Sixth Canadian Edition

Business Communication

BUILDING CRITICAL SKILLS

BRAUN • LOCKER • KACZMAREK

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Kathryn Braun
Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

Kitty O. Locker
The Ohio State University

Stephen Kyo Kaczmarek
Columbus State Community College

Mc Graw Hill Education

Business Communication: Building Critical Skills
Sixth Canadian Edition

ISBN-13: 978-1-25-908909-1
ISBN-10: 1-25-908909-6

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 WEB 1 9 8 7 6

Printed and bound in Canada

Director of Product Management: Rhondda McNabb
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Cover and Interior Design: Michelle Losier
Cover Image: © Getty Images/Royalty Free
Composition: Tom W. Dart
Printer: Webcom, Ltd.

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About the Authors

Kathryn Braun is a professional writer, editor, and training facilitator specializing in plain language, business communications, and interpersonal leadership skills. Kathryn taught business communications, critical thinking, and rhetoric and composition at Sheridan Institute of Technology. She trains public- and private-sector clients in business and technical report writing, proposal writing, web writing, revising and editing techniques, active listening strategies, influencing others, interpersonal skills, negotiating and reducing conflict, communicating non-verbally, power reading strategies, and designing and delivering persuasive presentations. Kathryn has an MA in English and is Myers-Briggs certified.

Kitty O. Locker was an Associate Professor of English at The Ohio State University, where she taught courses in workplace discourse and research methods. She had taught as Assistant Professor at Texas A&M University and the University of Illinois at Urbana. She received her BA from DePauw University and her MA and PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana. Her consulting clients included Abbott Laboratories, AT&T, and the American Medical Association. She developed a complete writing improvement program for Joseph T. Ryerson, the largest steel materials service centre in the USA. In 1994–95, she served as President of the Association for Business Communication (ABC). From 1997–2000, she edited *The Journal of Business Communication* for ABC. She received ABC's Outstanding Researcher Award in 1992 and ABC's Media Gibbs Outstanding Teacher Award in 1998. Kitty Locker passed away in 2005.

Stephen Kyo Kaczmarek is an Associate Professor at Columbus State Community College and a Lecturer at Ohio State University. He teaches courses in business communication, composition, creative writing, freshman experience, film and literature, globalization and culture, and public relations. He has also taught public relations at Ohio Dominican University. Steve received an MA in English and BAs in journalism and English from Ohio State. He has presented papers at conferences of the Association for Business Communication (ABC), College English Association of Ohio (CEAO), and Conference on College Composition and Communication. His consulting clients include Nationwide Insurance, Red Capital Mortgage Group, and United Energy Systems. He also advises individual clients on job search and interviewing techniques.

Preface

The Sixth Canadian Edition of *Business Communication: Building Critical Skills* provides a plain-language, practical approach to building communication competencies.

This edition builds on the outstanding features of the previous five editions:

- The **PAIBOC** ("payback") **model** emphasizes the rhetorical analysis necessary for all successful communication. PAIBOC prompts students to consider **P**urpose, **A**udiences, **I**nformation, **B**enefits, **O**bjections, and **C**ontext to create audience-centred messages. Effective communicators use PAIBOC analyses to think, listen, read, speak, and write for intended results.
- **Current examples of Canadian experience** demonstrate communication theory in action.
- The **modular format** offers teaching/learning flexibility: easily tailored to any course length or organization, the modules can be taught in any order.

Our Audience

Context creates meaning: people learn best when the context is familiar and relevant. This edition continues to provide contemporary Canadian illustrations, references, examples, and stories, with emphasis on communication strategies for techno-savants.

Responding to Teacher and Student Needs

The Sixth Canadian Edition of *Business Communication: Building Critical Skills* reflects the suggestions of teachers across Canada. I am indebted to these reviewers whose constructive comments inform both the form and the content of the revisions.

As a result of reviewer suggestions

- Text design and plain language increase readability.
- Dozens of new visuals reinforce student comprehension and retention.
- Text and exercises focus on new/social media business communication.
- Every module introduces successful young Canadian entrepreneurs whose stories demonstrate practiced communication skills.
- Updated A Question of Ethics situations, critical thinking questions, and end-of-chapter exercises challenge students' cultural assumptions.
- Revised content order increases clarity and coherence.
- E-communications strategies emphasize how the medium shapes the message.
- Icons embedded in each module refer users to relevant exercises and create opportunities for immediate application.

Ex 1.7, 1.8

The Sixth Canadian Edition

Module 1: Introducing Business Communications

- Describes the employability skills employers seek
- Demonstrates the interdependence of communication skills and workplace success
- Describes the conventions of business communications
- Challenges students to analyze social media as a business communication medium

Module 2: Adapting Your Messages to Your Audience

- Describes how context and culture create meaning
- Illustrates the variety of audiences who might evaluate a business message
- Provides essential strategies for audience analysis
- Challenges students to analyze diverse audiences, including social media contacts

Module 3: Communicating Culturally

- Expands the exploration of intergenerational communication
- Introduces new metaphors for intercultural communication (linear-active, multi-active and reactive), based on the work of British linguist Richard D. Lewis
- Challenges students to examine their own cultural assumptions and biases

Module 4: Planning, Writing, and Revising

- Provides proven revising, editing, and proofreading techniques
- Expands information on overcoming writer's block
- Describes how to assess message readability level
- Challenges students to use both right- and left-brain techniques in creating notes

Module 5: Designing Documents, Slides, and Screens

- Provides examples from a variety of industries to demonstrate how design creates meaning
- Challenges students to analyze the rhetorical purposes of design choices

Module 6: Communicating Electronically

- Emphasizes the importance of PAIBOC analysis in all electronic communication
- Describes the context for social media, including tweeting and blogging
- Challenges students to analyze the medium according to the message

Module 7: Composing Informative and Positive Messages

- Explores the social and technological reasons for brevity in business messages
- Analyzes social media "tone"
- Challenges students to apply PAIBOC analysis to a variety of communication situations

Module 8: Composing Negative Messages

- Provides annotated examples of "no" messages
- Provides a **PAIBOC** problem for analysis
- Challenges students to apply PAIBOC analysis to social media messages
- Challenges student to analyze how social media can be used for cyber bullying

Module 9: Composing Persuasive Messages

- Emphasizes how businesses use social media to sell their brand
- Provides a **PAIBOC** problem for analysis
- Challenges students to analyze when and how social media is used inappropriately

Module 10: Communicating Audience Benefits

- Demonstrates how PAIBOC analysis matches Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs
- Describes how to translate features into benefits
- Challenges students to analyze the ego needs of social media users

Module 11: Communicating with Positive Emphasis

- Discusses the rhetorical purposes of positive emphasis
- Describes how social media contributes to the sharing economy
- Challenges students to think critically about common social media messages

Module 12: Communicating Using You-Attitude

- Discusses the rhetorical purposes of you-attitude in business
- Describes how to revise for you-attitude through layout, organization, and language
- Challenges students to analyze how layout, language and media create tone

Module 13: Researching

- Demonstrates how to use Wikipedia to find other relevant resources
- Details the process of preparing to take notes
- Challenges students to evaluate electronic resources
- Challenges students to create and analyze their own online survey

Module 14: Summarizing and Documenting Information

- Describes the advantages of taking notes by hand
- Describes how to précis information
- Challenges students to analyze social media plagiarism
- Challenges students to document social media sources

Module 15: Writing Information Reports

- Describes reports in the context of **PAIBOC** analysis
- Details how to create purpose statements
- Provides a variety of information report models
- Challenges students to report on a social media policy

Module 16: Writing Proposals and Analytical Reports

- Defines analytical reports
- Provides numerous models of analytical reports and proposals
- Challenges students to analyze the readability of popular social media reportage

Module 17: Writing Formal Reports

- Describes formal reports
- Provides a formal business report model describing a communications plan
- Challenges students to write a formal report based on both primary and secondary resources

Module 18: Using Visuals to Tell Stories

- Describes how visuals tell stories
- Provides numerous visual examples
- Challenges students to analyze unethical visuals
- Challenges students to create visuals for Module 17's formal report

Module 19: Listening Actively

- Describes active listening
- Contrasts active listening with poor listening habits

Module 20: Working and Writing in Teams

- Details behaviours of successful team members
- Describes the process of collaborative writing
- Challenges students to analyze their negotiating and team work skills

Module 21: Planning, Managing, and Recording Meetings

- Describes and compares physical and virtual meeting management
- Challenges students to analyze current virtual meeting software

Module 22: Making Presentations

- Details how to create and deliver successful presentations
- Challenges students to use social media to enhance audience engagement
- Challenges students to create a presentation evaluation matrix

Module 23: Researching Jobs

- Describes how to network via social media
- Describes how employers use social media
- Challenges students to use a variety of e-resources to collect career information

Module 24: Creating Persuasive Resumés

- Details current resumé formats
- Challenges students to identify their accomplishments in terms of their audience(s)
- Challenges students to create a persuasive digital resume

Module 25: Creating Persuasive Application/Cover Letters

- Describes how to target specific companies in the job search
- Challenges students to use collaborative software to elicit feedback on their writing
- Challenges students to create job application materials that distinguish them positively

Module 26: Managing the Interview Process

- Explains how to prepare an interview strategy
- Describes how to prepare for behavioural, situational, phone, and video interviews
- Challenges students to research electronic resources to develop a personal interview strategy

Appendices A and B: Revising and Editing Resources

- Provides specifics on how to create clear, concise, comprehensive, and correct prose
- Identifies the common errors of adult writers and describes how to correct them
- Challenges students to apply their learning through numerous exercises

Features of the Sixth Canadian Edition

Plain Language

The use of clear language increases readability and demonstrates effective business communication.

Preparing to Make Notes
Recording information efficiently and effectively enables you to remember, understand, and retrieve your research. Creating useful notes is a critical information-processing skill.

To begin the process, and save time and energy with good preparation

- *Define your purpose*. We take different notes for different purposes. Why are you making notes? How are you going to use the notes? How is the information important? What is valuable, and why?
- *Listen*. Defining your purpose helps you focus on what you need to listen to. What do you want to take away? What's the situation? Will you be writing a report? Taking an exam? What will you make notes about? What do you want to remember?
- Listen for understanding. What ideas does the speaker emphasize? If you're listening to a prepared lecture or presentation, what ideas does the speaker highlight in the introduction? What does the speaker repeat or stress in the conclusion? What examples and details are relevant to your purpose?

Young Canadians' Stories

Every module includes the story of a young Canadian entrepreneur whose success has been enhanced by outstanding communications skills.

Successful reports deliver audience-focused messages, as Brian Wong, CEO and co-founder of Kiip, demonstrated. "[O]ne of the youngest people to raise venture capital in the world," Brian used infographics to propose to prospective clients that they invest in his "category-creating mobile rewards" business.[1]

Source: Kiip.me

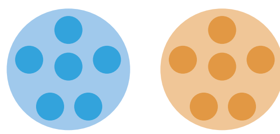
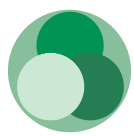
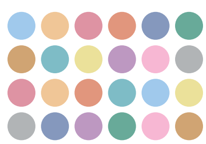
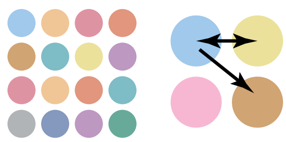
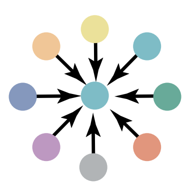
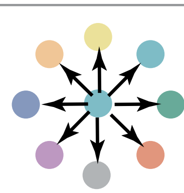
Highly Visual Design

Figures, photos, and tables visually reinforce the concepts in the text to help students learn and retain important concepts and information.

FIGURE 6.10

Twitter's Dominant Discourse Communities: Aerial View

The Six Structures of Twitter Conversation Networks

Network Type	Diagram	Description	Groups	Example
Divided 1		**POLARIZED CROWDS** This type illustrates different groups of Twitter users who discuss polarizing topics. They often rely on different sources of information and commonly do not interact with groups that disagree with them.	2 large	Politics or divisive topics that display separate "echo chamber" structures
Unified 2		**TIGHT CROWDS** This type captures close communities, such as conferences, professional topics, and hobby groups, where participants strongly connect to one another for information, ideas, and opinions.	2–6 medium	Hobbies, professional topics, conferences—no outsiders, all participants are members
Fragmented 3		**BRAND CLUSTERS** This type is formed around products and celebrities. These popular topics attract large fragmented Twitter populations, generating mass interest but little connectivity.	Many small	Brands, public events, popular subjects
Clustered 4		**COMMUNITY CLUSTERS** These groups are created around global news events and popular topics. Communities form around multiple news sources. These community clusters are mostly disconnected from one another.	Many small and medium	Global news events
In-Hub & Spoke 5		**BROADCAST NETWORK** This type is often triggered by news media outlets and pundits who have loyal followers who retweet them. These communities are often star-shaped, as little interaction exists among members of the audience.	1 large, some secondary	News pundits and media outlets, famous individuals
Out-Hub & Spoke 6		**SUPPORT NETWORK** This type is created when companies, government agencies or organizations respond to complaints and customer requests. The company, or hub, account replies to many disconnected users, creating outward spokes.	1 large, some secondary	Companies and services with customer support

Source: Pew Research Center, "The Six Structures of Twitter Conversation Networks," February, 2014, http://pewinternet.org/

Sample Documents

More than 50 sample documents provide examples for students. Annotations call students' attention to exemplary approaches as well as areas for improvement.

FIGURE 8.10

An Unacceptable Solution to the Sample Problem

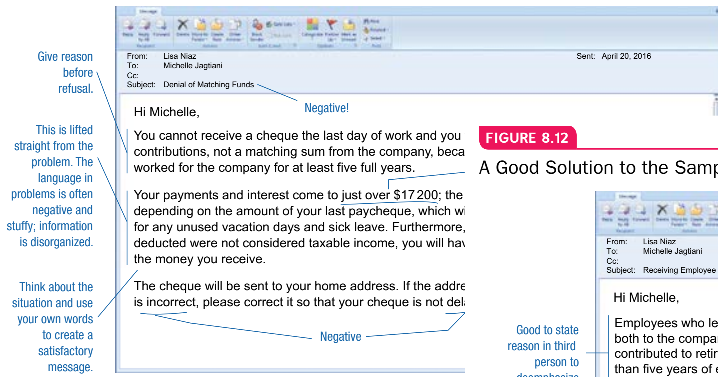
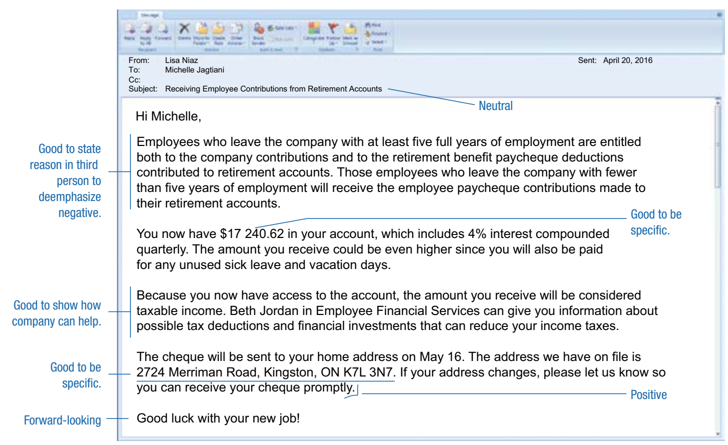


FIGURE 8.12

A Good Solution to the Sample Problem



Expanding a Critical Skill Boxes

Expanding a Critical Skill boxes focus on how a particular skill works in the workplace and suggest ways students can develop these skills.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Taking Great Notes

Note-taking is not duplicating information verbatim, but translating and recording information in a way *that informs you*. The best notes encode and encapsulate meaning. This interpreting and synthesizing process uses both critical and creative thinking skills.

- First, you have to know *why* you are recording the information; then you have to focus on, filter, analyze, organize, and interpret the information to understand *what* you should record (Module 13).
- You use creative thinking when you note the information in a way that is both meaningful and memorable for you.
- Once you have identified your purpose, the context, and the content you want to record, experiment to find the most efficient note-taking system for you.

Try the following strategies.

- Test all available tools. Don't assume that creating e-notes is the best method for you; indeed, research indicates that note-taking by hand offers significant learning advantages (Pamela Meuller and Daniel Oppenheimer, 2014; *Science Daily*, 2011).
- Try
  - ✓ Taking notes in longhand or by stylus
  - ✓ Recording information on small note cards—one idea, quotation, summary, or paraphrase, with bibliographic information, per card; you can then organize your report information by rearranging the cards
  - ✓ Creating doodle notes, jot-dots, clusters
- Use alphabetic shorthand, as you do when you text. For example, you might write "You cite your sources even when you use your own words" as

U cte yr srcs evn whn u uz yr wn wrds

- Use common symbols as a shorthand code.

A Question of Ethics Boxes

A Question of Ethics boxes contain ethics questions based on business, technology, and media concerns relevant to students' lives.

A Question of Ethics: Designing Ethics

You're the business developer on the design and development team for Personal Assistant Robots (PARs). These full-mobility robots will provide live-in support for people, including seniors and people with disabilities. PARs understand instructions, answer doors and telephones, use computers and smartphones, do housework, cook, and clean. What's missing? What ethical responsibilities would you advise your technicians to code into the PARs, and why?[1]

Language Focus Boxes

Language Focus boxes explain the finer points of the English language, and help native English speakers and ESL learners troubleshoot tricky grammar areas.

Language Focus

Good writers do not rely on direct translations from dictionaries. If English is not your first language, it is important to use words and phrases as they are used in North America. Instead of directly translating from your first language, pay close attention to the way native speakers use the language and try to copy it.

Cultural Focus Boxes

Cultural Focus boxes explore North Americans' approach to communication, often in juxtaposition with how other regions in the world communicate in business.

Cultural Focus

Many companies use personality assessment instruments—such as Myers-Briggs, DISC, or The Keirsey Temperament Sorter II (KTS-II)—and informed feedback to help decide whether an employee will fit in with the corporate culture.

Module Summary

Module Summaries provide a concise recap of the key concepts presented in each module.

Unit 3 Creating Audience-Focused Messages

MODULE SUMMARY

- Communicating with you-attitude means consciously writing and speaking in a way that
    - Looks at the situation from the audience's point of view
    - Treats the audience with courtesy
    - Respects the audience's intelligence
    - Protects the audience's ego
    - Emphasizes what the audience wants to know
- You convey you-attitude when you choose organization, content, layout, and appropriate media that meet audience needs and expectations.
- You apply you-attitude in sentences when you
    - Talk about the reader/audience, not about yourself
    - Refer specifically to the audience's request or order
    - Don't talk about feelings, except to congratulate or offer sympathy

Assignments

Each module contains a variety of problems and exercises for in-class activities or homework.

Module 14 Summarizing and Documenting Information

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 14

Questions for Critical Thinking

14.1 What kind of information would you find most difficult to summarize or paraphrase? Why?

14.2 What is unintentional plagiarism? What three strategies can you use to avoid it?

14.3 During a casual lunch conversation, a person at your table makes a comment that gives you a brilliant idea you can use in your report. Should you credit the person? Why or why not?

14.4 How can a researcher using only secondary sources come up with original material?

Exercises and Problems

14.5 Citing Social Media Sources

How do researchers cite and document their social media sources? Research three online sources to find the correct way to cite social media using APA style.

a. Create notes—either electronically or manually—describing how to cite three popular social media sites.

b. Write an email to your instructor describing the process; attach your e-notes or scan your longhand notes.

c. Create a References page to document both your style guides and social media sites. Attach this page to your email.

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- Microsoft PowerPoint Presentations
- Case Studies
- Discussion Topics
- LearnSmart Achieve

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Acknowledgements

This Sixth Canadian Edition is the result of my ongoing collaboration with the McGraw-Hill Ryerson team: Karen Fozard, Senior Product Manager; Robyn Craig, Permissions Editor; Sara Braithwaite, Senior Product Developer; Cathy Biribauer, Supervising Editor; and Judy Sturrup, Copy Editor.

Reviewers' comments and suggestions also contributed to creating this edition. Thank you so much for your generous ideas and expertise to

Katherine Dyck, SIAST

Dorothy Hadfield, University of Waterloo

Brenda Lang, Mount Royal University

Peter Miller, Seneca College

Suzanne Moore, Humber College

Kathryn Voltan, Ryerson University

I am particularly indebted to the interviewees, writers, students, and colleagues who continue to teach me so much.

Kathryn Braun

Kathryn Braun

UNIT 1 Building Effective Messages

Introducing Business Communications

MODULE 1

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 1 you will be familiar with

- LO1 Why we communicate
- LO2 What business communication accomplishes
- LO3 What communication and interpersonal skills employers seek
- LO4 How to begin to analyze communication situations

By applying the information you will be able to

- LO5 Identify the characteristics of effective business messages
- LO6 Analyze communication situations

Module Outline

- Why do we communicate?
- How is business communication different?
- What communications skills are vital for career success?
- How much will I really have to write?
- How much does writing cost?
- What makes a message effective?
- How do effective communicators begin to analyze communications situations?

Module Summary

Assignments for Module 1

Polishing Your Prose: Sentence Fragments

Employability Skills 2000+

The Conference Board of Canada—"an independent, not-for-profit…research organization"[1] for Canadian economic development—identifies these skills as essential for work and personal success. You will build these skills as you apply the interpersonal and communication competencies covered in this text.

Fundamental Skills: *The skills needed as a base for further development*

You will be better prepared to progress in the world of work when you can

COMMUNICATE

- Read and understand information presented in a variety of forms (e.g., words, graphs, charts, diagrams)
- Write and speak so others pay attention and understand
- Listen and ask questions to understand and appreciate the points of view of others
- Share information using a range of information and communications technologies (e.g., voice, email, computers)
- Use relevant scientific, technological, and mathematical knowledge and skills to explain or clarify ideas

MANAGE INFORMATION

- Locate, gather, and organize information using appropriate technology and information systems
- Access, analyze, and apply knowledge and skills from various disciplines (e.g., the arts, languages, science, technology, mathematics, social sciences, the humanities)

USE NUMBERS

- Decide what needs to be measured or calculated
- Observe and record data using appropriate methods, tools, and technology
- Make estimates and verify calculations

THINK AND SOLVE PROBLEMS

- Assess situations and identify problems
- Seek different points of view and evaluate them based on facts
- Recognize the human, interpersonal, technical, scientific, and mathematical dimensions of a problem
- Identify the root cause of a problem
- Be creative and innovative in exploring possible solutions
- Readily use science, technology, and mathematics as ways to think, gain and share knowledge, solve problems, and make decisions
- Evaluate solutions to make recommendations or decisions
- Implement solutions
- Check to see if a solution works, and act on opportunities for improvement

Personal Management Skills: *The personal skills, attitudes, and behaviours that expand your potential for growth*

You will be able to offer yourself greater possibilities for achievement when you can

DEMONSTRATE POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

- Feel good about yourself and be confident
- Deal with people, problems, and situations with honesty, integrity, and personal ethics
- Recognize your own and other people's good efforts
- Take care of your personal health
- Show interest, initiative, and effort

BE RESPONSIBLE

- Set goals and priorities balancing work and personal life
- Plan and manage time, money, and other resources to achieve goals
- Assess, weigh, and manage risk
- Be accountable for your actions and the actions of your group
- Be socially responsible and contribute to your community

BE ADAPTABLE

- Work independently or as a part of a team
- Carry out multiple tasks or projects
- Be innovative and resourceful: identify and suggest alternative ways to achieve goals and get the job done
- Be open and respond constructively to change
- Learn from your mistakes and accept feedback
- Cope with uncertainty

LEARN CONTINUOUSLY

- Be willing to learn and grow continuously
- Assess personal strengths and areas for development
- Set your own learning goals
- Identify and access learning sources and opportunities
- Plan for and achieve your learning goals

WORK SAFELY

- Be aware of, and act in accordance with personal and group health and safety practices and procedures

Teamwork Skills: *The skills and attributes needed to contribute productively*

You will be better prepared to add value to the outcomes of a task, project, or team when you can

WORK WITH OTHERS

- Understand and work within the dynamics of a group
- Ensure that a team's purpose and objectives are clear
- Be flexible: respect, be open to, and be supportive of the thoughts, opinions, and contributions of others in a group
- Recognize and respect people's diversity, individual differences, and perspectives
- Accept and provide feedback in a constructive and considerate manner
- Contribute to a team by sharing information and expertise
- Lead or support when appropriate, motivating a group for high performance
- Understand the role of conflict in a group to reach solutions
- Manage and resolve conflict when appropriate

PARTICIPATE IN PROJECTS AND TASKS

- Plan, design, or carry out a project or task from start to finish with well-defined objectives and outcomes
- Develop a plan, seek feedback, test, revise, and implement
- Work to agreed quality standards and specifications
- Select and use appropriate tools and technology for a task or project
- Adapt to changing requirements and information
- Continuously monitor the success of a project or task and identify ways to improve

LO1 Why Do We Communicate?

We communicate to connect.

We communicate because we have an innate need to make meaning. This need drives us to express ourselves in myriad ways. And the more skillful we grow at communicating, the more valuable we feel and the more we excel in our careers.

We communicate best when we (1) consider the results we want and (2) adapt our message content, tone, style, and medium to the needs of our audience. Successful communication with others (getting the results we want) includes persuasion: we cannot get what we want unless and until we understand and meet what the other person wants or needs.

Digital Vision

Office of the Mayor, City of Calgary

Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi used a variety of channels—including social media platforms Facebook and Twitter—to create a community response during Alberta's flooding and winter weather crises of 2013–2014. Citizens' testimonials to Nenshi focus on his communication skills: he "speaks authentically…while being relatable, eloquent, educated, and poised."[2]

LO2 How Is Business Communication Different?

Business communication uses specific conventions to get the job done.

Ex. 1.3, 1.2, 1.5

All good communicators understand the importance of audience. However, effective business communications conform to specific conventions of medium, format, style, and tone to meet audience needs as efficiently as possible. (For an overview, see Figure 1.1.)

Most successful organizations doing business in North America value time as a commodity. For people in these businesses "time is money"; their primary need is to get the message across, clearly and completely, the first time.

Business communications—oral, nonverbal, and written—reach both internal and external audiences. Internal audiences (Figures 1.2 and 1.3) are other people in the same organization: subordinates, superiors, and peers. External audiences (Figure 1.4) are people outside the organization: customers, suppliers, unions, stockholders, potential employees, government agencies, the press, and the public. Whatever the organization, its number-one business is reaching these audiences. Social media has only served to increase the amount of and accountability for all business communications.

Royalty Free/Corbis

FIGURE 1.1

Business Communication Conventions, North American Style

Emphasis	Medium	Format	Elements of Style	Tone
Written	• Email memos and letters • Hard copy memos and letters	Defined by organizational culture/ software	Salutation; simple, concrete language; short sentences and paragraphs; white space and bullets/numbers for emphasis; headings to guide the reader; direct or indirect method of development; friendly; close	Polite but neutral; memos go to internal audiences/ letters to external audiences; however, people in positions of power—the boss or the client—establish the tone
	• Website	Defined by organizational culture and evolving technology	Visual-heavy, short sentences, direct development	Positive and persuasive
	• Intranet	Defined by organizational culture and technology	Dependent on organizational culture	Positive and pro-organization
	• Texts	Defined by technology	Informal, direct and concise; conventions of grammar, punctuation, and spelling ignored for immediacy and clarity	Direct and often brusque
	• Social Media	Defined by platform apps	Dependent on platform and user purpose	Chatty, informal, and inclusive
Oral, Nonverbal	• Face to face • Telephone • Electronic and in-person meetings	Space, time, and behaviours defined by participants' individual and organizational cultures	Emphasis is on multitude of symbols: language and paralanguage, eye contact, facial expressions, and body language	Friendly, informal, and polite; first-name basis; however, people in positions of power—the boss or the client—establish the tone

Cultural FOCUS

In North America and northern Europe people feel that time can be measured and is valuable, and all activities are scheduled accordingly. (Even children's playtime is scheduled.) Not only do we believe time is money, but we also believe we can "spend time," "waste time," and "save time." Because of this, North Americans believe business communication needs to be clear and concise—to avoid the waste of valuable "on" time.

FIGURE 1.2

Internal Audiences of a Small Information Technology Business

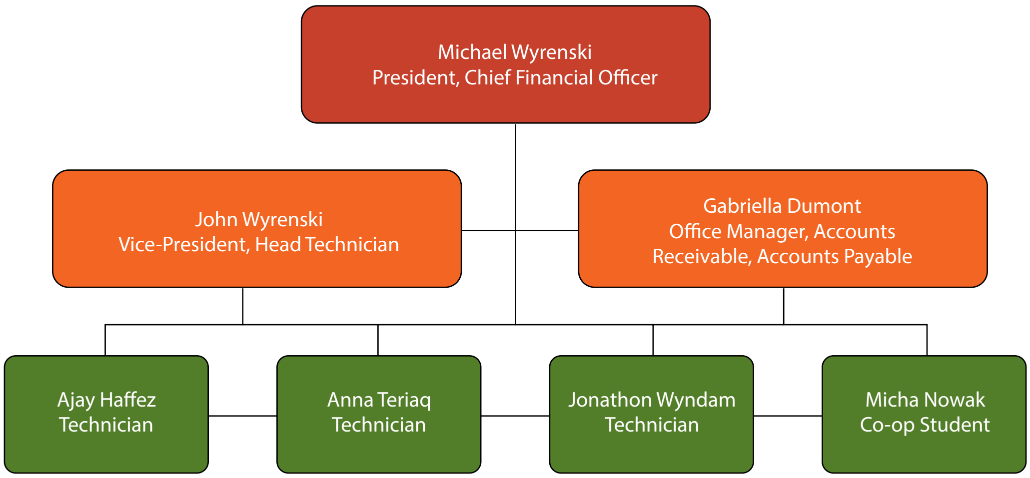


FIGURE 1.3

Examples of Business Communication with an Internal Audience

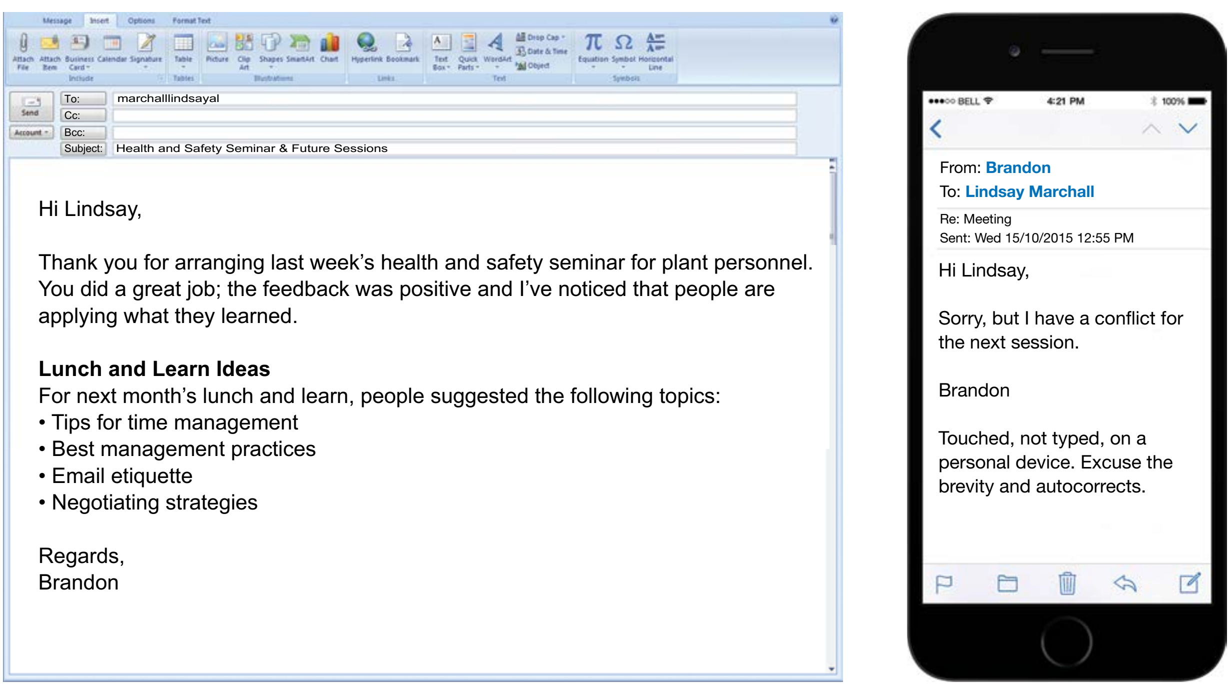
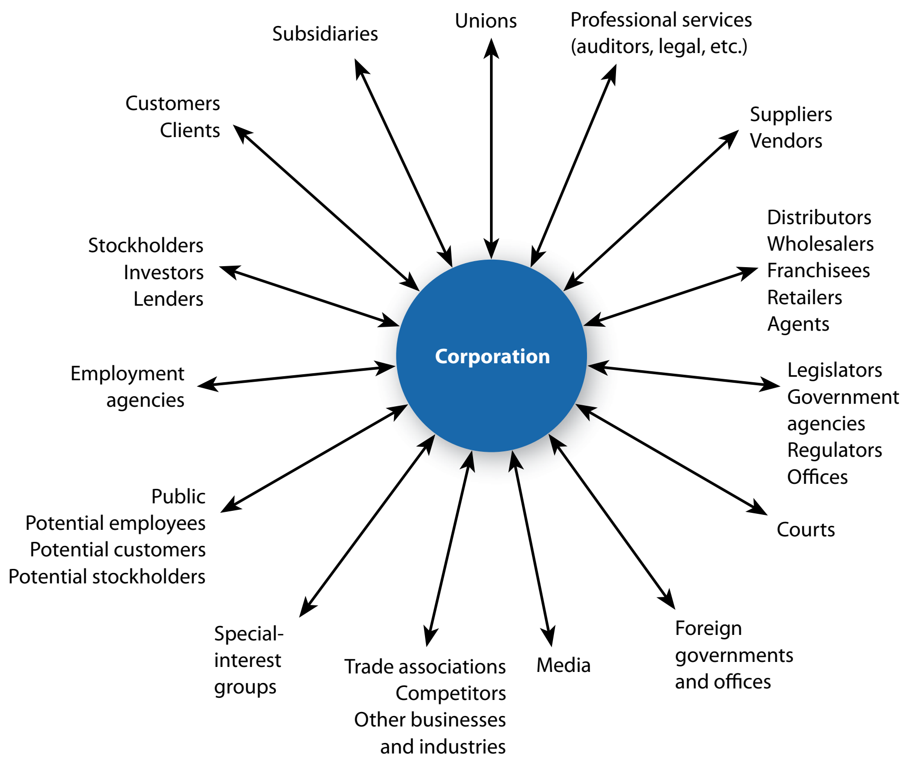


FIGURE 1.4

Potential External Audiences



Source: Daphne A. Jameson.

Today's employees use an ever-expanding variety of media and strategies to communicate effectively with internal and external audiences. Employers expect that even those in entry-level positions will know how to interpret comments from informal channels (such as the company grapevine), to speak effectively to customers and colleagues, to work well in small groups, and to write well.

LO3 What Communications Skills Are Essential for Employment?

Effective listening, reading, speaking, interpersonal, and writing skills are vital.

Ex. 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8

Listening, reading, speaking, writing, and working in groups are all part of everyday business practice. In every job, you need to listen to others to find out what you are supposed to do, to learn about the organization's culture and values, and to establish and maintain work relationships.

You need to read a variety of informal and formal documents, including text messages, emails, blogs, industry journals, newspapers, magazines, instructions, and reports in order to keep current with your job and your industry.

Your interpersonal communications skills connect you to the grapevine, an informal source of organizational information. Moreover, networking—including using social media—and working with others, both inside and outside your workplace, are crucial to developing relationships and to your personal and professional growth.

Business, government, and not-for-profit organizations—in fact, all organizations—also depend on written messages. People in organizations produce written documents for the record, to inform, request, or persuade. When you write to inform, you tell or explain something to your readers; when you write to request or persuade, you want your readers to do something.

However, the primary purpose of business messages is to build and maintain relationships with readers. The best business messages create a positive image of their writers, and of their organizations, so that readers will want to do business with them.

Language FOCUS

To **hear something through the grapevine** means you have heard news informally from another person. Other, similar idioms you may hear are "the office scuttlebutt" or "news from around the water cooler." Many idioms and buzzwords are used in everyday business conversation. Because not everyone understands these expressions, when you are working with people who are not native English speakers, you may need to adapt your language to communicate.

A Question of Ethics: Data Mining

Without informing users, Facebook conducted an experiment to determine if emotions are transferable through social media: "…for one week in January 2012, [Facebook]…altered the number of positive and negative posts in the news feeds of 689,003 randomly selected users to see what effect the changes had on the tone of posts the recipients then wrote."[3] Researchers found that yes, indeed, negative posts promoted an increased number of negative posts, and positive posts elected more positive posts. Questions remain: What is the information for? How ethical is gathering information without knowledge and consent?

How Much Will I Really Have to Write?

You will have to write a lot. Luckily, you already do.

Ex. 1.5–1.11

People in organizations have always written to create a record, to convey complex information, to make things convenient for readers, to save money, to make themselves visible, and to express their ideas more effectively. Now, however, people write more than ever because technology has transformed workers' roles and responsibilities.

Almost every entry-level professional or managerial job requires employees to write memos and email messages, and to work productively in small groups. Child- and health-care workers, tradespeople, and technicians routinely write incident reports and instructions.

For example, engineering firms today expect even their junior engineers to manage projects and write reports. In response to industry complaints about graduates' poor communications skills, universities across Canada now emphasize writing and leadership

Imran Amed by Thomas Lohr

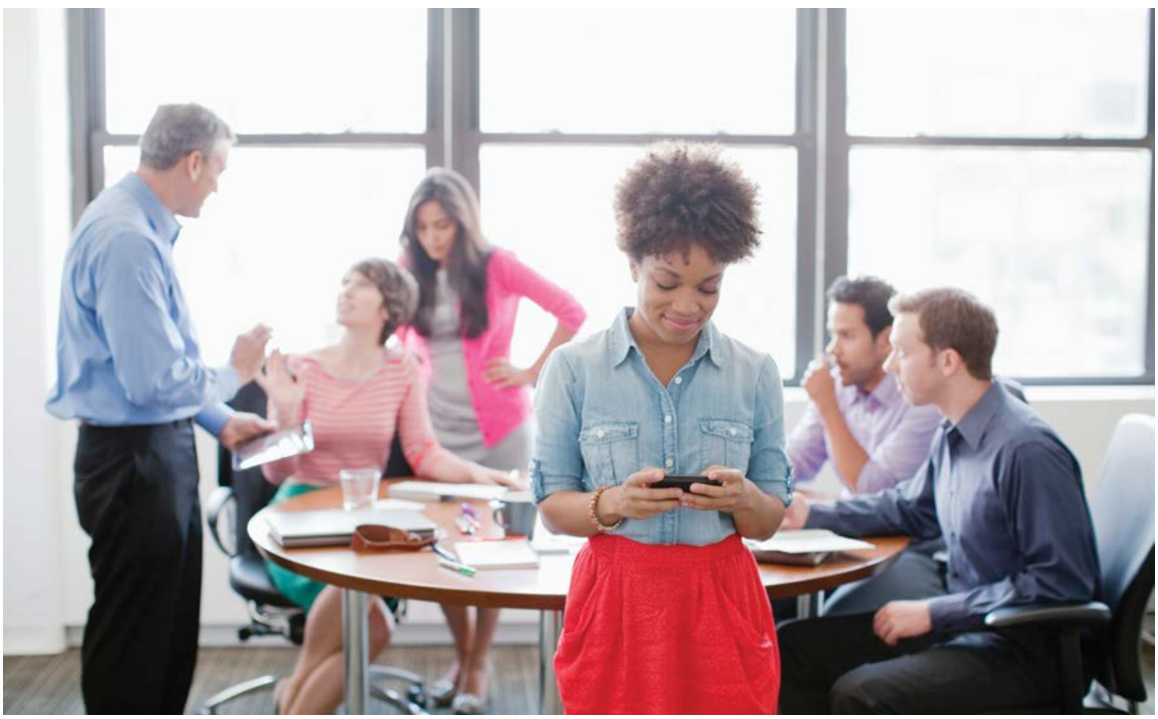
On his website, The Business of Fashion, Calgarian Imran Amed combined his business training and fashion interest to herald fashion trends. Imran now lives and works in London while The Business of Fashion continues to be a must-read for anyone in the fashion industry.

courses in their undergraduate engineering programs. According to Gabriel Desjardins, a Queen's University computer engineering graduate working in California's Silicon Valley, "Engineers with excellent writing skills are often promoted over people with superior technical skills."[4]

Moreover, international literacy surveys consistently find a "clear link" between literacy and employment, with "document literacy" proficiency (the ability to read and write well) corresponding most strongly to higher employment rates and higher salaries.[5] To remain competitive in the global market, according to employers, Canadian professionals must be competent in business basics that include "reading, writing, document use, numeracy, oral communications, thinking, digital technology, working with others and continuous learning."[6]

Ex. 1.7, 1.8

Fortunately, you already write a lot—to a variety of audiences—in texts, tweets, websites, and blogs. These media provide plenty of writing practice and, when audience-centred, can build careers.



©Blue Images/CORBIS [format as Source line]

People communicate to influence others; to plan; to create products and services; to hire, train, and motivate workers; to coordinate manufacturing and delivery; to persuade customers to buy; and to bill for the sale.

How Much Does Writing Cost?

Business correspondence is very expensive, and even more so when it doesn't work.

Writing is essential to doing business, and writing costs money. If a $60,000-a-year-employee spends 35 percent of work time writing, that's an annual cost of $21,000.[7] That amount does not account for the time writers spend revising, editing, and proofreading.

Furthermore, in many organizations, managers must approve all external documents before they go out. A document might cycle from writer to superior, back to writer, then to another superior, and back to the writer again three, four, or more times before it is finally approved. This cycling process increases the cost of correspondence.

Poor writing costs even more. When writing isn't clear, complete, and correct, you and your organization pay in wasted time, wasted effort, and lost customers.

Poor Writing Costs Everyone

Ex. 1.6

- Poor writing
  - ✓ Takes more time to read and interpret
  - ✓ Requires more time for revisions
  - ✓ Confuses and irritates the reader
  - ✓ Delays action while the reader requests more information or tries to figure out the meaning

Quite simply, ineffective messages get negative results. A reader who has to guess what the writer means may guess wrongly. A reader who finds a letter or memo unconvincing or insulting won't do what the writer asks.

Whatever the literal content of the words, every letter, memo, report, text, or tweet serves either to enhance or to hurt the image the reader has of the writer. Poor messages damage business relationships.

Good communication is worth every minute it takes and every penny it costs. In fact, "[e]ffective employee communication is a leading indicator of financial performance."[8] Consulting firm Watson Wyatt Worldwide's research confirms that organizations that communicate effectively profit dramatically over those that do not. Effective communication translated into a 19.4 percent higher market premium, over 57 percent higher shareholder returns, and reports of higher morale and higher employee retention.[9]

Good Writing Benefits Everyone

- Good writing
  - ✓ **Saves time**, because well-written correspondence is easy to read and respond to
  - ✓ **Saves money**, because effective writing increases the number of requests answered positively and promptly the first time, and presents your point of view—to other people in your organization; to clients, customers, and suppliers; to government agencies; and to the public—more persuasively
  - ✓ **Saves energy**, because effective messages reduce the misunderstandings that occur when the reader has to supply missing or unclear information, and because good writing clarifies the issues so that disagreements can surface and be resolved more quickly
  - ✓ **Builds goodwill**, because it projects a positive image of your organization and an image of the writer as a knowledgeable, intelligent, capable person

LO5 What makes a message effective?

Successful messages build goodwill by focusing on the reader.

An effective, reader-centred business message meets five criteria.

1. The message is **clear**: the writer chooses the information—and the structure and language to convey that information—that enable the reader to get the meaning that the writer intended.

2. The message is **concise**: the writer conveys maximum meaning using as few words as possible.
3. The message is **comprehensive**: the style, organization, medium, and visual impact of the message help the reader to read, understand, and act.
4. The message is **complete**: the reader has enough information to evaluate the message and act on it.
5. The message is **correct**: the information in the message is accurate and is free of errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar, word order, and sentence structure.

An effective message initiates or builds a positive relationship between the writer and the reader (Figure 1.3).

LO4 LO6 How Do Effective Communicators Begin to Analyze Communication Situations?

They consider the context!

Ex. 1.1, 1.5, 1.7–1.11

Before you write—or listen, speak, or read—you need to analyze and understand the situation. What do you really want to happen as a result of your communication? How can you get the results you want?

Communication has consequences. To get the results you want, consider these questions.

- **Why should the communication happen? What is my purpose?** Am I conveying instructions? Building relationships? Managing a crisis?
- **How should my information be conveyed?** Considering the sensitivity of the message, what medium best meets my purposes and the audience needs: Face to face? Phone? Email? Text? Tweet?
- **What do I want to happen as a result of this communication?** Is my goal to make a favourable impression? Do I want to inform or to confirm plans? Do I want to change attitudes and behaviours? What do I really want as a result?
- **Who's my audience?** What do they already know? What do they need to know to make a decision? What are their wants and needs? What do they value? What's in it for them?
- **Where will the communication happen?** Do I have the best possible environment for maximum meaning transfer? For example, if I am trying to resolve a conflict, should I speak face to face with my audience? When reading complicated material, have I found a quiet space? If my message is confidential, have I chosen a method that offers maximum privacy?
- **When will the communication happen?** What time of day and what length of time have I chosen to deliver the message? When will the audience really be able to pay attention to my message? If I am reading difficult material, when am I most alert to absorb it? What is the best time of day for my team to meet for highest productivity?

In every communication situation, your success depends on thinking strategically. You must think both critically and creatively to get the results you want. Use the PAIBOC ("payback") questions (Figure 1.5) to analyze the communication context and to consider your message from your audience's point of view. Then get creative: brainstorm solutions that might resolve the situation and meet the psychological needs of the people involved.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Thinking Creatively

Ex. 1.4, 1.8

Since change is the only certainty in today's workplace, the ability to bring a fresh perspective to situations is essential for career success. For example, more and more companies are relying on innovative interviewing and hiring practices, such as behavioural and speed interviewing, to find suitable employees. Some recruiters ask prospects to submit taped presentations; young, entrepreneurial companies such as 1-800-Got-Junk? interview several candidates together and choose the most impressive people for further interviews.

Innovative solutions come out of preparedness: you generate insights best by immersing yourself in the situation. And, like any skill, creative, right-brain, and lateral thinking can be learned with practice. Improve your flexible thinking by approaching even mundane tasks in new ways: brush your teeth with your non-dominant hand, for example. When you are writing, don't wait for ideas or for the perfect sentence: free write for ten minutes, or visualize your thoughts on paper with doodles and shapes.

To help find that fresh perspective, change the place, pace, and practice.

- Leave the office
- Lose the mobile device
- Make the time to be by yourself
- Move—walk, run, do jumping jacks
- Record—by handwriting or drawing—your thoughts and impressions

Moe Doiron/The Globe and Mail Inc./The Canadian Press

Start a blog and have something interesting to say. Ex-Torontonian Christian Lander originated the blog *Stuff White People Like* in January 2008. The satiric postings attracted thousands of hits and comments, and proved so popular that two months later Random House paid Landers over $300,000 to write a book based on his blog. Currently working on his PhD, Lander writes for MTV.

Sources: Kate Murphy, "The Fear of having Real 'Me' Time." *The New York Times International Weekly*, August 9–10, 2014, p. 13.

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Language FOCUS

You **brainstorm** when you generate every possible idea on a topic, no matter how silly or far-fetched. Critical analysis begins only after you have expressed every solution you can think of. **Mind-mapping** uses visuals to outline or cluster, and solve problems, and is covered in Module 4.

FIGURE 1.5

PAIBOC Questions for Analysis

Use the PAIBOC ("payback") questions to analyze business communication problems.	
P	What are your **purposes** in writing?
A	Who is your **audience**? How do members of your audience differ? What audience characteristics are relevant to this particular message? Most important: what's in it for your audience to pay attention to your message?
I	What **information** must your message include?
B	What reasons or reader **benefits** can you use to support your position?
O	What **objections** can you expect your readers to have? What negative elements of your message must you de-emphasize or overcome?
C	How will the **context** affect the reader's response? Think about your relationship to the reader, the time of day and time of year, the medium—including its limitations—the morale in the organization, the economy, and any special circumstances.

