. What specialized terms or forms of address did you hear which fit with your understanding of *Robert's Rules of Order*? What function did those terms or forms of address fulfill?
2. Locate a meeting agenda for a student group or employee committee on your campus. To what degree do its contents differ from the simplified standard order of business described in this section? Why do you think the organizers of the meeting modified the standard order as they did?
3. Draft an agenda for a meeting of an imaginary student group and share it with 2-3 fellow students. Explain why you structured your agenda the way you did.

2.6c Meeting Minutes

Bookends hold books up. Without them, the books tumble onto each other or off the shelf. The “bookends” of a meeting, likewise, are as important as the meeting itself. Without them, nobody knows beforehand what’s going to happen or remembers afterward what did. We’ve discussed the first major bookend of a meeting, its agenda. In this section we’ll turn our attention to the kinds of bookends that follow a meeting, including principally its minutes.

THE WHY AND HOW OF MEETING MINUTES

Among the exasperating experiences in group meetings are moments when people say, “We talked about this before—at least twice. Why are we going over the same ground again?” There are also those times when we hear, “John, you were supposed to report on this. What’s your report?” and John replies, “But I didn’t know I was supposed to make a report.”

Whether we like or believe it or not, our individual impressions of a meeting start changing and diverging the moment we leave the site. As one business writer noted, “Even with the ubiquitous tools of organization and sharing ideas...the capacity for misunderstanding is unlimited.” Matson, E. (1996, April-May). The seven sins of deadly meetings. *Fast Company*, 122.

Effective meeting minutes include the following:

1. Date, location, time (start/stop), participants in attendance and those absent.
2. Detailed account of significant discussion points and decision(s) made.

Minutes should be written for an audience needing to know what was discussed at a meeting. You don’t have to capture everything everyone said in the meeting (like a transcript), but you should capture the essence of the discussion.

Good Example: The group talked about various types of fundraising events, and narrowed its focus to those that have a low overhead and are family friendly. Ideas that will be explored more fully include a fun run/walk, block party, and pony rides.

Bad Example: The group talked about fundraising.

3. Action items.

Things that need to be done by meeting participants **after** the meeting need to be called out and identified as action items. Each action item should be set off on its own line, and include the task, who is responsible for the task, and when the task will be done.

Examples

Action item: All participants will write up a personal bio and submit it to HR by June 2, 2025.

Action item: Ted will contact the legal department to get guidelines for our new policy and email the information to the group by next Tuesday.

d. Next steps

Summary of plans and procedures for the group.

Example: Members will work on their action items, and come to the next meeting ready to share out with committee. Committee chair will schedule the next meeting, and circulate the draft minutes for review and approval.

Recording minutes during the meeting

Recording communication in “real time” during a meeting is definitely a skill that takes practice. Below are some suggestions that help minute takers stay on track during the meeting:

1. Get the agenda

Before the meeting, get an agenda from the meeting facilitator so you can prepare yourself for the topics, and make a template to fill in during the meeting.

2. Decide what method of transcription works best for you

Some people like to record minutes on their computer during a meeting, while others like to take notes on paper. Decide what method works best for you. If you are considering tape-recording the meeting to help you fill in details when crafting the actual minutes, you should get consent from the meeting participants. Some states (e.g., Washington State) have informed consent laws about tape recording people.

3. Have plenty of space to record notes

Whether you chose to create a template based on the agenda or not, you will want to make sure you have plenty of room to record your minutes. Not everything you write down will go into your finalized minutes, but a good minute taker captures as much as they can during the meeting.

4. Record facts, not interpretations

While taking minutes you want to make sure that you record what people say, not how you feel about their statements. For example, you would write “Stacey suggested we all donate money to the food bank” as opposed to “Stacey had the ridiculous idea that everyone donate to the food bank.

5. Focus on major issues, actions and decisions, not on every comment made.

Your goal is to capture the bases of the discussion, not create a transcript. Action items need to be detailed and specific, but the rest of the minutes can summarize the general gist of the discussions.

6. Make sure you have the meeting participants and their names recorded accurately before the meeting adjourns.

7. Identify yourself as the minute taker

It is important to put your name at the bottom of the minutes, in case anyone needs to ask a clarifying question or request edits to the minutes.

Example:

Respectfully Submitted by [your name]

Have the meeting facilitator (or yourself as the person recording minutes) distribute minutes promptly. When and how you disseminate minutes shows whether and how much you care about what your group does. If your group has bylaws, it may be a good idea for them to include a time frame within which minutes of meetings need to be distributed (such as “within five days”).

Make sure your mailing list of people to receive minutes is up to date and accurate. This will ensure that no one misses the next meeting because he or she didn’t see when and where it was scheduled to take place.

Sloppy minutes degrade the value of the work and time people invest together. They can also weaken a group’s morale. Professional minutes, on the other hand, may even make people who weren’t at a meeting wish they had been—although that’s perhaps asking a lot, unless you served pizza!—and can strengthen your group’s pride and solidarity. As with meeting agendas, there are a wide variety of sample meeting minutes to review. Here’s a [link](#) to a Google search for meeting minutes.

WHAT ELSE?

If you’re the leader of the group, making sure that minutes are prepared and distributed well is only one step toward increasing the likelihood that your meetings will achieve their full potential of transmitting discussions into plans and plans into action. You should do three other things after a meeting.

First, you should contact group members who were identified in the minutes as being responsible for follow-up action. See if they need information, resources, or other help to follow through on their assignments. If a committee or subcommittee was asked to take action on some point, get in touch with whoever heads it and offer to provide materials or other support that may be needed to accomplish its work.

Second, you should set a positive example. Take a few minutes to reflect on how effective you were in facilitating the last meeting and ask yourself what you might change at the next one. Be sure, too, to implement any decisions in a timely fashion that you as the leader were given.

Third, you should make sure that the minutes of your group's meetings are stored in secure form, either physically or digitally or both, so that they are available to both you and other group members at any time. Your group's *institutional memory*, which is the foundation for future members to build upon, needs to be tended regularly and diligently. When in doubt, it's better to hold onto information and documentation related to your group. Discarding something because you think to yourself "nobody will forget this" may very well turn out to be a mistake.

Observing these suggestions may not make the experiences associated with following up on group meetings heavenly, but it might at least keep them from being too hellish.

Key Takeaway: After a group meets, its leader should ensure that professional minutes are disseminated and that other members of the group follow through with their responsibilities.

1. Review the minutes of 3–4 recent meetings of a local governmental agency such as a city council or parks commission. What portion of the text in each set of minutes, if any, do you feel could be eliminated without diminishing the effectiveness of the documents as records of the meetings? Write up a revised version of one of the sets of minutes which most efficiently conveys what was important in the meeting.

Chapter 3: Organizational Cultures & Management Philosophies

3.1 Organizational Culture

Just as water is invisible to the fish swimming in it, yet affects their actions, culture consists of unseen elements such as assumptions and values that affect organizational life.

1. Define organizational culture.
2. Explain why organizational culture is important.
3. Identify indicators of organizational cultures

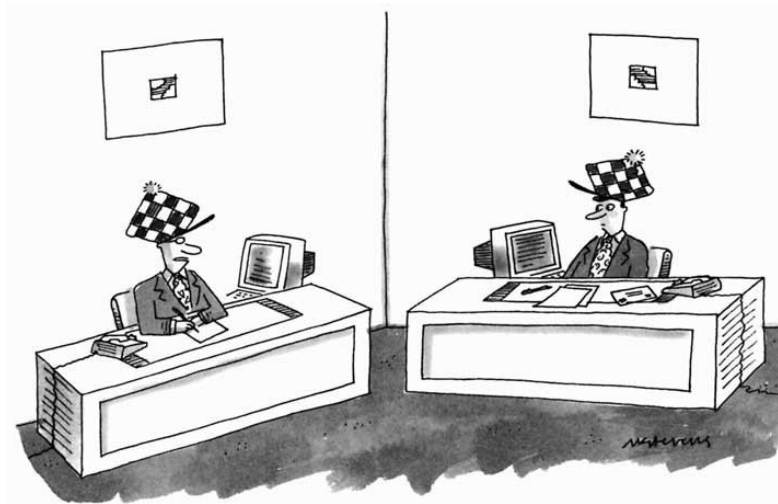
What Is Organizational Culture?

Organizational culture refers to a system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that show people what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior. These values have a strong influence on employee behavior as well as organizational performance. In fact, the term organizational culture was made popular in the 1980s when Peters and Waterman's best-selling book "In Search of Excellence" made the argument that company success could be attributed to an organizational culture that was decisive, customer-oriented, empowering, and people-oriented. Since then, organizational culture has become the subject of numerous research studies, books, and articles. Organizational culture is still a relatively new concept. In contrast to a topic such as leadership, which has a history spanning several centuries, organizational culture is a young but fast-growing area within management.

Culture is largely invisible to individuals just as the sea is invisible to the fish swimming in it. Even though it affects all employee behaviors, thinking, and behavioral patterns, individuals tend to become more aware of their organization's culture when they have the opportunity to compare it to other organizations. It is related to the second of the three facets that compose the planning, organizing, leading and controlling (P-O-L-C) function of organizing. The organizing function involves creating and implementing organizational design decisions. The culture of the organization is closely linked to organizational design. For instance, a culture that empowers employees to make decisions could prove extremely resistant to a centralized organizational design, hampering the manager's ability to enact such a design. However, a culture that supports the organizational structure (and vice versa) can be very powerful.

Why Does Organizational Culture Matter?

An organization's culture may be one of its strongest assets or its biggest liability. In fact, it has been argued that organizations that have a rare and hard-to-imitate culture enjoy a competitive advantage. In a survey conducted by the management consulting firm Bain & Company in 2007, worldwide business leaders identified corporate culture to be as important as corporate strategy for business success. This comes as no surprise to leaders of successful businesses, who are quick to attribute their company's success to their organization's culture.



"I don't know how it started, either. All I know is that it's part of our corporate culture."

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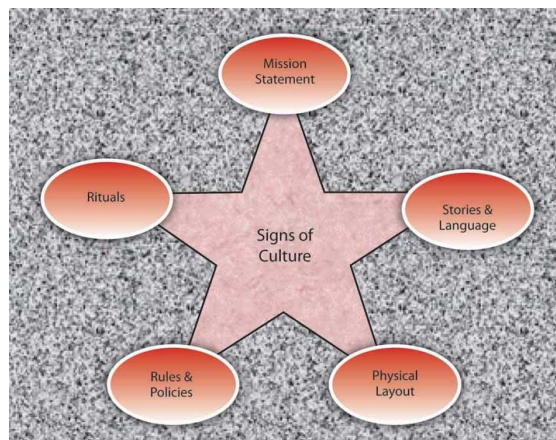
Culture, or shared values within the organization, may be related to increased performance. Researchers found a relationship between organizational cultures and company performance, with respect to success indicators such as revenues, sales volume, market share, and stock prices. At the same time, it is important to have a culture that fits with the demands of the company's environment. To the extent that shared values are proper for the company in question, company performance may benefit from culture. For example, if a company is in the high-tech industry, having a culture that encourages innovativeness and adaptability will support its performance. However, if a company in the same industry has a culture characterized by stability, a high respect for tradition, and a strong preference for upholding rules and procedures, the company may suffer because of its culture. In other words, just as having the "right" culture may be a competitive advantage for an organization, having the "wrong" culture may lead to performance difficulties, may be responsible for organizational failure, and may act as a barrier preventing the company from changing and taking risks.

In addition to having implications for organizational performance, organizational culture is an effective control mechanism dictating employee behavior. Culture is a more powerful way of controlling and managing employee behaviors than organizational rules and regulations. For example, when a company is trying to improve the quality of its customer service, rules may not be helpful, particularly when the problems customers present are unique. Instead, creating a culture of customer service may achieve

better results by encouraging employees to think like customers, knowing that the company priorities in this case are clear: Keeping the customer happy is preferable to other concerns, such as saving the cost of a refund. Therefore, the ability to understand and influence organizational culture is important.

Signs of Organizational Culture

How do you find out about a company's culture? We emphasized earlier that culture influences the way members of the organization think, behave, and interact with one another. Thus, one way of finding out about a company's culture is by observing employees or interviewing them. At the same time, culture manifests itself in some visible aspects of the organization's environment. In this section, we discuss five ways in which culture shows itself to observers and employees.



Visual Elements of Culture

Mission Statement

A mission statement is a statement of purpose, describing who the company is and what it does. It serves an important function for organizations as part of the first facet of the planning P-O-L-C function. But, while many companies have mission statements, they do not always reflect the company's values and its purpose. An effective mission statement is well known by employees, is transmitted to all employees starting from their first day at work, and influences employee behavior.

Some mission statements reflect who the company wants to be as opposed to who they actually are. If the mission statement does not affect employee behavior on a day-to-day basis, it has little usefulness as a tool for understanding the company's culture. Enron provided an often-cited example of a disconnect between a company's mission statement and how the company actually operated. Their missions and values statement started with "As a partner in the communities in which we operate, Enron believes it has a responsibility to conduct itself according to certain basic principles." Their values statement included such ironic declarations as "We do not tolerate abusive or disrespectful treatment. Ruthlessness, callousness and arrogance don't belong here." A mission statement that is taken seriously and widely communicated may provide insights into the corporate culture. For example, the Mayo

Clinic's mission statement is "The needs of the patient come first." This mission statement evolved from the founders who are quoted as saying, "The best interest of the patient is the only interest to be considered." Mayo Clinics have a corporate culture that puts patients first. For example, no incentives are given to physicians based on the number of patients they see. Because doctors are salaried, they have no interest in retaining a patient for themselves, and they refer the patient to other doctors when needed. Wal-Mart may be another example of a company that lives its mission statement and therefore its mission statement may give hints about its culture: "Saving people money so they can live better."

Rituals



Tradition is important at Mary Kay Cosmetics. Pink Cadillacs are given to top performers at large annual events. [Source](#).

Rituals refer to repetitive activities within an organization that have symbolic meaning. Usually rituals have their roots in the history of a company's culture. They create camaraderie and a sense of belonging among employees. They also serve to teach employees corporate values and create identification with the organization. For example, at the cosmetics firm Mary Kay Inc., employees attend ceremonies recognizing their top salespeople with an award of a new car—traditionally a pink Cadillac. These ceremonies are conducted in large auditoriums where participants wear elaborate evening gowns and sing company songs that create emotional excitement. During this ritual, employees feel a connection to the company culture and its values such as self-determination, willpower, and enthusiasm. Another example of rituals is the Saturday morning meetings of Wal-Mart. This ritual was first created by the company founder Sam Walton, who used these meetings to discuss which products and practices were doing well and which required adjustment. He was able to use this information to make changes in Wal-Mart's stores before the start of the week, which gave him a competitive advantage over rival stores who would make their adjustments based on weekly sales figures during the middle of the following week. Today, hundreds of Wal-Mart associates attend the Saturday morning meetings in the Bentonville, Arkansas, headquarters. The meetings, which run from 7:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., start and end with the Wal-Mart cheer; the agenda includes a discussion of weekly sales figures and merchandising tactics. As a ritual, the meetings help maintain a small-company atmosphere, ensure employee involvement and accountability, communicate a performance orientation, and demonstrate taking quick action.

Rules and Policies

Another way in which an observer may find out about a company's culture is to examine its rules and policies. Companies create rules to determine acceptable and unacceptable behavior and, thus, the rules that exist in a company will signal the type of values it has. Policies about issues such as decision making, human resources, and employee privacy reveal what the company values and emphasizes. For example, a company that has a policy such as "all pricing decisions of merchandise will be made at corporate headquarters" is likely to have a centralized culture that is hierarchical, as opposed to decentralized and empowering. The presence or absence of policies on sensitive issues such as English-only rules, bullying and unfair treatment of others, workplace surveillance, open-door policies, sexual harassment, workplace romances, and corporate social responsibility all provide pieces of the puzzle that make up a company's culture. This highlights how interrelated the P-O-L-C functions are in practice. Through rules and policies, the controlling function affects the organization's culture, a facet of organizing.

Physical Layout

A company's building, layout of employee offices, and other workspaces communicate important messages about a company's culture. For example, visitors walking into the Nike campus in Beaverton, Oregon, can witness firsthand some of the distinguishing characteristics of the company's culture. The campus is set on 74 acres and boasts an artificial lake, walking trails, soccer fields, and cutting-edge fitness centers. The campus functions as a symbol of Nike's values such as energy, physical fitness, an emphasis on quality, and a competitive orientation. In addition, at fitness centers on the Nike headquarters, only those using Nike shoes and apparel are allowed in. This sends a strong signal that loyalty is expected. The company's devotion to athletes and their winning spirit are manifested in campus buildings named after famous athletes, photos of athletes hanging on the walls, and their statues dotting the campus.

The layout of the office space also is a strong indicator of a company's culture. A company that has an open layout where high-level managers interact with employees may have a culture of team orientation and egalitarianism, whereas a company where most high-level managers have their own floor may indicate a higher level of hierarchy. Microsoft employees tend to have offices with walls and a door because the culture emphasizes solitude, concentration, and privacy. In contrast, Intel is famous for its standard cubicles, which reflect its egalitarian culture. The same value can also be observed in its avoidance of private and reserved parking spots. The degree to which playfulness, humor, and fun are part of a company's culture may be indicated in the office environment. For example, Jive Software boasts a colorful, modern, and comfortable office design. Their break room is equipped with a keg of beer, free snacks and sodas, an Xbox 360, and Nintendo Wii. A casual observation of their work environment sends the message that employees who work there see their work as fun.

Stories and Language

Perhaps the most colorful and effective way in which organizations communicate their culture to new

employees and organizational members is through the skillful use of stories. A story can highlight a critical event an organization faced and the organization's response to it, or a heroic effort of a single employee illustrating the company's values. The stories usually engage employee emotions and generate employee identification with the company or the heroes of the tale. A compelling story may be a key mechanism through which managers motivate employees by giving their behavior direction and by energizing them toward a certain goal. Moreover, stories shared with new employees communicate the company's history, its values and priorities, and create a bond between the new employee and the organization. For example, you may already be familiar with the story of how a scientist at 3M invented Post-it notes. Arthur Fry, a 3M scientist, was using slips of paper to mark the pages of hymns in his church choir, but they kept falling off. He remembered a superweak adhesive that had been invented in 3M's labs, and he coated the markers with this adhesive. Thus, the Post-it notes were born. However, marketing surveys for the interest in such a product were weak and the distributors were not convinced that it had a market. Instead of giving up, Fry distributed samples of the small yellow sticky notes to secretaries throughout his company. Once they tried them, people loved them and asked for more. Word spread and this led to the ultimate success of the product. As you can see, this story does a great job of describing the core values of a 3M employee: Being innovative by finding unexpected uses for objects, persevering, and being proactive in the face of negative feedback.

Language is another way to identify an organization's culture. Companies often have their own acronyms and buzzwords that are clear to them and help set apart organizational insiders from outsiders. In business, this code is known as jargon. Jargon is the language of specialized terms used by a group or profession. Every profession, trade, and organization has its own specialized terms.

Do Organizations Have a Single Culture?

So far, it may seem that a company has a single culture that is shared throughout the organization. In reality there might be multiple cultures within the organization. For example, people working on the sales floor may experience a different culture from that experienced by people working in the warehouse. Cultures that emerge within different departments, branches, or geographic locations are called subcultures. Subcultures may arise from the personal characteristics of employees and managers, as well as the different conditions under which work is performed. In addition to understanding the broader organization's values, managers will need to make an effort to understand subculture values to see their effect on workforce behavior and managers can wield when undertaking the controlling function. Whether this is one or more cultures within an organization, they will reflect the organization's overall management philosophy, which we will explore next.

Summary

Organizational culture is a system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that helps individuals understand which behaviors are and are not appropriate within an organization. Cultures can be a source of competitive advantage for organizations. Strong organizational cultures can be an organizing as well as a controlling mechanism for organizations. These cultures are created by a variety of

factors, including founders' values and preferences, industry demands, and early values, goals, and assumptions. An organization's culture is maintained through communication interactions within the organization, and is can be identified through a company's culture include the organization's mission statement, stories, physical layout, rules and policies, and rituals.

Adapted from:

- "[Chapter 8: Organizational Culture](#)". [Management Principles](#) (v. 1.1). Anonymous author and publisher.

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3.2 Management Philosophies

Now that you understand what is meant by ‘organizational culture’, let’s look at five different management philosophies that guide the work of an organization. Management philosophies are like an organization’s “personality.” Some organizations have a more structured, rigid personality (i.e., classical management perspective) while others have a more collaborative personality (i.e., human resources perspective). The aspects of an organization’s culture discussed in the previous section help one identify the overall management philosophy (i.e. personality) of the organization.

Classical Management Perspective

The original perspective for understanding organizational communication can be described using a machine metaphor. At the beginning of the industrial age, when people thought science could solve almost every problem, American [Frederick Taylor](#), Frenchman [Henri Fayol](#), and German [Max Weber](#) tried to apply scientific solutions to organizations. They wanted to determine how organizations and workers could function in an ideal way. Organizations during the industrial revolution wanted to know how they could maximize their profits so the classical management perspective focused on worker productivity.

Case In Point



Owners Richard and Maurice McDonald. McDonalds

After running a restaurant successfully for 11 years, Richard and Maurice McDonald decided to improve it. They wanted to make food faster, sell it cheaper and spend less time worrying about replacing cooks and car hops. The brothers closed the restaurant and redesigned its food-preparation area to work less like a restaurant and more like an automobile assembly line.

Their old drive-in had already made them rich, but the new restaurant – which became McDonald’s – made the brothers famous. Restaurateurs traveled from all over the country to copy their system of fast food preparation, which they called the Speedee Service System. Without

cars, Carl and Maurice would not have had a drive-in restaurant to tinker with. Without assembly lines, they would not have had a basis for their method of preparing food.

Being a short-order cook took skill and training, and good cooks were in high demand. The Speedee system, however, was completely different. Instead of using a skilled cook to make food quickly, it used lots of unskilled workers, each of whom did one small, specific step in the food-preparation process.

Instead of being designed to facilitate the preparation of a variety of food relatively quickly, the kitchen's purpose was to make a very large amount of a very few items.

When you visit different restaurants belonging to the same fast-food chain, the menu and food are pretty much the same. There's one reason for this uniformity in fast food – it's a product of mass-production.

The machine metaphor of classical management suggests that three basic aspects should exist in organizations: Specialization, Standardization, and Predictability. Those who advocated this perspective argued that every employee should have a specialized function, thus, essentially any individual could perform a job if they are properly trained. If one individual fails to do the job, they are easily replaceable with another person since people are seen as simply parts of a machine.

Taylor developed his **Theory of Scientific Management** from his early days as a foreman in a machine shop. Little did he know how drastically he was going to influence organizations and our notions of working life. Taylor could not understand why organizations and individuals would not want to maximize efficiency. In Copley's biography about Taylor he reveals a man who was driven by perfection: "The spectacle of a [man] doing less than [his] best was to him morally shocking. He enthusiastically believed that to do anything less than your best is to add to the sum of the world's unrighteousness". However, workers were not always as enthusiastic about efficiency and quality as Taylor, especially given the significant difference in status and pay between management and labor. For the common laborer during the industrial revolution, this new approach to employment meant possibly losing your job if a "scientific" formula showed that fewer workers could do the same job. If you don't think this is alive today, think about organizations such as Apple that have employees overseas manufacture iPhones.

Organizational Communication Then

Frederick Taylor

In today's world, fast food chains are good examples of classical management. Next time you buy that Whopper or Big Mac, you can thank the influence of American businessman Frederick Taylor. Literally using a stopwatch, Taylor's used his time and motion studies to prove that for every job, there is one best way to perform it in the shortest amount of time. This meant properly selecting, training, and rewarding the appropriate worker with the right task (Taylor, 1947). Peek into the kitchen the next time you order that burger, fries, and coke. It is likely that you will see employees separated by station and task, doing their specific part to fulfill your order. Likewise,

the design of hard plastic seats and bright colors in fast food restaurants is done with intention to get customers in and out of the restaurant in an efficient and expedient manner.

During this time, Weber was also developing his ideas about **bureaucracy**. He was fascinated with what the ideal organization should look like, and believed that effective hierarchies helped organizations operate effectively. *Precise rules, a division of labor, centralized authority, and a distinctly defined hierarchy should be driven by rational thought void of emotion and outside influence* (Weber). These qualities would allow organizations to operate in a somewhat predictable manner — employees knew what to expect and who was in charge, and management could make decisions based on familiar, relevant information rather than irrational feelings. Think about the bureaucracy of your college campus, there are numerous divisions of labor, rules, policies, and procedures. Registering for classes, tracking transcripts, obtaining financial aid, living in campus housing, are all part of the time you spend navigating the bureaucracy on your campus. Imagine a campus without bureaucracy. What if you couldn't easily access your transcripts? What if no one kept track of your progress through college? How would you know what to do and when you were done? What if there was no process for applying for financial aid? While bureaucracies can be slow, tedious, and often inefficient, they provide structure we have come to rely on to accomplish personal and professional goals.

Fayol's theory of classical management focused on how management worked, specifically looking at what managers should do to be most effective. For Fayol, organizational members should be clear who is in charge, and everyone should know their role in an organization. He argued that organizations should be grouped in a precise hierarchy that limits the flow of communication to top-down communication.

Theory X is an example of a classical management theory where *managers micro-manage employees by using reward-punishment tactics, and limiting employee participation in decision-making*. This theory sees employees as basically lazy or unmotivated. Because of this, managers must closely supervise their workers. Those that do not do their work are disposable parts of the machine. This allows for management to mistreat and abuse their employees, ultimately lowering the very thing they were after, greater productivity.

Organizations using this approach can still be found today. Have you ever had a boss or manager who treated you like an interchangeable part of a machine who had little value? If so, you've experienced aspects of the classical management perspective at work. While scientific approaches to organizations were an interesting starting point for determining how to communicate, the classical management approach fell short in many ways. Thus, development and refinement continued to occur regarding ways to understand organizational communication.

Human Relations Perspective

Because classical management was so mechanical and did not treat people as humans, organizational scholars wanted to focus on the human elements of organizations. The **human relations approach** focuses on how *organizational members relate to one another, and how individuals' needs influence their performance in organizations*. In 1924 Elton Mayo and his team of Harvard scientists began a series of studies that were initially interested in how to modify working conditions to increase worker productivity, decrease employee turnover, and change the overall poor organizational effectiveness at the Hawthorne Electric Plant near Chicago.

Mayo's team discovered that, no matter what changes they made to the work environment (such as adjusting lighting and temperature levels, work schedules, and worker isolation), worker productivity increased simply due to the fact that researchers were paying attention to them. Simply paying attention to workers and addressing their social needs yielded significant changes in their productivity. This is where the term "[The Hawthorne Effect](#)" developed. Mayo's work provided an impetus for a new way of looking at workers in organizations.

Maslow's hierarchy suggests that human beings are actually motivated to satisfy their personal needs. His theory is still of interest to us today as we try to comprehend the relevance of human relations in the workplace. Papa, Daniels and Spiker describe McGregor's contributions: "As management theorists became familiar with Maslow's work, they soon realized the possibility of connecting higher-level needs to worker motivation. If organizational goals and individual needs could be integrated so that people would acquire self-esteem and, ultimately, self-actualization through work, then motivation would be self-sustaining" (33). Remember that Theory X managers do not trust their employees because they think workers are inherently unmotivated and lazy. At the other end of the managerial spectrum, Theory Y managers (those that take a human relations perspective to employees) assume that workers are self motivated, seek responsibility, and want to achieve success. As a result of this changing perspective, managers began to invite feedback and encourage a degree of participation in organizational decision making, thus focusing on human relationships as a way to motivate employee productivity. Today many companies make employees happy by keeping them well rested and supplying them with ways to catch up on sleep even at work.

Human Resources Perspective

The Human Resources perspective picks up where human relations left off. The primary criticism of human relations was that it still focused on productivity, trying to achieve worker productivity simply by making workers happy. The idea that a happy employee would be a productive employee makes initial sense. However, happiness does not mean that we will be productive workers. As a matter of fact, an individual can be happy with a job and not work very hard. Another reason scholars tried to improve the human relations perspective was because manipulative managers misused it by inviting participation from employees on the surface, but not really doing anything with the employees' contributions. Imagine your boss encouraging everyone to put their ideas into a suggestion box but never looking them. How would you feel?

Human Resources attempts to truly embrace participation by all organizational members, viewing

each person as a valuable human resource. *Employees are valuable resources that should be fully involved to manifest their abilities and productivity.* Using this approach, organizations began to encourage employee participation in decision making.

An example of the human resources perspective is William Ouchi's [Theory Z](#). Ouchi believed that traditional American organizations should be more like Japanese organizations. Japanese culture values lifetime employment, teamwork, collective responsibility, and a sound mind and body. This contrasts with many American work values such as short-term employment, individualism, and non-participation. Many U.S. companies implemented Japanese organizational concepts such as quality circles (QC), quality of work life (QWL) programs, management by objectives (MBO), and W. E. Deming's notion of total quality management (TQM). Each of these approaches was designed to flatten hierarchies, increase participation, implement quality control, and utilize teamwork. Human Resources works "by getting organizational participants meaningfully involved in the important decisions that regulate the enterprise" .

Systems Perspective

Collectively, individuals in organizations achieve more than they can independently (Barnard; Katz & Kahn; Redding; von Bertalanffy; Skyttner). The **systems perspective** for understanding organizations is "*concerned with problems of relationships, of structure, and of interdependence rather than with the constant attributes of objects*" . An organization is like a living organism and must exist in its external environment in order to survive. Without this interaction an organization remains what we call closed, and withers away.

All organizations have basic properties. **Equifinality** means that *a system (organization) can reach its goals from different paths*. Each professor that teaches public speaking, for example, does so in a different way but, the end result is that the students in each of the classes as completed a course in public speaking. **Negative entropy** is *the ability of an organization to overcome the possibility of becoming run down*. Companies like Apple do everything they can to stay ahead of their competition and keep their products ahead of the curve. **Requisite variety** means that *organizations must be responsive to their external environment and adjust when needed*. Apple is always under pressure to come up with the newest and best technology. When Apple goes a long time without doing so, the public begins to be critical. **Homeostasis** points to *an organization's need for stability in a turbulent environment*. When gas prices go up, for example, organizations impacted by these rising costs take steps to ensure their survival and profitability. **Complexity** states that *the more an organization grows and interacts, the more elaborate it becomes* (Katz & Kahn; von Bertalanffy; Miller). Think about how huge companies such as Verizon must have elaborate organizational systems in place to deal with all of its employees and customers in a competitive market place.

If an organization is a system, how do we use the role of communication to analyze interactions among organizational members? Karl Weick's Theory of Organizing suggests that participants organize through their communication and make sense of unpredictable environments through interactions. Simply put, organizations exist as a result of the interactions of people in those organizations. An

organization is more than just a physical building with people inside. Communication is the “process of organizing” implying that communication actually is the organization. Regardless of whether the focus is on the message or the meaning, systems theory stresses the interdependence of integrated people in organizations and the outcomes they produce as a result of their interactions.

Transformational Perspective

In response to the problems the other perspectives experience with today’s fast-paced business environment, the transformational perspective asserts that organizations need to be small and flexible so they can shift quickly in response to market demands.

One key characteristics of organization’s with a transformational management philosophy is the the flexibility built in by being **multiunit organizations**. According to Hamilton (2014) “A multiunit organization is made up of separate, autonomous businesses under the same holding company. This decentralized structure allows the large parent company to operate with the flexibility of much smaller businesses” (p. 58). For example, Johnson & Johnson is comprised of over 200 individual companies.

A related characteristic of organizations with a transformational management philosophy is the use of **virtual organizations/teams**, which is “a temporary venture among several companies, each with a special expertise or process specialty” (Hamilton, 2014, p. 59). Independent employees from these various companies communication via mediated means (video-chats, email, telephone), and may never actually meet in person.

By dividing one’s organization into multiple units, and using virtual organizations/teams to conduct business, the transformational organization is able to make quick adjustments to market demands and stay relevant. These organizations typically dont provide the safety of long-term employment, and have to be attentive to **frame-of-reference differences** (different perspectives, terminologies, and goals) among employees that can impede collaboration. Additionally, because much of the work occurs via mediated means, employees need to be skilled at communicating electronically and at developing trust.

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Chapter 4: Ethical Communication in Organizations

4.0 Ethics in Organizations

Introduction

As the assistant manager at an automotive parts department, Jeremy has lots of experience with cars and the automotive parts business. Everyone has their own preference for car part brand, including him. When he works with customers, he might show them the other brand but tends to know more about his favorite brands and shows those brands more often. However, at the new product training seminar three weeks ago, all managers were told they will receive a bonus for every DevilsDeat brake pad they or their employees sell. Employees would also receive a bonus. Furthermore, it was recommended that managers train their employees only on the DevilsDeat products, so the managers and employees alike could earn a higher salary. Personally, Jeremy feels DevilsDeat brake pads are inferior and has had several products malfunction on him. But the company ordered this to be done, so Jeremy trained his employees on the products when he returned to the store. Last week, a customer came in and said his seventeen-year-old daughter had been in an accident. The store had sold a defective DevilsDeat brake pad, and his daughter was almost killed. Jeremy apologized profusely and replaced the part for free. Three more times that week customers came in upset their DevilsDeat products had malfunctioned. Jeremy replaced them each time but began to feel really uncomfortable with the encouragement of selling an inferior product. Jeremy called to discuss with the district manager, who told him it was just a fluke, so Jeremy continued on as usual. Several months later, a lawsuit was filed against DevilsDeat and Jeremy's automotive parts chain because of three fatalities as a result of the brake pads.

This story is a classic one of conflicting values between a company and an employee. This chapter will discuss some of the challenges associated with conflicting values, social responsibility of companies, and how to manage this in the workplace.

When people hear the word "ethics" used in modern society, many different images and incidents quickly come to mind. Sadly, the 21st Century has already been plagued with many ethical lapses in the business sector. Turn on any major global news station, newspaper, magazine, or podcast and you're likely to hear about some business that is currently in a state of crisis due to lapses in ethical judgment. Below is a short list of organizations and various ethical lapses in judgments

Organization	Ethical Lapse
Arthur Andersen	Accounting Fraud & Shredding documents wanted in a criminal investigation
Bridgestone-Firestone	Delaying a recall of defective tires
Catholic Church	Sex Abuse and cover up
Coca-Cola	Taking groundwater from local farmers in India
Enron	Accounting Fraud
Halliburton	Overbilling for products and services
McDonald's	8 individuals provided winning game pieces from McDonald's Monopoly game to family and friends.
Merrill Lynch	Lying to investors
Napster	Digital copyright violations
Sanlu Group Co.	Chinese based company knowingly distributes tainted baby formula.
Tyco	CEO was caught embezzling funds.
Xerox	Exaggerating Revenues

What are Ethics?

Before we begin to explore the topic of organizational ethics, it is important to identify what is meant by “ethics”. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the word “ethics” is derived from the Greek *ethos* or the nature or disposition of a culture; thus, ethics are a set of values that define right and wrong. One can see the challenge with this ambiguous definition. What exactly is right or wrong? The answer to this question obviously depends on the person and the individual situation, which is what makes ethics difficult to more specifically define.

If ethics are a set of values that define right and wrong, we must also identify what is meant by values. Values will be used here as the principles or standards that a person or organization finds desirable. So we can say that ethics is a set of principles that a person or organization finds desirable and help define right and wrong. Often people believe that the law defines this for us. To an extent it does, but there are many things that can be considered unethical that are not illegal. For example, take the popularized case where a reality production crew was filming about alcoholism—a show called *Intervention*. They followed one woman who got behind the wheel to drive and obviously was in no state to do so. The television crew let her drive. People felt this was extremely unethical, but it wasn't illegal because they were viewed as witnesses and therefore had no legal duty to intervene. This is the difference between something being ethical and illegal. Something may not be illegal, but at the same time, it may not be the right thing to do.

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4.1 Ethical Domains

Domains of Organizational Ethics

One could easily be misled into thinking that the idea of ethical business behavior and practices is a creation of the 21st Century, but the discussion of ethical and unethical business behavior is as old as the marketplace itself. While there may appear to be a difference in ethics between individuals and the organization, often individuals' ethics are shown through the ethics of an organization, since individuals are the ones who set the ethics to begin with. Thus, if an organization believes in creating a culture of ethics, it is more likely to hire people who behave ethically.. One way to think about organizational ethics is to consider two broad domains within which organizational ethics occur: external ethics (behaviors that occur between an organization and various constituents) and internal ethics (ethical behaviors that occur among the employees of an organization).

External Domain

Organizations decisions and actions impact individuals beyond the employees. An organization's customers, vendors, competitors, community and the world can all be affected by the ethical decisions of an organization. Questions such as the morality of child labor, environmental impacts, outsourcing, and social responsibility are examples of external ethical issues. We know, however, that organizations don't always make ethical decisions, despite the seemingly best efforts of a company. For example, court papers accuse British Petroleum (BP) of gross negligence for safety violations and knowingly failing to maintain the oil rig, which caused the death of eleven workers and leaked oil in the Gulf of Mexico for eighty-seven days. In this case, and others like it, people question the ability of companies to fulfill their duty to society. An alternative example, however, is Tom's Shoes; an organization that believes it is their responsibility to ensure everyone has shoes to wear. As a result, their "one for one" program gives one pair of shoes to someone in need for every pair of shoes purchased.

Organizations also make ethical decisions that affect customers, suppliers, and people within the community. Examples of this include fairness in wages for employees and the notification of the potential dangers of a company's product. McDonald's was sued in 2010 because the lure of Happy Meal toys were said to encourage children to eat unhealthy food. This is a stakeholder issue for McDonald's, since it affects customers. Although the case was dismissed, the stakeholder issue revolves around the need for companies to balance healthy choices and its marketing campaigns.

Internal Domain

In addition to ethical decisions that affect constituents outside of an organization, organizations also

deal with internal ethical issues. Fairness in management, pay, and employee participation are ethical issues. If we work in management at some point in our careers, this is certainly an area we will have extensive control over. Creation of policies that relate to the treatment of employees relates to human relations—and retention of those employees through fair treatment. It is in the organization's best interests to create policies around internal policies that benefit the company, as well as the individuals working for them.

Internal ethics also include individual/personal decision. How we treat others within the organization (e.g., gossiping, taking credit for another's work) are examples of this type of ethics. As an employee of an organization, we may not have as much control over external ethical decisions (e.g., global, stakeholder issues), but certainly have control over our personal ethical behaviors. Doing the right thing affects us in that if we are shown to be trustworthy when making ethical decisions, it is more likely we can be promoted, or at the very least, earn respect from our colleagues.

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United Press International. (2012, February 24). [BP trial will push gross negligence claim](#), accessed February 24, 2012.

Jacobson, M. (2010, June 22). [McDonald's lawsuit: Using toys to sell Happy Meals](#), accessed February 24, 2012.

4.2 Types of Ethical Lapses

Types of Ethical Lapses in Organizations

Now that we have reviewed domains within which organizational ethics occur, we will review some examples of ethical issues within these domains. The following list identifies 11 types of ethical lapses, but is not meant to be an exhaustive list.

1. **Taking things that do not belong to you (stealing):** Whether stealing a package of Post-It® notes for home use or skimming millions of dollars out of a corporate account, the first major ethical hurdle many organizations have to face is theft. Sometimes the issue of theft is not clear cut. For example, is using company time for personal business theft? One area that has recently received attention is the use work computers for non-work/personal business, such as playing games online or chatting on Facebook.
2. **Saying things that are not true (lying):** Gregory House, main character on the hit Fox television series House, frequently utters his basic mantra, “Everyone lies.” Whether someone is lying to get a job, keep a job, or advance in a job, people often use deception as a method for enhancing occupational options. Lying can also occur via an organization’s advertising campaign.
3. **False impressions (fraud and deceit):** For the purposes of the list lying is differentiated from “false impressions.” False impressions occur when an individual or organization purposefully represents herself or himself as something that he or she is not. The authors note, “Are you responsible for correcting others’ false impressions such as not accepting unearned praise or not letting others take the blame for your mistakes? ... Are you being deceitful when you dress for success or pretend to be successful so clients will have confidence in you?” (p. 256).
4. **Conflict of interest and influence buying (bribes, payoffs, & kickbacks):** According to Desjardins (2009) a conflict of interest occurs when an individual’s or organization’s interests interferes with professional judgments. Influence buying, on the other hand, is when an external party offers a bribe, payoff, or kickback to a decision maker in order to influence her or his decision.
5. **Hiding versus divulging information:** Information is one of the most important commodities in any organization. Ultimately, who has information and how they chose to disseminate that information can have very positive or negative ramifications for an organization and its stakeholders. For example, would you sell a product to a client, allowing them to believe that the version you are selling them is the latest technology, when you know a newer, better version is being released the following week? When is divulging information about your corporation “whistleblowing” and when is it “industrial espionage?”

6. **Unfair advantage (cheating):** The idea of unfair advantage occurs when a person or organization has more power to control the outcome of a situation. For example, if you are dying of a disease and a business has the only cure, they hold all the cards. In essence, they have the ability to charge anything they want for their “magical pill” because the patient has no other options. Is this practice fair and ethical? Is it fair when CEOs are paid multi-million dollar bonuses when thousands of employees are being laid off? In these situations, we see how power differentials can affect ethical decision making positions they hold.
7. **Personal decadence:** In the summer of 2008, the major players in the United States’ auto industry flew on their private jets to Washington, DC to ask for a multi-billion dollar bailout from the U.S. Congress. When most people think of personal decadence, this type of over-the-top self-indulgent behavior comes to mind.
8. **Interpersonal abuse:** While some actions within the organization, like personal decadence, impact the larger organization, other actions directed at coworkers have direct effects on personal performance. Cherrington and Cherrington (1992) note that “physical violence, sexual harassment, emotional abuse, abuse of one’s position, racism, and sexism” are examples of interpersonal abuse occurring in modern organizations (p. 256).
9. **Organizational abuse:** While interpersonal abuse includes targeted action from one member of an organization toward another member of the organization, organizational abuse stems from the organization toward the organizational members. For example, “inequity in compensation, performance appraisals that destroy self-esteem, transfers or time pressures that destroy family life, terminating people through no fault of their own, encouraging loyalty and not rewarding it, and creating the myth that the organization will benevolently protect or direct an employee’s career” are examples of how organizations abuse employees.
10. **Rule violations:** Every person within an organization is governed by a list of rules. Some of these rules come in the form of laws set down from the judicial or legislative system. Other rules are created for specific organizational settings and are handed down in the form of an employee manual. Are there ever legitimate reasons to break these rules? Are some rules more important than other rules? When the rules in one set of documents (workplace policies) contradicts the rules in another set of documents (religious tenants), which rules should be followed?
11. **Accessory to unethical acts:** An accessory to an unethical act is an individual who knows that an ethical violation has occurred by another individual. This knowledge of ethical violation could come either in the form of witnessing the ethical violation or somehow helping the individual commit the ethical violation. Ultimately, individuals who find themselves in the accessory position are faced with the ethical dilemma of whether or not to report the ethical violation.
12. **Moral balance (ethical dilemmas):** The idea of “moral balance” stems from a philosophical debate about individuals who are faced with the possibility that a good outcome of her or his behavior or decisions will lead to a secondary outcome that is bad. For example, an issue of moral balance is at stake when an organization wants to produce a new product that will save hundreds of thousands of lives (primary outcome), but will destroy the fragile ecosystem of a village and make it uninhabitable for the indigenous people who live there (secondary

outcome). An inverse moral dilemma could also exist: if the company does not produce the product, the fragile ecosystem of the village will be saved (primary outcome) but hundreds of thousands of lives will not be saved by the product (secondary outcome). How do you decide which option is ethical? Unfortunately, these types of ethical decisions are often the most complicated to make.

Cherrington, J. O., & Cherrington, D. J. (1992). [A menu of moral issues: One week in the life of the Wall Street Journal](#). *Journal of Business Ethics*, 11, 255-265.

The following statics are derived from the annual Ethics & Workplace Survey conducted by Deloitte (2006)Deloitte. (2006). [Business ethics and compliance in the Sarbanes-Oxley era: A survey by Deloitte and Corporate Board Member magazine](#). (2007). [Leadership counts: Deloitte & Touche USA 2007 Ethics & Workplace survey results](#). (2008). Transparency matters: Deloitte LLP 2008 Ethics & Workplace Survey results. (2009). Social networking and reputational risk in the workplace: Deloitte LLP 2009 Ethics & Workplace Survey results. (2010). Trust in the workplace: Deloitte LLP 2010 Ethics & Workplace Survey results.

Desjardins, J. (2009). *An introduction to business ethics* (3rd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.,
Cherrington & D. J. Cherrington, 1992, p. 256-257).

4.3 Typology of Unethical Communication

Redding's Typology of Unethical Organizational Communication

As part of Redding's (1996) call for the field of organizational communication to "wake up" and start studying ethics, he created a basic typology of unethical organizational communication. The resulting typology of unethical organizational communication consisted of six general categories: coercive, destructive, deceptive, intrusive, secretive, and manipulative-exploitative.

1. **Coercive Communication:** The first category of unethical organizational communication discussed by Redding (1996) is coercive acts. He defined coercive acts as:

communication events or behavior reflecting abuses of power or authority resulting in (or designed to effect) unjustified invasions of autonomy. This includes: intolerance of dissent, restrictions of freedom of speech; refusal to listen; resorting to formal rules and regulations to stifle discussion or to squash complaints, and so on. (pp. 27-28)

2. **Destructive Communication:** The second category of unethical organizational communication discussed by Redding (1996) is destructive acts. He defined destructive acts as:

communication events or behavior attack receivers' self-esteem, reputation, or deeply held feelings; reflecting indifference toward, or content for, basic values of others. This includes: insults, derogatory innuendoes, epithets, jokes (especially those based on gender, race, sex, religion, or ethnicity); put-downs; back-stabbing; character-assassination; and so on. It also includes the use of "truth" as a weapon (as in revealing confidential information to unauthorized persons, or in using alleged "openness" as a façade to conceal the launching of personal attacks. (pp. 28-29)

When looking at Redding's explanation of destructive communicative acts, there are clearly two parts: aggressive communication and use of information. The first part of his definition focuses on how individuals can use aggressive forms of communication in an attempt to make others feel inferior. These types of communicative acts are commonly referred to as verbally aggressive acts. The second aspect of destructive communication is about how people use information within an organization. Information is commonly seen as a commodity in many organizations, so the hoarding of information as well as using information in manipulative manners is quite common.

3. **Deceptive Communication:** The third category of unethical organizational communication discussed by Redding (1996) is deceptive acts. He defined deceptive acts as:

communication events or behavior reflecting a "willful perversion of the truth in order to deceive, cheat, or defraud" (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1998, s.v. "dishonesty"). This

includes: evasive or deliberately misleading messages, which in turn includes equivocation (i.e., the deliberate use of ambiguity) ...; also bureaucratic-style euphemisms designed to cover up defects, to conceal embarrassing deeds, or to “prettify” unpleasant facts. (p. 30).

In this category of unethical behavior, we have non-truthful and misleading messages. The first part of this definition examines how some individuals lie in order to get what they want at work. The second part of the definition examines how some individuals or organizations use messages in order to alter a receiver’s perception of reality. The messages, in this case, are not explicitly not-true, but are manipulated in a fashion to alter how receivers interpret those messages.

4. **Intrusive Communication:** The fourth category of unethical organizational communication discussed by Redding (1996) is intrusive acts. He defined intrusive acts as:

communication behavior that is characteristically initiated by message receivers. For example,...the use of hidden cameras, the tapping of telephones, and the application of computer technologies to the monitoring of employee behavior; in other words, surveillance. The fundamental issue, of course, revolves around the meaning and legitimacy of “privacy rights.” (p. 31)

The issue of intrusion has become important in the 21st Century because modern technology has made intrusion into individuals’ private lives very easy. Whether potential employers are looking at your private Facebook information prior to interviewing you or employers install software on your computer that monitors every key stroke you make, corporate “big-brother” is definitely watching you. According to a 2005 survey conducted by the American Management Association, 36% of respondents had some amount of monitoring of their computer key-strokes by their organizations and 50% of respondents had some or all of their computer files monitored by their organizations. 76% of respondents noted that their workplace monitored their internet activity. In fact, 26% of the respondents indicated that their organizations had fired workers for misusing the internet and another 25% had terminated employees for e-mail misuse. Corporate intrusion does not stop with computer activity. 3% of the respondents said that all of the employees in their organization have their telephone calls recorded while 19% said that only selected job categories had their telephone calls recorded. Some companies go so far as to track their employee’s physical whereabouts via global positioning systems and satellite technology in company vehicles (8%), company cell phones (5%), and employee identification cards (8%). We should mention that there are court cases within the United States that have legalized all of these processes without requiring a forewarning to employees. In the European Union, however, employees must be notified prior to monitoring, but organizations can still legally monitor their employees.

Organizations can also spy on one another. Professional sports teams have been accused of illegally filming opponents and relaying plays obtained without permission, in an attempt to advance their team.

5. **Secretive Communication:** The fifth category of unethical organizational communication

discussed by Redding (1996) is secretive acts. He defined secretive acts as:

various forms of nonverbal communication, especially (of course) silence and including unresponsiveness. It includes such behaviors as hoarding information (I call this “culpable silence”) and sweeping under the rug information that, if revealed, would expose wrongdoing or ineptness on the part of individuals in positions of power. (p. 32)

According to Redding, even nonverbal unresponsiveness can be a form of unethical communication. For example, if the sender of the message purposefully manipulates her or his nonverbal behavior in an attempt to skew how a receiver interprets a message, then the sender of the message is preventing the receiver from completely and accurately interpreting the message. Furthermore, Redding believes that many employees engage in culpable silence, which occurs when someone purposefully prevents information from being given to receivers who need the information. While culpable silence is not lying in the strictest of senses, culpable silence is clearly a version of deception.

6. **Manipulative-Exploitative:** The final category of unethical organizational communication discussed by Redding (1996) is manipulative-exploitative acts. He defined manipulative-exploitative acts as those where the source purposefully prevents the receiver from knowing the source’s actual intentions behind a communicative message. A term that Redding finds closely related to these unethical acts is demagoguery:

Of central importance is the notion that a demagogue is one who, without concern for the best interests of the audience, seeks to gain compliance by exploiting people’s fears, prejudices, or areas of ignorance. Closely related to, if not a variant of, demagoguery is the utterance of messages that reflect a patronizing or condescending attitude toward the audience—an unstated assumption that audience members are dull-witted, or immature, or both. (pp. 33-34)

Redding, W. C. (1996). Ethics and the study of organizational communication: When will we wake up? In J. A. Jaks & M. S. Pritchard (Eds.), *Responsible communication: Ethical issues in business, industry, and the professions* (pp.17-40). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

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4.4 Determining what is Ethical

How do organizations, and individuals with organizations, decide what is right and wrong? Philosophers and ethicists have identified a variety of ethical perspectives that, when applied, affect how this question is answered. Thus, depending of the philosophical perspective used , the answer to any ethical situation may vary. Below is a brief review of some common ethical perspectives used by organizations when deciding if their actions are ethical (Andrew & Baird, 2005).

Ethical Perspective	Basic Premise	Organizational Communication Application
Economic	The standard is based on making money	Organizations should act and communicate in ways that make the most money for the organization
Legal	The standard is based on the laws of the community/society	Organizations should act and communicate in ways that follow the laws of the land.
Religious	The standard is based on the tenants of a religion.	Organizations should act and communicate in ways that uphold the major tenants of the religion.
Utilitarian	The standard is helping the greatest number of people	Organizations should act and communicate in a manner that does the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people.
Universalist	The standard is whether the person intended to do good	Organizations should act and communicate in ways that have the intended outcomes of doing good.
Humanist	The standard is based on honoring free will of others	Organizations should act and communicate in ways that encourage full, honest, open communication so others can make informed decisions.
Cultural	The standard is the cultural practice of a community/society.	Organizations should act and communicate in ways that uphold the cultural values in where they are situated.
Situational	The standard is the unique characteristics of the situation	Organizations should act and communicate in ways that address the central features of any given situation.

Making Ethical Decisions on a Personal Level

It is also important to discuss how we can attempt to make ethical decisions on an individual basis. There are hundreds of models, but we will review the Twelve Questions Model

Laura Nash, an ethics researcher, created the Twelve Questions Model as a simple approach to ethical decision making. In her model, she suggests asking yourself questions to determine if you are making the right ethical decision. This model asks people to reframe their perspective on ethical decision making, which can be helpful in looking at ethical choices from all angles. Her model consists of the following questions:

1. What is the nature of the problem at hand?
2. How would I define the problem if I stood on the other side of the fence?
3. How did this situation occur in the first place?
4. To whom and what do you give your loyalties as a person and as a member of the company?
5. What is your intention in making this decision?
6. How does this intention compare with the likely results?
7. Whom could your decision or action injure?
8. Can you engage the affected parties in a discussion of the problem before you make your decision?
9. Are you confident that your position will be as valid over a long period of time as it seems now?
10. Could you disclose without qualms your decision or action to your boss, your family, or society as a whole?
11. What is the symbolic potential of your action if understood? If misunderstood?
12. Under what conditions would you allow exceptions to your stand?

Consider the situation of Catha and her decision to take home a printer cartridge from work, despite the company policy against taking any office supplies home. She might go through the following process, using the Twelve Questions Model:

1. My problem is that I cannot afford to buy printer ink, and I have the same printer at home. Since I do some work at home, it seems fair that I can take home the printer ink.
2. If I am allowed to take this ink home, others may feel the same, and that means the company is spending a lot of money on printer ink for people's home use.
3. It has occurred due to the fact I have so much work that I need to take some of it home, and often I need to print at home.
4. I am loyal to the company.
5. My intention is to use the ink for work purposes only.
6. If I take home this ink, my intention may show I am disloyal to the company and do not respect company policies.
7. The decision could injure my company and myself, in that if I get caught, I may get in trouble. This could result in loss of respect for me at work.
8. Yes, I could engage my boss and ask her to make an exception to the company policy, since I am doing so much work at home.
9. No, I am not confident of this. For example, if I am promoted at work, I may have to enforce this rule at some point. It would be difficult to enforce if I personally have broken the rule before.
10. I would not feel comfortable doing it and letting my company and boss know after the fact.
11. The symbolic action could be questionable loyalty to the company and respect of company policies.
12. An exception might be ok if I ask permission first. If I am not given permission, I can work with my supervisor to find a way to get my work done without having a printer cartridge at home.

As you can see from the process, Catha came to her own conclusion by answering the questions

involved in this model. The purpose of the model is to think through the situation from all sides to make sure the right decision is being made.

Nash, L. (1981). Ethics without the sermon. *Howard Business Review*, 59 79-90, accessed February 24, 2012, <http://www.cs.bgsu.edu/maner/heuristics/1981Nash.htm>

4.5 Identifying Organizational Ethics and Values

How important is it for you to work for an organization that has values and ethics similar to yours? One of the biggest ethical challenges in the workplace is when the organization's ethical behaviors do not meet our own personal ethics. For example, suppose you believe strongly that child labor should not be used to produce clothing. You find out, however, that your company uses child labor in China to produce 10 percent of your products. In this case, your personal values do not meet the societal and stakeholder values you find important. This kind of difference in values can create challenges working in a particular organization. When choosing the company or business we work for, it is important to make sure there is a match between our personal values and the values within the organization.

Since we know that everyone's upbringing is different and had different role models, experiences, religious influences, etcetera, create various forms of institutional artifacts that articulate its values. One way an organization communicates its values is its internal code of conduct reflected in the **organization's policies and procedures**. Policies and procedures outline many things, and often companies offer training in one or more of these areas: Sexual harassment policy, employee privacy, insider trading, use of company equipment, company information nondisclosures, expectations for customer relationships and suppliers, policy on accepting or giving gifts to customers or clients, etcetera.

Organizations also communicate their values and ethical stance via their **mission and value statements**. For example, companies create values statements, which explain their values and are tied to company ethics. A values statement is the organization's guiding principles, those things that the company finds important.

Closing

The question "Is this ethical?" is not easily answered, and organizational ethics is a complex topic. There are a variety of domains, types, and perspectives that affect the answer to this question, and we have only been able to scratch the surface of these topics in this short section of our reader.

Chapter 5: Communication Flow: Networks & Channels

Remembering back to chapter 1, organization communication was defined as interactions among a stable system of individuals who work together to achieve, through a hierarchy of ranks and divisions of labor, common goals. Because of the complexities involved with organizational communication, it is important to distinguish between the directions communication flows (i.e., communication networks) and the means or medium through which communication flows (i.e., communication channel).

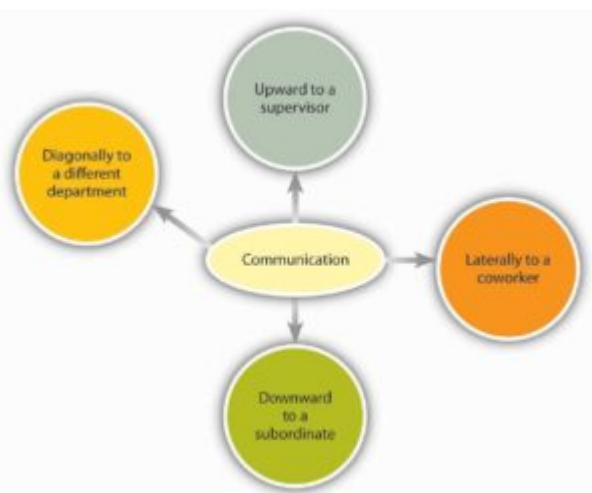
5.1 Communication Networks

Organizational communication is held to a higher standard than everyday communication. The consequences of misunderstandings are usually higher and the chances to recognize and correct a mistake are lower. Barriers to communication and skills for improving communication are the same regardless of where the conversation takes place or with whom. As Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, author of best-selling books such as *Flow*, has noted, “In large organizations the dilution of information as it passes up and down the hierarchy, and horizontally across departments, can undermine the effort to focus on common goals.” Organizations and individuals within organizations need to keep this in mind when going about their job related duties.

Communication Networks

Communication networks refer to the directionality of the communication flow. Communication can flow in a variety of directions within the organization (internal communication) and can flow between the organization and it’s constituents (external communication).

I. Internal Communication Networks



Communication flows in many different directions within an organization.

Internal information can flow in four directions in an organization: downward, upward, horizontally, and diagonally. The size, nature, and structure of the organization dictate which direction most of the information flows. In more established and traditional organizations, much of the communication flows in a vertical—downward and upward—direction. In informal firms, such as tech start-ups, information

tends to flow horizontally and diagonally. This, of course, is a function of the almost flat organizational hierarchy and the need for collaboration. Unofficial communications, such as those carried in the company grapevine, appear in both types of organizations.

Downward Communication Flows

Downward communication is when company leaders and managers share information with lower-level employees. Unless requested as part of the message, the senders don't usually expect (or particularly want) to get a response. An example may be an announcement of a new CEO or notice of a merger with a former competitor. Other forms of high-level downward communications include speeches, blogs, podcasts, and videos. The most common types of downward communication are everyday directives of department managers or line managers to employees. These can even be in the form of instruction manuals or company handbooks.

Downward communication delivers information that helps to update the workforce about key organizational changes, new goals, or strategies; provide performance feedback at the organizational level; coordinate initiatives; present an official policy (public relations); or improve worker morale or consumer relations.

Upward Communication Network

Information moving from lower-level employees to high-level employees is upward communication (also sometimes called vertical communication). For example, upward communication occurs when workers report to a supervisor or when team leaders report to a department manager. Items typically communicated upward include progress reports, proposals for projects, budget estimates, grievances and complaints, suggestions for improvements, and schedule concerns. Sometimes a downward communication prompts an upward response, such as when a manager asks for a recommendation for a replacement part or an estimate of when a project will be completed.

An important goal of many managers today is to encourage spontaneous or voluntary upward communication from employees without the need to ask first. Some companies go so far as to organize contests and provide prizes for the most innovative and creative solutions and suggestions. Before employees feel comfortable making these kinds of suggestions, however, they must trust that management will recognize their contributions and not unintentionally undermine or ignore their efforts. Some organizations have even installed "whistleblower" hotlines that will let employees report dangerous, unethical, or illegal activities anonymously to avoid possible retaliation by higher-ups in the company.

Horizontal and Diagonal Communication Networks

Horizontal communication involves the exchange of information across departments at the same level in an organization (i.e., peer-to-peer communication). The purpose of most horizontal communication is to

request support or coordinate activities. People at the same level in the organization can work together to work on problems or issues in an informal and as-needed basis. The manager of the production department can work with the purchasing manager to accelerate or delay the shipment of materials. The finance manager and inventory managers can be looped in so that the organization can achieve the maximum benefit from the coordination. Communications between two employees who report to the same manager is also an example of horizontal communication. Some problems with horizontal communication can arise if one manager is unwilling or unmotivated to share information, or sees efforts to work communally as threatening his position (territorial behavior). In a case like that, the manager at the next level up will need to communicate downward to reinforce the company's values of cooperation.

Diagonal communication is cross-functional communication between employees at different levels of the organization. For example, if the vice president of sales sends an e-mail to the vice president of manufacturing asking when a product will be available for shipping, this is an example of horizontal communication. But if a sales representative e-mails the vice president of marketing, then diagonal communication has occurred. Whenever communication goes from one department to another department, the sender's manager should be made part of the loop. A manager may be put in an embarrassing position and appear incompetent if he isn't aware of everything happening in his department. Trust may be lost and careers damaged by not paying attention to key communication protocols. Diagonal communication is becoming more common in organizations with a flattened, matrix, or product-based structure. Advantages include:

- Building relationships between senior and lower-level employees from different parts of the organization.
- Encouraging an informal flow of information in the organization.
- Reducing the chance of a message being distorted by going through additional filters.
- Reducing the workloads of senior-level managers.

II. External Communication Networks



Examples of channels that carry external communication include press briefings, fact sheets, press kits, newsletters, magazines, brochures, news releases, annual reports, invoices and purchase orders.

Communication does not start and stop within the organization. External communication focuses on audiences outside of the organization. Examples of external communication include press releases about the organization, public relations information, advertisements about the organization's product. Senior management—with the help of specialized departments such as public relations or legal—almost always controls communications that relate to the public image or may affect its financial situation. First-level and middle-level management generally handle operational business communications such as purchasing, hiring, and marketing. When communicating outside the organization (regardless of the level), it is important for employees to behave professionally and not to make commitments outside of their scope of authority. External communication also includes interactions between employees of the organization and its customers.

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5.2 Communication Channels

There's a well-known expression that goes "It's not what you say, it's how you say it." It's really both. While communication networks refer to the direction communication flows in an organization, **communication channels** refers to the medium, mean, or method through which a message is sent to its intended receiver. Basic channels include written (hard copy print or digital formats), oral or spoken, and electronic/multimedia. These types of channels have varying channel "richness".

Channel richness refers to the amount of nonverbal communication provided and the immediacy of feedback. Face-to-face communication is very high in richness because it includes nonverbal behaviors and has immediate feedback. A written document is lower in richness because it lacks nonverbal communication and doesn't have immediate feedback.

Information Channel	Information Richness
Face-to-face conversation	High
Videoconferencing	High
Telephone conversation	High
E-mails	Medium
Handheld devices	Medium
Blogs	Medium
Written letters and memos	Medium
Formal written documents	Low
Spreadsheets	Low

Source: Adapted from information in Daft, R. L., & Lenge, R. H. (1984). Information richness: A new approach to managerial behavior and organizational design. In B. Staw & L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Vol. 6, pp. 191-233). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press; and Lengel, R. H., & Daft, D. L. (1988). The selection of communication media as an executive skill. *Academy of Management Executive*, 11, 225-232.

1. Oral Channels

Oral channels depend on the spoken word. They are the richest mediums and include face-to-face, in-person presentations, mobile phone conferences, group presentations, telephone, video meetings, conferences, speeches, and lectures. These channels have lower message-distortion because nonverbal behaviors (including voice intonation) are included that provide meaning for the receiver. They also allow for immediate feedback of the communication to the sender. Oral channels are generally used in organizations when there is a high likelihood of the message creating anxiety, confusion, or an emotional response in the audience. For instance, a senior manager should address rumors about layoffs or downsizing in face-to-face meetings with management staff. This allows the receiver (audience) to get immediate clarification and explanations, even if the explanation is a simple but direct: "At this time, I just don't know."

Oral communications are also useful when the organization wants to introduce a key official or change a long-established policy, followed up with a written detailed explanation. Senior managers with high credibility usually deliver complex or disturbing messages. For example, a senior manager will usually announce plans to downsize in person so that everyone gets the same message at the same time. This will often include a schedule so people know when to expect more details.

2. Written Channels

Written communications include e-mails, texts, memos, letters, documents, reports, newsletters, spreadsheets, etc. (Even though e-mails are electronic, they are basically digital versions of written memos.) They are among the leaner business communications because the writer must provide enough context that the words are interpreted accurately. The receiver should be alert for ambiguity and ask for clarification if needed.

Written messages are effective in transmitting detailed messages. Humans are limited in the amount of data they can absorb at one time. Written information can be read over time. Reports can include supporting data and detailed explanations when it is important to persuade the receiver about a course of action. Written communications can be carefully crafted to say exactly what the sender means. Formal business communications, such as job offer letters, contracts and budgets, proposals and quotes, should always be written.

Because email is such a pervasive channel of communication, further discussion about this channel is warranted.

Use of E-Mail

The growth of e-mail has been spectacular, but it has also created challenges in managing information and an ever-increasing speed of doing business. Over 100 million adults in the United States use e-mail regularly (at least once a day). Internet users around the world send an estimated 60 billion e-mails every day, and many of those are spam or scam attempts. A 2005 study estimated that less than 1% of all written human communications even reached paper—and we can imagine that this percentage has

gone down even further since then. To combat the overuse of e-mail, companies such as Intel have even instituted “no e-mail Fridays” where all communication is done via other communication channels. Learning to be more effective in your e-mail communications is an important skill.

An important, although often ignored, rule when communicating emotional information is that e-mail’s lack of richness can be your loss. E-mail is a medium-rich channel. It can convey facts quickly, but when it comes to emotion, e-mail’s flaws make it far less desirable a choice than oral communication—the 55% of nonverbal cues that make a conversation comprehensible to a listener are missing. E-mail readers don’t pick up on sarcasm and other tonal aspects of writing as much as the writer believes they will, researchers note in a recent study. The sender may believe she has included these emotional signifiers in her message. But, with words alone, those signifiers are not there. This gap between the form and content of e-mail inspired the rise of emoticons—symbols that offer clues to the emotional side of the words in each message. Generally speaking, however, emoticons are not considered professional in business communication.

You might feel uncomfortable conveying an emotionally laden message verbally, especially when the message contains unwanted news. Sending an e-mail to your staff that there will be no bonuses this year may seem easier than breaking the bad news face-to-face, but that doesn’t mean that e-mail is an effective or appropriate way to deliver this kind of news. When the message is emotional, the sender should use verbal communication. Indeed, a good rule of thumb is that the more emotionally laden messages require more thought in the choice of channel and how they are communicated.

Basic E-Mail Do’s and Don’ts

DO	DON’T
.....use a subject line that summarizes your message & adjust it as the message changesput anything in an e-mail that you don’t want the world to see.
.....make your request in the first line of your e-mail.send or forward chain e-mails.
.....end your e-mail with your name and contact information.write a Message in capital letters—this is the equivalent of SHOUTING.
.....think of a work e-mail as a binding communicationhit Send until you spell-check your e-mail.
.....let others know if you’ve received an e-mail in error.routinely “cc” everyone all the time. Reducing inbox clutter is a great way to increase communication.

III. Electronic (Multimedia) Communications

Television broadcasts, web-based communications such as social media, interactive blogs, public and intranet company web pages, Facebook, and Twitter belong in this growing category of communication channels. Electronic communications allow messages to be sent instantaneously and globally. People can talk face-to-face across enormous distances. Marketing and advertising can be targeted to many different types of customers, and business units can easily communicate in real time. This is especially important when customers must be advised of product recalls or security issues.

Although extremely effective in sharing information with a large audience, the widespread utilization of electronic communications for business purposes can also be risky. In recent years, the private communications and customer files of many large corporations have been hacked and their data stolen. In 2016, New Jersey Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield was fined \$1.1 million for failing to safeguard the personal information of medical patients. The company stored unencrypted sensitive data including birth dates and Social Security numbers on laptops that were stolen out of their main offices.

Social Media

Read: "[The 5 Types of Social Media and Pros & Cons of Each.](#)" by Pamela Bump. The Hubspot Marketing Blog.

Which Channel Is Best?

Quite simply, the best channel is the one that most effectively delivers the message so that it is understood as the sender intended. Nuanced or emotionally charged messages require a rich medium; simple, routine messages don't need the personal touch. If you want to advise your department that at 2 p.m. you want to have a five-minute stand-up meeting in the hallway outside of your office to congratulate them on meeting a goal, then send a quick e-mail. You really don't want people to reply with questions. E-mail is a lean medium but works very well when the content of the message is neither complex nor emotionally charged. On the other hand, a telephone call is a more appropriate channel to apologize for having to cancel a lunch date. The speaker can hear the sincerity in your voice and can express their disappointment or offer to reschedule. A good rule of thumb is the more emotional the context of the message, the richer the medium should be to deliver the message. But remember—even face-to-face business meetings can be followed up with a written note to ensure that both parties are truly on the same page.

Handheld devices, blogs, and written letters and memos offer medium-rich channels because they convey words and pictures/photos. Formal written documents, such as legal documents, and spreadsheets, such as the division's budget, convey the least richness because the format is often rigid and standardized. As a result, nuance is lost. The key to effective communication is to match the communication channel with the goal of the communication. The table below provides a review of some channels, and their characteristics, as a way to make an effective choice.

	Speed	Richness	Sender's control over message creation	Sender's awareness of receiver attention	Detailed Message	Permanency
Face to Face	Synchronous	High	Low	High	Moderate	Low
Telephone	Synchronous	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Voicemail	Asynchronous	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low	Moderate
Email	Varies	Low	High	Low	High	High
IM/Text	Varies	Low	High	Moderate/Low	Low	High
Printed Document	Asynchronous	Low	High	Low	High	High
Social Media (E.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	Varies	Varies	High	Moderate/Low	Varies	High

OERs adapted for this reading include:

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-principlesofmanagement/chapter/channels-of-business-communication/>

<https://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/management-principles-v1.1/s16-05-communication-channels.html>

Chapter 6: Intercultural Communication in Organizations

Around the world, the workforce is becoming diverse. In this section, we will take an intercultural approach to explore communication in organizations. An intercultural approach is not easy and is often messy, but it acknowledges complexity and aims to work through it to a positive, inclusive, and equitable outcome.

6.0 Defining Culture & Intercultural Communication

Around the world, the workforce is becoming diverse. Regardless of your gender, race, and age, it seems that you will need to work with, communicate with, and understand people different from you at school as well as at work. Understanding cultures different from your own is also becoming increasingly important due to the globalization of business. In the United States, 16% of domestic employees were foreign born, indicating that even those of us who are not directly involved in international business may benefit from developing an appreciation for the differences and similarities between cultures.^[3] In this chapter, we will examine particular benefits and challenges doing international business, and of managing a diverse workforce. We will also discuss ways in which you can increase your effectiveness when working with diversity.

Before we move into these discussions, however, we need to spend time understanding what is meant by “culture” and “intercultural communication.”

Defining culture

According to Lustig and Koester (2010), “culture is a **learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, norms**, and social practices, which **affect the behaviors of a relatively large group of people**” (p. 25). Thus, when thinking about culture, it is helpful to remember the following :

- Culture is learned. Cultures are not innate or biological, they are something that we learn through interactions with others.
- Culture is shared. Individuals operating within a culture share the same set of interpretations. It is because of this that culture often seems invisible to those who share it....as everyone is operating under the same set of premises.
- Culture is dynamic. Cultures change (slowly) over time. They are not static, thus we must continually learn about a culture.
- Culture is systemic. Cultures permeate individual’s belief, social interactions, laws and institutions.

The iceberg (shown in Figure 7.5.1), is a commonly used metaphor to describe culture and is great for illustrating the tangible and the intangible. When talking about culture, most people focus on the “tip of the iceberg,” which is visible but makes up just 10 percent of the object. The rest of the iceberg, 90 percent of it, is below the waterline.



Figure: The cultural iceberg (by Laura Underwood), adapted from Lindner (2013)

Many business leaders, when addressing intercultural situations, pick up on the things they can see—things on the “tip of the iceberg.” Things like food, clothing, and language difference are easily and immediately obvious, but focusing only on these can mean missing or overlooking deeper cultural aspects such as thought patterns, values, and beliefs that are under the surface. Solutions to any interpersonal miscommunication that results become temporary bandages covering deeply rooted conflicts.

In addition to learning a culture, we also learn how to interact in what some refer to as co-cultures or social communities. These are groups of people who live within a dominant culture yet also belong to another social group or groups that share values, understandings and practices.

Thus, we will use the term **intercultural communication** to refer to “communication between people and groups of diverse cultures, subcultures or sub group identifications.” (Jandt, 2016, p G-4)

<https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/professionalcomms/chapter/8-1-intercultural-communication/>

6.1 International Business & Communication

Learning Objectives

1. Describe some ways in which national culture affects organizational behavior.
2. Describe the four dimensions of culture that are part of Hofstede's framework.

In the United States, the workforce is becoming increasingly multicultural, with close to 16% of all employees being born outside the country. In addition, the world of work is becoming increasingly international. The world is going through a transformation in which China, India, and Brazil are emerging as major players in world economics. Companies are realizing that doing international business provides access to raw materials, resources, and a wider customer base. For many companies, international business is where most of the profits lie, such as for Intel Corporation, where 70% of all revenues come from outside the United States. International companies are also becoming major players within the United States. For example, China's Lenovo acquired IBM's personal computer business and became the world's third largest computer manufacturer. As a result of these trends, understanding the role of national culture for organizational behavior may provide you with a competitive advantage in your career. In fact, sometime in your career, you may find yourself working as an expatriate. An expatriate is someone who is temporarily assigned to a position in a foreign country. Such an experience may be invaluable for your career and challenge you to increase your understanding and appreciation of differences across cultures.

Consider the following questions: How would you deal with Japanese customers? How would you behave when invited to dinner by a Moroccan customer? “, “Is there any kind of basic “international business behavior”? Would you be able to work for a German company? What about the American way of dealing with the working force? Any businessperson should have an answer for each one of these questions. Daily practice often shows professionals that working abroad or in an international setting is harder than expected beforehand and that academic contents do not seem basic in some specific situations, as in some of those expressed above. It is crucial to learn how to deal with difficult moments that many business people often have when working in an international setting.

In a world that is increasingly interconnected, the success of organizations and their people depends on effective intercultural communication. Research on the nature of linguistic and cultural similarities and differences can play a positive and constructive role. Lack of knowledge of another culture can lead, at the best, to embarrassing or amusing mistakes in communication. At the worst, such mistakes may confuse or even offend the people we wish to communicate with, making the conclusion of business deals or international agreements difficult or impossible. Donnell King of Pellissippi State Technical Community College provides some examples from the advertising world of how simply translating words is not enough—deeper understanding of the other culture is necessary to translate meaning effectively.

Products have failed overseas sometimes simply because a name may take on unanticipated meanings in translation:

- Pepsi Cola's "Come Alive With Pepsi" campaign, when it was translated for the Taiwanese market, conveyed the unsettling news that, "Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the grave."
- Parker Pen could not advertise its famous "Jotter" ballpoint pen in some languages because the translation sounded like "jockstrap" pen.
- One American airline operating in Brazil advertised that it had plush "rendezvous lounges" on its jets, unaware that in Portuguese (the language of Brazil) "rendezvous" implies a special room for having sex.
- The Olympic copier Roto in Chile (roto in Spanish means 'broken')
- The Chevy Nova in Puerto Rico (no va means 'doesn't go')
- A General Motors auto ad with "Body by Fisher" became "Corpse by Fisher" in Flemish.
- A Colgate-Palmolive toothpaste named "Cue" was advertised in France before anyone realized that *Cue* also happened to be the name of a widely circulated pornographic book about oral sex.

This type of mishap is not an American monopoly: A successful European chocolate and fruit product was introduced into the U.S. with the unfortunate name "Zit."

Naming a product is communication at its simplest level. The overall implications of intercultural communication for global business are enormous. Take the case of Euro Disney, later renamed Disneyland Paris. For the year 1993, the theme park lost approximately US \$1 billion. Losses were still at US \$1 million a day in 1994-95. There were many reasons for this, including a recession in Europe, but intercultural insensitivity was also a very important factor. No attention was paid to the European context or to cultural differences in management practice, labor relations, or even such simple matters as preferred dining hours or availability of alcohol and tobacco. Euro Disney signals the danger for business practitioners immersed in financial forecasting, market studies and management models when they overlook how culture affects behavior. Few things are more important to conducting business on a global scale than skill in intercultural communication.

For all these reasons, communication is crucial to business. Specialized business knowledge is important, but not enough to guarantee success. Communication skills are vital.

So how do cultures differ from each other, and how might you move towards more effective intercultural communication when doing business? If you have ever visited a country different from your own, you probably have stories to tell about what aspects of the culture were different and which were similar. Maybe you have noticed that in many parts of the United States people routinely greet strangers with a smile when they step into an elevator or see them on the street, but the same behavior of saying hello and smiling at strangers would be considered odd in many parts of Europe. In India and other parts of Asia, traffic flows with rules of its own, with people disobeying red lights, stopping and loading passengers in highways, or honking continuously for no apparent reason. In fact, when it comes to culture, we are like fish in the sea: We may not realize how culture is shaping our behavior until we

leave our own and go someplace else. Cultural differences may shape how people dress, how they act, how they form relationships, how they address each other, what they eat, and many other aspects of daily life. Of course, talking about national cultures does not mean that national cultures are uniform. In many countries, it is possible to talk about the existence of cultures based on region or geography. For example, in the United States, the southern, eastern, western, and midwestern regions of the country are associated with slightly different values.

Thinking about hundreds of different ways in which cultures may differ is not very practical when you are trying to understand how culture affects work behaviors. For this reason, the work of Geert Hofstede, a Dutch social scientist, is an important contribution to the literature. Hofstede studied IBM employees in 66 countries and showed that four dimensions of national culture explain an important source of variation among cultures. Research also shows that cultural variation with respect to these four dimensions influence employee job behaviors, attitudes, well-being, motivation, leadership, negotiations, and many other aspects of organizational behavior (Hofstede, 1980; Tsui, Nifadkar, & Ou, 2007).

Individualism

Cultures in which people define themselves as individuals and form looser ties with their groups.

- USA
- Australia
- UK
- Canada
- Hungary

Collectivism

Cultures where people have stronger bonds to their group membership forms a person's self identity.

- Guatemala
- Ecuador
- Indonesia
- Pakistan
- China

Low Power Distance

A society that views an unequal distribution of power as relatively unacceptable.

- Austria
- Denmark
- Israel
- Ireland
- New Zealand

High Power Distance

A society that views an unequal distribution of power as relatively acceptable.

- Malaysia
- Slovakia
- Philippines
- Russia
- Mexico

Low Uncertainty Avoidance

Cultures in which people are comfortable in unpredictable situations and have high tolerance for ambiguity.

- Denmark
- Jamaica
- Singapore
- China
- Sweden

High Uncertainty Avoidance

Cultures in which people prefer predictable situations and have low tolerance for ambiguity.

- Belgium
- El Salvador
- Greece
- Guatemala
- Portugal

Masculinity

Cultures in which people value achievement and competitiveness, as well as acquisition of money and other material objects.

Femininity

Cultures in which people value maintaining good relationships, caring for the weak, and quality of life.

- Slovakia
- Japan
- Hungary
- Austria
- Venezuela
- Norway
- Netherlands
- Sweden
- Costa Rica
- Chile

Hofstede's culture framework is a useful tool to understand the systematic differences across cultures.

Individualism-Collectivism

Individualistic cultures are cultures in which people define themselves as an individual and form looser ties with their groups. These cultures value autonomy and independence of the person, self-reliance, and creativity. Countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia are examples of individualistic cultures. In contrast, collectivistic cultures are cultures where people have stronger bonds to their groups and group membership forms a person's self identity. Asian countries such as China and Japan, as well as countries in Latin America are higher in collectivism.

In collectivistic cultures, people define themselves as part of a group. In fact, this may be one way to detect people's individualism-collectivism level. When individualists are asked a question such as "Who are you? Tell me about yourself," they are more likely to talk about their likes and dislikes, personal goals, or accomplishments. When collectivists are asked the same question, they are more likely to define themselves in relation to others, such as "I am Chinese" or "I am the daughter of a doctor and a homemaker. I have two brothers." In other words, in collectivistic cultures, self identity is shaped to a stronger extent by group memberships (Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990).