P What are your **purposes** in writing or speaking?

What must this message do to solve the problem? What must it do to meet your own needs? What do you want your audience to do, think, know, or feel? List all your purposes, major and minor. Specify exactly the images of yourself and your organization you want to project. Answer this question: What do I want to happen as a result of this message?

Even a simple message might have several related purposes: to announce a new policy, to make readers aware of the policy's provisions and requirements, to convince readers that the policy is a good one, to tell readers that the organization cares about its employees, and to show readers that you are a competent writer.

A Who is your **audience**? How are readers going to feel about your message? What are readers' expectations? What do they care about? What do they value? What's in the message that will appeal to them?

How much does your audience know about your topic? How will audience members respond to your message? Focus on audience characteristics that matter for this message. Whenever you write to several people or to a group (for example, a memo to all employees or a blog), try to identify the economic, cultural, or situational differences that may affect how various subgroups will respond to what you have to say.

Audience expectations are shaped by technology. What media do your audiences use? What media work best for your audience? How will your choice of media affect your audience's response to the message? Texting might be your medium of choice. But texting might be inappropriate for your audience and/or for the information.

I What **information** must your message include?

Make a list of the points that you must include; check your draft to make sure you include them all. If you're not sure whether a particular fact must be included, ask your peers, instructor, or boss. Look at the information from the audience's point of view.

B What reasons or reader **benefits** can you use to support your position?

Brainstorm to develop reasons for your decision, the logic behind your argument, and possible benefits to readers if they do as you ask. Reasons and reader benefits do not have to be monetary. Making the reader's job easier or more pleasant is a good reader benefit. For an informative or persuasive message, identify at least five reader benefits. In your message, use the ones that you can develop most easily and most effectively.

Be sure that the benefits are adapted to your reader. The fact that your company benefits from a policy will help the reader only if the saving or profit is passed on directly to the reader. That is rarely the case: savings and profits are often eaten up by returns to stockholders, bonuses to executives, and investments in plants and equipment or in research and development.

O What **objections** can you expect your reader(s) to have? What negative elements of your message must you de-emphasize or overcome?

Some negative elements can only be de-emphasized. Others can be overcome. Be creative: is there any advantage associated with (even though not caused by) the negative? Can you rephrase or redefine the negative to make the reader see it differently?

To include information without emphasizing it, put it in the middle of a paragraph or document, and present it as briefly as possible.

C How will the **context** affect the reader's response? Think about audience expectations, your relationship with the audience, the medium, the morale in the organization, the economy, the time of year, and any special circumstances.

Readers might like you or they might resent you. You might be younger or older than the people you're writing to. The organization might be prosperous or going through hard times; it might have just been reorganized or it might be stable. All these different situations will affect what you say and how you say it.

Consider the news, interest rates, the economy, and the weather. Think about the general business and regulatory climates, especially as they affect the organization specified in the problem. Use the real world as much as possible. Is the industry in which the problem is set doing well? Is the government agency in which the problem is set enjoying general support? Think about the time of year. If it's fall when you write, is your business in a seasonal slowdown after a busy summer? Gearing up for the holiday shopping rush? Going along at a steady pace unaffected by seasons?

To answer these questions, draw on your experience, your courses, and your research. Talk to other students, read newspapers and magazines, search the Internet, and look at a company's annual report. You may want to contact a local businessperson to get information. For instance, if you need more information on reader benefits for a problem set in a bank, call a local bank representative.

The remaining modules in this book will show you how to use PAIBOC analysis to create business messages that meet your needs, the needs of the audience, and the needs of the organization.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Although technology has transformed our expectations about *where*, *when*, and *how* we communicate, we still communicate because of our innate need to make meaning.
- Business communication creates, promotes, sells, and delivers products, services, and information.

- In a business context, people write for the record, and to communicate with global audiences simultaneously and instantly.
- Business communication uses specific conventions of formatting, style, and medium.
- The most successful communicators make conscious, informed choices, based on their analysis of purpose and audience: they know that they can only get what they want when they understand and acknowledge what their audience wants.
- PAIBOC analysis helps you to make conscious rhetorical choices about *what*, *when*, and *how* you communicate to achieve your purposes and build positive relationships with your audiences.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 1

Questions for Critical Thinking

1.1 Analyze the following email from CANWE Mobile. Be specific. What is the purpose of the email? Describe the audience. How do you know? Why is the message an email? What grade would you give this message, using the criterion of meaning making? Is the message clear, concise, comprehensive, complete, and correct?

THANKS!

Hey there, Irniq Uyarasuk

Just a quick note that we got your payment.

Maybe you want to keep this email for your records and stuff.

Kisses and Hugs,

The CANWE Mobile Team

Confirmation ID	**234456**
Transaction date	**August 8, 2015**
Bill	**544392447** - $72.32
Amount paid	$72.32
New balance	$0.00

Credit card information

Card type	**MASTERCARD**
Card number	**************5555**
Cardholder	Irniq Uyarasuk
Expiration date	**04/2019**

If you've got any questions, send us a line and make sure to have this transaction ID: 47656695

1.2 How valuable is a person's time in various cultures? Find a business message (written or visual) that demonstrates that the writer's culture values courtesy or consensus over time.

1.3 Identify three major differences between *school* writing and *business* writing.

1.4 What creative breakthroughs have you experienced? Think of a time when you found an innovative solution to a problem. Describe the circumstances, the situation, and the solution.

Exercises and Problems

1.5 Business Communications Analysis

How do we recognize and differentiate business messages from other types of communication? Together with three of your classmates, choose a minimum of four business messages (memos, emails, slide shows, advertisements, LinkedIn or other social media posts, voicemail answering messages, texts, tweets, proposals, flyers, brochures, thank-you postcards), and analyze each for its

- Purpose
- Audience

- Information (content, length)
- Organization
- Style (wording, sentence length, paragraph length)
- Medium
- Layout
- Visuals

Create a table comparing the business messages you have chosen with informal writing found on a site such as Yahoo, or in a celebrity or other personal blog. Be prepared to present and explain your results.

1.6 Social Media Analysis

What businesses rely on social media, and why? How useful are social media as business communications? What are the pitfalls of social media as communication tools?

As your instructor directs, and working with two or three classmates

Choose three examples of business-related social media messages (on, for example, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Technoratimedia, YouTube) for analysis.

- Apply PAIBOC to analyze the success (or failure) of the messages.
- Describe how you would change the messages and/or the medium to meet audience needs.

1.7 Emails for Discussion—Landscape Plants

Your nursery sells plants in-store and online. Today you've received an email from Pat Sykes complaining that the plants (in a $572 order) did not arrive in satisfactory condition: "All of them were dry and wilted. One came out by the roots when I took it out of the box. Please send me a replacement shipment immediately."

The following email letters are possible approaches to answering this complaint. How well does each message meet the needs of the reader, the writer, and the organization? Is the message clear, complete, and correct? Does it save the reader time? Does it favourably influence the reader? Will it keep the reader as a customer?

1. Dear Sir:

   I checked to see what could have caused the defective shipment you received. After ruling out problems in transit, I discovered that your order was packed by a new worker who didn't understand the need to water plants thoroughly before they are shipped. We have fired the worker, so you can be assured that this will not happen again.

   Although it will cost our company several hundred dollars, we will send you a replacement shipment.

   Let me know if the new shipment arrives safely. We trust that you will not complain again.

2. Dear Pat:

   Sorry we messed up that order. Sending plants across country is a risky business. Some of them just can't take the strain. (Some days I can't take the strain myself!) We'll credit your account for $572.

3. Dear Mr. Smith:

   I'm sorry you aren't happy with your plants, but it isn't our fault. The box clearly says, "Open and water immediately." If you had done that, the plants would have been fine. And anybody who is going to buy plants should know that a little care is needed. If you pull by the leaves, you will pull the roots out. Always lift by the stem! Since you don't know how to handle plants, I'm sending you a copy of our brochure, How to Care for Your Plants. Please read it carefully so that you will know how to avoid disappointment in the future.

   We look forward to your future orders.

4. Dear Pat Sykes:

   Please accept my apology for the condition of your order when it arrived. Our goal is always to ensure that our plants reach our customers in the same healthy condition they're in at the time of shipping. Be assured that we are re-processing your order and will send a replacement order of your perennials next week. Your plants were watered carefully before shipment and packed in specially designed cardboard containers. But if the weather is unusually warm, or if the truck is delayed, small root balls may dry out. Perhaps this happened with your plants. Plants with small root balls are easier to transplant, so they do better in your yard.

   The violas, digitalis, aquilegias, and hostas you ordered are long-blooming perennials that will get even prettier each year. Enjoy your garden with the confidence that you have purchased the very best quality plants available.

1.8 Announcing a Web Page

The Acme Corporation, a Canadian copper tubing manufacturer, has just revised its website. Ed Zeplin in Management Information Systems (MIS) created the page (www.server.acme.com/homepage.html) and needs you, the communications officer, to let employees and customers know about it.

As your instructor directs, and working with two or three classmates as your communications team

1. Apply PAIBOC analysis to the situation.
   - What are your purposes and who are your audiences?
   - What information is important?
   - What media would best suit your purposes and audience needs?
2. Write an email to Ed describing your communication plan, and send this to your instructor and classmates as an attachment. Your teacher will provide you with an overview of the memo format. (Also see Modules 6 and 7 for examples of memo formats.) Use a conversational writing style; check your draft to polish the style and edit for mechanical and grammatical correctness.

1.9 Discussing Strengths

Introduce yourself to a small group of students. Identify three of your strengths that might interest an employer. These might be experience, knowledge, or personality traits (such as enthusiasm).

1.10 Introducing Yourself to Your Instructor

Write a memo (at least 1.5 pages long) introducing yourself to your instructor. Include your

- *Background:* Where did you grow up? What have you done in terms of school, extracurricular activities, jobs, and family life?
- *Interests:* What are you interested in? What do you like to do? What do you like to think about and talk about?
- *Achievements:* What achievements have given you the greatest personal satisfaction? List at least five. Include achievements that gave you a real sense of accomplishment and pride, whether or not you'd list them on a resumé.
- *Goals:* What do you hope to accomplish this term? Where would you like to be professionally and personally five years from now?

Use appropriate headings throughout your memo. Use specific details to make your message vivid and interesting. Send your memo as an attachment in an email to your instructor.

1.11 Describing Your Experiences In and Goals For Writing

Write a blog (at least three paragraphs) to your classmates and instructor describing the experiences you've had writing and what you'd like to learn about writing during this course. Prompt yourself by asking

- What would you most like to learn in a writing course? What topics would motivate your interest in writing?
- What memories do you have of writing? What made writing fun or miserable in the past?
- What have you been taught about writing? List the topics, rules, and advice you remember.
- What kinds of writing have you done in school? How long have the papers been?
- How has your school writing been evaluated?
- Did the instructor mark or comment on mechanics and grammar? Style? Organization? Logic? Content? Audience analysis and adaptation? Have you received extended comments on your papers? Have instructors in different classes had the same standards, or have you changed aspects of your writing for different classes?
- What voluntary writing have you done (journals, poems, stories, essays)? Has this writing been just for you, or has some of it been shared or published?
- Have you ever written as part of a job, or a student or volunteer organization? Have you ever edited or typed other people's writing? What have these experiences led you to think about business writing?
- What do you see as your current strengths and weaknesses in writing skills? What skills do you think you'll need in the future? What kinds of writing do you expect to do after you graduate?

If you need help setting up your blog, go to www.blogger.com for step-by-step instructions. Then visit Seth's Blog at http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2008/04/write-like-a-bl.html to review tips for writing effectively. Edit your final draft for mechanical and grammatical correctness.

Read and respond to three other students' blogs. Prepare a five-minute presentation summarizing the students' most positive writing experiences.

Polishing *your* Prose

Sentence Fragments

A sentence has a subject and a verb, and expresses a complete thought. If the subject or the verb is missing, or the idea is unfinished, the result is a sentence fragment.

Going to be in Burnaby April 30.

And buy a hybrid car. Maybe a Saturn.

To fix the fragment, add a subject or a verb to express a complete thought.

When I am in Burnaby April 30, I may buy a Saturn hybrid.

Sentence fragments also occur when there's a subject and a verb but the thought is incomplete.

Although I often wait to make client calls until after 4 p.m.

Because she saved her work.

When he upgrades his computer.

The words *although*, *because*, and *when* begin *dependent clauses*, which means the idea cannot stand alone. It depends on a main, *or independent clause* (idea) for completion.

Although I often wait to make client calls until after 4 p.m., I still get voicemail instead of a real person.

Because she had saved her work, Paula was able to restore it after the crash.

When he upgrades his computer, he will be able to use the new software.

Words that make clauses dependent include

after	**if**
although, though	**when, whenever**
because, since	**while, as**
before, until	

Sometimes fragments work. For instance, fragments are used in texts and tweets, resumés, advertisements, and some sales and fundraising letters. However, fragments are inappropriate for most business documents. Because they are incomplete, they can confuse or mislead readers.

The biggest problem with grammatical errors like sentence fragments is that readers sometimes assume that people who make errors are unprofessional or illiterate. Using incorrect grammar has nothing to do with intelligence; nevertheless, many people use grammar as a yardstick. People who cannot measure up to that yardstick may be stuck in low-level jobs.

Exercises

Find and complete the sentence fragments in the following paragraphs.

1. Because people are constantly fiddling with their smartphones, even during meetings and training sessions. We need to establish some ground rules about checking and rechecking smartphones. Surfing the Web on their laptops. Or phones. Leaving meetings to check email and listen to voicemail messages. I am not convinced that our preoccupation with technology is really saving us time and money. Or contributing to productivity.
2. Since it's only a matter of time before government mandates it, I would appreciate your suggestions for going greener in the office. And in the building itself. While many of you have already taken responsibility for turning off lights, unplugging PCs and the like. We can make even greater, cost-effective changes. And the benefits? Thereby improving morale and employee health. And possibly qualifying for municipal grants.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

Adapting Your Messages to Your Audience

MODULE 2

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 2 you will be familiar with

LO1 The needs of the audiences who may evaluate your business messages

LO2 Variables in the communication process

LO3 The importance of adapting your message to your audience

By applying the information you will be able to

LO4 Analyze your communication audiences

LO5 Begin to shape the content, organization, and form of your messages to meet audience needs

Module Outline

Audience analysis is fundamental to the success of any message: to capture and hold an audience's attention, and to motivate readers and listeners, you must shape your message to meet the audience's interests and needs. Because your audience could be anyone and everyone, thoughtful audience analysis is more important than ever.

LO1 Who is My Audience?

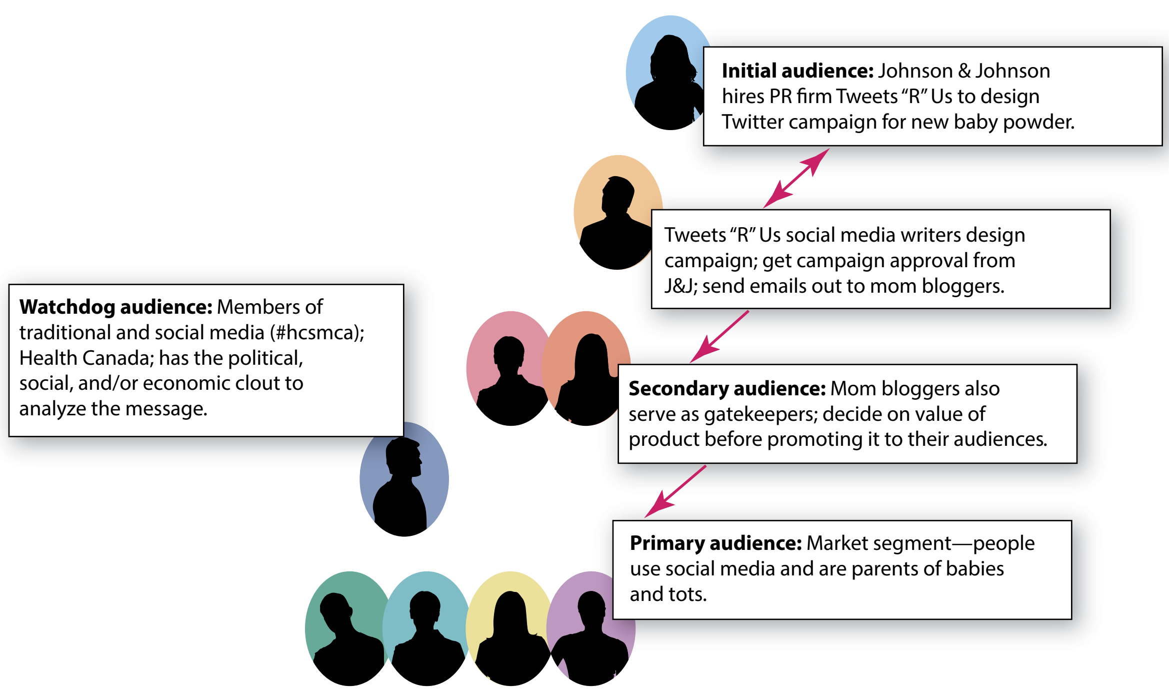
Your audience may include many people. In an organizational setting, a message may have as many as five audiences.

Ex. 2.1, 2.5

1. The **initial audience**—your supervisor or the client, for example—receives the message first and routes it to other audiences. Sometimes the initial audience is the person who directs you to create the message.
2. The **primary audience**—your supervisor, or the client, or your peers—will decide whether or not to act on your message.
3. The **secondary audience** may be asked to comment on your message or to implement your ideas after they've been approved. Secondary audiences can also include lawyers and researchers who use your message—perhaps years later—as evidence of your organization's culture and practices.
4. A **gatekeeper** has the power to stop your message before it gets to the primary audience. The supervisor or executive assistant who decides whether or not you can speak to the boss is a gatekeeper. Occasionally gatekeepers exist outside the organization. For example, regulatory boards are gatekeepers.

FIGURE 2.1

Audiences for a Marketing Campaign

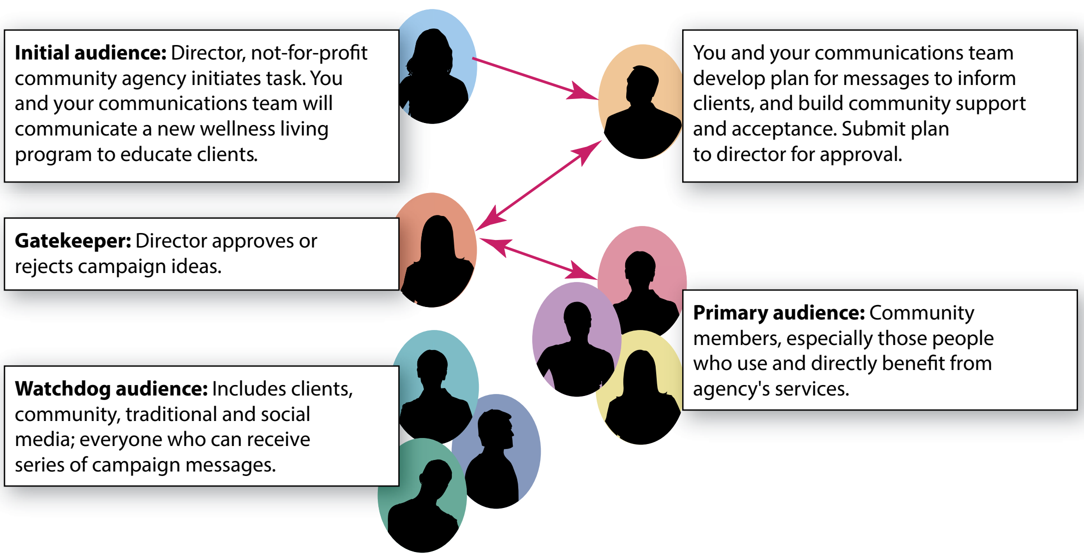


5. A **watchdog audience**—the media, boards of directors, and members of program advisory committees—has political, social, or economic power. The watchdog pays close attention to the communication between you and the primary audience and may base future actions on its evaluation of your message.

As Figures 2.1 and 2.2 illustrate, one person or group can be a member of two audiences. Frequently, a supervisor is both the initial audience and the gatekeeper. The initial audience can also be the primary audience who will act on the message.

FIGURE 2.2

Audiences for a Community Initiative



Language Focus

A **think tank** is a group of people, usually experts in their field, who work together to provide advice. People in the think tank often work for government or business to help solve a problem, such as how new laws will affect a company.

Why Is Audience So Important?

When people know how they'll benefit, they're more likely to pay attention and respond to your message. Successful communicators analyze, identify, and meet the audience's need to know what's in it for them.

Audience focus is central to both the communication process and message analysis (PAIBOC).

LO2 Audience and the Communication Process

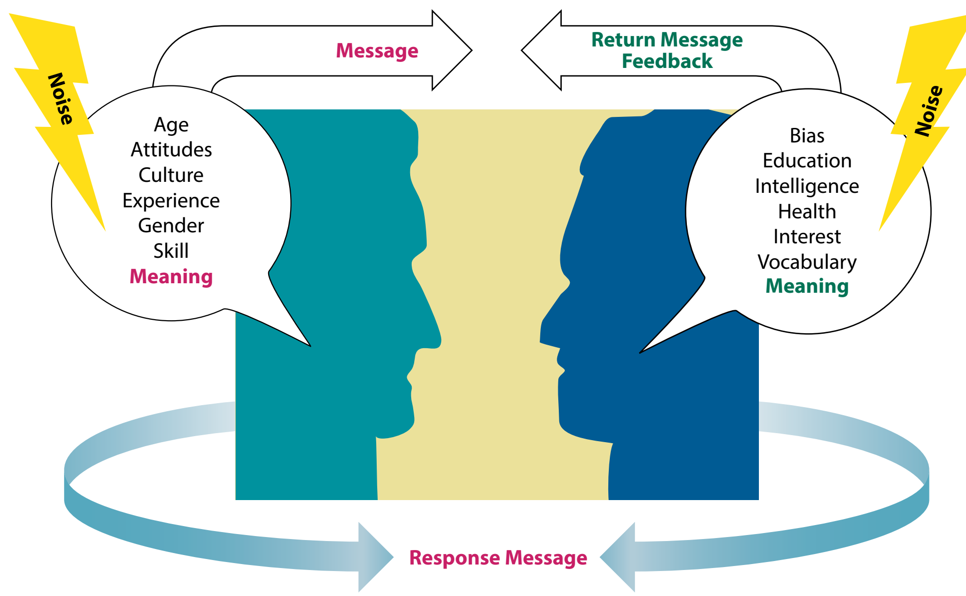
Ex. 2.6–2.12

Successful communication is an exchange of meaning. This meaning transfer is a complex process because each of us is unique and believes his or her own perceptions of reality (meaning) are true; therefore, misunderstandings can occur during any part of the process.

In fact, the communication process is the most complex of human activities, and audience is central to that process. We communicate unceasingly. Our audiences interpret our communication symbols unceasingly. Words, tone, volume and rate of speech, posture, stance and gait, height and weight, hairstyle, hair colour and choice of clothing styles, as well as the materials, colours, smartphones, tablets, and social media we choose—the thousands of symbols we use, intentionally and unintentionally—are translated according to our audience's perceptions. These in turn are shaped by age, gender, culture, intelligence, and the experiences unique to every individual.

FIGURE 2.3

The Communication Process



Throughout the communication process, both sender and receiver interpret and construct meaning. Successful communication occurs when both parties agree on the meaning and significance of the symbols they are exchanging.

For example, suppose you and your friend Mediha are having a cup of coffee together, and you realize you need help studying for the upcoming economics exam. You decide to ask Mediha. You choose to **encode** your request in symbols. What kinds of symbols will you use to convey your meaning? Why?

Once you have chosen your symbols, you must **transmit** your **message** to Mediha via a **channel**. Channels include any of the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste). You can also choose to transmit your message via any number of media, including smartphones, memos, iPods, Twitter, Facebook, press releases, billboards, telephones, television, and radio, to name a few. What channels and media will you use for this particular message, and why?

Mediha must **perceive** the message in order to **receive** it. That is, Mediha must have the physical ability to hear your request. Then she **decodes** your words: she makes meaning from your symbols. Then she interprets the message, chooses a response, and encodes it. Her response is **feedback**. Feedback may be direct and immediate, or indirect and delayed. What kinds of feedback could Mediha use to answer you? What symbols could she use?

Meanwhile, **noise** influences every part of the process. Noise can be physical or psychological. You're talking to Mediha in the cafeteria; the windows are open; both Mediha and you have your smartphones handy. What **physical noises** could interfere with your message?

Psychological noise, including emotional, intellectual, or psychological interference, also distorts communication. What kinds of psychological noise might interfere with your message to Mediha? As an effective communicator, what could you do to reduce or eliminate physical and psychological noise?

Ex. 2.1–2.4

Channel overload occurs when the channel cannot handle all the messages being sent. Two people may be speaking to you simultaneously, or a small business may have only two phone lines, for example.

Information overload occurs when more messages are transmitted than the receiver can handle. Because of technology, information overload is a constant for most of us. Some receivers process information on a "first come, first served" basis. Some may try to select the most important messages and ignore others. Some depend on abstracts or summaries prepared by other people. None of these ways is completely satisfactory.

At every stage, both Mediha and you can misperceive, misinterpret, choose badly, encode poorly, or choose inappropriate channels or media. Miscommunication also frequently occurs because every individual makes meaning using **different frames of reference**. We always interpret messages in the light of our perceptions, based on personal experiences, our cultures and subcultures, and the time in which we live.

Successful communication depends on identifying and establishing **common ground** between you and your audience. Choose information that your audience needs and will find interesting. Encode your message in words and other symbols the audience will understand. Transmit the message along media that your audience pays attention to.

Courtesy of Lee Scott, WoW Company

Walking coach Lee Scott, founder of WoW Power Walking, uses email newsletters, her company website, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and word of mouth to attract clients from all over Ontario. WoW's walkers—men and women of all cultures, ages, and incomes—have finished first in charity events around the world.

Ex. 2.6

Correctly identifying your audience and choosing audience-appropriate symbols (words, gestures, illustrations) and media guarantee a more efficient meaning transfer. Moreover, choosing audience-appropriate symbols and media creates a story that will attract and hold your audience's attention.

LO3 Audience and Business Messages

Consider the PAIBOC questions introduced in Module 1. Five of the six questions relate to audience, *because successful communication is always audience focused.* You must know and understand your audiences to identify the information that will attract and hold their attention and motivate them to comply with your message.

A COMMUNICATION PROBLEM FOR ANALYSIS

You work in a small, not-for-profit agency that supports disadvantaged youth (ages 13 to 19) in your city. Your organization's purpose is to raise public awareness and resources (funding, housing, job training, counselling services, bursaries, scholarships, and jobs) for these young people. Your agency's mandate includes encouraging and educating these youth to (1) assume personal responsibility for their lives and career goals, and (2) give back to the community by modeling leadership skills for and mentoring others.

Your director has decided that the agency will introduce a wellness program to educate your clients about healthy living practices and to encourage them to find ways to adopt these practices. You and your team members must prepare a message—or series of messages—to explain the new wellness program to your youth clients and to build support and acceptance.

FIGURE 2.4

Ex. 2.5, 2.9

PAIBOC Questions for Analysis

P	What are your purposes in communicating? Your purposes come from you and your organization. Your audience determines how you achieve those purposes.
A	Who is your audience? What audience characteristics are relevant to this particular message?

These questions ask directly about your audience.

I	What information must your message include? The information you need to give depends on your audience. You need to add relevant facts when the topic is new to your audience. If your audience is familiar with specific facts, concentrate more on clarifying new information. How you deliver your message(s) also depends on your audience and on your purposes. And how you deliver your information also shapes your audience's reaction to you and the message.
B	What reasons or reader benefits can you use to support your position? Regardless of your own needs, a good reason or benefit depends on your audience's perception. For some audiences, personal experience counts as a good reason. Other audiences are persuaded more by scientific studies or by experts. Module 10 gives more information on developing reader benefits.
O	What objections can you expect your readers to have? What elements of your message will your audience perceive as negative? How can you arrange the message to overcome audience objections or de-emphasize negative elements? Module 9 on persuasion gives more information on overcoming objections.
C	How will the context affect reader response? Consider your relationship to the reader, the reader's values and expectations, the economy, the time of year, the place and time of day, and any special circumstances surrounding the message exchange. People, information, and organizations exist in a context. How well your audience knows you, how they feel about you and your organization, how well the economy is doing, even what's been news recently, all influence audience response to your message.

Based on your PAIBOC analysis

- What information would you include in your message(s)?
- What format(s) would you use for your message(s)?
- What media would you use for your message(s)?"

The Canadian Press/Andrew Vaughan

To raise awareness for ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), athletes, coaches, politicians, and pop culture stars agree to be doused with ice-cold water and then dare others to do the same. The social media story of competition and community created a viral phenomenon and generated millions in donations.

LO4 What Do I Need to Know About My Audience?

You need to know everything that's relevant to what you're writing or talking about.

Almost everything about your audience is relevant to some message, but for any particular message, only a few facts about your audience will be relevant. These facts will vary depending on each communication situation (see Table 2.1).

In general, you need to use empathy and critical-thinking tools. **Empathy** is the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes, to feel with that person. Empathy requires being audience-centred because the audience is *not* just like you.

Ex. 2.7

Critical thinking involves gathering as much information as you can about someone or something, and then making decisions based on that information. You need to use your research and your knowledge about people and about organizations to predict likely responses.

Analyzing Individuals and Members of Groups

When you write or speak to people in your own organization, and in other organizations you work with, you may be able to analyze your audience as individuals. You may already know your audience; it might be easy to get additional information by talking to members of your audience, talking to people who know your audience, and observing your audience.

In other organizational situations, however, you'll analyze your audience as members of a group: inner-city youth dependent on their smartphones and peer groups for information, taxpayers who must be notified that they owe more income tax, customers living in the northeast end of the city, or employees with small children.

TABLE 2.1

Identifying Key Audience Characteristics for Messages

Ex. 2.7, 2.8

Message, Medium, and Purpose	Audience	Relevant Factors
Intranet and corporate blog announcing that the company will reimburse employees for tuition if they take work-related college or university courses	All employees	1. Attitudes toward formal education (some people find courses enjoyable; others might be intimidated) 2. Time available (some might be too busy) 3. Interest in being promoted or in receiving cross-training 4. Attitude toward company (those committed to its success will be more interested in the program)
Twitter, Facebook announcement offering special financing on a new or used car	Postsecondary students	1. Income 2. Expectations of future income (and ability to repay loan) 3. Interest in having a new car 4. Attitude toward cars offered by that dealership 5. Attitude about environmental concerns 6. Knowledge about fuel efficiency and hybrid cars 7. Knowledge of interest rates 8. Access to other kinds of financing
Municipal website and pamphlet describing new methods of waste sorting and collecting	Municipal homeowners	1. Education 2. Attitudes about home ownership 3. Awareness of environment 4. Feelings about neighbourhood and community

Since audience analysis is central to the success of your message, you'll need to consider pertinent information about your audience and their

- Current knowledge about your topic
- Demographic factors, such as age, gender, education, income, class, marital status, number of children, home ownership, location
- Personality
- Attitudes, values, and beliefs
- Past behaviour

CURRENT KNOWLEDGE

Even people in your own organization won't share all your knowledge. Many salespeople in the automotive industry, for example, don't know the technical language of their service mechanics.

Most of the time, you won't know exactly what your audience knows. Moreover, even if you've told readers before, they might not remember the old information when they read the new message. In any case, avoid mind-numbing details. If, however, you want to remind readers of *relevant facts*, tactfully

- Preface statements with *As you know*, *As you may know*, *As we've discussed*, or a similar phrase.

- Spell out acronyms the first time you use them, for example: Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP).
- Provide brief definitions in the text: the principal (the money you have invested).

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Demographic factors can be objectively quantified, or measured, and include age, gender, religion, education level, income, location, and so on.

Businesses and governments use a variety of demographic data to forecast people's behaviours and to design strategies accordingly. For example, in his *Boom, Bust and Echo* books, University of Toronto economics professor David Foot used his analysis of Canada's changing population demographics to identify economic and social trends, particularly the impact of the aging Boomer population. Such analysis affects decisions about every part of our lives, from social policy and urban design to store lighting and aisle width.

Sometimes demographic information is irrelevant; sometimes it's important. Does age matter? Almost always, since people's perspectives and priorities change as they grow older.

If you were explaining a change in your company's pension plan, for example, you would expect older workers to pay much closer attention than younger workers. And you would need to shape your explanation, and choose a variety of media, to appeal to both audiences.

Demographic data has certainly determined the sharp increase in small business start-ups devoted to personal services. For example, the North American concierge industry—providing services from animal care and house-sitting to running errands—thrives because it provides time for busy people. And in the hospitality, real estate, accounting, financial, and personal services industries, businesses that cater to specific populations and ethnic groups flourish.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Understanding What Your Organization Wants

Every workplace has rules about what's important, and the best communicators ferret these out fast. These rules make up the corporate culture (Module 3). Your awareness of the norms of your organizational culture is essential to work-life success.

Even in the same industry, different organizations and different supervisors may care about different things. One boss circles misspelled words and posts the offending messages on a bulletin board for everyone to see. Other people are more tolerant of errors. One company values original ideas, while in another workplace employees are expected just to do what they're told. One supervisor likes technology and always buys the latest hardware and software; another is technophobic and has to be persuaded to get needed upgrades. Private-sector clients value short proposals and reports, preferably in PowerPoint or Prezi; many governments prefer longer, more detailed paper documents.

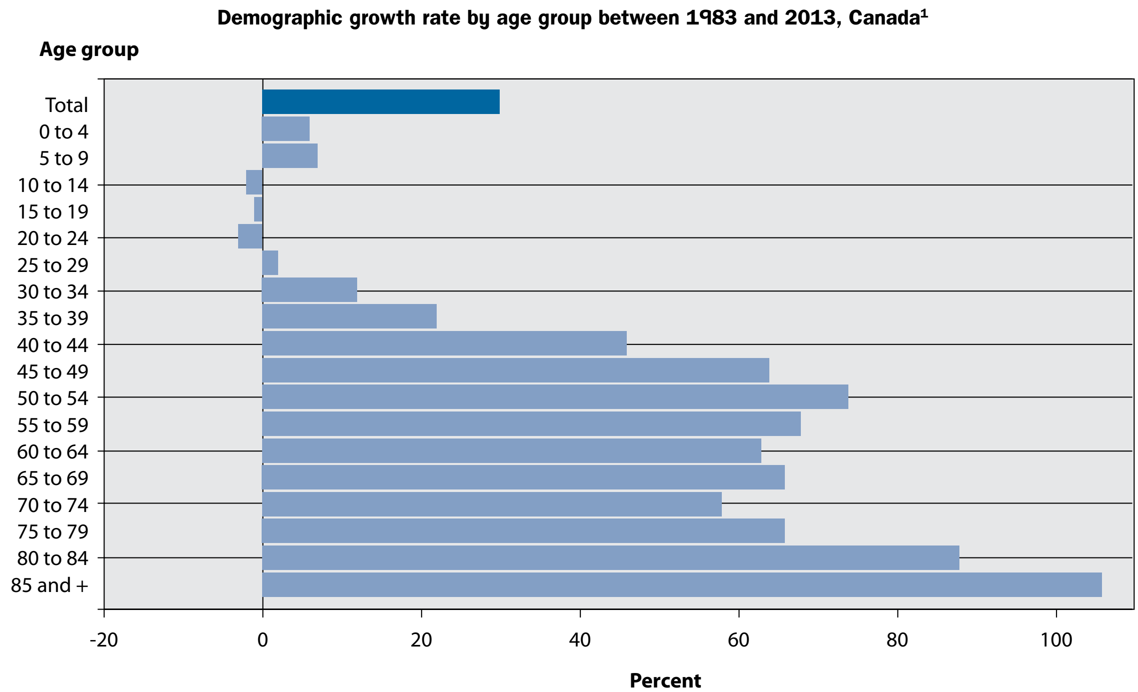
Ex. 2.8, 2.9

To find out what counts in your organization

- Ask your boss: "What parts of my job are most important? What's the biggest thing I could do to improve my work?"
- Listen to the stories colleagues tell about people who have succeeded and those who have failed. When you see patterns, check for confirmation: "So, his real problem was that he didn't socialize with co-workers?" This gives your colleagues a chance to provide feedback: "Well, it was more than never coming to the company picnic. He didn't really seem to care about the company."
- Observe. See who is praised and who is promoted.

TABLE 2.2

Age as a Demographic Factor in Audience Analysis



Source: Statistics Canada. Canada's population estimates: Age and sex, 2013. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of Statistics Canada.

Business and non-profit organizations get demographic data by surveying their customers, clients, and donors, by using Statistics Canada data, or by purchasing demographic data from marketing companies. For many messages, simply identifying subsets of your audience is enough. For example, a school board trying to win support for a tax increase knows that not everyone living in the district will have children in school. It isn't necessary to know the exact percentages to realize that successful messages need to contain appeals not only to parents but also to voters who won't directly benefit from the improvements that the tax increase will fund.

PERSONALITY

Understanding and adapting to your primary audience's personality can also help make your message more effective. You'll be most persuasive if you understand and play to your audience's strengths.

Personality and learning-style assessment tools can provide you with useful insights into your own and others' behaviours. In his bestsellers, *Secrets of Powerful Presentations* and *Leadership from Within*, business consultant Peter Urs Bender says that knowing your audience is key to communication success.

Bender describes four personality types—based on Bolton and Bolton's *Social Style/Management Style: Developing Productive Work Relationships*—and offers a free online assessment for readers to identify their type.[2] Another popular assessment tool, the Keirsey Temperament Sorter, also helps to identify personality preferences.

Cultural Focus

Many companies use personality assessment instruments—such as Myers-Briggs, DISC, or The Keirsey Temperament Sorter II (KTS-II)—and informed feedback to help decide whether an employee will fit in with the corporate culture.

VALUES AND BELIEFS

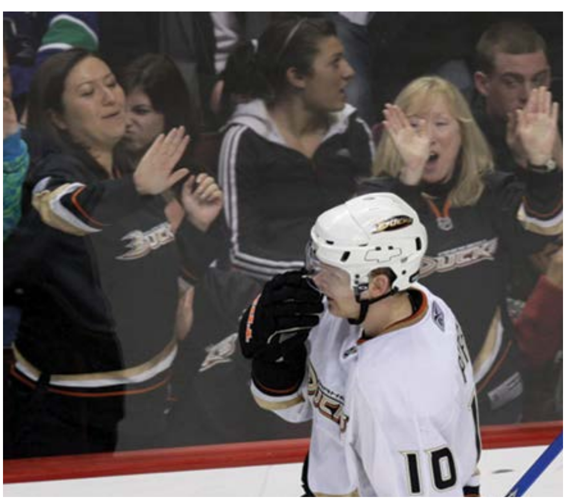
Psychographic characteristics are qualitative rather than quantitative and include values, beliefs, goals, and lifestyles. Knowing what your audience finds important allows you to organize information in a way that seems natural to your audience, and to choose appeals that audience members will find persuasive.

Looking at values enables a company to identify customer segments. The Tim Hortons chain introduces diverse menu items (salads, wraps, paninis) every few months to attract new fast-food clients and to appeal to its original, increasingly weight-conscious customers.

Canadian Tire also remains competitive in a very crowded market through audience analysis. Although still selling automotive and home repair products and services, Canadian Tire has expanded its lines of gardening, landscaping, lighting, furniture, and decorating products in response to Canadians' increasing investment (both emotional and financial) in their homes. And the company catalogue—in print since 1928—is now only online, "an environmentally responsible" move that also appeals to an increasing consumer base.[3]

Marketers also use **geodemographic data** to analyze and appeal to audiences according to where they live and what they buy. Postal-code clusters identify current and potential customers based on two assumptions: (1) people are what they buy, and (2) birds of a feather flock together. In other words, "Our shopping habits are shaped by environment and our desire to belong."[4]

Digital technology continues to refine research methods—and results. Internet, social media and smartphone usage provide researchers with valuable data on consumer values.[5]



The Canadian Press (Darryl Dyck)

The Canadian Press/Associated Press (Anja Niedringhaus)

Discourse communities create meaning and connection through verbal and non-verbal symbols, including uniforms—like these young people walking to school—safety wear, food choices, use of space, observances of religion, attitudes toward time, and levels of courtesy and formality.

A Question of Ethics: Buying Friends

Organizations struggle to keep up with social media messages, and social media platforms themselves still don't have a profitable business model. So who's making the money, and how? Social media promotion firms make millions selling fake friends and followers to "[c]elebrities, businesses and even the U.S. State Department…"[6] Would you buy friends? What might motivate you to purchase phony likes or post bogus reviews? What ethical concerns do these practices raise?

PAST BEHAVIOUR

Experts in human behaviour believe that we can analyze and predict people's future actions based on their past behaviours: the more recent the behaviour, the more accurate the prediction. On this premise, employers are using behavioural-based interviews ("Describe a mistake you made in dealing with people. What did you learn from it?") to assess a candidate's potential.[7] (See Module 26 on interviewing skills.)

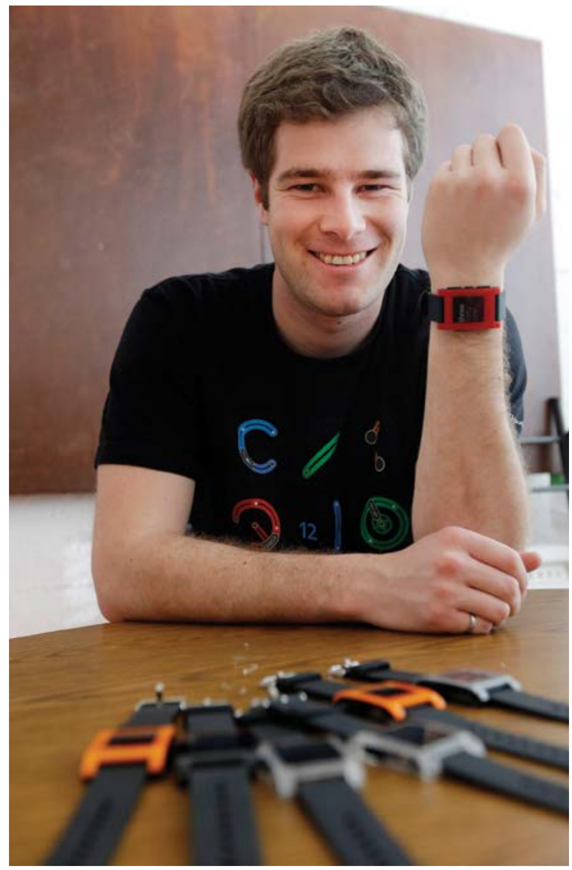
Analyzing People in Organizations

Ex. 2.8–2.11

Audience reaction is also strongly influenced by the perceptions and expectations of the groups to which they belong. These groups are **personal**, **social**, **religious**, **political**, and **class** associations. These groups are known as **discourse communities** because their members create their affiliations, rules, and norms through accepted verbal and non-verbal symbols (discourse).

These groups include family, peers, professional associations, social media sites, clubs, and the workplace—all communities with which members of your audience identify. Members communicate through symbols (language, non-verbals) that may or may not be exclusive to their group, but that identify them as members of that group.

For example, the uniform of a sports team symbolizes association, and the team's name reflects the culture and values members hold. Therefore, *a discourse community is a group of people who share assumptions about their particular culture and values:* what to wear; how to behave; what topics to discuss and how to discuss them; what media, formats, and styles to use; and what constitutes evidence when trying to prove a point. Each person is part of several discourse communities, which may or may not overlap.


Pebble Inc.

Crowd-funding support demonstrates the economic, political and social power of audience. Kickstarter Canada donations for the Pebble watch campaign raised the requisite amount for entrepreneur Eric Migicovsky and his team "in just two hours…After a funding period of 37 days, the Pebble watch drive collected over $10,000,000 thanks to 68,929 backers.[8]

Ex. 2.1

The Internet hosts thousands and thousands of discourse communities, where the audience might, potentially, be the whole world. Social websites such as BallHype, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, IndianPad, and Free IQ are their own discourse communities with their own set of rules; each reflects the values, norms, and expectations of its users. Twitter, for example, limits tweets to 140 characters per message. This limitation defines the kind of discourse, conversation, or meaning members can exchange. And violating the conventions can get you plenty of negative feedback.

Consider your discourse communities. Perhaps you wear jeans to signify your membership in the student community. Your hairstyle or piercing indicates your membership in a subculture. Your iPod holds music that reflects your affiliation to another group. When you go for a job interview, you might get a haircut and put on more formal clothes to reflect the norms of the organization's discourse community that you want to join.

When analyzing an organization's discourse community, both non-verbal and verbal clues offer information about the organization.

- What does the physical environment say about who and what are valued? What departments and services are front and centre? Where is the reception area located? What messages do the decor and furnishings send? How are visitors welcomed? Is the company mission statement prominent? What does the office layout indicate about the organization's values? Where are the library, training rooms, gymnasium, and cafeteria located? How well are they resourced?
- Where do the managers work? Do bosses dress differently from other employees?
- How are employees treated? How are new hires oriented? How is employee performance recognized? What's featured in the company newsletter? How do people in the organization get important information?
- How do people in the organization communicate? What media, formats, and styles are preferred for communication? Do they text, send an email, or walk down the hall to talk to someone? How formal or informal are people expected to be—in their dress, on the telephone, in meetings?
- What do people talk about? What is not discussed?
- What kind of and how much evidence is needed to be convincing? Is personal evidence convincing? Do people need to supply statistics and formal research to be convincing?

An organization's **culture** is expressed through its values, attitudes, and philosophies. Once established, **organizational** or **corporate** culture can shape members' attitudes and behaviours, and become very difficult to change. Organizational or corporate culture reveals itself verbally in the organization's myths, stories, and heroes, and non-verbally in the allocation of space, money, and power (Module 3).

Ex. 2.9–2.11

The following questions will help you analyze an organization's culture.

- What are the organization's goals? Making money? Serving customers and clients? Advancing knowledge? Contributing to the community?
- What does the organization value? Diversity or homogeneity? Independence or being a team player? Creativity or following orders?
- How do people get ahead? Are rewards based on seniority, education, being well liked, making technical discoveries, or serving customers? Are rewards available to only a few top people, or is everyone expected to succeed?
- How formal are behaviour, language, and dress?
- What behavioural expectations predominate? How do employees treat one another? Do employees speak in *I and we*, or *them and us* language? How do employees get organizational information?

Two companies in the same business may express very different cultures. Their company websites can offer some clues about what those cultures value and how they want to project their brand. Royal Bank's standing as Canada's oldest bank is reflected in its corporate website colours: conservative dark blue and gold. TD Canada Trust's green and white site—implying a fresh approach—offers photos of ethnically diverse young people apparently delighted by the products and services the bank provides.[9]

Organizations also contain several subcultures. For example, manufacturing and marketing may represent different subcultures in the same organization: workers may dress differently and espouse different values. In a union environment, management and union representatives traditionally employ adversarial language to advance their own subculture's perspective while undermining the other's point of view.

You can learn about organizational culture by paying attention to communication clues and cues. In particular, read organizational publications (newsletters and blogs), and observe people and listen to their stories. Every discourse community and every culture creates and perpetuates meaning and membership through the stories their members share.

Your awareness of an organization's spoken and unspoken messages can provide you with important information on its values and norms.

LO5 How Do I Use Audience Analysis?

Use audience analysis to plan your communication strategy.

Ex. 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.7

Take the time to analyze your audience, then adapt your channel, medium, organizational pattern, and language to meet your audience's needs. For paper or electronic documents, you can also adapt your choice of the document's design and the photos or illustrations. Always revise your message with your audience in mind.

Strategy

- Choose appeals and reader benefits that work for the specific audience (also see Module 10).
- Use details and language that reflect your knowledge of, and respect for the specific audience, the organizational culture, and the discourse community.
- Make it easy for the audience to respond positively.
- Include only necessary information.
- Anticipate and overcome objections (Modules 7 through 12 show you how to emphasize positive aspects, overcome obstacles, and decide how much information to include).

Channel and Medium

- Choose the channels and media that best suit your purposes and audience needs: sensitive information requires face to face communication; complicated information needs written and/or visual support.
- Use multiple media whenever possible.
- Choose the medium that best suits your purposes, your relationship with the audience, and audience needs: when you know your audience, and you're sending a simple message, texting is fine; however, effective crisis communication requires a variety of media, as Maple Leaf Foods demonstrated during the listeria crisis.