In collectivistic societies, family bonds are more influential in people's daily lives. While individualists often refer to their nuclear family when thinking about their families, collectivists are more likely to define family in a broader sense, including cousins, uncles, aunts, and second cousins. Family members are more involved in each others' lives. For example, in societies such as Iran, Greece, and Turkey, extended family members may see each other several times a week. In many collectivistic societies, the language reflects the level of interaction among extended family members such that there may be different words used to refer to maternal versus paternal grandparents, aunts, or uncles. In addition to interacting with each other more often, family members have a strong sense of obligation toward each other. For example, children often expect to live with their parents until they get married. In collectivistic countries such as Thailand, Japan, and India, choosing a career or finding a spouse are all family affairs. In these cultures, family members feel accountable for each others' behavior such that one person's misbehavior may be a cause of shame for the rest of the family (Hui & Triandis, 1986). Understanding the importance of family in collectivistic cultures is critical to understanding their work behaviors. For example, one multinational oil company in Mexico was suffering from low productivity. When the situation was investigated, it became clear that the new manager of the subsidiary had gotten

rid of a monthly fiesta for company employees and their families under the assumption that it was a waste of time and money. Employees had interpreted this to mean that the company no longer cared about their families (Raphael, 2001). In India, companies such as Intel organize “take your parents to work day” and involve parents in recruitment efforts, understanding the role of parents in the career and job choices of prospective employees (Frauenheim, 2005).

Collectivists are more attached to their groups and have more permanent attachments to these groups. Conversely, individualists attempt to change groups more often and have weaker bonds to them. It is important to recognize that to collectivists the entire human universe is not considered to be their in-group. In other words, collectivists draw sharper distinctions between the groups they belong to and those they do not belong to. They may be nice and friendly to their in-group members while acting much more competitively and aggressively toward out-group members. This tendency has important work implications. While individualists may evaluate the performance of their colleagues more accurately, collectivists are more likely to be generous when evaluating their in-group members. Freeborders, a software company based in San Francisco, California, found that even though it was against company policy, Chinese employees were routinely sharing salary information with their coworkers. This situation led them to change their pay system by standardizing pay at job levels and then giving raises after more frequent appraisals (Fruenheim, 2005; Hui & Triandis, 1986; Javidan & Dastmalchian, 2003; Gomez, Shapiro, & Kirkman, 2000).

Collectivistic societies emphasize conformity to the group. The Japanese saying “the nail that sticks up gets hammered down” illustrates that being different from the group is undesirable. In these cultures, disobeying or disagreeing with one’s group is difficult and people may find it hard to say no to their colleagues or friends. Instead of saying no, which would be interpreted as rebellion or at least be considered rude, they may use indirect ways of disagreeing, such as saying “I have to think about this” or “this would be difficult.” Such indirect communication prevents the other party from losing face but may cause misunderstandings in international communications with cultures that have a more direct style. Collectivist cultures may have a greater preference for team-based rewards as opposed to individual-based rewards. For example, in one study, more than 75% of the subjects in Philippines viewed team-based pay as fair, while less than 50% of the U.S.-based subjects viewed team-based rewards as fair (Kirkman, Gibson, & Shapiro, 2001).

Power Distance

Power distance refers to the degree to which the society views an unequal distribution of power as acceptable. Simply put, some cultures are more egalitarian than others. In low power distance cultures, egalitarianism is the norm. In high power distance cultures, people occupying more powerful positions such as managers, teachers, or those who are older are viewed as more powerful and deserving of a higher level of respect. High power distance cultures are hierarchical cultures where everyone has their place. Powerful people are supposed to act powerful, while those in inferior positions are expected to show respect. For example, Thailand is a high power distance culture and, starting from childhood, people learn to recognize who is superior, equal, or inferior to them. When passing people who are

more powerful, individuals are expected to bow, and the more powerful the person, the deeper the bow would be (Pornpitakpan, 2000). Managers in high power distance cultures are treated with a higher degree of respect, which may surprise those in lower power distance cultures. A Citibank manager in Saudi Arabia was surprised when employees stood up every time he passed by (Denison, Haaland, & Goelzer, 2004). Similarly, in Turkey, students in elementary and high schools greet their teacher by standing up every time the teacher walks into the classroom. In these cultures, referring to a manager or a teacher with their first name would be extremely rude. High power distance within a culture may easily cause misunderstandings with those from low power distance societies. For example, the limp handshake someone from India may give or a job candidate from Chad who is looking at the floor throughout the interview are in fact showing their respect, but these behaviors may be interpreted as indicating a lack of confidence or even disrespect in low power distance cultures.

One of the most important ways in which power distance is manifested in the workplace is that in high power distance cultures, employees are unlikely to question the power and authority of their manager, and conformity to the manager will be expected. Managers in these cultures may be more used to an authoritarian style with lower levels of participative leadership demonstrated. People will be more submissive to their superiors and may take orders without questioning the manager (Kirkman, Gibson, & Shapiro, 2001). In these cultures, people may feel uncomfortable when they are asked to participate in decision making. For example, peers are much less likely to be involved in hiring decisions in high power distance cultures. Instead, these cultures seem to prefer paternalistic leaders—leaders who are authoritarian but make decisions while showing a high level of concern toward employees as if they were family members (Javidan & Dastmalchian, 2003; Ryan et al., 1999).

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance refers to the degree to which people feel threatened by ambiguous, risky, or unstructured situations. Cultures high in uncertainty avoidance prefer predictable situations and have low tolerance for ambiguity. Employees in these cultures expect a clear set of instructions and clarity in expectations. Therefore, there will be a greater level of creating procedures to deal with problems and writing out expected behaviors in manuals.

Cultures high in uncertainty avoidance prefer to avoid risky situations and attempt to reduce uncertainty. For example, one study showed that when hiring new employees, companies in high uncertainty avoidance cultures are likely to use a larger number of tests, conduct a larger number of interviews, and use a fixed list of interview questions (Ryan et al., 1999). Employment contracts tend to be more popular in cultures higher in uncertainty avoidance compared to cultures low in uncertainty avoidance (Raghuram, London, & Larsen, 2001). The level of change-oriented leadership seems to be lower in cultures higher in uncertainty avoidance (Ergeneli, Gohar, & Temirbekova, 2007). Companies operating in high uncertainty avoidance cultures also tend to avoid risky endeavors such as entering foreign target markets unless the target market is very large (Rothaermel, Kotha, & Steensma, 2006).

Germany is an example of a high uncertainty avoidance culture where people prefer structure in their

lives and rely on rules and procedures to manage situations. Similarly, Greece is a culture relatively high in uncertainty avoidance, and Greek employees working in hierarchical and rule-oriented companies report lower levels of stress (Joiner, 2001). In contrast, cultures such as Iran and Russia are lower in uncertainty avoidance, and companies in these regions do not have rule-oriented cultures. When they create rules, they also selectively enforce rules and make a number of exceptions to them. In fact, rules may be viewed as constraining. Uncertainty avoidance may influence the type of organizations employees are attracted to. Japan's uncertainty avoidance is associated with valuing job security, while in uncertainty-avoidant Latin American cultures, many job candidates prefer the stability of bigger and well-known companies with established career paths.

Masculinity-Femininity

Masculine cultures are cultures that value achievement, competitiveness, and acquisition of money and other material objects. Japan and Hungary are examples of masculine cultures. Masculine cultures are also characterized by a separation of gender roles. In these cultures, men are more likely to be assertive and competitive compared to women. In contrast, feminine cultures are cultures that value maintaining good relationships, caring for the weak, and emphasizing quality of life. In these cultures, values are not separated by gender, and both women and men share the values of maintaining good relationships. Sweden and the Netherlands are examples of feminine cultures. The level of masculinity inherent in the culture has implications for the behavior of individuals as well as organizations. For example, in masculine cultures, the ratio of CEO pay to other management-level employees tends to be higher, indicating that these cultures are more likely to reward CEOs with higher levels of pay as opposed to other types of rewards (Tosi & Greckhamer, 2004). The femininity of a culture affects many work practices, such as the level of work/life balance. In cultures high in femininity such as Norway and Sweden, work arrangements such as telecommuting seem to be more popular compared to cultures higher in masculinity like Italy and the United Kingdom.

Source:

<https://granite.pressbooks.pub/organizationalcommunication/chapter/chapter-9-intercultural-communication-and-the-organization/>

[Adapted from information in Geert Hofstede cultural dimensions.](#) Retrieved November 12, 2008.

6.2 Workforce Diversity

After reading this section , you should be able to do the following:

1. Explain what constitutes diversity.
2. Explain the benefits of managing diversity.
3. Describe challenges of managing a workforce with diverse demographics.
4. Identify key issues facing specific diversity demographics in the workplace.

We may be tempted to think of intercultural communication as interaction between people from different countries. While two distinct national passports communicate a key part of our identity nonverbally, what happens when people from the same country, but with different histories, experiences, privileges and group identities interact? Indeed, intercultural communication happens in these interactions too.

Defining Diversity

Diversity refers to the ways in which people are similar or different from each other. It may be defined by any characteristic that varies within a particular work unit such as gender, race, age, education, tenure, or functional background (such as being an engineer versus being an accountant). Even though diversity may occur with respect to any characteristic, our focus will be on diversity with respect to the following: gender, race, age, religion, physical abilities, and sexual orientation. Understanding how these characteristics shape organizational behavior is important. While many organizations publicly rave about the benefits of diversity, many find it challenging to manage diversity effectively. This is evidenced by the number of complaints filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regarding discrimination. In the United States, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlaw discrimination based on age, gender, race, national origin, or religion. The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination of otherwise capable employees based on physical or mental disabilities. In 2008, over 95,000 individuals filed a complaint claiming that they were discriminated based on these protected characteristics. Of course, this number represents only the most extreme instances in which victims must have received visibly discriminatory treatment to justify filing a complaint. It is reasonable to assume that many instances of discrimination go unreported because they are more subtle and employees may not even be aware of inconsistencies such as pay discrimination. Before the passing of antidiscrimination laws in the United States, many forms of discrimination were socially acceptable. This acceptance of certain discrimination practices is more likely to be seen in countries without similar employment laws. It seems that there is room for improvement when it comes to benefiting from diversity, understanding its pitfalls, and creating a work environment where people feel appreciated for their contributions regardless of who they are.

Benefits of Diversity in Organizations

What is the business case for diversity? Having a diverse workforce and managing it effectively have the potential to bring about a number of benefits to organizations.

Higher Creativity in Decision Making



Research shows that diverse teams tend to make higher quality decisions. Teamwork and team spirit - CC BY-ND 2.0.

An important potential benefit of having a diverse workforce is the ability to make higher quality decisions. In a diverse work team, people will have different opinions and perspectives. In these teams, individuals are more likely to consider more alternatives and think outside the box when making decisions. When thinking about a problem, team members may identify novel solutions. Research shows that diverse teams tend to make higher quality decisions (McLeod, Lobel, & Cox, 1996). Therefore, having a diverse workforce may have a direct impact on a company's bottom line by increasing creativity in decision making.

Better Understanding and Service of Customers

A company with a diverse workforce may create products or services that appeal to a broader customer base. For example, PepsiCo Inc. planned and executed a successful diversification effort in the recent past. The company was able to increase the percentage of women and ethnic minorities in many levels of the company, including management. The company points out that in 2004, about 1% of the company's 8% revenue growth came from products that were inspired by the diversity efforts, such as guacamole-flavored Doritos chips and wasabi-flavored snacks. Similarly, Harley-Davidson Motor Company is pursuing diversification of employees at all levels because the company realizes that they need to reach beyond their traditional customer group to stay competitive (Hymowitz, 2005). Wal-Mart Stores Inc. heavily advertises in Hispanic neighborhoods between Christmas and The Epiphany because the company understands that Hispanics tend to exchange gifts on that day as well (Slater, Weigand, & Zwirlein, 2008). A company with a diverse workforce may understand the needs of particular groups of customers better, and customers may feel more at ease when they are dealing with a company that

understands their needs.

More Satisfied Workforce

When employees feel that they are fairly treated, they tend to be more satisfied. On the other hand, when employees perceive that they are being discriminated against, they tend to be less attached to the company, less satisfied with their jobs, and experience more stress at work (Sanchez & Brock, 1996). Organizations where employees are satisfied often have lower turnover.

Higher Stock Prices

Companies that do a better job of managing a diverse workforce are often rewarded in the stock market, indicating that investors use this information to judge how well a company is being managed. For example, companies that receive an award from the U.S. Department of Labor for their diversity management programs show increases in the stock price in the days following the announcement. Conversely, companies that announce settlements for discrimination lawsuits often show a decline in stock prices afterward (Wright et al., 1995).

Lower Litigation Expenses

Companies doing a particularly bad job in diversity management face costly litigations. When an employee or a group of employees feel that the company is violating EEOC laws, they may file a complaint. The EEOC acts as a mediator between the company and the person, and the company may choose to settle the case outside the court. If no settlement is reached, the EEOC may sue the company on behalf of the complainant or may provide the injured party with a right-to-sue letter. Regardless of the outcome, these lawsuits are expensive and include attorney fees as well as the cost of the settlement or judgment, which may reach millions of dollars. The resulting poor publicity also has a cost to the company. For example, in 1999, the Coca-Cola Company faced a race discrimination lawsuit claiming that the company discriminated against African Americans in promotions. The company settled for a record \$192.5 million (Lovel, 2003). In 2004, the clothing retailer Abercrombie & Fitch faced a race discrimination lawsuit that led to a \$40 million settlement and over \$7 million in legal fees. The company had constructed a primarily Caucasian image and was accused of discriminating against Hispanic and African American job candidates, steering these applicants to jobs in the back of the store. As part of the settlement, the company agreed to diversify its workforce and catalog, change its image to promote diversity, and stop recruiting employees primarily from college fraternities and sororities (Greenhouse, 2004). In 2007, the new African American district attorney of New Orleans, Eddie Jordan, was accused of firing 35 Caucasian employees and replacing them with African American employees. In the resulting reverse-discrimination lawsuit, the office was found liable for \$3.7 million, leading Jordan to step down from his office in the hopes of preventing the assets of the office from being seized. As you can see, effective management of diversity can lead to big cost savings by decreasing the probability of facing costly and embarrassing lawsuits.

Higher Company Performance

As a result of all these potential benefits, companies that manage diversity more effectively tend to outperform others. Research shows that in companies pursuing a growth strategy, there was a positive relationship between racial diversity of the company and firm performance (Richard, 2000). Companies ranked in the Diversity 50 list created by *DiversityInc* magazine performed better than their counterparts (Slater, Weigand, & Zwirlein, 2008). And, in a survey of 500 large companies, those with the largest percentage of female executives performed better than those with the smallest percentage of female executives (Weisul, 2004).

Challenges of Diversity

If managing diversity effectively has the potential to increase company performance, increase creativity, and create a more satisfied workforce, why aren't all companies doing a better job of encouraging diversity? Despite all the potential advantages, there are also a number of challenges associated with increased levels of diversity in the workforce.

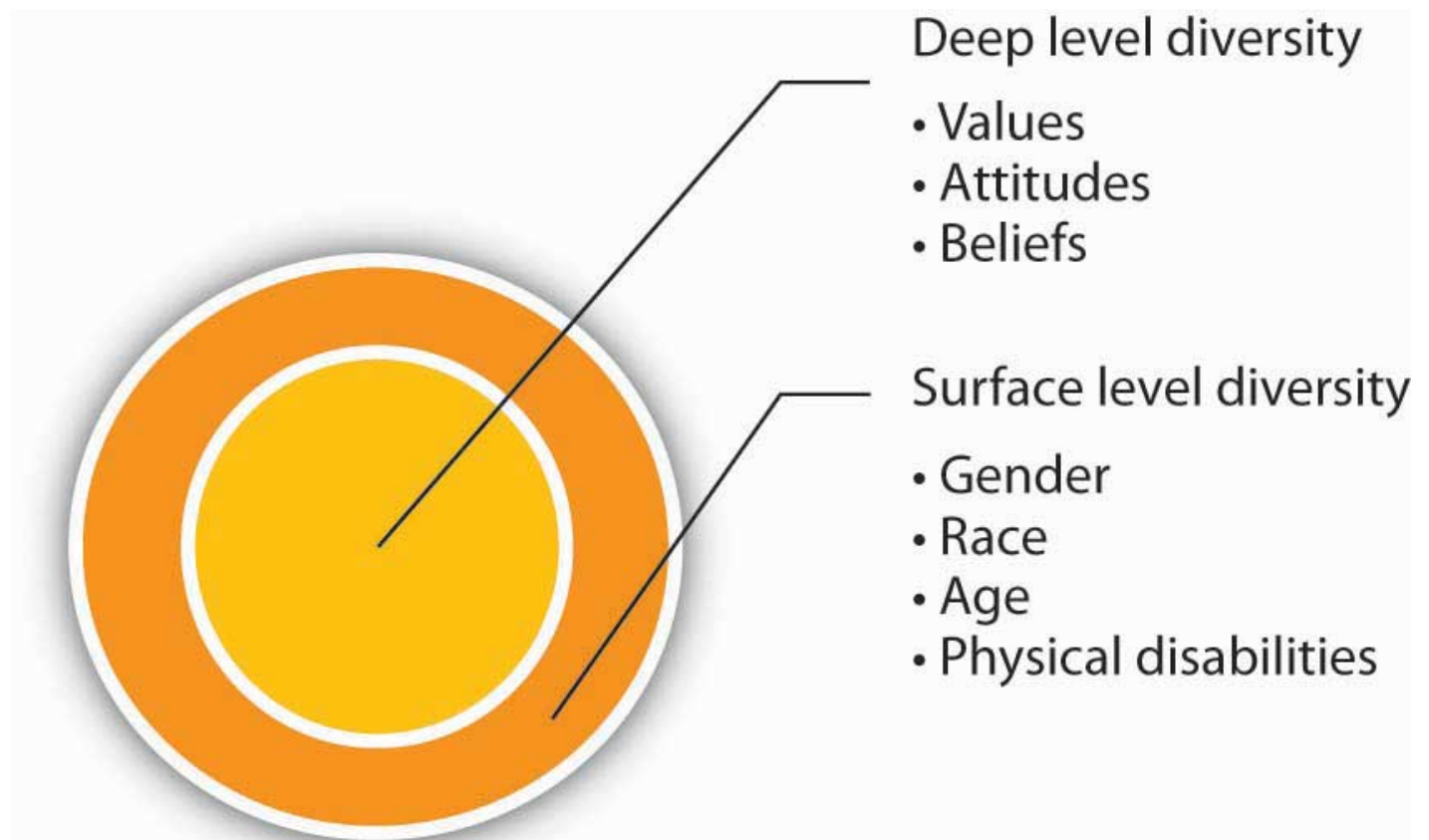
Similarity-Attraction Phenomenon

One of the commonly observed phenomena in human interactions is the tendency for individuals to be attracted to similar individuals (Riordan & Shore, 1997). Research shows that individuals communicate less frequently with those who are perceived as different from themselves (Chatman et al., 1998). They are also more likely to experience emotional conflict with people who differ with respect to race, age, and gender (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999). Individuals who are different from their team members are more likely to report perceptions of unfairness and feel that their contributions are ignored (Price, Harrison, & Gavin, 2006).

The similarity-attraction phenomenon may explain some of the potentially unfair treatment based on demographic traits. If a hiring manager chooses someone who is racially similar over a more qualified candidate from a different race, the decision will be ineffective and unfair. In other words, similarity-attraction may prevent some highly qualified women, minorities, or persons with disabilities from being hired. Of course, the same tendency may prevent highly qualified Caucasian and male candidates from being hired as well, but given that Caucasian males are more likely to hold powerful management positions in today's U.S.-based organizations, similarity-attraction may affect women and minorities to a greater extent. Even when candidates from minority or underrepresented groups are hired, they may receive different treatment within the organization. For example, research shows that one way in which employees may get ahead within organizations is through being mentored by a knowledgeable and powerful mentor. Yet, when the company does not have a formal mentoring program in which people are assigned a specific mentor, people are more likely to develop a mentoring relationship with someone who is similar to them in demographic traits (Dreher & Cox, 1996). This means that those who are not selected as protégés will not be able to benefit from the support and advice that would further their careers. Similarity-attraction may even affect the treatment people receive daily. If the company

CEO constantly invites a male employee to play golf with him while a female employee never receives the invitation, the male employee may have a serious advantage when important decisions are made.

Why are we more attracted to those who share our demographic attributes? Demographic traits are part of what makes up surface-level diversity. Surface-level diversity includes traits that are highly visible to us and those around us, such as race, gender, and age. Researchers believe that people pay attention to surface diversity because they are assumed to be related to deep-level diversity, which includes values, beliefs, and attitudes. We want to interact with those who share our values and attitudes, but when we meet people for the first time, we have no way of knowing whether they share similar values. As a result, we tend to use surface-level diversity to make judgments about deep-level diversity. Research shows that surface-level traits affect our interactions with other people early in our acquaintance with them, but as we get to know people, the influence of surface-level traits is replaced by deep-level traits such as similarity in values and attitudes (Harrison et al., 2002). Age, race, and gender dissimilarity are also stronger predictors of employee turnover during the first few weeks or months within a company. It seems that people who are different from others may feel isolated during their early tenure when they are dissimilar to the rest of the team, but these effects tend to disappear as people stay longer and get to know other employees.



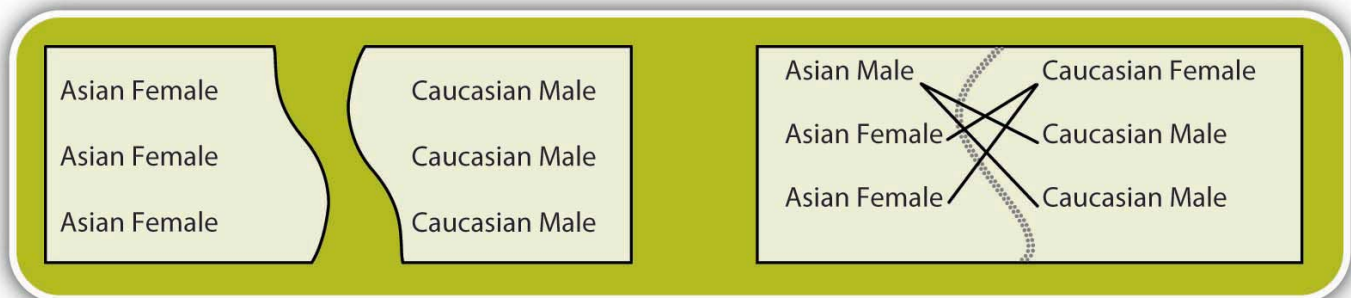
Individuals often initially judge others based on surface-level diversity. Over time, this effect tends to fade and is replaced by deep-level traits such as similarity in values and attitudes.

As you may see, while similarity-attraction may put some employees at a disadvantage, it is a tendency that can be managed by organizations. By paying attention to employees early in their tenure, having formal mentoring programs in which people are assigned mentors, and training managers to be aware of the similarity-attraction tendency, organizations can go a long way in dealing with potential diversity challenges.

Faultlines

A faultline is an attribute along which a group is split into subgroups. For example, in a group with three female and three male members, gender may act as a faultline because the female members may see themselves as separate from the male members. Now imagine that the female members of the same team are all over 50 years old and the male members are all younger than 25. In this case, age and gender combine to further divide the group into two subgroups. Teams that are divided by faultlines experience a number of difficulties. For example, members of the different subgroups may avoid communicating with each other, reducing the overall cohesiveness of the team. Research shows that these types of teams make less effective decisions and are less creative (Pearsall, Ellis, & Evans, 2008; Sawyer, Houlette, & Yeagley, 2006). Faultlines are more likely to emerge in diverse teams, but not all diverse teams have faultlines. Going back to our example, if the team has three male and three female members, but if two of the female members are older and one of the male members is also older, then the composition of the team will have much different effects on the team's processes. In this case, age could be a bridging characteristic that brings together people divided across gender.

Research shows that even groups that have strong faultlines can perform well if they establish certain norms. When members of subgroups debate the decision topic among themselves before having a general group discussion, there seems to be less communication during the meeting on pros and cons of different alternatives. Having a norm stating that members should not discuss the issue under consideration before the actual meeting may be useful in increasing decision effectiveness (Sawyer, Houlette, & Yeagley, 2006).



The group on the left will likely suffer a strong faultline due to the lack of common ground. The group to the right will likely only suffer a weak faultline because the men and women of the different groups will likely identify with each other.

Stereotypes

An important challenge of managing a diverse workforce is the possibility that stereotypes about different groups could lead to unfair decision making. Stereotypes are generalizations about a particular group of people. The assumption that women are more relationship oriented, while men are more assertive, is an example of a stereotype. The problem with stereotypes is that people often use them to make decisions about a particular individual without actually verifying whether the assumption holds for the person in question. As a result, stereotypes often lead to unfair and inaccurate decision making. For example, a hiring manager holding the stereotype mentioned above may prefer a male candidate for a management position over a well-qualified female candidate. The assumption would be that management positions require assertiveness and the male candidate would be more assertive than the female candidate. Being aware of these stereotypes is the first step to preventing them from affecting decision making.

Diversity: Gender, Race, Religion, Physical Ability

Different demographic groups face unique work environments and varying challenges in the workplace. In this section, we will review the particular challenges associated with managing gender, race, religion, physical ability, and sexual orientation diversity in the workplace. As we discuss differing environments faced by employees with different demographic traits, we primarily concentrate on the legal environment in the United States. Please note that the way in which demographic diversity is treated legally and socially varies around the globe. For example, countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom have their own versions of equal employment legislation. Moreover, how women, employees of different races, older employees, employees with disabilities, and employees of different religions are viewed and treated shows much variation based on the societal context.

Gender Diversity in the Workplace

In the United States, two important pieces of legislation prohibit gender discrimination at work. The Equal Pay Act (1963) prohibits discrimination in pay based on gender. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) prohibits discrimination in all employment-related decisions based on gender. Despite the existence of strong legislation, women and men often face different treatment at work. The earnings gap and the glass ceiling are two of the key problems women may experience in the workplace.

Earnings Gap

An often publicized issue women face at work is the earnings gap. The median earnings of women who worked full time in 2008 was 79% of men working full time (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). There are many potential explanations for the earnings gap that is often reported in the popular media. One explanation is that women are more likely to have gaps in their résumés because they are more likely to

take time off to have children. Women are still the primary caregiver for young children in many families and career gaps tend to affect earnings potential because it prevents employees from accumulating job tenure. Another potential explanation is that women are less likely to pursue high-paying occupations such as engineering and business.

In fact, research shows that men and women have somewhat different preferences in job attributes, with women valuing characteristics such as good hours, an easy commute, interpersonal relationships, helping others, and opportunities to make friends more than men do. In turn, men seem to value promotion opportunities, freedom, challenge, leadership, and power more than women do (Konrad et al., 2000). These differences are relatively small, but they could explain some of the earnings gap. Finally, negotiation differences among women are often cited as a potential reason for the earnings gap. In general, women are less likely to initiate negotiations (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). Moreover, when they actually negotiate, they achieve less favorable outcomes compared to men (Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999). Laboratory studies show that female candidates who negotiated were more likely to be penalized for their attempts to negotiate and male evaluators expressed an unwillingness to work with a female who negotiated (Bowles, Babcock, & Lai, 2007). The differences in the tendency to negotiate and success in negotiating are important factors contributing to the earnings gap. According to one estimate, as much as 34% of the differences between women's and men's pay can be explained by their starting salaries (Gerhart, 1990). When differences in negotiation skills or tendencies affect starting salaries, they tend to have a large impact over the course of years.

If the earnings gap could be traced only to résumé gaps, choice of different occupations, or differences in negotiation behavior, the salary difference might be viewed as legitimate. Yet, these factors fail to completely account for gender differences in pay, and lawsuits about gender discrimination in pay abound. In these lawsuits, stereotypes or prejudices about women seem to be the main culprit. In fact, according to a Gallup poll, women are over 12 times more likely than men to perceive gender-based discrimination in the workplace (Avery, McKay, & Wilson, 2008). For example, Wal-Mart Stores Inc. was recently sued for alleged gender-discrimination in pay. One of the people who initiated the lawsuit was a female assistant manager who found out that a male assistant manager with similar qualifications was making \$10,000 more per year. When she approached the store manager, she was told that the male manager had a "wife and kids to support." She was then asked to submit a household budget to justify a raise (Daniels, 2003). Such explicit discrimination, while less frequent, contributes to creating an unfair work environment.

Glass Ceiling

Another issue that provides a challenge for women in the workforce is the so-called glass ceiling. While women may be represented in lower level positions, they are less likely to be seen in higher management and executive suites of companies. In fact, while women constitute close to one-half of the workforce, men are four times more likely to reach the highest levels of organizations (Umphress et al., 2008). In 2008, only 12 of the *Fortune* 500 companies had female CEOs, including Xerox Corporation, PepsiCo, Kraft Foods Inc., and Avon Products Inc. The absence of women in leadership is unfortunate,

particularly in light of studies that show the leadership performance of female leaders is comparable to, and in some dimensions such as transformational or change-oriented leadership, superior to, the performance of male leaders (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003).



Ursula Burns became president of Xerox Corporation in 2007. She is responsible for the company's global R&D, engineering, manufacturing, and marketing. Fortune Live Media - Fortune The Most Powerful Women 2013 - CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

One explanation for the glass ceiling is the gender-based stereotypes favoring men in managerial positions. Traditionally, men have been viewed as more assertive and confident than women, while women have been viewed as more passive and submissive. Studies show that these particular stereotypes are still prevalent among male college students, which may mean that these stereotypes may be perpetuated among the next generation of managers (Duehr & Bono, 2006). Assumptions such as these are problematic for women's advancement because stereotypes associated with men are characteristics often associated with being a manager. Stereotypes are also found to influence how managers view male versus female employees' work accomplishments. For example, when men and women work together in a team on a "masculine" task such as working on an investment portfolio and it is not clear to management which member has done what, managers are more likely to attribute the team's success to the male employees and give less credit to the female employees (Heilman & Haynes, 2005). It seems that in addition to working hard and contributing to the team, female employees should pay extra attention to ensure that their contributions are known to decision makers.

There are many organizations making the effort to make work environments more welcoming to men and women. For example, IBM is reaching out to female middle school students to get them interested in science, hoping to increase female presence in the field of engineering (Thomas, 2004). Companies such as IBM, Booz Allen Hamilton Inc., Ernst & Young Global Ltd., and General Mills Inc. top the 100 Best Companies list created by *Working Mother* magazine by providing flexible work arrangements to balance work and family demands. In addition, these companies provide employees of both sexes with learning, development, and networking opportunities (2007 100 Best companies, 2007).

Race Diversity in the Workplace

Race is another demographic characteristic that is under legal protection in the United States. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) prohibits race discrimination in all employment-related decisions. Yet race discrimination still exists in organizations. In a Korn-Ferry/Columbia University study of 280 minority managers earning more than \$100,000, 60% of the respondents reported that they had seen discrimination in their work assignments and 45% have been the target of racial or cultural jokes. The fact that such discrimination exists even at higher levels in organizations is noteworthy (Allers, 2005; Mehta et al., 2000). In a different study of over 5,500 workers, only 32% reported that their company did a good job hiring and promoting minorities (Fisher, 2004). One estimate suggests that when compared to Caucasian employees, African Americans are four times more likely and Hispanics are three times more likely to experience discrimination (Avery et al., 2007).

Ethnic minorities experience both an earnings gap and a glass ceiling. In 2008, for every dollar a Caucasian male employee made, African American males made around 79 cents while Hispanic employees made 64 cents (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Among *Fortune* 500 companies, only three (American Express Company, Aetna Inc., and Darden Restaurants Inc.) have African American CEOs. It is interesting that while ethnic minorities face these challenges, the demographic trends are such that by 2042, Caucasians are estimated to constitute less than one-half of the population in the United States. This demographic shift has already taken place in some parts of the United States such as the Los Angeles area where only 30% of the population is Caucasian (Dougherty, 2008).

Unfortunately, discrimination against ethnic minorities still occurs. One study conducted by Harvard University researchers found that when Chicago-area companies were sent fictitious résumés containing identical background information, résumés with “Caucasian” sounding names (such as Emily and Greg) were more likely to get callbacks compared to résumés with African American sounding names (such as Jamal and Lakisha) (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004).

Studies indicate that ethnic minorities are less likely to experience a satisfying work environment. One study found that African Americans were more likely to be absent from work compared to Caucasians, but this trend existed only in organizations viewed as not valuing diversity (Avery et al., 2007). Similarly, among African Americans, the perception that the organization did not value diversity was related to higher levels of turnover (McKay et al., 2007). Another study found differences in the sales performance of Hispanic and Caucasian employees, but again this difference disappeared when the

organization was viewed as valuing diversity (McKay, Avery, & Morris, 2008). It seems that the *perception* that the organization does not value diversity is a fundamental explanation for why ethnic minorities may feel alienated from coworkers. Creating a fair work environment where diversity is valued and appreciated seems to be the key.

Organizations often make news headlines for alleged or actual race discrimination, but there are many stories involving complete turnarounds, suggesting that conscious planning and motivation to improve may make organizations friendlier to all races. One such success story is Denny's Corporation. In 1991, Denny's restaurants settled a \$54 million race discrimination lawsuit. In 10 years, the company was able to change the situation completely. Now, women and minorities make up half of their board and almost half of their management team. The company started by hiring a chief diversity officer who reported directly to the CEO. The company implemented a diversity-training program, extended recruitment efforts to diverse colleges, and increased the number of minority-owned franchises. At the same time, customer satisfaction among African Americans increased from 30% to 80% (Speizer, 2004).

Age Diversity in the Workplace



Older employees tend to be reliable and committed employees who often perform at comparable or higher levels than younger workers. Wikimedia Commons – CC BY-SA 2.5.

The workforce is rapidly aging. By 2015, those who are 55 and older are estimated to constitute 20% of the workforce in the United States. The same trend seems to be occurring elsewhere in the world. In the European Union, employees over 50 years of age are projected to increase by 25% in the next 25 years (Avery, McKay, & Wilson, 2007). According to International Labor Organization (ILO), out of the world's working population, the largest group is those between 40 and 44 years old. In contrast, the largest segment in 1980 was the 20- to 24-year-old group (International Labor Organization, 2005). In other words, age diversity at work will grow in the future.

What happens to work performance as employees get older? Research shows that age is correlated with a number of positive workplace behaviors, including higher levels of citizenship behaviors such as volunteering, higher compliance with safety rules, lower work injuries, lower counterproductive behaviors, and lower rates of tardiness or absenteeism (Ng & Feldman, 2008). As people get older, they are also less likely to want to quit their job when they are dissatisfied at work (Hellman, 1997).

Despite their positive workplace behaviors, employees who are older often have to deal with age-related stereotypes at work. For example, a review of a large number of studies showed that those between 17 and 29 years of age tend to rate older employees more negatively, while younger employees were viewed as more qualified and having higher potential (Finkelstein, Burke, & Raju, 1995). However, these stereotypes have been largely refuted by research. Another review showed that stereotypes about older employees—they perform on a lower level, they are less able to handle stress, or their performance declines with age—are simply inaccurate (Posthuma & Campion). The problem with these stereotypes is that they may discourage older workers from remaining in the workforce or may act as a barrier to their being hired in the first place.

In the United States, age discrimination is prohibited by the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, which made it illegal for organizations to discriminate against employees over 40 years of age. Still, age discrimination is prevalent in workplaces. For example, while not admitting wrongdoing, Honeywell International Inc. recently settled an age discrimination lawsuit for \$2.15 million. A group of older sales representatives were laid off during company reorganization while younger employees with less experience were kept in their positions (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2004). Older employees may also face discrimination because some jobs have a perceived "correct age." This was probably the reason behind the lawsuit International Creative Management Inc. faced against 150 TV writers. The lawsuit claimed that the talent agency systematically prevented older workers from getting jobs at major networks (TV writers settle age discrimination lawsuit, 2008).



In many family-owned businesses, different generations work together. Nancy Pelosi - Touring a Family-Owned Business - CC BY 2.0.

What are the challenges of managing age diversity beyond the management of stereotypes? Age diversity within a team can actually lead to higher team performance. In a simulation, teams with higher age diversity were able to think of different possibilities and diverse actions, leading to higher performance for the teams (Kilduff, Angelmar, & Mehra, 2000). At the same time, managing a team with age diversity may be challenging because different age groups seem to have different opinions about what is fair treatment, leading to different perceptions of organizational justice (Colquitt, Noe, & Jackson, 2002). Age diversity also means that the workforce will consist of employees from different generations. Some organizations are noticing a generation gap and noting implications for the management of employees. For example, the pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk Inc. noticed that baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) were competitive and preferred individual feedback on performance, while Generation Y workers (born between 1979 and 1994) were more team oriented. This difference led one regional manager to start each performance feedback e-mail with recognition of team performance, which was later followed by feedback on individual performance. Similarly, Lockheed Martin Corporation noticed that employees from different generations had different learning styles, with older employees preferring PowerPoint presentations and younger employees preferring more interactive learning (White, 2008). Paying attention to such differences and tailoring various aspects of management to the particular employees in question may lead to more effective management of an age-diverse workforce.

Religious Diversity in the Workplace

In the United States, employers are prohibited from using religion in employment decisions based on Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Moreover, employees are required to make reasonable

accommodations to ensure that employees can practice their beliefs unless doing so provides an unreasonable hardship on the employer (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2007). After September 11, cases involving religion and particularly those involving Muslim employees have been on the rise (Bazar, 2008). Religious discrimination often occurs because the religion necessitates modifying the employee's schedule. For example, devout Muslim employees may want to pray five times a day with each prayer lasting 5 to 10 minutes. Some Jewish employees may want to take off Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah, although these days are not recognized as holidays in the United States. These situations pit employers' concerns for productivity against employees' desires to fulfill religious obligations.

Accommodating someone's religious preferences may also require companies to relax their dress code to take into account religious practices such as wearing a turban for Sikhs or covering one's hair with a scarf for Muslim women. In these cases, what matters most is that the company makes a good faith attempt to accommodate the employee. For example, in a recent lawsuit that was decided in favor of Costco Wholesale Corporation, the retailer was accused of religious discrimination. A cashier who belonged to the Church of Body Modification, which is a church with about 1,000 members worldwide, wanted to be able to display her tattoos and facial piercings, which was against the dress code of Costco. Costco wanted to accommodate the employee by asking the individual to cover the piercings with skin-colored Band-Aids, which the employee refused. This is likely the primary reason why the case was decided in favor of Costco (Wellner, 2005).

Employees with Disabilities in the Workplace

Employees with a wide range of physical and mental disabilities are part of the workforce. In 2008 alone, over 19,000 cases of discrimination based on disabilities have been filed with the EEOC. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination in employment against individuals with physical as well as mental disabilities if these individuals are otherwise qualified to do their jobs with or without reasonable accommodation. For example, an organization may receive a job application from a hearing impaired candidate whose job responsibilities will include talking over the phone. With the help of a telephone amplifier, which costs around \$50, the employee will be able to perform the job; therefore, the company cannot use the hearing impairment as a reason not to hire the person, again, as long as the employee is otherwise qualified. In 2008, the largest groups of complaints were cases based on discrimination related to disabilities or illnesses such as cancer, depression, diabetes, hearing impairment, manic-depressive disorder, and orthopedic impairments, among others (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2008). Particularly employees suffering from illnesses that last for a long time and require ongoing care seem to be at a disadvantage, because they are more likely to be stereotyped, locked into dead-end jobs, and employed in jobs that require substantially lower skills and qualifications than they possess. They also are more likely to quit their jobs (Beatty & Joffe, 2006).

What can organizations do to create a better work environment for employees with disabilities? One legal requirement is that, when an employee brings up a disability, the organization should consider

reasonable accommodations. This may include modifying the employee's schedule and reassigning some nonessential job functions. Organizations that offer flexible work hours may also make it easier for employees with disabilities to be more effective. Finally, supportive relationships with others seem to be the key for making these employees feel at home. Particularly, having an understanding boss and an effective relationship with supervisors are particularly important for employees with disabilities. Because the visible differences between individuals may act as an initial barrier against developing rapport, employees with disabilities and their managers may benefit from being proactive in relationship development (Colella & Varma, 2001).

Sexual Orientation Diversity in the Workplace

Lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender (LBGT) employees in the workplace face a number of challenges and barriers to employment. There is currently no federal law in the United States prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, but as of 2008, 20 states as well as the District of Columbia had laws prohibiting discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation (Human Rights Campaign, 2008).

Research shows that one of the most important issues relating to sexual orientation is the disclosure of sexual identity in the workplace. According to one estimate, up to one-third of lesbian, gay, and bisexual employees do not disclose their sexual orientation at work. Employees may fear the reactions of their managers and coworkers, leading to keeping their sexual identity a secret. In reality though, it seems that disclosing sexual orientation is not the key to explaining work attitudes of these employees—it is whether or not they are *afraid* to disclose their sexual identity. In other words, those employees who fear that full disclosure would lead to negative reactions experience lower job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and higher intentions to leave their jobs (Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell, 2007). Creating an environment where all employees feel welcome and respected regardless of their sexual orientation is the key to maintaining a positive work environment.