Organization

- Analyze your audience's reaction to the meaning of the message. When your message is positive, you can make your point right away. However, many business messages cause negative reader reaction:

messages demanding payment, attempting to sell a product or service, or informing readers of a rate increase or of changes that may inconvenience them. When you must persuade a reluctant reader, and when your audience would see the message negatively, organize the message to break the news gradually (see also Modules 8 and 9).

- Anticipate and meet the audience's expectations of format: make the organizational pattern clear to the audience. (Modules 7 through 9 and Module 16 describe organizational patterns. Module 22 shows how to use overviews and signposts in oral presentations.)

Language

Many North Americans value saving time and multi-tasking. Because we've been trained by technology, we expect immediate gratification. Therefore, business audiences today expect messages that are short and clear.

- Strive for clarity and accessibility: use simple words, a mixture of sentence lengths (average today: fourteen words), and short paragraphs with topic sentences (refer to the Revising and Editing Resources at the end of this book).
- Use natural, conversational, personable, tactful language; avoid negative, defensive, arrogant, and "red-flag" words—*unfortunately*, *fundamentalist*, *crazy*, *incompetent*, *dishonest*—that may generate a negative reaction.
- Use the language that appeals to your audience. In parts of Canada, including Quebec and some areas of Ontario, Manitoba, and New Brunswick, bilingual messages in English and in French, with French first, are the norm.
- When both internal and external audiences will read the document, use a slightly more formal style and the third person; avoid *I*.
- Use a more formal style when you write to international audiences.

Document Design

- Use headings, bulleted lists, and a mix of paragraph lengths to create white space.
- Choose the format, footnotes, and visuals expected by the organizational culture or the discourse community. (Module 5 discusses effective document design.)

Photographs and Visuals

- Carefully consider the difference between cartoons and photos of "high art." Photos and visuals can make a document look more informal or more formal.
- Use bias-free photographs. Unintentional cultural, gender, religious, and economic assumptions can offend readers and cost you business.
- Choose photographs and illustrations that project positive cultural meanings for your audience. Middle Eastern readers, for example, find pictures of bare-legged and bare-armed women offensive and may object to pictures of clean-shaven men.
- Do your research and audience analysis: some cultures (e.g., France and Japan) use evocative photographs that bear little direct relationship to the text. North American audiences expect photos to relate to the text.

LO5 What If My Audiences Have Different Needs?

Focus on gatekeepers and decision makers.

When you are writing or speaking to a variety of audiences, research to identify (1) who can best ensure your message gets to the decision makers, and (2) who those decision makers are. Meet the needs of those gatekeepers and primary audiences first.

LO3 LO5 How Do I Reach My Audience?

Effective messages make use of multiple media.

Ex. 2.6

Communication media include verbal and non-verbal symbols (in person or electronic; speaking, gesturing, writing; use of colour; use of space and time). These vary in

- Transmission speed
- Transmission accuracy
- Cost
- Efficiency
- Number of people reached
- Audience impact
- Positive influence

Your purpose, the audience, and the situation—known as the *communication context*—determine which and how many channels and media you choose (refer to the PAIBOC questions in Figure 2.4). However, given the potential for miscommunication, the more you use, the better.

The Advantages of Writing

A written message is primarily for the record. Writing makes it easier to

- Present many specific details of a law, policy, or procedure
- Present extensive or complex financial data
- Minimize undesirable emotions

The Disadvantages of Writing

Writing, however, often requires more time than speaking face to face. Furthermore, once you mail the letter or hit Send, your documents (including email messages) are permanent and potentially available to everyone.

When you do decide to write, use the medium that best meets the expectations and needs of your audience. Text messaging may work for family and friends. Email messages are appropriate for routine business messages to people you already know. Paper may be better for someone to whom you're writing for the first time.

The Advantages of Oral Communication

Speaking is easier and more efficient when you need to

- Answer questions, resolve conflicts, and build consensus
- Use emotion to help persuade the audience
- Provoke an immediate action or response
- Focus the audience's attention on specific points
- Modify a proposal that may not be acceptable in its original form

Scheduled meetings and oral presentations are more formal than phone calls or stopping someone in the hall. Important messages should use more media and more formal media, whether they're oral or written.

The Disadvantages of Oral Communication

Meaning and morale can be jeopardized, however, when people choose efficiency and formality over real communication. For example, some organizations regularly use "town hall meetings"—large-auditorium gatherings—to tell employees about new strategies, policies and procedures, and/or new initiatives. The manager employs only one channel (voice), and even when the presentation includes slides, the message is often all one way: top-down. In this "command and control" corporate culture, employees often feel too intimidated or too disaffected to provide feedback. True communication does not occur.

Use Multiple Media and Channels, and Know Your Audience's Preferences

When sending and receiving both oral and written messages, you maximize success when you

1. Adapt the message to the specific audience
2. Show the audience members how they benefit from the idea, policy, service, or product (Module 10)
3. Anticipate and overcome any objections the audience may have
4. Adopt a good attitude and use positive emphasis (Module 11)
5. Use visuals to clarify or emphasize material (Module 18)
6. Specify exactly what the audience should do

Even when everyone in an organization has access to the same media and channels, different discourse communities have different preferences. For example, students use texts (visual channel) when exchanging messages with each other; however, for important information, students want faculty to communicate with them through multiple media and channels—including learning systems and calendars, hard-copy instructions, and emails.

The larger your audience, the more complicated medium choice becomes. When possible, use multiple channels and multiple media. For example, talk to key players about a document before the meeting where the document will be discussed. Or, in the case of town hall meetings, make sure everyone has a chance to preview the announcements (via email and bulletin boards), and generate feedback through productivity apps, emails, focus groups, or team meetings.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Communication is the transfer of meaning: both sender and receiver, using multiple symbols, reach agreement on the meaning intended.
- The communication process includes a **sender**, **receiver**, **message**, **channel(s)**, **medium**, and **noise**. True communication is transactional: both parties provide **feedback** for meaning clarification. Noise is always present; any physical, emotional, or psychological interference affects meaning exchange.
- Audience focus is the key to communication success. Empathy and critical thinking are crucial to valid audience analysis. Analyzing your audience's needs and expectations lets you shape messages accordingly, with positive results.
- Business messages may include five audiences: the **initial audience** first receives the message, or tells you to send the message; the decision maker, or **primary audience**, makes the decision or acts on the basis of your message; the **secondary audience** may comment on your message, or implement your ideas after they've been approved; the **gatekeeper** manages your message flow—this person has the power to stop your message before it reaches the primary audience; the **watchdog audience** has the political, social, or economic power to evaluate your message.
- You need to know everything about your audience that's relevant to your purposes for communicating. Use demographic factors, personality characteristics, values and beliefs, past behaviours, and your own observations and experiences to analyze your audience.
- Audience reaction is also strongly influenced by the perceptions and expectations of the groups to which they belong. These groups, or **discourse communities**, create group norms through verbal and non-verbal symbols. Each of us belongs to a number of very different discourse communities (family, religious affiliation, Facebook, sports team).
- When you want to understand people in organizations, you need to observe the organizational, or **corporate culture**. People create their corporate culture—values, attitudes, and philosophies—and express these through discourse—their stories and behaviours.
- Medium choice is shaped by the organizational culture. However, effective messages use multiple media and encourage feedback.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 2

Questions for Critical Thinking

2.1 Who are the audiences for Facebook posts?

2.2 Emphasizing the importance of audience, salespeople often say, "The customer is king," or "The customer is always right," or "The customer is in control." To what extent do you feel in control as a customer, a citizen, or a student? How do you use technology to increase your feelings of control?

2.3 If you are employed, which aspects of your organization's culture match your own values? Describe the culture you would most like to work in.

Exercises and Problems

2.4 Analyzing Social Media Users

How useful are social media posts for audience analysis? What does membership in specific social media sites say about its users? What do members' posts—including text and visuals—demonstrate about them? What might you assume about people based on their social media involvement?

As your instructor directs

1. Choose two other people to team with.
2. Exchange access to at least two different social media—on Facebook and Twitter, for example—with your teammates. Each of you should have access to the social media activity of two other members, on two different sites.
3. Review your teammates' social media activities: read posts, examine photos and visuals.
4. Based on this review, make notes on your assumptions about your teammates'
   - Discourse communities
   - Age, education, marital status, number of children, home ownership, location
   - Values and beliefs
   - Personalities
5. Exchange your impressions with each other; explore which assumptions are valid and which are not.
6. Each of you tweet your instructor about how useful social media presence is for audience analysis.

2.5 Identifying Audiences

In each of the following situations, label the audiences as initial, gatekeeper, primary, secondary, or watchdog.

1. Cheechoo is seeking venture capital so that he can expand his business of offering soccer camps to youngsters. He's met an investment banker whose clients regularly hear presentations from businesspeople seeking capital. The investment banker decides who will get a slot on the program, based on a comprehensive audit of each company's records and business plan.
2. Maria is marketing auto loans. She knows that many car buyers choose one of the financing options presented by the car dealership, so she wants to persuade dealers to include her financial institution in the options they offer.
3. Paul works for the mayor's office in a big city. As part of a citywide cost-cutting measure, a panel has recommended requiring employees who work more than forty hours in a week to take compensatory time off rather than be paid overtime. The only exceptions will be the police and fire departments. The mayor asks Paul to prepare a proposal for the city council, which will vote on whether to implement the change. Before they vote, council members will hear from (1) citizens, who will have an opportunity to read the proposal and communicate their opinions to the city council; (2) mayors in other cities, who may be asked about their experiences; (3) union representatives, who may be concerned about the reduction in income that will result if the proposal is implemented;

(4) department heads, whose ability to schedule work might be limited if the proposal passes; and (5) panel members and government lobbying groups. Council members come up for re-election in six months.

2.6 Choosing Media to Reach a Specific Audience

Suppose that your business, government agency, or nonprofit group has a product, service, or program targeted for each of the following audiences. What would be the best media to reach people in that group?

1. Renters
2. Small business owners
3. People who use wheelchairs
4. Teenagers who work part-time while attending school
5. Competitive athletes
6. Parents whose children play soccer
7. People looking for part-time work
8. Financial planners
9. Sport hunters
10. New immigrants

2.7 Persuading Your Organization to Adopt Flextime

Flextime is a system that allows employees to set their own starting and stopping times. It is especially appealing to organizations that value keeping good employees (or cannot easily raise salaries) and companies that aim to give workers as much independence as possible. Most employees prefer flextime. However, in some organizations, the system creates conflict between workers who get the schedules they want and those who have to work traditional hours. Some firms are afraid that the quality of work may suffer if employees and supervisors aren't on the job at the same time. Record keeping may be more complicated.

Identify the major argument that you could use to persuade each of the following organizations to use flextime, and the major objection you anticipate. Which of the organizations would be fairly easy to convince? Which would be harder to persuade?

1. A large, successful insurance company
2. A branch bank
3. A small catering service
4. The admissions office on your campus
5. A church, synagogue, temple, or mosque with a staff of two clergy, a director of music, two secretaries, and a custodian
6. A government agency
7. The business where you work part-time

2.8 Analyzing the Other Students in Your College or University

Analyze the students in your college or university. (If your college or university is large, analyze the students in your program of study.) Is there a "typical" student?

If all students are quite different, how are they different? In your analysis consider

- Age (average; high and low)
- Gender (What proportion are men? What proportion are women?)
- Ethnic background (What groups are represented? How many of each?)
- Languages

- Social media communities
- Marital status
- Number of children
- Parents' income/personal or family income
- Full- or part-time
- Outside jobs (What kinds? How many hours a week?)
- Membership in campus organizations
- Religious affiliations
- Political preferences
- Proportion going on for further education after graduation
- Psychographics

What values, beliefs, goals, and lifestyles do students have? Which are common? Which are less common?

What's the relationship between the students' values and their choice of major or program? Their social media choices and frequency of use?

What do students hope to gain from the classes they're taking? What motivates them to do their best work in class?

Additional Information

What are students' attitudes toward current campus problems? Current political problems?

What is the job market like for students in your school or major? Will students find it difficult to get jobs after graduation? How much will they be making? Where will they be working?

After you answer these questions, identify the factors that would be most relevant when

1. You want to persuade students to participate in an internship program
2. You want to persuade students to join a not-for-profit charity organization
3. You want to persuade students to adopt "green" habits, including carpooling, taking the bus rather than driving, avoiding products that are packaged or sold in plastic or Styrofoam, and eating locally
4. You want to know whether the campus placement office is providing adequate services to students
5. You want to hire students to staff a business that you're starting

2.9 Analyzing People in Your Organization

1. Your supervisor
    - Does he or she like short or long explanations?
    - Does he or she want to hear about all the problems in a unit or only the major ones?
    - How important are punctuality and deadlines?
    - How well informed about a project does he or she want to be?
    - Is he or she more approachable in the morning or the afternoon?
    - What are your supervisor's major concerns?

2. Other workers in your organization
    - Is work “just a job” or do most people really care about the organization’s goals?
    - How do workers feel about clients or customers?
    - What are your co-workers’ major concerns?
3. Your customers or clients
    - What attitudes do they have toward the organization and its products or services?
    - How are their attitudes affected by education, age, or other factors?
    - What are their major concerns?

As your instructor directs

a. Email a memo to your instructor summarizing your analysis.
b. Discuss your analysis with a small group of students.
c. Present your analysis orally to the class.
d. Combine your information with classmates’ information to present a collaborative report comparing and contrasting your audiences at work.

2.10 Analyzing a Discourse Community

Analyze the way one of your discourse communities uses language. Possible groups are

- Family
- Peers
- YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, or any other social media
- Work teams
- Work blogs
- Wikipedia
- Sports teams
- Associations, organizations, and other service or social groups
- Churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques
- Geographic or ethnic groups

Questions to ask include

- What specialized terms might not be known to outsiders?
- What topics do members talk or write about? What topics are considered unimportant or improper?
- What channels do members use to convey messages?
- What forms of language do members use to build goodwill? To demonstrate competence or superiority?
- What strategies or kinds of proof are convincing to members?
- What formats, conventions, or rules do members expect messages to follow?

As your instructor directs

a. Share your results orally with a small group of students.
b. Present your results in an oral presentation to the class.
c. Present your results in an email memo to your instructor.

- **d.** Share your results in an email message to the class.
- **e.** Share your results with a small group of students, and write a joint memo reporting the similarities and differences you found.

2.11 Analyzing Corporate Culture on the Web

Use three organizations' websites and/or blogs to analyze their corporate cultures.

1. What assumptions can you make about the corporate culture, based on your analysis of these media?
2. What inconsistencies do you find?
3. What aspects of each culture do you like best? What, if anything, do you not like? What questions do you have about the organizational culture that the web pages or blogs don't answer?

As your instructor directs

- **a.** Share your results orally with a small group of students.
- **b.** Present your results orally to the class.
- **c.** Present your results in an email memo to your instructor.
- **d.** Share your results in an email message to the class.
- **e.** Share your results with a small group of students, and write a joint memo reporting the similarities and differences you found.

2.12 Analyzing an Organization's Culture

Interview several people about the culture of their organization. (This exercise gives you a great opportunity to become known in a company where you would like to work. See Module 23.)

Possible organizations are

- Work teams
- Sports teams
- Associations, organizations, and other service or social groups
- Churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques
- Geographic or ethnic groups
- Groups of friends

Questions to ask include those in this module and

1. Tell me about someone in this organization you admire. Why is he or she successful?
2. Tell me about someone who failed in this organization. What did he or she do wrong?
3. What ceremonies and rituals does this organization have? Why are they important?
4. Why would someone join this group rather than joining a competitor?

As your instructor directs

- **a.** Share your results orally with a small group of students.
- **b.** Present your results orally to the class.
- **c.** Present your results in a tweet to your instructor.
- **d.** Share your results in an email message to the class.
- **e.** Share your results with a small group of students, and write a joint memo reporting the similarities and differences you found.

Polishing *your* Prose

Comma Splices

In filmmaking, editors splice, or connect, two segments of film to create one segment. A *comma splice* occurs when writers try to create one sentence by connecting two sentences, or independent clauses, with only a comma.

Incorrect: We shipped the order on Tuesday, it arrived on Wednesday.

Comma splices are inappropriate in business communication. (Poetry and fiction sometimes use comma splices to speed up action or simulate dialect; some sales letters and advertisements use comma splices for the same effect, though not always successfully.)

To fix a comma splice

- Use a semicolon if the ideas in the sentence are closely related: We shipped the order on Tuesday; it arrived on Wednesday.
- Add a coordinating conjunction (*and*, *yet*, *but*, *or*, *for*, *nor*): We shipped the order on Tuesday, and it arrived on Wednesday.
- Make the incorrect sentence into two correct ones: We shipped the order on Tuesday. It arrived on Wednesday.
- Make one of the clauses subordinate, or dependent on the other for meaning: Since we shipped the order on Tuesday, it arrived on Wednesday.

Exercises

Fix the comma splices in the following sentences.

1. The conference call came at 1 p.m., we took it immediately.
2. We interviewed two people for the accounting position, we made a job offer to one.
3. Janelle drafted her problem-solving report, she sent a copy to each committee member for review.
4. The director of purchasing went to our Main Street warehouse to inspect the inventory, Chum called him later to ask how things had gone.
5. Katy called the hotel in Montreal for a reservation, the desk staff booked a room for her immediately.
6. Mr. Margulies gave a Prezi presentation at our September sales meeting in Whistler, it went very well.
7. I'll have Tina call the main office, you ask Polsun to set up an appointment for the four of us tomorrow.
8. You know, the fines for texting while driving have increased in all the provinces, Ontario has the biggest penalty for distracted driving.
9. I wish I were more confident making presentations, I'd like to find ways to make them fun.
10. Sunil is our most experienced employee, he joined the department in 2009.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

MODULE 3

Communicating Culturally

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 3 you will be familiar with

LO1 The components of culture

LO2 The influence of culture on communications

LO3 The importance and variety of non-verbal communication symbols

By applying the information you will be able to

LO4 Connect your awareness of others' values to your spoken and written messages

LO5 Use bias-free language and photos

Module Outline

- What is culture?
- What is Canadian culture?
- How does culture affect business communication?
- How do I communicate globally?
- How do I create culturally sensitive messages?

Module Summary

Assignments for Module 3

Polishing Your Prose: Subject–Verb Agreement

Our culture shapes the way we see reality. Often we become aware of our cultural biases only when we encounter people whose cultural assumptions differ from our own. If we come from a culture where cows and pigs are raised to be food, for example, that may seem normal until we meet people who consider these animals sacred, or unclean, or people who consider raising any animal for consumption to be cruel and barbaric.

Despite our cultural convictions, our ability to communicate flexibly with others is necessary for our personal and professional success. Cultural awareness makes sound economic, ethical, and legal sense.

LO1 What Is Culture?

Our culture is a learned set of assumptions that shape our perceptions of the world, and of appropriate values, norms, attitudes, and behaviours.

Ex. 3.1

We learn our concepts of gender, age, and social class, as we do our ideas about

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Religious practices
- Sexual orientation
- Physical appearance and ability
- Regional and national characteristics

Communication difficulties arise because we take our cultural behaviours for granted, and we assume they are "normal." However, "normal" is culturally biased: people's expectations of behaviours vary from culture to culture, and even within cultures.

LO1 What Is Canadian Culture?

Canada is a country of multiple cultures.

Canada is "[t]he only western country" in "the top 20 most diverse" countries in the world. (Several "African countries typically rank high[er] on any diversity index because of their multitude of tribal groups and languages.")[1]

Canada is home to more than 200 different ethnic groups,[2] with a foreign-born population second only to Australia's.[3] The co-existence of a French and English Canada is essential to our national identity, as are Canada's Aboriginal peoples, "…three distinct groups…First Nation or Indian, Métis and Inuit as defined by the *British North America Act, 1867*, the *Indian Act*, and the *Constitution Act, 1982*."[4] Within these distinct groups, diversity is the norm: "each [has]…a distinct history that shaped their particular cultural identity. They each have distinct economies, capacities and challenges."[5]

Meanwhile, cultural diversity is part of urban Canadians' identity, because most of our almost 7 million foreign-born citizens live in the largest cities "in four provinces: Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta."[6]

ETHNIC DIVERSITY

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Canada is home to a multitude of cultural realities.

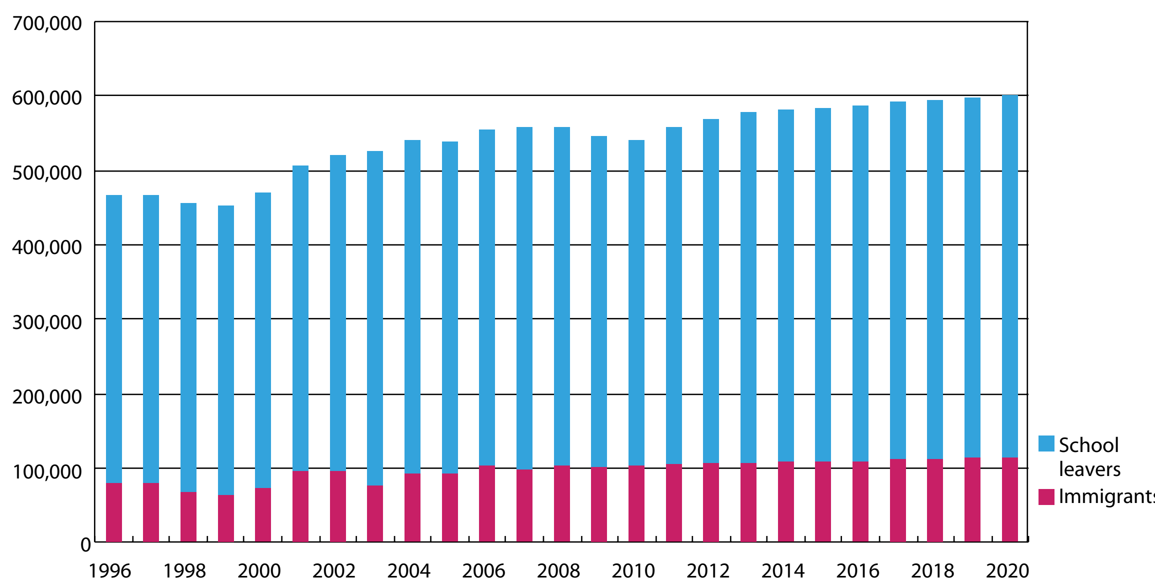
Immigration has always sourced Canada's population growth, and continues to do so. According to the 2011 census, "13.7% of [Canadian] newcomers were born in Europe, while another 3.9% were born in the United States. The remaining 82.4% came from Asia (including the Middle East), the Caribbean and Central and South America, Africa and Oceania and other regions."[7]

The largest proportion of immigrants settle in Toronto and Vancouver, with Toronto attracting "the largest share of foreign-born residents: 37.4% of all foreign-born in Canada."[8] Indeed, close to 50% of Toronto's total population are immigrants. "[T]he…majority (85.1%) of the Toronto census metropolitan area's 2.6 million visible minorities live in four municipalities: the city of Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton and Markham."[9] Because of "its diverse economy, with key clusters in finance, media, information and communication technologies and film production, as well as its success as a magnet for immigrants," Toronto was named "the 2014 Intelligent Community of the Year." [10]

Our immigrant population will continue to contribute to the economy. However, as the workforce ages and "roughly 6.4 million jobs will open up in the coming decade…the majority of new entrants will be made up of [Canadian]school leavers (incomplete high school to PhD)" [11]

FIGURE 3.1

New Labour-Market Entrants: School Leavers and Immigrants, 1996–2020



Source: Figure 6: New Labour market entrants; school leavers and immigrants, 1996-2020 http://www.cic.gc.ca//english/resources/research/2012-migrant/sec04.asp Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS) Employment and Social Development Canada, 2015. Reproduced withthe permission of the Minister of Emplyment and Social Development Canada, 2015.

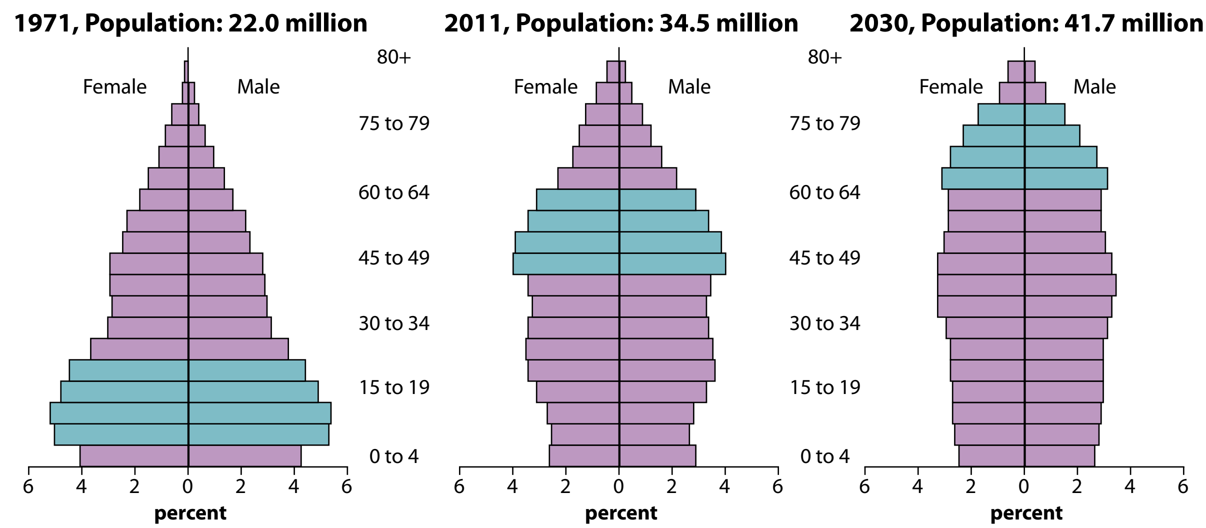
AGE DIVERSITY

Ex. 3.3, 3.4

Our aging population also contributes to Canadian diversity: in 2013, "for the first time" in record-keeping history, "the number of 15- to 24-year-olds slip[ped] below the number of 55- to 64-year-olds."[12] Although immigration "could help slow population aging…Canada's] ratio of the elderly to the working-age population is expected to nearly double over the next 20 years. [13]

FIGURE 3.2

Changes in the Age Structure of the Population



Source: Statistics Canada, Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada," 2014-01-14. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of Statistics Canada.

Meanwhile, "the first baby boomers reached 65 years old in 2011." [14] Boomers (born between 1946 and 1957) are the largest population cohort; their demographic will continue to influence Canada's social, political, and economic realities.

Since people are living longer, and without a mandatory retirement age, more seniors remain in the workforce after they turn 65. You could, therefore, be working with and for people older than your grandparents. Whether bosses, co-workers or clients, these older people are a significant audience demographic for you (Module 2), as their values (and expectations) continue to shape what is considered appropriate business communication and culture.

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Cultural diversity includes differing generational perspectives and values.

Thus, cultural sensitivity is not only emotionally intelligent (see this chapter's Expanding a Critical Skill box), but also economically sound: people you work with and for are *not* just like you; being aware of others' norms and values enables you to shape your messages for successful results.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IS LEGALLY AND FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR… AND PART OF OUR GLOBAL IDENTITY

Recognition of and respect for the diverse views of others is also legally responsible behavior, enshrined in numerous documents, at every level of government. Legal support for the heterogeneous population in Canadian workplaces is articulated in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (1985), the *Multiculturalism Act* (1985), the *Official Languages Act* (1988), the *Pay Equity Act* (1990), and the *Employment Equity Act* (1995). "Provinces and territories also have laws, human rights commissions and programs that promote inclusivity."[15]

Increasing globalization and rapid technological change demand effective intercultural communication. Foreign trade is essential to the growth of both individual businesses and Canada's economy. Although the United States remains our primary trading partner, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and our free-trade agreements with the European Union and South Korea reflect the global nature of Canadians' business future.

LO2 How Does Culture Affect Business Communication?

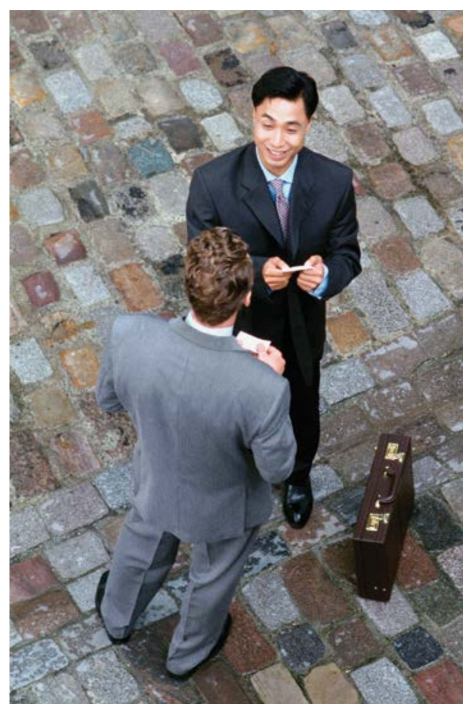
Cultural assumptions and expectations determine both the form and the content of every business transaction.

Ex. 3.7–3.11

Culture influences every single choice in our personal and professional communication: how to dress; how to demonstrate politeness and respect; how much information to give; how to motivate people; when, how much, and how loudly to talk and laugh; how to organize a message, and what medium to use to send it.

Cultural anthropologist E. T. Hall theorized that people's cultural values and beliefs determine their communication style. Hall characterized these communication behaviours as high context and low context.

- In **high-context cultures**, most of the information is suggested from the context of a message; little is "spelled out." Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, North American Aboriginal, and Latin American cultures might be considered high context.
- In **low-context cultures**, context is less important; most information is explicitly spelled out. German, Scandinavian, and the dominant North American cultures might be considered low context.



Exchanging business cards in reactive cultures: Cultural assumptions and expectations determine both the form and the content of every business interaction.

High-context and low-context cultures value different kinds of communication and have different attitudes toward oral and written channels.[16] Low-context cultures favour direct approaches, and see indirectness as dishonest or manipulative. The written word is more important than spoken agreements, so contracts are binding but promises may be broken. Details, logic, and time constraints matter. North American and some European communication practices reflect these low-context preferences.

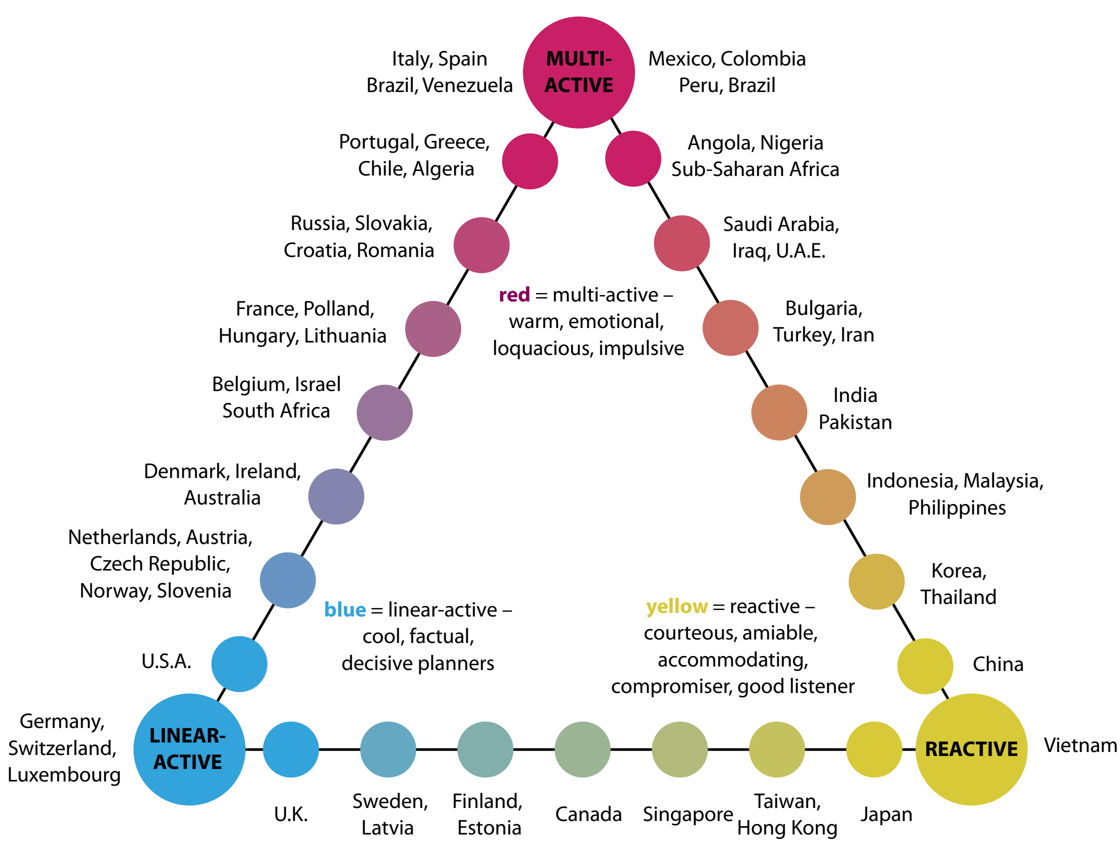
In his award-winning book, *When Cultures Collide*, British linguist Richard D. Lewis categorizes cultures as linear-active, multi-active and reactive.

- "Linear-active people…do one thing at a time, concentrate hard on that thing and do it within a scheduled time period. These people think that in this way they are more efficient and get more done…*their way*."
- "Multi-active cultures are very flexible. Multi-active people are not very interested in schedules or punctuality…They consider reality to be more important than man-made appointments."
- People in reactive "…or listening…cultures…rarely initiate action or discussion, preferring to listen to and establish the other's position first, then react to it and formulate their own…Reactive cultures [encourage people to] listen before they leap…concentrate on what the speaker is saying…do not let their minds wander…and rarely, if ever, interrupt a speaker…Reactives are introverted; they distrust [too many] words…are adept at non-verbal communication…[and] regard [silences]as a very meaningful, almost refined, part of discourse. [17]

Clearly, working comfortably and productively with other people demands awareness of their communication preferences.

FIGURE 3.3

Cultural Types: The Lewis Model



Courtesy of Richard Lewis.

Communication is also influenced by the organizational culture and by personal culture, such as gender, race and ethnicity, social class, and so forth. As Figure 3.4 suggests, these intersecting cultures create the *context* for the person's communication in a given situation.

FIGURE 3.4

National Culture, Organizational Culture, and Personal Culture Overlap

Source: Adapted from Farid Elashmawi and Philip R. Harris (1998), *Multicultural management 2000: Essential cultural insights for global business success* (p. 169). Houston: Gulf.

Often one kind of cultural assumption dominates another. For example, professional affiliation bests national identity: a study of aerospace engineers in Europe, Asia, and the United States found that the similarities of the professional communication community (one kind of culture) outweighed differences in national cultures.[18]

And technological innovation transforms culture. For example, cell phone use challenges traditional assumptions of public versus private space, texting has displaced the culture of face-to-face conversation, shoppers prefer e-commerce to bricks-and-mortar shopping, and Facebook creates a culture of consuming others' idealized lives.

The Internet and social media also enable global project sharing and resourcing (for example, crowdfunding and open innovation) "in less time than it takes to fill in a funding application…The hackday approach to protoyping social solutions…"[19] fosters entrepreneurship and community that transcend cultural biases.

Values, Beliefs, and Practices

Values and beliefs, often unconscious, prompt our response to people and situations. Most Canadians, for example, value fairness. "You're not playing fair" is a sharp criticism calling for changed behaviour. In some countries, however, people expect certain groups to receive preferential treatment. Most North Americans accept competition and believe that it produces better performance. The Japanese, however, believe that competition leads to disharmony. U.S. businesspeople believe that success is based on individual achievement and is open to anyone who excels. Many Canadians prefer co-operation to blatant competition (Figure 3.3). In England and in France, success is more obviously linked to social class. And in some countries, the law prohibits people of some castes or races from participating fully in society.

Many North Americans value individualism. Other countries rely on group consensus for decision making. In Japan, for example, groups routinely work together to solve problems. However, the extroverted behaviours rewarded in the classrooms and boardrooms of North America are considered rude and crazy in Japanese culture.

Kim Wheeler with Katarina Ziervogel

Our cultural assumptions shape our perceptions of the world and of appropriate values, norms, attitudes, and behaviours. H & M's "hippie headdress"—a cool fashion accessory to some, prompted an email from Kim Wheeler, a Mohawk-Ojibway woman from Winnipeg. Wheeler made the point that the headdress, "worn by chiefs in some of our communities…is a symbol of respect and honour and should not be for sale as some sort of cute accessory. It is not honourable nor flattering." H & M removed the headdresses from stores.[20]

In the dominant North American culture, quiet is a sign that people are working. In Latin American, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and some African countries, people talk to get the work done.[21] Cultural assumptions also create people's spiritual, religious, and political beliefs, and these, in turn, shape personal, political, and professional communications.

LO3 LO4 Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication—making meaning without words—permeates our lives. Facial expressions, gestures, our use of time and space—even our pauses and vocal intonations—all communicate pleasure or anger, friendliness or distance, power and status.

Non-verbal communication is older and more powerful than spoken language. And its symbols can be misinterpreted just as easily as can verbal symbols (words). For example, "digital natives, Millennials and Gen Z's"[22] see their smartphones as integral sensory equipment: stopping a face-to-face transaction to respond to a call or text feels natural—a form of multitasking—whereas traditionalists think these interruptions are disruptive and insensitive.

Misunderstandings are even more common in communication across cultures, since non-verbal signals are culturally defined. An Arab student might assume that his North American roommate disliked him intensely because the roommate sat around the room with his feet up on the furniture, soles toward the Arab roommate. Arab culture sees the foot in general and the sole in particular as unclean; showing the sole of the foot is an insult.[23]

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Building Emotional Intelligence

Ex. 3.5, 3.6

In his bestselling books*, Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ; Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships*; and *Focus: The Hidden Driver of Excellence*, author and science journalist Daniel Goleman claims we can learn intrapersonal and interpersonal communication skills that can drive our success. Goleman's emotional intelligence (EQ) consists of knowing and managing your emotions, motivating yourself, recognizing the emotions of other people, and managing relationships productively. A high EQ, audience awareness, and cultural sensitivity are interdependent.

The idea that we can train ourselves to understand and better manage our own feelings and relationships has gained considerable currency. Indeed, studies show that having high EQ is a better predictor of personal, academic, and professional success than having a high IQ. The best managers and top-performing employees all demonstrate a number of high-EQ competencies; many organizations use EQ tests to identify and nurture people with strong emotional competencies, since these people outperform employees with average or low EQ; organizations that train employees in EQ consistently outperform their competitors.

There's no easy app for EQ: strengthening emotional intelligence begins with self-assessment and reflection, followed by plenty of practice.[24] Identifying your EQ skills and building these is an essential survival skill in our wired world; as social media experts point out, whatever words or visuals you choose to post are out there forever, for everyone, anywhere. Failing to understand your audience (and to check your privacy box) leads to failure, period. Fortunately, plentiful print and electronic resources exist to help you assess and develop your EQ.

Sources: Kate Murphy, "The fear of having real 'me' time." *New York Times International Weekly*. August 9–10, 2014. p.13; Daniel Goleman (1995). *Emotional intelligence*, New York: Bantam Books; R.E. Boyatzis & A. Howard, *Career success through emotional intelligence: Developing EI competencies*. Retrieved from www.careertrainer.com; Cary Chernis, *The business case for emotional intelligence*. Retrieved from www.eiconsortium.org/reports/business_case_for_ei.html; Michael E. Rock, *The 90% factor: EQ (emotional intelligence) and the new workplace*. Retrieved from www.canadaone.com/magazine/eq050198.html; "Emotional intelligence may be good predictor of success in computing studies," *Science Daily*, October 5, 2005. Retrieved from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2005/10/051005072152.htm

As is true of every communication situation, knowledge is power: learning about non-verbal symbols gives you the information you need to

- Be more conscious of the signals you are sending and interpreting
- Project the image you want

Since most of our communication is based on non-verbal symbols, self-awareness and correct interpretation are vital. Remember, however, that non-verbal communication is also culturally learned. Check your perceptions before making assumptions about the non-verbal signals of others.

Body Language

Posture and **body language** show self-concept, energy, and openness. North American **open body positions** include leaning forward with uncrossed arms and legs with the arms away from the body. **Closed or defensive body positions** include leaning back, arms and legs crossed or close together, or hands in pockets. As the labels imply, "open" positions suggest that people are accepting and open to new ideas. "Closed" positions suggest that people are physically or psychologically uncomfortable, that they are defending themselves and shutting other people out.

People who cross their arms or legs claim that they do so only because the position is more comfortable. Certainly crossing one's legs is one way to be more comfortable in a chair that is the wrong height. Traditionally, Canadian women were taught to adopt a "ladylike" posture: back straight, arms close to their bodies, knees and ankles together, and feet on the floor. Today this posture is encouraged for everyone, for back and core strength.

But notice your own body the next time you're in a perfectly comfortable discussion with a good friend. You'll probably find that you naturally assume open body positions. The fact that so many people in organizational settings adopt closed positions may indicate that many people feel at least slightly uncomfortable in school and on the job.

People of Eastern cultures value the ability to sit quietly. They may see the North American tendency to fidget and shift as an indication of a lack of mental or spiritual balance. Even Canadian interviewers and audiences usually respond negatively to nervous gestures, such as fidgeting with a tie or hair or jewellery, tapping a pencil, or swinging a foot.

EYE CONTACT

Canadians of European background see eye contact as a sign of honesty. But in many cultures, dropped eyes are a sign of appropriate deference to a superior. Puerto Rican children are taught not to meet the eyes of adults.[25] The Japanese are taught to look at the neck "while listening and at their own feet or knees when they speak themselves." [26] In Korea, prolonged eye contact is considered rude. The lower-ranking person is expected to look down first.[27] In Muslim countries, women and men are not supposed to make eye contact with each other. These differences can lead to miscommunication in the multicultural workplace. Supervisors may infer from their eye contact that employees are being disrespectful, when, in fact, the employee is behaving according to the norms of his or her culture.

GESTURES

Canadians sometimes assume that, if language fails, they can depend on gestures to communicate with non-English-speaking people. However, experts agree that gestures are culturally diverse.[28] Gestures that mean approval in Canada may have very different meanings in other countries. The "thumbs up" sign that means "good work" or "go ahead" in Canada, the United States, and most of Western Europe is a vulgar insult in Greece. The circle formed with the thumb and first finger that means OK in Canada is obscene in Southern Italy and Brazil, and it can mean "You're worth nothing" in France and Belgium.[29]

SPACE

Concepts of space are also culturally understood. **Personal space** is the distance people want between themselves and other people in ordinary, non-intimate interchanges. Most North Americans, North Europeans, and Asians want a bigger personal space than do Latin Americans, French, Italians, and Arabs.

People who are accustomed to lots of personal space and are forced to accept close contact on a crowded elevator or subway react in predictable and ritualistic ways: they stand stiffly and avoid eye contact with others.

Even within a culture, some people take more personal space than others. For example, men tend to take up more personal space than women do.[30] In many cultures, people who are of the same age and sex take less personal space than do mixed-age or mixed-sex groups. Latin Americans stand closer to people of the same sex than North Americans do, but North Americans stand closer to people of the opposite sex.

TOUCH

Humans crave touch. Babies need to be touched to grow and thrive, and older people are healthier both mentally and physically if they are touched. Indeed, studies indicate that touch is such a powerful communication channel that humans can use touching to convey "eight distinct emotions—anger, fear, disgust, love, gratitude, sympathy, happiness, and sadness—with accuracy rates as high as 78 percent."[31]

However, some cultures are more comfortable with touch than others. Some people shake hands in greeting but otherwise don't like to be touched at all, except by family members or lovers. Other people, having grown up in families that touch a lot, hug as part of a greeting and touch even casual friends. Each kind of person may misinterpret the other. A person who dislikes touch may seem unfriendly to someone who's used to touching. A toucher may seem overly familiar to someone who dislikes touch.

In general, North Americans are much more casual about touch than Easterners and Middle-Easterners. Studies indicate that in North American culture, touch can be interpreted as power: people who are more powerful touch people who are less powerful.[32] In Islamic culture, handshakes are prolonged, as dictated by etiquette, and always right-handed. However, men and women do not exchange handshakes unless and until the woman extends her hand.[33] Handshakes between men and women are beginning to be acceptable in India's larger cities because of their expanding young, urban, middle-class workers.[34]

Most parts of North America allow opposite-sex couples to hold hands or walk arm in arm in public, but frown on the same behaviour in same-sex couples. People in Asia, the Middle East, and South America have the opposite expectation: male friends or female friends can hold hands or walk arm in arm, but it is slightly shocking for an opposite-sex couple to touch in public.

Digital Vision

In linear-active cultures, the size, placement, and privacy of a person's office connote status.

SPATIAL ARRANGEMENTS

In linear-active cultures, the size, placement, and privacy of a person's office indicate status. Large corner offices have the highest status. An individual office with a door that closes suggests more status than a desk in a common area.

People who don't know each other well prefer a piece of furniture to separate them. For example, in most Canadian interviews, a desk, which both people perceive as part of the interviewer's space, separates the interviewer and the applicant. It's appropriate for the applicant to ask to place her or his property (notebook, smartphone, purse) on the desk. In most workplaces, meeting around a table is more formal than sitting in a circle. In North America, a person sitting at the head of a table is generally assumed the group's leader.

Time

Canadian organizations—businesses, government, and schools—keep time by the calendar and the clock. Being *on time* is seen as a sign of dependability. Other cultures keep time by the seasons and the moon, the sun, internal *body clocks*, or a personal feeling that *the time is right*.

Canadians who believe *time is money* are often frustrated in negotiations with multi-active people who take a much more leisurely approach. The miscommunication stems from a major perception difference: people in multi-active cultures want to take the time to establish a personal relationship before they decide to do business with each other.

Miscommunication also occurs because various cultures perceive time differently. Many Canadians measure time in five-minute blocks. Someone five minutes late to an appointment or a job interview feels called upon to apologize. If the executive or interviewer is running half an hour late, the caller expects to be told about the likely delay when he or she arrives. Some people won't be able to wait that long and will need to reschedule their appointments. But in Latin American and other cultures, 15 minutes or half an hour may be the smallest block of time. To someone who mentally measures time in 15-minute blocks, being 45 minutes late is no worse than being 15 minutes late.

Further, Edward T. Hall distinguishes between **monochronic cultures**, where people do only one important activity at a time, and **polychronic cultures**, where people do several things at once.

North Americans and Northern Europeans are predominantly monochronic cultures. When North American managers feel offended because a Latin American manager also sees other people during *their* appointments, cultural perceptions of time conflict.

Other Non-Verbal Symbols

Many other symbols—clothing, colours, age, and height, to name a few—carry important non-verbal meanings. In Canada, certain styles and colours of clothing are considered more professional and more credible. Certain fabrics—silk and linen, for example—carry non-verbal messages of class, success, and competence. In Japan, clothing denotes not only status but also occupational group. All students in junior and senior high school wear school uniforms. Businesspeople dress conservatively and formally.[35]

Our clothing choices reflect our cultural assumptions.

Colours can also carry cultural meanings. In Canada, mourners wear black to funerals, while brides wear white at their weddings. In pre-Communist China and in some South American tribes, white is the colour of mourning. Chinese and Hindu brides wear red, as do Muslim brides in India and Palestine.[36]

North American culture values youth. Increasingly, individuals choose to colour their hair and have surgery to look as young and attractive as possible (although Korea, Greece and Italy are world leaders in plastic surgery consumption).[37] In multi-active and reactive cultures, however, younger people defer to older people.[38] North Americans attempting to negotiate in Japan are usually taken more seriously if at least one member of the team is noticeably grey-haired.

Height connotes status in many parts of the world. Executive offices are usually on the top floors; the underlings work below. And being tall is economically advantageous for men, because male height is associated with competence: "Tall men get hired and promoted more frequently than short men, and make more money."[39] In one study, every extra inch of height brought in an extra $950 a year.[40] But being too big can be a disadvantage. A tall, brawny football player complained that people found him intimidating off the field and assumed that he was stupid.

Moodboard/Superstock

In Japan, business wear is formal, reflecting Japanese reactive culture.

LO2 Oral Communication

Effective oral communication also requires cultural awareness. Both the purpose and content of business communication differ across cultures and genders. Deborah Tannen uses the term *conversational style* to denote our conversational patterns and the meanings we give to them, the way we show interest, courtesy, social decorum.[41]

Your answers to the following questions reveal your own conversational style.

- How long a pause tells you that it's your turn to speak?
- Do you see interruption as rude? Or do you say things while other people are still talking to show that you're interested and to encourage them to say more?
- Do you show interest by asking many questions? Or do you see questions as intrusive and wait for people to volunteer whatever they have to say?

No conversational style is better or worse than any another, but people with different styles may feel uncomfortable without knowing why. A boss who speaks slowly may frustrate a subordinate who talks quickly. People who talk more slowly may feel shut out of a conversation with people who talk more quickly. Someone who has learned to make requests directly (Please pass the salt) may be annoyed by someone who uses indirect requests (This casserole needs some salt).

In the workplace, conflicts may arise because of differences in conversational style. Many older professionals consider certain speech patterns—*you know, like, basically, right?*—to be eye-rolling irritants. According to University of Toronto sociolinguistics professor Sali Tagliamonte, however, our speech patterns reflect our age and our cultural values. People under 40 "are much more likely to use 'like' when narrating a story, than those over 40." ("And I'm like, OK, I'm all over that.") Tagliamonte believes the use of "like" is a demographic identifier; migrating from California, it has become a fashionable "way to voice a speaker's inner experience."[42]

Ex. 3.2, 3.4

Another, more recent cultural linguistic marker is the use of *so* to begin sentences. Adopted from our American neighbours, *so* is a "conversational manager," according to experts. Beginning sentences with *so* "…is a way for the speaker to subtly cue to the listener that the following information is relevant to the listener's interests."[43] Or, such is our belief in the validity of words, perhaps Canadians use *so* "…to create a continuous experience"[44]: that is, to speak without interruption.

Many researchers believe that differences in conversational style might be responsible for the miscommunication that sometimes occurs in male–female conversations. For example, women are much more likely to nod and to say "yes" or "mm-hmm" than men are. Maltz and Borker hypothesize that to women, these symbols mean simply, *I'm listening; go on*. Men, on the other hand, may decode these symbols as *I agree* or at least *I follow what you're saying so far.* A man who receives nods and "mm"s from a woman might feel she is inconsistent and unpredictable if she then disagrees with him. A woman might feel that a man who doesn't provide any feedback isn't listening to her.[45]

To minimize conflict due to differences in conversational style, talk less and listen more—always a successful communication strategy—and try to mirror the speaker's pace (Module 19).

UNDERSTATEMENT AND EXAGGERATION

Closely related to conversational style is the issue of understatement and overstatement. The British have a reputation for understatement. Someone good enough to play at Wimbledon may say he or she *plays a little tennis*. Or ask a Canadian how the meeting yesterday or last night's game went, and the answer will be "Not bad!" even if the event was a roaring success. Conversely, "American English is…tough…and tending toward the exaggerated and sensational."[46]

COMPLIMENTS

The kinds of statements that people interpret as compliments and the socially correct way to respond to compliments also vary among cultures. The statement *You must be really tired* is a compliment in Japan, since it recognizes the other person has worked hard. The correct response is "Thank you, but I'm OK." A Canadian complimented on giving a good oral presentation will probably say, "Thank you." A Chinese or Japanese person, in contrast, will apologize, saying, "No, it wasn't very good," a form of courtesy.[47]

Moreover, statements that seem complimentary in one context may be inappropriate in another. For example, businesswomen may feel uncomfortable if male colleagues or superiors compliment them on their appearance: the comments suggest that the women are being treated as visual decoration rather than contributing workers.

SILENCE

Silence has different meanings in different cultures and subcultures. East Asian cultures—Korean, Chinese and Japanese, for example—value silence as a communication norm, since they are "concentrat[ing] on what the speaker is saying" and showing respect for both the speaker and the words.[48] North Americans, who are culturalized to mistrust pauses and silences, may struggle in their business negotiations with these cultures.

Different understandings of silence can prolong problems with sexual harassment in the workplace. Women sometimes use silence to respond to comments they find offensive, hoping that silence will signal their lack of appreciation. But some men may think that silence means appreciation, or at least neutrality.

LO4 Writing to International Audiences

Ex. 3.10, 3.12

Many cultures are more formal than those of North America. When you write to international audiences, use titles, not first names. Avoid contractions, slang, and idioms.

The patterns of organization that work for Canadian audiences might not work for international correspondence beyond the United States. You will need to adapt your style, structure, and strategy when writing to international readers. For most cultures, buffer negative messages (Module 8), and make requests (Module 9) more indirect. Avoid phrases your audience might interpret as arrogant or uncaring. Cultural mistakes made in speech may float away on the air; those made in writing are permanent.

LO4 How Do I Communicate Globally?

Focus on being aware and flexible.

Ex. 3.7, 3.8

The best communicators are self-aware and sensitive to others' values. Successful international communicators are[49]

- Aware that their preferred values and behaviours are influenced by culture and are not necessarily "right"
- Flexible and open to change
- Sensitive to verbal and non-verbal behaviour
- Aware of the values, beliefs, and practices in other cultures
- Sensitive to differences among individuals within a culture

Use the PAIBOC questions shown in Figure 3.6 to prepare to communicate interculturally.

FIGURE 3.5

PAIBOC Questions for Analysis

P	What are your **purposes** in communicating?
A	Who is your **audience**? What are their values and expectations? How will they react to the content of your message? How should you frame your message to meet your audience's values and needs? What media will make your message accessible to your audience?
I	What **information** will meet the needs of your audience and your purposes?
B	What reasons or audience **benefits** can you use to support your position?
O	What **objections** can you expect from your audience? What negative content must you de-emphasize or overcome?
C	What is the **context** of the message, and how will the context affect your audience's response? What is your relationship with your audience? What special circumstances should shape message form, content and media? What cultural biases may distort your message, and how can you reduce or eliminate these?

LO5 How Do I Create Culturally Sensitive Messages?

Start by using non-sexist, non-racist, and non-ageist language.

Bias-free language avoids discriminating against people based on gender, physical condition, race, age, or any other category. Bias-free language is fair and friendly; it complies with the law. It includes all readers; it helps build goodwill. For example, when you produce material (newsletters, pamphlets, slides) with photos and illustrations, choose a sampling of the whole population, not just part of it.

Making Language Non-Sexist

Ex. 3.2, 3.5, 3.6

Non-sexist language treats gender neutrally. Check to be sure that your writing is free from sexism in four areas: words and phrases, job titles, pronouns, and courtesy titles (Ms. Mrs. Mr. Dr. etc.).

WORDS AND PHRASES

Current business writers choose language for clarity and equity, as Table 3.1 illustrates.

JOB TITLES

Use neutral titles that imply that a person of either gender could hold the job. Many job titles are already neutral: *accountant*, *banker*, *doctor*, *engineer*, *inspector*, *manager*, *nurse*, *pilot*, *secretary*, *technician*, to name a few. Other titles reflect gender stereotypes and need to be changed. (See Table 3.1 for examples.)

PRONOUNS

Choosing gender-appropriate pronouns is fractious territory for wordsmiths. Traditionally, when referring to a specific person, writers use gender-appropriate pronouns.

In his speech, John Jones said that…
In her speech, Judy Jones said that…

When not referring to a specific person, however, but about anyone who may be in a given job or position, writers avoid using traditional-gender pronouns.

Sexist a. Each supervisor must certify that the time sheet for his department is correct.

Sexist b. When the nurse fills out the accident report form, she should send one copy to the Central Division Office.

Business writing offers four alternatives to sexist generic pronouns: use plurals, use second person (*you*), revise the sentence to omit the pronoun, and use pronoun pairs. Whenever you have a choice of two or more ways to make a phrase or sentence non-sexist, choose the alternative that is smoothest and least conspicuous.

The following examples use these methods to revise sentences (a) and (b) above.

1. Use plural nouns and pronouns.

Non-sexist Supervisors must certify that the time sheets for their departments are correct.

TABLE 3.1

Eliminating Sexist Terms and Phrases

Instead of	Use	Why it's important
The girl at the front desk	The woman's name or job title: Ms. Browning, Rosa, the receptionist	When you talk about a specific woman, use her name, just as you use a man's name to talk about a specific man.
The ladies on our staff	The women on our staff	Call female employees *women* just as you call male employees *men*. Use *ladies* only if you refer to the males on your staff as *gentlemen*. Few people do, since these terms are very old-fashioned.
Manpower Man-hours Manning	Personnel Hours or worker hours Staffing	The power in business today comes from both women and men. Use non-sexist alternatives.
Managers and their wives	Managers and their guests	Managers may be female, and not everyone is married.
Businessman	A specific title: executive, accountant, department head, owner of a small business, men and women in business, businessperson	Gender-neutral title
Chairman	Chair, chairperson, moderator	Gender-neutral title
Foreman	Supervisor	Gender-neutral title
Salesman	Salesperson, sales representative	Gender-neutral title
Waitress	Server	Gender-neutral title
Woman lawyer	Lawyer	Gender-neutral title; you would not describe a man as a *male* lawyer.
Workman	Worker, employee, or use a specific title: crane operator, bricklayer	Gender-neutral title

When you use plural nouns and pronouns, other words in the sentence may need to be made plural, too. In the example above, plural supervisors have plural time sheets and plural departments. Avoid mixing singular nouns and plural pronouns.

Non-sexist, but lacks agreement Each supervisor must certify that the time sheet for their department is correct.

Since *supervisor* is singular, it is incorrect to use the plural *they* to refer to it. The resulting lack of agreement is acceptable orally, but not yet acceptable to many readers in writing. Instead, use one of the four grammatically correct ways to make the sentence non-sexist.

2. Use *you*.

Non-sexist You must certify that the time sheet for your department is correct.

Non-sexist When you fill out an accident report form, send one copy to the Central Division Office.

You is particularly good for instructions and statements of the responsibilities of someone in a given position. Using *you* frequently shortens sentences, because you write *Send one copy* instead of *You should send one copy*. It also makes your writing more direct.

3. Substitute an article (*a*, *an*, or *the*) for the pronoun, or revise the sentence so that the pronoun is unnecessary.

Non-sexist	The supervisor must certify that the time sheet for the department is correct.
Non-sexist	The nurse will 1. Fill out the accident report form 2. Send one copy of the form to the Central Division Office

4. When you must focus on the action of an individual, use pronoun pairs.

Non-sexist	The supervisor must certify that the time sheet for his or her department is correct.
Non-sexist	When the nurse fills out the accident report form, he or she should send one copy to the Central Division Office.

Contemporary communications offer other choices. For example, Germany and Sweden are adopting gender-neutral pronouns, and "[s]tudents and teachers in Vancouver, British Columbia, can now use the gender-neutral pronouns 'xe,' 'xem,' and 'x'…to accommodate students for whom 'he' and 'she' is…inappropriate."[50]

Making Language Neutral

Language is never neutral, but you can choose language that is as neutral as possible, avoiding negative stereotypes of any group. Use these guidelines to check for bias in documents you write or edit.

- *Avoid terms that assume everyone is married or heterosexual.*

Biased	You and your husband or wife are cordially invited to the dinner.
Better	You and your guest are cordially invited to the dinner.

- *Give someone's race or age only if it is relevant to your story.* When you do mention these characteristics, give them for everyone in your story—not just the non-Caucasian, non-young-to-middle-aged adults you mention.
- *Refer to a group by the term it prefers. As preferences change, change your usage.* Sixty years ago, *negro* was preferred as a more dignified term than *coloured* for North Americans of African origin. As times changed, *black person* and *African American* replaced it in the United States. In Canada, *black person* is generally preferred to *African Canadian*, which is more often used for recent immigrants from Africa and thus might not include, for example, black Canadians from Caribbean nations, or black Canadians who came to Nova Scotia as Loyalists in the late 18th century.
- *Asian* is preferred to *Oriental*, which may be considered offensive.
- *East Indian* is frequently misused to include people of non-Indian origin, such as new Canadians from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. *South Asian* is more accurate, and *Pakistani*, *Sri Lankan*, and *Bangladeshi* are preferred.
- *Eskimo* is a negative label. The correct term is *Inuit*, which means *the people*.
- The term *Aboriginal Peoples* is generally used to refer to Canada's indigenous peoples: *First Nations*, *Inuit*, and *Métis*. But usage will vary according to the preference of the individual or group referred to. For example, most Aboriginal peoples consider *Indian* offensive, or at least a source of confusion with people from India. Where possible, consider referring to the specific band or nation of the individual (e.g., *Métis*, *Mohawk*, *Cree*, *Haida*).
- *Older people* and *mature customers* are more generally accepted terms than *senior citizens* or *golden agers*.

- *Avoid terms that suggest competent people are unusual in a group.* "He is a credit to his race" suggests that excellence in the "race" is rare. "He is a spry 70-year-old" suggests that the writer is amazed that anyone that old can still move.

Talking About People with Disabilities and Illnesses

A disability is a physical, mental, sensory, or emotional impairment that interferes with the major tasks of daily living. In 2012, approximately "3.8 million Canadians (13.7%) reported having a disability…" and reportage increased with age, as Figure 3.6 demonstrates.[51]

People-first language focuses on the person, not the condition. Avoid outdated adjectives used as nouns that imply that the condition defines the person, like *asthmatic* or *schizophrenic*.

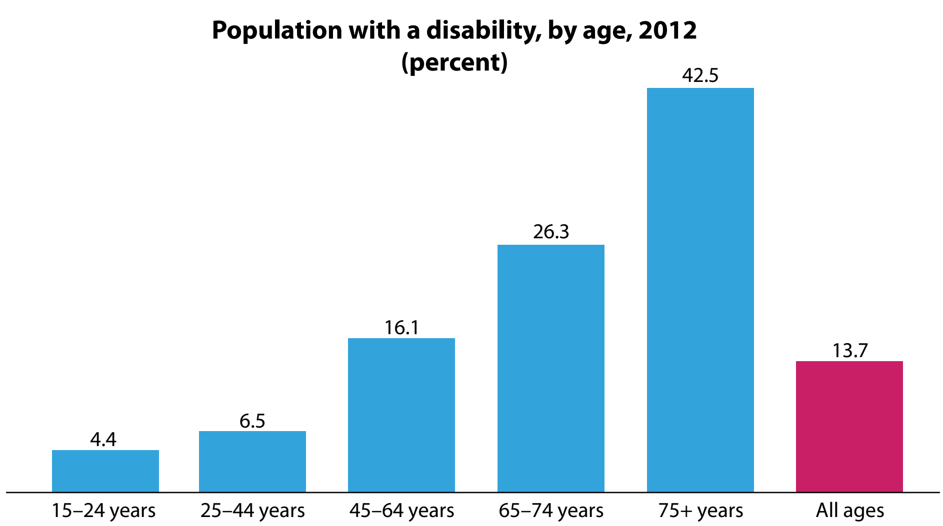
Avoid negative terms, unless the audience prefers them. Preference takes precedence over positive emphasis: use the term a group prefers. People who lost their hearing as infants, children, or young adults often prefer to be called *deaf*. But people who lose their hearing as older adults often prefer to be called *hard of hearing*, even when their hearing loss is just as great as someone who identifies as part of deaf culture.

Marcy Mussari

Canadians Jay Baty (left) and Danny Lamb (right) embarked on a six-city musical tour, supported by crowd sourcing, through Dublin, London, Edinburgh, Brussels, Amsterdam and Izmir, Turkey, to promote awareness of spina bifida/hydrocephalus (http://pu-sh.org/en). When he was a child, Danny was diagnosed with hydrocephalus and spina bifida occulta. Grateful for his talent, he feels responsible to use the ability he has as an artist to speak on behalf of all who work hard every day to find their own voices. The two musicians are now working on a Canadian fund-raising initiative for spina bifida/hydrocephalus.

FIGURE 3.6

Population with a Disability



Source: Statistics Canada, Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada," 2014-01-14. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of Statistics Canada.

Just as people in a single ethnic group may prefer different labels based on generational or cultural divides, so differences exist within the disability community (see Table 3.2). Using the right term requires keeping up with changing preferences. If your target audience is smaller than the whole group, use the term preferred by that audience, even if the group as a whole prefers another term.

Some negative terms, however, are never appropriate: *afflicted*, *suffering from*, *the victim of*, and *struck down by* suggest an outdated view of illness.

TABLE 3.2

Eliminating the Use of Terms and Phrases to Define Persons with Disabilities

Instead of	Use
Mentally retarded	People with developmental delays
Blind	People with vision impairments
Cancer patients	People being treated for cancer

Choosing Bias-Free Photos and Illustrations

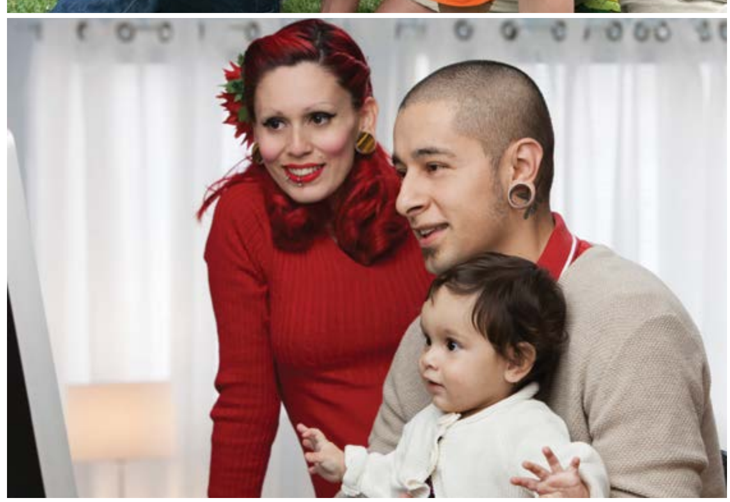
Ex. 3.12

When you produce a document with photographs or illustrations, check the visuals for possible bias. Do they show people of both genders and all races? Is there representation of various kinds of people (younger and older, people using wheelchairs, etc.)? The photos as a whole do not need to show exactly 50 percent men and 50 percent women. But the general impression should suggest that diversity is welcome and normal.

Check relationships and authority figures as well as numbers. If all the men appear in business suits and all the women in maids' uniforms, the pictures are sexist even if an equal number of men and women are pictured. If the only black people and Filipinos pictured are factory workers, the photos support racism even when equal numbers of people from each race are shown.

Through the Internet, communicators have millions of bytes of bias-free photos and illustrations to choose from. You can also create your own.

©Juanmonino/Getty Images



©Blend Images/Hill Street Studios/Getty Images

In Canada, diversity is normal.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Culture is a learned set of assumptions that shape our perception of reality. No culture exits wherein all members adhere to one notion of reality, and in urban Canada, cultural diversity is the norm.
- Each of us belongs to a number of cultures, whose expectations are communicated through symbols, including language. Cultural assumptions and expectations shape the form and content of our communication.
- In high-context or multi-active and reactive cultures, most of the meaning is understood from the context of the message. In low-context or linear-active cultures, most information is explicitly stated.
- No gesture has a universal meaning across cultures, and non-verbal symbols can be misinterpreted as easily as verbal symbols (words).
- North Americans, who believe *time is money*, are often frustrated in negotiations with people from cultures with different values. In polychronic (or multi-active) cultures, people want to establish a personal relationship before they decide whether to do business with each other, and may measure time in 15- or 30-minute increments rather than the 5-minute increments North Americans are used to.
- Conversational style reflects our cultural patterns, and the way we display age, interest, politeness, and appropriateness.
- Generational differences may affect perceptions and lead to conflict in the workplace. Use empathy to try to see other points of view and adapt accordingly.
- In today's global marketplace, cultural awareness is vital to communication success. Analyzing your audience members allows you to be sensitive to their cultural norms and flexible about adapting to those norms. The most effective communicator mirrors others in form and content.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 3

Questions for Critical Thinking

3.1 Language shapes reality, and the English vocabulary (the largest in the world) has words for concepts that other languages don't (and vice versa). Interview class members or work peers to find a commonplace English word that doesn't exist in their language. Now together find a common word in another language that has no English equivalent. How and why does the word, or lack of the word, reflect your different cultures?

3.2 Find an example of an infamous tweet, Facebook, or other social media post (text or visual) that demonstrates sexist, racist, or ageist bias. Explain the bias. Who was the intended audience?

3.3 Based on your own experience, identify one area of business communication that could be a source of intergenerational conflict. What could the younger person do to avoid or defuse the conflict? What could the older person do?

Exercises and Problems

3.4 Finding the Retiree Jobs

Boomers leaving the workforce will open the labour market in specific sectors and industries. What careers are growing for graduates as a result of boomers' retirements?

As your instructor directs

a. Choose two other people to work with.

b. As a group, research the specific industries and jobs increasingly available due to retirements.

c. Email your instructor and classmates a summary of your findings and identify your sources.

Hints

- Review Module 13 to begin your research, and Module 14 to cite your sources correctly.
- Research those careers you are most interested in.
- Do primary research, too. Interview boomers you know.

3.5 Analyzing Social Media Culture

What are today's most popular social media platforms? Who are their users, and what are the predominant cultural assumptions of each site?

As your instructor directs

a. Choose two other people to work with.

b. Together with your group members, identify and analyze one (1) popular social media site.

d. Email your instructor and class a summary of your findings.

Hints

- What content is king on this social media site, and how do you know?
- What level of interactivity is available via the site?
- What form does that interactivity take?
- What culture dominates the site? Age? Gender? Nationality? Ethnicity? Spirituality? Religion?
- How does the site make money, and how do you know?

Post your findings on your favourite social media site, and ensure your instructor and the class can read your post.

3.6 Dealing with Discrimination

Both Canadians and visitors to Canada have experienced some form of discrimination. Some people believe that prejudice is systemic—that bias against visible minorities, women, people with disabilities, and seniors is built into our legal and judicial systems and demonstrated daily in our assumptions and attitudes.

Media attention has focused on such culturally sensitive issues as police racism (carding) and discriminatory hiring and promotion practices in Canadian organizations and institutions.

Find a specific, relevant news story of cultural bias or discrimination. Or use your own experience to identify a serious miscommunication based on cultural assumptions. Write a summary of the news story or of your experience. Using what you have learned in Modules 1, 2, and 3, write an email memo to your classmates and your professor, providing specific ideas about how to deal positively with such a situation.

3.7 Analyzing Cultural Preferences: Business Introductions

What are some differences between multi-active, reactive and linear-active cultures in business introductions? Research a multi-active, reactive or linear-active culture you are interested in, and compare this culture's norms for business introductions with your own. Use the following criteria for your comparison: purpose of the introduction, image of the individual introducing him/herself, information provided, level of language (formal, informal, slang), and values (harmony, competition, respect, individualism, openness, directness, etc.).

Prepare a chart comparing the culture you chose with your own culture, based on the criteria. Attach the chart to an email memo to your instructor. In your email, describe one intercultural communication difference you found interesting.

3.8 Analyzing Cultural Preferences: Business Correspondence

What values and norms shape the business writing of multi-active and reactive cultures? Research a multi-active or reactive culture you know about, or are interested in, and compare this culture's norms for business writing with that of Canadian businesses. Find a request letter/email based on Canadian business culture, and compare it to a request letter/email from a person of multi-active or reactive culture. Compare the letters based on the following criteria: salutation or greeting, close, organizational pattern (direct or indirect), level of language (formal, informal), emphasis (positive, neutral, friendly, polite, reader-centred, writer-centred).

Prepare a chart comparing the culture you chose with Canadian culture, based on the criteria. Attach the chart to an email memo to your instructor. In your memo, describe one intercultural communication difference you found interesting.

3.9 Asking About Travel Arrangements

The CEO of your company is planning a trip to visit colleagues in another country (you pick the country). As executive assistant to the CEO of your organization, it's your job to make travel plans. At this stage, you don't know anything except dates and flights. (The CEO will arrive in the country at 7 a.m. local time on the 28th of next month, and stay for three days.) It's your job to find out what the plans are, and communicate these and any of the CEO's requirements to your contact in this other country. Write an email message to your contact.

Hints

- Pick a business, non-profit organization, or government agency you know something about, making assumptions about the kinds of things its executive would want to do during an international visit.
- How much international travelling does your CEO do? Has he or she ever been to this country before? What questions will he or she want answered?

3.10 Creating a Blog

Create a blog for your organization's managers who must communicate interculturally. You may offer information as well as links to other pages with information. Offer at least seven links (more are better). At the top of the blog, offer an overview of page contents. At the bottom of the page, put the creation date. Ensure your instructor and classmates can access your blog and encourage comments.

As your instructor directs

a. Write an email memo to your instructor identifying (1) what search strategies you used to find material on this topic, (2) why you chose the information you've included, and (3) what you learned from readers' comments.

b. Post your findings on a popular social media site.

Hints

- Limit your blog to just one culture or country.
- Try to cover as many business topics as possible: introductions, dress, conversational style, non-verbal communications, entertaining, dining, gifts, and so forth.
- Include visuals, or links to visuals.

3.11 Requesting Information About a Country

Use one or more of the following ways to get information about a country. You might focus on

- Business opportunities
- History and geography
- Principal exports and imports
- Dominant religions
- Holidays
- School system
- Political system

1. Visit the Canadian government's Canada Business Network website for information on international markets (http://www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/2825) and click on Country Information—Export Development Canada or Market Reports—Canadian Trade Commissioner.
2. Check the country's trade office, if there is one in your city.
3. Use a social media site to contact someone from that country or someone who has lived there. Interview that person.
4. Read about the country.

As your instructor directs

a. Share your findings orally with a small group of students.

b. Summarize your findings in an email memo to your instructor.

c. Present your findings to the class.

d. Email your findings to the class.

e. Join with a group of classmates to write a short group report on the country.

3.12 Answering an Inquiry About eNewsletter Photos

You've just been named vice-president for diversity, the first person in your organization to hold this position. Today, you receive the following memo from Sheila Lathan, who edits the employee newsletter.

> Subject: Photos in the Employee eNewsletter
>
> Please tell me what to do about photos in the monthly employee email newsletter. I'm concerned that almost no single issue represents the diversity of employees we have here.
>
> As you know, our layout allows two visuals each month. One of those is always the employee of the month (EM). In the last year, most of those have been male and all but two have been white. What makes it worse is that people want photos that make them look good. You may remember that Ron Olmos was the EM two months ago; in the photo he wanted me to use, you can't tell that he's in a wheelchair. Often the EM is the only photo; the other visual is a graph of sales or something relating to quality.
>
> Even if the second visual is another photo, it may not look balanced in terms of gender and race. After all, 62 percent of our employees are women, and 70 percent are non-white. Should the pictures try to represent those percentages? The leadership positions (both in management and in the union) are heavily male and white. Should we run pictures of people doing important things and risk continuing the imbalance?
>
> I guess I could use more visuals, but then there wouldn't be room for as many stories—and people really like to see their names in print. Plus, giving people information about company activities and sales is important to maintaining goodwill. A bigger newsletter would be one way to have more visuals and keep the content, but will people bother to read it?
>
> What should I do?

As your instructor directs

a. Work in a small group with students to come up with a recommendation for Sheila.

b. Write an email memo responding to Sheila.

c. Write an article for the employee newsletter about the photo policy you recommend and how it relates to the company's concern for diversity.

Polishing *your* Prose

Subject–Verb Agreement

The subjects and verbs in your sentences must agree in number: singular subjects take singular verbs; plural subjects take plural verbs. Remember that singular subjects (laser, chair, etc.) and the pronouns *he*, *she*, and *it* require a singular verb that, in the present tense, ends in s:

Correct	The laser printer no longer works.
Correct	The broken laser printers are in the storeroom.

Often, subject–verb errors occur when other words come between the subject and verb. Learn to correct errors by looking for the subject—who or what is doing the principal action—and the verb—the action itself:

Incorrect	A team of marketing researchers are reviewing our new social media campaign.
Correct	A team of marketing researchers is reviewing our new social media campaign.
Incorrect	The idea of tax rebates do not solve the growing gap between rich and poor.
Correct	The idea of tax rebates does not solve the growing gap between rich and poor.

Canadian and American usage treats company names and the words *company* and *government* as singular nouns. In England and countries adopting the British system, these nouns are plural:

Correct (Canada)	Clarica is headquartered in Waterloo, Ontario.
Correct (U.S.)	National Insurance is headquartered in Columbus, Ohio.
Correct (U.K.)	Lloyds of London are headquartered in London.

Use a plural verb when two or more singular subjects are joined by *and*.

Correct Mr. Simmens, Ms. Lopez, and Mr. Yee were in Seoul for a meeting last week.

Use a singular verb when two or more singular subjects are joined by *or*, *nor*, or *but*.

Correct Neither Dr. Hroscoe nor Mr. Jamieson is in today.

When the sentence begins with *there* or *here*, make the verb agree with the subject that follows the verb.

Correct There were blank pages in the fax we received.

Correct Here is the information on the job candidate you requested.

Some words that end in *s* are considered singular and require singular verbs.

Correct The World Series features advertisements of our product in the stadium.

When you encounter situations that don't seem to fit the rule, or when following the rules produces an awkward sentence, rewrite the sentence to avoid the problem.

Problematic The grant coordinator in addition to the awarding agency (is, are?) happy with the latest proposal we submitted.

Better The grant coordinator and the awarding agency are happy with the latest proposal we submitted.

Exercises

Choose the correct verb or rewrite the sentence.

1. Each of us (is, are) entitled to company healthcare benefits.
2. KPMG, a leading management consulting firm, (operate, operates) in nine Canadian provinces.
3. The price of our stocks (is, are) increasing.
4. Every project team (train, trains) for at least 90 days before projects (is, are) started.
5. We (order, orders) a dozen new toner cartridges each month.
6. A series of meetings (is, are) devoted to concerns about our office air quality.
7. Marina Schiff and her assistant (is, are) attending the conference in Halifax.
8. Make it a point to (has, have) your report ready by Monday.
9. Professor Beauparlant, Mr. Kincaid, and Ms. Carolla (is, are) on the guest list and (plan, plans) to sit at the same table.
10. The offices in Buenos Aries (report, reports) a 19 percent increase in employee turnover for the past year.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Answer Key at the end of the text.

MODULE 4

Planning, Writing, and Revising

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 4 you will be familiar with

- **LO1** The activities in the writing process
- **LO2** The importance of feedback in the writing process

By applying the information you will be able to

- **LO3** Begin to use the activities in the writing process
- **LO4** Begin to identify and analyze your own strategies
- **LO5** Begin to use revising and editing techniques

Module Outline

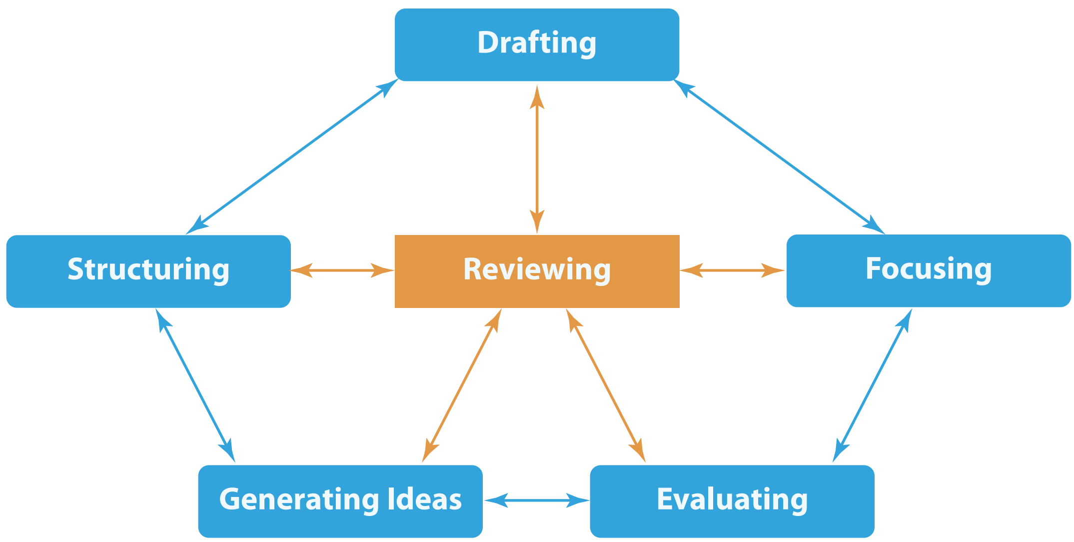
Business writing is a process that can include jotting down ideas, drafting, revising, editing, and proofing (Figure 4.1). Not all writers follow the process steps in order. In fact, successful writers often create "multiple drafts…concurrently write and revise," and always focus on their audience's needs.[1]

Ex. 4.1

For most business writers, writing is rewriting. Revising before posting or sending guarantees better results. And the higher the stakes, the more writers revise. As the emails in Figures 4.2A and 4.2B show, a draft version—before PAIBOC analysis and colleagues' feedback—might not get the results writers want, when they want them.

FIGURE 4.1

The Writing Process



Source: White, R. and Arndt, V. (1991) *Process Writing*. Essex: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.

LO1 What Is the Writing Process?

The process includes planning, drafting, and rewriting.

Ex. 4.3, 4.4

Planning

- Analyze the situation: What has the initial audience (Module 2) requested? Specifically, what is the task?
- Use PAIBOC to understand the situation: Define your purposes, and analyze your audience needs
- Think about the information you need. What facts count with your audience and meet your purposes? Where can you find the information?
- Gather the data from your reading, and from your own and others' observations and experiences.

FIGURE 4.2A

Writing Is Rewriting: Draft Email

November 10, 2016

To: Staff

From: Omar

Re: Christmas Party

While we're planning our Christmas party we should also be thinking about what we're going to do about who's going to be responsible for cleaning up and locking up after the party, if we start partying after closing time at 1 on the 21, and party until 3 or 4, that's fine with the managers, and some staff have already said they will taxi people home but we need people to stay to clean up and set up for the next day's lunch crowd. Also, somebody has to take the day's receipts and money for safekeeping, and bank it the next day.

Party includes free food and you can bring a guest. You need to bring your own booze

Can you let me know who will volunteer to do that? Thx

FIGURE 4.2B

Writing Is Rewriting: Revised Email

November 10, 2016

To: Bartenders, servers, and bussing staff

From: Omar

Re: After-Hours Christmas Party and Cleanup

Our employee celebration starts at 1 a.m. on December 21. Food is on the house. Please BYOB, and a guest. We have volunteer designated drivers.

Frank is not concerned about our end time. However, we are responsible for cleanup, and lunch setup for business on December 22. I will also need a volunteer to take the day's count and receipts, and to bank them the next day.

Please let me know your duty preference by filling in the attached to-do list, and emailing it to me by end of today. If I don't hear from you, I'll assign you where you're needed.

Thank you.

To and From content depends on the relationship between writer and reader

Subject line sums up memo

Paragraphs increase readability

Most important info to the reader put in first and last paragraphs

- Make notes and create outlines, either manually or with mind-mapping software.
  - ✓ Consider how to format the information: What is the context? Is this a business message? A social message? An academic message? What are the audience's expectations?
  - ✓ Consider how to organize the information: What do your audiences already know? What do they need to know? How can you organize your information for maximum influence on your audience? (See Modules 8 and 9, and How Should I Organize Reports? in Module 16.)
  - ✓ Consider the ideal media: What are the cultural/organizational norms? What medium or media best suit your purposes and best meet audience expectations?

Drafting/Pre-Writing/Writing

Depending on your purposes and audiences, you might write multiple drafts. Make hard-copy notes or draft on-screen, as you think, plan, and research. Create as much content as you can before rewriting.

Drafting can include

- Purpose statements
- Visuals
- Lists
- Brainstorms, jot-dots, and freewriting (writing anything that comes to mind, without stopping and without evaluating)
- Paragraphs and pages

LO1 LO2 Rewriting

Ex. 4.2

REVISING

Revising means creating user-friendly copy. All revision requires seeing the material *from your audience's point of view*. Focus first on the **meaning** of the message.

- Compare your draft to the answers to your PAIBOC questions: What are your purposes in writing? Who is your audience?
- Read your drafts from the reader's point of view: Is the meaning clear? Complete? Convincing? Tactful?
- Get as much feedback as soon and as often as you can. Ask friends and colleagues to comment on the **content**. Do they understand the message? What questions do they have about the message? What content is confusing?
- Revise based on your analysis and others' feedback: delete, add, substitute, rearrange; change sections of the document, or revise sentences or single words.

Ex. 4.3, 4.5, 4.6

EDITING

- Leave editing until you are almost ready to publish (that is, send your document).
- Focus on the micro view: polishing the sentence structure and the language.
- Edit the draft for grammar, usage, and punctuation. Spell-checking is not enough: check for typos.
- Ask a peer to read your document for errors.

Ex. 4.5–4.7

PROOFREADING

- Focus on the mechanics of the document.
- Proof the final copy to ensure it is error-free.
- Ask a peer to read your document for errors.

We may text or post our first and only draft to friends and family. Depending on your purposes and your audiences, however, you may need to revise and edit a message—even one sent from your smartphone—several times before you hit Send.

LO4 Does It Matter What Process I Use?

Learn what experts do, and use what works best for you.

Ex. 4.3

ImageSource/Getty Images

The writing process can include many critical thinking strategies.

Although there is no one *right* way to write, all writers agree that they write best when they know their topic and understand their audience. Thinking about the processes you currently use and experimenting with expert writers' strategies can help you become a better writer.

Successful writers tend to

- Focus on their purpose and audience
- Identify a story, thesis, theme, or central idea related to their purpose and audience
- Assume that the first draft will be revised
- Break big writing jobs into a series of steps
- Read daily
- Write daily
- Work to acquire a large vocabulary of concrete nouns and action verbs
- Discuss their writing with others
- Ask for and apply feedback
- Use colleagues, friends, and family for revising, editing, and proofing
- Use whatever rules work for them

Practised writers spend more time identifying and analyzing the initial problem, understanding the task more broadly and deeply, setting goals, drawing from a wider repertoire of strategies, and seeing patterns more clearly. Practised writers compose more slowly than novices and spend more time evaluating their work.[2]

LO4 How Do I Make the Best Use of My Time?

Make notes on your research and thinking. Save plenty of time for rewriting.

To get the best results

- Try to use only one-third of your time composing your first draft: spend at least one-third of your time analyzing your purpose(s) and audience(s), gathering your information, and organizing what you want to say.
- Keep notes (electronic and hardcopy) on all your information. These jottings stimulate your thinking and serve as your rough drafts.
- Spend another third of your time revising and editing: assess your draft based on your analysis of purpose and audience; revise; get feedback, and revise again; edit for correct grammar and mechanics; proofread your final copy.

Ex. 4.3, 4.5, 4.6

Different projects need different times and revisions. Texting to remind a co-worker about a meeting time requires little planning. Crafting a proposal to sell your audience on an idea calls for a defined strategy. When you get an assignment, consider the steps you'll need to go through so you can timeline the project (Module 17).

Language Focus

Good writers do not rely on direct translations from dictionaries. If English is not your first language, it is important to use words and phrases as they are used in North America. Instead of directly translating from your first language, pay close attention to the way native speakers use the language and try to copy it.

LO3 How Do I Prepare to Write or Speak?

Do as much planning as you can, and keep a record.

Spend at least one-third of your time gathering ideas, researching, planning, and making notes. The more comfortable you are with your ideas, the fewer drafts you'll need to produce a good document.

Start by using PAIBOC to identify purpose and audience. Use the strategies described in Module 2 to analyze your audience and to identify what **audience needs** your message can meet. Gather information you can use for your message.

How Can I Jumpstart Ideas?

To encourage ideas, try the following techniques.

- **Brainstorm.** Write down all your ideas without judging them. Consciously try to get at least a dozen different ideas before you stop.
- **Freewrite.** Write without stopping for five minutes or so, even if you have to write "I will think of something soon." At the end of five minutes, read what you've written and identify the best points. Get a clean paper or screen and write for another five uninterrupted minutes. Read this draft, marking anything that's good and then write again for another five minutes. By the third session, you will probably produce several sections worth keeping—maybe even a complete draft that's ready to be revised.[3]
- **Cluster.** Write your topic in the middle of the page and circle it. Write down the ideas the topic suggests, circling them, too. (The circles are designed to tap into the non-linear half of your brain.)

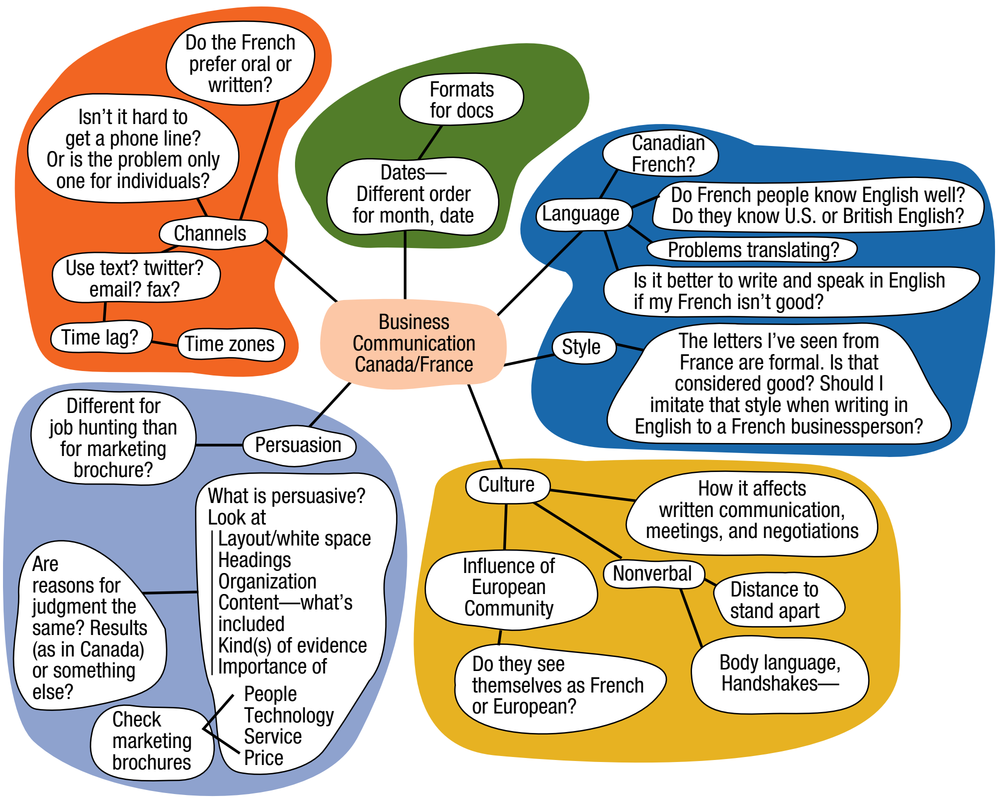
When you've filled the page, look for patterns or repeated ideas. Use different-coloured pens to group related ideas (Modules 13 and 14). Then use these ideas to develop reader benefits in your message. Figure 4.3 presents the clusters that one writer created about business communication in Canada and France.

- **Talk to people.** Talking to internal and external audiences is invaluable to the writing process. Talking to real audiences helps writers
  - ✓ Involve readers in the planning process
  - ✓ Understand readers' concerns
  - ✓ Negotiate conflicts orally rather than depending solely on the final message.

FIGURE 4.3

Ex. 4.5

Clustering Helps Generate Ideas



Writers who discuss their work with peers and colleagues can focus on relevant content as well as on organization, style, and media. Furthermore, colleagues' feedback can determine common ground (such as reducing waste or increasing productivity) that several readers share, and thereby reduce the number of revisions.[4]

Nicholas Jones, Boken Photograph

J.D. Witkowski

Canadian entrepreneur Allen Lau (left), co-founded Wattpad, the free fiction app, and Anna Todd (right) is a Wattpad writer. The interactive site attracts millions of authors—including Margaret Atwood—and even more millions of readers who contribute to the serialized storytelling through immediate, in-line feedback.

Where Else Can I Get Ideas?

Ex. 4.5

Talking to others about the content, layout, structure, and medium of your message can also give you ideas. For long documents, *write out the headings you'll use*. For anything shorter than five pages, less formal notes will work. You may want to jot down ideas that you can use as the basis for a draft. You may want to use collaborative software such as Google Docs, MixedInk and Etherpad to get others involved immediately.

For an oral presentation, a meeting, or a document with lots of visuals, use your presentation software to create a storyboard, or cluster ideas to make your own storyboard.

Emails will go faster if you can visualize a basic organizational pattern before you start. Modules 7 through 9 give detailed patterns of organization for the most common kinds of email letters and memos.

Caialmages/Glow Images

To get a fresh perspective, writers talk to others about their work.

LO5 What Is Revision? How Do I Do It?

Revision means seeing the document anew, from the reader's point of view.

Writers improve their messages by *reading out*: that is, by reading their documents from the audience's point of view. Revision means taking an aerial or wide-angled view of the document: you assume the perspective of the reader, with the reader's needs (the first of which, above all, is to understand, quickly, what the writer wants).

Revision Tips

- Ask a colleague (friend, parent) to read your writing and give you specific feedback, related to each stage of the process (see the Revision Questions in Figure 4.4, and Expanding a Critical Skill: Getting Good Feedback later in this Module).
- Make a timeline to revise the draft at least three times *when you're writing to a new audience or solving a particularly difficult problem.*
  - ✓ The first time, look for content and clarity.
  - ✓ The second time, check the organization and layout.
  - ✓ Finally, check for style and tone, grammar and usage, using the information in the Revising and Editing Resources at the end of this book.
- Read the message with fresh eyes: when you can, leave the draft for a few hours, or overnight. Then start revising.
- As you revise, be sure to read the document through from start to finish.
- Wait to edit until after you have revised: it's a waste of your time to fix a grammatical error in a sentence that you may cut when you clarify your meaning or tighten your style.
- Try reading and revising on hard copy, which many writers find easier and more accurate.

FIGURE 4.4

Revision Questions

Medium, Organization, and Layout

- ☐ How effectively does the medium convey the message, meet audience needs, and suit my purpose(s)?
- ☐ How does the message design make it easy for readers to find the information they need?
- ☐ How well have I emphasized the most important information?
- ☐ How smoothly do I move from one idea to the next?
- ☐ How well do ideas within paragraphs flow?
- ☐ How effective are the first and last paragraphs?

Content and Clarity

- ☐ How does the message meet the audience's needs?
- ☐ How does the message meet my purpose(s)?
- ☐ What information is essential for the audience and my purposes? What information could I omit?
- ☐ How have I organized the message for optimum positive audience impact? (Modules 2 and 11)
- ☐ How accurate is the information?
- ☐ How well have I supported the information with facts/details/examples/explanations/descriptions?
- ☐ How clear are my explanations?
- ☐ Where have I told the reader what to think, say, or do?
- ☐ Where have I contradicted or undercut my argument?

Style and Tone

- ☐ How does the message build goodwill?
- ☐ How does the message communicate positive attitude (Module 11) and you-attitude (Module 12)?
- ☐ What can I change to make the message more audience-friendly?

LO5 What Is Editing? How Do I Do It?

Editing is making surface-level changes for correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage.

As opposed to working on the aerial view of the document, editing requires close-up concentration. Begin your editing process by assessing your document's readability.

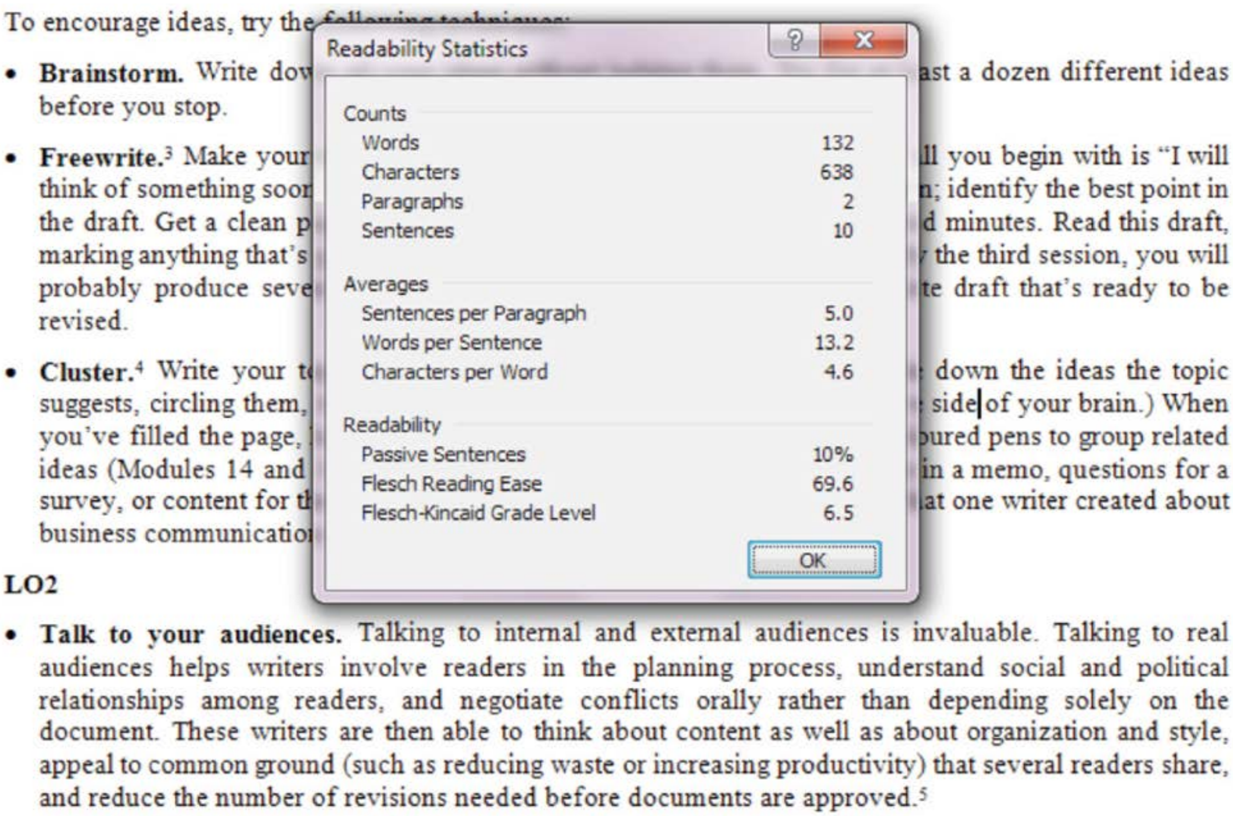
Editing for Readability

Free software offers readability formulas to assess the complexity of text, based on syntax, sentence length and word complexity. Grammar checkers include an option for checking the readability of a selected passage. Word's grammar checker indicates readability based on the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (corresponding to years of education required to comprehend the material) and a Flesch Reading Ease score (assessing the difficulty level based on the average number of words per sentence and the average number of syllables per word). Figure 4.5 depicts the supposed grade level required to read part of this chapter.