How can organizations show their respect for diversity in sexual orientation? Some companies start by creating a written statement that the organization will not tolerate discrimination based on sexual orientation. They may have workshops addressing issues relating to sexual orientation and facilitate and create networking opportunities for lesbian and gay employees. Perhaps the most powerful way in which companies show respect for sexual orientation diversity is by extending benefits to the partners of same-sex couples. In fact, more than half of *Fortune* 500 companies currently offer health benefits to domestic partners of same-sex couples. Research shows that in companies that have these types of programs, discrimination based on sexual orientation is less frequent, and the job satisfaction and commitment levels are higher (Button, 2001).

OB Toolbox: I think I am being asked illegal interview questions. What can I do?

In the United States, demographic characteristics such as race, gender, national origin, age, and

disability status are protected by law. Yet according to a survey of 4,000 job seekers, about one-third of job applicants have been asked illegal interview questions^[2]. How can you answer such questions?

Here are some options.

- *Refuse to answer.* You may point out that the question is illegal and refuse to answer. Of course, this may cost you the job offer, because you are likely to seem confrontational and aggressive.
- *Answer shortly.* Instead of giving a full answer to a question such as “are you married,” you could answer the question briefly and change the subject. In many cases, the interviewer may be trying to initiate small talk and may be unaware that the question is potentially illegal.
- *Answer the intent.* Sometimes, the illegal question hides a legitimate concern. When you are being asked where you are from, the potential employer might be concerned that you do not have a work permit. Addressing the issue in your answer may be better than answering the question you are being asked.
- *Walk away from the interview.* If you feel that the intent of the question is discriminatory, and if you feel that you would rather not work at a company that would ask such questions, you can always walk away from the interview. If you feel that you are being discriminated against, you may also want to talk to a lawyer later on.

[After \\$3.7 million reverse discrimination lawsuit, the New Orleans district attorney resigns.](#) (2007, October 31). DiversityInc Magazine. Retrieved November 18, 2008.

6.3 Effective Intercultural Communication

With the increasing importance of international business as well as the culturally diverse domestic workforce, what can organizations do to manage cultural diversity? The following are some ideas about how to move forward with more effective intercultural communication interactions in organizations.

Help Employees Build Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence is a person's capability to understand how a person's cultural background influences one's behavior. Developing cultural intelligence seems important, because the days when organizations could prepare their employees for international work simply by sending them to long seminars on a particular culture are gone. Presently, international business is not necessarily conducted between pairs of countries. A successful domestic manager is not necessarily assigned to work on a long-term assignment in China. Of course such assignments still happen, but it is more likely that the employees will continually work with others from diverse cultural backgrounds. This means employees will not necessarily have to become experts in one culture. Instead, they should have the ability to work with people from many diverse backgrounds all at the same time. For these types of assignments, employees will need to develop an awareness of overall cultural differences and learn how to recognize cultural principles that are operating in different situations. In other words, employees will need to be selected based on cultural sensitivity and understanding and trained to enhance such qualities (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). For example, GlobeSmart by Aperian Global is an online tool that helps employees learn how to deal with people from around the world. The process starts by completing a survey about your cultural values, and then these values are compared to those of different cultures. The tool provides specific advice about interpersonal interactions with these cultures (Hamm, 2008).

Help Avoid Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own culture is superior to other cultures one comes across. Ethnocentrism leads organizations to adopt universal principles when doing business around the globe and may backfire. In this chapter, we highlighted research findings showing how culture affects employee expectations of work life such as work-life balance, job security, or the level of empowerment. Ignoring cultural differences, norms, and local habits may be costly for businesses and may lead to unmotivated and dissatisfied employees. Successful global companies modify their management styles, marketing, and communication campaigns to fit with the culture in which they are operating. For example, Apple Inc.'s famous PC versus Mac advertising campaign was reshot in Japan and the United Kingdom using local actors. The American ads were found to be too aggressive for the Japanese culture,

where direct product comparisons are rare and tend to make people uncomfortable. The new ads feature more friendly banter and are subtler than the U.S. ads. For the British market, the advertisers localized the humor (Fowler, Steinberg, & Patrick, 2007).

Listen to Locals

When doing cross-cultural business, locals are a key source of information. To get timely and accurate feedback, companies will need to open lines of communication and actively seek feedback. For example, Convergys, a Cincinnati-based call-center company, built a cafeteria for the employees in India. During the planning phase, the Indian vice president pointed out that because Indian food is served hot and employees would expect to receive hot meals for lunch, building a cafeteria that served only sandwiches would create dissatisfied employees. By opening the lines of communication in the planning phase of the project, Convergys was alerted to this important cultural difference in time to change the plans (Fisher, 2005).

Recognize That Culture Changes

Cultures are not static—they evolve over the years. A piece of advice that was true 5 years ago may no longer hold true. For example, showing sensitivity to the Indian caste system may be outdated advice for those internationals doing business in India today.

Do Not Always Assume That Culture Is the Problem

When doing business internationally, failure may occur due to culture as well as other problems. Attributing all misunderstandings or failures to culture may enlarge the cultural gap and shift the blame to others. In fact, managing people who have diverse personalities or functional backgrounds may create misunderstandings that are not necessarily due to cultural differences. When marketing people from the United States interact with engineers in India, misunderstandings may be caused by the differences in perceptions between marketing and engineering employees. While familiarizing employees about culture, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal skills regardless of cultural background will be important.

Build a Culture of Respecting Diversity



UPS operates in 200 countries, including Italy where a boat is carrying packages on the Canal Grande in Venice. At UPS, 58% of all senior officers are women or minorities. Wikimedia Commons - CC BY-SA 2.5.

In the most successful companies, diversity management is not the responsibility of the human resource department. Starting from top management and including the lowest levels in the hierarchy, each person understands the importance of respecting others. If this respect is not part of an organization's culture, no amount of diversity training or other programs are likely to be effective. In fact, in the most successful companies, diversity is viewed as everyone's responsibility. The United Parcel Service of America Inc. (UPS), the international shipping company, refuses to hire a diversity officer, underlining that it is not one person's job. Companies with a strong culture—where people have a sense of shared values, loyalty to the organization is rewarded, and team performance is celebrated—enable employees with vastly different demographics and backgrounds to feel a sense of belonging (Chatman et al., 1998; Fisher, 2004).

Promote Diversity Training Programs

Many companies provide employees and managers with training programs relating to diversity. However, not all diversity programs are equally successful. You may expect that more successful programs are those that occur in companies where a culture of diversity exists. A study of over 700 companies found that programs with a higher perceived success rate were those that occurred in

companies where top management believed in the importance of diversity, where there were explicit rewards for increasing diversity of the company, and where managers were required to attend the diversity training programs (Rynes & Rosen, 1995).

Review Recruitment Practices

Companies may want to increase diversity by targeting a pool that is more diverse. There are many minority professional groups such as the National Black MBA Association or the Chinese Software Professionals Association. By building relations with these occupational groups, organizations may attract a more diverse group of candidates to choose from. The auditing company Ernst & Young Global Ltd. increases diversity of job candidates by mentoring undergraduate students (Nussenbaum, 2003). Companies may also benefit from reviewing their employment advertising to ensure that diversity is important at all levels of the company (Avery, 2003).

Review Affirmative Action Programs

Policies designed to recruit, promote, train, and retain employees belonging to a protected class are referred to as affirmative action. Based on Executive order 11246 (1965), federal contractors are required to use affirmative action programs. In addition, the federal government, many state and local governments, and the U.S. military are required to have affirmative action plans. An organization may also be using affirmative action as a result of a court order or due to a past history of discrimination. Affirmative action programs are among the most controversial methods in diversity management because some people believe that they lead to an unfair advantage for minority members.

In many cases, the negative perceptions about affirmative action can be explained by misunderstandings relating to what such antidiscrimination policies entail. Moreover, affirmative action means different things to different people and therefore it is inaccurate to discuss affirmative action as a uniform package.

Four groups of programs can be viewed as part of affirmative action programs (Cropanzano, Slaughter, & Bachiochi, 2005; Kravitz, 2008; Voluntary diversity plans can lead to risk, 2007):

1. **Simple elimination of discrimination.** These programs are the least controversial and are received favorably by employees.
2. **Targeted recruitment.** These affirmative action plans involve ensuring that the candidate pool is diverse. These programs are also viewed as fair by most employees.
3. **Tie-breaker.** In these programs, if all other characteristics are equal, then preference may be given to a minority candidate. In fact, these programs are not widely used and their use needs to be justified by organizations. In other words, organizations need to have very specific reasons for why they are using this type of affirmative action, such as past illegal discrimination. Otherwise, their use may be illegal and lead to reverse discrimination. These

programs are viewed as less fair by employees.

4. **Preferential treatment.** These programs involve hiring a less-qualified minority candidate. Strong preferential treatment programs are illegal in most cases.

It is plausible that people who are against affirmative action programs may have unverified assumptions about the type of affirmative action program the company is using. Informing employees about the specifics of how affirmative action is being used may be a good way of dealing with any negative attitudes. In fact, a review of the past literature revealed that when specifics of affirmative action are not clearly defined, observers seem to draw their own conclusions about the particulars of the programs (Harrison et al., 2006).

In addition to employee reactions to affirmative action, there is some research indicating that affirmative action programs may lead to stigmatization of the perceived beneficiaries. For example, in companies using affirmative action, coworkers of new hires may make the assumption that the new hire was chosen due to gender or race as opposed to having the necessary qualifications. These effects may even occur in the new hires themselves, who may have doubts about the fact that they were chosen because they were the best candidate for the position. Research also shows that giving coworkers information about the qualifications and performance of the new hire eliminates these potentially negative effects of affirmative action programs (Heilman et al., 1993; Heilman, Rivero, & Brett, 1991; Heilman, Simon, & Repper, 1987; Kravitz, 2008).

Closing Thoughts

Whenever we encounter someone, we notice similarities and differences. While both are important, it is often the differences that contribute to communication troubles. We don't see similarities and differences only on an individual level. In fact, we also place people into in-groups and out-groups based on the similarities and differences we perceive. We tend to react to someone we perceive as a member of an out-group based on the characteristics we attach to the group rather than the individual (Allen, 2010). In these situations, it is more likely that stereotypes and prejudice will influence our communication. This division of people into opposing groups has been the source of great conflict around the world, and learning about difference and why it matters will help us be more competent communicators and help to prevent conflict.

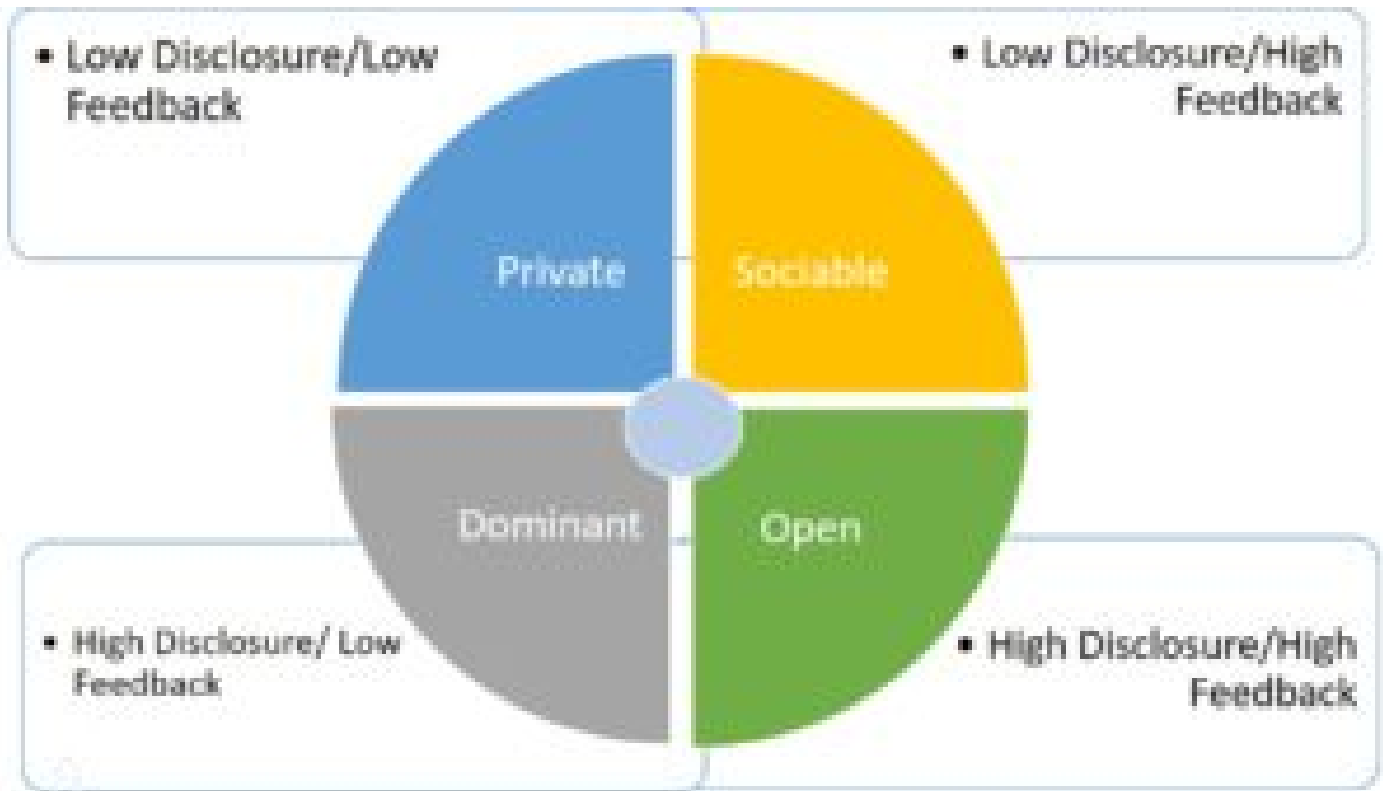
Chapter 7: Individuals in Organizations

7.1 Communication Styles

The information in this section is from Cheryl Hamilton's Communicating for results: A guide for business and the professions (11th Ed.)

Strong interpersonal relationships are not only the heart of a successful organization but they are also the foundation of our own business successes. To make relationships work, we need to understand our communication styles. Do you know yours? It is important because your communication style(s) affect your relationships with bosses, coworkers, teams, and customers. Each of us has a distinct communication style or styles that we feel the most comfortable using when things are going well and a different style or styles that we use under pressure or stress. Have you ever noticed that you behave differently when under stress or during a conflict? Many professions and businesses also seem to have preferred communication styles. In this section, we will look at four styles that managers, employees, and customers typically use when communicating and relating with each other: the private, dominant, sociable, and open styles. Few people are ever completely one style. Although a person may have some characteristics of all four styles, most people have one or sometimes two central styles they typically use. None of these styles is totally good or totally bad: each style has its “best” and “worst” side. Note that these four styles are a composite of several different style approaches as listed in the footnote and do not mirror any of them exactly. We have attempted to alter any criticisms or weaknesses of these approaches and have developed two Polishing Your Career Skills surveys both located near the end of this chapter to help you determine your main styles used as an employee and as a manager.

Waldherr and Muck (2011) conducted a literature review of research on communication styles and concluded that two reliable dimensions stand out in the research so far—high and low assertiveness and high and low responsiveness. People who are high in assertiveness are more likely to disclose information and feelings, while people who are high in responsiveness are more likely to seek and reply to the feedback of others. The disclosure/assertiveness and the feedback/responsiveness dimensions have been combined in this edition as you can see in diagram below.



To communicate more successfully and establish more meaningful working relationships, employees need to (a) understand each style including its strengths and weaknesses, (b) learn how to communicate effectively with people using styles different from their own (whether they are supervisors, coworkers, or customers), and (c) determine their personal communication styles. Let's start with understanding each style.

Communication Styles: What Are They?

Please realize that this classification system of four styles is not intended to serve as a method for stereotyping people but as a practical way of understanding your own and others' frames of reference. As you read remember that the descriptions of these styles are not perfect or even complete; rather, they describe tendencies. As such, we hope you will find them as helpful in your daily business and professional careers as our many students and business seminar participants have over the years.

The Private Style

If you had the choice of a job in a room with five or six other people whom you would work with each day or a job in a room by yourself, working with a machine that only one person could operate at a time, which would you choose? If you selected to work alone, you probably have strong private tendencies. Private-style communicators simply feel more comfortable working with things than with people—does this seem like you? For example, a private-style employee might do well working at restocking items or finding glitches in a software program but be inefficient when handling customers at a complaint window or working in a group. A private-style manager may enjoy inventory control, ordering

supplies, and detail work, but may also be less successful dealing with employees and employee problems. The private-style communicators seek little feedback, which makes them low on the responsiveness continuum, and disclose little information, which also makes them low on the assertiveness continuum. In other words, they are noncommunicators, who not only feel uncomfortable around people, they may actually fear them.

Because private-style people find it difficult to communicate their expectations to others, they are often disappointed by and disappointing to those around them. For example, the boss who expects private-style employees to actively participate in group meetings and decision making will be disappointed. Asking their opinion in meetings does not make it easier for them to participate; instead, it increases their anxiety. Private-style customers are often disappointed by salespeople (they really want to be led by the hand but are afraid to ask). If the product or service recommended by the salesperson turns out to be poor, rarely will private-style customers openly complain. Instead, they may change stores without letting the store or letting the salesperson know why.

Private-style people spend much of their energy in seeking safety to keep from looking like fools, being blamed for something, or even losing their jobs. They try to avoid conflict and avoid making decisions. When decisions have to be made, they use safe procedures such as “going by the book,” following tradition, and treating everyone alike. Actions taken by private-style managers in an attempt to remain safe include treating all employees the same regardless of their performance, giving only brief, superficial employee appraisals (and then only when absolutely necessary), and never initiating upward communication.

Private-style people can be quite productive as long as only minimal interaction with others is required. However, because of their communication anxiety, relationships with private-style people are difficult—especially in the work environment. As a result, creative employees and employees who need guidance often become frustrated with the private-style manager. On the other hand, other private-style employees and highly trained and motivated employees who like to make their own decisions appreciate the private-style manager, who stays out of their way and concentrates on computers, equipment, and other “things.”

To summarize, the private style is most successful when little interpersonal interaction is required for the job, when going by the book is the preferred company stance, when subordinates are professionals who need little supervision, and when others in the department are private or prefer things to people. The private style is less successful when the job requires a high level of interpersonal interaction; when the organization is in a high-risk profession with creative, high-strung individuals; when subordinates need or want guidance; and when the profession or business is productivity-oriented.

The Dominant Style

If you are looking for someone you can depend on to get the job done, someone to train a group of overconfident new hires, someone with the self assurance to troubleshoot a problem department, or

someone who can command authority in a crisis, you couldn't do better than to hire a dominant-style communicator. Whereas private-style communicators would experience disabling anxiety in these situations, dominant-style communicators thrive in situations in which they can demonstrate their expertise and experience—does this sound like you?

The dominant-style communicators tend to fall on the low-feedback/responsiveness and high-disclosure/assertiveness ends of the two continuums, which causes others to view them as authoritarian. As with private-style people, dominant-style communicators seldom ask for feedback, and yet they are the opposite of private communicators in several ways. Instead of having a low self-image, dominant-style communicators tend to be very confident (even overly confident) and are not afraid to express their views, expectations, or needs. People know where they stand with a dominant-style communicator. Dominant communicators don't ask for feedback from others because they don't feel they need it; they already know what's best. Instead of avoiding others, dominant-style communicators tend to overuse disclosure, telling others their opinions, how things should be done, and what others are doing wrong, even when their advice may not be wanted. For example, it's very difficult for dominant-style managers to delegate responsibility. They want employees to do the work but to do it the way they themselves would do it. Private and dominant communicators also differ in the way they handle conflict. Instead of ignoring conflict, dominant communicators jump right in and solve the problem their way, using force if necessary. Often, dominant-style managers solve conflicts without asking for employee agreement or input.

Actually, dominant-style communicators are often right when they say their ideas are better. They are usually experienced and very knowledgeable on the topic. But when people are not allowed to give feedback, to try things their way, or to make mistakes, they can't develop their potential. Therefore, even though dominant-style managers are good trainers, they don't allow their employees the freedom to develop to the point at which they can take over for the boss. When the manager is promoted or leaves, the organization usually discovers that there is no one ready to fill the position.



“I don’t have time to write performance reviews, so I’ll just criticize you in public from time to time.”

Dominant-style communicators are seen as very critical and demanding. For example, although dominant-style managers mention employee strengths in appraisal sessions, they spend the majority of the time on weaknesses. Their comments probably don’t include “face supportive” communication (Carson & Cupach, 2000)—comments and nonverbal gestures designed to show employee approval and give the employee some choices. In the same way, dominant-style employees (feeling that their ideas are better than those of their bosses) are argumentative and have problems gracefully receiving criticism or orders. Even dominant-style customers are very critical (often knowing more about a product than the salesperson) and are usually the first to tell their friends when they are unhappy with a particular organization.

If you have dominant-style tendencies, you have probably discovered that most people are not

interested

in the perfect way to do things. Most people want the job completed but are not impressed by all the hard work that “perfection” requires. If you often feel dismayed by the quality of others’ ideas and think to yourself, “If I want something done right, I’ve got to do it myself,” you are exhibiting dominant-style tendencies as are often found in the traditional organization. Occasionally, a person who appears to be dominant is really a very insecure, private-style person who notices that dominant communicators get more desired results (such as more job promotions) than private ones and decides to try the dominant style. Therefore, these people—we’ll call them neurotic dominant communicators—hide their insecurity behind an authoritarian mask. Instead of the constructive criticism given by a dominant manager, the neurotic dominant manager’s criticism is angry and includes unrealistic personal attacks. To hide the fact that they feel threatened by knowledgeable, hardworking employees, neurotic dominant managers find a minor employee weakness and blow it out of proportion—often in front of other employees. Therefore, don’t confuse the true dominant communicator with the neurotic dominant communicator. Dominant-style communicators may be critical and demanding, but they appreciate quality work; neurotic dominant communicators feel threatened by quality and are impossible to please.

To summarize, the dominant style is most successful when untrained subordinates need their expertise, during a crisis or time of organizational change, or when an immediate decision is needed. The dominant style is less successful when the organization has many personnel problems, when subordinates are professional people who expect to make their own decisions, or when creativity and risk taking are critical to the organization’s success.

The Sociable Style

If you had to choose between an efficient, highly productive office in which people were friendly but not social, or a less efficient but social environment in which birthdays were celebrated, employees freely chatted while working, and everyone was treated as a family member, which would you pick? People with sociable tendencies prefer a social environment and want to be friendly with everyone as is found in the human relations model. Sociable-style communicators are interested in people, are good listeners, and are generally well liked. It’s very important to them that everyone gets along and that conflicts are avoided. However, sociable-style communicators may limit what they choose to share and may hide their “true” feelings and knowledge from others.

Sociable-style communicators fall on the low-disclosure/assertiveness, high-feedback/responsiveness ends of the two continuums. Although they like social environments, they find it difficult to disclose their opinions and expectations to others. For example, a sociable-style boss may cover only strengths in an employee appraisal and skip over weaknesses; a sociable-style employee may be unable to disagree with an unfair comment from the boss during an appraisal; and a sociable-style customer may agree with a salesperson’s suggestions even if they don’t reflect what the customer prefers.

Don’t confuse the sociable communicator with the private communicator. Sociable communicators are

not afraid of people, and they don't hide from them like the private style communicator does. They do listen carefully to others and ask them how they feel, but they tend to keep their own opinions and feelings private—does this sound like you?

Why do sociable-style people hide their opinions and feelings from others? They are motivated by mistrust of people or by the desire for social acceptance—or even both. Sociable people who tend to mistrust others feel more comfortable when they know what people are up to; they want to find out what is going on and to get feedback—someone is bound to let something slip. For example, a sociable-style customer who is motivated by mistrust will be suspicious that the salesperson is taking advantage in some way and will try to confirm these suspicions by asking questions.

Sociable-style people who are motivated by the desire for social acceptance want, above all, to please others. For example, sociable-style managers feel that keeping people happy is more important than productivity. After all, employee complaints can get you fired; moderate productivity usually doesn't. Sociable-style customers who are motivated by a desire for social acceptance would rather deal with friendly, sociable salespeople even if they have to pay more for the product.

Sociable-style people often appear to be sharing because they ask questions and stimulate others to share, thereby disguising their lack of disclosure. Sociable people disclose only on impersonal, safe topics and don't disagree with others. Sociable-style employees often appear overly friendly and eager to please ("yes" people). Sociable-style managers create the facade of being open in meetings when important decisions are to be made, but they usually speak up only after the majority opinion is clear or the top bosses' views are known. Sociable people fear conflict and disagreement and try to smooth over any discord.

As you can see, relationships with sociable-style people are basically one-way; they do most of the listening, while others do most of the sharing. Often, when others realize this, they withdraw their trust or at least stop confiding as much to the sociable-style person.

To summarize, the sociable style is most successful when a social environment is expected; when the climate of the organization makes caution and political maneuvering necessary; when teamwork is a social occasion and rarely involves problem solving; and when adequate performance is all that is expected. The sociable style is less successful when the climate is more work-oriented than social; when tasks require a high degree of trust among workers; when tasks are complex and involve team problem solving; and when excellent performance is expected.

The Open Style

Open-style communicators tend to use both disclosure and feedback and are equally interested in people's needs and company productivity. Of the four styles, open-style communicators are the ones who most appreciate other people (private communicators are nervous around people, dominant communicators tend to view others as relatively unimportant, and sociable communicators don't always trust people). Open-style communicators fall on the high-disclosure/assertiveness, high-feedback/responsiveness ends of the two continuums. In fact, they may disclose too much too often

and may ask for too much feedback. This type of forward communication makes many people uncomfortable—like the stranger sitting next to you on an airplane who tells you all about his or her family, latest surgery, and marital affair.

For most open-style people, the problem is not that they are too open but that they are too open too soon. In *The Open Organization*, Steele (1975) warns that the order in which we disclose different aspects of ourselves will determine how others react to us. For instance, new members of a group should first show their responsible, concerned side. When this stance results in their acceptance, they can then start to show their less perfect aspects and even make a critical observation. These same aspects or observations could get a nonmember rejected out of hand. For example, mentioning a problem you observed to your colleagues when you are a new hire of less than a week would likely get more of a negative response than if you had worked for the company for 2 to 3 months. In new environments, open-style employees need to listen and observe others to determine the openness of the climate. Openness is most effective when it produces a gradual sharing with others.

Open-style people are generally sensitive to the needs of others and realize that conflict can be productive. Open-style managers are more likely to empower employees to take active roles in the affairs of the organization. These empowered employees usually develop quality relationships and increase productivity. Generally, “employees in open, supportive communication climates are satisfied employees” (Conrad & Poole, 2012, p.143; see also Daft & Marcic, 2015).

Do not assume from what has been said so far that the open style is advocated in all situations. If the organization’s climate is open, if upper management favors the open style, if employees and managers are basically open, and if customers appreciate an open style, then the open style is appropriate.

Within reason, the more open we are, the better communicators we are likely to be because we are better able to share our frames of reference and expectations with others. Many organizations, however, do not have an open climate. Upper management may not approve of open-style managers and may fail to

promote them. Some employees may be uncomfortable around open managers and consider their requests for employee input as proof that they cannot make decisions. Some customers consider open-style salespeople as pushy or even nosy. But keep in mind that what is too open for one group may be just right for another.

In general, a moderately open style is most successful when employee involvement in decision making is desired; when change is welcomed as a new opportunity; when tasks are complex and require teamwork; when quality work is expected; and when the organization is involved in global communication

using one of the transformational models. The open style is less successful when upper managers or workers view the open style negatively; when tasks are extremely simple and require no teamwork; and when an immediate decision is needed.

Important Tips on Using Communication Styles in the Workplace

Your communication success and your ability to establish and maintain relationships both at home and in the workplace depend on realizing two important facts about communication styles:

Fact one: All communication styles have strengths and all have weaknesses. Realizing this simple fact indicates to all communicators that we should analyze our own strengths and weaknesses to see whether any changes are needed. This knowledge also indicates the need for flexibility when dealing with other people who also have styles with strengths and weaknesses.

Fact two: Successful relationships depend on our knowing how to relate to people of different styles. Therefore, this section includes both the best and worst of each style as well as some suggested ways to relate to managers, employees, and customers in our lives who use different communication styles.

Tips for Communicating with Private-Style People

How to communicate with private-style managers: Take care—don't threaten them or increase their insecurity. Avoid asking questions—better to ask other employees if you can do so quietly or make the decision yourself. Don't make waves—better to downplay new procedures you develop. Don't expect any praise, guidance, criticism, or help from the boss— better to provide these for yourself.

How to communicate with private-style employees: Put closed employees in environments that feel safe—that require little interaction with others. Give specific instructions about how, what, when, and where. Make the chain of command clear—to whom are they responsible? Limit criticism—they are overcritical of themselves already. Don't expect their participation in meetings or appraisal interviews.

How to communicate with private-style customers: Don't expect them to openly express what they really want—you must search for it. Help them make good choices and you could have a customer for life. Avoid technical jargon—they may be overwhelmed by it. A flip chart presentation may give them a sense of security—avoid a team presentation—it may increase their insecurity. Treat them with respect.

Tips for Communicating with Dominant-Style People

How to communicate with dominant style managers: Take their criticism well and expect to learn from them. Meet the dominant manager's expectations. Accept that your proposals will be changed by the boss. Ask questions to see what information the boss has assumed you already know and to determine whether the boss already has a "correct" solution in mind. If the boss is a neurotic blind type (a closed boss pretending to be blind), expect personal attacks on your ego.

How to communicate with dominant style employees: Expect that dominant employees are very self-assured, often argumentative, and usually not team players but know the rules of the game and can play when it is to their advantage. Encourage them to deal with others more flexibly because these employees could well become managers in the future. Show them that you will reward team

involvement. Let them see that you are in charge but that you appreciate the skills and knowledge of others.

How to communicate with dominant style customers: Give a polished, well-supported sales presentation—avoid reading a canned flip chart presentation. A team approach, if professional, will probably impress them. Be prepared for suggestions on how to improve your selling technique. Dominant customers like to feel in control; let them feel that they negotiated an exceptional deal (they probably did). Don't keep them waiting.

Tips for Communicating with Sociable-Style People

How to communicate with sociable style managers: If you are too knowledgeable or have come from another department, you may be considered a spy. You will not always know where you stand. Don't expect the boss to disclose fully—watch for nonverbal signs that the boss could say more. Show how your work or ideas will bring recognition to the department and thus to the boss, who wants social acceptance. Don't be afraid to use tactful confrontation; the boss will often back down.

How to communicate with sociable employees motivated by desire for social acceptance: Expect these employees to be “yes” people because they believe that pleasing you and others is the way to success. Motivate them by public praise (but criticism given in private), posting their names on a wall chart, asking them to give special talks, and other actions that will enhance their social acceptance. Show that you feel positive toward them. How to communicate with sociable employees motivated by lack of trust: Realize that sociable-style employees are hard to spot because they have learned how to play the game. Demonstrate (by promotions and performance appraisals) that honest team cooperation is the way to get ahead. Establish a climate in which differing opinions will not be penalized. Expect your comments to be searched for a double meaning. Be specific, use examples, don't assume meanings are clear.

How to communicate with sociable-style customers: Spend time establishing a friendly feeling before giving your pitch. Use referral—they are more likely to buy if they feel that others they respect are sold on the idea, product, or service. Listen carefully and keep your opinions out of the picture (at least until the client's views are known) because hidden customers may say they agree even if they don't.

Tips for Communicating with Open-Style People

How to communicate with open managers: Be honest and open, but use tact. Look at all sides of a problem. Don't hesitate to share job feelings, doubts, or concerns. Share part of your personal life; follow the boss's lead. Accept shared responsibility and power.

How to communicate with open employees: Share confidences—open employees respond well. Place them in an environment in which some friendships can develop. Give them constructive criticism—they usually want to improve and are the first to sign up for special courses offered by the company. Employees who are too open may talk too much, but don't assume that people can't talk and

work at the same time—some talkative employees are more productive than quiet ones.

How to communicate with open customers: Don't be pushy or manipulative. Listen carefully to their needs and wants—they are usually able to articulate them well. Build your persuasive appeals around these needs. Treat them as equals—don't talk down or defer to them. Canned flip chart presentations may be tolerated but are normally not impressive. Open customers are less impressed by flashiness and more impressed by facts—brief demonstrations can work well.

Becoming Flexible in Use of Styles

The key to good communication is flexibility in use of styles. There is a big difference between being private, dominant, sociable, or open because that is the style we generally use and deliberately choosing a certain style because it best suits the needs of the individual or group with whom we are dealing.

When you complete the Polishing Your Career Skill survey, you may discover that your style does not match your work environment. If so, you may be down to two choices: either change your job (remember, we tend to become like the environment in which we spend our time) or adapt your style. The latter is a good choice even if a job change is in order; flexibility may well be your key to effective communication wherever you work. However, we don't recommend that you try a complete style change, at least not all at once. Before making any change, you should get enough feedback to be sure that a change is warranted and then start gradually. Adapt some of your responses to mirror those used by a person with a different style. When you feel comfortable with that new behavior, try another one. Communication behaviors can be changed, but not without hard work and patience. Few people find it easy to break an old habit. For example, a person with strong dominant tendencies can learn to communicate in an open style and even solve conflict in a collaborative manner but will normally retain some dominant-style behaviors, especially in times of stress

Adapting or changing a style will require changes in your use of feedback, disclosure, or both

- The person with *dominant tendencies* needs to ask for more feedback from others to discover areas needing change.
- The person with *sociable tendencies* needs to disclose more and should slowly begin to share more information, opinions, and feelings with others
- People with *private or open styles* need to work equally on both feedback and disclosure; the private person to use more of each, and the overly open person to use less of each.

Media Attributions

- Hamiton picture
- image 2

The manager, employee, and customer styles presented in this section are a composite of Luft and Ingham's (Luft, 1969) "JoHari window" concept; J. A. Hall's (1975) "interpersonal styles and managerial impacts;" Lefton's (Lefton, Buzzotta, Sherberg, & Karraker, 1980) "management systems approach;" Bradford and Cohen's (1984) "manageras- conductor" and "manager-as-developer" middle manager style; and Merrill & Reid's (1981) "Social Style Model" (SSM). The final result is Hamilton's own product updated in 2011 and, therefore, does not parallel any of the other approaches exactly.

7.2 Praise & Criticism

According to Adler, Elmorst and Lucas (2010), research indicates that “cognitive intelligence (IQ) takes a backseat to social intelligence in determining outstanding job performance. Your IQ could be 145 and you could get a doctorate in business, but you’ll never break away from the pack unless your interpersonal skills are strong” (p. 110).

Social (or emotional) intelligence refers to the ability to recognize one’s own and others’ emotions when engaged in interpersonal interactions. Demonstrating social intelligence can be done via the skill of rhetorical sensitivity. People who are **rhetorically sensitivity** have the ability to get clear about what they are thinking/feeling, and then create a message that allows the other person the best ability to listen to the message. Notice that this skill has two focuses: self and other. A person who is rhetorically sensitive takes care of his/her needs, but also attends to the needs of other(s). One ineffective alternative to being rhetorically sensitive is the person who acts as a **noble self**: only focused on taking care of his/herself. A noble self says things like “I just say it like it is, and if the other person cant handle it that is their problem!” Another equally ineffective alternative is a person who act as a reflector. A **reflector** is a person who doesn’t express their thoughts/feelings, and simply says whatever they think the other person wants to hear. The problem with both the noble self and the reflector is that they dont recognize the relational, dynamic nature of communication. To be an effective communicator in the workplace, people need to utilize the skills of rhetorical sensitivity, especially when faced with giving praise and criticism to others.

Giving Praise

Whether you are a manager, co-worker, customer service agent, or customer, there are multiple situations in which you may want to praise others. One goal for delivering praise is to make the other person feel appreciated. Another goa is to encourage the other to replicate their “good deed.” To do this, we need to use our rhetorical sensitivity skills by clearly expressing what we liked about their behavior, and delivering the message in a way that keeps the other listening. Adler et al. (2019) offer the following tips for giving praise:

1. **Praise promptly:** When you provide positive feedback on the spot, the other person is clear about what they did that you liked.
2. **Make praise specific:** By describing exactly what you liked, the other person is more likely to replicate the behaviors. For example, if you said “good job today” your co-worker may not know what they did that reflected “good job.” But if you say “good job stepping in and helping me with the customers when we had a flood at the help desk” they know what they did, and are more likely to do it again.
3. **Praise progress, not just perfection:** Praising progress can motivate people to keep

improving their performance. By acknowledging that we recognize their improvements, even if not perfect, individuals feel appreciated and are more likely to keep striving to do better. An example of this might be “The draft proposal is a lot clearer. By adding in those details about the timeline it really helped clarify the process.”

4. **Relay praise:** By letting folks know that others appreciate them, it can boost morale and future good behaviors. By letting others know that you’ve heard good things, you also spread good will.
5. **Go social with your praise:** A final strategy to consider is sharing your praise publically. Some organizations have employee newsletters where a “kudo” about an employee can be shared with all. Social media platforms are also a way to praise employees or organizations for their good work. Giving praise publically, especially with respect to singling out an employee, need to be considered within the context of cultural norms (i.e., individualist societies value this more than collectivistic societies).

Giving Constructive Criticism

Unfortunately, there will also be times when we need to deliver difficult messages about problematic behaviors. While it is natural for the listener to feel a host of feelings (e.g., defensive, embarrassed, confused, angry, etcetera), our rhetorical sensitivity skills can help us deliver these messages in a way that give the other person the best opportunity to stay present in the conversation. As with giving praise, Adler et al. (2019) offer suggestions for delivering constructive criticism:

1. **Be accurate:** Make sure you have the facts right before approaching the other person with the criticism. If you start with inaccurate information, you’ll lose credibility and the other’s attention.
2. **Focus on facts, not opinions:** Next, make sure you are describing facts of the situation, and not your personal opinions or inferences. For example, you might say “Tracy, I noticed you’ve come in late the last 3 days,” as opposed to “Tracy, I’m noticing that you are disorganized in the mornings,” or “Tracy, it seems like you are becoming a slacker.”
3. **Limit criticism to one topic:** Bringing up too many topics can create an adversarial conversation. People become overwhelmed by hearing all the things they need to change, and can become defensive wondering why they haven’t been kept apprised of all these things they are “doing wrong.”
4. **Show how the criticism can benefit the recipient:** Contextualize your criticism by showing the other how changing their behaviors can help them. For example, if you say something like “I wanted to share this with you before our boss hears about it”, the other person is more apt to view your criticism as a gift not a condemnation.
5. **Deliver privately:** No one likes to be embarrassed publically, so pulling the person aside to have a conversation is just common sense. By reducing distractions (e.g., others, ringing phones), you are able to reduce environmental and psychological noise and thus give the other person a better opportunity to stay present in the conversation.
6. **Address the problem before it grows:** This doesn’t mean that we should constantly nitpick people’s behaviors, but let folks know a change is needed before it becomes a serious problem.

7. **Remain calm and professional (skills for responding non-defensively):** A final strategy for delivering criticism is to recognize that the other person may respond in a highly defensive way, so it is important to stay calm and avoid creating a downward conflict spiral. In the next section, we will explore ways to respond non-defensively.

Responding non-defensively to critics

When faced with criticism, it is common for people to use a variety of defense mechanisms to mitigate the unpleasant information. Some of defense mechanisms include responding with denial (I didn't do it), counterattacks (you're not perfect either), rationalization (I couldn't help it), and projection (it's the fault of another person/event). If you find yourself reacting to criticism with one of these strategies, below are some new skills to help you stay present in the conversation. Similarly, if you hear someone respond to the constructive feedback you deliver by using a defense mechanism, you can employ one of these strategies to try and keep the conversation focused on the topic at hand.

1. **Ask for clarification:** Sometimes by simply asking the other to say more, we can defuse a potentially heated discussion and keep things moving in a productive direction.
2. **Guess about details of the criticism:** At times, the other person may not be able to clearly articulate their thoughts/feelings. In these situations we might offer a "guess" as a way to perception check.
3. **Paraphrase:** Take a moment to paraphrase back what you think you just heard. This is helpful as it ensures everyone is on the same page, and is confirming for the other person (i.e., indicates you were listening).
4. **Ask what they want:** By asking what the other person might want, you send a message that the other person matters to you, and that you are interested in their needs.
5. **Agree with the facts:** If you agree with the facts as presented, you can illustrate the common ground you share with the other.
6. **Acknowledge their perception:** You may not agree with their perception of the situation, but you may be able to validate them by saying that you understand their position.

Below are examples of each strategy based on the following scenario: You arrive late to a meeting. Later in the day your boss says "Your behaviors today are disrespectful to me and your coworker."

Ask for specifics: What am I doing that seems disrespectful?

Guess about specifics: Do you feel I'm being disrespectful because I arrived to the meeting late today?"