Most business writers strive for a readability score of between Grade 8 and 10, because (1) technology has created expectations of immediate satisfaction, and (2) clear and concise documents make it easier for the audience to read and understand the message. Saving the reader time and trouble has a positive impact (Modules 10 and 11), increasing the chances of you getting the results you want.

FIGURE 4.5

Flesch Readability Score



Editing for Correctness

To edit your own writing, you also need to know grammar and punctuation. Most writers make a small number of errors repeatedly. If you know that you have trouble with dangling modifiers or subject–verb agreement, for example, specifically look for them in your draft. Also look for any errors that especially bother your boss, and learn how correct them. The Internet offers lots of grammar and usage guides and blogs.

LO5 Can a Grammar Checker Edit for Me?

No. You have to decide on each change.

Grammar checkers are good at finding missing halves. For example, if you open a parenthesis and forget to close it, a grammar checker will note that you need a second one. Of course, *you* have to decide where it goes.

For other errors, all a grammar checker can do is ask you about what you have done. A grammar checker can tell you that you've used a passive construction (refer to the Revising and Editing Resources at the end of this book) and ask whether you want to change it. But you have to decide whether the passive is correct in context. If it finds the word *well*, the grammar checker can tell you that *good* and *well* are sometimes confused. But you have to decide which word fits your meaning. You still need to know the rules so you can decide which changes to make.

FIGURE 4.6

Editing Tips

1. Ask a colleague (friend, parent) to read and edit for you, as you watch.
2. Learn and check for the most common grammar mistakes of adult writers.
   - ☐ Sentence structure
   - ☐ Subject–verb and noun–pronoun agreement
   - ☐ Dangling or misplaced modifiers
   - ☐ Parallelism
   - ☐ Punctuation
   - ☐ Passive verbs
3. Check for correct word use.
4. Check for correct spelling—including spelling of names—and numbers accuracy.

LO5 What Is Proofreading? How Do I Do It?

Proofreading means checking to ensure the document is free from typographical errors.

Proofreading is polishing. Wait until the final draft to proofread your document, and print out a hard copy to do so. Finding spelling errors and typos may be easier and faster on hard copy. And since it's always easier to proof something you haven't written, you may want to swap papers with a proofing buddy. Be sure the person looks for typos, not for content.

Try the proofreading tips listed in Figure 4.7

FIGURE 4.7

Proofreading Tips

- ☐ Read the document aloud, listening for poor or incorrect phrasing.
- ☐ Read the document from last word to first word to catch spelling errors.
- ☐ Read the document in stages—first page, second page, third page—with plenty of time in between so you are fresh for each page.
- ☐ Read pages out of sequence so you can concentrate on the characters on the page rather than the meaning.
- ☐ Ask a friend to read the document aloud while you follow along with the original.
- ☐ Double-check numbers, dates, and people's names.

LO5 I Use a Spell-Checker. Do I Still Need to Proofread?

Yes.

Ex. 4.7

Proofread every document both with a spell-checker and by eye to catch the errors a spell-checker can't find.

Spell-checkers can't think; they cannot recognize words that are out of context. If you write *two* instead of *too*, or *there* instead of *their* or *they're*, the spell-checker will not identify a problem. Similarly, if you misspell your client's name, or write down the wrong date, the spell-checker won't notice or care. But your reader will.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Getting Good Feedback

Writers in businesses, government, and non-profit organizations routinely ask for feedback because getting feedback helps make writing easier. The skill is in asking for the kind of feedback you need.

To improve the quality of the feedback you get, and of your revisions, tell people which aspects you'd especially like comments about. For example, when you give a reader a draft or an outline, describe the task and the audience.

Ask if the general approach is appropriate.

- How relevant is the plan to my purpose? How audience-focused is the plan?
- What topics should be added? What areas should I cut?
- What other general suggestions do you have?

After your second draft, you might want more details about the information and organization.

- How well does the message satisfy all its purposes?
- How well do I develop reader benefits?
- How is the message well adapted to the audience(s)?
- How effective is the organization?
- How clear and readable is the message?
- What parts are confusing, and why?
- What ideas need further development?
- What suggestions do you have for improving the content or organization?

When you reach the polishing draft, you'll be ready for feedback on style and grammar.

- How effective is the document design?
- What paragraphs are too long?
- What sentences are too long or awkward?
- What words might work better?
- Where are the typos?

It's easy to feel defensive about your work. However, even when the feedback stings, or if you think the reader has misunderstood what you were trying to say, the fact that the reader commented means the section could be improved.

Colleagues' and supervisors' comments on a draft can help you improve that document, help you write better drafts the next time, and teach you about the culture of your organization.

Look for patterns in the feedback you receive. Are you asked to use language that is more formal or to make the document more conversational? Does your boss want to see an overview before details? Does your company prefer information presented in bulleted lists rather than in paragraphs? When the feedback is honest, even harsh criticism can be beneficial. Pay attention to the meaning of the criticism, rather than how it is delivered. You can choose to use any feedback as a source of valuable information.

LO4 Can I Use Templates and Form Letters?

Use whatever works, but adapt the form, content, and language to your audience.

A **form letter** or **template** is a prewritten, fill-in-the-blanks document designed for routine situations. Word offers dozens of templates (under the New menu), as does the Internet.

Some form letters have different paragraphs that can be inserted, depending on the situation. For example, a form letter admitting students to university might add additional paragraphs for students receiving financial aid.

Boilerplate is language—sentences, paragraphs, even pages—from a previous document that a writer includes in a new document.

In academic papers, material written by others must be quoted and documented. However, because businesses own the documents their employees write, text from these documents may be included without attribution.

Many organizations encourage their employees to use templates, boilerplate, and standardized or pre-approved language to save time and energy. Often, however, the format, organization, or language does not fit the situation.

Before you use a form letter, make sure it applies to your writing context, and revise it for contemporary language and tone.

LO4 How Do I Get Started?

Talk, participate, and practise. Reward yourself for activities that encourage writing.

Ex. 4.3, 4.4

According to psychologist Robert Boice, a combination of actions works to get people writing.[5]

- **Participate actively in the organization and the community.** The more you talk to people, the more you communicate with some of your audiences, the more you learn about the company, culture, and context (Module 2), the easier it will be to write—and the better your writing will be.
- **Practise writing regularly.**
- **Learn as many strategies as you can.** Good writers have a repertoire of strategies they draw on. They try a variety of techniques in each new situation. Research these strategies and patterns, and try them to see what works for you.
- **Talk positively to yourself.** "I can do this." "I'll write for 15 minutes, and see what happens." "It doesn't have to be perfect; I can make it better later."
- **Talk about writing with other people.** Talk to peers, colleagues, and supervisors about writing. Value the feedback you get. Ask your supervisor for models of good examples of writing. Talking to other people expands your repertoire of strategies and helps you understand what is valued in the discourse communities (Module 2) in which you write.

To avoid procrastinating, modify your behaviour by rewarding yourself for activities that *lead* to writing.

- **Set a regular time to write.** Sit down and stay there for the time you planned, even if you write nothing usable.
- **Develop a ritual for writing.** Choose tools—smartphone, tablet, laptop, pen and paper, chair—that you find comfortable. Use the same tools in the same place every time you write.
- **Freewrite**. Write for ten minutes without stopping.
- **Write down your thoughts and fears as you write.** If your thoughts are negative, try to reframe them more positively: "I can do this." "I'll keep going and evaluate it later." "If I keep working, I'll produce something that's okay."
- **Identify the problem that keeps you from writing.** Deal with the problem; then go back to your writing.
- **Set modest goals** (a paragraph, not the whole essay or report) **and reward yourself for reaching them**.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Planning, writing, and revising can include analyzing, collecting information, composing, assessing, getting feedback, revising, editing, and proofreading.
- **Revising** means *re-seeing* the document from the reader's point of view; you revise to maximize positive audience impact while satisfying your purposes.
- **Editing** means making surface-level changes for correct grammar, punctuation, and usage.
- **Proofreading** means checking to ensure the document is free from typographical errors.
- Writers use processes that work for them: these include expecting to revise, writing regularly, having clear goals, modifying the task if it's too easy or too hard, knowing many different strategies, using rules as guidelines, and waiting to edit until after the draft is complete. To think of ideas, try **brainstorming**, **freewriting** (writing without stopping for 10 minutes or more), and **clustering** (brainstorming using visuals).
- You can improve the quality of feedback you get by telling people which aspects of the draft you'd like comments about. Look for patterns in the feedback you get.
- If the writing task is new or difficult, plan to revise at least three times. The first time, look for clarity and content. The second time, check the layout and organization. Finally, check style and tone.
- **Form letters** are prewritten, fill-in-the-blanks documents designed for routine situations. **Boilerplate** is language from a previous document that writers include in new documents. Use templates (or form letters) and boilerplate only when you can adapt them to meet your purposes and the audience's needs
- To get started writing
    1. Participate actively in the organization, and the community.
    2. Follow a routine; practise writing regularly.
    3. Learn as many strategies as you can.
    4. Talk about your writing tasks with other people.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 4

Questions for Critical Thinking

4.1 How do you decide when to revise or edit or proof your text messages?

4.2 If colleagues, peers or family members ask you for feedback about their writing, what three specific questions do you ask before you begin?

4.3 How can software such as Draftback help you throughout the writing process?

Exercises and Problems

4.4 Analyzing Your Own Writing Processes

Save your notes and drafts from several assignments to answer the following questions.

- Which of the activities in the writing process do you use? How often?
- How much time do you spend on each of the activities?
- What kinds of revisions do you make most often?
- Which practices of good writers do you follow?
- What parts of your process seem most successful? What would you like to change? Why?
- What relation do you see between the process(es) you use and the quality of the final document?

Using the answers to these questions, and as your instructor directs

a. Draft an email memo to your instructor describing your process(es) for composing a work-related email memo or school-related document (text, email, essay).

b. Exchange your draft with another student, so that you can give each other feedback.

c. Read that student's email memo and assess it based on the revision questions in Figure 4.4. Write down your comments and questions. Be specific and constructive (make suggestions!)

d. Give feedback to your writing partner, and listen to and note the feedback you receive.

e. Exchange your draft with a second student, and repeat steps (c) and (d).

f. Based on your analysis of the feedback your peers provided, revise your original draft.

g. Exchange papers with a third student, this time for editing. Circle any grammar, usage, and punctuation errors you find in each other's revised copy.

h. Correct the errors your peer identified, and write your third draft.

i. Print your memo and proofread it using the strategies described in Figure 4.7. If you find errors, correct them.

j. Print or email your final copy, and send it to your instructor

4.5 Exploring the Best of Blogs on Writing

Visit the Top 25 Writing Blogs site at http://positivewriter.com/top-25-writing-blogs/. Scroll through the blog titles, choose three that appeal to you, and read the blogs. Choose one blog that offers helpful tips on the writing process.

As your instructor directs

a. Summarize the blog insights or information in your own words in one paragraph.

b. Compose an email to your instructor and the class with the blog title and your summary.

c. Revise, edit, and proofread your email to ensure it suits your purposes and audience needs.

4.6 Clustering or Mind-Mapping a Lecture

Use clustering (see Figure 4.3) to mind-map a classroom lecture or organizational meeting. Then convert your visuals into a summary of the lecture or meeting. To maximize your results, compare them with those of peers or colleagues. Where are the similarities? Where are the differences? As a form of note taking, how well does clustering work for you?

4.7 Writing, Revising, and Editing a Volunteer Letter

Choose a local organization (academic, athletic, community, seniors, social, youth) that you are interested in, and write a letter (hard copy or electronic attachment) volunteering your time. In the body of the letter (1) describe what you think you can offer the organization, (2) ask what the greatest need is, and (3) ask when and for what length of time you would be of most use.

As your instructor directs

a. Form a group of three people.
b. Exchange hard-copy drafts or use collaborative software.
c. Read each group member's letter for clarity, positive emphasis (Module 11), thorough content/details, and courtesy.
d. Suggest revisions, in writing (on the letter itself, or electronically).
e. Return the letters to their writers.
f. Make the revisions.
g. Exchange papers again.
h. Read the revised letters for mechanical errors and usage.
i. Indicate necessary corrections.
j. Return letters to their writers.
k. Edit and print.
l. Proofread your letter, make any necessary corrections, and email it to your instructor.

4.8 Writing a Social Media Usage Policy for Your Classroom or Place of Business.

Draft a one-page policy statement about appropriate social media use among staff where you work, or among students and teachers in one of your classes. What kinds of concerns could inappropriate social media messages on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, or Twitter cause for your university/college/workplace?

As you create your policy statement, keep the needs of your boss and customers (or, in the case of classrooms, students and teachers) in mind.

As your instructor directs

a. Form a group of three people.
b. Exchange drafts, manually or electronically.
c. Read each group member's policy draft for clarity, positive emphasis (Module 11), thorough content/details, and courtesy.
d. As a team, discuss the policy ideas you find most useful.
e. As a team, choose the policy format you find most useful.
f. As a team, revise one policy statement, in the best format, so that it includes the best ideas.
g. Attach the team policy to an email to your instructor.

4.9 Checking Spell-Checkers and Grammar Checkers

Each of the following paragraphs contains errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Which errors does your spelling or grammar checker catch? Which errors does it miss? Does it flag as errors any words that are correct?

1. Answer to an Inquiry

   Enclosed are the tow copies you requested of our pamphlet, "Using the Internet to market Your products. The pamphlet walks you through the steps of planning the Home Page (The first page of the web cite, shows examples of other web pages we have designed, and provide a questionnaire that you can use to analyze audience the audience and purposes).

2. Performance Appraisal

   Most staff accountants complete three audits a month. Ellen has completed 21 audits in this past six months she is our most productive staff accountant. Her technical skills our very good however some clients feel that she could be more tactful in suggesting ways that the clients accounting practices could be improved.

3. On-Line Brochure

   Are you finding that being your own boss crates it's own problems? Take the hassle out of working at home with Front Desk. Its user-friendly and easy.

Polishing *your* Prose

Commas in Lists

Use commas in lists to separate items.

> At the office supply store I bought pens, stationery, and three-ring binders.

Commas show distinctions between items in a list. Technically, the comma before the coordinating conjunction *and* is optional, but the additional comma always adds clarity. Use commas consistently throughout your document. Missing or improperly placed commas confuse readers.

> We bought the following items for the staff lounge: television cabinet computer desk refrigerator and microwave oven.

Does television describe cabinet or is it a separate item? Is computer desk one item? Or are computer and desk two separate things? Inserting commas makes the distinction clear.

> We bought the following items for the staff kitchen: television, cabinet, computer, desk, refrigerator, and microwave oven.

Semicolons replace commas in lists in which the items themselves contain commas.

> Our company has plants in Moncton, New Brunswick; Flin Flon, Manitoba; and Lethbridge, Alberta.

Exercises

Use commas to make these lists clearer.

1. Please send the “flowers of the month” in April May June and July.
2. At the weekly staff meeting we will be joined by Mr. Loomis Ms. Handelman Ms. Lang and Mr. Kim.
3. The special parts division is opening offices in Brampton Ontario Fredericton New Brunswick and Big Salmon Yukon.
4. Buy small medium and large paper clips at the office supply store.
5. I need to telephone Mary Frank and Paul to finish my report and mail copies of it to Ted Sam and Latanya.
6. Applicants should send copies of their resumés to Mr. Arthur Bramberger human resource director Ms. Tina Ramos vice-president of marketing and Ms. Ellen Choi administrative assistant in marketing.
7. The weather affects our offices in Montreal New York City and Philadelphia.
8. Interns will be rotated through the receiving claims adjustment customer service and shipping departments.
9. Elizabeth Tyrone Mark and Sara presented the team’s recommendations.
10. We are open until 9 p.m. on Mondays Wednesdays Fridays and Saturdays.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Answer Key at the end of the text.

Designing Documents, Slides, and Screens

MODULE 5

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 5 you will be familiar with

- **LO1** The importance of message appearance, layout, and design
- **LO2** Essential design principles
- **LO3** The interdependence of readability and your credibility

By applying the information you will be able to

- **LO4** Design documents, presentation slides, and screens

Module Outline

LO1 Why Is Design Important?

Design is essential to making meaning.

Readers "see" design and layout first: A well-designed Web page encourages scanning; a well-designed document invites reading. Good document design saves time and money, builds goodwill, and reduces legal problems. Effective design also puts ideas together visually, making the content and organization more obvious and easier to understand.

Poor design causes confusion, lost sales, and disparaging tweets. For example, look at the Web page in Figure 5.1A, then answer these PAIBOC questions.

1. What is the purpose of the page?
2. Who is the audience?
3. What is the important information?
4. What expectations do readers bring to the page?
5. How well are those expectations met? Why?

Now look at the redesigned page (Figure 5.1B) and answer the same questions. What design changes have improved the page?

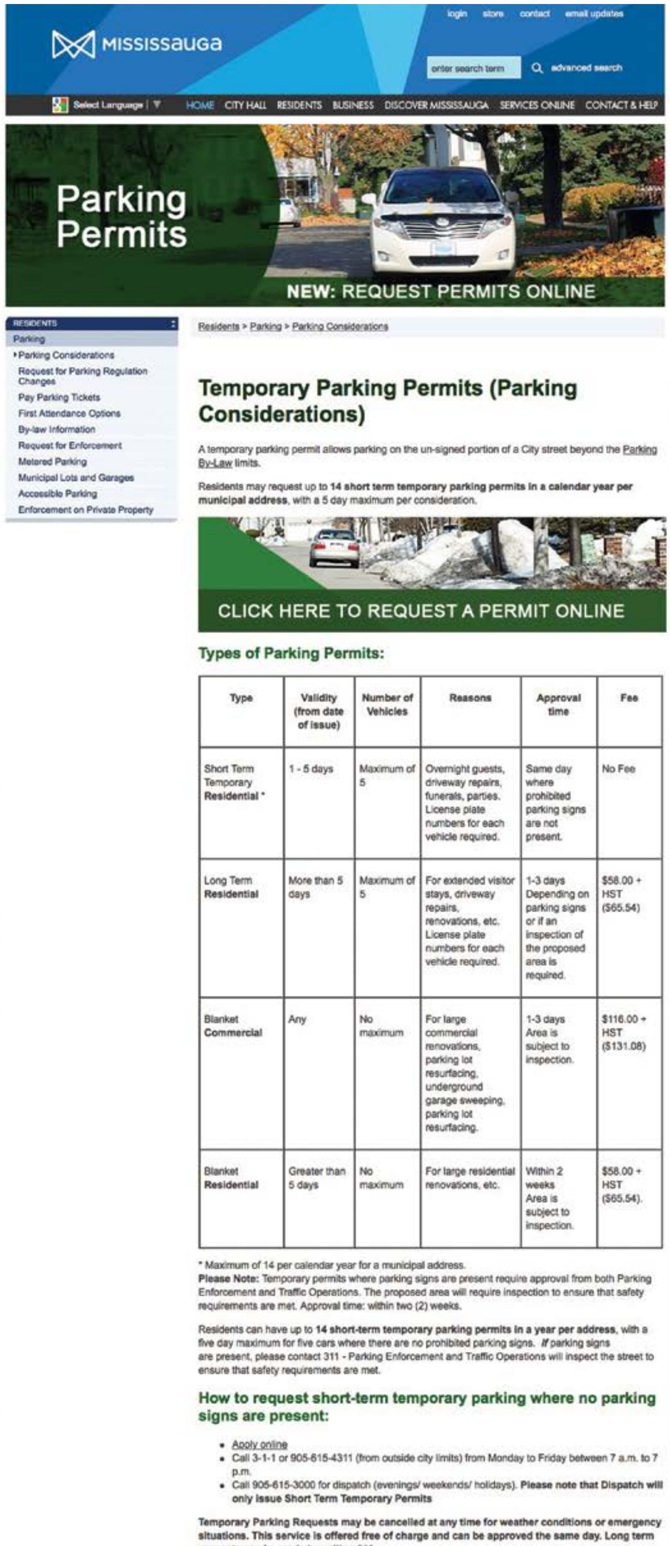
FIGURE 5.1A

Mississauga Parking Considerations Web Page: Before

Source: The Corporation of the City of Mississauga

FIGURE 5.1B

Mississauga Parking Considerations: After



login store contact email updates

MISSISSAUGA

enter search term advanced search

Select Language | HOME CITY HALL RESIDENTS BUSINESS DISCOVER MISSISSAUGA SERVICES ONLINE CONTACT & HELP

Parking Permits

NEW: REQUEST PERMITS ONLINE

RESIDENTS

Parking

- Parking Considerations
- Request for Parking Regulation Changes
- Pay Parking Tickets
- First Attendance Options
- By-law Information
- Request for Enforcement
- Metered Parking
- Municipal Lots and Garages
- Accessible Parking
- Enforcement on Private Property

Residents > Parking > Parking Considerations

Temporary Parking Permits (Parking Considerations)

A temporary parking permit allows parking on the un-signed portion of a City street beyond the Parking By-Law limits.

Residents may request up to **14 short term temporary parking permits in a calendar year per municipal address**, with a 5 day maximum per consideration.

CLICK HERE TO REQUEST A PERMIT ONLINE

Types of Parking Permits:

Type	Validity (from date of issue)	Number of Vehicles	Reasons	Approval time	Fee
Short Term Temporary **Residential** *	1 - 5 days	Maximum of 5	Overnight guests, driveway repairs, funerals, parties. License plate numbers for each vehicle required.	Same day where prohibited parking signs are not present.	No Fee
Long Term **Residential**	More than 5 days	Maximum of 5	For extended visitor stays, driveway repairs, renovations, etc. License plate numbers for each vehicle required.	1-3 days Depending on parking signs or if an inspection of the proposed area is required.	$58.00 + HST ($65.54)
Blanket **Commercial**	Any	No maximum	For large commercial renovations, parking lot resurfacing, underground garage sweeping, parking lot resurfacing.	1-3 days Area is subject to inspection.	$116.00 + HST ($131.08)
Blanket **Residential**	Greater than 5 days	No maximum	For large residential renovations, etc.	Within 2 weeks Area is subject to inspection.	$58.00 + HST ($65.54).

* Maximum of 14 per calendar year for a municipal address.
Please Note: Temporary permits where parking signs are present require approval from both Parking Enforcement and Traffic Operations. The proposed area will require inspection to ensure that safety requirements are met. Approval time: within two (2) weeks.

Residents can have up to **14 short-term temporary parking permits in a year per address**, with a five day maximum for five cars where there are no prohibited parking signs. *If* parking signs are present, please contact 311 - Parking Enforcement and Traffic Operations will inspect the street to ensure that safety requirements are met.

How to request short-term temporary parking where no parking signs are present:

- Apply online
- Call 3-1-1 or 905-615-4311 (from outside city limits) from Monday to Friday between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- Call 905-615-3000 for dispatch (evenings/ weekends/ holidays). **Please note that Dispatch will only issue Short Term Temporary Permits**

Temporary Parking Requests may be cancelled at any time for weather conditions or emergency situations. This service is offered free of charge and can be approved the same day. Long term requests can be made by calling 311.

Source: The Corporation of the City of Mississauga

LO2 How Do I Begin to Think About Good Design?

Use PAIBOC analysis to create audience-friendly design.

When you are considering how best to shape your message, remember the principle of all good design: *form follows function*. This design principle is essential to communication success: when you shape your message (form) to meet the needs of your audience and your purposes (function), you get the results you want.

FIGURE 5.2

PAIBOC Questions for Analysis

P	What are your design **purposes**? Sales? Marketing or Promotion? Safety? Readability?
A	Who will be using your design? What physical, psychological, and emotional expectations does your **audience** bring to your design?
I	What **information** must your design convey? What does your audience already know? What does your audience need to know? How can you use design to meet your audience's needs? What design will emphasize the vital information? What design will make your message most attractive and accessible to your audience?
B	How can you use your design to emphasize **reasons** or reader **benefits**?
O	How can you use design to de-emphasize or eliminate potential reader **objections**?
C	How will the **context** of the design affect audience response? What economic, environmental, cultural, and organizational realities will influence audience response to your message? How can you use design principles to attract and hold audience interest? If you are designing a presentation, how will the size of the audience, the time of day, the presentation room, and lighting affect your design planning?

FIGURE 5.3

Form Follows Function in Urban Design

Lucas Olenuik/Toronto Star/GETSTOCK

Industrial designer Simon Treadwell may have solved the problem city-dwellers have with scavenging raccoons. The City of Toronto is testing the prototype designed by the president of Treadwell & Company and his team.

FIGURE 5.4

Smart House Design

The University of Toronto's Peter Kitchen, a Master of Architecture graduate student, won the House 2020 design competition for his Tranquil House, a "working, living, and breathing system," where he envisioned residents "curating [their] home…constantly thinking about what can change, what plants to bring in, what [they] eat."

Source: Peter Kitchen

LO2 How Do I Design Documents?

Follow these guidelines.

To create visually attractive documents

- Use white space to separate and emphasize points.
- Use headings and sub-headings to signal readers and to group points.
- Limit the use of words set in all capitals.
- Use no more than two typefaces in a single document.
- Decide on margins based on the situation and your audience.

Use White Space

Ex. 5.4

White space—the empty space on the page—emphasizes the material that it separates from the rest of the text. This emphasis makes the material easier to read.

Creating white space is also known as "menu writing," because the visual design principle—brief text highlighted by space—is the same as you find on restaurant menus.

A Question of Ethics: Designing Ethics

You're the business developer on the design and development team for Personal Assistant Robots (PARs). These full-mobility robots will provide live-in support for people, including seniors and people with disabilities. PARs understand instructions, answer doors and telephones, use computers and smartphones, do housework, cook, and clean. What's missing? What ethical responsibilities would you advise your technicians to code into the PARs, and why?[1]

Create white space in several ways.

- Use headings and subheadings.
- Use a mix of paragraph lengths (maximum six to seven typed lines).
- Use lists.
- Use tabs or indents—not spacing—to align items vertically.
- Use numbered lists when the number or sequence of items is exact.
- Use bullets when the number and sequence are equal.

When you create a list, use parallelism: begin each item on the list with the same part of speech. If you begin your list with a verb, for example, begin every following item on the list with a verb. This parallel structure meets the reader's subconscious expectation. *And meeting audience expectations is the most important aspect of business writing.*

Not parallel The following suggestions can help employers avoid bias in job interviews:
1. Base questions on the job description
2. Questioning techniques
3. Selection and training of interviewers

Parallel The following suggestions can help employers avoid bias in job interviews:
1. Base questions on the job description.
2. Ask the same questions of all applicants.
3. Select and train interviewers carefully.

Also parallel Employers can avoid bias in job interviews by
1. Basing questions on the job description
2. Asking the same questions of all applicants
3. Selecting and training interviewers carefully

In Figure 5.5 the writer for Roysner, a legal firm, drafts a letter to describe what happens to consumers who don't pay their bills. Figure 5.6 illustrates how the same information becomes clearer and more reader-friendly when the writer uses shorter paragraphs, lists, and headings.

However, these design changes take space. When saving space is essential, it is better to cut the text and keep white space and headings.

Use Headings

Headings are words or short phrases that presage and sum up the text below, and divide your letter, memo, or report into sections. Headings should *talk*: that is, your headings should *say* in a phrase or question what the information underneath explains. Headings and sub-headings increase readability because they summarize what the reader is about to read, and they increase white space.

- Use first-level and second-level (sub-headings) to emphasize organization.
- Make each heading cover all the material until the next heading.
- Use sub-headings to signal the reader that you are about to give more specific information.
- Use even more levels of headings in long documents.
- Keep headings at any one level parallel: for example, all nouns, all complete sentences, or all questions.

This text uses talking headings, sub-headings, and sub-sub-headings throughout.

In documents, type main headings in bold, flush with the left-hand margin. Capitalize the first letters of the first word and other major words; use lowercase for conjunctions, articles, and short prepositions. (See Figure 5.6 for an example.) In single-spaced text, triple-space between the previous text and the heading; double-space between the heading and the text that follows.

Limit the Use of Words Set in All Capitals

"The bulk of scientific evidence says that we recognize a word's component letters, then use that visual information to recognize a word."[2] Because we are more familiar with lower-case letters, we recognize them more readily, and "read" the word more quickly. (For example, try reading each line in Figure 5.7.)

Also, readers tend to associate full-cap words with yelling. Use full capitals sparingly; instead, use bolding or italics to emphasize text.

FIGURE 5.5

Document with Poor Visual Impact

MONEY DEDUCTED FROM YOUR WAGES TO PAY CREDITORS

Full capital letters make title hard to read

When you buy goods on credit, the store will sometimes ask you to sign a Wage Assignment form allowing it to deduct money from your wages if you do not pay your bill. When you buy on credit, you sign a contract agreeing to pay a certain amount each week or month until you have paid all you owe. The Wage Assignment form is separate. It must contain the name of your present employer, your social insurance number, the amount of money loaned, the rate of interest, the date when payments are due, and your signature. The words "Wage Assignment" must be printed at the top of the form and also near the line for your signature. Even if you have signed a Wage Assignment agreement, Roysner will not withhold part of your wages unless all of the following conditions are met: 1. You have to be more than forty days late in payment of what you owe; 2. Roysner has to receive a correct statement of the amount you are in default and a copy of the Wage Assignment form; and 3. You and Roysner must receive a notice from the creditor at least twenty days in advance stating that the creditor plans to make a demand on your wages. This twenty-day notice gives you a chance to correct the problems yourself. If these conditions are all met, Roysner must withhold 15 percent of each paycheque until your bill is paid and give this money to your creditor.

Long paragraph is visually uninviting

If you think you are not late or that you do not owe the amount stated, you can argue against it by filing a legal document called a "defence." Once you file a defence, Roysner will not withhold any money from you. However, be sure you are right before you file a defence. If you are wrong, you have to pay not only what you owe but also all legal costs for both yourself and the creditor. If you are right, the creditor has to pay all these costs.

Important information is hard to find

FIGURE 5.6

Document Revised to Improve Visual Impact

Money Deducted from Your Wages to Pay Creditors

When you buy goods on credit, the store will sometimes ask you to sign a Wage Assignment form allowing it to deduct money from your wages if you do not pay your bill.

Have You Signed a Wage Assignment Form?

When you buy on credit, you sign a contract agreeing to pay a certain amount each week or month until you have paid all you owe. The Wage Assignment form is separate. It must contain the following:

- The name of your present employer
- Your social insurance number
- The amount of insurance
- The rate of interest
- The date when payments are due
- Your signature

The words "Wage Assignment" must be printed at the top of the form and also near the line for your signature.

When Would Money Be Deducted from Your Wages to Pay a Creditor?

Even if you have signed a Wage Assignment agreement, Roysner will not withhold part of your wages unless all of the following conditions are met:

1. You have to be more than 40 days late in payment of what you owe.
2. Roysner has to receive a correct statement of the amount you are in default and a copy of the Wage Assignment form.
3. You and Roysner must receive a notice from the creditor at least 20 days in advance stating that the creditor plans to make a demand on your wages.This 20-day notice gives you a chance to correct the problem yourself.

If these conditions are all met, Roysner must withhold fifteen percent (15 percent) of each paycheque and give this money to your creditor until your bill is paid.

What Should You Do If You Think the Wage Assignment Is Incorrect?

If you think you are not late or that you do not owe the amount stated, you can argue against it by filing a legal document called a "defence." Once you file a defence, Roysner will not withhold any money from you. However, be sure you are right before you file a defence. If you are wrong, you have to pay not only what you owe but also all legal costs for both yourself and the creditor. If you are right, the creditor has to pay these costs.

This letter is in full block format

First letter of each main word capitalized

Headings divide document into chunks

List with bullets where order of items doesn't matter

Headings should be parallel. Here, all are questions.

White space between items emphasizes them

Numbered list where number, order of items matter

Important information emphasized

FIGURE 5.7

Full-Cap Words Slow Reading

Full capitals hide the shape of a word and slow reading 19%.

FULL CAPITALS HIDE THE SHAPE OF A WORD AND SLOW READING 19%.

Limit Your Use of Fonts in a Single Document

Each font comes in several sizes and usually in several styles (bold, italic, etc.). Most computer fonts are **proportional**: wider letters (such as *w*) take more space than narrower letters (such as *i*). Times Roman, Palatino, Helvetica, Geneva, and Arial are proportional fonts. Fonts such as Courier and Prestige Elite, designed for typewriters and still offered as computer fonts, are **fixed**. Every letter takes the same space, so that an *i* takes the same space as a *w*.

Use an Appropriate Font

Choose your font style and size based on your purposes, audiences, and medium.

Serif fonts have little extensions, called *serifs*, from the main strokes. (In Figure 5.8, look at the feet on the T in Times Roman and the little flicks on the ends of the top bar of the T.) In **hardcopy** documents, serif fonts are easier to read, because the serifs help the eyes move from letter to letter. Courier, Times Roman, Palatino, and Lucida Calligraphy are serif fonts.

Helvetica, Geneva, and Arial are called **sans serif** fonts because they lack serifs (*sans* is French for *without*). Sans serif fonts are good for titles, tables, and narrow columns.

FIGURE 5.8

Examples of Different Fonts

This sentence is set in 12-point Times Roman.

This sentence is set in 12-point Arial.

This sentence is set in 12-point New Courier.

This sentence is set in 12-point Lucida Calligraphy.

This sentence is set in 12-point Broadway.

This sentence is set in 12-point Technical.

In magnified text and electronic messages, sans serif fonts are easier to read; therefore, use sans serif fonts for your slide presentations.

Most business documents use just one font—usually Times Roman, Palatino, Helvetica, or Arial in 11-point or 12-point. In a complex document, use bigger type for main headings and slightly smaller type for subheadings and text. If you combine two fonts in one document, choose one serif and one sans serif typeface.

Choose Margins Based on the Situation and the Audience

"[A]ll layouts…depend on the purpose of the piece, the audience and its expectations, the fonts, the margins and white space, and other elements on the page. The most appropriate choice is the alignment that works for that particular design."[3]

Left justification—with **ragged right margins**—is common business usage. Lines end in different places because words are of different lengths. Use default margin settings that line up to the left (see Figure 5.6).

Ex. 5.4–5.9

Use ragged right margins when you

- Do not have proportional typefaces
- Want a less formal look
- Want to be able to revise an individual page without reprinting the whole document
- Use very short line lengths

Computers allow you to use **full justification**, so that type on the both sides of the page is evenly lined up. Books, like this one, usually use full justification.

Use justified margins when you

- Can use proportional typefaces
- Want a more formal look
- Want to use as few pages as possible

LO4 How Do I Design Emails?

Apply design principles: Keep it consistent, simple, and readable.

The best business design delivers the right message, on time, the first time. To create visually attractive emails, follow the page design guidelines in this module and Module 6.

You can customize your email design, adding colour, texture and graphics, and highlighting words; however, exercise caution. Design should illuminate, not impede meaning. PAIBOC analysis will help you to choose design elements that invite reading, reinforce the message content, and conform to your organization's standards.

LO4 How Do I Design Presentation Slides?

Keep slides simple, relevant, and interesting.

As you design slides for Keynote, Prezi, PowerPoint, and other presentation programs, keep these guidelines in mind.

- Create slides that reinforce or illustrate your key ideas.
- Keep it consistent: use the same template and font throughout.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Using Computer Software to Create Good Design

Standard word-processing software enables you to emphasize—or highlight—text.[4] Online resources and Help menus can show you how to

- Add a background color, gradient, texture, pattern, or picture
- Change the font
- Add graphics
- Add a numbered or bulleted list
- Add a table
- Add a signature
- Add symbols, equations, and horizontal lines
- Change the theme

Designing Business Letters and Emails

- Choose a businesslike **font** in 11-point or 12-point type. Times Roman, Palatino, Helvetica, and Arial are the most commonly used business fonts.
- Use **bold** headings. Avoid having a heading all by itself at the bottom of the page. If you can't have at least one line of text under it, move the heading to the next page. You can check this by eye or set your program to avoid **widows** and **orphans** (single lines at the top and bottom of the page).
- Use **tabs** or **indents** to line up the return address and signature blocks in modified block format (Module 6) and the items in a list.
- Choose the design for **bullets** under **Insert** or **Format**. Word will create bulleted or numbered lists automatically.
- Use a **header** (found in the **Insert** or **View** menu) with automatic **page numbering** (pull down **Format Page Numbers**) for second and subsequent pages. That way, when you delete a paragraph or expand your reader benefits, you don't have to move the header manually. You can either delay the header until page two or create it on page two. For best visual impact, make your header one point size smaller than the body type.
- For a two-page document, change the top **margin** of the second page to 0.5 inches (1.25 centimetres) so the header is close to the top of the page.
- Use the same-size margins as your letterhead. If you aren't using letterhead, use 1-inch (2.5 centimetre) side margins.
- Emails are usually one long page, but if you're attaching a letter that has a second page, make sure the second page has at least four to six lines of text. If necessary, increase the length by (1) adding details, (2) starting the letter farther down on the first page so that there is more text on page two, or (3) making the text fit on just one page by tightening your prose, using full justification to save space, or using less white space.
- Word-processing programs have a **quick correct** or **auto correct** feature that changes *hte* to *the*, (c) to ©, and so forth. Go into the **Tools** or **Format** menus to find these features and edit them so they make only the changes you want.
- Hyphenation may be under **Format** or **Language** in **Tools**.
- The content of any attachment (other than a letter) should be centred on each page, like a picture in a frame. Go to **File**, **Page Setup, Layout, Vertical Alignment, Centre.**

- Customize your slides with the company logo as well as colours, charts, and scanned-in photos and drawings.
- Emphasize visuals. Pictures, charts, and graphs have much greater impact than text: they appeal to the right, or creative, side of the brain; they are more easily accessible than text; and they are more memorable.
- Use audience-relevant photos or illustrations to keep memorable images in your listeners' minds.
- Use no more than one slide per minute of your talk
- Keep text to an absolute minimum—three to five lines at most
- Use bullet-point phrases, action verbs, and concrete nouns.
- Give your audience slide handouts on which to write notes.
- Contrast background and text: the rule is light on dark or dark on light.
- Use a big font: 44-point or 50-point for titles, 32-point for subheads, and 28-point for examples.

What Should I Really Pay Attention To?

Pay attention to audience ennui: the best presentation slides are minimalist.

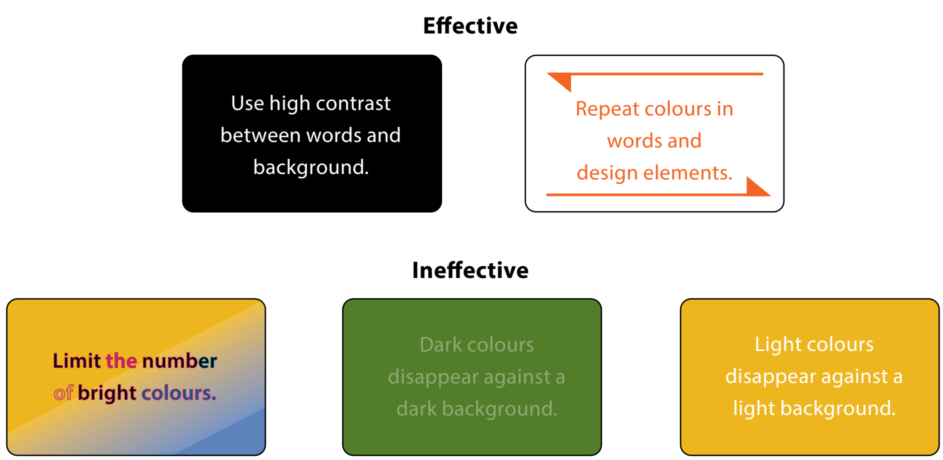
Choose a consistent template, or background design, for the entire presentation. Make sure that the template reinforces your topic. Whenever possible, create your own template.

Embed animation, video, and/or sound files in your presentations *only* if these contribute to audience understanding, and meet your objectives. Use visuals only when they reinforce your points and are audience-appropriate.

Choose a light background if the lights are off during the presentation and a dark background if the lights are on. Slides will be easier to read if you use high contrast between the words and background. Figure 5.9 shows examples of effective and ineffective colour combinations.

FIGURE 5.9

Effective and Ineffective Colours for Presentation Slides



LO4 How Do I Design Web Pages?

The best Web pages use design principles that facilitate immediate satisfaction, including easy navigation.

Web usability experts have proven that we read Web pages very differently than we read for pleasure.[5] Web users scan pages from top to bottom, in the F-shape captured in Jakob Nielsen's eye tracking studies.

According to Janice Redish, on the Web we "grab and go."[6] We read only what we need, and don't stay on the page if we can't meet that need immediately. For readers, "immediately" means the information on the first screen.

To design readable Web pages

- Define the purpose of the page
- Identify your users
- Use proven viewer patterns (the F-shape) to decide what you will place where
- Keep colours, font, and visuals consistent
- Keep your pages "clean and clutter-free"[7]
- Use mobility editors to enable mobile access[8]

FIGURE 5.10

How Readers Scan Web Pages

Source: Nielson Norman Group

LO4 How Do I Design Social Media Pages?

Design elements always depend on your purpose, audience and context.

Digital technology continues to evolve, along with billions of bits and bytes of design advice. However, knowing the purpose of your social media site(s)—to attract and hold your audience's attention—should help you identify the people you want to connect with, and the design elements that will appeal to them. On social media sites dominated by visuals, follow the same principles that guide your slide and Web design decisions.

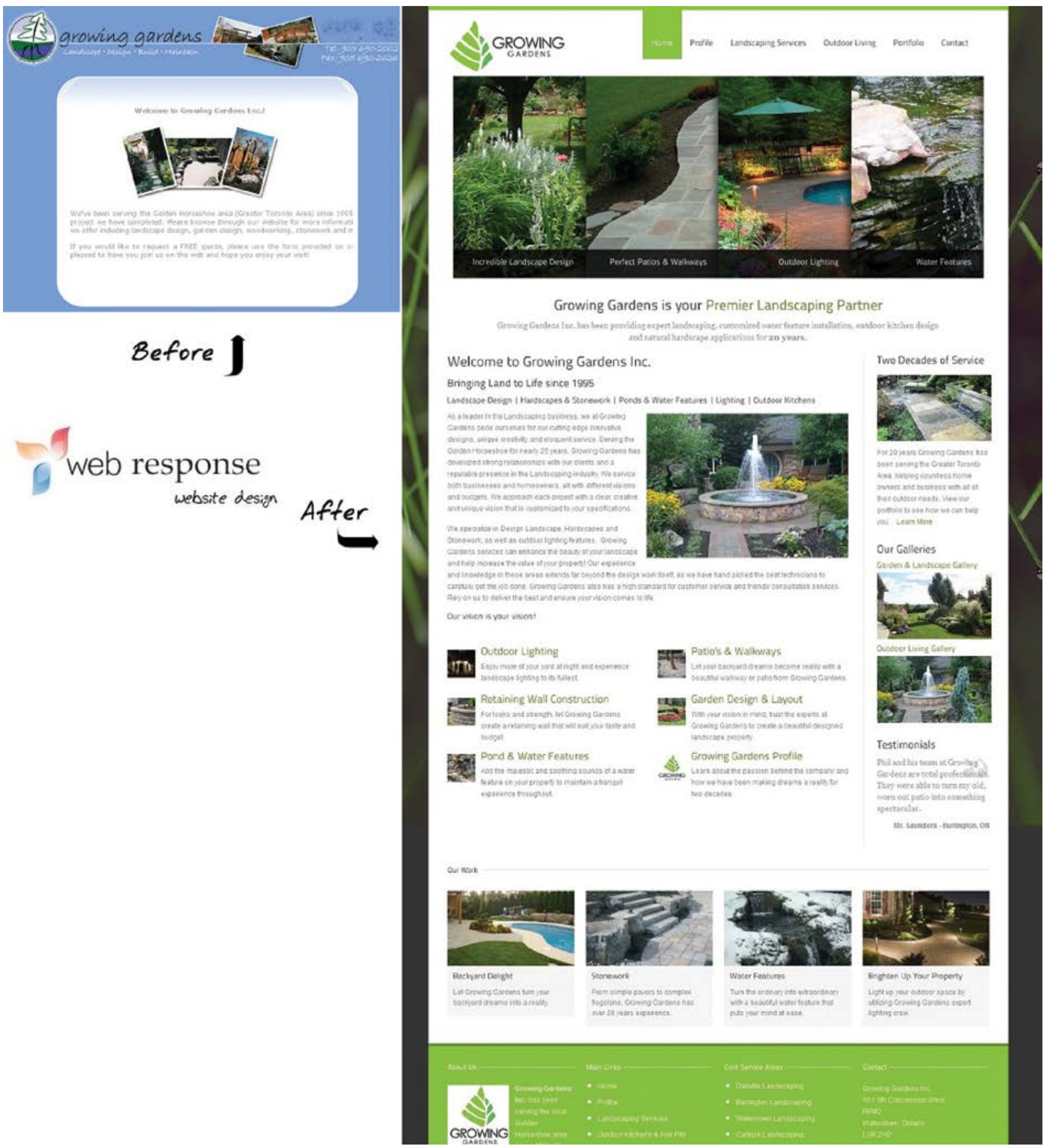
- Choose a colour scheme that reflects your identity, content, or brand.
- Choose fonts that reinforce your site's identity.

- "Use photo filters…[to] reinforce your brand's culture."[9]
- Create templates that convey specific content ideas, and use these consistently.[10]

On social media sites dominated by text, like LinkedIn or blogs, people still read according to need: Web reading is functional, so keep content relevant and accessible.[11]

FIGURE 5.11

Web Page Design, Before and After



Courtesy of Web Response www.webresponse, http://www.webresponse, and Growing Gardens Inc.

LO3 How Do I Know If My Design Works?

Test it.

A design that looks fine to you may not work for your audience. To know whether your design is functional, test it with your audience.

- Watch someone as he or she uses the document or page to do a task. Where does the reader pause, reread, or seem confused? How long does it take? How do the design elements enable the reader to complete the task accurately?
- Ask the reader to "think aloud" while completing the task: interrupt the reader at key points to ask what he or she is thinking, or ask the reader to describe his or her thought processes after reading the email or page. Exploring the reader's thought processes is important, since a reader may get the right answer for the wrong reasons. You can use this information to identify where and how the design needs work.
- Test the document with the people most likely to have trouble with it: very young readers, people with little education, people who read English as a second language, and people who have little experience with Web pages.

LO3 When Should I Think About Design?

Think about design at each stage of the writing process.

Because layout and design make the first impression on readers, pleasing document design is persuasive. You create the best messages when you think about design at each stage of your writing process.

- As you plan, apply your PAIBOC audience analysis. Are your audience members skilled readers? Are they busy? Will they read the document straight through or skip around in it? Design the document to meet readers' needs and expectations.
- As you write, incorporate lists and headings. Use visuals to convey numerical data clearly and forcefully.
- Get feedback from people who will be using your document. What parts of the document do they find hard to understand? What additional information do they need?
- As you revise, check your draft against the guidelines in this module.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Your audience makes meaning primarily from the design of your message. Audiences expect documents, slides and Web pages to be eye-pleasing and accessible.
- An attractive message is inviting and easy to read. Visual grouping of ideas also makes the message easier to read.
- Good message design saves time, money, and legal problems.
- To create visually inviting documents
  - Use white space.
  - Use headings.
  - Limit the use of words in all capital letters.
  - Limit the number of fonts in a single document.
  - Choose margins based on your audience and situation analysis.
- Keep presentation slides, Web pages and social media pages relevant, consistent and simple.
  - Customize slides and page design for audience appeal.
  - Use bullets.
  - Use clear, concise language.
  - Make only three to five points on a slide.
- To test a design, observe readers, ask them to "think aloud" while completing the task, interrupt them at key points to ask them what they are thinking, or ask them to describe their thought processes after completing the task.
- You create the best message when you consider design throughout the creation process and get feedback from people who will be using your document/visual.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 5

Questions for Critical Thinking

5.1 When would you use justified margins as a design choice?

5.2 Your college/university is preparing a brochure to persuade prospective students to enroll. The school doesn't want to invest a lot of money in full-scale document testing. What free or almost-free things could it do to make the document as effective as possible?

5.3 What is AODA compliance, and how does it impact designers?

Exercises and Problems

5.4 **Using Headings**

Reorganize the items in each of the following lists, using appropriate headings. Use bulleted or numbered lists as appropriate.

a. Rules and Procedures for a Tuition Reimbursement Plan

1. You are eligible to be reimbursed if you have been a full-time employee for at least three months.
2. You must apply before the first class meeting.
3. You must earn a C or better in the course.
4. You must submit a copy of the approved application, an official grade report, and your tuition receipt in order to be reimbursed.
5. You can be reimbursed for courses related to your current position or another position in the company, or for courses that are part of a degree related to a current or possible job.
6. Your supervisor must sign the application form.
7. Courses may be at any appropriate level (high school, college or university, or graduate school).

b. Activities in Starting a New Business

- Getting a loan or venture capital
- Getting any necessary city or provincial licences
- Determining what you will make, do, or sell
- Identifying the market for your products or services
- Pricing your products or services
- Choosing a location
- Checking zoning laws that may affect the location
- Identifying government and university programs for small business development
- Figuring cash flow
- Ordering equipment and supplies
- Selling
- Advertising and marketing

5.5 Evaluating and Revising Page Designs

Find a hard-copy or electronic document that could benefit from improved design: for example, this public document at http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/DrinkingWater_PrivateCitizen_test_requisition.pdf.

a. Write an analysis of the document's layout and page design. (Read the Hints in Exercise 5.9 for some ideas.)

b. Use PAIBOC analysis, then redesign one page, or part of a page of the document, to show readers how you would improve the original.

As your instructor directs

1. Write a letter describing the design changes you would make to the document.
2. Explain why you would make these changes.
3. Send an electronic copy of the original document and your letter in an email to your instructor.
4. Send an electronic copy of the original document and your letter in a memo to the communications department of the organization that published the document.

5.6 Comparing Current Presentation Software

Since presentation software keeps evolving, how do you know what software is just adequate, and what is really good? What criteria would cause you to choose one type over another?

Research the variety of presentation software (for example, PowerPoint, Prezi, Google Slides, Keynote, SlideDog, Powtoon), and choose three presentation programs to compare, using the following criteria:

- Business applications
- Ease of use
- Flexibility
- Collaboration capabilities
- Graphics
- Price

Using your favorite software, create a three-minute presentation on your comparison findings. Email your presentation to your instructor and classmates.

5.7 Evaluating Web Page Designs

Use the guidelines in this module and your own experience to assess business website designs. Find two effective and two ineffective business Web page designs. Assess the sites based on the relationship between the design and the sites' purposes (and potential audiences). Consider

- Navigation
- Visual hierarchy (the F-shape)
- Clarity
- Colour
- Visuals
- Interactivity
- Font type and size

Bookmark the sites, and record your assessments.

As your instructor directs

a. Choose two or three classmates to create a work group.

b. Use social bookmarking to exchange your Web pages with each other.

c. Comment on your peers' choices: which pages do you consider well designed and why? Which pages are poorly designed and why?

d. Together with your team, create a slide-show presentation (maximum five slides) identifying the common design elements your team and you found in the best Web pages.

e. Email your slide presentation to your instructor with a cover memo.

5.8 Assessing Peers' Social Media Pages

How effective are your Facebook pages, and what criteria do you use to determine their efficacy? Why do you use Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other SM? Who are your audiences? How well do your SM posts serve your purposes and attract your designated audiences?

a. Form a group with three other students and share Facebook pages (or posts on any other social media you use).

b. Assess one other group member's SM pages based on

- Visual appeal
- Readability
- Interest

c. Make notes about your assessments.

d. Identify three specific ways you would improve the SM site/pages.

e. Write your teammates an email describing your ideas. Send your instructor a copy of your email.

5.9 Revising a Financial Aid Form

You've just joined the Financial Aid office at your school. The director gives you the accompanying form and asks you to redesign it.

"We need this form to see whether parents have other students in college or university besides the one requesting aid. Parents are supposed to list all family members that they support—themselves, the person here, any other kids in college or university, and any younger dependent kids.

"Half of these forms are filled out incorrectly. Most people just list the student going here; they leave out everyone else.

"If something is missing, the computer sends out a letter and a second copy of this form. The whole process starts over. Sometimes we send this form back two or three times before it's right. In the meantime, students' financial aid is delayed—maybe for months. Sometimes things are so late that they can't register for classes, or they have to pay tuition themselves and get reimbursed later.

"If so many people are filling out the form wrong, the form itself must be the problem. See what you can do with it. But keep it to a page."

As your instructor directs

a. Analyze the current form and identify its problems.

b. Revise the form. Add necessary information; reorder information; change the chart to make it easier to fill out.

Hints

- Where are people supposed to send the form? What is the phone number of the financial aid office? Should they need to call the office if the form is clear?
- Does the definition of *half time* apply to all students or just those taking courses beyond high school?
- Should capital or lowercase letters be used?
- Are the lines big enough to write on?
- What headings or subdivisions within the form would remind people to list all family members whom they support?
- How can you encourage people to return the form promptly?

Please complete the chart below by listing all family members for whom you (the parents) will provide more than half support during the academic year (July 1 through June 30). Include yourselves (the parents), the student, and your dependent children, even if they are not attending college or university.

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION, 2015–2016						
FULL NAME OF FAMILY MEMBER	AGE	RELATIONSHIP OF FAMILY MEMBERS TO STUDENT	NAME OF SCHOOL, COLLEGE, OR UNIVERSITY SCHOOL YEAR	FULL-TIME	HALF-TIME* OR MORE	LESS THAN HALF-TIME
STUDENT APPLICANT						

*Half-time is defined as 6 credit hours or 12 clock hours a term.

When the information requested is received by our office, processing of your financial aid application will resume.

Please sign and mail this form to the above address as soon as possible. Your signature certifies that this information and the information on the FAF is true and complete to the best of your knowledge. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the needs analysis staff.

______________________ ____________

Signature of Parent(s) Data

Polishing *your* Prose

Active and Passive Voice

The verb is the most important part of a sentence. Verbs tell what action is being performed. When whoever is acting is the subject of the sentence, the verb is active; when the subject is not doing the action, the verb is passive.

Active The man bought grapes at the store.

Passive The grapes were bought at the store by the man.

In the active voice, the subject "the man," is doing the action—"bought." In the second sentence, "The grapes" is the subject; the grapes are not doing the action. When the verb is passive, it is harder for the reader to follow who or what is doing the action. In addition, it takes more words to convey the same idea.

Contemporary communication prefers verbs in the active voice, because the resulting sentence is clearer and shorter. When writers want to avoid or downplay responsibility, they use the passive voice.

To change a passive verb into the active, start by identifying who or what is doing the action. A passive verb is usually accompanied by a copula verb, such as *is*, *are*, or *were*. Rewrite the sentence by putting the actor in the role of subject and changing the verb.

Passive The plan was approved by our clients.

Active Our clients approved the plan.

Passive Prezi slides have been created.

Active Susan created the Prezi slides.

Passive It is desired that you back up your work daily.

Active Back up your work daily.

In business communication, active voice is usually better. However, passives are better when you want to

1. Emphasize the object receiving the action, not the agent.

   My mother was taken to hospital last night.

   It does not really matter who took her.

2. Provide coherence within a paragraph. A sentence is easier to read if "old" information comes at the beginning of a sentence. When you have been discussing a topic, use the word again as your subject even if that requires a passive verb.

   The bank made several risky loans in the early 2000s. These loans were written off as "uncollectible" in 2008.

   Using "loans" as the subject of the second sentence provides a link between the two sentences, making the paragraph as a whole easier to read.

3. Avoid assigning blame.

   The order was damaged during shipment.

   An active verb would require the writer to specify who damaged the order. The passive here is more tactful.

Exercises

Identify whether the passives in the following sentences are acceptable, or whether the verb should be changed to active.

1. The contract was signed by the vice-president of finance.
2. New employees Ms. Taleroski, Mr. Franklin, and Ms. Holbreck were introduced at last week's staff meeting.
3. Two visitors are expected to arrive at headquarters tomorrow.
4. Outgoing correspondence was collected by the mailroom staff.
5. The proposal was turned in late.

Change these passive-voice constructions into the active voice.

6. Correspondence was collected by the mailroom staff.
7. Phone calls were returned by the human resources administrator.
8. In April, budgets were amortized and files created for the project.
9. Phone calls need to be returned within 24 hours.
10. Packages are to be sent to the mailroom for delivery.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Answer Key at the back of the text.

MODULE 6

Communicating Electronically

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 6 you will be familiar with

- **LO1** Business e-communication practices
- **LO2** Formatting business messages
- **LO3** Social media for business basics

By applying the information you will be able to

- **LO4** Apply PAIBOC analysis to business messages
- **LO5** Choose the best medium for your message

Module Outline

Composing effective electronic messages necessitates the same careful analysis (PAIBOC), and the same processes (revising, editing) as any other for-the-record writing.

Messaging may feel as informal and spontaneous as speaking. However, electronic messages lack all the subtle symbols—facial expressions, gestures, tone, posture, use of space—we use to negotiate meaning. And, of course, electronic messages are permanent.

LO1 What Do I Need to Know About E-communicating?

When you post, you're published.

Electronic privacy does not exist. Your text messages, tweets, Facebook posts—all your electronic messages—are retrievable, virtually forever. Even personal electronic conversations are in the public domain.[1] Around the globe, anyone can follow your electronic trail.

So when you email, text, tweet, or post, keep these guidelines in mind.

- Texts, posts, and emails are neither private nor informal, as a conversation may be. Governments, law enforcement agencies, and employers may legally check your messages. And any e-messages you send can be printed out and/or forwarded to others without your knowledge or consent.
- E-messages work best for simple, direct, and emotionally neutral conversations. Effective communicators do not send or post sensitive material, nor do they negotiate via emails, texting, or social media.
- Because they lack subtle non-verbal cues and are, therefore, easily misinterpreted, writing e-messages requires **heightened audience awareness**. For example, some readers may expect traditional business language in your electronic communications.

It's *your job as a writer* to find out your readers' preferences. And audience awareness applies as much to *how* you communicate as it does to *what* you communicate. As McLuhan taught us, the medium is the message: choose your connection (phone, text, tweet, post, email, snail mail) based on PAIBOC analysis.

LO1 When Do I Use Email?

Use email when it serves your purposes and meets your audience's needs.

"[Email] is the connective tissue and common denominator for almost all other forms of communication."[2] As of the writing of this edition, email and phone conversations continue to be business standards for communicating with customers. Business users consider email more formal than texts, and easier to track, file and retrieve; tweets are restricted to 140 characters, and currently "[y]ou can't embed a file directly in a [t]weet"[3]

Use email when one or more of the following is true.

- Email is standard organizational practice.
- Your audience expects or prefers it.
- Email is the optimum tool for your message.

Because email seems to be as instantaneous as texting, some writers pay less attention to grammar, punctuation, and spelling. However, business emails should be as correct as any written document. Use a spell-checker; check for grammar and punctuation. Whenever you can, ask a peer to proof your message.

FIGURE 6.1

PAIBOC Questions for Analysis

P	What is your **purpose**? What do you want to accomplish? Are you texting a friend to verify an address? Emailing a colleague about work? Writing a client to arrange a meeting? Saying no to a customer request? What results do you want?
A	Who is your **audience**? What is your relationship with your audience? Are you close friends? Acquaintances? Are you communicating with your supervisor? With a subordinate? How will your audience feel about your message? Happy? Neutral? Angry? What medium does your audience assume is appropriate for your communication?
I	What does your audience already know? What do they need to know? Will you need to persuade your audience? What facts or feelings will your audience consider worthwhile? Based on your audience and purpose analysis, what **information** must you include?
B	What reasons or reader **benefits** support your ideas? What will motivate your audience to do as you request? What benefits or alternatives will enable your audience to accept your decision? What's in it for them?
O	What **objections** can you expect your audience to have to your message content, to the medium you have chosen, or to you? What negatives must you de-emphasize or overcome?
C	How will the **context** affect your message? What cultural, organizational, economic, environmental, and/or seasonal circumstances will affect your content and medium and your audience response to your message? For example, your organization might encourage employees to text each other on work matters, but consider it inappropriate for you to text a client. This cultural expectation is the context that determines when you use texting and when you send emails.

LO2 How Do I Format Email Messages?

Follow organizational formats, or use a software template.

Some organizations use boilerplate formats for their electronic documents. If you are unsure about how to format a document, ask co-workers. Other resources include software and email programs that provide formats you can customize.

Begin your message with a salutation: *Hi* or *Hello* (*Name*), *Good Morning* (*Name*). Omitting the salutation sounds brusque, even rude. A salutation is particularly important for readers whose cultures value courtesy and formality. (See Module 2: How Do I Use Audience Analysis? and Module 3: How Does Culture Affect Business Communication?)

The writer in Figure 6.2 ends the message with all his contact information, but you can choose to type only your name. These conventions depend on your relationship with the reader, and the assumptions and expectations of your company's culture.

When you hit Reply, the email program automatically uses *Re:* (short for *regarding*) and the previous subject. Revise the subject line to make it appropriate for your message. When you change the subject line, you can include the original one in parentheses for the reader who sorts messages by thread.

When you create a new subject line, delete the *Re*.

LO1 LO2 How Do I Organize Email Messages?

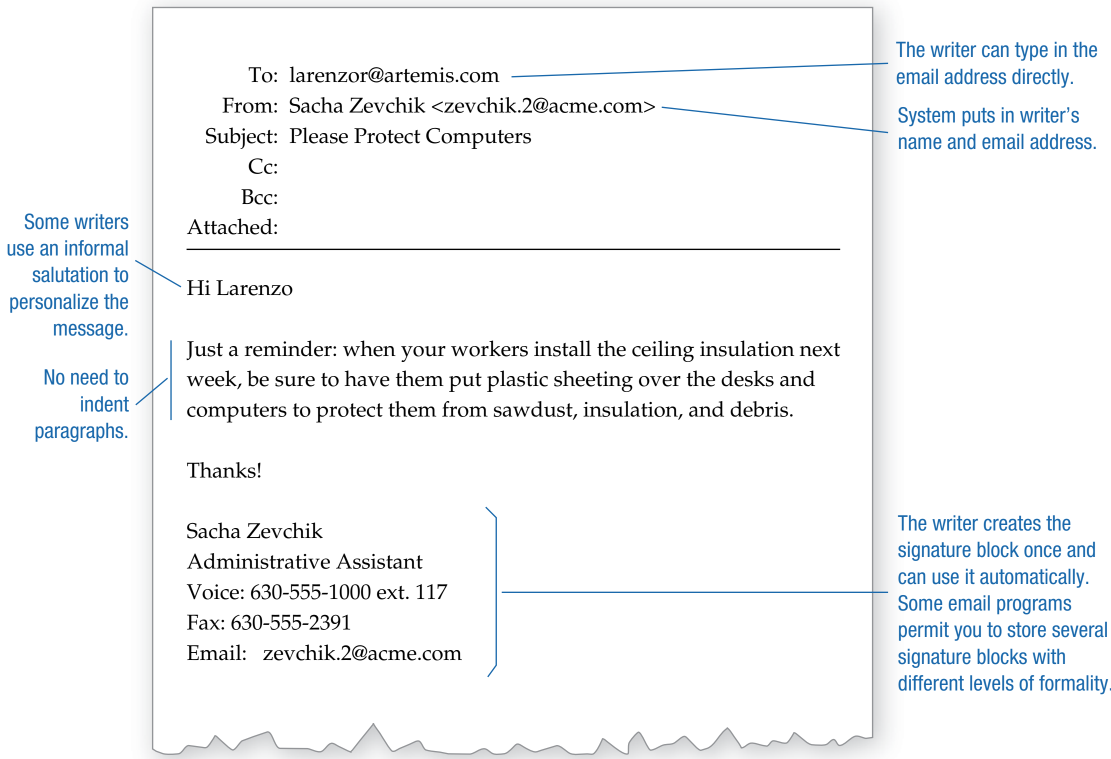
Organize to meet readers' expectations.

Ex. 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.10

Because they have to deal with so many electronic messages daily, people need to be able to recognize, read, and respond to emails rapidly. Your responsibility as a writer is to meet that need.

FIGURE 6.2

A Basic Email Message



Write with intention; make conscious choices.

- Use PAIBOC analysis to plan: clarify why you are writing—what results you want—and how your audience will feel about your message.
- Take special care when writing to people who do not report to you, or to people outside your organization or unit.
- Give all the necessary information your reader needs to make a decision and act on your request.
- Use numbers, bullets, and indents to emphasize information (Figure 6.3).
- Organize to meet readers' needs: use the indirect pattern when your message is bad news for your reader—that is, your message will inconvenience or cost the reader time or money—or you have to say no to the reader (Modules 8 and 9).
- Revise for clarity and conciseness: choose concrete nouns and action verbs; keep sentences and paragraphs short; eliminate unnecessary words.
- Write your subject line last, and make it effective. The ideal subject line sums up your email; however, you don't know what you're going to say until you've said it. Furthermore, you may be revising to discover exactly what it is you do want to say. Why write a subject line that you'll have to change?
- Take time to proofread, just as you would with paper messages. It's easier to catch errors in hard copy, so if you can, print your messages out to edit and proofread.

FIGURE 6.3

Confirmation Email with Content Emphasis

Dear Dennis Baronski,

Thank you for shopping at goodbooks.ca. The item(s) listed below have been shipped from your order, OR141133149. Any item(s) remaining in your order will ship as they become available. If you paid for your order by credit card we are now processing a charge to your card for the shipped item(s).

To check your order's status, sign in to your Online Account and reference your Order History.

ITEM(S) SHIPPED

1. Bob Dylan: In His Own Words - 1 @ 29.88
2. Down the Highway: The Life of Bob Dylan - 1 @ 49.35

Item(s) Subtotal: $79.23
Shipping: $0.00
HST: $3.96

____
____

TOTAL: $83.19

Note the differences between the two emails—the draft and revised copies—below. In Figure 6.6, the writer has used PAIBOC analysis to revise for clarity and conciseness.

LO2 What Subject Lines Do I Use for Emails?

Use subject lines that are concise and relevant.

Email users get so many messages that they don't bother reading them if they don't recognize the sender, or if the subject doesn't interest them. After crafting your message, create a concise subject line that captures your content.

If your message gives bad news to your reader, write a neutral subject line that orients your reader to the topic. Figures 6.4 and 6.5 feature neutral subject lines. The subject line in Figure 6.6 delivers direct bad news to readers ("Here's some more work for you!") only because the writer and readers have negotiated the work in earlier conversations.

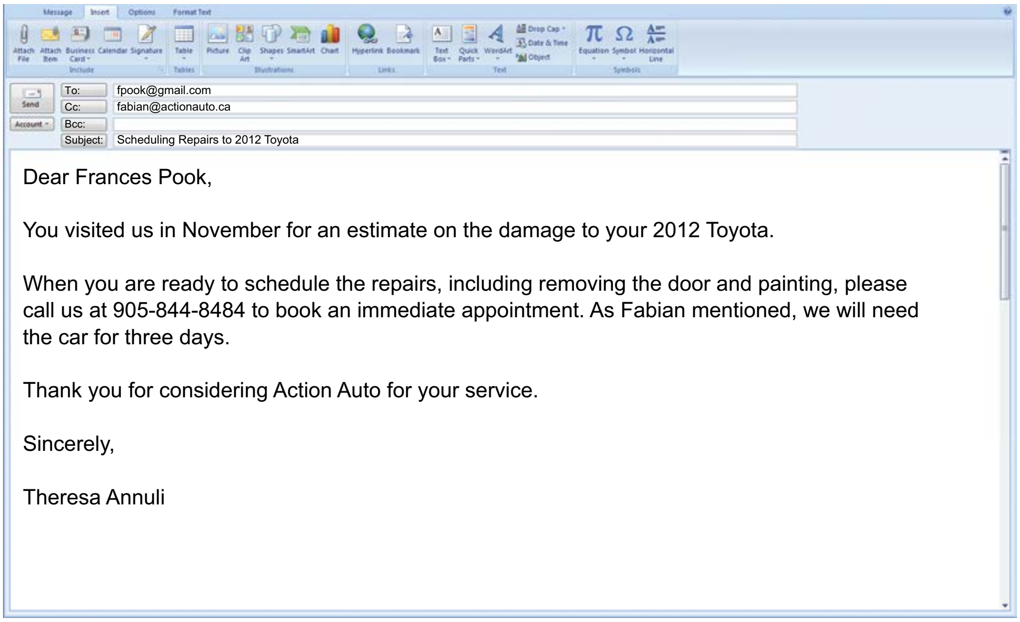
If your message is very short, you may be able to put it in the subject line. "EOM" (end of message) tells your reader there is no additional information in the body of the message.

Subject:	Will attend 3:00 p.m. meeting. EOM

You'll find more information on how to structure informative, positive, negative, and persuasive messages, and how to write subject lines in Modules 7, 8, and 9.

FIGURE 6.4

Email Letter/Sales Letter



To: fpook@gmail.com
Cc: fabian@actionauto.ca
Bcc:
Subject: Scheduling Repairs to 2012 Toyota

Dear Frances Pook,

You visited us in November for an estimate on the damage to your 2012 Toyota.

When you are ready to schedule the repairs, including removing the door and painting, please call us at 905-844-8484 to book an immediate appointment. As Fabian mentioned, we will need the car for three days.

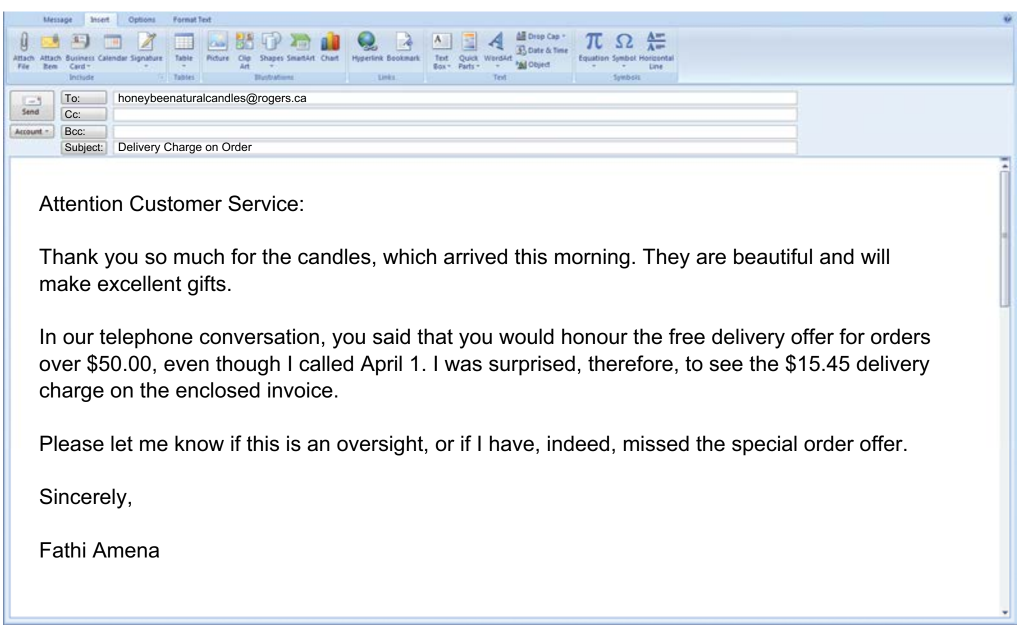
Thank you for considering Action Auto for your service.

Sincerely,

Theresa Annuli

FIGURE 6.5

Email Letter Request for Adjustment



To: honeybeenaturalcandles@rogers.ca
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Delivery Charge on Order

Attention Customer Service:

Thank you so much for the candles, which arrived this morning. They are beautiful and will make excellent gifts.

In our telephone conversation, you said that you would honour the free delivery offer for orders over $50.00, even though I called April 1. I was surprised, therefore, to see the $15.45 delivery charge on the enclosed invoice.

Please let me know if this is an oversight, or if I have, indeed, missed the special order offer.

Sincerely,

Fathi Amena

FIGURE 6.6

Email Message with Attachment (direct request, draft copy)

To: Communications Committee
From: Ray Lui
Subject: Draft Copy of the new office social media policy and procedures
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached: G:\comm\socialmedia.draft

No salutation–seems abrupt

As we discussed and agreed in the meting of March 11, I need your feedback on the current draft on the social media policy and procedures that Arlen and Laihla have been working on over the past several weeks.

Repetition unnecessary –writer sounds as if he doesn't trust audience

You may remember that everyone agreed to provide input, including opinions as well as criticisms and information that might be missing so that we can formulate a coherent policy, including information on the legal repercussions of staff using social media to discuss personal and political opinions which could be incorrectly be attributed to the business.

Sentence has over 50 words –all unnecessary

I would really appreciate it if you could get back to me when we agreed, which was within three days of getting the new draft. I think it's really important that we drill down and hammer out some kind of realistic rules that people can understand, agree to, and follow.

Clichés

Specify when!

What works best is if you read and comment right on the attach and then send it back to me as soon as you possibly can.

Thanks!

FIGURE 6.7

Email Message with Attachment (direct request, revised)

To: Communications Committee
From: Ray Lui
Subject: Please Comment on New Draft
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached: G:\comm\socialmediapolicy.draft

Hi everyone,

Here is the latest draft of our social media policy.

Please send me any changes by 10 a.m. Thursday. I'll collate them and bring them to our Thursday afternoon meeting.

Thanks!

How Do I Show I Am Sending My Message to Other People?

When you want to send copies of your email to other people, list their email addresses in the *Cc* line below the *To* space. The abbreviation *cc* originally meant *carbon copy* but now means *computer copy*. Saving a copy of a message for your own files is standard business practice.

A Question of Ethics

You can also send copies to other people without the reader knowing. You don't mention these **blind copies** in your original message; you list these other people beside *Bcc*, which is just above the Subject line.

When and why would you choose to send blind copies? What might be some ethical concerns of blind copying your electronic messages to other people, without your primary recipient's knowledge?

LO2 When Do I Use Attachments?

Send attachments when your PAIBOC analysis tells you that they meet the needs of your audience.

Ex. 6.9

Any text document can be copied and pasted into the body of your email message. However, sending attachments makes sense when your reader needs

- A business letter or report
- A long text document
- A text document with extensive formatting
- A non-text file (e.g., Prezi slides, HTML file, spreadsheet)

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Formatting Letters

Ex. 6.1, 6.2

Business letters and memos are similar in formality, length, style, and organization. **Letters** go to people outside the organization; **memos** are messages sent to people within your organization. Because they have different **audiences**, letters and memos differ in format, signaling readers that they are getting an external or internal message.

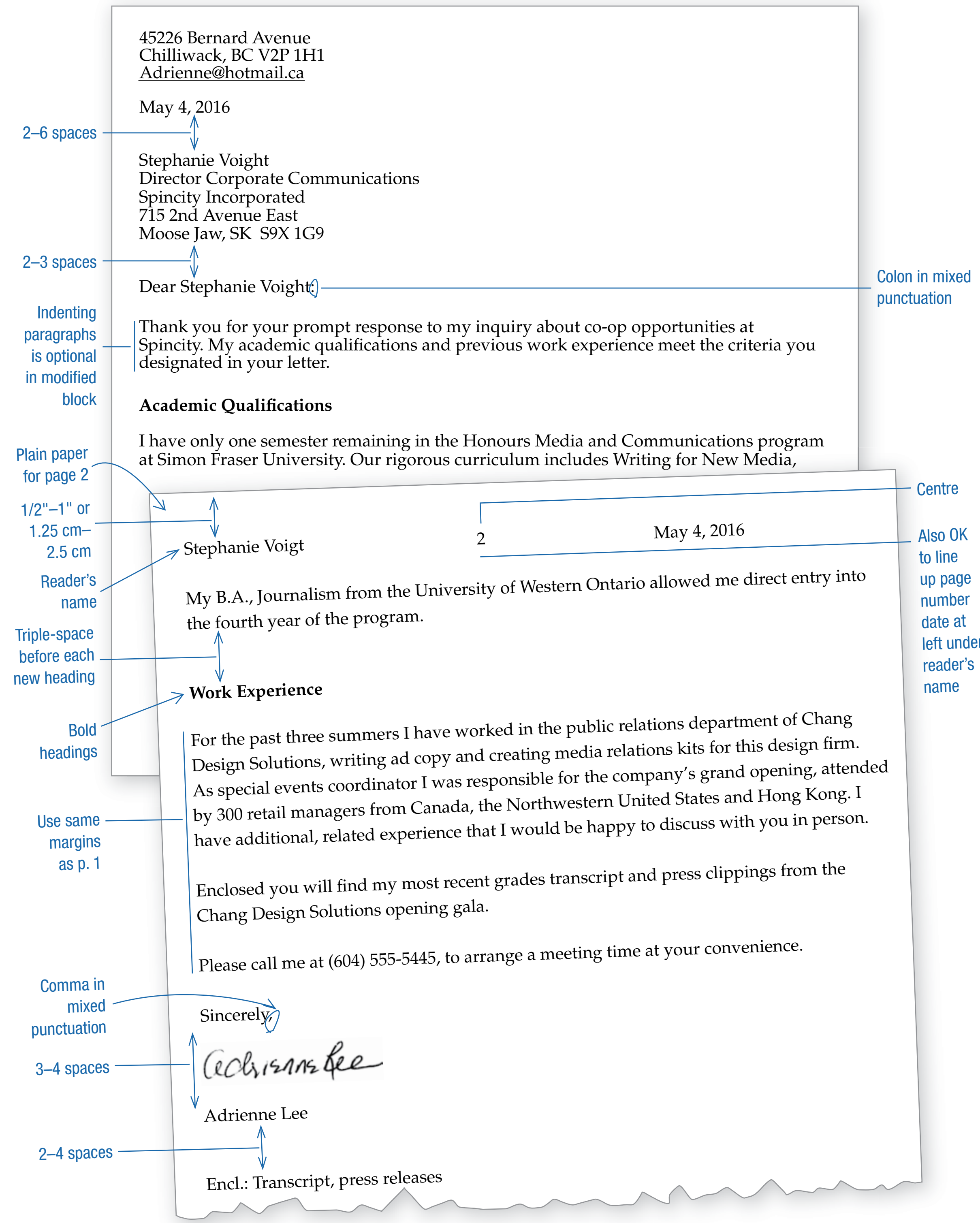
Format includes the parts of a document and the way they are arranged on the page. Most organizations have standard formats for their client correspondence (emails and letters). Otherwise, you can customize software templates.

The two most common letter formats are **block**, sometimes called **full block**, and **modified block** or **semi-block**.

Each format has advantages. Block is the format most frequently used for business letters; readers expect it and it can be typed quickly, since everything lines up at the left margin. Speed-readers say it is easier to read. *Modified* block format creates a visually attractive page by moving the date and signature block into what would otherwise be empty white space.

FIGURE 6.8

Two-Page Letter, Block Format (mixed or two-point punctuation; informative)



45226 Bernard Avenue
Chilliwack, BC V2P 1H1
Adrienne@hotmail.ca

May 4, 2016

Stephanie Voight
Director Corporate Communications
Spincity Incorporated
715 2nd Avenue East
Moose Jaw, SK S9X 1G9

Dear Stephanie Voight:

Thank you for your prompt response to my inquiry about co-op opportunities at Spincity. My academic qualifications and previous work experience meet the criteria you designated in your letter.

Academic Qualifications

I have only one semester remaining in the Honours Media and Communications program at Simon Fraser University. Our rigorous curriculum includes Writing for New Media,

Stephanie Voigt 2 May 4, 2016

My B.A., Journalism from the University of Western Ontario allowed me direct entry into the fourth year of the program.

Work Experience

For the past three summers I have worked in the public relations department of Chang Design Solutions, writing ad copy and creating media relations kits for this design firm. As special events coordinator I was responsible for the company's grand opening, attended by 300 retail managers from Canada, the Northwestern United States and Hong Kong. I have additional, related experience that I would be happy to discuss with you in person.

Enclosed you will find my most recent grades transcript and press clippings from the Chang Design Solutions opening gala.

Please call me at (604) 555-5445, to arrange a meeting time at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Lee

Adrienne Lee

Encl.: Transcript, press releases

FIGURE 6.9

Modified Block Letter (open punctuation, subject line; request)

1148 Brussels Ave. NE
Timmons, ON P4N 2S9
February 12, 2016

Sales Department
Custom Accessories Corporation
2020 104 St. NW
Edmonton, AB T5A 1B0

Attention: Sales
Subject: Invoice No. 664907, 10/29/16

I ordered and received the briefcase on page 14 of your online catalogue (881-CD-L-9Q-4.) The catalogue offered the Leatherizer, 881-P-4, free with the purchase of the briefcase. On the order form, I indicated that I wanted the Leatherizer and checked the "Free" box, as required. However, you have charged my credit card for the Leatherizer, plus HST.

Please refund my credit card the $16.00 charge for the Leatherizer, plus additional HST, and confirm when you have done so.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Lehman

Carolyn Lehman

Block and modified-block business letters share many elements.

- Organizations include their return address in their **letterhead**.
- Written documentation is for the record, so the **date** is essential.
- Readers are addressed by name in the **salutation**.
- Readers appreciate **subject** and **reference** lines (Figure 6.9) that focus attention on your purpose.
- Bullets, numbers, headings and indents (known as *telegraphing or highlighting*) add emphasis.
- A standard **complimentary close** (*Sincerely*, *Best*, *Cordially*, *Regards*) comes before your signature.
- Correct punctuation is essential for credibility.
- Continuation (subsequent) pages maintain coherence.
- Encl. (short for *enclosure*) tells the reader that you have included additional material, such as a duplicated document or a resumé.

Choose the level of formality in the **salutation** based on your relationship with the person: *Dear Ahmed* if you're on a first-name basis and *Dear Mr. Guten* if you don't know the reader well enough to use a first name. When you are responding to a letter or memo, use a salutation that mirrors the original sender's signature, which reflects how the person wants to be addressed.

How Do I Manage Attachments?

When you send an attachment, remember that

- Word-processing programs can generally open documents created in earlier versions of such programs but not later ones; Word 2010 can open documents created in Word 2007 but not in Word 2013.
- Attachments always require a cover email drawing the reader's attention to them—*Here is, I have attached, You'll see, (Enclosure)*; your reader won't be happy having to guess what you are sending.
- All files, including attachments, require appropriate names so that (1) you can find the file easily, and (2) the reader understands the attachment's purpose and contents.

Viruses can infect files that are attached to email messages or that you download. To stay virus-free[4]

- Install an antivirus program on your computer, and keep it up to date.
- Ask people who send you attachments to include their names in the document titles; virus titles aren't that specific.
- Don't open an attachment if you're in doubt about it.
- Forward email messages only when you're sure of the source and contents.

LO4 LO5 When Do I Text?

Text when your PAIBOC analysis determines it's the best medium for your message.

Ex. 6.5, 6.9

Some digital natives sleep with their smartphones; prefer texting each other to talking face to face, even when sitting together; text while waiting in line, walking, talking, shopping, eating and—despite the legal prohibitions and proven dangers—driving; and text in bed, bars, coffee houses, movies, museums, and meetings. For many people, texting is connecting.

But texting has not yet displaced email in for-the-record business communicating.[5] Email allows unlimited characters (a text is restricted to 160), and email is cheaper and considered more formal.[6]

When deciding whether to text, email, telephone, or meet in person, choose your medium—or media—based on careful (PAIBOC) analysis of your

- Organizational culture
- Audience's expectations
- Purposes

When texting meets these designated criteria, format and frame your text message to audience expectations. Texts between peers, colleagues and customers often use textspeak—including shorthand and emoticons—and omit salutations and signatures.

©StockByte/PictureQuest

Texting has become the default personal communication medium.

Remember: Whatever media you do choose and use tells your audience almost as much about you as the content does.

LO3 LO5 When Do I Use Social Media?

Choose specific social media for business messages only when it is professionally appropriate.

Ex. 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.9

Social media (SM) provide a plethora of discourse communities (Module 2) where interested people engage anywhere, anytime. You can use social media for interactivity, collaboration, and learning. Twitter is particularly popular for 140-character, carefully crafted social and political commentary.

However, in your own personal and professional interests, lurk before you leap: Don't post or tweet anything you don't want public, because—guaranteed—it will be. And before you digitally socialize for business, research the norms and expectations of each and every discourse community (Module 2) you want membership in.

Know your organization's social media policy to ensure compliance. If your business doesn't have a social media policy, create one.

Currently, organizations connect with customers through SM primarily to

- Create and maintain their identities (branding)
- Promote their products and services (marketing)
- Manage crisis communications, including public criticism

Meanwhile, social media have enhanced two essential business applications: blogs and internal communications.

Blogging for Business

Ex. 6.5

Blogs began as individuals' online journals. Today people all over the world blog on every possible subject, from pets to piano tuning. And thousands of blogs proffer pointers on blogging.

Social media enable bloggers to amplify their audiences via shared content, especially on the big three: Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.[7] Co-opted by business, "commercial" blogs primarily promote the financial interests of the organization.

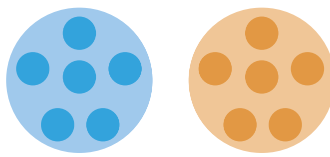
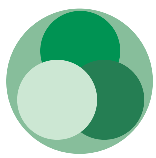
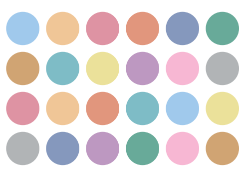
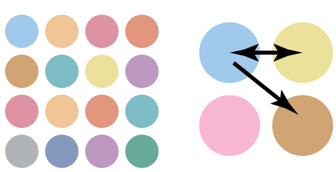
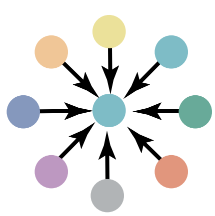
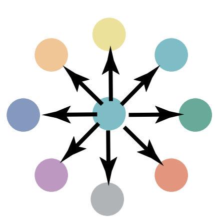
Blogging tips include keeping content fresh and engaging, and avoiding overt marketing. Other tips include writing and design best practices you are already familiar with.

- Use PAIBOC analysis to identify your preferred audience. Whom do you want to attract and engage with via your blog?
- Create a blog identity with your blog name, and consistent colour and design.
- Keep text tight. Use short sentences and paragraphs.
- Use common highlighting techniques, including catchy titles and bullets, to break up text.
- Support your ideas and opinions with hard data.
- Keep it exciting. Take advantage of the technology to intersperse graphics and video.[8]

FIGURE 6.10

Twitter's Dominant Discourse Communities: Aerial View

The Six Structures of Twitter Conversation Networks

Network Type	Diagram	Description	Groups	Example
Divided 1		**POLARIZED CROWDS** This type illustrates different groups of Twitter users who discuss polarizing topics. They often rely on different sources of information and commonly do not interact with groups that disagree with them.	2 large	Politics or divisive topics that display separate "echo chamber" structures
Unified 2		**TIGHT CROWDS** This type captures close communities, such as conferences, professional topics, and hobby groups, where participants strongly connect to one another for information, ideas, and opinions.	2–6 medium	Hobbies, professional topics, conferences—no outsiders, all participants are members
Fragmented 3		**BRAND CLUSTERS** This type is formed around products and celebrities. These popular topics attract large fragmented Twitter populations, generating mass interest but little connectivity.	Many small	Brands, public events, popular subjects
Clustered 4		**COMMUNITY CLUSTERS** These groups are created around global news events and popular topics. Communities form around multiple news sources. These community clusters are mostly disconnected from one another.	Many small and medium	Global news events
In-Hub & Spoke 5		**BROADCAST NETWORK** This type is often triggered by news media outlets and pundits who have loyal followers who retweet them. These communities are often star-shaped, as little interaction exists among members of the audience.	1 large, some secondary	News pundits and media outlets, famous individuals
Out-Hub & Spoke 6		**SUPPORT NETWORK** This type is created when companies, government agencies or organizations respond to complaints and customer requests. The company, or hub, account replies to many disconnected users, creating outward spokes.	1 large, some secondary	Companies and services with customer support

Source: Pew Research Center, "The Six Structures of Twitter Conversation Networks," February, 2014, http://pewinternet.org/

Communicating Internally

Ex. 6.5

Evolving technology continues to shape communications that transcend time and space. Cloud computing enables instantaneous employee information storage and sharing; applications like Workday and SalesForce provide global employee connectivity and instantaneous, collaborative, trouble-shooting via texts and images.[9]

Digital media enable faster, cheaper, and easier inter-company communications. Before you use social networks like Chatter, however, familiarize yourself with the online organizational culture. Create messages that respect the reader and get the job done.

LO1 LO4 LO5 What Should I Know About Content and Tone?

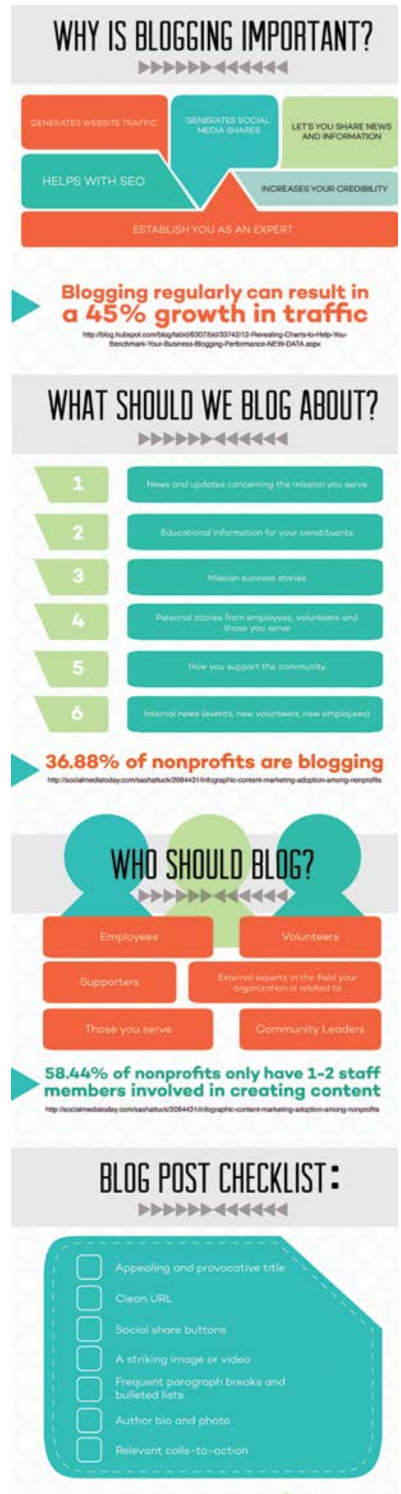
Use PAIBOC analysis: Communicate to meet your audience's needs and your purposes.

Remember to

- *Deliver sensitive messages in person whenever possible.* Because of the limitations of electronic media, negative and persuasive messages (reprimands, negotiations) are more efficiently delivered face to face. The important nuances added through non-verbal communication speak volumes and can save time and energy. If you must deliver negative information electronically, write so that it's easy for readers to understand and act on the information quickly.
- *Be clear, courteous, and concise.* Unless your reader's expectations, your corporate culture, or your purposes dictate otherwise, compose and revise your messages to convey necessary information as politely, clearly, and briefly as possible. This reader-focus is not only good business; it is also legally responsible behaviour.
- *Format and name attachments appropriately.* Attached documents (letters, resumés, reports, invoices, etc.) use standard formats (See Expanding a Critical Skill.). Use document names that make it easy for your reader to find and file.

FIGURE 6.11

The Blogging Boom



Source: Jennifer Crothers, Graphic Designer, Bloomerang

- *Compose and copy with discretion.* In email memos, *Cc* denotes computer copies; your recipient can see the names of other people getting the message. *Bcc* denotes blind computer copies, usually used for mailing lists or for sending yourself electronic copies; the recipient does not see the names of these people.

LO1 What Netiquette Rules Should I Follow?

Follow these guidelines to be a good netizen.

Evolving technology continues to challenge us psychologically and emotionally. To adjust, we adapt behavioral norms and expectations almost as quickly as the new app. Regardless of your medium, when you message, always err on the side of caution and courtesy. Your reputation and peace of mind depend on it.

- *Never send or post angry messages.* If you have a conflict with someone, work it out face to face, not electronically.
- *Send people only messages they need.* Send copies to supervisors/bosses only if they have asked you to.
- *Avoid clichés* such as "Enclosed please find" and "Please don't hesitate to call," as you would in any messages.
- *Send cards, rather than emails, to express condolences and appreciation for hospitality.* Use the appropriate medium for your message. When you respond to a message, mirror the sender's choice of medium, format, and language.
- *Before you hit Send, assume your email will appear on the front pages of the national newspaper,* because it very well could.
- *Avoid using full caps; use mixed case in subject lines and full caps only if you have to emphasize a word or two.* Putting the whole message in full caps is considered shouting.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Use PAIBOC analysis to write for the results you want. Because e-communications omit the thousands of non-verbal nuances present in face-to-face communication, humour, sarcasm, and sensitive interpersonal negotiations are not appropriate in emails, texts, tweets, or posts.
- Create emails that are clear, concise, and courteous. Make sure you write messages that people can read and act on quickly.
- Compose important messages offline to give yourself time for thought and revision.
- Organize email messages for audience compliance: give good news directly and bad news indirectly.
- Write your subject lines last: make them specific and concise. When your message is bad news, write a neutral subject line.
- Draw readers' attention to the attachments you include, and give attachments useful (to the reader) names.

- Format attachment documents according to audience expectations; use organizational or software templates.
- Use your message media professionally to get the job done.
- Be discreet when you post or hit Send. All electronic communications can be shared and retrieved without your permission.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 6

Questions for Critical Thinking

6.1 What if you do not know the name of the person you are writing a letter to? What can you do?

6.2 Word offers dozens of templates for business documents. How would you decide what template to use? What are the advantages of using Word templates? What are the disadvantages?

6.3 What social media does your university/college use? Where can you locate the official SM guidelines/best practices?

6.4 What's the purpose of hashtags? What are the characteristics of good hashtags?

Exercises and Problems

6.5 Analyzing the Medium and the Message

As digital media expand, so do their inappropriate applications. Increasingly news stories feature seemingly intelligent people behaving badly via electronic communications.

Find an example of an electronic message (email, text, blog, Facebook or LinkedIn post, tweet, or YouTube video) that you find inappropriate or offensive. Use PAIBOC to analyze the message and the medium. What specifically is unacceptable about the message? Is it the message itself? Is it ageist, racist, or sexist? Is it violent or bullying? What's wrong with the message? Is the message worthy of being revised? If so, how would you revise it?

Is the message medium the problem? How is the chosen medium inappropriate or just plain wrong? If the message is worthwhile, what medium or media would you choose to deliver the message, and why?

As your instructor directs

a. Compose your analysis.

- Assume your audience is your instructor and fellow students.
- Provide the message, or briefly describe the message.
- Explain what is inappropriate about the message and/or medium.
- Provide an alternative to the message or medium, if one exists.
- Conclude your analysis by suggesting an alternative to the problem message or medium, or both.

b. Form a group with two or three other classmates to collaborate on a summary of your findings.

- Use Google Docs (or any other collaboration software) to compose a one-page summary of your message analyses and your conclusions.
- Revise your summary for consistent tone.
- Edit your summary so it is complete and correct.

c. Create a blog for your summary; use appropriate media to invite your instructor and classmates to read and comment on your blog.