Paraphrase (*best done when the message is longer than 1 sentence): "So you're saying I'm acting disrespectful towards you and my coworkers."

Ask what they want: "Would you like me to apologize to the others for arriving late today?"

Agree with the facts: "You're right, I was late today."

Acknowledge the critics perspective: "I can see how my tardiness would look disrespectful."

null

null

7.3 Defensive & Supportive Communication

One way to understand communication is to view it as a people process in addition to a language process. If one is to make fundamental improvement in communication, one must make changes in interpersonal relationships. One possible type of alteration—and the one with which this paper is concerned—is that of reducing the degree of defensiveness.

Definition and Significance

Defensive behavior is defined as that behavior which occurs when an individual perceives threat or anticipates threat in the group. The person who behaves defensively, even though he or she also gives some attention to the common task, devotes an appreciable portion of energy to defending himself or herself. Besides talking about the topic, he/she thinks about how they appear to others, how they may be seen more favorably, how they may win, dominate, impress or escape punishment, and/or how they may avoid or mitigate a perceived attack.

Such inner feelings and outward acts tend to create similarly defensive postures in others; and, if unchecked, the ensuing circular response becomes increasingly destructive. Defensive behavior, in short, engenders defensive listening, and this in turn produces postural, facial and verbal cues which raise the defense level of the original communicator.

Defense arousal prevents the listener from concentrating upon the message. Not only do defensive communicators send off multiple value, motive and affect cues, but also defensive recipients distort what they receive. As a person becomes more and more defensive, he or she becomes less and less able to perceive accurately the motives, the values and the emotions of the sender. Defensive behaviors have been correlated positively with losses in efficiency in communication.

The converse, moreover, also is true. The more “supportive” or defense-reductive the climate, the less the receiver reads into the communication distorted loadings which arise from projections of his own anxieties, motives and concerns. As defenses are reduced, the receivers become better able to concentrate upon the structure, the content and the cognitive meanings of the message.

Categories of Defensive and Supportive Communications

Jack Gibb developed six pairs of defensive and supportive categories presented below. Behavior which a listener perceives as possessing any of the characteristics listed in the left-hand column arouses defensiveness, whereas that which he interprets as having any of the qualities designated as supportive reduces defensive feelings. The degree to which these reactions occur depends upon the person’s level

of defensiveness and upon the general climate in the group at the time.

Evaluation and Description

Speech or other behavior which appears evaluative increases defensiveness. If by expression, manner of speech, tone of voice or verbal content the sender seems to be evaluating or judging the listener, the receiver goes on guard. Of course, other factors may inhibit the reaction. If the listener thought that the speaker regarded him/her as an equal and was being open and spontaneous, for example, the evaluativeness in a message would be neutralized and perhaps not even perceived. This same principle applies equally to the other five categories of potentially defense-producing climates. These six sets are interactive.

Because our attitudes toward other persons are frequently, and often necessarily, evaluative, expressions which the defensive person will regard as nonjudgmental are hard to frame. Even the simplest question usually conveys the answer that the sender wishes or implies the response that would fit into his or her value system. A mother, for example, immediately following an earth tremor that shook the house, sought for her small son with the question, "Bobby, where are you?" The timid and plaintive "Mommy, I didn't do it" indicated how Bobby's chronic mild defensiveness predisposed him to react with a projection of his own guilt and in the context of his chronic assumption that questions are full of accusation.

Categories of Behavior Characteristic of Supportive and Defensive Climates

Defensive Climates	Supportive Climates
1. Evaluation	1. Description
2. Control	2. Problem Orientation
3. Strategy	3. Spontaneity
4. Neutrality	4. Empathy
5. Superiority	5. Equality
6. Certainty	6. Provisionalism

Anyone who has attempted to train professionals to use information-seeking speech with neutral affect appreciates how difficult it is to teach a person to say even the simple "who did that?" without being seen as accusing. Speech is so frequently judgmental that there is a reality base for the defensive interpretations which are so common.

When insecure, group members are particularly likely to place blame, to see others as fitting into categories of good or bad, to make moral judgments of their colleagues and to question the value, motive and affect loadings of the speech which they hear. Since value loadings imply a judgment of others, a belief that the standards of the speaker differ from his or her own causes the listener to

become defensive.

Descriptive speech, in contrast to that which is evaluative, tends to arouse a minimum of uneasiness. Speech acts in which the listener perceives as genuine requests for information or as material with neutral loadings is descriptive. Specifically, presentation of feelings, events, perceptions or processes which do not ask or imply that the receiver change behavior or attitude are minimally defense producing. On a side note, one can often tell from the opening words in a news article which side the newspaper's editorial policy favors.

Control and Problem Orientation

Speech which is used to control the listener evokes resistance. In most of our social intercourse, someone is trying to do something to someone else—to change an attitude, to influence behavior, or to restrict the field of activity. The degree to which attempts to control produce defensiveness depends upon the openness of the effort, for a suspicion that hidden motives exist heightens resistance. For this reason, attempts of nondirective therapists and progressive educators to refrain from imposing a set of values, a point of view or a problem solution upon the receivers meet with many barriers. Since the norm is control, noncontrollers must earn the perceptions that their efforts have no hidden motives. A bombardment of persuasive “messages” in the fields of politics, education, special causes, advertising, religion, medicine, industrial relations and guidance has bred cynical and paranoid responses in listeners.

Implicit in all attempts to alter another person is the assumption by the change agent that the person to be altered is inadequate. That the speaker secretly views the listener as ignorant, unable to make his or her own decisions, uninformed, immature, unwise, or possessed of wrong or inadequate attitudes is a subconscious perception which gives the latter a valid base for defensive reactions.

Ernesto Sirolli: Want to help someone? Shut up and listen!



A TED element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <http://textbooks.whatcom.edu/cmst245/?p=190>

Strategy and Spontaneity

When the sender is perceived as engaged in a stratagem involving ambiguous and multiple motivations, the receiver becomes defensive. No one wishes to be a guinea pig, a role player, or an impressed actor, and no one likes to be the victim of some hidden motivation. That which is concealed, also, may appear larger than it really is with the degree of defensiveness of the listener determining the perceived size of the element. The intense reaction of the reading audience to the material in *The Hidden Persuaders* indicates the prevalence of defensive reactions to multiple motivations behind strategy. Group members who are seen as “taking a role” as feigning emotion, as toying with their colleagues, as withholding information or as having special sources of data are especially resented. One participant once complained that another was “using a listening technique” on him!

A large part of the adverse reaction to much of the so-called human relations training is a feeling against what are perceived as gimmicks and tricks to fool or to “involve” people, to make a person think he or she is making their own decision, or to make the listener feel that the sender is genuinely

interested in him or her as a person. Particularly violent reactions occur when it appears that someone is trying to make a stratagem appear spontaneous. One person reported a boss who incurred resentment by habitually using the gimmick of “spontaneously” looking at his watch and saying “my gosh, look at the time—I must run to an appointment.” The belief was that the boss would create less irritation by honestly asking to be excused.

The aversion to deceit may account for one’s resistance to politicians who are suspected of behind-the-scenes planning to get one’s vote, to psychologists whose listening apparently is motivated by more than the manifest or content-level interest in one’s behavior, or the sophisticated, smooth, or clever person whose one-upmanship is marked with guile. In training groups the role-flexible person frequently is resented because his or her changes in behavior are perceived as strategic maneuvers.

In contrast, behavior that appears to be spontaneous and free of deception is defense reductive. If the communicator is seen as having a clean id, as having uncomplicated motivations, as being straightforward and honest, as behaving spontaneously in response to the situation, he or she is likely to arouse minimal defensiveness.

Neutrality and Empathy

When neutrality in speech appears to the listener to indicate a lack of concern for his welfare, he becomes defensive. Group members usually desire to be perceived as valued persons, as individuals with special worth, and as objects of concern and affection. The clinical, detached, person-is-an-object-study attitude on the part of many psychologist-trainers is resented by group members. Speech with low affect that communicates little warmth or caring is in such contrast with the affect-laden speech in social situations that it sometimes communicates rejection.

Communication that conveys empathy for the feelings and respect for the worth of the listener, however, is particularly supportive and defense reductive. Reassurance results when a message indicates that the speaker identifies himself or herself with the listener’s problems, shares her feelings, and accepts her emotional reactions at face value. Abortive efforts to deny the legitimacy of the receiver’s emotions by assuring the receiver that she need not feel badly, that she should not feel rejected, or that she is overly anxious, although often intended as support giving, may impress the listener as lack of acceptance. The combination of understanding and empathizing with the other person’s emotions with no accompanying effort to change him or her is supportive at a high level.

The importance of gestural behavior cues in communicating empathy should be mentioned. Apparently spontaneous facial and bodily evidences of concern are often interpreted as especially valid evidence of deep-level acceptance.

Superiority and Equality

When a person communicates to another that he or she feels superior in position, power, wealth, intellectual ability, physical characteristics, or other ways, she or he arouses defensiveness. Here, as

with other sources of disturbance, whatever arouses feelings of inadequacy causes the listener to center upon the affect loading of the statement rather than upon the cognitive elements. The receiver then reacts by not hearing the message, by forgetting it, by competing with the sender, or by becoming jealous of him or her.

The person who is perceived as feeling superior communicates that he or she is not willing to enter into a shared problem-solving relationship, that he or she probably does not desire feedback, that he or she does not require help, and/or that he or she will be likely to try to reduce the power, the status, or the worth of the receiver.

Many ways exist for creating the atmosphere that the sender feels himself or herself equal to the listener. Defenses are reduced when one perceives the sender as being willing to enter into participative planning with mutual trust and respect. Differences in talent, ability, worth, appearance, status and power often exist, but the low defense communicator seems to attach little importance to these distinctions.

Certainty and Provisionalism

The effects of dogmatism in producing defensiveness are well known. Those who seem to know the answers, to require no additional data, and to regard themselves as teachers rather than as co-workers tend to put others on guard. Moreover, listeners often perceive manifest expressions of certainty as connoting inward feelings of inferiority. They see the dogmatic individual as needing to be right, as wanting to win an argument rather than solve a problem and as seeing his or her ideas as truths to be defended. This kind of behavior often is associated with acts which others regarded as attempts to exercise control. People who are right seem to have low tolerance for members who are “wrong”—i.e., who do not agree with the sender.

One reduces the defensiveness of the listener when one communicates that one is willing to experiment with one's own behavior, attitudes and ideas. The person who appears to be taking provisional attitudes, to be investigating issues rather than taking sides on them, to be problem solving rather than doubting, and to be willing to experiment and explore tends to communicate that the listener may have some control over the shared quest or the investigation of the ideas. If a person is genuinely searching for information and data, he or she does not resent help or company along the way.

Conclusion

The implications of the above material for the teacher, the manager, the administrator, or the therapist are fairly obvious. Arousing defensiveness interferes with communication and thus makes it difficult—and sometimes impossible—for anyone to convey ideas clearly and to move effectively toward the solution of therapeutic, educational, or managerial problems.

7.4 Conflict

Defining Conflict

[Source](#)

Learning Objectives

1. Define conflict.
2. Address whether conflict is always negative.

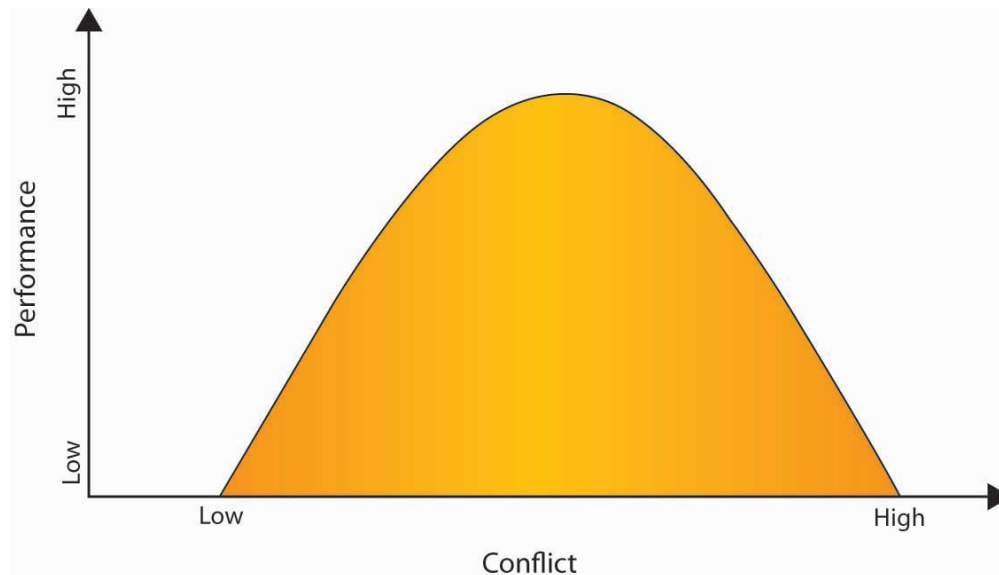
Let's take a closer look at issue of conflict to understand how they can derail companies and individuals alike—and what to do to prevent such consequences from happening to you. In this chapter, you'll see that managing conflict is key for effective organizational behavior within organizations as well as daily life. Conflicts range from minor annoyances to outright violence. For example, one million workers (18,000 people per week) are assaulted on the job in the United States alone (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 1997). One of the major ways to avoid conflicts escalating to these levels is through understanding the causes of conflict and developing methods for managing potential negative outcomes.

Conflict is defined by Wilmot & Hocker (2010) as an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive scarce resources, incompatible goals and interference from the other in achieving their goal(s). Researchers have noted that conflict is like the common cold. Everyone knows what it is, but understanding its causes and how to treat it is much more challenging (Wall & Callister, 1995).

Is Conflict Always Bad?

Most people are uncomfortable with conflict, but is conflict always bad? Conflict can be dysfunctional if it paralyzes an organization, leads to less than optimal performance, or, in the worst case, leads to workplace violence. Surprisingly, a moderate amount of conflict can actually be a healthy (and necessary) part of organizational life (Amason, 1996). To understand how to get to a positive level of conflict, we need to understand its root causes, consequences, and tools to help manage it. The impact of too much or too little conflict can disrupt performance. If conflict is too low, then performance is low. If conflict is too high, then performance also tends to be low. The goal is to hold conflict levels in the

middle of this range. While it might seem strange to want a particular level of conflict, a medium level of task-related conflict is often viewed as optimal, because it represents a situation in which a healthy debate of ideas takes place.



The Inverted U Relationship Between Performance and Conflict

Task conflict can be good in certain circumstances, such as in the early stages of decision making, because it stimulates creativity. However, it can interfere with complex tasks in the long run (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Personal conflicts, such as personal attacks, are never healthy because they cause stress and distress, which undermines performance. The worst cases of personal conflicts can lead to workplace bullying. At Intel Corporation, all new employees go through a 4-hour training module to learn “constructive confrontation.” The content of the training program includes dealing with others in a positive manner, using facts rather than opinion to persuade others, and focusing on the problem at hand rather than the people involved. “We don’t spend time being defensive or taking things personally. We cut through all of that and get to the issues,” notes a trainer from Intel University (Dahle, 2001). The success of the training remains unclear, but the presence of this program indicates that Intel understands the potentially positive effect of a moderate level of conflict. Research focusing on effective teams across time found that they were characterized by low but increasing levels of process conflict (how do we get things done?), low levels of relationship conflict with a rise toward the end of the project (personal disagreements among team members), and moderate levels of task conflict in the middle of the task time line (Jehn & Mannix, 2001).

Key Takeaway

Conflict can be a problem for individuals and organizations. Moderate conflict can be a healthy and necessary part of organizational life.

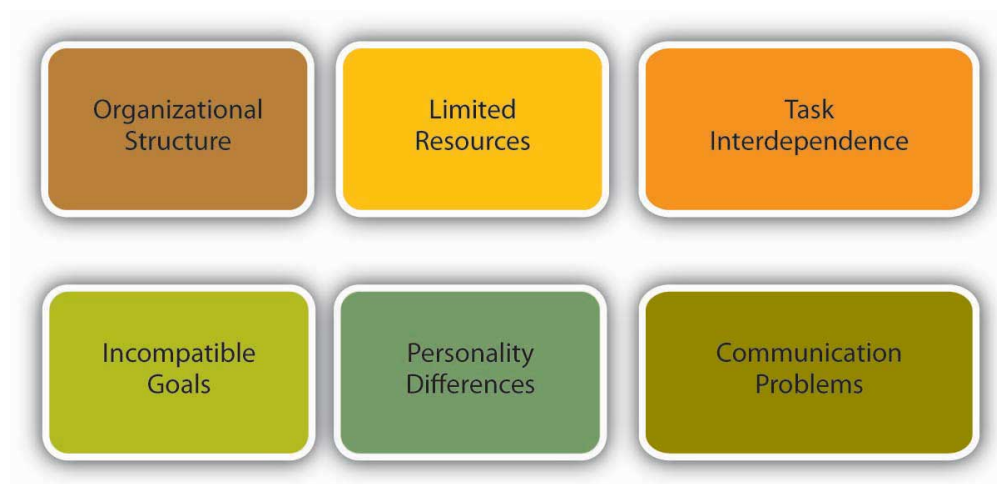
Causes and Outcomes of Conflict

[Source](#)

Learning Objectives

1. Understand different causes of conflict.
2. Understand jobs at risk for conflict.
3. Learn the outcomes of conflict.

There are many potential root causes of conflict at work. We'll go over six of them here. Remember, anything that leads to a disagreement can be a cause of conflict. Although conflict is common to organizations, some organizations have more than others.



Potential Causes of Conflict

Causes of Conflict

Organizational Structure

Conflict tends to take different forms, depending upon the organizational structure (Jaffe, 2000). For example, if a company uses a matrix structure as its organizational form, it will have decisional conflict built in, because the structure specifies that each manager report to two bosses. For example, global company ABB Inc. is organized around a matrix structure based on the dimensions of country and industry. This structure can lead to confusion as the company is divided geographically into 1,200 different units and by industry into 50

different units (Taylor, 1991).

Limited Resources

Resources such as money, time, and equipment are often scarce. Competition among people or departments for limited resources is a frequent cause for conflict. For example, cutting-edge laptops and gadgets such as a BlackBerry or iPhone are expensive resources that may be allocated to employees on a need-to-have basis in some companies. When a group of employees have access to such resources while others do not, conflict may arise among employees or between employees and management. While technical employees may feel that these devices are crucial to their productivity, employees with customer contact such as sales representatives may make the point that these devices are important for them to make a good impression to clients. Because important resources are often limited, this is one source of conflict many companies have to live with.

Task Interdependence

Another cause of conflict is task interdependence; that is, when accomplishment of your goal requires reliance on others to perform their tasks. For example, if you're tasked with creating advertising for your product, you're dependent on the creative team to design the words and layout, the photographer or videographer to create the visuals, the media buyer to purchase the advertising space, and so on. The completion of your goal (airing or publishing your ad) is dependent on others.

Incompatible Goals

Sometimes conflict arises when two parties think that their goals are mutually exclusive. Within an organization, incompatible goals often arise because of the different ways department managers are compensated. For example, a sales manager's bonus may be tied to how many sales are made for the company. As a result, the individual might be tempted to offer customers "freebies" such as expedited delivery in order to make the sale. In contrast, a transportation manager's compensation may be based on how much money the company saves on transit. In this case, the goal might be to eliminate expedited delivery because it adds expense. The two will butt heads until the company resolves the conflict by changing the compensation scheme. For example, if the company assigns the bonus based on profitability of a sale, not just the dollar amount, the cost of the expediting would be subtracted from the value of the sale. It might still make sense to expedite the order if the sale is large enough, in which case both parties would support it. On the other hand, if the expediting negates the value of the sale, neither party would be in favor of the added expense.

Personality Differences

Personality differences among coworkers are common. By understanding some fundamental differences

among the way people think and act, we can better understand how others see the world. Knowing that these differences are natural and normal lets us anticipate and mitigate interpersonal conflict—it's often not about "you" but simply a different way of seeing and behaving. For example, Type A individuals have been found to have more conflicts with their coworkers than Type B individuals (Baron, 1989).

Communication Problems

Sometimes conflict arises simply out of a small, unintentional communication problem, such as lost e-mails or dealing with people who don't return phone calls. Giving feedback is also a case in which the best intentions can quickly escalate into a conflict situation. When communicating, be sure to focus on behavior and its effects, not on the person. For example, say that Jeff always arrives late to all your meetings. You think he has a bad attitude, but you don't really know what Jeff's attitude is. You do know, however, the effect that Jeff's behavior has on you. You could say, "Jeff, when you come late to the meeting, I feel like my time is wasted." Jeff can't argue with that statement, because it is a fact of the impact of his behavior on you. It's indisputable, because it is your reality. What Jeff can say is that he did not intend such an effect, and then you can have a discussion regarding the behavior.

In another example, the Hershey Company was engaged in talks behind closed doors with Cadbury Schweppes about a possible merger. No information about this deal was shared with Hershey's major stakeholder, the Hershey Trust. When Robert Vowler, CEO of the Hershey Trust, discovered that talks were underway without anyone consulting the Trust, tensions between the major stakeholders began to rise. As Hershey's continued to underperform, steps were taken in what is now called the "Sunday night massacre," in which several board members were forced to resign and Richard Lenny, Hershey's then current CEO, retired (Jargon, Karnitschnig, & Lublin, 2008). This example shows how a lack of communication can lead to an escalation of conflict. Time will tell what the lasting effects of this conflict will be, but in the short term, effective communication will be the key. Now, let's turn our attention to the outcomes of conflict.

Outcomes of Conflict

One of the most common outcomes of conflict is that it upsets parties in the short run (Bergman & Volkema, 1989). However, conflict can have both positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, conflict can result in greater creativity or better decisions. For example, as a result of a disagreement over a policy, a manager may learn from an employee that newer technologies help solve problems in an unanticipated new way.

Positive outcomes include the following:

- Consideration of a broader range of ideas, resulting in a better, stronger idea
- Surfacing of assumptions that may be inaccurate
- Increased participation and creativity

- Clarification of individual views that build learning

On the other hand, conflict can be dysfunctional if it is excessive or involves personal attacks or underhanded tactics.

Examples of negative outcomes include the following:

- Increased stress and anxiety among individuals, which decreases productivity and satisfaction
- Feelings of being defeated and demeaned, which lowers individuals' morale and may increase turnover
- A climate of mistrust, which hinders the teamwork and cooperation necessary to get work done

Is Your Job at Risk for Workplace Violence?

You may be at increased risk for workplace violence if your job involves the following:

- Dealing With People
 - *Caring for others either emotionally or physically*, such as at a nursing home.
 - *Interacting with frustrated customers*, such as with retail sales.
 - *Supervising others*, such as being a manager.
 - *Denying requests others make of you*, such as with customer service.
- Being in High-Risk Situations
 - *Dealing with valuables or exchanging money*, such as in banking.
 - *Handling weapons*, such as in law enforcement.
 - *Working with drugs, alcohol, or those under the influence of them*, such as bartending.
 - *Working nights or weekends*, such as gas station attendants.

Sources: Adapted from information in LeBlanc, M. M., & Kelloway, E. K. (2002). [Predictors and outcomes of workplace violence and aggression](#). *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 444-453; National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. (1997). Violence in the workplace. Retrieved November 12, 2008, from ; National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. (2006). [Workplace prevention strategies and research needs](#). Retrieved November 12, 2008.

Given these negative outcomes, how can conflict be managed so that it does not become dysfunctional or even dangerous? We'll explore this in the next section.

Key Takeaway

Conflict has many causes, including organizational structures, limitations on resources, task interdependence, goal incompatibility, personality differences, and communication challenges.

Outcomes of well-managed conflict include increased participation and creativity, while negatives of poorly managed conflict include increased stress and anxiety. Jobs that deal with people are at higher risk for conflict.

Exercises

1. What are some primary causes of conflict at work?
2. What are the outcomes of workplace conflict? Which types of job are the most at risk for workplace violence? Why do you think that is?
3. What outcomes have you observed from conflict?

Conflict Management

[Source](#)

Learning Objectives

1. Understand different ways to manage conflict.
2. Learn to stimulate conflict if needed.

There are a number of different ways of managing organizational conflict, which are highlighted in this section. Conflict management refers to resolving disagreements effectively.

Ways to Manage Conflict

Change the Structure

When structure is a cause of dysfunctional conflict, structural change can be the solution to resolving

the conflict. Consider this situation. Vanessa, the lead engineer in charge of new product development, has submitted her components list to Tom, the procurement officer, for purchasing. Tom, as usual, has rejected two of the key components, refusing the expenditure on the purchase. Vanessa is furious, saying, “Every time I give you a request to buy a new part, you fight me on it. Why can’t you ever trust my judgment and honor my request?”

Tom counters, “You’re always choosing the newest, leading-edge parts—they’re hard to find and expensive to purchase. I’m supposed to keep costs down, and your requests always break my budget.”

“But when you don’t order the parts we need for a new product, you delay the whole project,” Vanessa says.

Sharon, the business unit’s vice president, hits upon a structural solution by stating, “From now on, both of you will be evaluated on the total cost and the overall performance of the product. You need to work together to keep component costs low while minimizing quality issues later on.” If the conflict is at an intergroup level, such as between two departments, a structural solution could be to have those two departments report to the same executive, who could align their previously incompatible goals.

Change the Composition of the Team

If the conflict is between team members, the easiest solution may be to change the composition of the team, separating the personalities that were at odds. In instances in which conflict is attributed to the widely different styles, values, and preferences of a small number of members, replacing some of these members may resolve the problem. If that’s not possible because everyone’s skills are needed on the team and substitutes aren’t available, consider a physical layout solution. Research has shown that when known antagonists are seated directly across from each other, the amount of conflict increases. However, when they are seated side by side, the conflict tends to decrease (Gordon et al., 1990).

Create a Common Opposing Force

Group conflict within an organization can be mitigated by focusing attention on a common enemy such as the competition. For example, two software groups may be vying against each other for marketing dollars, each wanting to maximize advertising money devoted to their product. But, by focusing attention on a competitor company, the groups may decide to work together to enhance the marketing effectiveness for the company as a whole. The “enemy” need not be another company—it could be a concept, such as a recession, that unites previously warring departments to save jobs during a downturn.

Consider Majority Rule

Sometimes a group conflict can be resolved through majority rule. That is, group members take a vote, and the idea with the most votes is the one that gets implemented. The majority rule approach can work

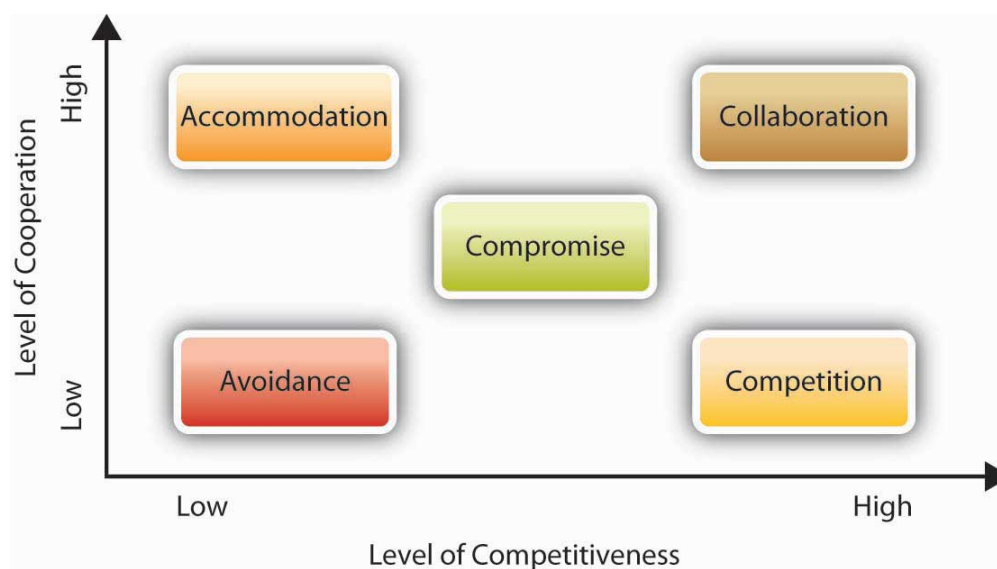
if the participants feel that the procedure is fair. It is important to keep in mind that this strategy will become ineffective if used repeatedly with the same members typically winning. Moreover, the approach should be used sparingly. It should follow a healthy discussion of the issues and points of contention, not be a substitute for that discussion.

Problem Solve

Problem solving is a common approach to resolving conflict. In problem-solving mode, the individuals or groups in conflict are asked to focus on the problem, not on each other, and to uncover the root cause of the problem. This approach recognizes the rarity of one side being completely right and the other being completely wrong.

Personal Conflict-Management Styles

Individuals vary in the way that they handle conflicts. There are five common styles of handling conflicts. These styles can be mapped onto a grid that shows the varying degree of cooperation and assertiveness each style entails. Let us look at each in turn.



Personal Conflict-Management Styles

Avoidance

The avoiding style is uncooperative and unassertive. People exhibiting this style seek to avoid conflict altogether by denying that it is there. They are prone to postponing any decisions in which a conflict may arise. People using this style may say things such as, “I don’t really care if we work this out,” or “I don’t think there’s any problem. I feel fine about how things are.” Conflict avoidance may be habitual to some people because of personality traits such as the need for affiliation. While conflict avoidance may not be a significant problem if the issue at hand is trivial, it becomes a problem when individuals avoid confronting important issues because of a dislike for conflict or a perceived inability to handle the other

party's reactions.

Accommodation

The accommodating style is cooperative and unassertive. In this style, the person gives in to what the other side wants, even if it means giving up one's personal goals. People who use this style may fear speaking up for themselves or they may place a higher value on the relationship, believing that disagreeing with an idea might be hurtful to the other person. They will say things such as, "Let's do it your way" or "If it's important to you, I can go along with it." Accommodation may be an effective strategy if the issue at hand is more important to others compared to oneself. However, if a person perpetually uses this style, that individual may start to see that personal interests and well-being are neglected.

Compromise

The compromising style is a middle-ground style, in which individuals have some desire to express their own concerns and get their way but still respect the other person's goals. The compromiser may say things such as, "Perhaps I ought to reconsider my initial position" or "Maybe we can both agree to give in a little." In a compromise, each person sacrifices something valuable to them. For example, in 2005 the luxurious Lanesborough Hotel in London advertised incorrect nightly rates for £35, as opposed to £350. When the hotel received a large number of online bookings at this rate, the initial reaction was to insist that customers cancel their reservations and book at the correct rate. The situation was about to lead to a public relations crisis. As a result, they agreed to book the rooms at the advertised price for a maximum of three nights, thereby limiting the damage to the hotel's bottom line as well as its reputation (Horowitz et al., 2006).

Competition



Body language can fuel a conflict. Gideon - Oh That Body Language! - CC BY 2.0.

People exhibiting a competing style want to reach their goal or get their solution adopted regardless of what others say or how they feel. They are more interested in getting the outcome they want as opposed to keeping the other party happy, and they push for the deal they are interested in making. Competition may lead to poor relationships with others if one is always seeking to maximize their own outcomes at the expense of others' well-being. This approach may be effective if one has strong moral objections to the alternatives or if the alternatives one is opposing are unethical or harmful.

Collaboration

The collaborating style is high on both assertiveness and cooperation. This is a strategy to use for achieving the best outcome from conflict—both sides argue for their position, supporting it with facts and rationale while listening attentively to the other side. The objective is to find a win-win solution to the problem in which both parties get what they want. They'll challenge points but not each other. They'll emphasize problem solving and integration of each other's goals. For example, an employee who wants to complete an MBA program may have a conflict with management when he wants to reduce his work hours. Instead of taking opposing positions in which the employee defends his need to pursue his career goals while the manager emphasizes the company's need for the employee, both parties may review alternatives to find an integrative solution. In the end, the employee may decide to pursue the degree while taking online classes, and the company may realize that paying for the employee's tuition is a worthwhile investment. This may be a win-win solution to the problem in which no one gives up what is personally important, and every party gains something from the exchange.

Which Style Is Best?

Like much of organizational behavior, there is no one "right way" to deal with conflict. Much of the time it will depend on the situation. However, the collaborative style has the potential to be highly effective in many different situations.

We do know that most individuals have a dominant style that they tend to use most frequently. Think of your friend who is always looking for a fight or your coworker who always backs down from a disagreement. Successful individuals are able to match their style to the situation. There are times when avoiding a conflict can be a great choice. For example, if a driver cuts you off in traffic, ignoring it and going on with your day is a good alternative to "road rage." However, if a colleague keeps claiming ownership of your ideas, it may be time for a confrontation. Allowing such intellectual plagiarism to continue could easily be more destructive to your career than confronting the individual. Research also shows that when it comes to dealing with conflict, managers prefer forcing, while their subordinates are more likely to engage in avoiding, accommodating, or compromising (Howat & London, 1980). It is also likely that individuals will respond similarly to the person engaging in conflict. For example, if one person is forcing, others are likely to respond with a forcing tactic as well.

What If You Don't Have Enough Conflict Over Ideas?

Part of effective conflict management is knowing when proper stimulation is necessary. Many people think that conflict is inherently bad—that it undermines goals or shows that a group or meeting is not running smoothly. In fact, if there is no conflict, it may mean that people are silencing themselves and withholding their opinions. The reality is that within meaningful group discussions there are usually varying opinions about the best course of action. If people are suppressing their opinions, the final result may not be the best solution. During healthy debates, people point out difficulties or weaknesses in a proposed alternative and can work together to solve them. The key to keeping the disagreement healthy is to keep the discussion focused on the task, not the personalities. For example, a comment such as “Jack’s ideas have never worked before. I doubt his current idea will be any better” is not constructive. Instead, a comment such as “This production step uses a degreaser that’s considered a hazardous material. Can we think of an alternative degreaser that’s nontoxic?” is more productive. It challenges the group to improve upon the existing idea.

Traditionally, Hewlett-Packard Development Company LP was known as a “nice” organization. Throughout its history, HP viewed itself as a scientific organization, and their culture valued teamwork and respect. But over time, HP learned that you can be “nice to death.” In fact, in the 1990s, HP found it difficult to partner with other organizations because of their culture differences. During role plays created to help HP managers be more dynamic, the trainers had to modify several role-plays, because participants simply said, “That would never happen at HP,” over the smallest conflict. All this probably played a role in the discomfort many felt with Carly Fiorina’s style as CEO and the merge she orchestrated with Compaq Computer Corporation, which ultimately caused the board of directors to fire Fiorina. On the other hand, no one is calling HP “too nice” anymore.

OB Toolbox: How Can You Stimulate Conflict?

- *Encourage people to raise issues and disagree with you or the status quo without fear of reprisal.* An issue festering beneath the surface, when brought out into the open, may turn out to be a minor issue that can be easily addressed and resolved.
- *Assign a devil’s advocate to stimulate alternative viewpoints.* If a business unit is getting stagnant, bring in new people to “shake things up.”
- *Create a competition among teams, offering a bonus to the team that comes up with the best solution to a problem.* For example, have two product development teams compete on designing a new product. Or, reward the team that has the fewest customer complaints or achieves the highest customer satisfaction rating.
- *Build some ambiguity into the process.* When individuals are free to come up with their own ideas about how to complete a task, the outcome may be surprising, and it allows for more healthy disagreements along the way.

Key Takeaway

Conflict management techniques include changing organizational structures to avoid built-in conflict, changing team members, creating a common “enemy,” using majority rules, and problem solving. Conflict management styles include accommodating others, avoiding the conflict, collaborating, competing, and compromising. People tend to have a dominant style. At times it makes sense to build in some conflict over ideas if none exists.

Exercises

1. List three ways to decrease a conflict situation. What are some pros and cons of each of these approaches?
2. Do you deal with conflict differently with friends and family than you do at work? If so, why do you think that is?
3. What is your usual conflict-handling style at work? Do you see it as effective or ineffective?
4. Describe a situation in which not having enough conflict can be a problem.

Chapter 8: Professional Presentations in Organizations

8.1 Speech Goals & Audience Analysis

[Section Source](#)

Ancient Greek educators and philosophers wrote the first public speaking texts about 2,400 years ago. Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* covers many of the same topics addressed in this unit of the book, including speech organization, audience analysis, and persuasive appeals. Even though these principles have been around for thousands of years and have been taught to millions of students, it's still a challenge to get students to see the value of public speaking. Some students think they already know everything they need to know about speaking in public. In response I remind them that even the best speakers still don't know everything there is to know about public speaking. Other students don't think they'll engage in public speaking very often, if at all. To them, I mention that oral communication and presentation skills are integral to professional and personal success. Last, some students are anxious or even scared by the thought of speaking in front of an audience. To them, I explain that speaking anxiety is common and can be addressed. Learning about and practicing public speaking fosters transferable skills that will help you organize your thoughts, outline information, do research, adapt to various audiences, and utilize and understand persuasive techniques. These skills will be useful in other college classes, your career, your personal relationships, and your civic life.

Speech Goals

Your speeches will usually fall into one of three categories. In some cases we speak to inform, meaning we attempt to teach our audience using factual objective evidence. In other cases, we speak to persuade, as we try to influence an audience's beliefs, attitudes, values, or behaviors. Last, we may speak to entertain or amuse our audience. In summary, the general purpose of your speech will be to inform, to persuade, or to entertain.

You can see various topics that may fit into the three general purposes for speaking in Table 8.1 "General Purposes and Speech Topics". Some of the topics listed could fall into another general purpose category depending on how the speaker approached the topic, or they could contain elements of more than one general purpose. For example, you may have to inform your audience about your topic in one main point before you can persuade them, or you may include some entertaining elements in an informative or persuasive speech to help make the content more engaging for the audience. There should not be elements of persuasion included in an informative speech, however, since persuading is contrary to the objective approach that defines an informative general purpose. In any case, while there may be some overlap between general purposes, most speeches can be placed into one of the categories based on the overall content of the speech.

Table 8.1 Speech Goals

To Inform	To Persuade	To Entertain
Civil rights movement	Gun control	Comedic monologue
Renewable energy	Privacy rights	My craziest adventure
Reality television	Prison reform	A “roast”

Specific Purpose

Once you have determined your goal, you can begin to draft your specific purpose statement or proposition. A specific purpose is a one-sentence statement that includes the objective you want to accomplish in your informative speech. A proposition is a one-sentence statement that identifies how you want your audience to think or behave after listening to your persuasive speech. You do not speak aloud these statement in your; you use them to guide your researching, organizing, and writing. A good specific purpose statement or proposition is audience centered and realistic.

Audience Analysis

Audience analysis is key for a speaker to achieve his or her speech goal. One of the first questions you should ask yourself is “Who is my audience?” While there are some generalizations you can make about an audience, a competent speaker always assumes there is a diversity of opinion and background among his or her listeners. You can’t assume from looking that everyone in your audience is the same age, race, sexual orientation, religion, or many other factors. Even if you did have a fairly homogenous audience, with only one or two people who don’t match up, you should still consider those one or two people. When I have a class with one or two older students, I still consider the different age demographics even though twenty other students are eighteen to twenty-two years old. In short, a good speaker shouldn’t intentionally alienate even one audience member. Of course, a speaker could still unintentionally alienate certain audience members, especially in persuasive speaking situations. While this may be unavoidable, speakers can still think critically about what content they include in the speech and the effects it may have.

Even

tho



ugh you should remain conscious of the differences among audience members, you can also focus on commonalities. When delivering a speech in a college classroom, you can rightfully assume that everyone in your audience is currently living in the general area of the school, is enrolled at the school, and is currently taking the same speech class. In professional speeches, you can often assume that everyone is part of the same professional organization if you present at a conference, employed at the same place or in the same field if you are giving a sales presentation, or experiencing the nervousness of starting a new job if you are leading an orientation or training. You may not be able to assume much more, but that's enough to add some tailored points to your speech that will make the content more relevant. When possible, it's a good idea to do some audience analysis. This can be done by using a focus group, or sending out a questionnaire to obtain information about the audience before developing you speech.

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8.2 Content: Integrating Research

Page Source

Research is integrated and presented in a text as evidence. The text can be an essay or speech outline that you have written. Written text can also include a computer generated presentation like a slide show. The text can also be verbal and include a speech or presentation. It doesn't matter what text you comprise, you need to incorporate your research. The varied ways that you incorporate your research can help you plan, organize, and deliver your evidence more effectively. Choices you make for integrating and presenting your information depend upon the message you want to convey. There are 4 ways that you can integrate evidence: definitions, examples, facts and statistics, and testimony.

A **definition** is a formal statement of the meaning or significance of a word, phrase, idiom, etc.. There are different types of definitions and ways to think about defining a term. Thinking about how the word is used in our language can determine if we want a common meaning or want to use a word more strategically based on how people think about the use of the word. We know there is the denotative or dictionary definition — the literal meaning of the word. There is the connotative definition — the associated meaning of the word based on our world view and experiences. There are more formal ideas about how to define terms such as the **etymological definition**, or *how the word is defined by the word's origin or history*. Definitions provide clarity to complex ideas, jargon, or slang.