6.6 Telling an Employee that a Workshop Is Full

As director of human resources, you sponsor a variety of workshops for employees. You received this email message today.

> Subject: Re: Presentations Workshop
>
> Please register me for the workshop on giving oral presentations next week. My supervisor has told me I should attend this.

The workshop is full, however, and you already have three people on a waiting list to fill vacancies if anyone should cancel. You will repeat the workshop only if you have guarantees for at least fifteen participants.

Write the message.

6.7 Saying No to the Boss

Today, you received this email from your boss.

> Subject: Oversee United Way
>
> I'm appointing you as company representative to oversee our United Way campaign. You've done a good job the last three years, so this year should be a piece of cake.

It's true that you know exactly what to do. The job wouldn't be hard for you. But that's just the problem. You wouldn't learn anything, either. You'd rather have an assignment that would stretch you, teach you new skills, or enable you to meet new people. Continuing to grow helps ensure your continued employability and mobility. Three upcoming projects in your division might offer growth: creating DVDs for a "town meeting" for all employees to be held at the beginning of next quarter, creating a plain language policy for the company, or serving on the diversity committee. Any of these would be time-consuming, but no more time-consuming than running the United Way campaign.

Respond to your boss, asking for something more challenging to do.

6.8 Persuading the CEO to Attend Orientation

As the director of education and training for your organization, you run orientation sessions for new hires. You're planning next quarter's session (new quarters start in January, April, July, and October) for a big group of new college graduates. You'd really like the organization's president and CEO to come in and talk to the group for at least fifteen minutes. Probably most of the employees have seen the CEO, but they haven't had any direct contact. The CEO could come any time during the three-day session. Speaking just before or after lunch would be ideal, because then the CEO could also come to lunch and talk informally with at least a few people. Next best would be speaking just before or after a mid-morning or mid-afternoon break. But the CEO is busy, and you'll take what you can get.

As your instructor directs

a. Assume that your instructor is your CEO, and send an email message persuading him or her to come to the orientation.

b. Send an email message to your instructor asking him or her to address new members of a campus organization.

c. Send an email message to the CEO of your university, college, or workplace, asking him or her to speak to new students/employees.

6.9 Writing a Texting Policy

Your CEO is concerned about the number of employees using their own devices to text at their desks, in meetings, strolling through the office, at the photocopier—even in the washrooms. How does this behaviour affect productivity? Your CEO has asked you, the human resources director, to create a texting policy, and to inform people about the policy appropriately. Write the policy.

As your instructor directs

a. Choose two other classmates for your HR team.

b. With your team members, share your policy drafts through emails and attachments.

c. Share feedback electronically or through an in-person meeting, or both.

d. Choose the best ideas and create a revised policy.

e. Edit the policy.

f. Send the revised and edited policy through three appropriate media to inform your instructor (the CEO) and classmates (employees) about the policy.

6.10 Asking for More Time or Resources

Today, this message showed up in your email inbox from your boss.

> Subject: Re: Want Culture Report
>
> This request has come down from the CEO. I'm delegating it to you. See me a couple of days before the board meeting—the first Monday of next month—so we can go over your presentation.
>
> I want a report on the culture for underrepresented groups in our organization. A presentation at the last board of directors' meeting showed that although we do a good job of hiring women and minorities, few of them rise to the top. The directors suspect that our culture may not be supportive and want information on it. Please prepare a presentation for the next meeting. You'll have 15 minutes to speak.

Making a presentation to the company's board of directors might really help your career. But preparing a good presentation and report will take time. You can look at exit reports filed by Human Resources when people leave the company, but you'll also need to interview people—many people. You're already working 60 hours a week on three major projects, and one of them is behind schedule. Can one of the projects wait? Can someone else take one of the projects? Can you get some help? Should you do just enough to get by?

Write an email to your boss, asking for advice in a way that makes you look like a committed employee, not a slacker.

Polishing *your* Prose

Correcting Dangling Modifiers

Modifiers are words or phrases that give more information about parts of a sentence. For instance, an adjective is a modifier that usually describes a noun (*top* performer), and an adverb modifies a verb (performs *brilliantly*).

Dangling modifiers	confuse readers, because the word they modify is not in the sentence.
Dangling	After talking on the phone, your Hot Springs Hot Tub Spa is scheduled for delivery April 12. (This sentence implies that the spa talked on the phone.)

Correct a dangling modifier in either of these ways.

1. Rewrite the modifier as a subordinate clause.

   Correct As we agreed yesterday, your Hot Springs Hot Tub Spa is scheduled for delivery April 12.

2. Rewrite the main clause so its subject or object can be modified correctly.

   Correct To confirm our conversation, your Hot Springs Hot Tub Spa is scheduled for delivery April 12.

Exercises

Correct the dangling modifiers in these sentences.

1. After working here a year, dental insurance covers you.
2. Using the fax machine, new orders are processed quickly.
3. At the age of 10, I bought my daughter her first share of stock.
4. Working in teams, projects can be completed quickly.
5. Calling ahead of time, the reservations can be made efficiently.
6. Before joining our company, your resumé shows a good deal of experience with new media.
7. Posting risqué material on Facebook potential employers can access even years later.
8. A simple notebook filled with thoughts and ideas, you can keep a journal of your business experiences.
9. Sharing files with our legal department, our attorneys can work better with you.
10. As a new employee, your supervisor can answer your questions.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Answer Key at the back of the text.

Composing Informative and Positive Messages

MODULE 7

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 7 you will be familiar with

LO1 The types of direct messages

LO2 The organization pattern for informative and positive messages

LO3 The persuasive element of all effective messages

LO4 The audience impact of organizational patterns

By applying the information you will be able to

LO5 Further analyze business communication situations

LO6 Begin to organize and write informative and positive messages

Module Outline

Direct messages provide information that you expect will please the audience or that you expect the audience will respond to neutrally. These informative or "good news" messages usually have both primary and underlying purposes.

LO1 What Are the Purposes of Positive Messages?

Besides providing information, "good news" messages build relationships.

Ex. 7.12

Positive messages serve several primary purposes.

- To give information or good news to the reader, or to reassure the reader
- To have the reader "hear" the message, understand it, and view the information positively
- To de-emphasize any negative elements
- To reduce or eliminate future correspondence on the same subject

Positive messages also always have these underlying purposes.

- To build and maintain the brand
- To create a good image of the writer
- To initiate or build a good relationship between the organization and its audiences

Because you want to build positive attitudes about yourself and the information you are presenting, even informative messages have persuasive elements, including clarity, brevity, and courtesy.

LO3 LO4 Why Do I Need to Know How to Organize Messages?

Form follows function: The way you organize your message shapes how your audience reacts to it.

Knowing the appropriate organizational pattern can help you compose messages more quickly and create a more effective final product. How you organize your messages affects how your audience responds to the information.

The organization patterns described in this module and Modules 8 and 9 work in most business writing situations. Be sure you understand the rationale behind each pattern so that you can modify the pattern when your purpose and audience analysis make it necessary. For example, when you write instructions, any warnings should go up front, in a place of emphasis (see Figure 7.3 later in this module).

LO1 What Kinds of Informative and Positive Messages Will I Write?

You will likely write acceptances, confirmations, summaries, instructions, complaint responses and adjustments, and thank-you notes.

Ex. 7.4

- A summary can be positive when you're sending glowing sales figures or persuasive when you want the reader to act on the information.

- Readers may feel neutral about assembly, safety, and fire drill instructions (unless, of course, these are badly written and therefore hard to understand and follow; then readers may feel irritated or frustrated).
- A collection letter is persuasive; it becomes negative in the last stage when you threaten legal action.

Depending on your purpose(s) and audience(s), you can use multiple media to deliver positive messages.

Acceptances and Confirmations

Ex. 7.5

Traditional informative messages are for the record: they go to others to summarize the conversation. These messages are brief and often repeat information shared orally, as in Figure 7.1.

When you need to orient the reader to a previous conversation, start the message by indicating that it is an acceptance or confirmation, not a new message.

As we discussed on the phone today…
As I told you yesterday…
Attached is the meeting schedule we discussed earlier today.

Whenever audience-appropriate, people prefer texting acceptance and confirmation messages, which they perceive as more casual than emails (although just as retrievable!).

FIGURE 7.1

A Confirmation Email

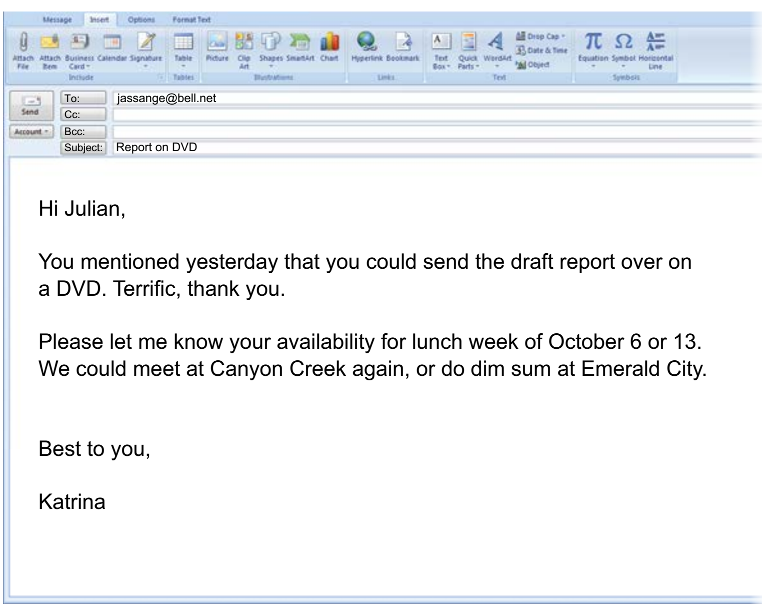
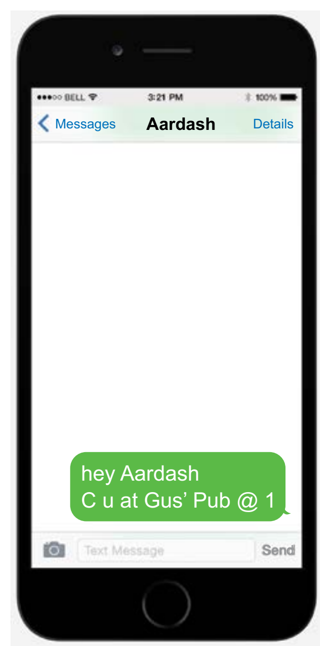


FIGURE 7.2

A Confirmation Text



Social Media Confirmations

Social media enable immediate, multiple, interactive, global confirmation messages. According to Web Content & Social Media Coordinator Gazalle Ardekani, organizations use these messages to demonstrate currency and audience understanding, thereby building brand loyalty.[1]

However, as Ardekani points out, social media change so constantly and rapidly that no one can legitimately claim expertise in any particular medium.[2] The only constant remains the importance of PAIBOC analysis: practiced social media communicators know their purposes and their audiences *before* they post.

The best Twitter confirmation messages invite audiences to share in a friendly, witty, conversational exchange in 140 characters; embedding links to related material engages readers without adding to character count.[3]

Gazalle Ardekani

Web Content & Social Media Coordinator Gazalle Ardekani

Summaries

Ex. 7.4, 7.6–7.8, 7.10, 7.12

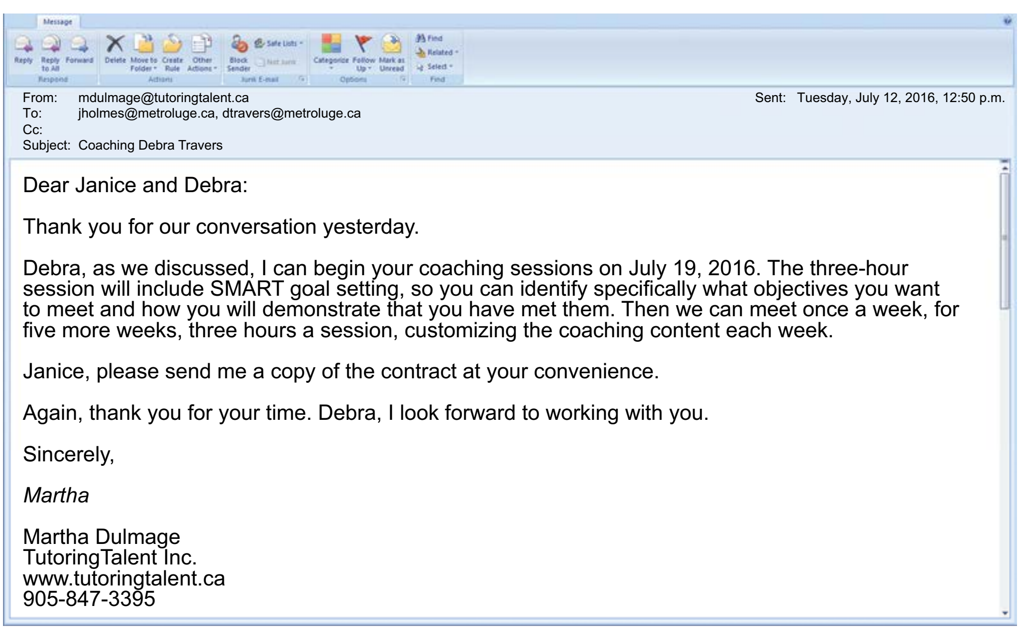
You may summarize all sorts of data—conversations, documents, client meetings, team meetings, business results and/or outside meetings—for colleagues or superiors. (Minutes of an internal meeting are usually more detailed. See Module 21 for advice on writing minutes of meetings.)

Use PAIBOC analysis to determine what to include in your summary, and how to organize it. For example, in a summary of a conversation for internal use, identify

- Who was present
- What was discussed
- What was decided
- Who does what next

FIGURE 7.3

Informative Email Summarizing Meeting



From: mdulmage@tutoringtalent.ca Sent: Tuesday, July 12, 2016, 12:50 p.m.
To: jholmes@metroluge.ca, dtravers@metroluge.ca
Cc:
Subject: Coaching Debra Travers

Dear Janice and Debra:

Thank you for our conversation yesterday.

Debra, as we discussed, I can begin your coaching sessions on July 19, 2016. The three-hour session will include SMART goal setting, so you can identify specifically what objectives you want to meet and how you will demonstrate that you have met them. Then we can meet once a week, for five more weeks, three hours a session, customizing the coaching content each week.

Janice, please send me a copy of the contract at your convenience.

Again, thank you for your time. Debra, I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Martha

Martha Dulmage
TutoringTalent Inc.
www.tutoringtalent.ca
905-847-3395

To summarize text

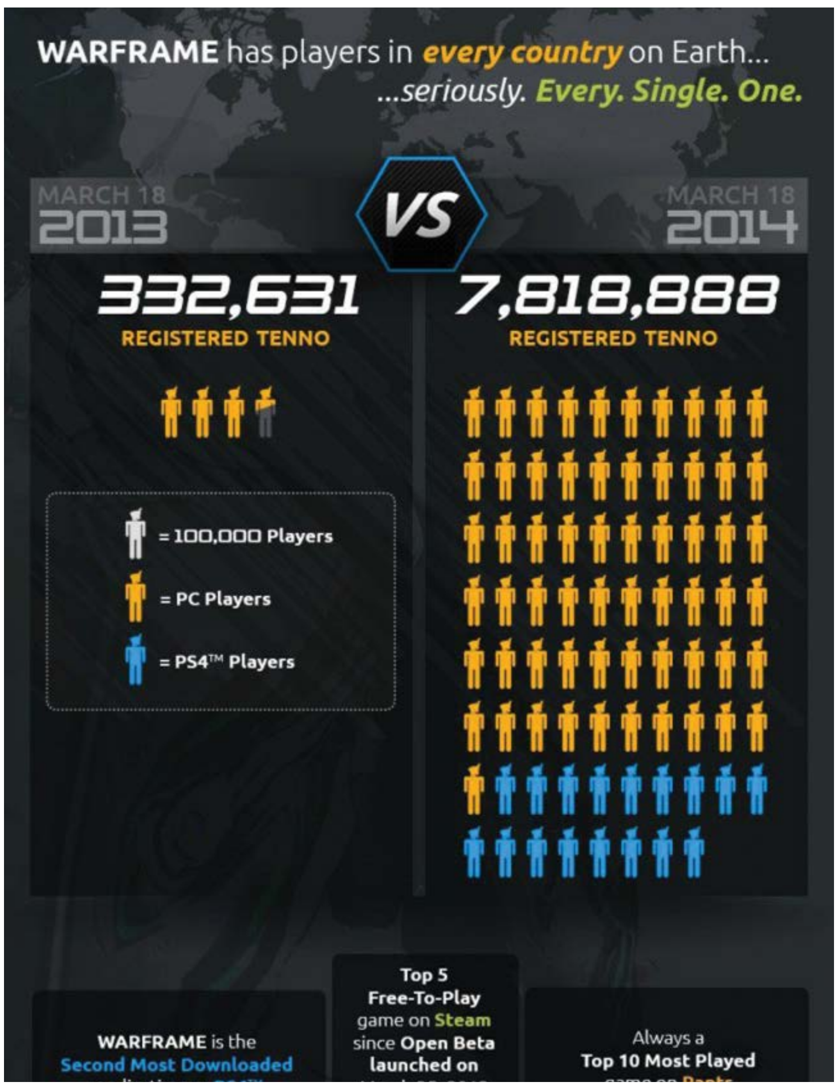
- Start with the main point.
- Give supporting evidence and details.
- Evaluate the document, blog, or post, if your audience expects an evaluation.

When you write a summary to get action, ask for the action that you want: what should the organization do, based on your summary of this meeting? Should others in the company read this blog? Should someone in the company tweet in response to this newspaper article?

Social media enable you to tell summary stories in a variety of ways that (1) reflect the values of the discourse community (Module 2) you share with your audience and (2) shape your audience's responses, as Digital Extremes' infographic below demonstrates.

FIGURE 7.4A

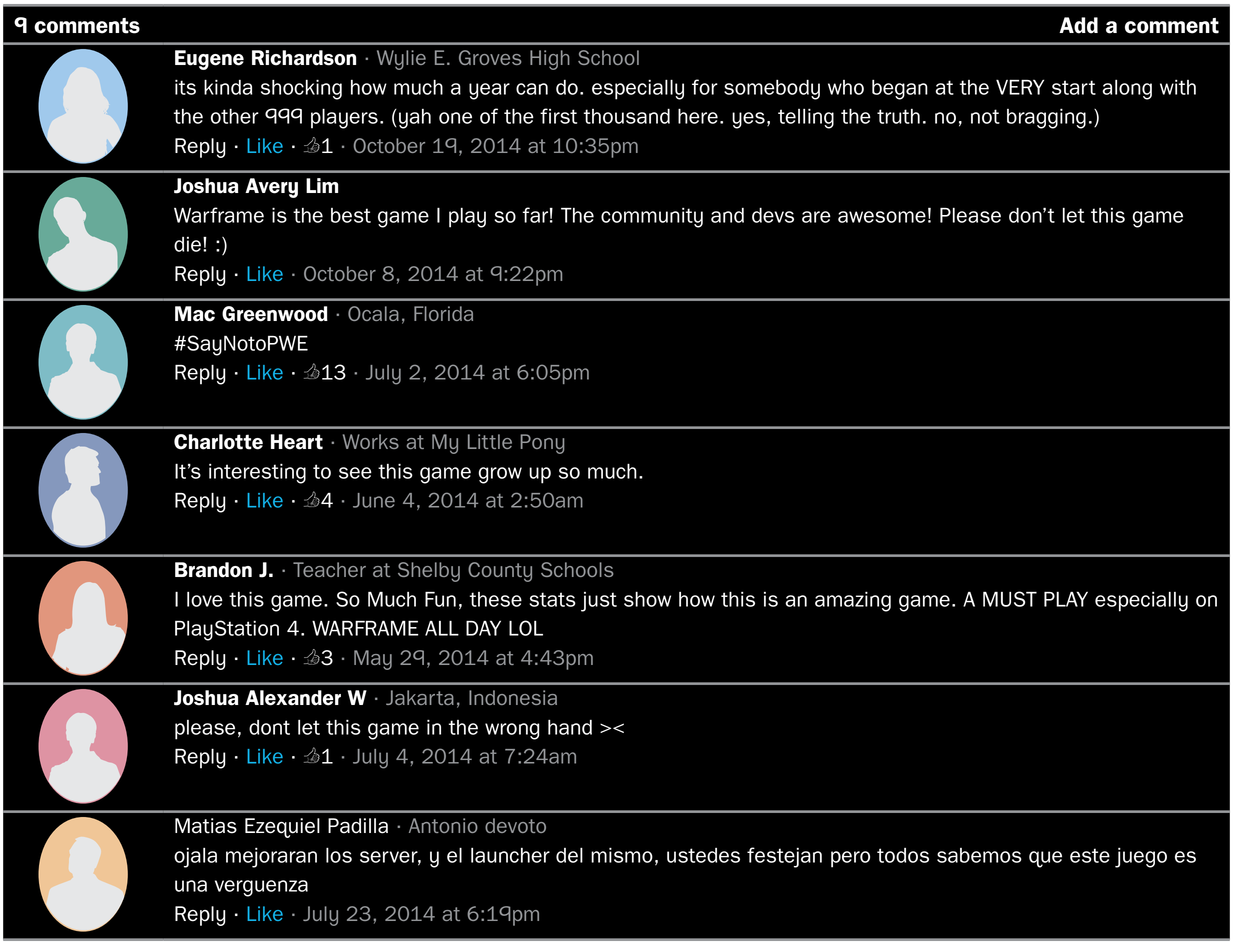
Summary of Growth: Infographic for Players



Source: Digital Extremes

FIGURE 7.4B

Summary of Growth: Infographic for Players



Source: Digital Extremes

Instructions

Ex. 7.5

Information on new procedures may generate hostility, since most of us dislike change. You can frame the information, and use placement, language, and font size for neutral or even positive emphasis.

Instructions for complicated procedures (electronic application, machine assembly) require diagrams right beside the text.

Complaint Responses and Adjustments

Ex. 7.11

The best customer management relations practices include (1) acknowledging a complaint and (2) finding a solution.

Your appropriate response—verbal or written—serves as the acknowledgement.

FIGURE 7.5

Instructions on Safety Procedures (email and hard-copy memo)

Date: May 11, 2016
Memo to: Staff
From: Franco
Re: Procedures for Spills

To comply with Health and Safety legislation, and to protect your own safety and the safety of all employees and patrons, please ensure that you read, understand, and comply with the following instructions for dealing with spills:

1. STOP! whatever you are doing immediately.
2. Alert the person closest to you. Indicate to that person
   a. The exact location of the spill
   b. The nature of the spill (e.g., grease, juice, water, gravy, sauce, etc.)
3. WHILE THAT PERSON WAITS IN PLACE, get the yellow warning sign, and a pail and mop from cupboard #3.
4. Place the sign and clean the spill immediately.
5. Ensure the floor/area is completely clean.
6. Ensure the floor/area is completely dry.
7. Return the sign, mop, and pail to cupboard #3.

Your cooperation is essential for the safety, security, and comfort of us all.

When you grant a customer's request for an adjusted price, discount, replacement, or other benefit to resolve a complaint, do so in the very first sentence.

> Your VISA bill for the night's lodging has been adjusted to $97, plus HST. Next month, a credit of $30 plus HST will appear on your bill to reimburse you for the extra amount you originally paid.

Readers are not interested in your own process in making the decision. Give the reason for the original mistake only if it reflects credit on the organization. In most cases it doesn't, so omit it.

Social media's brave new world of *very* public relations means more people can criticize more organizations more immediately, more visibly, more often—and they do. Since the balance of communication control has moved from organizational oligarchy to consumer democracy, adept business communicators monitor all their media to control the correspondence as much as possible. They practice proactive PR to (1) identify consumer concerns and (2) respond immediately to involve the customer in a negotiated solution,[4] as this Whole Foods tweet demonstrates.

FIGURE 7.6

Model Response to Twitter Complaint

Source: Sarah Burke, "Examples Of The Good, The Bad & The Ugly Of Customer Service On Social Media!" *Spokal*. Retrieved September 29, 2014, from http://www.getspokal.com/examples-of-the-good-the-bad-the-ugly-of-customer-service-on-social-media/

When managing customer relations, remember that people prefer to complain *first by phone* or in person.[5] Make these *your first* ways of responding.

When dealing with a complaint sent via SM

1. Apply PAIBOC analysis to clarify your purposes and audiences. Your primary purpose is to have the complainer *go away* reasonably happy and remain a loyal customer.
2. Use appropriate media to acknowledge and resolve the situation. You may begin the conversation on Twitter; however, ask to move to a more private dialogue as soon as possible.

Thank-You and Congratulatory Notes

Ex. 7.1, 7.13

Sending a **thank-you note** recognizes and acknowledges a person's contribution (see Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in Module 10). And when you recognize others, they are more willing to help you again.

Thank-you letters are prompt, sincere, short, and specific. Most of us appreciate any sincere thank-you; when you put it in writing, however, you demonstrate that you feel grateful enough to take the time to write, and you give the recipient a record of your appreciation.

Congratulating someone sincerely and respectfully is another powerful acknowledgement. You can create your own hard-copy, customized notes with freely available software templates. These hand-written messages build good feelings between you and the reader, demonstrate emotional intelligence, and enhance your own visibility.

©Blend Images/Alamy

LO2 How Do I Organize Informative and Positive Messages?

Consider your audience's needs: Put the good news and a summary of the information first.

Ex. 7.4, 7.12

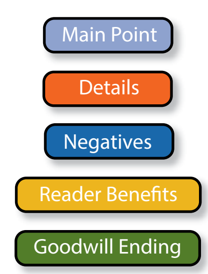
Social media demand brevity; furthermore, concise, audience-focused posts invite positive engagement. Putting good news up front meets people's needs for acknowledgement, recognition, and respect (Module 10). In traditional and new media informative/positive messages

1. *Give any good news and summarize the main points.* Share good news immediately. Include details such as the date that policies begin and the percent of a discount. When the reader has raised the issue, make it clear that you're responding.
2. *Present details in the order of importance to the reader.* Give as-needed details, clarification, and background. Don't repeat information. Do answer all possible FAQs your reader is likely to have; provide all the information necessary to achieve your purposes.
3. *Present any negative elements as positively as possible.* Products or packaging may be discontinued; a policy might have limits; information might be incomplete; readers might have to satisfy requirements to get a discount or benefit. Make these negatives clear, and present them as positively as possible.
4. *Explain any reader benefits.* Some information memos need reader benefits. Explain how the policy or procedure helps the reader (as the opening and last paragraphs in Figure 7.5 do), not just the company. Give enough detail to make the benefits clear and convincing. You may want to include the benefits of dealing with your company as well as the benefits of the product or policy (Module 10). In a good news message, it's often possible to combine a short reader benefit with a goodwill ending in the last paragraph.
5. *Use a goodwill ending that's positive, personal, and forward-looking.* Shifting your emphasis away from the message to the reader suggests that serving the reader is your real concern.

Figure 7.7 summarizes the pattern. Figures 7.3 and 7.5 illustrate two ways to apply the pattern.

FIGURE 7.7

Organizing an Informative/Positive Message



LO3 LO5 When Do I Emphasize Reader Benefits?

Emphasize reader benefits when you want readers to view your policies and your organization positively.

Not all informative and positive messages need reader benefits (See Module 10).

You don't need reader benefits when

- You're presenting only facts
- The reader's attitude toward the information doesn't matter

- Stressing benefits may make the reader sound selfish
- The benefits are so obvious that to restate them insults the reader's intelligence

Ex. 7.2, 7.3, 7.6–7.10

You do need reader benefits when

- You want to shape readers' attitudes toward the information or toward your organization
- You are presenting policies
- The benefits frame readers' motives positively
- The benefits may not be obvious to readers

LO4 LO5 A Question of Ethics

Banks and credit card companies use the direct (good news!) organizational pattern to let consumers know that they have qualified for a credit card. The congratulations message at the beginning is often in 14-point or higher font; the interest rate on unpaid balances appears in small print towards the end of the document. What ethical considerations might these authorial choices raise?

LO6 How Do I Write Good Subject Lines for Informative or Positive Messages?

The best subject line contains the basic information or good news.

Ex. 7.4–7.12

A good subject line meets three criteria: it is specific, concise, and appropriate to the message function (positive, negative, persuasive). The best **subject lines** preview your information.

Good positive-message subject lines

- Tell readers why they need to read the document
- Provide a framework or context for what you're about to say
- Help in filing and retrieving the document

Try composing the subject line **after** writing the message. Because you now know what you want to say, you can compose a subject line that sums up and previews the message content for the reader, as do the informative email subject lines below.

Ya Ting, complete your Twitter profile today!
Your monthly Virgin Mobile e-Bill is ready!
Congrats, you got 2 profile views last week

Subject lines are standard in memos, but not in letters; however, because a subject line *saves the reader's time (and builds the writer's credibility)*, many businesspeople see a subject line as very important.

FIGURE 7.8

An Informative, Good News Memo with Benefits

Date: December 15, 2016
To: All Family Centre Therapy Employees
From: Sundra Owusu
Subject: New Tuition Reimbursement Program

Good news in subject line and first paragraph

Hello Everyone,

Starting February 1, full-time employees with more than three months of service can be reimbursed up to $2500 a year for tuition and fees for career-related courses.

These include

- Courses related to your current position, including licence updating
- Courses to prepare you for advancement at Family Therapy Centre
- Courses required for a job-related degree program

You may take the courses at any level, from high school to graduate school.

Headings prepare the reader and provide good visual impact

Reimbursement

You'll receive reimbursement if you earn a C grade or better. If you are eligible for other financial aid (scholarships, grants) you will be reimbursed up to $2500 per calendar year for tuition and fees not covered by that aid.

Negatives presented as positively as possible

Program Application

Please pick up an application form in the Human Resources office, fill it out, and have it signed by your supervisor. Return it to Human Resources at least two weeks before your classes start. Your application must be approved as part of the program requirements.

Details about the program and necessary documentation for reimbursement are attached to the program application.

Please note that the courses you choose do not have to relate to counselling and psychology. Management, interpersonal, teamwork, advanced computer courses: any of these would contribute to our collective productivity.

Goodwill ending and benefit for people not yet eligible to participate

This program gives us the opportunity to build on our strengths as we help people face the challenges in their lives.

Making Subject Lines Specific

A subject line needs to be specific to differentiate that message from others on the same subject, but broad enough to cover everything in the message.

Too general Training Sessions

Better Technical Training Sessions Dates

Making Subject Lines Concise

According to McGill Professor Daniel J. Levitin, we absorb "the equivalent of about 174 newspapers' worth of information in a typical day, five times as much as in 1986."[6] People feel overwhelmed by information; the Internet and digital media acculturate us to addictive distractibility. Furthermore, social media's concise, catchy posts, especially in the Twittersphere, compete with email and letter subject lines for reader attention. Crafting a concise subject line increases the chances of your audience looking at your message.

Wordy	Survey of Student Preferences in Regard to Various Pizza Factors
Better	Student Pizza Preferences
Or	The Feasibility of a Pizza Pizza Branch on Campus
Or	What Students Like and Dislike About Pizza Pizza

Making Subject Lines Match the Pattern of Organization

In general, make sure that the subject line delivers the same message as that expressed in the first paragraph. When you have good news for the reader, build goodwill by **highlighting** it in the subject line. When your information is neutral, summarize it concisely in the subject line.

Subject: Discount on Rental Cars Effective January 2

Starting January 2, as an employee of Amalgamated Industries you can get a 15 percent discount on cars you rent for business or personal use from Roadway Rent-a-Car.

Subject: Update on Arrangements for Videoconference with Montreal

In the last month, we have chosen the participants and developed a tentative agenda for the videoconference with our Montreal office scheduled for March 21.

LO3 LO5 LO6

How Can PAIBOC Analysis Help Me Write Informative and Positive Messages?

PAIBOC analysis helps you identify a reader-centred organizational pattern and the information you should include.

Before you tackle the assignments for this module, examine the following problem. See how the PAIBOC questions probe the basic points required for a solution. Study the two sample solutions. The checklist in Figure 7.9 can help you evaluate the solutions in Figures 7.12 and 7.13. Note the recommendations for revision that might make the good solution in Figure 7.13 even better.

A PAIBOC Problem for Analysis

CanWest Insurance's payments and billings computerized system creates a time lag between receiving a payment from a customer and recording it on the computer. Sometimes, while the payment is in line to be processed, the computer sends out additional notices: past-due notices, collection letters, even threats to sue. Customers are frightened or angry, and write or call asking for an explanation. In most cases, if customers had just waited a little longer the situation would be straightened out. But policyholders are afraid that they'll be without insurance because the company thinks the bill has not been paid.[7]

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Writing a Goodwill Ending

Goodwill endings focus on establishing or building business relationships. When you write to one person, tailor the last paragraph to that person specifically. When you write to someone who represents an organization, the last paragraph can refer to your company's relationship with the reader's organization. When you write to a group (e.g., to all employees) your ending should apply to the whole group.

Possibilities include complimenting the reader for a job well done, describing a reader benefit, or looking forward to something positive that relates to the subject of the message. For example, consider possible endings for a response to an information query about tours of Wikwemikong Indian reserve on Manitoulin Island. The People of the Three Fires community offer group tours tailored to special interests.

Weak closing paragraph	Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to call me.
Goodwill ending	The People of the Three Fires Tours offer custom tours for educational institutions and corporate retreats. Please contact us at threefirestours@rogers.ca for further information.

Some writers end every message with a standard invitation.

> If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

This sentence lacks positive emphasis (Module 11). But saying "feel free to call"—though more positive—is rarely a good idea. Most of the time, omit the sentence. Don't make more work for yourself by inviting calls to clarify simple messages. And avoid clichés.

You write and post to save the time needed to tell everyone individually. Most consumers are well educated and assertive; they will call if they need help. Do make sure your phone number is in the letterhead or is typed below your name. You can also add your email address below your name.

Use the checklists in Figure 7.9 and 7.10 to assess your informative and positive messages.

FIGURE 7.9

Revision Checklist for Informative/Positive Messages

- ☐ Does the message design invite reading through white space, headings, and lists?
- ☐ In positive messages, does the subject line give the good news? Whether the message is positive or negative, is the subject line specific enough to differentiate this message from others on the same subject?
- ☐ Does the first paragraph summarize the information or good news? If the information is too complex to fit into a single paragraph, does the paragraph list the basic parts of the policy or information in the order in which the message discusses them?
- ☐ Is all the information given in the message? (The information needed will vary depending on the message, but information about dates, places, times, and anything related to money usually needs to be included. When in doubt, ask!) Does the message give details that answer readers' questions and make it easy for them to understand and comply?
- ☐ In messages announcing policies, is there at least one reader benefit for each segment of the audience? Do all reader benefits seem likely to occur in this organization?
- ☐ Is each reader benefit developed, showing how the benefit will come from the policy and why the benefit matters to this organization? Are the benefits relevant to the job duties of people in this organization and to the specific circumstances of the organization?
- ☐ Does the message end with a positive paragraph—preferably one specific to the readers, not a general one that might fit any organization or policy?

FIGURE 7.10

Editing/Proofing Checklist for All Messages

- ☐ Does form follow function?
- ☐ Does the message reflect positive emphasis and you-attitude (Modules 11 and 12)?
- ☐ Does the message use standard grammar?
- ☐ Is the message free of typos?

CanWest doesn't have the time to check every individual situation to see if the cheque did arrive and has been processed. The communications director wants you to write a letter that will persuade customers to wait. If something is wrong and the payment never reaches CanWest, the company sends a legal notice to that effect, saying that the policy will be cancelled by a certain date (which the notice would specify) at least thirty days after the date on the original bill. Continuing customers always get this legal notice as a third chance (after the original bill and the past-due notice).

Prepare a form letter that can go out to every policyholder who claims to have paid a premium for automobile insurance and resents getting a past-due notice. *The letter should reassure readers and build goodwill for CanWest.*

The insurance business is highly competitive—other companies offer similar rates and policies. The customer might be able to get a similar policy for the same money from someone else. Most people find that money is tight, so they want to keep insurance costs low. On the other hand, the fact that prices are steady or rising means that the value of what they own is higher—they need insurance more than ever.

Many insurance companies are refusing to renew policies (car, liability, malpractice insurance). These refusals to renew have received lots of publicity, and many people have heard horror stories about companies and individuals whose insurance has been cancelled or not renewed after a small number of claims. Readers don't feel very kindly toward insurance companies.

FIGURE 7.11

PAIBOC Analysis of the Problem

P	What are your **purposes** in writing or speaking? To reassure readers they're covered for 30 days; to inform them they can assume everything is OK unless they receive a second notice; to avoid further correspondence on this subject; to build goodwill for CanWest. We don't want to suggest CanWest is error-prone, or too cheap to hire enough people to do the necessary work and we don't want readers to switch companies. We do want readers to buy from CanWest when they're ready for more insurance.
A	Who is your **audience**? How do the members of your audience differ from one another? What audience characteristics are relevant to this particular message? The audience is automobile insurance customers who say they've paid but still received a past-due notice. They're afraid they're no longer insured. Since it's a form letter, different readers will have different situations: in some cases payment arrived late, in some cases the company made a mistake, in some the reader never paid (cheque lost in mail, unsigned, bounced, etc.).
I	What **information** must your message include? Readers are still insured. We cannot say whether their cheques have now been processed (company doesn't want to check individual accounts). Their insurance will be cancelled only if they do not pay after receiving the second past-due notice (the legal notice).
B	What reasons or reader **benefits** can you use to support your position? Computers help us provide personal service to policyholders. We offer policies to meet all their needs. Both of these points would need specifics to be interesting and convincing.
O	What **objections** can you expect your readers to have? What negative elements of your message must you de-emphasize or overcome? Computers appear to cause errors. We don't know whether the cheques have been processed. We will cancel policies if their cheques don't arrive.
C	How will the **context** affect the reader's response? Think about your relationship to the reader, the morale in the organization, the economy, the time of year, and any special circumstances. People expect immediate satisfaction; people are not interested in organizational glitches; computer errors cause concern. Insurance is very expensive. In Canada, drivers are legally required to have car insurance. If their insurance policies are cancelled because of a computer error, drivers have a legitimate worry.

Discussion of the Sample Solutions

The draft solution in Figure 7.12 is unacceptable. The marginal comments show problem spots. Since this is a form letter, we cannot tell customers we have their cheques; in some cases, we may not. The letter is far too negative. The explanation in paragraph two makes CanWest look irresponsible and uncaring. Paragraph 3 is far too negative. Paragraph 4 is too vague; there are no reader benefits; the ending sounds selfish.

FIGURE 7.12

Draft Solution to the Sample Problem

Need date.

Not personalized: not you-focused.

Dear Customer:

Relax. We got your cheque.

Not necessarily true. Reread problem.

This explanation makes company look bad.

There is always a time lag between the time payments come in and the time they are processed. While payments are waiting to be processed, the computer with super-human quickness is sending out past-due notices and threats of cancellation.

Too negative.

Cancellation is not something you should worry about. No policy would be cancelled without a legal notice to that effect giving a specific date for cancellation which would be at least 30 days after the date on the original premium notice.

Need to present this positively.

If you want to buy more insurance, just contact your local CanWest Life Insurance agent. We will be happy to help you.

This paragraph isn't specific enough to work as a reader benefit. It lacks you-attitude and positive emphasis.

Sincerely,

A major weakness with the solution is that it lifts phrases straight out of the problem; the writer does not seem to have thought about the problem or about the words he or she is using. Measuring the draft against the answers to the questions for analysis suggests that this writer should start over.

The solution in Figure 7.13 is much better.

The marginal comments show the letter's strong points.

- The message opens with the good news that is true for all readers. (Whenever possible, one should use the good-news pattern of organization.)
- Paragraph two explains CanWest's policy. It avoids assigning blame and ends on a positive note.
- The negative information is buried in paragraph three and is presented positively: the notice is information, not a threat; the 30-day extension is a grace period. Telling the reader what to do if a second notice arrives eliminates the need for another exchange of letters.
- Paragraph four offers benefits for using computers, since some readers may blame the notice on computers, and offers benefits for being insured by CanWest.
- Paragraph five promotes other policies the company sells and prepares for the last paragraph.

As the red circle indicates, this good solution might be improved by including the name and number of the local agent. Computers could make both of those insertions easily.

This good letter can become an excellent letter by revising paragraph 4 to include more reader benefits. For instance, do computers help agents advise clients of the best policies for them? Does CanWest offer good service—quick, friendly, non-pressured—that might be emphasized? Are agents well trained? All these might yield ideas for additional reader benefits.

FIGURE 7.13

A Good Solution to the Sample Problem

Need date

Use computer to personalize. Put in name and address of a specific reader.

Dear Amjit Sunder:

Re: Auto Insurance Policy ATP10004395

Good paragraph #1; true for all readers

Your auto insurance is still in effect.

Good to treat notice as information, tell reader what to do if it arrives

Past-due notices are mailed out if the payment has not been processed within three days after the due date. This may happen if a cheque is delayed in the mail or arrives without a signature or account number. When your cheque arrives with all the necessary information, it is promptly credited to your account.

Good you-attitude

Even if a cheque is lost in the mail and never reaches us, you still have a 30-day grace period. If you do get a second notice, you'll know that we still have not received your cheque. To keep your insurance in place, just stop payment on the first cheque and send a second one.

Benefits of using computers

Computer processing of your account guarantees that you get any discounts you're eligible for: multicar, accident-free record, good student. If you have a claim, your agent uses computer tracking to find matching parts quickly, no matter what kind of car you drive. You get a cheque quickly—usually within three working days—without having to visit dealer after dealer for time-consuming estimates.

Today, your home and possessions are worth more than ever. You can protect them with Canwest Insurance's homeowners' and renters' policies. Let your local agent show you how easy it is to give yourself full protection. If you need a special rider to insure a personal computer, a coin or stamp collection, or a fine antique, you can get that from CanWest, too.

Good specifics

Whatever your insurance needs—auto, home, life, or health—one call to CanWest can do it all.

Acceptable ending

Sincerely,

MODULE SUMMARY

- Direct messages provide information and build relationships.
- Use PAIBOC analysis to identify what you want your message to achieve, how your audience will feel about your message, and what information you should include.
- You decide how to organize your message based on your purpose and audience analysis.
- You decide on the medium for your message based on your purpose and audience analysis.
- If your audience will feel neutral or pleased about your message, use the direct or good news organizational pattern.
  1. Give the good news, and summarize the main points.
  2. Give details.
  3. Give any reader benefits.
  4. End positively.
- Use reader benefits in informative and positive messages when
  - You are presenting policies
  - You want to influence readers' attitudes toward the information or your organization
  - Stressing benefits presents readers' motives positively
  - Some of the benefits may not be obvious to readers
- For informative and positive documents, use a subject line that highlights the good news and/or concisely summarizes the information.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 7

Questions for Critical Thinking

7.1 Identify two specific circumstances when you would consider an informative or positive electronic message completely inappropriate. Explain why.

7.2 What specific benefits would help to convince you to accept a new organizational policy that now charges you for something that was previously free (parking, coffee, refreshments during meetings and training sessions)?

7.3 Why do certain benefits appeal to some cultures and not to others? Give specific examples to prove your answer.

Exercises and Problems

7.4 Analyzing an eNewsletter

Organizations use eNewletters both to build the brand and create a shared culture or discourse community (Module 2). What separates an excellent eNewsletter from one that's just ordinary? Content? Visual appeal? Style? Customization?

Research a variety of eNewsletters, including those from private and public sector business, and not-for-profit. Choose the best newsletter and

1. Summarize the eNewsletter—and your ideas about why it is so good—for your
   a. Supervisor/manager/boss
   b. Instructor
   c. Close friend
2. Choose the most appropriate medium to send your different summaries to each of your audiences.
3. Send the informative summaries.
4. Send your instructor an email with all three summaries attached. In the email, explain your choices of media.

7.5 Revising a Letter

Your colleague emails you the following draft letter asking for your feedback before she sends it.

> Dear Ms. Hebbar:
>
> I received your request to send a speaker to participate in Career Day at King Elementary School next month. I am pleased to be able to send Audrey Lindstrom to speak at your school about her job at the childcare centre.
>
> Audrey has been working in the childcare centre for over five years. She trains contracted centre personnel on policies and procedures of the department.
>
> Another commitment later that day will make it impossible for her to spend the whole day at your school. She will be happy to spend two hours with your class participating in the event.
>
> Call Audrey to discuss the time of the program, the expected content, and the age group of the audience.
>
> Your students will see the importance of trained daycare providers in our neighbourhoods.
>
> Thank you for asking our agency to be part of your school's special event. Our future lies in the hands of today's students.
>
> Sincerely,

This draft definitely needs work. It lacks you-attitude and positive emphasis, it isn't well organized, and it doesn't have enough details.

As your instructor directs

a. Use PAIBOC analysis to identify how this informative message could be better.

P	What is the **purpose** of the message? What are desired results?
A	Who is your **audience**? What audience characteristics are relevant to this particular message?
I	Based on your purposes and audiences, what **information** must you include?
B	What reader **benefits** or reasons would appeal to your audience?
O	What **objections** can you anticipate your reader(s) having?
C	What **context** will affect your reader's response?

Hints

- Review the in-depth PAIBOC analysis in Module 1.
- Write an email to your colleague, explaining what revisions are necessary.
- Revise the letter.

7.6 Responding to a Supervisor's Request

Respond to this email from your supervisor, describing something that you or others in your unit or on your team do well.

> Subject: Need "Best Practices"
>
> Our organization is putting together something on Best Practices so that good ideas can be shared as widely as possible. Please describe something our unit does well—ideally something that could be copied by or at least applied to other units.
>
> Please provide specifics, such as a story or full description of what you do well. For example, don't just say "serve customers"—explain exactly what you do and how you do it to be effective.
>
> Also, indicate what media would serve to share your practice. It may be possible to use more than one, depending on the response.
>
> I need your answer ASAP so that I can send it on to my boss.

Respond via email with your best practices and ideas for the media that would best tell your story.

7.7 Giving Good News

Write to a customer or client, to a vendor or supplier, or to your boss announcing good news. Possibilities include a product improvement, a price cut or special, an addition to your management team, or a new contract.

Use the appropriate media to meet your specific audience's needs.

7.8 Easing New Hires into Your Unit

Prepare an orientation document to help new hires adjust quickly to your unit. You may want to focus solely on work procedures; you may also want to discuss aspects of the corporate culture.

7.9 Explaining Packing Material

Your organization ships thousands of boxes as it fills orders from catalogues and from your website. To cushion items, you fill the empty spaces around the items with plastic "popcorn." Some customers have written to complain about the plastic, which is not biodegradable. Some have asked you to use real popcorn, paper, or starch (which will degrade when wet). However, these materials do not cushion as well as plastic does (so more items are damaged during shipment) and weigh more (so shipping costs are higher). In addition, popcorn is subject to Canadian Food Inspection Agency regulations, which you do not want to monitor; paper fill creates dust and thus is a health hazard for packers; and starch doesn't work in very humid or very dry climates. You want to use one packing material for all boxes, wherever they are going.

Customers could save and reuse the plastic packaging material. If they can't reuse it, they may be able to recycle it. They can call their local solid waste department, or check their website, to find out.

As your instructor directs

a. Write to one customer who has complained showing why you are continuing to use plastic fill.

b. Prepare a one-page insert to be included in every package, explaining your decision about packaging.

7.10 Answering an International Inquiry

Your business, government, or non-profit organization has received the following inquiries from international correspondents. (You choose the country the inquiry originated from.)

1. Please tell us about a new product, service, or trend so that we can decide whether we want to buy, license, or imitate it in our country.
2. We have heard about a problem (technical, social, political, or ethical) that occurred in your organization. Please tell us what really happened, and estimate how likely it is to affect the long-term success of the organization.
3. Please tell us about college or university (choose one) programs in this field. We are interested in sending some of our managers to your country to complete a degree.
4. We are considering setting up a plant in your city. We have already received adequate business information. However, we would also like to know how comfortable our nationals would feel. Do people in your city speak our language? How many? What opportunities exist for our nationals to improve their English? Does your town already have people from a wide mix of nations? Which are the largest groups?
5. Our organization would like to subscribe to an English-language trade journal. Which one would you recommend? Why? How much does it cost? How can we order it?

As your instructor directs

a. Answer one or more of the inquiries. Assume that your reader either reads English or can have your message translated.

b. Write an email to your instructor explaining how you've adapted the message for your audience.