An **example** is a characteristic of its kind or illustrates a general rule. They can be brief, extended, or hypothetical. A **brief example** is short and generally adds clarity by providing a detail or characteristic of a piece of information. Examples add relevance by discussing what is current or familiar to the audience as a way to connect information. For example, using a genre of music as an example of what music you listen to in your free time allows the audience to determine similarities, differences, or lack of exposure and experience. An **extended example**, or narrative, provides an anecdote or story that relays a more vivid and textured example of a situation, experience, or context surrounding your topic. An extended example often serves as an illustration of an idea. If you are presenting a persuasive speech on local services, you can use an article from a local paper to help the audience visualize how the problem impacts their lives. **Hypothetical examples** convey ideas that are common, known, or sensitive in nature that is imagined to depict realistic scenarios. Since a hypothetical example does not have to be connected to a specific person, time, or place, hypothetical examples allow an audience to think introspectively about how they would react or respond in the situation.

A **fact** is a piece of information used as evidence known or proved to be true. A **statistic** is a piece of data from a study of a large quantity of numerical data. Facts and statistics can be used to present new ideas or reinforce current ideas or to confirm or disprove information. Data and statistics help audiences consider a topic from a more informed standpoint and help further reasoning. There are,

however, some constraints to using statistics efficiently. When used accurately, facts and statistics can present a clear and purposeful message that creates a sense of immediacy in relationship to a topic. When used poorly, facts and statistics can result in information overload or confusion.

When evaluating facts and statistics, it is important to ask the following questions to allow for better understanding.

1. Is the Source Reliable?
2. Is there Manipulation or Distortion?
3. Is the statistic Representative (Sample Size)?
4. Is the Math Correct (Mean/ average, Median/ middle, or Mode/ frequency)?

Presenting Statistics

It is equally important to present statistics, numerical data, accurately. Introducing statistics as a quantity or rounding the numbers will aid the cognitive process when trying to convey the impact of large numbers. While a large blanket number may be hard to understand, the use of values like “one in three” or an illustration like “five football stadiums long” can present a more simplified, recognizable figure. Combining figures can show seriousness or magnitude of a problem or issue. While you do want to think about your main ideas to be illustrated, statistics should be used sparingly. The audience cannot remember all the information provided and will need to select information based on its goals and needs. Identify the source, cite the author, present a clear idea of where the information comes from, and ensure the audience of the source’s reliability. Explain and clarify the research by providing an interpretation of how the statistic is being applied and how it helps our understanding of the larger topic. Use visuals to help simplify the information and to bolster your audience’s interest.

Testimony is a *formal written or spoken statement*. It can be expert or peer-based. The type of testimony you provide has much to do with your topic or the desired audience outcome. **Experts** are *people who are acknowledged authorities in their fields*. **Peers** are *people like ourselves; not prominent figures, but ordinary citizens who have the first-hand experience on a topic*. To use peer testimonial as substantive support, you would need to include a number of peers. It is important that when you present testimony, you consider the authority of the source. Celebrity or athletic endorsements may not be as trusted or credible as professional endorsements. Always credit the author and include their credentials or qualifications to build that credibility and strengthen the source. You can think back to the introduction on personal and professional experience to understand these two types of testimony better.

The tone of your connection can sometimes benefit from peer testimony. Let’s look at our scenario from the introduction of the chapter. If we follow a travel guide or food channel to determine the best restaurants in Alaska, we would have a pretty impressive list. However, would we be able to afford them? Would it be feasible or possible for us to travel to remote areas to visit them all? A trusted friend that lives there may know of a restaurant that is not in any guide but is an affordable, hidden gem.

We integrate testimony as support by either quoting or paraphrasing our original source. **Quoting** is *presenting a message word-for-word, exactly as it was written or stated*. Quoting works best when the quote is short and not drawn out, or when the meaning is better conveyed through language or literary technique. When quoting a source, be sure that you are delivering the quote with the correct meaning or intent and presenting the context in which the quote was used. **Paraphrasing** is *restating or summarizing in one's own words what another person had said*. Paraphrase when the quote is long, difficult to understand, or jargon-heavy. There are a few tips to paraphrase accurately (but remember, you must still cite the original source when paraphrasing):

1. Change the words. Identify the key words that are not your own vocabulary or stand out and change them to reflect your own personality and voice.
2. Edit the quote. Identify areas that you can leave out or add-to in order to make the information helpful to your audience.
3. Re-structure the quote. Can you move the beginning to the middle or to the end? Is the paraphrased information better if you start with the last sentence's idea and work backward to the introduction? Could the body of the quote serve as steps or claims that you can present in order?
4. For a guide on how to paraphrase, [check out this site](#).

Identifying Evidence Types and Use Chart

Evidence Type	Reason and Use
Definitions/Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifies ideas • Reinforces ideas • Strengthens credibility • Demonstrates significance • Demonstrates relevance • Demonstrates currency
Facts/ Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifies ideas • Reinforces ideas • Strengthens credibility • Demonstrates significance • Demonstrates relevance • Demonstrates currency • Presents ideas strategically
Testimony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalizes ideas • Reinforces ideas • Strengthens credibility • Provides variety and texture • Demonstrates significance • Demonstrate relevance • Demonstrates currency • Presents ideas strategically
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates audience interest and engagement • Reduces communication apprehension • Clarifies ideas • Personalizes ideas • Reinforces ideas • Strengthens credibility • Provides variety and texture • Demonstrates significance • Demonstrate relevance • Demonstrates currency • Presents ideas strategically

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8.3 Organization & Outlining

Organization For Speeches

When organizing your speech, you want to start with the body. Even though most students want to start with the introduction, I explain that it's difficult to introduce and preview something that you haven't yet developed. A well-structured speech includes an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Think of this structure as a human body. This type of comparison dates back to Plato, who noted, "every speech ought to be put together like a living creature" (Winans, 1917). The introduction is the head, the body is the torso and legs, and the conclusion is the feet. The information you add to this structure from your research and personal experience is the organs and muscle. The transitions you add are the connecting tissues that hold the parts together, and a well-practiced delivery is the skin and clothing that makes everything presentable.

Organizing the Body of Your Speech

Writing the body of your speech takes the most time in the speech-writing process. Your specific purpose and thesis statements should guide the initial development of the body, which will then be more informed by your research process. You will determine main points that help achieve your purpose and match your thesis. You will then fill information into your main points by incorporating the various types of supporting material discussed previously. Before you move on to your introduction and conclusion, you will connect the main points together with transitions and other signposts.

Determining Your Main Points

Think of each main point as a miniature speech within your larger speech. Each main point will have a central idea, meet some part of your specific purpose, and include supporting material from your research that relates to your thesis. Reviewing the draft of your thesis and specific purpose statements can lead you to research materials. As you review your research, take notes on and/or highlight key ideas that stick out to you as useful, effective, relevant, and interesting. It is likely that these key ideas will become the central ideas of your main points, or at least subpoints. Once you've researched your speech enough to achieve your specific purpose, support your thesis, and meet the research guidelines set forth by your instructor, boss, or project guidelines, you can distill the research down to a series of central ideas. As you draft these central ideas, use parallel wording, which is similar wording among key organizing signposts and main points that helps structure a speech. Using parallel wording in your

central idea statement for each main point will also help you write parallel key signposts like the preview statement in the introduction, transitions between main points, and the review statement in the conclusion. The following example shows parallel wording in the central ideas of each main point in a speech about the green movement and schools:

- I. The green movement in schools positively affects school buildings and facilities.
- II. The green movement in schools positively affects students.
- III. The green movement in schools positively affects teachers.

While writing each central idea using parallel wording is useful for organizing information at this stage in the speech-making process, you should feel free to vary the wording a little more in your actual speech delivery. You will still want some parallel key words that are woven throughout the speech, but sticking too close to parallel wording can make your content sound forced or artificial.

After distilling your research materials down, you may have several central idea statements. You will likely have two to five main points, depending on what your instructor prefers, time constraints, or the organizational pattern you choose. All the central ideas may not get converted into main points; some may end up becoming subpoints and some may be discarded. Once you get your series of central ideas drafted, you will then want to consider how you might organize them, which will help you narrow your list down to what may actually end up becoming the body of your speech.

Organizing Your Main Points: Organizational Formats

There are several ways you can organize your main points, and some patterns correspond well to a particular subject area or speech type. Determining which pattern you will use helps filter through your list of central ideas generated from your research and allows you to move on to the next step of inserting supporting material into your speech. Here are some common organizational patterns.

Topical Format

When you use the topical pattern, you are breaking a large idea or category into smaller ideas or subcategories. In short you are finding logical divisions to a whole. While you may break something down into smaller topics that will make two, three, or more main points, people tend to like groups of three. In a speech about the Woodstock Music and Art Fair, for example, you could break the main points down to (1) the musicians who performed, (2) the musicians who declined to perform, and (3) the audience. You could also break it down into three specific performances—(1) Santana, (2) The Grateful Dead, and (3) Creedence Clearwater Revival—or three genres of music—(1) folk, (2) funk, and (3) rock.

The topical pattern breaks a topic down into logical divisions but doesn't necessarily offer any guidance in ordering them. To help determine the order of topical main points, you may consider the primacy or recency effect. You prime an engine before you attempt to start it and prime a surface before you paint

it. The primacy effect is similar in that you present your best information first in order to make a positive impression and engage your audience early in your speech. The recency effect is based on the idea that an audience will best remember the information they heard most recently. Therefore you would include your best information last in your speech to leave a strong final impression. Both primacy and recency can be effective. Consider your topic and your audience to help determine which would work best for your speech.

Chronological Format

A chronological pattern helps structure your speech based on time or sequence. If you order a speech based on time, you may trace the development of an idea, product, or event. A speech on Woodstock could cover the following: (1) preparing for the event, (2) what happened during the event, and (3) the aftermath of the event. Ordering a speech based on sequence is also chronological and can be useful when providing directions on how to do something or how a process works. This could work well for a speech on baking bread at home, refinishing furniture, or harvesting corn. The chronological pattern is often a good choice for speeches related to history or demonstration speeches.

Spatial Format

The spatial pattern arranges main points based on their layout or proximity to each other. A speech on Woodstock could focus on the layout of the venue, including (1) the camping area, (2) the stage area, and (3) the musician/crew area. A speech could also focus on the components of a typical theater stage or the layout of the new 9/11 memorial at the World Trade Center site.

Cause-Effect Pattern

The cause-effect pattern sets up a relationship between ideas that shows a progression from origin to result. You could also start with the current situation and trace back to the root causes. This pattern can be used for informative or persuasive speeches. When used for informing, the speaker is explaining an established relationship and citing evidence to support the claim—for example, accessing unsecured, untrusted websites or e-mails leads to computer viruses. When used for persuading, the speaker is arguing for a link that is not as well established and/or is controversial—for example, violent video games lead to violent thoughts and actions. In a persuasive speech, a cause-effect argument is often paired with a proposed solution or call to action, such as advocating for stricter age restrictions on who can play violent video games. When organizing an informative speech using the cause-effect pattern, be careful not to advocate for a particular course of action.

Problem-Solution Format (for persuasive speeches)

The problem-solution pattern entails presenting a problem and offering a solution. This pattern can be useful for persuasive speaking—specifically, persuasive speeches focused on a current societal issue. This can also be coupled with a call to action asking an audience to take specific steps to implement a solution offered. This organizational pattern can be applied to a wide range of topics and can be easily organized into two or three main points. You can offer evidence to support your claim that a problem exists in one main point and then offer a specific solution in the second main point. To be more comprehensive, you could set up the problem, review multiple solutions that have been proposed, and then add a third main point that argues for a specific solution out of the ones reviewed in the second main point. Using this pattern, you could offer solutions to the problem of rising textbook costs or offer your audience guidance on how to solve conflicts with roommates or coworkers.

Monroe's Motivated Sequence (for persuasive speeches)

Monroe's Motivated Sequence is a five-step organization pattern that attempts to persuade an audience by making a topic relevant, using positive and/or negative motivation, and including a call to action. The five steps are (1) attention, (2) need, (3) satisfaction, (4) visualization, and (5) action (Monroe & Ehninger, 1964).

The attention step is accomplished in the introduction to your speech. Whether your entire speech is organized using this pattern or not, any good speaker begins by getting the attention of the audience. We will discuss several strategies in Section 9 "Getting Your Audience's Attention" for getting an audience's attention. The next two steps set up a problem and solution.

After getting the audience's attention you will want to establish that there is a need for your topic to be addressed. You will want to cite credible research that points out the seriousness or prevalence of an issue. In the attention and need steps, it is helpful to use supporting material that is relevant and proxemic to the audience.

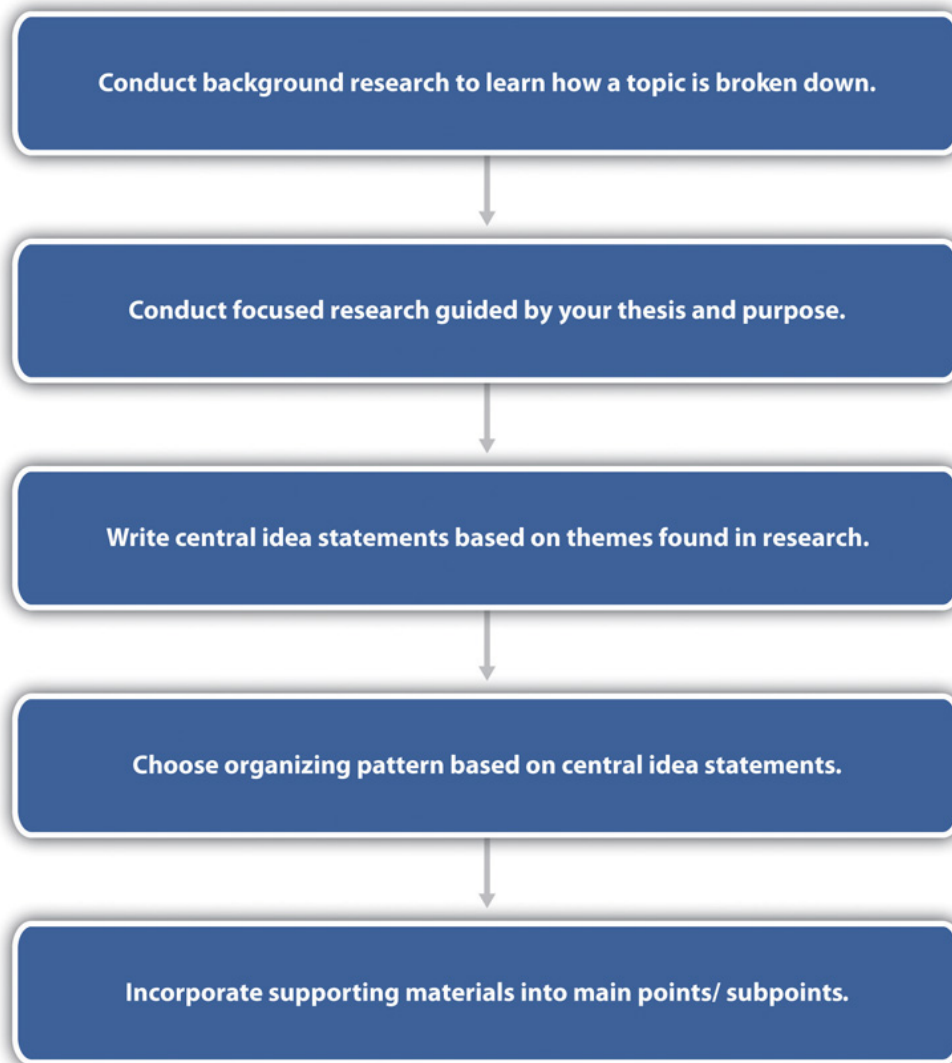
Once you have set up the need for the problem to be addressed, you move on to the satisfaction step, where you present a solution to the problem. You may propose your own solution if it is informed by your research and reasonable. You may also propose a solution that you found in your research.

The visualization step is next and incorporates positive and/or negative motivation as a way to support the relationship you have set up between the need and your proposal to satisfy the need. You may ask your audience to visualize a world where things are better because they took your advice and addressed this problem. This capitalizes on positive motivation. You may also ask your audience to visualize a world where things are worse because they did not address the issue, which is a use of negative motivation. Now that you have hopefully persuaded your audience to believe the problem is worthy of addressing, proposed a solution, and asked them to visualize potential positive or negative consequences, you move to the action step.

The action step includes a call to action where you are basically saying, “Now that you see the seriousness of this problem, here’s what you can do about it.” The call to action should include concrete and specific steps an audience can take. Your goal should be to facilitate the call to action, making it easy for the audience to complete. Instead of asking them to contact their elected officials, you could start an online petition and make the link available to everyone. You could also bring the contact information for officials that represent that region so the audience doesn’t have to look them up on their own. Although this organizing pattern is more complicated than the others, it offers a proven structure that can help you organize your supporting materials and achieve your speech goals.

Incorporating Supporting Material

So far, you have learned several key steps in the speech creation process, which are reviewed in the below figure “From Research to Main Points”. Now you will begin to incorporate more specific information from your supporting materials into the body of your speech. You can place the central ideas that fit your organizational pattern at the beginning of each main point and then plug supporting material in as subpoints.



From Research to Main Points

This information will also make up the content of your formal and speaking outlines, which we will discuss more in Section 9.4 “Outlining”. Remember that you want to include a variety of supporting material (examples, analogies, statistics, explanations, etc.) within your speech. The information that you include as subpoints helps back up the central idea that started the main point. Depending on the length of your speech and the depth of your research, you may also have sub-subpoints that back up the claim you are making in the subpoint. Each piece of supporting material you include eventually links back to the specific purpose and thesis statement. This approach to supporting your speech is systematic and organized and helps ensure that your content fits together logically and that your main points are clearly supported and balanced.

One of the key elements of academic and professional public speaking is verbally citing your supporting materials so your audience can evaluate your credibility and the credibility of your sources. You should include citation information in three places: verbally in your speech, on any paper or electronic information (outline, PowerPoint), and on a separate reference sheet. Since much of the supporting material you incorporate into your speech comes directly from your research, it’s important that you

include relevant citation information as you plug this information into your main points. Don't wait to include citation information once you've drafted the body of your speech. At that point it may be difficult to retrace your steps to locate the source of a specific sentence or statistic. As you paraphrase or quote your supporting material, work the citation information into the sentences; do not clump the information together at the end of a sentence, or try to cite more than one source at the end of a paragraph or main point. It's important that the audience hear the citations as you use the respective information so it's clear which supporting material matches up with which source.

Writing key bibliographic information into your speech will help ensure that you remember to verbally cite your sources and that your citations will be more natural and flowing and less likely to result in fluency hiccups. At minimum, you should include the author, date, and source in a verbal citation. Sometimes more information is necessary. When citing a magazine, newspaper, or journal article, it is more important to include the source name than the title of the article, since the source name—for example, *Newsweek*—is what the audience needs to evaluate the speaker's credibility. For a book, make sure to cite the title and indicate that the source is a book. When verbally citing information retrieved from a website, you do not want to try to recite a long and cumbersome URL in your speech. Most people don't even make it past the "www." before they mess up. It is more relevant to audiences for speakers to report the sponsor/author of the site and the title of the web page, or section of the website, where they obtained their information. When getting information from a website, it is best to use "official" organization websites or government websites. When you get information from an official site, make sure you state that in your citation to add to your credibility. For an interview, state the interviewee's name, their credentials, and when the interview took place. Advice for verbally citing sources and examples from specific types of sources follow:

1. Magazine article

- "According to an article by Niall Ferguson in the January 23, 2012, issue of *Newsweek*, we can expect much discussion about 'class warfare' in the upcoming presidential and national election cycle. Ferguson reports that..."
- "As reported by Niall Ferguson, in the January 23, 2012, issue of *Newsweek*, many candidates denounce talking points about economic inequality..."

2. Newspaper article

- "On November 26, 2011, Eithne Farry of *The Daily Telegraph* of London reported that..."
- "An article about the renewed popularity of selling products in people's own homes appeared in *The Daily Telegraph* on November 26, 2011. Eithne Farry explored a few of these 'blast-from-the-past' styled parties..."

3. Website

- “According to information I found at ready.gov, the website of the US Department of Homeland Security, US businesses and citizens...”
- “According to information posted on the US Department of Homeland Security’s official website,...”
- “Helpful information about business continuity planning can be found on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s official website, located at ready.gov...”

4. Journal article

- “An article written by Dr. Nakamura and Dr. Kikuchi, at Meiji University in Tokyo, found that the Fukushima disaster was complicated by Japan’s high nuclear consciousness. Their 2011 article published in the journal *Public Administration Today* reported that...”
- “In a 2012 article published in *Public Administration Review*, Professors Nakamura and Kikuchi reported that the Fukushima disaster was embarrassing for a country with a long nuclear history...”
- “Nakamura and Kikuchi, scholars in crisis management and public policy, authored a 2011 article about the failed crisis preparation at the now infamous Fukushima nuclear plant. Their *Public Administration Review* article reports that...”
- **Bad example** (doesn’t say where the information came from). “A 2011 study by Meiji University scholars found the crisis preparations at a Japanese nuclear plant to be inadequate...”

5. Book

- “In their 2008 book *At War with Metaphor*, Steuter and Wills describe how we use metaphor to justify military conflict. They report...”
- “Erin Steuter and Deborah Wills, experts in sociology and media studies, describe the connections between metaphor and warfare in their 2008 book *At War with Metaphor*. They both contend that...”
- “In their 2008 book *At War with Metaphor*, Steuter and Wills reveal...”

6. Interview

- “On February 20 I conducted a personal interview with Dr. Linda Scholz, a communication studies professor at Eastern Illinois University, to learn more about Latina/o Heritage Month. Dr. Scholz told me that...”
- “I conducted an interview with Dr. Linda Scholz, a communication studies professor here at Eastern, and learned that there are more than a dozen events planned for Latina/o Heritage Month.”
- “In a telephone interview I conducted with Dr. Linda Scholz, a communication studies professor, I learned...”

Signposts

Signposts on highways help drivers and passengers navigate places they are not familiar with and give us reminders and warnings about what to expect down the road. Signposts in speeches are statements that help audience members navigate the turns of your speech. There are several key signposts in your speech. In the order you will likely use them, they are preview statement, transition between introduction and body, transitions between main points, transition from body to conclusion, and review statement (see below table for a review of the key signposts with examples). While the preview and review statements are in the introduction and conclusion, respectively, the other signposts are all transitions that help move between sections of your speech.

Table “Organizing Signposts”

Signpost	Example
Preview statement	“Today, I’d like to inform you about the history of Habitat for Humanity, the work they have done in our area, and my experiences as a volunteer.”
Transition from introduction to body	“Let’s begin with the history of Habitat for Humanity.”
Transition from main point one to main point two	“Now that you know more about the history of Habitat for Humanity, let’s look at the work they have done in our area.”
Transition from main point two to main point three	“Habitat for Humanity has done a lot of good work in our area, and I was fortunate to be able to experience this as a volunteer.”
Transition from body to conclusion	“In closing, I hope you now have a better idea of the impact this well-known group has had.”
Review statement	“Habitat for Humanity is an organization with an inspiring history that has done much for our area while also providing an opportunity for volunteers, like myself, to learn and grow.”

There are also signposts that can be useful within sections of your speech. Words and phrases like *Aside from* and *While* are good ways to transition between thoughts within a main point or subpoint. Organizing signposts like *First*, *Second*, and *Third* can be used within a main point to help speaker and audience move through information. The preview in the introduction and review in the conclusion need not be the only such signposts in your speech. You can also include internal previews and internal reviews in your main points to help make the content more digestible or memorable.

In terms of writing, compose transitions that are easy for you to remember and speak. Pioneer speech teacher James A. Winans wrote in 1917 that “it is at a transition, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, that the speaker who staggers or breaks down, meets his [or her] difficulty” (Winans, 1917). His observation still holds true today. Key signposts like the ones in Table 9.3 “Organizing Signposts” should be concise, parallel, and obviously worded. Going back to the connection between speech signposts and signposts that guide our driving, we can see many connections. Speech signposts should be one concise sentence. Stop signs, for example, just say, “STOP.” They do not say, “Your vehicle is

now approaching an intersection. Please bring it to a stop.”



Signposts in your speech guide the way for your audience members like signposts on the highway guide drivers. Doug Kerr - Minnesota State Highway 5 - CC BY-SA 2.0.

Try to remove unnecessary words from key signposts to make them more effective and easier to remember and deliver. Speech signposts should also be parallel. All stop signs are octagonal with a red background and white lettering, which makes them easily recognizable to drivers. If the wording in your preview statement matches with key wording in your main points, transitions between main points, and review statement, then your audience will be better able to follow your speech. Last, traffic signposts are obvious. They are bright colors, sometimes reflective, and may even have flashing lights on them. A “Road Closed” sign painted in camouflage isn’t a good idea and could lead to disaster.

Being too vague or getting too creative with your speech signposts can also make them disappear into the background of your speech. My students have expressed concern that using parallel and obvious wording in speech signposts would make their speech boring or insult the intelligence of their audience. This is not the case. As we learned in Chapter 5 “Listening”, most people struggle to be active listeners, so making a speech more listenable is usually appreciated. In addition, these are just six sentences in a much larger speech, so they are spaced out enough to not sound repetitive, and they can serve as anchor points to secure the attention of the audience.

In addition to well-written signposts, you want to have well-delivered signposts. Nonverbal signposts include pauses and changes in rate, pitch, or volume that help emphasize transitions within a speech. I have missed students’ signposts before, even though they were well written, because they did not stand out in the delivery. Here are some ways you can use nonverbal signposting: pause before and after your preview and review statements so they stand out, pause before and after your transitions between main

points so they stand out, and slow your rate and lower your pitch on the closing line of your speech to provide closure.

Introduction



Because of the power of first impressions, a speaker who seems unprepared in his or her introduction will likely be negatively evaluated even if the speech improves. Nadine Dereza - "[Insider Secrets of Public Speaking](#)". - CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

We all know that first impressions matter. Research shows that students' impressions of instructors on the first day of class persist throughout the semester (Laws et al., 2010). First impressions are quickly formed, sometimes spontaneous, and involve little to no cognitive effort. Despite the fact that first impressions aren't formed with much conscious effort, they form the basis of inferences and judgments about a person's personality (Lass-Hennemann, et al., 2011). For example, the student who approaches the front of the class before their speech wearing sweatpants and a t-shirt, looks around blankly, and lets out a sigh before starting hasn't made a very good first impression. Even if the student is prepared for the speech and delivers it well, the audience has likely already associated what they observed with personality traits of the student (i.e., lazy, indifferent), and those associations now have staying power in the face of contrary evidence that comes later.

Your introduction is only a fraction of your speech, but in that first minute or so, your audience decides whether or not they are interested in listening to the rest of the speech. There are four objectives that you should accomplish in your introduction. They include getting your audience's attention, introducing your topic, establishing credibility and relevance (psychological orientation), and previewing your main points (logical orientation).

Getting Your Audience's Attention

There are several strategies you can use to get your audience's attention. Although each can be effective on its own, combining these strategies is also an option. A speaker can get their audience's attention negatively, so think carefully about your choice. The student who began his speech on Habitat

for Humanity by banging on the table with a hammer definitely got his audience's attention during his 8:00 a.m. class, but he also lost credibility in that moment because many in the audience probably saw him as a joker rather than a serious speaker. The student who started her persuasive speech against animal testing with a little tap dance number ended up stumbling through the first half of her speech when she was thrown off by the confused looks the audience gave her when she finished her "attention getter." These cautionary tales point out the importance of choosing an attention getter that is appropriate, meaning that it's unusual enough to get people interested—but not over the top—and relevant to your speech topic.

- **Dramatic fact, example, quote:** According to the Washington State Department of Education, every day 30,000 children in Whatcom county go to school hungry.
- **Tell a story:** Evie Smith is a 6th grade student in Kent. One morning Evie woke up to find her mother downstairs crying. When she asked her mom why she was crying she said it was because she was so sad that Evie didn't have the breakfast options her classmates have....
- **Hypothetical Scenario:** Imagine waking up, walking downstairs, and finding nothing but outdated milk and....
- **Refer to something familiar:** Most of us know what its like to go home after a long day of classes, go into the kitchen to make a quick snack, and
- **Pose a Rhetorical Questions:** "How many children will have to go to school hungry before we change our ways?"
- **Ask a Question:** "How many of you had breakfast this morning? "

Psychological Orientation: Establishing Credibility and Relevance



Imagine that your audience members will all ask, "Why should I care about your topic?" and work to proactively address relevance throughout your speech. [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) - CC BY 2.0.

The way you write and deliver your introduction makes an important first impression on your audience. But you can also take a moment in your introduction to explicitly set up your credibility in relation to your speech topic. If you have training, expertise, or credentials (e.g., a degree, certificate, etc.) relevant to your topic, you can share that with your audience. It may also be appropriate to mention

firsthand experience, previous classes you have taken, or even a personal interest related to your topic. For example, I had a student deliver a speech persuading the audience that the penalties for texting and driving should be stricter. In his introduction, he mentioned that his brother's girlfriend was killed when she was hit by a car driven by someone who was texting. His personal story shared in the introduction added credibility to the overall speech.

I ask my students to imagine that when they finish their speech, everyone in the audience will raise their hands and ask the question "Why should I care about what you just said?"

This would no doubt be a nerve-racking experience. However, you can address this concern by preemptively answering this question in your speech. A good speaker will strive to make his or her content relevant to the audience throughout the speech, and starting this in the introduction appeals to an audience because the speaker is already answering the "so what?" question. When you establish relevance, you want to use immediate words like *I*, *you*, *we*, *our*, or *your*. You also want to address the audience sitting directly in front of you. While many students are good at making a topic relevant to humanity in general, it takes more effort to make the content relevant to a specific audience.

Logical Orientation: Previewing Your Main Points

The preview of main points is usually the last sentence of your introduction and serves as a map of what's to come in the speech. The preview narrows your introduction of the topic down to the main ideas you will focus on in the speech. Your preview should be one sentence, should include wording that is parallel to the key wording of your main points in the body of your speech, and should preview your main points in the same order you discuss them in your speech. Make sure your wording is concise so your audience doesn't think there will be four points when there are only three. The following example previews the main points for a speech on childhood obesity: "Today I'll convey the seriousness of the obesity epidemic among children by reviewing some of the causes of obesity, common health problems associated with it, and steps we can take to help ensure our children maintain a healthy weight."

Conclusion

How you conclude a speech leaves an impression on your audience. The important objectives to accomplish in your include summarizing the importance of your topic, reviewing your main points, and closing your speech with reminding your audience about the relevance to their lives.

Logical Closure: Summarizing the Importance of Your Topic

After you transition from the body of your speech to the conclusion, you will summarize the importance of your topic. This is the "take-away" message, or another place where you can answer the "so what?" question. This can often be a rewording of your thesis statement. The speech about childhood obesity could be summarized by saying, "Whether you have children or not, childhood obesity is a national

problem that needs to be addressed.”

Once you have summarized the overall importance of your speech, you review the main points. The review statement in the conclusion is very similar to the preview statement in your introduction. You don’t have to use the exact same wording, but you still want to have recognizable parallelism that connects the key idea of each main point to the preview, review, and transitions. The review statement for the childhood obesity speech could be “In an effort to convince you of this, I cited statistics showing the rise of obesity, explained common health problems associated with obesity, and proposed steps that parents should take to ensure their children maintain a healthy weight.”

Psychological closure & Final Statement

Like your introduction, your conclusion is an opportunity for you to connect your speech to your audience’s lives. Remind the audience why your speech was relevant to them, and why they should take the information with them as they go about their everyday lives.

Many students have difficulty wrapping up the speech with a sense of closure and completeness. In terms of closure, a well-written and well-delivered closing line signals to your audience that your speech is over, which cues their applause. You should not have to put an artificial end to your speech by saying “thank you” or “that’s it” or “that’s all I have.” In terms of completeness, the closing line should relate to the overall speech and should provide some “take-away” message that may leave an audience thinking or propel them to action. A sample closing line could be “For your health, for our children’s health, and for our country’s health, we must take steps to address childhood obesity today.” You can also create what I call the “ribbon and bow” for your speech by referring back to the introduction in the closing of your speech. For example, you may finish an illustration or answer a rhetorical question you started in the introduction.

Although the conclusion is likely the shortest part of the speech, I suggest that students practice it often. Even a well-crafted conclusion can be ineffective if the delivery is not good. Conclusions often turn out bad because they weren’t practiced enough. If you only practice your speech starting from the beginning, you may not get to your conclusion very often because you stop to fix something in one of the main points, get interrupted, or run out of time. Once you’ve started your speech, anxiety may increase as you near the end and your brain becomes filled with thoughts of returning to your seat, so even a well-practiced conclusion can fall short. Practicing your conclusion by itself several times can help prevent this.

Key Takeaways

- The speech consists of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. When organizing a speech, start with the body.
- Determine the main points of a speech based on your research and supporting

materials. The main points should support the thesis statement and help achieve the general and specific purposes.

- The organizational patterns that can help arrange the main points of a speech are topical, chronological, spatial, problem-solution, cause-effect, and Monroe's Motivated Sequence.
- Incorporating supporting material helps fill in the main points by creating subpoints. As supporting material is added to the speech, citation information should be included so you will have the information necessary to verbally cite your sources.
- Organizing signposts help connect the introduction, body, and conclusion of a speech. Organizing signposts should be written using parallel wording to the central idea of each main point.
- A speaker should do the following in the introduction of a speech: get the audience's attention, introduce the topic, establish credibility and relevance, and preview the main points.
- A speaker should do the following in the conclusion of a speech: summarize the importance of the topic, remind the audience why they care, and provide closure.

Exercises

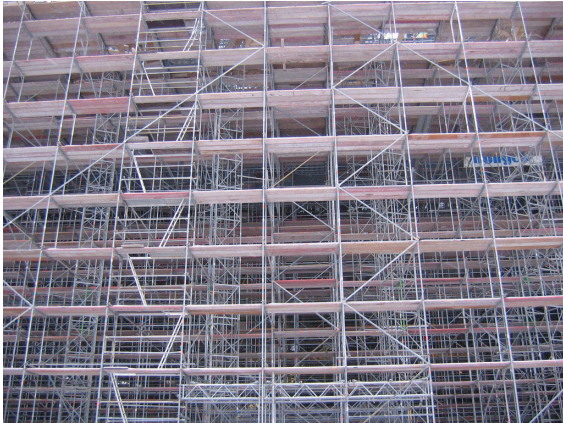
1. Identifying the main points of reference material you plan to use in your speech can help you determine your main points/subpoints. Take one of your sources for your speech and list the main points and any subpoints from the article. Are any of them suitable main points for your speech? Why or why not?
2. Which organizational pattern listed do you think you will use for your speech, and why?
3. Write out verbal citations for some of the sources you plan to use in your speech, using the examples cited in the chapter as a guide.
4. Draft the opening and closing lines of your speech. Remember to tap into your creativity to try to engage the audience. Is there any way you can tie the introduction and conclusion together to create a "ribbon and bow" for your speech?

Outlining

Think of your outline as a living document that grows and takes form throughout your speech-making process. When you first draft your general purpose, specific purpose, and thesis statement, you could create a new document on your computer and plug those in, essentially starting your outline. As you review your research and distill the information down into separate central ideas that support your specific purpose and thesis, type those statements into the document. Once you've chosen your organizational pattern and are ready to incorporate supporting material, you can quote and paraphrase your supporting material along with the bibliographic information needed for your verbal citations into the document. By this point, you have a good working outline, and you can easily cut and paste

information to move it around and see how it fits into the main points, subpoints, and sub-subpoints. As your outline continues to take shape, you will want to follow established principles of outlining to ensure a quality speech.

The Formal Outline



Outlining provides a scaffolding, or structure, that will help ensure your speech is logical, coherent, and organized. [Wikimedia Commons](#) – CC BY 2.0.

The formal outline is a full-sentence outline that helps you prepare for your speech. It includes the introduction and conclusion, the main content of the body, key supporting materials, citation information written into the sentences in the outline, and a references page for your speech. The formal outline also includes a title, the general purpose, specific purpose, and thesis statement. It's important to note that an outline is different from a script. While a script contains everything that will be said, an outline includes the main content. Therefore you shouldn't include every word you're going to say on your outline. This allows you more freedom as a speaker to adapt to your audience during your speech. Students sometimes complain about having to outline speeches or papers, but it is a skill that will help you in other contexts. Being able to break a topic down into logical divisions and then connect the information together will help ensure that you can prepare for complicated tasks or that you're prepared for meetings or interviews. I use outlines regularly to help me organize my thoughts and prepare for upcoming projects.

Principles of Outlining

There are principles of outlining you can follow to make your outlining process more efficient and effective. Four principles of outlining are consistency, unity, coherence, and emphasis (DuBois, 1929). In terms of consistency, you should follow standard outlining format. In standard outlining format, main points are indicated by capital roman numerals, subpoints are indicated by capital letters, and sub-subpoints are indicated by Arabic numerals. Further divisions are indicated by either lowercase letters or lowercase roman numerals.

The principle of unity means that each letter or number represents one idea. One concrete way to help reduce the amount of ideas you include per item is to limit each letter or number to one complete sentence. If you find that one subpoint has more than one idea, you can divide it into two subpoints. Limiting each component of your outline to one idea makes it easier to then plug in supporting material and helps ensure that your speech is coherent. In the following example from a speech arguing that downloading music from peer-to-peer sites should be legal, two ideas are presented as part of a main point.

- Downloading music using peer-to-peer file-sharing programs helps market new music and doesn't hurt record sales.

The main point could be broken up into two distinct ideas that can be more fully supported.

- I. Downloading music using peer-to-peer file-sharing programs helps market new music.
- II. Downloading music using peer-to-peer file-sharing programs doesn't hurt record sales.

Following the principle of unity should help your outline adhere to the principle of coherence, which states that there should be a logical and natural flow of ideas, with main points, subpoints, and sub-subpoints connecting to each other (Winans, 1917). Shorter phrases and keywords can make up the speaking outline, but you should write complete sentences throughout your formal outline to ensure coherence. The principle of coherence can also be met by making sure that when dividing a main point or subpoint, you include at least two subdivisions. After all, it defies logic that you could divide anything into just one part. Therefore if you have an *A*, you must have a *B*, and if you have a *1*, you must have a *2*. If you can easily think of one subpoint but are having difficulty identifying another one, that subpoint may not be robust enough to stand on its own. Determining which ideas are coordinate with each other and which are subordinate to each other will help divide supporting information into the outline (Winans, 1917). Coordinate points are on the same level of importance in relation to the thesis of the speech or the central idea of a main point. In the following example, the two main points (I, II) are coordinate with each other. The two subpoints (A, B) are also coordinate with each other. Subordinate points provide evidence or support for a main idea or thesis. In the following example, subpoint A and subpoint B are subordinate to main point II. You can look for specific words to help you determine any errors in distinguishing coordinate and subordinate points. Your points/subpoints are likely coordinate when you would connect the two statements using any of the following: *and*, *but*, *yet*, *or*, or *also*. In the example, the word *also* appears in B, which connects it, as a coordinate point, to A. The points/subpoints are likely subordinate if you would connect them using the following: *since*, *because*, *in order that*, *to explain*, or *to illustrate*. In the example, 1 and 2 are subordinate to A because they support that sentence.

- I. Downloading music using peer-to-peer file-sharing programs helps market new music.
- II. Downloading music using peer-to-peer file-sharing programs doesn't hurt record sales.

- A. John Borland, writing for CNET.com in 2004, cited research conducted by professors from Harvard and the University of North Carolina that observed 1.75 million downloads from two file-sharing programs.

- i. They conclude that the rapid increase in music downloading over the past few years does not significantly contribute to declining record sales.
 - ii. Their research even suggests that the practice of downloading music may even have a “slight positive effect on the sales of the top albums.”
- B. A 2010 Government Accountability Office Report also states that sampling “pirated” goods could lead consumers to buy the “legitimate” goods.

The principle of emphasis states that the material included in your outline should be engaging and balanced. As you place supporting material into your outline, choose the information that will have the most impact on your audience. Choose information that is proxemic and relevant, meaning that it can be easily related to the audience’s lives because it matches their interests or ties into current events or the local area. Remember primacy and recency discussed earlier and place the most engaging information first or last in a main point depending on what kind of effect you want to have. Also make sure your information is balanced. The outline serves as a useful visual representation of the proportions of your speech. You can tell by the amount of space a main point, subpoint, or sub-subpoint takes up in relation to other points of the same level whether or not your speech is balanced. If one subpoint is a half a page, but a main point is only a quarter of a page, then you may want to consider making the subpoint a main point. Each part of your speech doesn’t have to be equal. The first or last point may be more substantial than a middle point if you are following primacy or recency, but overall the speech should be relatively balanced.

Sample Formal Outline

The following outline shows the beginning of a full sentence outline using the standards for formatting and content and can serve as an example as you construct your own outline. Check with your instructor to see if he or she has specific requirements for speech outlines that may differ from what is shown here.

Introduction

Attention getter: GOOOOOOOOOOOOAL! GOAL! GOAL! GOOOOOOAL!

Credibility and psychological orientation: If you’ve ever heard this excited yell coming from your television, then you probably already know that my speech today is about soccer. Like many of you, I played soccer on and off as a kid, but I was never really exposed to the culture of the sport. It wasn’t until recently, when I started to watch some of the World Cup games with international students in my dorm, that I realized what I’d been missing out on. Soccer is the most popular sport in the world, but I bet that, like most US Americans, it only comes on your radar every few years during the World Cup or the Olympics. If, however, you lived anywhere else in the world, soccer (or football, as it is more often called) would likely be a much larger part of your life.

Logical orientation/Preview: In order to persuade you that soccer should be more popular in the

United States, I'll explain why soccer isn't as popular in the United States and describe some of the actions we should take to change our beliefs and attitudes about the game.

Transition: Let us begin with the problem of soccer's unpopularity in America.

Body

- I. Although soccer has a long history as a sport, it hasn't taken hold in the United States to the extent that it has in other countries.
 - A. Soccer has been around in one form or another for thousands of years.
 - i. The president of FIFA, which is the international governing body for soccer, was quoted in David Goldblatt's 2008 book, *The Ball is Round*, as saying, "Football is as old as the world...People have always played some form of football, from its very basic form of kicking a ball around to the game it is today."
 - ii. Basil Kane, author of the book *Soccer for American Spectators*, reiterates this fact when he states, "Nearly every society at one time or another claimed its own form of kicking game."
 - B. Despite this history, the United States hasn't caught "soccer fever" for several different reasons.
 - i. Sports fans in the United States already have lots of options when it comes to playing and watching sports.
 - a. Our own "national sports" such as football, basketball, and baseball take up much of our time and attention, which may prevent people from engaging in an additional sport.
 - b. Statistics unmistakably show that soccer viewership is low as indicated by the much-respected Pew Research group, which reported in 2006 that only 4 percent of adult US Americans they surveyed said that soccer was their favorite sport to watch.
 - ii. The attitudes and expectations of sports fans in the United States also prevent soccer's expansion into the national sports consciousness.
 - a. One reason Americans don't enjoy soccer as much as other sports is due to our shortened attention span, which has been created by the increasingly fast pace of our more revered sports like football and basketball.
 - b. Our lack of attention span isn't the only obstacle that limits our appreciation for soccer; we are also set in our expectations.

C. *Transition:* Although soccer has many problems that it would need to overcome to be more popular in the United States, I think there are actions we can take now to change our beliefs and attitudes about soccer in order to give it a better chance.

II. Soccer is the most popular sport in the world, and there have to be some good reasons that account for this status.

A. As US Americans, we can start to enjoy soccer more if we better understand why the rest of the world loves it so much.

i. As was mentioned earlier, Chad Nielsen of ESPN.com notes that American sports fans can't have the same stats obsession with soccer that they do with baseball or football, but fans all over the world obsess about their favorite teams and players.

a. Fans argue every day, in bars and cafés from Baghdad to Bogotá, about statistics for goals and assists, but as Nielsen points out, with the game of soccer, such stats still fail to account for varieties of style and competition.

b. So even though the statistics may be different, bonding over or arguing about a favorite team or player creates communities of fans that are just as involved and invested as even the most loyal team fans in the United States.

ii. Additionally, Americans can start to realize that some of the things we might initially find off putting about the sport of soccer are actually some of its strengths.

a. The fact that soccer statistics aren't poured over and used to make predictions makes the game more interesting.

b. The fact that the segments of play in soccer are longer and the scoring lower allows for the game to have a longer arc, meaning that anticipation can build and that a game might be won or lost by only one goal after a long and even-matched game.

B. We can also begin to enjoy soccer more if we view it as an additional form of entertainment.

i. As Americans who like to be entertained, we can seek out soccer games in many different places.

a. There is most likely a minor or even a major league soccer stadium team within driving distance of where you live.

b. You can also go to soccer games at your local high school, college, or university.

ii. We can also join the rest of the world in following some of the major soccer celebrities—David Beckham is just the tip of the iceberg.

C. Getting involved in soccer can also help make our society more fit and healthy.

- i. Soccer can easily be the most athletic sport available to Americans.
 - ii. In just one game, the popular soccer player Gennaro Gattuso was calculated to have run about 6.2 miles, says Carl Bialik, a numbers expert who writes for *The Wall Street Journal*.
 - iii. With the growing trend of obesity in America, getting involved in soccer promotes more running and athletic ability than baseball, for instance, could ever provide.
 - a. A press release on FIFA's official website notes that one hour of soccer three times a week has been shown in research to provide significant physical benefits.
 - b. If that's not convincing enough, the website ScienceDaily.com reports that the *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports* published a whole special issue titled *Football for Health* that contained fourteen articles supporting the health benefits of soccer.
- D. Last, soccer has been praised for its ability to transcend language, culture, class, and country.
 - i. The nongovernmental organization Soccer for Peace seeks to use the worldwide popularity of soccer as a peacemaking strategy to bridge the divides of race, religion, and socioeconomic class.
 - ii. According to their official website, the organization just celebrated its ten-year anniversary in 2012.
 - a. Over those ten years the organization has focused on using soccer to bring together people of different religious faiths, particularly people who are Jewish and Muslim.
 - b. In 2012, three first-year college students, one Christian, one Jew, and one Muslim, dribbled soccer balls for 450 miles across the state of North Carolina to help raise money for Soccer for Peace.
- E. A press release on the World Association of Nongovernmental Organizations's official website states that from the dusty refugee camps of Lebanon to the upscale new neighborhoods in Buenos Aires, "soccer turns heads, stops conversations, causes breath to catch, and stirs hearts like virtually no other activity."

Conclusion

Transition to conclusion and summary of importance: In conclusion, soccer is a sport that has a long history, can help you get healthy, and can bring people together.

Logical & Psychological closure: Now that you know some of the obstacles that prevent soccer from becoming more popular in the United States and several actions we can take to change our beliefs and attitudes about soccer, I hope you agree with me that it's time for the United States to join the rest of

the world in welcoming soccer into our society.

Closing statement: The article from BleacherReport.com that I cited earlier closes with the following words that I would like you to take as you leave here today: “We need to learn that just because there is no scoring chance that doesn’t mean it is boring. We need to see that soccer is not for a select few, but for all. We only need two feet and a ball. We need to stand up and appreciate the beautiful game.”

The Key Word (Alpha Numeric) Outline

The formal outline is a full-sentence outline that helps as you prepare for your speech, and the key word/alpha numeric outline is a keyword outline that helps you deliver your speech. While the formal outline is important to ensure that your content is coherent and your ideas are balanced and expressed clearly, the key word outline helps you get that information out to the audience. Make sure you budget time in your speech preparation to work on the speaking outline. Skimping on the key word outline will show in your delivery. Below is a sample portion of a key word outline based off the main point from the soccer full sentence outline above:

I. Soccer new to United States

A. Globally around for thousands of years

- a. FIFA Present states “....”
- b. Basil Kane states “...”

B. Reasons not popular in USA

- a. Lots of other sport options
- b. Short attention span



Using note cards for your speaking outline will help you be able to move around and gesture more freely than using full sheets of paper.

Justin See (coming back) - [My Pile of Index Card](#) - CC BY 2.0.

You may convert your formal outline into a speaking outline on paper or note cards. Note cards are a good option when you want to have more freedom to gesture or know you won't have a lectern on which to place notes printed on full sheets of paper. In either case, this entails converting the full-sentence outline to a keyword or key-phrase outline. Speakers will need to find a balance between having too much or too little content on their speaking outlines. You want to have enough information to prevent fluency hiccups as you stop to mentally retrieve information, but you don't want to have so much information that you read your speech, which lessens your eye contact and engagement with the audience. Budgeting sufficient time to work on your speaking outline will allow you to practice your speech with different amounts of notes to find what works best for you. Since the introduction and conclusion are so important, it may be useful to include notes to ensure that you remember to accomplish all the objectives of each.

Aside from including important content on your speaking outline, you may want to include speaking cues. Speaking cues are reminders designed to help your delivery. You may write "(PAUSE)" before and after your preview statement to help you remember that important nonverbal signpost. You might also write "(MAKE EYE CONTACT)" as a reminder not to read unnecessarily from your cards. Overall, my advice is to make your speaking outline work for you. It's your last line of defense when you're in front of an audience, so you want it to help you, not hurt you.

Tips for Note Cards

1. The 4 × 6 inch index cards provide more space and are easier to hold and move than 3.5 × 5 inch cards.
2. Find a balance between having so much information on your cards that you are tempted to read from them and so little information that you have fluency hiccups and verbal fillers while trying to remember what to say.
3. Use bullet points on the left-hand side rather than writing in paragraph form, so your eye can easily catch where you need to pick back up after you've made eye contact with the audience. Skipping a line between bullet points may also help.
4. Include all parts of the introduction/conclusion and signposts for backup.
5. Include key supporting material and wording for verbal citations.
6. Only write on the front of your cards.
7. Do not have a sentence that carries over from one card to the next (can lead to fluency hiccups).
8. If you have difficult-to-read handwriting, you may type your speech and tape or glue it to your cards. Use a font that's large enough for you to see and be neat with the glue or tape so your cards don't get stuck together.
9. Include cues that will help with your delivery. Highlight transitions, verbal citations, or other important information. Include reminders to pause, slow down, breathe, or make eye contact.
10. Your cards should be an extension of your body, not something to play with. Don't wiggle, wring, flip through, or slap your note cards.
11. Number your note cards; if they fall you want to be able to quickly reorganize them.

Key Takeaways

- The formal outline is a full-sentence outline that helps you prepare for your speech and includes the introduction and conclusion, the main content of the body, citation information written into the sentences of the outline, and a references page.
- The principles of outlining include consistency, unity, coherence, and emphasis.
- Coordinate points in an outline are on the same level of importance in relation to the thesis of the speech or the central idea of a main point. Subordinate points provide evidence for a main idea or thesis.
- The speaking outline is a keyword and phrase outline that helps you deliver your speech and can include speaking cues like “pause,” “make eye contact,” and so on.

Exercises

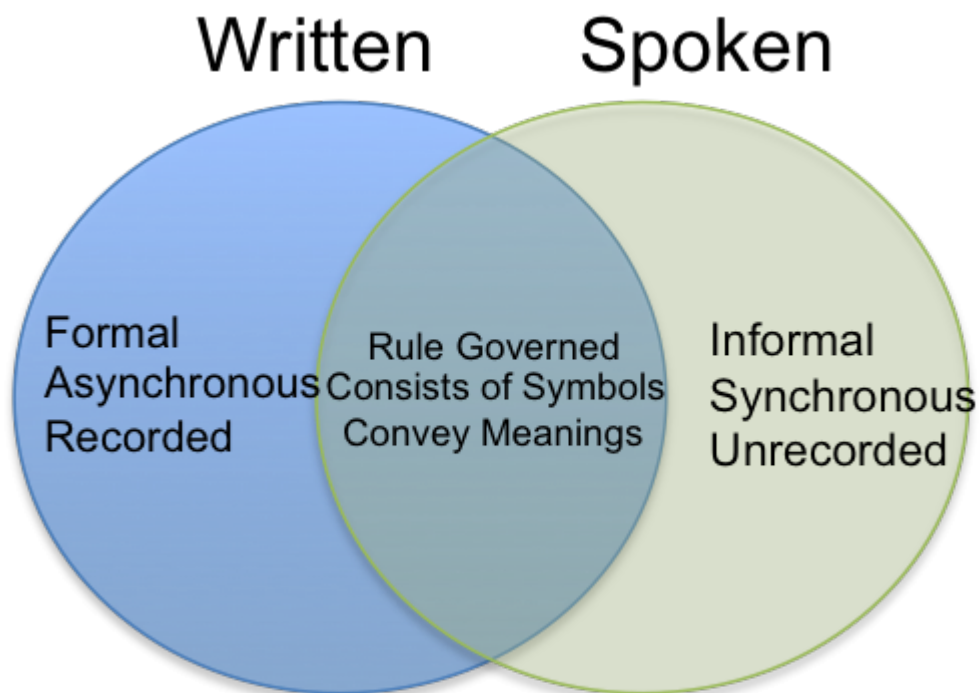
1. What are some practical uses for outlining outside of this class? Which of the principles of outlining do you think would be most important in the workplace and why?
2. Identify which pieces of information you may use in your speech are coordinate with each other and subordinate.

8.4 Delivery & Presentation Aids

Page Source

There are many decisions that must be made during the speech-making process. Making informed decisions about delivery can help boost your confidence and manage speaking anxiety. In this section, we will discuss the similarities and differences between written and spoken communication, learn some strengths and weaknesses of various delivery methods and how to make the most of your practice sessions.

Spoken vs Written Communication



"vcsspoken" by Spaynton via Wikimedia Commons. 22 December 2014. [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International](#).

While both spoken and written communication function as agreed-upon rule-governed systems of symbols used to convey meaning, there are enough differences in pragmatic rules between writing and speaking to justify discussing some of their differences. Imagine for a moment that you're a college student who desperately needs money. Rather than looking for a job you decide that you're going to ask your parents for the money you need to make it through the end of the semester. Now, you have a few

choices for using verbal communication to do this. You might choose to call your parents or talk to them in person. You may take a different approach and write them a letter or send them an email. You can probably identify your own list of pros and cons for each of these approaches. But really, what's the difference between writing and talking in these situations? Let's look at four of the major differences between the two: 1) formal versus informal, 2) synchronous versus asynchronous, 3) recorded versus unrecorded, and 4) privacy.

The first difference between spoken and written communication is that we generally use spoken communication **informally** while we use written communication **formally**. Consider how you have been trained to talk versus how you have been trained to write. Have you ever turned in a paper to a professor that "sounds" like how you talk? How was that paper graded compared to one that follows the more formal structures and rules of the English language? In western societies like the U.S., we follow more formal standards for our written communication than our spoken communication. With a few exceptions, we generally tolerate verbal mistakes (e.g. "should of" rather than "should have") and qualifiers (e.g. "uh" "um" "you know," etc.) in our speech, but not our writing. Consider a written statement such as, "I should of, um, gone and done somethin' 'bout it' but, um, I I didn't do nothin'." In most written contexts, this is considered unacceptable written verbal communication. However, most of us would not give much thought to hearing this statement spoken aloud by someone. While we may certainly notice mistakes in another's speech, we are generally not inclined to correct those mistakes as we would in written contexts. Even though most try to speak without qualifiers and verbal mistakes, there is something to be said about those utterances in our speech while engaging in an interpersonal conversation. According to John Du Bois, the way two people use utterances and structure their sentences during conversation creates an opportunity to find new meaning within the language and develop "parallelism" which can lead to a natural feeling of liking or sympathy in the conversation partner. So, even though it may seem like formal language is valued over informal, this informal language that most of us use when we speak inadvertently contributes to bringing people closer together.

While writing is generally more formal and speech more informal, there are some exceptions to the rule, especially with the growing popularity of new technologies. For the first time in history, we are now seeing exceptions in our uses of speech and writing. Using text messaging and email, people are engaging in forms of writing using more informal rule structures, making their writing "sound" more like conversation. Likewise, this style of writing often attempts to incorporate the use of "nonverbal" communication (known as emoticons) to accent the writing. Consider the two examples in the box. One is an example of written correspondence using text while the other is a roughly equivalent version following the more formal written guidelines of a letter.

Notice the informality in the text version. While it is readable, it reads as if Tesia was actually speaking in a conversation rather than writing a document. Have you noticed that when you turn in written work that has been written in email programs, the level of formality of the writing decreases? However, when students use a word processing program like Microsoft Word, the writing tends to follow formal rules more often. As we continue using new technologies to communicate, new rule systems for those mediums will continue altering the rule systems in other forms of communication.

The second difference between spoken and written forms of verbal communication is that spoken communication or speech is almost entirely synchronous while written communication is almost entirely asynchronous. **Synchronous** communication is *communication that takes place in real time*, such as a conversation with a friend. When we are in conversation and even in public speaking situations, immediate feedback and response from the receiver is the rule. For instance, when you say “hello” to someone, you expect that the person will respond immediately. You do not expect that the person will get back to you sometime later in response to your greeting. In contrast, **asynchronous** communication is *communication that is not immediate and occurs over longer periods of time*, such as letters, email, or even text messages at times. When someone writes a book, letter, email, or text, there is no expectation from the sender that the receiver will provide an immediate response. Instead, the expectation is that the receiver will receive the message, and respond to it when they have time. This is one of the reasons people sometimes choose to send an email instead of calling another person, because it allows the receiver to respond when they have time rather than “putting them on the spot” to respond right away.

Just as new technologies are changing the rules of formality and informality, they are also creating new situations that break the norms of written communication as asynchronous and spoken communication as synchronous. Voicemail has turned the telephone and our talk into asynchronous forms of communication. Even though we speak in these contexts, we understand that if we leave a message on voicemail we will not get an immediate reply. Instead, we understand that the receiver will call us back at their convenience. In this example, even though the channel of communication is speaking, there is no expectation for immediate response to the sent message. Similarly, texting is a form of written communication that follows the rules of spoken conversation in that it functions as synchronous communication. When you type a text to someone you know, the expectation is that they will respond almost immediately. The lines continue to blur when video chats were introduced as communication technologies. These are a form of synchronous communication that mimics face-to-face interaction and in some cases even have an option to send written messages to others. The possible back and forth between written and spoken communication has allowed many questions to arise about rules and meaning behind interactions. Maria Sindoni explains in her article, “Through the Looking Glass” that even though people are having a synchronous conversation and are sharing meaning through their words, they are ultimately in different rooms and communicating through a machine which makes the meaning of their exchanges more ambiguous.

The third difference between spoken and written communication is that written communication is generally *archived and recorded for later retrieval*, while spoken communication is generally not recorded. When we talk with friends, we do not tend to take notes or tape record our conversations. Instead, conversations tend to be ongoing and catalogued into our personal memories rather than recorded in an easily retrievable written format. On the other hand, it is quite easy to reference written works such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and electronic sources such as web pages and emails for long periods after the sender has written them. New communication applications like Vine add to the confusion. This app allows users to record themselves and post it to their profile. This would be considered a form of spoken communication, yet it is archived and asynchronous so others can look at the videos years after the original posting. To make the matter more complicated, Snapchat’s many

functions come into play. On Snapchat you have the option of sending videos or photos that are traditionally not archived since the sender decides how long the receiver has to view it, then will theoretically disappear forever. Most recently with the addition of My Story, users of the app can post a picture for 24 hours and have their friends view it multiple times. The feeling of technological communication not being archived can lead to a false sense of privacy, which can lead to some negative consequences.

As with the previous rules we've discussed, new technologies are changing many of the dynamics of speech and writing. Just take a look at the "Verbal Communication Then" sidebar and see how far we have come. For example, many people use email and texting informally like spoken conversation, as an informal form of verbal communication. Because of this, they often expect that these operate and function like a spoken conversation with the belief that it is a private conversation between the sender and receiver. However, many people have gotten into trouble because of what they have "spoken" about others through email and text. The corporation Epson (a large computer electronics manufacturer) was at the center of one of the first lawsuits regarding the recording and archiving of employees' use of email correspondence. Employees at Epson assumed their email was private and therefore used it to say negative things about their bosses. What they didn't know was their bosses were saving and printing these email messages, and using the content of these messages to make personnel decisions. When employees sued Epson, the courts ruled in favor of the corporation, stating that they had every right to retain employee email for their records.

While most of us have become accustomed to using technologies such as texting and instant messaging in ways that are similar to our spoken conversations, we must also consider the repercussions of using communication technologies in this fashion because they are often archived and not private. We can see examples of negative outcomes from archived messages in recent years through many highly publicized sexting scandals. One incident that was very pertinent was former congressman and former candidate for Mayor of New York, Anthony Weiner, and a series of inappropriate exchanges with women using communication technologies. Because of his position in power and high media coverage, his privacy was very minimal. Since he had these conversations in a setting that is recorded, he was not able to keep his anonymity or confidentiality in the matter. These acts were seen as inappropriate by the public, so there were both professional and personal repercussions for Weiner. Both the Epson and Anthony Weiner incidents, even though happening in different decades, show the consequences when assumed private information becomes public.

As you can see, there are a number of differences between spoken and written forms of verbal communication. Both forms are rule-governed as our definition points out, but the rules are often different for the use of these two types of verbal communication. However, it's apparent that as new technologies provide more ways for us to communicate, many of our traditional rules for using both speech and writing will continue to blur as we try to determine the "most appropriate" uses of these new communication technologies. As Chapter 2 pointed out, practical problems of the day will continue to guide the directions our field takes as we continue to study the ways technology changes our communication. As more changes continue to occur in the ways we communicate with one another, more avenues of study will continue to open for those interested in being part of the development of

how communication is conducted. Now that we have looked in detail at our definition of verbal communication, and the differences between spoken and written forms of verbal communication, let's explore what our use of verbal communication accomplishes for us as humans.

Modes of Delivery

Different speaking occasions call for different delivery methods. While it may be acceptable to speak from memory in some situations, lengthy notes may be required in others. The four most common delivery methods are manuscript, memorized, extemporaneous and impromptu.

Manuscript Delivery

Speaking from a written or printed document that contains the entirety of a speech is known as manuscript delivery. Manuscript delivery can be the best choice when a speech has complicated information and/or the contents of the speech are going to be quoted or published. Despite the fact that most speakers are not going to find themselves in that situation, many are drawn to this delivery method because of the security they feel with having everything they're going to say in front of them. Unfortunately, the security of having every word you want to say at your disposal translates to a poorly delivered and unengaging speech. Even with every word written out, speakers can still have fluency hiccups and verbal fillers as they lose their place in the manuscript or get tripped up over their words. The alternative, of course, is that a speaker reads the manuscript the whole time, effectively cutting himself or herself off from the audience. One way to make a manuscript delivery more engaging is through the use of a teleprompter. Almost all politicians who give televised addresses use teleprompters. In the below image, you can see President Obama's teleprompter system.



Newscasters and politicians frequently use teleprompters so they can use manuscript delivery but still engage with the audience. [Wikimedia Commons](#) - CC BY-SA 2.0.

You may not even notice them, as the technology has improved to give the illusion that a speaker is engaged with the audience and delivering a speech from memory. The Plexiglas sheets on poles that surround the president during the inauguration and State of the Union addresses are cleverly hidden teleprompters. Even these useful devices can fail. A quick search for “teleprompter fail” on YouTube will yield many examples of politicians and newscasters who probably wish they had a paper backup of their speech. Since most of us will likely not have opportunities to speak using a teleprompter, great care should be taken to ensure that the delivery is effective. To make the delivery seem more natural, print the speech out in a larger-than-typical font, triple-space between lines so you can easily find your place, use heavier-than-normal paper so it’s easy to pick up and turn the pages as needed, and use a portfolio so you can carry the manuscript securely.

Strengths of Manuscript Delivery

- The speaker can include precise or complex information such as statistics or quotes.
- The entire content of the speech is available for reference during the delivery.
- The speech will be consistent in terms of content and time length, which is beneficial if a speech will be delivered multiple times.

Weaknesses of Manuscript Delivery

- Engagement with the audience is challenging, because the speaker must constantly reference the manuscript (unless a teleprompter is used).
- Speakers are unable to adapt information to audience reactions, since they are confined to the

content of the manuscript.

- Speakers may be tempted to read the entire speech because they didn't practice enough or because they get nervous.
- Speakers who are able to make eye contact with the audience may still sound like they are reading the speech unless they employ proper vocal variety, pacing, and pauses.

Memorized Delivery

Completely memorizing a speech and delivering it without notes is known as memorized delivery. Some students attempt to memorize their speech because they think it will make them feel more confident to not have to look at their notes; however, when their anxiety level spikes at the beginning of their speech and their mind goes blank for a minute, many admit they should have chosen a different delivery method. When using any of the other delivery methods, speakers still need to rely on their memory. An impromptu speaker must recall facts or experiences related to their topic, and speakers using a manuscript want to have some of their content memorized so they do not read their entire speech to their audience. The problem with memorized delivery overall is that it puts too much responsibility on our memory, which we all know from experience is fallible.

When memorizing, most people use rote memorization techniques, which entail reading and then reciting something over and over until it is committed to memory. One major downfall of this technique is its effect on speaking rate. When we memorize this way, we end up going over the early parts of a speech many more times than the later parts. As you memorize one sentence, you add on another, and so on. By the time you're adding on later parts of your speech, you are likely speed talking through the earlier parts because you know them by heart at that point. As we'll discuss more later, to prevent bad habits from practice from hurting our speech delivery, speakers should practice a speech the exact way they want to deliver it to their audience. Fast-paced speaking during practice will likely make its way into the actual delivery of the speech. Delivery also suffers when speaking from memory if the speaker sounds like he or she is reciting the speech. Rote memorization tasks that many of us had to do in school have left their mark on our memorized delivery. Being made to recite the pledge of allegiance, the preamble to the Constitution, and so on didn't enhance our speaking abilities. I've observed many students whose speeches remind me of the sound of school children flatly going through the motions of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. It's the "going through the motions" impression that speakers should want to avoid.



Memorized delivery is a good option for people like tour guides, who need to move while speaking and be interactive with an audience. John Lambert Pearson - "listening" to adam - CC BY 2.0.

Even with much practice, our memories can fail. If you do opt to use memorized delivery, make sure you have several “entry points” determined, so you can pick up at spots other than the very beginning of a speech if you lose your place and have to start again. Memorized delivery is very useful for speakers who are going to be moving around during a speech when carrying notes would be burdensome. Think of the tour guide who showed you around your college campus. As someone who used to give college tours, I can attest to the fact that we all had speeches memorized, which was a good thing. It’s already difficult enough to walk backward while facing a group of people and lead them across roads and up stairs. Think about how dangerous it would be if the tour guide were trying to hold onto and reference a stack of note cards at the same time! In summary, I only recommend memorized delivery in cases where the speech is short (only one to two minutes), the speech is personal (like a brief toast), or the speech will be repeated numerous times (like a tour guide’s spiel), and even in these cases, it may be perfectly fine to have notes. Many students think that their anxiety and/or delivery challenges will be fixed if they just memorize their speech only to find that they are more anxious and have more problems.

Strengths of Memorized Delivery

- Speakers can include precise or complex information such as statistics or quotes (if they have put the time into memorization).
- Speakers can directly engage with the audience without worrying about referencing notes.
- The speech will be consistent in terms of content and time-length, which is beneficial if a speech will be delivered multiple times.

Weaknesses of Memorized Delivery

- It is the most time-consuming delivery method.
- Speakers are unable to adapt information to audience reactions, since they are confined to the content they memorized.
- If speakers lose their place in the speech, they will likely have to start over.
- Since everything is preplanned, it is difficult to make the speech content and delivery seem genuine (i.e., humor may seem “canned” or corny).
- The speech can sound like a recitation if the proper vocal variety and pacing are not used.

Extemporaneous Delivery

Extemporaneous delivery entails memorizing the overall structure and main points of a speech and then speaking from keyword/key-phrase notes. This delivery mode brings together many of the strengths of the previous three methods. Since you only internalize and memorize the main structure of a speech, you don't have to worry as much about the content and delivery seeming stale. Extemporaneous delivery brings in some of the spontaneity of impromptu delivery but still allows a speaker to carefully plan the overall structure of a speech and incorporate supporting materials that include key facts, quotations, and paraphrased information. You can also more freely adapt your speech to fit various audiences and occasions, since every word and sentence isn't predetermined. Thus extemporaneous delivery is the mode of delivery effective in the majority of speaking situations within an organization.

When preparing a speech that you will deliver extemporaneously, you will want to start practicing your speech early and then continue to practice as you revise your content. Investing quality time and effort into the speech-outlining process helps with extemporaneous delivery. As you put together your outline, you are already doing the work of internalizing the key structure of your speech. Read parts of your outline aloud as you draft them to help ensure they are written in a way that makes sense and is easy for you to deliver. By the time you complete the formal, full-sentence outline, you should have already internalized much of the key information in your speech. Now, you can begin practicing with the full outline. As you become more comfortable with the content of your full outline, start to convert it into your speaking outline. Take out information that you know well and replace it with a keyword or key phrase that prompts your memory. You'll probably want to leave key quotes, facts, and other paraphrased information, including your verbal source citation information, on your delivery outline so you make sure to include it in your speech. Once you've converted your full outline into your speaking outline, practice it a few more times, making sure to take some time between each practice session so you don't inadvertently start to memorize the speech word for word. The final product should be a confident delivery of a well-organized and structured speech that is conversational and adaptable to various audiences and occasions.

Strengths of Extemporaneous Delivery

- Speech content and delivery appear more spontaneous and natural, making it more conversational, since the speaker is using a keyword/key-phrase outline.

- Speakers can include quotes or complex information on their speaking outline for easy reference.
- Speakers can adapt information and delivery to specific audiences, occasions, and audience reactions, since they are not confined to the content of a manuscript or what they memorized.

Weaknesses of Extemporaneous Delivery

- Since the speech is so adaptable, it can be difficult to ensure the speech will be the exact same length each time.
- It is perhaps not the best option when exact wording is expected.
- Speakers must find a balance between having too much content on their speaking outline, which may cause them to read, and too little content, which may lead to fluency hiccups.

Impromptu Delivery

When using impromptu delivery, a speaker has little to no time to prepare for a speech. This means there is little time for research, audience analysis, organizing, and practice. For this reason, impromptu speaking often evokes higher degrees of speaking anxiety than other delivery types. Although impromptu speaking arouses anxiety, it is also a good way to build public speaking skills. Using some of the exercises for managing speaking anxiety that were discussed earlier in this chapter can help a speaker better manage the challenges of impromptu speaking. Only skilled public speakers with much experience are usually able to “pull off” an impromptu delivery without looking unprepared. Otherwise, a speaker who is very familiar with the subject matter can sometimes be a competent impromptu speaker, because their expertise can compensate for the lack of research and organizing time.

When Mark Twain famously said, “It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech,” he was jokingly pointing out the difficulties of giving a good impromptu speech, essentially saying that there is no such thing as a good impromptu speech, as good speeches take time to prepare. We don’t always have the luxury of preparation, though. So when speaking impromptu, be brief, stick to what you know, and avoid rambling. Quickly organize your thoughts into an introduction, body, and conclusion. Try to determine three key ideas that will serve as the basis of your main points.

In what situations would impromptu speaking be used? Since we’ve already started thinking of the similarities between public speaking and conversations, we can clearly see that most of our day-to-day interactions involve impromptu speaking. When your roommate asks you what your plans for the weekend are, you don’t pull a few note cards out of your back pocket to prompt your response. This type of conversational impromptu speaking isn’t anxiety inducing because we’re talking about our lives, experiences, or something we’re familiar with. This is also usually the case when we are asked to speak publicly with little to no advance warning. For example, if you are at a meeting for work and you are representing the public relations department, a colleague may ask you to say a few words about a recent news story involving a public relations misstep of a competing company. In this case, you are being asked to speak on the spot because of your expertise. A competent communicator should anticipate instances like this when they might be called on to speak, so they won’t be so surprised. Of

course, being caught completely off guard or being asked to comment on something unfamiliar to you creates more anxiety. In such cases, do not pretend to know something you don't, as that may come back to hurt you later. You can usually mention that you do not have the necessary background information at that time but will follow up later with your comments.

Salespeople on home-shopping television shows are masters of impromptu speaking. They obviously have sales training and have built up a repertoire of adjectives and sayings that entice an audience to buy. But they are often speaking impromptu when interacting with a guest on the show or the customers who call in. Their ability to remain animated and fluent in their delivery with little time to prepare comes from much experience. Politicians, lawyers, teachers, journalists, and spokespeople engage in impromptu speaking regularly.

Strengths of Impromptu Delivery

- Content and delivery are spontaneous, which can make the speech more engaging (if a speaker's anxiety is under control).
- It enhances public speaking skills because speakers have to "think on their feet."

Weaknesses of Impromptu Delivery

- It is typically the most anxiety-inducing delivery method, since speakers do not have time to prepare or practice the speech.
- Speakers may get off topic or ramble if they did not set up some structure to guide them.
- Speakers may be tempted to overstate or mislead an audience about the extent of their knowledge or expertise if asked to speak about something they aren't familiar with.

Practicing Your Speech

Practicing a speech is essential, and practice sessions can be more or less useful depending on how you approach them. There are three primary phases to the practice process. In the first phase, you practice as you're working through your ideas and drafting your outline. In the second, you practice for someone and get feedback. In the third, you put the finishing touches on the speech.

Start practicing your speech early, as you are working through your ideas, by reading sections aloud as you draft them into your working outline. This will help ensure your speech is fluent and sounds good for the audience. Start to envision the audience while you practice and continue to think about them throughout the practicing process. This will help minimize anxiety when you actually have them sitting in front of you. Once you have completed your research and finished a draft of your outline, you will have already practiced your speech several times as you were putting it together. Now, you can get feedback on the speech as a whole.

You begin to solicit feedback from a trusted source in the second phase of practicing your speech. This is the most important phase of practicing, and the one that most speakers do not complete. Beginning

speakers may be nervous to practice in front of someone, which is to be expected. But review the strategies for managing anxiety discussed earlier in this chapter and try to face that anxiety. After all, you will have to face a full audience when you deliver the speech, so getting used to speaking in front of someone can only help you at this point. Choose someone who will give you constructive feedback on your speech, not just unconditional praise or criticism. Before you practice for them, explain the assignment or purpose of the speech. When practicing for a classroom speech, you may even want to give the person the assignment guidelines or a feedback sheet that has some key things for them to look for. Ask them for feedback on content and delivery. Almost anyone is good at evaluating delivery, but it's more difficult to evaluate content. And, in most cases, the content of your speech will be account for more of your grade or what you will be evaluated on for work than the delivery. Also begin to time your speech at this point, so you can determine if it meets any time limits that you have.

In addition to practicing for a trusted source for feedback, you may want to audio or video record your speech. This can be useful because it provides an objective record that you can then compare with the feedback you got from your friend and to your own evaluation of your speech. The most important part of this phase is incorporating the feedback you receive into your speech. If you practice for someone, get feedback, and then don't do anything with the feedback, then you have wasted your time and their time. Use the feedback to assess whether or not you met your speaking goals. Was your thesis supported? Was your specific purpose met? Did your speech conform to any time limits that were set? Based on your answers to these questions, you may need to make some changes to your content or delivery, so do not put this part of practicing off to the last minute. Once the content has been revised as needed, draft your speaking outline and move on to the next phase of practice.



You can practice your speech in front of a mirror to gauge your use of facial expressions and gestures. In addition, practice in front of a couple people for feedback. Tschlunder - Mirror - CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

During the third and final phase of practice, you are putting the finishing touches on your speech. You should be familiar with the content based on your early practice sessions. You have also gotten feedback and incorporated that feedback into the speech. Your practice sessions at this point should precreate, as much as possible, the conditions in which you will be giving your speech. You should have

your speaking outline completed so you can practice with it. It's important to be familiar with the content on your note cards or speaking outline so you will not need to rely on it so much during the actual delivery. You may also want to practice in the type of clothing you will be wearing on speech day. This can be useful if you are wearing something you don't typically wear—a suit for example—so you can see how it might affect your posture, gestures, and overall comfort level. If possible, at least one practice session in the place you will be giving the speech can be very helpful, especially if it's a room you are not familiar with. Make sure you're practicing with any visual aids or technology you will use so you can be familiar with it and it doesn't affect your speech fluency. Continue to time each practice round. If you are too short or too long, you will need to go back and adjust your content some more. Always adjust your content to fit the time limit; do not try to adjust your delivery. Trying to speed talk or stretch things out to make a speech faster or longer is a mistake that will ultimately hurt your delivery, which will hurt your credibility. The overall purpose of this phase of practicing is to minimize surprises that might throw you off on speech day.

Some “Dos” and “Don’ts” for Effective Speech Practice Sessions

- Do start practicing sections of your speech early, as you draft your outline.
- Do practice for someone for feedback.
- Do time yourself once a draft of the speech is completed and adjust the speech as needed to conform to time limits.
- Do deliver the speech the way you want it to be when you deliver it for your audience (use the rate, volume, vocal variety, pauses, and emphasis you plan to use on speech day).
- Don't only practice in front of a mirror (practicing once in front of a mirror can help you gauge your facial expressions and other aspects of delivery, but that shouldn't be the only way you practice).
- Don't only practice in your head (we have a tendency to go too fast when we practice in our head, and you need to get practice saying the words of your speech to help lessen fluency hiccups).
- Don't practice too much. It's best to practice a few times in the days leading up to the speech, making sure to leave several hours between practice sessions. Practicing too much can lead you to become bored with your content, which could lead to delivery that sounds like a recitation.

Exercises

1. Which delivery methods have you used before? Which did you like the best and why? Which delivery method would you most prefer a speaker to use if you were an audience member and why?
2. Have you ever had any “surprises” come up during a speech that you could have prevented with more effective practice sessions? If so, explain. If not, list some surprises that good practice sessions could help prevent.
3. Using the suggestions in the chapter, make a timeline for practicing your next speech. Include specific dates and make a list of things you plan to do during each of the three phases of practice.

Nonverbal Delivery Considerations

Vocal Delivery

Vocal delivery includes components of speech delivery that relate to your voice. These include rate, volume, pitch, articulation, pronunciation, and fluency. Our voice is important to consider when delivering our speech for two main reasons. First, vocal delivery can help us engage and interest the audience. Second, vocal delivery helps ensure that our ideas are communicated clearly.

Rate

Rate of speaking refers to how fast or slow you speak. If you speak too fast, your audience will not be able to absorb the information you present. If you speak too slowly, the audience may lose interest. The key is to vary your rate of speaking in a middle range, staying away from either extreme, in order to keep your audience engaged. In general, a higher rate of speaking signals that a speaker is enthusiastic about his or her topic. Speaking slowly may lead the audience to infer that the speaker is uninterested, uninformed, or unprepared to present his or her own topic. These negative assumptions, whether they are true or not, are likely to hurt the credibility of the speaker. Having evaluated thousands of speeches, I can say that, in terms of rate, the issue speakers face is speaking too fast. The goal is to speak at a rate that will interest the audience and will effectively convey your information. Speaking at a slow rate throughout a speech would likely bore an audience, but that is not a common occurrence.

Some people naturally speak faster than others, which is fine, but we can all alter our rate of speaking with practice. If you find that you are a naturally fast speaker, make sure that you do not “speed talk” through your speech when practicing it. Even if you try to hold back when actually delivering your speech, you may fall back into your practice routine and speak too fast. You can also include reminders to “slow down” on your speaking outline.

Volume

Volume refers to how loud or soft your voice is. As with speaking rate, you want to avoid the extremes of being too loud or too soft, but still vary your volume within an acceptable middle range. When speaking in a typically sized classroom or office setting that seats about twenty-five people, using a volume a few steps above a typical conversational volume is usually sufficient. When speaking in larger rooms, you will need to project your voice. You may want to look for nonverbal cues from people in the back rows or corners, like leaning forward or straining to hear, to see if you need to adjust your volume more. Obviously, in some settings, a microphone will be necessary to be heard by the entire audience.

Like rate, audiences use volume to make a variety of judgments about a speaker. Softer speakers are sometimes judged as meek, which may lead to lowered expectations for the speech or less perceived credibility. Loud speakers may be seen as overbearing or annoying, which can lead audience members to disengage from the speaker and message. Be aware of the volume of your voice and, when in doubt, increase your volume a notch, since beginning speakers are more likely to have an issue of speaking too softly rather than too loudly.



Speak a couple steps above your regular volume for speeches that occur in typically sized classrooms or meeting rooms that seat twenty to forty people. A microphone may be necessary for larger groups or rooms. Speaker at Podium - CC BY 2.0

Pitch

Pitch refers to how high or low a speaker's voice is. As with other vocal qualities, there are natural variations among people's vocal pitch. Unlike rate and volume, there are more physiological limitations on the control we have over pitch. For example, males generally have lower pitched voices than females. Despite these limitations, each person still has the capability to intentionally change their pitch across a range large enough to engage an audience. Changing pitch is a good way to communicate enthusiasm and indicate emphasis or closure. In general, our pitch goes up when we are discussing something exciting. Our pitch goes down slightly when we emphasize a serious or important point. Lowering pitch is also an effective way to signal transitions between sections of your speech or the end of your speech, which cues your audience to applaud and avoids an awkward ending.

Of the vocal components of delivery discussed so far, pitch seems to give beginning speakers the most difficulty. There is a stark difference between the way I hear students speak before and after class and

the way they speak when they get in front of the class. It's like giving a speech temporarily numbs their ability to vary their pitch. Record yourself practicing your speech to help determine if the amount of pitch variety and enthusiasm you think you convey while speaking actually comes through. Speakers often assume that their pitch is more varied and their delivery more enthusiastic than the audience actually perceives it to be. Many of my students note this on the self-evaluations they write after viewing their recorded speech.

Vocal Variety

Overall, the lesson to take away from this section on vocal delivery is that variety is key. Vocal variety includes changes in your rate, volume, and pitch that can make you look more prepared, seem more credible, and be able to engage your audience better. Employing vocal variety is not something that takes natural ability or advanced skills training. It is something that beginning speakers can start working on immediately and everyone can accomplish. The key is to become aware of how you use your voice when you speak, and the best way to do this is to record yourself. We all use vocal variety naturally without thinking about it during our regular conversations, and many of us think that this tendency will translate over to our speaking voices. This is definitely not the case for most beginning speakers. Unlike in your regular conversations, it will take some awareness and practice to use vocal variety in speeches. I encourage students to make this a delivery priority early on. Since it's something anyone can do, improving in this area will add to your speaking confidence, which usually translates into better speeches and better grades further on.

Speaking for Clarity

In order to be an effective speaker, your audience should be able to understand your message and digest the information you present. Audience members will make assumptions about our competence and credibility based on how we speak. As with other aspects of speech delivery, many people are not aware that they have habits of speech that interfere with their message clarity. Since most of our conversations are informal and take place with people we know, many people don't make a concerted effort to articulate every word clearly and pronounce every word correctly, and most of the people we talk to either don't notice our errors or don't correct us if they do notice. Since public speaking is generally more formal than our conversations, we should be more concerned with the clarity of our speech.

Articulation

Articulation refers to the clarity of sounds and words we produce. If someone is articulate, they speak words clearly, and speakers should strive to speak clearly. Poor articulation results when speakers do not speak clearly. For example, a person may say *dinnt* instead of *didn't*, *gonna* instead of *going to*, *wanna* instead of *want to*, or *hunnerd* instead of *hundred*. Unawareness and laziness are two common

challenges to articulation. As with other aspects of our voice, many people are unaware that they regularly have errors in articulation. Recording yourself speak and then becoming a higher self-monitor are effective ways to improve your articulation. Laziness, on the other hand, requires a little more motivation to address. Some people just get in the habit of not articulating their words well. I'm sure we all know someone who mumbles when they speak or slurs their words together. From my experience, this is a problem that I've noticed more among men than women. Both mumbling and slurring are examples of poor articulation. In more informal settings, this type of speaking may be acceptable, but in formal settings, it will be negatively evaluated, which will hurt a speaker's credibility. Perhaps the promise of being judged more favorably, which may help a person become more successful, is enough to motivate a mumblor to speak more clearly.

When combined with a low volume, poor articulation becomes an even greater problem. Doing vocal warm-ups like the ones listed in Section 10.1 "Managing Public Speaking Anxiety" or tongue twisters can help prime your mouth, lips, and tongue to articulate words more clearly. When you notice that you have trouble articulating a particular word, you can either choose a different word to include in your speech or you can repeat it a few times in a row in the days leading up to your speech to get used to saying it.

Pronunciation

Unlike articulation, which focuses on the clarity of words, pronunciation refers to speaking words correctly, including the proper sounds of the letters and the proper emphasis. Mispronouncing words can damage a speaker's credibility, especially when the correct pronunciation of a word is commonly known. I have actually heard someone, presenting on the topic of pronunciation, mispronounce the word *pronunciation*, saying "pro-NOUN-ciation" instead of "pro-NUN-ciation." In such a case, it would not be unwarranted for the audience to question the speaker's expertise on the subject.

We all commonly run into words that we are unfamiliar with and therefore may not know how to pronounce. I offer my students three suggestions when faced with this problem. The first is to look the word up in an online dictionary. Many dictionaries have a speaker icon with their definitions, and when you click on it, you can hear the correct pronunciation of a word. Some words have more than one pronunciation—for example, *Caribbean*—so choosing either of the accepted pronunciations is fine. Just remember to consistently use that pronunciation to avoid confusing your audience. If a word doesn't include an audio pronunciation, you can usually find the phonetic spelling of a word, which is the word spelled out the way it sounds. There will occasionally be words that you can't locate in a dictionary. These are typically proper nouns or foreign words. In this case, I suggest the "phone-a-friend" strategy. Call up the people you know who have large vocabularies or are generally smart when it comes to words, and ask them if they know how to pronounce it. If they do, and you find them credible, you're probably safe to take their suggestion. The third option is to "fake it 'til you make it" and should only be used as a last resort. If you can't find the word in a dictionary and your smart friends don't know how to pronounce it, it's likely that your audience will also be unfamiliar with the word. In that case, using your knowledge of how things are typically pronounced, decide on a pronunciation that makes sense and

confidently use it during your speech. Most people will not question it. In the event that someone does correct you on your pronunciation, thank him or her for correcting you and adjust your pronunciation.

Fluency

Fluency refers to the flow of your speaking. To speak with fluency means that your speech flows well and that there are not many interruptions to that flow. There are two main disfluencies, or problems that affect the flow of a speech. Fluency hiccups are unintended pauses in a speech that usually result from forgetting what you were saying, being distracted, or losing your place in your speaking notes. Fluency hiccups are not the same as intended pauses, which are useful for adding emphasis or transitioning between parts of a speech. While speakers should try to minimize fluency hiccups, even experienced speakers need to take an unintended pause sometimes to get their bearings or to recover from an unexpected distraction. Fluency hiccups become a problem when they happen regularly enough to detract from the speaker's message.

Verbal fillers are words that speakers use to fill in a gap between what they were saying and what they're saying next. Common verbal fillers include *um*, *uh*, *ah*, *er*, *you know*, and *like*. The best way to minimize verbal fillers is to become a higher self-monitor and realize that you use them. Many students are surprised when they watch the video of their first speech and realize they said "um" thirty times in three minutes. Gaining that awareness is the first step in eliminating verbal fillers, and students make noticeable progress with this between their first and second speeches. If you do lose your train of thought, having a brief fluency hiccup is better than injecting a verbal filler, because the audience may not even notice the pause or may think it was intentional.

Common Causes of Fluency Hiccups

- **Lack of preparation.** Effective practice sessions are the best way to prevent fluency hiccups.
- **Not writing for speaking.** If you write your speech the way you've been taught to write papers, you will have fluency hiccups. You must translate the written words into something easier for you to present orally. To do this, read your speech aloud and edit as you write to make sure your speech is easy for you to speak.
- **A poorly prepared speaking outline.** Whether it is on paper or note cards, sloppy writing, unorganized bullet points, or incomplete/insufficient information on a speaking outline leads to fluency hiccups.
- **Distractions.** Audience members and the external environment are unpredictable. Hopefully audience members will be polite and will silence their phones, avoid talking while the speaker is presenting, and avoid moving excessively. There could also be external noise that comes through a door or window. A speaker can also be distracted by internal noise such as thinking about other things.

“Getting Plugged In”

Delivering Presentations Online

As many people and organizations are trying to do more with smaller budgets, and new software becomes available, online presentations are becoming more common. Whether using a Webinar format, a WebEx, Skype, FaceTime, Elluminate Live, or some other program, the live, face-to-face audience is now mediated through a computer screen. Despite this change in format, many of the same basic principles of public speaking apply when speaking to people virtually. Yet many business professionals seem to forget the best practices of public speaking when presenting online or don't get that they apply in both settings. The website TheVirtualPresenter.com offers many tips for presenting online that we've covered in this book, including be audience focused, have engaging delivery, and use visual aids effectively (Courville, 2012). Yet speakers need to think about some of these things differently when presenting online. We have natural ways to engage an audience when presenting face-to-face, but since many online presentations are only one-way in terms of video, speakers have to rely on technology like audience polls, live chat, or options for audience members to virtually raise their hand when they have a question to get feedback while speaking. Also, in some formats, the audience can only see the presenter's computer desktop or slide show, which pulls attention away from physical delivery and makes vocal delivery and visual aids more important. Extemporaneous delivery and vocal variety are still key when presenting online. Reading from your slides or having a monotone voice will likely not make a favorable impression on your audience. The lesson to take away is that presenting online requires the same skills as presenting in person, so don't let the change in format lead you to make mistakes that will make you a less effective speaker.

1. Have you ever presented online or been an audience member for an online presentation? If so, describe your experience and compare it to face-to-face speaking.
2. What are some of the key differences between presenting online and presenting in person that a speaker should consider?
3. How might online presentations play into your future career goals? What types of presentations do you think you would give? What could you do to ensure the presentations are effective

Kinesics Delivery

Many speakers are more nervous about physical delivery than vocal delivery. Putting our bodies on the line in front of an audience often makes us feel more vulnerable than putting our voice out there. Yet most audiences are not as fixated on our physical delivery as we think they are. Knowing this can help relieve some anxiety, but it doesn't give us a free pass when it comes to physical delivery. We should still practice for physical delivery that enhances our verbal message. Physical delivery of a speech involves nonverbal communication through the face and eyes, gestures, and body movements.

Facial Expressions

Facial expressions can help bring a speech to life when used by a speaker to communicate emotions and demonstrate enthusiasm for the speech. As with vocal variety, we tend to use facial expressions naturally and without conscious effort when engaging in day-to-day conversations. Yet I see many speakers' expressive faces turn "deadpan" when they stand in front of an audience. Some people naturally have more expressive faces than others—think about the actor Jim Carey's ability to contort his face as an example. But we can also consciously control and improve on our facial expressions to be more effective speakers. As with other components of speech delivery, becoming a higher self-monitor and increasing your awareness of your typical delivery habits can help you understand, control, and improve your delivery. Although you shouldn't only practice your speech in front of a mirror, doing so can help you get an idea of how expressive or unexpressive your face is while delivering your speech. There is some more specific advice about assessing and improving your use of facial expressions in the "Getting Competent" box in this chapter.



Facial expressions are key for conveying emotions and enthusiasm in a speech.. Jeff Wasson - Immutable Law Of The Universe #2 - CC BY 2.0.

Facial expressions help set the emotional tone for a speech, and it is important that your facial expressions stay consistent with your message. In order to set a positive tone before you start speaking, briefly look at the audience and smile. A smile is a simple but powerful facial expression that can communicate friendliness, openness, and confidence. Facial expressions communicate a range of emotions and are also associated with various moods or personality traits. For example, combinations of facial expressions can communicate that a speaker is tired, excited, angry, confused, frustrated, sad, confident, smug, shy, or bored, among other things. Even if you aren't bored, for example, a slack face with little animation may lead an audience to think that you are bored with your own speech, which isn't likely to motivate them to be interested. So make sure your facial expressions are communicating an emotion, mood, or personality trait that you think your audience will view favorably. Also make sure your facial expressions match with the content of your speech. When delivering something lighthearted

or humorous, a smile, bright eyes, and slightly raised eyebrows will nonverbally enhance your verbal message. When delivering something serious or somber, a furrowed brow, a tighter mouth, and even a slight head nod can enhance that message. If your facial expressions and speech content are not consistent, your audience could become confused by the conflicting messages, which could lead them to question your honesty and credibility.

“Getting Competent” Improving Facial Expressions

My very first semester teaching, I was required by my supervisor to record myself teaching and evaluate what I saw. I was surprised by how serious I looked while teaching. My stern and expressionless face was due to my anxiety about being a beginning teacher and my determination to make sure I covered the content for the day. I didn’t realize that it was also making me miss opportunities to communicate how happy I was to be teaching and how passionate I was about the content. I just assumed those things would come through in my delivery. I was wrong. The best way to get an idea of the facial expressions you use while speaking is to record your speech using a computer’s webcam, much like you would look at and talk to the computer when using Skype or another video-chat program. The first time you try this, minimize the video window once you’ve started recording so you don’t get distracted by watching yourself. Once you’ve recorded the video, watch the playback and take notes on your facial expressions. Answer the following questions:

1. Did anything surprise you? Were you as expressive as you thought you were?
2. What facial expressions did you use throughout the speech?
3. Where did your facial expressions match with the content of your speech? Where did your facial expressions not match with the content of your speech?
4. Where could you include more facial expressions to enhance your content and/or delivery?

You can also have a friend watch the video and give you feedback on your facial expressions to see if your assessment matches with theirs. Once you’ve assessed your video, re-record your speech and try to improve your facial expressions and delivery. Revisit the previous questions to see if you improved.

Eye Contact

Eye contact is an important element of nonverbal communication in all communication settings. Chapter 4 “Nonverbal Communication” explains the power of eye contact to make people feel welcome/unwelcome, comfortable/uncomfortable, listened to / ignored, and so on. As a speaker, eye contact can also be used to establish credibility and hold your audience’s attention. We often interpret a lack of eye contact to mean that someone is not credible or not competent, and as a public speaker, you don’t want your audience thinking either of those things. Eye contact holds attention because an audience member who knows the speaker is making regular eye contact will want to reciprocate that eye contact to show that they are paying attention. This will also help your audience remember the content of your speech better, because acting like we’re paying attention actually leads us to pay attention and better retain information.

Eye contact is an aspect of delivery that beginning speakers can attend to and make noticeable progress on early in their speech training. By the final speech in my classes, I suggest that my students make eye contact with their audience for at least 75 percent of their speech. Most speakers cannot do this when they first begin practicing with extemporaneous delivery, but continued practice and effort make this an achievable goal for most.

As was mentioned in Chapter 4 “Nonverbal Communication”, norms for eye contact vary among cultures. Therefore it may be difficult for speakers from countries that have higher power distances or are more collectivistic to get used to the idea of making direct and sustained eye contact during a speech. In these cases, it is important for the speaker to challenge himself or herself to integrate some of the host culture’s expectations and for the audience to be accommodating and understanding of the cultural differences.

Tips for Having Effective Eye Contact

1. Once in front of the audience, establish eye contact before you speak.
2. Make slow and deliberate eye contact, sweeping through the whole audience from left to right.
3. Despite what high school speech teachers or others might have told you, do not look over the audience’s heads, at the back wall, or the clock. Unless you are in a huge auditorium, it will just look to the audience like you are looking over their heads.
4. Do not just make eye contact with one or a few people that you know or that look friendly. Also, do not just make eye contact with your instructor or boss. Even if it’s comforting for you as the speaker, it is usually awkward for the audience member.
5. Try to memorize your opening and closing lines so you can make full eye contact with the audience. This will strengthen the opening and closing of your speech and help you make a connection with the audience.

Posture

Posture is the position we assume with our bodies, either intentionally or out of habit. Although people, especially young women, used to be trained in posture, often by having them walk around with books stacked on their heads, you should use a posture that is appropriate for the occasion while still positioning yourself in a way that feels natural. In a formal speaking situation, it’s important to have an erect posture that communicates professionalism and credibility. However, a military posture of standing at attention may feel and look unnatural in a typical school or business speech. In informal settings, it may be appropriate to lean on a table or lectern, or even sit among your audience members. Head position is also part of posture. In most speaking situations, it is best to keep your head up, facing your audience. A droopy head doesn’t communicate confidence. Consider the occasion important, as an inappropriate posture can hurt your credibility.



Government and military leaders use an erect posture to communicate confidence and professionalism during public appearances. Wikimedia Commons - public domain

Gestures

Gestures include arm and hand movements. We all go through a process of internalizing our native culture from childhood. An obvious part of this process is becoming fluent in a language. Perhaps less obvious is the fact that we also become fluent in nonverbal communication, gestures in particular. We all use hand gestures while we speak, but we didn't ever take a class in matching verbal communication with the appropriate gestures; we just internalized these norms over time based on observation and put them into practice. By this point in your life, you have a whole vocabulary of hand movements and gestures that spontaneously come out while you're speaking. Some of these gestures are emphatic and some are descriptive (Koch, 2007).

Emphatic gestures are the most common hand gestures we use, and they function to emphasize our verbal communication and often relate to the emotions we verbally communicate. Pointing with one finger or all the fingers straight out is an emphatic gesture. We can even bounce that gesture up and down to provide more emphasis. Moving the hand in a circular motion in front of our chest with the fingers spread apart is a common emphatic gesture that shows excitement and often accompanies an increased rate of verbal speaking. We make this gesture more emphatic by using both hands. Descriptive gestures function to illustrate or refer to objects rather than emotions. We use descriptive gestures to indicate the number of something by counting with our fingers or the size, shape, or speed of something. Our hands and arms are often the most reliable and easy-to-use visual aids a speaker can have.

While it can be beneficial to plan a key gesture or two in advance, it is generally best to gesture spontaneously in a speech, just as you would during a regular conversation. For some reason, students

are insecure about or uncomfortable with gesturing during a speech. Even after watching their speech videos, many students say they think they “gestured too much” or nit-pick over a particular gesture. Out of thousands of speeches I’ve seen, I can’t recall a student who gestured too much to the point that it was distracting. Don’t try to overdo your gestures though. You don’t want to look like one of those crazy-arm inflatable dancing men that companies set up on the side of the road to attract customers. But more important, don’t try to hold back. Even holding back a little usually ends up nearly eliminating gestures. While the best beginning strategy is to gesture naturally, you also want to remain a high self-monitor and take note of your typical patterns of gesturing. If you notice that you naturally gravitate toward one particular gesture, make an effort to vary your gestures more. You also want your gestures to be purposeful, not limp or lifeless. I caution my students against having what I call “spaghetti noodle arms,” where they raise their hand to gesture and then let it flop back down to their side.

Movement

Sometimes movement of the whole body, instead of just gesturing with hands, is appropriate in a speech. I recommend that beginning speakers hold off trying to incorporate body movement from the waist down until they’ve gotten at least one speech done. This allows you to concentrate on managing anxiety and focus on more important aspects of delivery like vocal variety, avoiding fluency hiccups and verbal fillers, and improving eye contact. When students are given the freedom to move around, it often ends up becoming floating or pacing, which are both movements that comfort a speaker by expending nervous energy but only serve to distract the audience. *Floating* refers to speakers who wander aimlessly around, and *pacing* refers to speakers who walk back and forth in the same path. To prevent floating or pacing, make sure that your movements are purposeful. Many speakers employ the triangle method of body movement where they start in the middle, take a couple steps forward and to the right, then take a couple steps to the left, then return back to the center. Obviously you don’t need to do this multiple times in a five- to ten-minute speech, as doing so, just like floating or pacing, tends to make an audience dizzy. To make your movements appear more natural, time them to coincide with a key point you want to emphasize or a transition between key points. Minimize other movements from the waist down when you are not purposefully moving for emphasis. Speakers sometimes tap or shuffle their feet, rock, or shift their weight back and forth from one leg to the other. Keeping both feet flat on the floor, and still, will help avoid these distracting movements.

Personal Appearance

Looking like a credible and prepared public speaker will make you feel more like one and will make your audience more likely to perceive you as such. This applies to all speaking contexts: academic, professional, and personal. Although the standards for appropriate personal appearance vary between contexts, meeting them is key. You may have experienced a time when your vocal and physical delivery suffered because you were not “dressed the part.” The first time I ever presented at a conference, I had a terrible cold and in my hazy packing forgot to bring a belt. While presenting later that day, all I could think about was how everyone was probably noticing that, despite my nice dress shirt tucked into my

slacks, I didn't have a belt on. Dressing the part makes you feel more confident, which will come through in your delivery. Ideally, you should also be comfortable in the clothes you're wearing. If the clothes are dressy, professional, and nice but ill fitting, then the effect isn't the same. Avoid clothes that are too tight or too loose. Looking the part is just as important as dressing the part, so make sure you are cleaned and groomed in a way that's appropriate for the occasion. The "Getting Real" box in this chapter goes into more detail about professional dress in a variety of contexts.

"Getting Real"

Professional Dress and Appearance

No matter what professional field you go into, you will need to consider the importance of personal appearance. Although it may seem petty or shallow to put so much emphasis on dress and appearance, impressions matter, and people make judgments about our personality, competence, and credibility based on how we look. In some cases, you may work somewhere with a clearly laid out policy for personal dress and appearance. In many cases, the suggestion is to follow guidelines for "business casual." Despite the increasing popularity of this notion over the past twenty years, people's understanding of what business casual means is not consistent (Cullen, 2008). The formal dress codes of the mid-1900s, which required employees to wear suits and dresses, gave way to the trend of business casual dress, which seeks to allow employees to work comfortably while still appearing professional (Heathfield, S. M., 2012). While most people still dress more formally for job interviews or high-stakes presentations, the day-to-day dress of working professionals varies. Here are some tips for maintaining "business casual" dress and appearance:

- Things to generally avoid. Jeans, hats, flip-flops, exposed underwear, exposed stomachs, athletic wear, heavy cologne/perfume, and chewing gum.
- General dress guidelines for men. Dress pants or khaki pants, button-up shirt or collared polo/golf shirt tucked in with belt, and dress shoes; jacket and/or tie are optional.
- General dress guidelines for women. Dress pants or skirt, blouse or dress shirt, dress, and closed-toe dress shoes; jacket is optional.
- Finishing touches. Make sure shoes are neat and polished, not scuffed or dirty; clothes should be pressed, not wrinkled; make sure fingernails are clean and trimmed/groomed; and remove any lint, dog hair, and so on from clothing.

Obviously, these are general guidelines and there may be exceptions. It's always a good idea to see if your place of business has a dress code, or at least guidelines. If you are uncertain whether or not something is appropriate, most people recommend to air on the side of caution and choose something else. While consultants and professionals usually recommend sticking to dark colors such as black, navy, and charcoal and/or light colors such as white, khaki, and tan, it is OK to add something that expresses your identity and makes you stand out, like a splash of color or a nice accessory like a watch, eyeglasses, or a briefcase. In fact, in the current competitive job market, employers want to see that you are serious about the position, can fit in with the culture of the organization, and are confident in who

you are (Verner, 2008).

1. What do you think is the best practice to follow when dressing for a job interview?
2. In what professional presentations would you want to dress formally? Business casual? Casual?
3. Aside from the examples listed previously, what are some other things to generally avoid, in terms of dress and appearance, when trying to present yourself as a credible and competent communicator/speaker?
4. In what ways do you think you can conform to business-casual expectations while still preserving your individuality?

Visual Aids

Visual aids play an important role in conveying supporting material to your audience. They also tie to delivery, since using visual aids during a speech usually requires some physical movements. It is important not to let your use of visual aids detract from your credibility. I've seen many good speeches derailed by posters that fall over, videos with no sound, and uncooperative PowerPoint presentations.

The following tips can help you ensure that your visual aids enhance, rather than detract, from your message and credibility:

1. Only have your visual aid displayed when it is relevant to what you are saying.
2. Make sure to practice with your visual aids so there aren't any surprises on speech day.
3. Don't read from your visual aids. Put key information (e.g., 1-4 words per bullet) from your PowerPoint or Prezi on your speaking outline and only briefly glance at the screen to make sure you are on the right slide. You can also write information on the back of a poster or picture that you're going to display so you can reference it while holding the visual aid up, since it's difficult to hold a poster or picture and note cards at the same time.
4. Triple check your technology to make sure it's working: electricity, Internet connection, wireless clicker, sound, and so on.
5. Proofread all your visual aids to find spelling/grammar errors and typos.
6. Bring all the materials you may need to make your visual aid work: tape/tacks for posters and pictures, computer cables/adaptors, and so on. Don't assume these materials will be provided.
7. Have a backup plan in case your visual aid doesn't work properly

Using Presentation Slides

Source

Ever since the 1990s and the mainstreaming of personal computer technology, speakers have had the option of using slide presentation software to accompany their speeches and presentations. The most

commonly known one is PowerPoint, although there are several others:

- Prezi.
- Slide Rocket
- Google Slides, available in Google Drive and useful for collaborative assignments
- Keynote, the Apple presentation slide software on MACs
- Impress, an Open Office product
- PrezentIt
- AdobeAcrobat Presenter
- ThinkFree

These products, some of which are offered free for trial or basic subscriptions (called a “freemium”), allow you to present professional-looking slides. Each one is “robust,” a word used to mean it has a large number of functions and features, some of which are helpful and some of which are distracting. For example, you can use the full range of fonts, although many of them are not appropriate for presentations because they are hard to read. In this section we will discuss the proper use of presentation slides, with the assumption that you understand the basics of cutting, pasting, inserting, etc. involved in these products. You may have taken a class in high school where you learned to use the technology, but that is not the same as learning to use them for actual presentations.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Presentation Slides

In some industries and businesses, there is an assumption that speakers will use presentation slides. They allow visualization of concepts, they are easily portable, they can be embedded with videos and audio, words can dance around the screen—why wouldn’t a speaker use them? You will probably also be expected to have slide presentations in future assignments in college. Knowing how to use them, beyond the basic technology, is vital to being a proficient presenter.

But why not use them? Franck Frommer, a French journalist and communication expert, published the book *How PowerPoint Makes You Stupid* (2012), whose title says it all. He criticizes the “linearity” of PowerPoint and similar presentation software, meaning that audiences are not encouraged to see the relationship of ideas and that PowerPoint hurts critical thinking in the audience. Slide follows slide of bulleted information without one slide being more important or the logical connections being clear.

As recently as the mid-2000s, critics such as well-known graphic expert and NASA consultant Edward Tufte (2005) charged that PowerPoint’s tendency to force the user to put a certain number of bullet points on each slide in a certain format was a serious threat to the accurate presentation of data. As Tufte put it, “the rigid slide-by-slide hierarchies, indifferent to content, slice and dice the evidence into arbitrary compartments, producing an anti-narrative with choppy continuity.”

Tufte argues that poor decision making, such as was involved with the 2003 space shuttle *Columbia* disaster, may have been related to the shortcomings of such presentation aids in NASA meetings. While more recent versions of PowerPoint and similar programs allow much more creative freedom in

designing slides, this freedom comes with a responsibility—the user needs to take responsibility for using the technology to support the speech and not get carried away with the many special effects the software is capable of producing.

It should be mentioned here that Prezi helps address one of the major criticisms of PowerPoint. Because Prezi, in its design stage, looks something like a mind map on a very large canvas with grid lines, it allows you to show the relationship and hierarchy of ideas better. For example, you can see and design the slides so that the “Big Ideas” are in big circles and the subordinate ideas are in smaller ones.

In addition to recognizing the truth behind Frommer’s and Tufte’s critiques, we have all sat through a presenter who committed the errors of putting far too much text on the slide. When a speaker does this, the audience is confused—**do they read the text or listen to the speaker? An audience member cannot do both.** Then, the speaker feels the need to read the slides rather than use PowerPoint for what it does best, visual reinforcement and clarification. We have also seen many poorly designed PowerPoint slides, either through haste or lack of knowledge: slides where the graphics are distorted (elongated or squatty), words and graphics not balanced, text too small, words printed over photographs, garish or nauseating colors, or animated figures left up on the screen for too long and distracting the audience. What about you? Can you think about PowerPoint “don’ts” that have hurt your reception of a presentation or lecture? This would be a good discussion for class, and a good way to know what not to do with your own slides.

Creating Quality Slide Shows

Slides should show the principles of good design, which include unity, emphasis or focal point, scale and proportion, balance, and rhythm (Lauer & Pentak, 2000). Presenters should also pay attention to tone and usability. With those principles in mind, here are some tips for creating and then using presentation software.

Unity and Consistency

Generally it is best to **use a single font** for the text on your visuals so that they look like a unified set. Or you can use two different fonts in consistent ways, such as having all headings and titles in the same font and all bullet points in the same font. Additionally, **the background should remain consistent**, whether you choose one of the many design templates or if you just opt for a background color.

In terms of unity, the adage, “Keep It Simple, Speaker” definitely applies to presentation slides. Each slide should have **one message, one photo, one graphic**. The audience members should know what they are supposed to look at on the slide. A phrase to remember about presentation slides and the wide range of design elements available is “Just because you can, doesn’t mean you should.”

Another area related to unity and consistency, as well as audience response, is the use of animation or movement. There are three types of animation in slideshows. First, you can embed little characters or icons that have movement. These may seem like fun, but they have limited use and should not stay on

the screen very long—you can use the second type of animation to take them off the screen.

That second type is the designed movement of text or objects on and off the screen. Although using this function takes up time in preparing your slides, especially if you want to do it well and be creative with it, it is very useful. You can control what your audience is seeing. It also avoids bringing up all the text and material on a slide at one time, which tempts the audience again to pay more attention to the screen than to you. Movement on the screen attracts attention, for better or worse. PowerPoint, for example, allows bouncing words, pulsating text, swirling phrases, even *Star Wars* scroll, which may or may not serve your purpose.

The third type of animation is called slide transitions, which is the design of how the next slide appears. In PowerPoint you can have the slides appear automatically or as blinds, as little checkerboards, from different sides of the screen, in opening circles, etc. (You can also use sound effects, but that is strongly discouraged.) In Prezi, the slides transition by zooming in and out, which is a clever effect but does make some audience members experience motion sickness. In general, **you want to use a consistent and efficient pattern of movement with the second and third types of animation.**

Emphasis, Focal Point, and Visibility

Several points should be made about how to make sure the audience sees what they need to see on the slides.

1. It is essential to **make sure the information is large enough for the audience to see**; and since the display size may vary according to the projector you are using, this is another reason for practicing in advance with the equipment you intend to use.
2. A standard rule is for text is 6 X 4. Have **no more than 6 horizontal lines** (this does not mean bullet points, but lines of text, including the heading) and the **longest line should not exceed 4 (or 5) words.**
3. **Avoid too many slides.** Less sometimes really is more. Again, there is no hard and fast rule, but a ten-minute speech probably needs fewer than ten slides, unless you can make a good argument for more based on the content of the speech. If, however, the slides are just text, more than ten is too many.
4. **Do not assume that all the templates feature visible text.** Text should not be smaller than 22 point font for best visibility, and some of the templates use much smaller fonts than 22 point. This is especially important in those situations where the speaker creates handouts. Text smaller than 22 is very difficult to see on handouts of your slides. (However, handouts are not recommended for most situations.)
5. **High contrast between the text and slides is extremely important.** White fonts against very dark backgrounds and black fonts against very light backgrounds are probably your safest bet here. Remember that the way it looks on your computer screen is not the exactly how it will look when

projected—the light is coming from a different place. Avoid words on photos. Figure 9.21 shows a photo with the words placed across the center of the image. Not only does this obviously obscure some of the picture, it also makes the words difficult to read. Figure 9.22, by contrast, has the accompanying text placed just below the image, making both much easier to see, and a citation is provided.

Garamond. Merriam-Webster (2018) defines “serif” as “any of the short lines stemming from and at an angle to the upper and lower ends of the strokes of a letter.” Serifs are additions to the letters on different fonts that give them a different appearance and help the flow of eye when reading.

Tone

Fonts, color, clip art, photographs, and templates all contribute to **tone**, which is the attitude being conveyed in the slides. If you want a light tone, such as for a speech about cruises, some colors (springtime, pastel, cool, warm, or primary colors) and fonts (such as Comic Sans) and lots of photographs will be more appropriate. For a speech about the Holocaust, more somber colors and design elements would be more fitting, whereas clip art would not be.

Scale and Proportion

Although there are several ways to think about scale and proportion, we will discuss three here. First, bullet points. **Bullet points infer that the items in the bulleted list are equal and the sequence doesn’t matter.** If you want to **communicate order or sequence or priority, use numbers.** Do not mix outline points or numerical points with bullet points. Also, **you should not put your outline (Roman numerals, etc.) on the slide.**

Bullet points should be short—not long, full sentences—but at the same time should be long enough to mean something. In a speech on spaying and neutering pets, the bullet point “pain” may be better replaced with “Pet feels little pain.” Second, when you are designing your slides, it is best to choose a template and stick with it. If you input all your graphics and material and then change the template, the format of the slide will change, in some cases dramatically, and you will have distorted graphics and words covered up. You will then have to redesign each slide, which can be unnecessarily time-consuming.

The third aspect of scale and proportion is the relationship between the graphics and text in terms of size. This aspect is discussed below in the next section on “Balance.” Also, a graphic should be surrounded by some empty space and not just take up the whole slide.

Balance

In general you want symmetrical slides. Below are four examples of slides that are unbalanced, and a fifth that achieves a better symmetry and design.

Block	of	Text:	This	sl
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Job Interview Tips

- During a job interview you should be sure to smile, show up on time, ask questions, have researched the company, dress appropriately, let the interviewer take the lead, expect a tour of the company or facility, get the name of the interviewer and use it frequently.



ide does not break the text up into bullets and is therefore hard to read; the graphic is strangely small, and the heading is in a different font. Script fonts are often hard to read on screens.

Job Interview Tips

- Be on time
- Smile
- Ask questions



Unbalanced: This slide leaves too much 'white space' below the text, leaving an imbalance between the text and graphic; the graphic goes up into the title, and the title is not centered.

JOB INTERVIEWING TIPS

- Here are some things you should do in an interview



During a job interview you should be sure to smile, show up on time, ask questions, have researched the company, dress appropriately, let the interviewer take the lead, expect a tour of the company or facility, get the name of the interviewer and use it frequently.

Busy: This slide is far too “busy.” The additional clip art is not helpful, the font is too small, and the ideas are disconnected. Having text in all caps is also difficult to read.

Job Interviewing Tips

- Arrive on time
- Ask Question
- Smile Frequently
- Use the Interviewer's Name
- Expect a tour



Better: This version provides more visual balance and has minimal words per bullet. A photograph would probably have worked better than clip art on this slide. It also has a few typos—can you find them?

Rhythm in Presenting

The rhythm of your slide display should be reasonably consistent—you would not want to display a dozen different slides in the first minute of a five-minute presentation and then display only one slide per minute for the rest of the speech. Timing them so that the audience can actually take them in is important. Presenters often overdo the number of slides, thinking they will get a better grade, but too many slides just causes overkill.

If you can obtain a remote mouse to change slides, that can help you feel independent of the mouse

attached to the computer. However, you have to practice with the remote “clicker.” But if you have to use the mouse to change slide, keep your hands off of it between clicks. We have seen students wiggle the little arrow all over the screen. It is extremely annoying.

Whether using a remote “clicker” or the attached mouse, you must attend to the connection between what is on the screen and what you are actually talking about at the moment. Put reminders in your notes about when you need to change slides during your speech.

For better or worse, we have become very screen-oriented in our communication, largely because screens change often and that changing teaches us to expect new stimuli, which we crave. If the screen is up but you are not talking about what is on the screen, it is very confusing to the audience.

If you are using PowerPoint and if you are not talking about something on a slide, hit the “B” key or the blank screen button on the remote mouse.

This action will turn the screen to black. You can also hit the “W” key, which turns the screen to white, but that will make the audience think something is coming. Unfortunately, the downside of the “B” key action is that it will return you to the previous screen. To avoid this, some presenters put a black slide between slides in the presentation so that hitting the forward key gives the same effect, but hitting it again takes them to a new screen. (Other programs have similar functions; for example, if using Prezi, the “B” key also shows a black screen.)

In fact, a basic presentation rule is to only show your visual aid when you are talking about it, and remove it when you no longer are talking about it. Some other practical considerations are as follows:

1. Be sure the file is saved in a format that will be “readable” on the computer where you are presenting. A common example is that a Keynote presentation (Apple) does not open on all PCs. You can save Keynote as a .ppt file for use on a PC. Likewise, if you chose to use Prezi or other web-based presentation software, you will need a strong, reliable Internet connection to show the slides.
2. Any borrowed graphic must be cited on the slide where it is used; the same would be true of borrowed textual material.
3. A very strong temptation for speakers is to look at the projected image rather than the audience during the speech. This practice cuts down on eye contact, of course, and is distracting for the audience. Two solutions for that are to print your notes from the presentation slides and/or use the slides as your note structure. Also remember that if the image is on the computer monitor in front of you, it is on the screen behind you.
4. Always remember—and this cannot be emphasized enough—technology works for you, not you for the technology. The presentation aids are aids, not the speech itself.
5. As mentioned before, sometimes life happens—technology does not work. It could be that the projector bulb goes out or the Internet connection is down. The show must go on.
6. If you are using a video or audio clip from an Internet source, it is probably best to hyperlink the URL on one of the slides rather than minimize the program and change to the Internet site. You can do this by highlighting a key word on the slide, right clicking to find “hyperlink,” and

then pasting the URL there. Although you can also embed video in a PowerPoint, it makes the file extremely large and that may cause problems of its own.

7. Finally, it is common for speakers to think “the slide changes, so the audience know there is a change, so I don’t need a verbal transition.” Please do not fall into this trap. Verbal transitions are just as, and maybe more, necessary for a speech using slides.

Media Attributions

- text in block
- too much white space
- too busy
- better balance

"Section 10.2 - 10.4". [Communication in the Real World](#). Anonymous Publisher & Author.

Tucker, B. ; Barton, K. ; Burger, A ; Drye, J. ; Hunsicker, C.; Mendes, A. ; and LeHew, M. , "[Exploring Public Speaking: 4th Edition](#)" (2019). *Communication Open Textbooks*.

Chapter 9: Interviewing in Organizations

A. Interviewing Skills; Interviews & the Law

B. Responding as the Applicant

Chapter 10 Training Sessions

A training session teaches employees how to do something: respond to customer complaints, create excel spreadsheets, avoid or deal with sexual harassment, etcetera. To develop an effective training sessions, workplace-learning professionals (i.e., trainers) typically use the following steps: 1. Analyze the organizational needs, 2. Develop a learning outcome, 3. Develop content and materials, 4. Implement the training session, 5. Evaluate results.



INSTRUCTURE

10.1 Analyzing Need & Creating Learning Outcomes

1. **Analysing organizational need:** During this initial stage, training professionals determine what issue(s) needs to be addressed in the organization (e.g., organizational structures, skill gaps, employee relations, etc), who needs to be trained and what these employees need to be able to do. To do this, they will perform tasks such as talking with the management and employees about the organization (e.g., interviews, focus groups, surveys), reviewing documents within the organization (e.g., organizational mission statement, policies/procedures, production reports), and observing the business of the organization for a period of time (e.g., direct observations, job shadow). After thoroughly understanding the organization (including its overall management philosophy) and the training focus(es), training professionals move to the next step of the process: creating learning outcomes.
2. **Creating learning outcome (s):** Learning outcome are the framework for the training session, identifying what employees will be able to **do** after engaging in the training session.

The training session learning outcomes should be concise, measureable, and identify one major job-related outcome. When writing the outcome statement begin with the wording “ After completing this training session, employee-learners will be able to.....”

Vague learning outcome: After completing this training session, employee-learners will be able to deal with customer complaints and act professional.

There are many ways an individual may interpret what it means to “act professional”, thus this learning outcome is not sufficiently measureable as written

Better learning outcome. After completing this training session, employee-learners will be able to use skills of responding nondefensively to criticism when dealing with difficult customers.

Because there are a specific set of skills for responding nondefensively to criticism (e.g., skills in this reader), one can identify whether employees use these skills after a training session, thus this is measurable.

10.2 Developing Training Session Content & Materials

Developing the training session includes creating content-scripts (i.e., the instruction a trainer will provide the participants before they begin their active learning), selecting learning activities (strategies), developing materials for the training session, and creating an employee-learner post-test to assess learning at the end of the training session.

Developing a training sessions involves preparing materials that help employee-learners actively process the material to achieve the learning outcomes. Examples of adult learner active learning strategies include: small group exercises, games, case studies, role-play, simulations, and observations.

Keep the following points in mind when creating learning activities for employee-learners:

1. Materials should be clearly relevant to their work.
2. Give them opportunities to experience the principles you are introducing.
3. Develop training materials that take into account their level of experience and expertise.
4. Be prepared to modify your training session while implementing based on the employee-learners needs.

10.3 Implementation & Assessment

quired is available ahead of time. It is also a good idea to preview the space for the training session to assess whether you can engage the employee-participants the way you'd like (e.g., Are desks movable?).

Before conducting the training session, trainers should ask themselves the following questions: 1. Do I know what the learning outcome is for the session? 2. Do I have the appropriate training materials developed and ready for use? 3. Have I created learning activities (strategies) that meet the needs of employee-learners?, 4. Do I have an effective post-session assessment tool?

On the day of the training session, arrive at the space early so that you can arrange the room the way you need and get any audio-visual equipment set up. Greet the employee-learners as they enter the room and encourage them to talk with one another to develop rapport. Before launching into the content review and activities for the session make sure to clearly explain the learning outcome for the training session.

As you wrap-up, make sure to summarize the training session by once again stating the learning outcome and reviewing how the activities the employee-learners engaged in developed this outcome.

At the end of a training session, facilitators often conduct an assessment to measure whether participants can demonstrate the learning outcome. Assessments may take the form of a skills check, written exam, oral demonstration.