Hints

- Even though you can write in English, English may not be your reader's native language. Write a letter that can be translated easily.
- In some cases, you may need to spell out background information that might not be clear to someone from another country.

7.11 Writing a Thank-You Message

Write a hard copy, thank-you message to someone who has helped you achieve your goals.

As your instructor directs

a. Turn in a copy of the letter.

b. Mail the letter to the person who helped you.

c. Write an email to your instructor explaining the choices you made in writing the thank-you letter.

7.12 Creating a Human Resources Blog

As firms attempt to help employees balance work and family life, human resource departments sponsor an array of programs, and provide information on all work-life and private-life subjects. Organizations post this information on media that employees can access privately—even from home.

Create a human resources blog to help employees with one of the challenges they face. Possible topics include

- Appreciating an ethnic heritage
- Buying a house
- Caring for dependants: childcare, helping a child learn to read, living with teenagers, elder care, and so forth
- Dealing with a health issue: exercising, having a healthy diet, and so on
- Dealing with an environmental situation: energy prices, conserving resources, recycling and/or reusing items
- Dealing with a health problem: alcoholism, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and so on
- Dressing for success or dressing for casual days
- Managing finances: basic budgeting, deciding how much to save, choosing investments, and so on
- Nourishing the spirit: meditation, religion, mindfulness
- Planning for retirement
- Planning vacations
- Reducing stress
- Resolving conflicts on the job or in families

Assume that this blog can be accessed from another of the organization's pages. Offer at least seven links. (More are better.) You may offer information as well as links to other pages with information. At the top of the page, offer an overview of what the page covers. At the bottom of the page, put the creation and update date and your name and email address.

As your instructor directs

a. Write a memo to your instructor identifying the audience for which the page is designed and explaining (1) how you found material on this topic, (2) why you chose the pages and information you've included, and (3) why you chose the layout and graphics you've used.

b. Post your blog and send your blog URL to your instructor and classmates.

Hints

- Pick a topic you know something about.
- Create copy to meet audience members' different needs. You could explain the basics of choosing daycare or stocks, but don't recommend a specific daycare centre or a specific stock.
- If you have more than nine links, chunk them in small groups under headings.
- Create a good image of the organization.
- Review the information on Web page design in Module 5.

Polishing *your* Prose

Applying Parallel Structure

Apply parallel structure in lists, headings, and subheadings by using the same grammatical form for ideas that have the same relationship in your sentence.

Not parallel Good reports are factual, logical, and demonstrate clarity.

It may be easier to see faulty parallelism by listing parts that need to be parallel. Check to make sure each component fits with the words that introduce the list.

Not parallel Good reports are

Factual

Logical

Demonstrate clarity

Parallel Good reports are

Factual

Logical

Clear

Make sure the entire list is horizontal or vertical. Don't start a list horizontally and finish it vertically.

Incorrect As department manager, I supervised eight employees.

Wrote the department budget

Presented our sales strategy to the board of directors

Correct As department manager, I supervised eight employees, wrote the department budget, and presented our sales strategy to the board of directors.

Or As department manager, I

- Supervised eight employees
- Wrote the department budget
- Presented our sales strategy to the board of directors

Headings have to be parallel throughout the document, but subheads need only be parallel to other subheads in the same section.

Not parallel Should Ogden Industries Purchase Blue Chip International in 2016?

- Short-Term Costs
- What Are the Long-Term Gains?

Parallel Should Ogden Industries Purchase Blue Chip International in 2016?

- Short-Term Costs
- Long-Term Gains

In addition to grammatical parallels, check your sentences for logical parallels.

Incorrect The group ranges from males and females to people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s.

Better We interviewed men and women ranging in age from 20 to 50.

Gender is one category; age is another.

Exercises

Rewrite the following sentences or headings to make them parallel.

1. Last week, Alain and Rochelle flew to Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City, and the capital of the province of Nova Scotia.
2. Ask Ms. Liken, Mr. Fitzgerald, Bill Anderson, and Professor Timmons to join us for the meeting.
3. To ship a package
    1. Fill out an address form.
    2. Specify on the form how the package should be sent.
    3. If you want to send a package by overnight mail, your supervisor must initial the appropriate box on the address form.
4. Make sure benefits announcements are routed to managers, supervisors, and the folks in the Human Resources Department.
5. Appointments can be scheduled in 5-minute, 10-minute, quarter-hour, or 20-minute intervals.
6. The project's fixed costs include material, salaries, advertising, bonus packages for anyone who goes above and beyond the call of duty, and the cost of travel to different cities.
7. This report discusses Why We Should Upgrade Capital Equipment, Why We Should Increase Staff by 25 percent, The Benefits of Decreasing Employee Turnover, and The Importance of Identifying New Product Markets.
8. The selection committee reviews each job applicant based on education, experience, extracurricular activities, the awards the employee has received, and the strength of the applicant's personal statement.
9. Use the telephone to answer customer questions, email to send order confirmations, and take orders using our Web page, and social media is often best for crisis communications.
10. Each agency should estimate Annual Costs, Costs per Month, Salaries, New Equipment Costs, and How Much You Need in a Reserve Fund for Unexpected Expenses.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Answer Key at the end of the text.

MODULE 8

Composing Negative Messages

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 8 you will be familiar with

LO1 The criteria that define negative messages

LO2 The “bad news” message structure

LO3 The legal and ethical implications of your messages

By applying the information you will be able to

LO4 Structure negative messages effectively

LO5 Present bad news appropriately

LO6 Practice models of negative message formats

LO7 Further analyze business communication situations

Module Outline

- What are the purposes of negative messages?
- What kinds of negative messages will I write?
- How do I organize negative messages?
- What’s the best subject line for a negative message?
- How can PAIBOC analysis help me write effective negative messages?

Module Summary

Assignments for Module 8

Polishing Your Prose: Finding Your Narrative Voice

Negative or "bad news" messages contain information that could cost the reader comfort, time, money, esteem, or resources. Negative messages—particularly messages saying *no*—are common in business. Although few people like to give bad news—and fewer still like to get it—you can frame and organize negative messages to influence a positive audience response.

LO1 What Are the Purposes of Negative Messages?

Besides providing the information, "bad news" messages build relationships.

Ex. 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5, 8.7, 8.12

Negative messages serve two primary purposes.

- To deliver the bad news so that the audience understands and accepts the message
- To maintain as much goodwill as possible

Although the audience may be unhappy with the news, you still want them to feel that

- They have been taken seriously
- Your decision is fair and reasonable
- If they were in your shoes, they would make the same decision

Therefore, both positive and negative messages share these purposes.

- To build a good image of the writer
- To build a good image of the writer's organization
- To reduce or eliminate future correspondence on the same subject so the message doesn't create more work for the writer (you).

LO1 What Kinds of Negative Messages Will I Write?

You will likely write rejections and refusals, announcements of policy changes that do not appear to benefit readers, requests that readers will see as bothersome, insulting, or intrusive, and messages that focus on problems.

Rejections and Refusals

Ex. 8.7, 8.10, 8.12

Canadians' global awareness, sense of egalitarianism and respect for tradition influence our best business communications.[1] Successful *no* messages emphasize courtesy and respect for the audience. Indeed, your relationship with your audience, and any interest you have in continuing that relationship, determine the content, organization and medium of your *no*.

When you refuse requests, try to (1) buffer the *no* and (2) give an alternative if one is available.

FIGURE 8.1

Email Refusal of Request for Adjustment

Dear Chaudrey Sheikh,

Thank you for your recent stay at Banff Royal, and thank you, too, for letting us know about the problem with your wedding party discount. Please accept our apologies for your inconvenience.

Had you booked directly through us toll-free or online, we would certainly have honoured the discount. However, we don't control the rates for third-party bookings like booking.com; therefore, we can't give you the discount this time.

For future bookings, please call us toll-free at 1-800-563-8764, or email us at reservations@banffroyal. And when you contact us for your very next reservation, please quote the code RCSD for a 15% room discount on us.

Best,

Courtesy buffer acknowledges customer complaint, defers bad news and frames the polite no.

Middle paragraph (position of least prominence in a letter) gives the reason/explanation, followed by the refusal.

Goodwill ending assumes ongoing business relationship and offers alternative in the form of compensation.

FIGURE 8.2

Email Refusal of Request for Endorsement

Hi Sam,

As you would expect, Mike is often asked to endorse products and services, many of which, like yours, are worthy of consideration.

When contemplating partnerships, Mike looks for a product with which he has personal experience, because Mike would not promote a product or service he doesn't know or use. Since Mike doesn't have a pet, and has never used pet insurance, it would be inappropriate for him to endorse pet insurance.

Thank you for your enquiry.

Regards,

Friendly, informal salutation mirrors tone of "Sam's" request. Word choice of courtesy buffer contains "you" emphasis, acknowledges request, and recognizes worthiness of recipient and product.

Reason for refusal, followed by refusal: both sentences emphasize integrity of celebrity.

Goodwill close again emphasizes audience, while closing the door on this specific request.

When you reject ideas or refuse requests within your organization, use your knowledge of the culture and of the specific individual to craft your message. In some organizations, it may be appropriate to use company slogans, offer whatever help established departments can give, and refer to the individual's good work. In less personal organizations, a simple negative without embellishment might be more appropriate. Again, decide on your content and medium based on your relationship with the audience.

LO2 LO4 How Do I Organize Negative Messages?

All successful communication is shaped to (1) audiences and (2) the sender's purposes!

Ex. 8.3, 8.4, 8.7–8.12

Use PAIBOC analysis (and **Maslow's hierarchy of needs**, Module 10) to identify your audience's needs. Whether saying no to a request, notifying a client about a price increase, or emailing colleagues about extra work they must do, you want to give the necessary information while maintaining goodwill. Otherwise, you'll waste time and money in lost customers and disruption to work relationships.

Choose your pattern of organization based on the situation.

- Letters to people outside your organization should be indirect to build goodwill.
- When you write to supervisors, propose solutions when you report a problem.
- When you write to peers and subordinates, ask for their input in dealing with situations.

Giving Bad News to Customers and Other People Outside Your Organization

The following pattern helps writers maintain goodwill.

1. *Start with a neutral statement or buffer.* These opening statements are meant to prepare readers for news that they are not going to like. Whether writing or speaking, you will find that the best buffers begin with subjects that both you and your audience can agree on—such as the first paragraph in Figure 8.3.

   Buffer statements such as "Thank you for your letter," in response to a complaint or query, acknowledge that you have read, understood, and are responding to your reader's concern.

FIGURE 8.3

Email Rejection, Supervisor to Employee

Hi Bartosz,

Many thanks for the social media plan. Some really good ideas here, and I appreciate your hard work. Particularly impressive are your plans for using Twitter and our blog to manage customer concerns.

Bartosz, I find the plan vague on how we are going to use social media to attract business. Also, we need to encourage much more employee participation than the plan seems to suggest.

Let's meet next Monday with reps from HR and Sales to get their input. Let me know what time is good for you.

Thanks.

Geoff

Friendly salutation and positive buffer set the tone of collegiality; as in all successful negotiations, message begins with area of agreement.

Criticism of plan softened by (1) placing "no" in second paragraph, after positive first paragraph, (2) using recipient's name at beginning of paragraph, (3) sharing the problem "we need to," with suggestions.

Goodwill ending suggests cooperative solutions, and respects recipient.

2. *Give the reason for the refusal before the refusal itself* when you have a reason that readers will understand and accept. A good reason prepares the reader to expect the refusal.
3. *Give the negative just once, clearly.* Inconspicuous refusals can be missed, making it necessary to say no a second time.
4. *Always present an alternative or compromise, if one is available.* An alternative gives readers another way to get what they want; it also suggests that you care about the readers and want to help them solve their problems.
5. *End with a positive, forward-looking statement.*

Figure 8.4 includes the buffer, the reason, and the refusal in the first paragraph. Figure 8.5, a message asking for costs due to the shipper's negligence, follows the bad news pattern: buffer + rationale + the bad news + friendly close.

FIGURE 8.4

A Refusal with Alternative

AlbertaFilmInstitute

8th floor Commerce Place 10155 102 Street Edmonton AB T5J 4L6
T: 780.415.0200 F. 780.415.0201 E. stephanblackbird@gov.ab.ca

November 22, 2016

Mr. Marco Novelli
319 Sweetwater Bay
Winnipeg, MB R2J 3G4

Dear Mr. Novelli:
Subject: Submission, Original Screenplay ***Doubtful***

Buffer: Beginning clause

Although your script is highly original and well crafted, we have found that film noir themes do not attract a large box office. Therefore we cannot use your story for next year's festival.

Explanation

Refusal

With your permission, however, we would like to send your treatment on to Jessie Prynne, chair of the Alberta Arts Foundation. Foundation members are always looking for original works to present.

Alternative

If this is agreeable to you, please let me know by email, letter, or phone.

Meanwhile, please keep writing, and please continue to send us your work.

Positive, forward-looking ending

Sincerely,

Stephan Blackbird

Stephan Blackbird
Script Supervisor

FIGURE 8.5

A Claim Letter

Nature's Lifesource Inc.
111 Pleasant Street
Stephan, NB E3L 1B4

May 8, 2016

Alyssa Scarangella
72 Rue Windermere
Montreal, PQ H9A 2C4

Dear Alyssa Scarangella:
Subject: **Shipments # 3101–3105 inclusive**

Buffer: Neutral statement

Thank you for the information you provided yesterday.

Explanation: Reasons

As we discussed, the last three shipments have arrived with product damage. Both our transportation service suppliers and warehouse personnel have expressed concerns about the security of the loading. The quality of the pallets supporting the products and of the equipment fastenings could lead to load shifts, creating dangerous highway conditions.

Explanation: Proof

As you requested, I am attaching photographs of the damage to shipments # 3103, 3104, and 3105. These photographs show the condition of the pallets and the manner in which the load was secured. Since our research indicates that these two factors led to the damage, I would appreciate your help in recouping our costs for the damaged products.

Bad News: Reimbursement owed

Positive ending

Thank you for your assurance that the quality of the pallets and the fastenings of all future shipments will provide a safe, secure load.

When you have reviewed the photographs, please let me know what additional information you will need.

Sincerely,

Leovee Yang

Leovee Yang

Enclosure

LO4 LO5 The Buffer

A **buffer** is a neutral or positive statement that allows you to delay the negative. You'll want to begin messages with a neutral statement or buffer when the reader (individually or culturally) values harmony, or when the buffer serves another purpose. For example, when you have to thank the reader somewhere in the letter, putting the thank-you in the first paragraph allows you to start on a positive note.

To be effective, a buffer must put the reader in a good frame of mind—not give the bad news but not imply a positive answer either—and provide a natural transition to the body of the letter. The kinds of statements most often used as buffers are good news, facts, chronologies of events, references to enclosures, thanks, and statements of principle, as the examples below illustrate.

1. Start with any good news or positive elements the message contains.

> *Signage and newspaper ad announcing two-month store closing for renovations*
> Our three-day Grand Reopening Celebration will start at 8 a.m., Thursday, June 23, with dozens of specialties on sale!

2. State a fact or provide a chronology of events.

> *Announcement of a new dues structure that will raise most members' dues*
> A new, graduated dues schedule, determined by delegate assembly vote last December, has been endorsed by the executive council. Members are now asked to establish their own dues rate and to calculate the total amount of their remittance.

3. Refer to enclosures in the letter.

> *Letter announcing an increase in parking rental rates*
> Enclosed is a new sticker for your car. You may pick up additional ones in the office if needed. Please destroy old stickers bearing the signature of L. S. LaVoie.

4. Thank the reader for something he or she has done.

> *Letter refusing a job offer*
> Thank you for scheduling appointments for me with so many senior people at the Bank of Montreal. My visit there March 14 was very informative.

5. State a general principle.

> *Letter announcing that the company will now count traffic tickets, not just accidents, in calculating insurance rates—a change that will raise many people's premiums*
> Good drivers should pay substantially less for their auto insurance. The Good Driver Plan was created to reward good drivers (those with five-year accident-free records) with our lowest available rates. A change in the plan, effective January 1, will help keep those rates low.

Buffers are hard to write. Even if you think the reader would prefer to be let down easily, use a buffer only when you can write a good one.

It's better *not* to use a buffer (1) if the reader might ignore a letter with a bland first paragraph, (2) if the reader or the organization prefers bottom-line-first messages, (3) if the reader is suspicious of the writer, or (4) if the reader likely won't take no for an answer.

Reasons

Make the reason for the refusal clear and convincing in terms of the audience's needs and wants (Modules 3 and 10). The following reason is inadequate.

Weak reason The goal of the ValuDrug CHARGE-ALL Centre is to provide our customers with faster, more personalized service. Since you now live outside the Halifax ValuDrug CHARGE-ALL service area, we can no longer offer you the advantages of a local CHARGE-ALL Centre.

If the reader says, "I don't care if my bills are slow and impersonal," will the company let the reader keep the card? No. The real reason for the negative is that the drugstore's franchise allows it to have cardholders only in a given geographical region.

Better reason Each local CHARGE-ALL Centre offers accounts to customers in a specific regional area. The Nova Scotia ValuDrug CHARGE-ALL Centre serves customers east of Quebec. Your current card is good until it expires. When that happens, please open an account with a CHARGE-ALL Centre that serves Quebec.

Invoking company policy as a reason is really risky: readers will assume the policy is designed to benefit you at their expense. If you're going to mention company policy, *explain* how readers benefit from the policy. If they don't benefit, don't mention policy.

Weak reason	Company policy does not insure automobiles that are not garaged at night.
Better reason	General Insurance insures cars only when they are normally garaged at night. Standard insurance policies cover a wider variety of risks and charge higher fees. Limiting policies gives General's customers the lowest possible rates for auto insurance.

Avoid saying that you *cannot* do something. Most negative messages exist because the writer or company has chosen certain policies or cut-off points. In the example above, the company could choose to insure a wider variety of customers if it wanted to do so. In the example below, because credit-card transactions cost merchants money, many small businesses encourage other forms of payment.

Negative	We cannot accept credit cards.
Weak reason	We don't accept credit card payments because they cost us money.
Better	Your cash or debit payment lets us pass savings on to you.

Often you will have to enforce policies that you did not design. Don't pass the buck by saying, "This is a terrible policy." Carelessly criticizing your superiors is never a good idea. If you really think a policy is bad, try to persuade your superiors to change it. If you can't think of convincing reasons to change the policy, maybe it isn't so bad after all.

If you have several reasons for saying no, use only those that are strong and watertight. If you give five reasons and readers dismiss two of them, readers may feel that they've won and you should honour their request.

Weak reason	You cannot store large, bulky items in the dormitory over the summer: moving them into and out of storage would tie up the stairs and the elevators right at the busiest times when people are moving in and out.
Way to dismiss the reason	We'll move large items before or after the two days when most people are moving in or out.

If you do not have a good reason, omit the reason rather than use a weak one. Even if you have a strong reason, omit it if it reflects poorly on your organization.

Reason that reflects poorly on company	Our company is not hiring now because profits are down. In fact, the downturn has prompted top management to reduce the salaried staff by 5 percent just this month, with perhaps more reductions to come.
Better	Our company does not have any openings now.

Refusals

De-emphasize the refusal by putting it in the same paragraph as the reason, rather than in a paragraph by itself. Sometimes you may be able to imply the refusal rather than stating it directly.

Direct refusal	We don't provide insurance for just one month.
Implied refusal	The shortest term for an insurance policy is six months.

Be sure that your implication is clear. Any message can be misunderstood, but an optimistic or desperate reader is particularly likely to misunderstand a negative message. One of your purposes in a negative message is to close the door on the subject. You do not want to have to write a second letter saying that the real answer is no.

Alternatives

Ex. 8.1, 8.7, 8.8, 8.10, 8.12

Because of technology, better-informed consumers can choose immediate, globally public arenas in which to voice their complaints. Providing an alternative or a compromise after your *no* meets important audience needs.

- It offers the reader another way to get what he or she wants.
- It suggests that you really care about the reader, and about meeting his or her needs.
- It enables the reader to re-establish the psychological freedom you limited when you said no.
- It allows you to end on a positive note and to present yourself and your organization as positive, friendly, and helpful.

FIGURE 8.6

How to Organize a Negative Message

When you give an alternative, give readers all the information they need to act on it, but let readers decide whether to try the alternative.

Negative messages limit the reader's freedom. People may respond to a limitation of freedom by asserting their freedom in some other arena. University of Kansas psychology professor Jack W. Brehm calls this phenomenon **psychological reactance**.[2] Psychological reactance is at work when a customer who has been denied credit no longer buys, even on a cash basis, or when someone who has been passed over for a promotion gets back at the company by deliberately doing a poor job.

An alternative allows the reader to react in a way that doesn't hurt you. By letting readers decide for themselves whether they want the alternative, you allow them to re-establish their sense of psychological freedom.

The specific alternative will vary depending on the circumstances. In Figure 8.4, the script supervisor of the Alberta Film Institute refuses *Doubtful*, but tells the screenwriter he is sending his script on to someone who might use it.

Endings

If you have a good alternative, refer to it in your ending: "We are offering 15% off all treatments in March."

The best endings look to the future, as in this example of refusing to continue a charge account for a customer who has moved.

> Wherever you have your account, you'll continue to get all the service you've learned to expect from CHARGE-ALL and the convenience of charging items at more than a thousand ValuDrugs stores in Canada—and in Halifax, too, whenever you come back to visit!

To maintain goodwill and retain a positive business relationship, end sincerely.

> Please call me at 403-555-7700 if you need further clarification.

Avoid endings that seem insincere or clichéd.

> We are happy to have been of service, and should we be able to assist you in the future, please do not hesitate to contact us.

This ending lacks you-attitude and would not be good even in a positive message. In a situation where the company has just refused to help, it sounds sarcastic.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

LO3 Thinking About the Legal and Ethical Implications of What You Say

Any recorded message—on paper (even a napkin), on a disk or hard drive, on a landline or smartphone, or in voicemail—can be retrieved and used as legal evidence. Inappropriate texts, tweets and posts are *not* about momentary embarrassment: your gaffes are out there forever. You can be fired or serve jail time for your bad judgment. You can expect prospective employers to research your electronic identity as part of the hiring process.

In any message you write, however informal or hurried, you need to be conscious of your potentially global audience and to say exactly what you mean. The Supreme Court of Canada and provincial defamation legislation protect each individual's dignity, right to privacy, and reputation. Libel and slander actions can include everyone who participates in disseminating injurious material.

Thinking about the legal and ethical implications of what you say is particularly important when delivering negative messages. Your choice of content, organization, timing, and medium reflect your EQ, particularly your ability to empathize. Social media environments—particularly Twitter—delude people into believing they can behave badly without consequences. This *online disinhibition effect*—lack of empathy due to ill-conceived notions of anonymity and lack of face time—lower inhibitions, allowing people to rage, rant, and bully abnormally.

In today's global village you must think about the implications of your messages. People prefer to do business with someone they trust; therefore, it's good business to deliver negative messages honestly and sensitively.

Acting ethically means acting out of enlightened self-interest, treating others as you want to be treated. You need to assume your audience's point of view to figure out what to say—or not to say. Think about how a dispassionate person might interpret your words. If that interpretation isn't what you mean, revise the passage so that it says what you mean in a way *you* would find acceptable.

Sources: Nhung T. Nguyen. (January 2, 2014). "Employer's Use of Social Networking Sites in Applicant Screening: An Unethical and Potentially Illegal Practice." *Journal of Business and Financial Affairs*. Retrieved October 11, 2014 from http://omicsgroup.org/journals/employers-use-of-social-networking-sites-in-applicant-screening-an-unethical-and-potentially-illegal-practice-2167-0234.1000e138.php?aid=21854; Chris Gayomali. (September 5, 2014) "Why Does Twitter Feel So Angry?" *FastCompany*. Retrieved October 1, 2014 from http://www.fastcompany.com/3035114/most-innovative-companies/why-does-twitter-feel-so-angry; Stephen Marche (February 14, 2015). "The Epidemic of Facelessness," New York Times. Retrieved July 28, 2015 from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/15/opinion/sunday/the-epidemic-of-facelessness.html

Giving Bad News to Managers

Ex. 8.8

Effective managers expect you to solve minor problems by yourself. But sometimes solving a problem requires more authority or resources than you have. When you give bad news to a superior, try to turn the negative message into a persuasive one: recommend a way to deal with the problem.

1. *Describe the problem.* Say what's wrong, clearly and unemotionally.
2. *Tell how it happened.* Provide the background. What underlying factors led to this specific problem?
3. *Describe the options for fixing it.* If one option is clearly best, you may need to discuss only one. But if the reader will think of other options, or if different people will judge the options differently, describe all the options, giving their advantages and disadvantages.
4. *Recommend a solution and ask for action.* Ask for approval so that you can go ahead to make the necessary changes to fix the problem.

Giving Bad News to Peers and Subordinates

Ex. 8.11

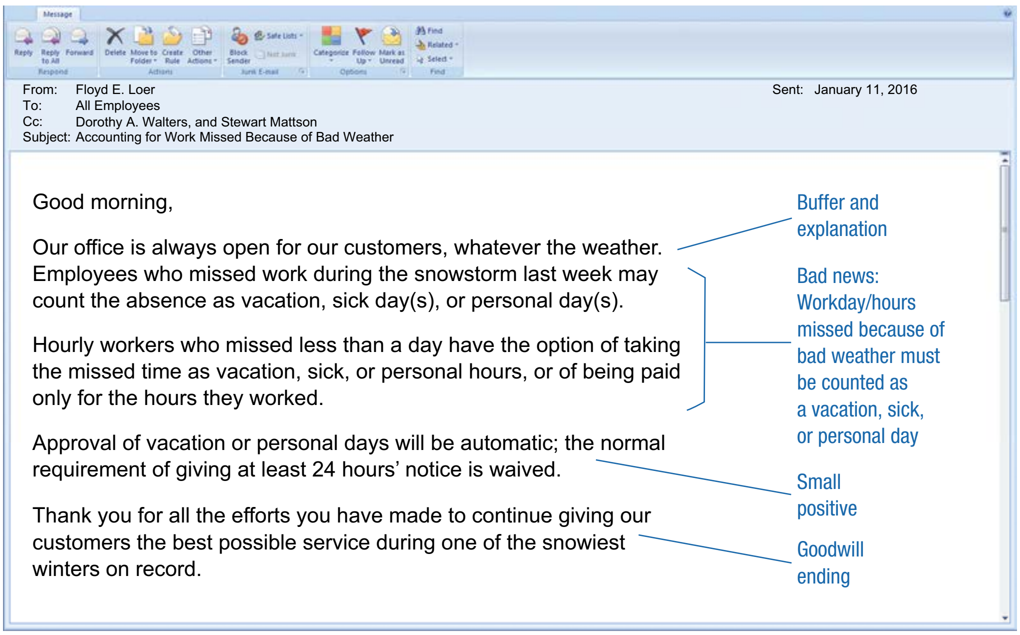
When giving serious bad news to peers and subordinates, use a variation of the pattern to superiors.

1. *Describe the problem.* Say what's wrong, clearly and unemotionally.

2. *Present an alternative or compromise, if one is available.* An alternative gives readers another way to get what they want and suggests that you care about the readers and want to help them meet their needs.
3. *If possible, ask for input or action.* People in the audience may be able to suggest solutions. And people who help make a decision are far more likely to accept the consequences.

FIGURE 8.7

A Bad News Email to Subordinates



From: Floyd E. Loer
To: All Employees
Cc: Dorothy A. Walters, and Stewart Mattson
Subject: Accounting for Work Missed Because of Bad Weather
Sent: January 11, 2016

Good morning,

Our office is always open for our customers, whatever the weather. Employees who missed work during the snowstorm last week may count the absence as vacation, sick day(s), or personal day(s).

Hourly workers who missed less than a day have the option of taking the missed time as vacation, sick, or personal hours, or of being paid only for the hours they worked.

Approval of vacation or personal days will be automatic; the normal requirement of giving at least 24 hours' notice is waived.

Thank you for all the efforts you have made to continue giving our customers the best possible service during one of the snowiest winters on record.

As in Figure 8.7, use the bad news organizational pattern (buffer, explanation, bad news, positive ending) unless your knowledge of the reader suggests that a different pattern will be more effective.

Remember that the context of communication is crucial. Choose your words, organizational pattern, and message medium based on your answers to these questions.

- What is the relationship between the reader and you?
- How does the reader view the organization?
- What is the shock and awe factor? How much of a surprise will your decision be for your reader?
- How well will readers buy into the criteria for the decision?
- How well does the information following the negative build goodwill?

LO5 What's the Best Subject Line for a Negative Message?

Only use negative subject lines if you think the reader might otherwise ignore the message.

When you give bad news, use a neutral subject line, or use a subject line that focuses on solutions.

Subject: Improving Our Subscription Letter

Or you can put the topic (but not your action on it) in the subject line.

Subject: Status of Conversion Table Program
Because of heavy demands on our time, we have not yet been able to write programs for the conversion tables you asked for.

LO5 What's the Best Medium for Negative Messages?

Negative messages are best delivered in real time and, whenever possible, in person.

Effective communicators make *conscious* choices from a wide repertoire of intelligent practices. Such practices include taking responsibility for the message, and delivering negative news sensitively.

Maple Leaf Foods CEO Michael McCain demonstrated conscious, responsible choices during the listeria bacteria crisis, when—against the advice of company lawyers—he apologized on TV and YouTube for the damage, and described preventative measures for the future.[3]

Experts agree on the ideal bad news medium and method. Deliver bad news in person; use an appropriate meeting space; allot enough time for people to respond; be accountable; describe next steps.[4] When delivering bad news to a group of people or to geographically distant employees, use meetings, town hall meetings, and video conferencing, and follow the same methods.

LO6 How Can PAIBOC Help Me Write Negative Messages?

PAIBOC analysis helps you identify a reader-centred organizational pattern and the information you should include.

Ex. 8.3, 8.4, 8.7–8.12

Before you tackle the assignments for this module, examine the following problem. As in Module 7, the PAIBOC questions probe the basic points required for a solution. Study the two sample solutions to see what makes one unacceptable and the other one good.[5] The checklist in Figure 8.11 can help you evaluate a draft.

LO7 Problem

You're director of employee benefits for a Fortune 500 company. Today, you received the following email.

From: Michelle Jagtiani
Subject: Getting My Retirement Benefits
Next Friday will be my last day here. I am leaving (name of company) to take a position at another firm. Please process a cheque for my retirement benefits, including both the deductions from my salary and the company's contributions for the last three and a half years. I would like to receive the cheque by next Friday, if possible.

You have bad news for Michelle. Although the company does contribute an amount to the retirement fund equal to the amount deducted for retirement from the employee's paycheque, employees who leave with fewer than five years of employment receive only their own contributions. Michelle will get back only the money that has been deducted from her own pay, plus 4 percent interest compounded quarterly. Her payments and interest come to just over \$17,200; the amount might be higher, depending on the amount of her last paycheque, which will include compensation for any unused vacation days and sick leave. Furthermore, since the amounts deducted were not considered taxable income, she will have to pay income tax on the money she receives.

You cannot process the cheque until after her resignation is effective, so you will mail it to her. You have her home address on file; if she's moving, she needs to let you know where to send the cheque. Processing the cheque may take two to three weeks.

Write a memo to Michelle using PAIBOC analysis.

FIGURE 8.8

Allocating Time for Writing a Bad News Memo (email denying matching funds; time may vary)

	Total Time: 3 hours
Planning • Understand the situation. • Answer the PAIBOC questions (Module 1). • Think about document design (Module 5). • Organize the message.	1.0 hours
Writing • Draft the memo.	0.5 hours
Revising • Reread draft. • Measure draft against PAIBOC questions and checklist for negative messages (Figure 8.12). • Revise draft. • Ask for feedback. • Revise draft based on feedback. • Edit to catch grammatical errors. • Run spell check. • Proofread. • Email to Michelle.	1.5 hours

FIGURE 8.9

PAIBOC Analysis of the Problem

P	What are your **purposes** in writing or speaking? • To tell Michelle that she will receive only her own contributions, plus 4 percent interest compounded quarterly; that the cheque will be mailed to her home address two to three weeks after her last day on the job; and that the money will be taxable as income • To build goodwill so that she feels that she has been treated fairly and consistently; to minimize negative feelings she may have • To close the door on this subject
A	Who is your **audience**? How do the members of your audience differ from each other? What audience characteristics are relevant to this particular message? • The audience is Michelle Jagtiani. Unless she's a personal friend, you probably wouldn't know why she's leaving and where she's going. • There's a lot you don't know. She may or may not know much about taxes; she may or may not be able to take advantage of tax-reduction strategies. You can't assume the answers, because you wouldn't have them in real life.

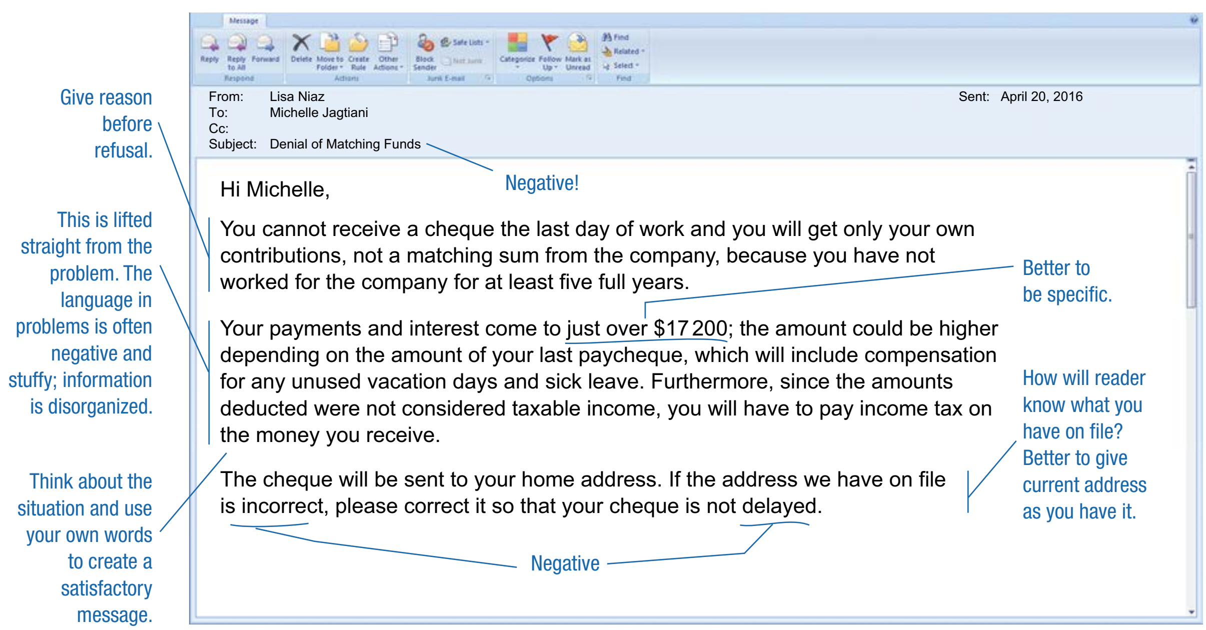
I	What **information** must your message include? • Your message must tell Michelle when the cheque will arrive; the facts that the cheque will be based on her contributions, not her employer's, and that the money will be taxable income; how lump-sum retirement benefits are calculated; and the fact that you have her current address on file but need a new address if she's moving.
B	What reasons or reader **benefits** can you use to support your position? • Stating the amount currently in her account might make Michelle feel that she is getting a significant sum of money. Suggesting someone who can give free tax advice (if the company offers this as a fringe benefit) reminds her of the benefits of working with the company. Wishing her luck with her new job is a nice touch.
O	What **objections** can you expect your readers to have? What negative elements of your message must you de-emphasize or overcome? • Michelle is getting about half the amount she expected, since she won't receive any matching funds. • She might have been able to earn more than 4 percent interest if she had invested the money herself. Depending on her personal tax situation, she may pay more tax on the money as a lump sum than she would have had she paid it each year as she earned the money.
C	How will the **context** affect the reader's response? Think about your relationship to the reader, the morale in the organization, the economy, the time of year, and any special circumstances. • Interest rates are low; 4 percent interest looks good.

Discussion of the Sample Solutions

The solution in Figure 8.10 is not acceptable. The subject line gives a negative with no reason or alternative. The first sentence has a condescending tone that is particularly offensive in negative messages. The last sentence focuses on what is being taken away rather than what remains. Paragraph 2 lacks you-attitude and is vague. The memo ends with a negative. There is nothing anywhere in the memo to build goodwill.

FIGURE 8.10

An Unacceptable Solution to the Sample Problem



From: Lisa Niaz
To: Michelle Jagtiani
Cc:
Subject: Denial of Matching Funds
Sent: April 20, 2016

Hi Michelle,

You cannot receive a cheque the last day of work and you will get only your own contributions, not a matching sum from the company, because you have not worked for the company for at least five full years.

Your payments and interest come to just over $17 200; the amount could be higher depending on the amount of your last paycheque, which will include compensation for any unused vacation days and sick leave. Furthermore, since the amounts deducted were not considered taxable income, you will have to pay income tax on the money you receive.

The cheque will be sent to your home address. If the address we have on file is incorrect, please correct it so that your cheque is not delayed.

FIGURE 8.11

Checklist for Negative Messages

- ☐ Is the subject line appropriate?
- ☐ If a buffer is used, does it invite a neutral or affirmative response?
- ☐ Is the reason presented before the refusal? Is the reason clear and relevant to the reader?
- ☐ Is the negative information clear and concise?
- ☐ Is an alternative given, if a good one is available? Does the message provide all the information needed to act on the alternative, but leave the choice up to the reader?
- ☐ Is the last paragraph forward-looking?
- ☐ Is the tone positive, confident, and respectful?

Add Originality in a Negative Message

- ☐ Use an effective buffer, if one is appropriate.
- ☐ Include a clear, complete statement of the reason for the refusal.
- ☐ Offer a good, clear alternative, showing that you're thinking about what the reader really needs.
- ☐ Add details that show you're thinking about a specific organization and the specific people in that organization.

Checklist for All Effective Messages

- ☐ Does the message use you-attitude and positive emphasis?
- ☐ Is the style easy to read and friendly?
- ☐ Is the visual design of the message inviting?
- ☐ Is the format correct?
- ☐ Does the message use standard grammar? Is it free of typos?

A review of the checklist in Figure 8.11 will show you why the solution in Figure 8.12, in contrast, is very good. The policy serves as a buffer and explanation. The negative is stated clearly but is buried in the paragraph to avoid overemphasizing it. The paragraph ends on a positive note by specifying the amount in the account and the fact that the sum might be even higher.

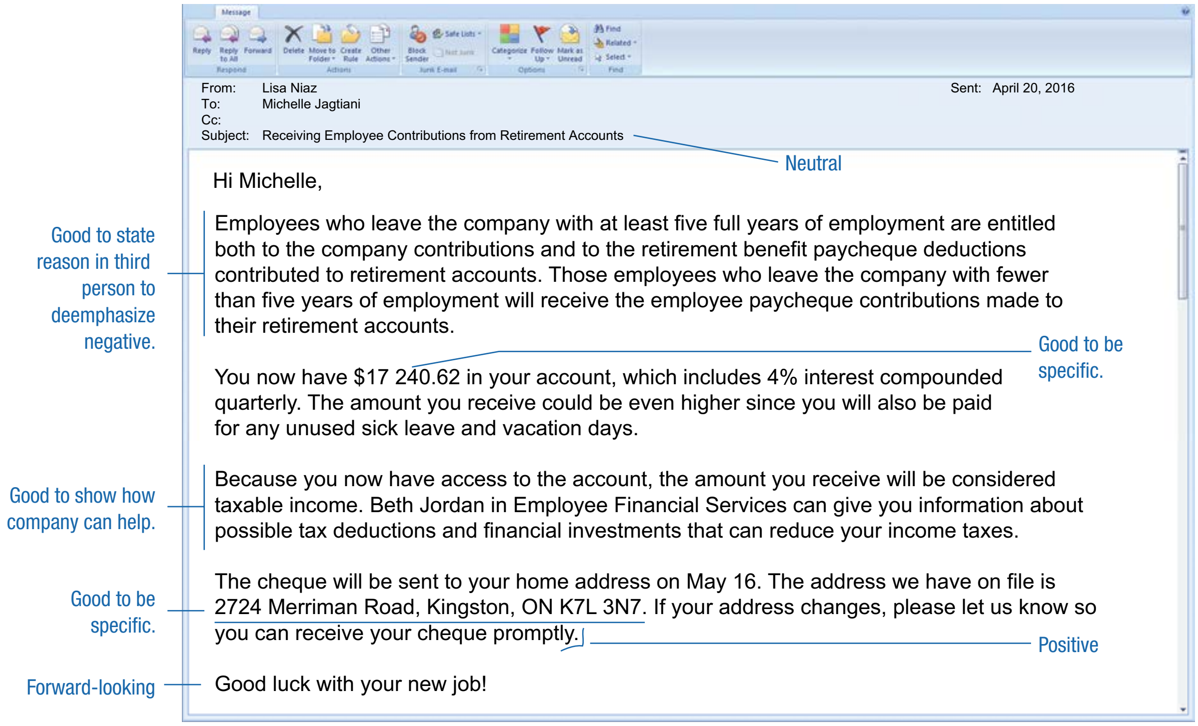
Paragraph 3 contains the additional negative information that the amount will be taxable, but offers the alternative that it might be possible to reduce taxes. The writer builds goodwill by suggesting a specific person the reader might contact.

Paragraph 4 tells the reader what address is in the company files (Michelle might not know whether the files are up to date), asks that she update it if necessary, and ends with the reader's concern: getting her cheque promptly.

The final paragraph ends on a positive note. This generalized goodwill is appropriate when the writer does not know the reader well.

FIGURE 8.12

A Good Solution to the Sample Problem



From: Lisa Niaz
To: Michelle Jagtiani
Cc:
Subject: Receiving Employee Contributions from Retirement Accounts
Sent: April 20, 2016

Hi Michelle,

Employees who leave the company with at least five full years of employment are entitled both to the company contributions and to the retirement benefit paycheque deductions contributed to retirement accounts. Those employees who leave the company with fewer than five years of employment will receive the employee paycheque contributions made to their retirement accounts.

You now have $17 240.62 in your account, which includes 4% interest compounded quarterly. The amount you receive could be even higher since you will also be paid for any unused sick leave and vacation days.

Because you now have access to the account, the amount you receive will be considered taxable income. Beth Jordan in Employee Financial Services can give you information about possible tax deductions and financial investments that can reduce your income taxes.

The cheque will be sent to your home address on May 16. The address we have on file is 2724 Merriman Road, Kingston, ON K7L 3N7. If your address changes, please let us know so you can receive your cheque promptly.

Good luck with your new job!

MODULE SUMMARY

- Organize negative messages so they
  1. Begin with a buffer or neutral statement when possible
  2. Explain the refusal
  3. Give the negative once, clearly
  4. End with a positive, forward-looking statement
- Use a buffer when the reader values harmony or when the buffer serves a purpose in addition to simply delaying the negative
- Organize negative messages to superiors so they
  - Describe the problem
  - Explain how it happened
  - Describe options for fixing it
  - Recommend a solution, and ask for action
- When giving bad news to peers or subordinates
  - Describe the problem
  - Present an alternative or compromise, if one is available
  - If possible, ask for input

- Make sure your reason for refusing is valid. Omit the reason if it is weak, or makes your organization look bad.
- Giving an alternative or compromise
  - Offers the audience another way of getting what they want
  - Suggests you care about the audience and helping to meet their needs
  - Enables the reader to re-establish the psychological freedom limited when you said no
  - Lets you end on a positive note and to present your organization and yourself as positive, friendly, and helpful
- Use PAIBOC analysis to decide how best to compose negative messages that meet your purposes and your audience's needs.
- Use PAIBOC analysis to decide the best medium for your negative message; whenever possible, deliver bad news in person.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 8

Questions for Critical Thinking

8.1 What experiences have you had with psychological reactance? How have you reacted when faced with real or perceived limitation(s) on your freedom? Describe the limitations, and your behaviour as a result.

8.2 What is the *Apology Act*? How many provinces have passed an apology act, and how does the act concern you?

8.3 Based on the Lewis model of linear-active, multi-active, and reactive cultures (Module 3), (1) how would you define your dominant culture, and (2) how does your dominant culture deliver bad news professionally?

8.4 Describe the circumstances in which you would post a negative message to social media.

Exercises and Problems

8.5 Analyzing and Revising Negative Message

Read the following three letters, which are typical business negative messages.

OAKVILLE HYDRO
ELECTRICITY
DISTRIBUTION

Oakville Hydro
Electricity Distribution Inc.
P.O. Box 1900
861 Redwood Square
Oakville ON L6J 5E3
Telephone: 905-825-9400
Fax: 905-825-4447
email: hydro@oakvillehydro.com
ww.oakvil!ehydro.com

August 25, 2016

Dear Customer:

During routine meter reading it was reported that access to your hydro/water meter is impeded. We kindly request that you remove or trim back all plants, trees or bushes from around the meter to allow us to retrieve regular readings to avoid estimated bills.

It should also be noted that the growth of plants around electric meters presents a safety hazard, and may cause meter bases to become unattached from the house resulting in a possible electrical fault or fire.

Thank you for your co-operation. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to call me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Yours truly,

Meter Reading

Casa Properties
Providing Quality and Affordability for 50 years!

Greetings to the Residents at: 160 Sail Ave

IMPORTANT NOTICE!!!

We would like to take the opportunity to ask all residents to please remove your bicycles from parking spaces by October 31, 2016.

Parking spaces are not to be used for personal storage as this is a fire hazard. Residents can arrange with Site Staff to conveniently store their bicycles in the bike room.

Please speak with the Building Manager should you have any questions.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Pierre Lazarus

Property Manager

September 16, 2016

456 Main Street W, Brentwood, BC, T4U 8E2 • Tel (123)-456-7890 • Fax (123)-456-7891 • www.casaprop.ca
Casa Property Holdings Limited

Casa Properties
Providing Quality and Affordability for 50 years!

NOTICE TO ALL RESIDENTS

With the winter season fast upon us there are certain things we need to bring to your attention, as listed below.

- All balcony carpets must be removed for the winter season as they will cause damage to the balcony concrete.
- Flowerpots, planters, and patio furniture must be properly stored.
- Window air-conditioners will need to be removed and/or winterized properly to prevent drafts.
- Baseboard heaters should be vacuumed to remove dust before use and regularly during the heating season. Window coverings should be kept clear of baseboard radiant heating so as not to restrict heat flow.
- The battery or fuse for your smoke and CO detectors must be checked to confirm they are operating properly.
- Be sure to keep all windows closed during the heating season and that indoor and outdoor lights are turned off when not in use, as wasting energy costs everyone in the end.
- No satellite dishes may be fastened to the building or balcony railings as they damage the structural integrity. Please remove immediately if you have any.
- Ensure your apartment insurance policy is current and up-to-date in accordance with the terms of your lease.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact your Site Staff.

On behalf of the management and staff we would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Casa Property Holdings Limited

456 Main Street W, Brentwood, BC, T4U 8E2 • Tel (123)-456-7890 • Fax (123)-456-7891 • www.casaprop.ca
Casa Property Holdings Limited

P	What is the **purpose** of the message? What are desired results?
A	Who is your **audience**? What audience characteristics are relevant to this particular message?
I	Based on your purposes and audiences, what **information** must you include?
B	What reader **benefits** or reasons would appeal to your audience?
O	What **objections** can you anticipate your reader(s) having?
C	What **context** will affect your reader's response?

As your instructor directs

a. Analyze one of the messages, based on PAIBOC analysis.
b. Revise your chosen message.
c. Pair up with another student who has chosen a different message.
d. Read the student's PAIBOC analysis and revision.
e. Give the student feedback on her/his analysis and feedback, and get his/her feedback on yours.
f. Write your instructor an email describing your specific learning through this exercise.

8.6 Analyzing the Medium as the Message

Find a negative/bad news message on any social media site. Using PAIBOC, analyze whether or not the medium is appropriate for the message. Send your instructor an email with the original message and your analysis.

8.7 Scripting Negative Messages

Think of a negative message related to your academic or professional life you have had to deliver, or now have to deliver.

As your instructor directs

a. Write down the negative or bad news situation, and the audience.
b. Exchange your bad news situation and audience with those of another student.
c. Write to the designated audience using the other student's bad news scenario, and your PAIBOC analysis.
d. Choose an appropriate medium for your message, based on your PAIBOC analysis.
e. Email your instructor and your student partner with your message. Be prepared to explain your choice of organizational pattern and medium, or media.

8.8 Telling the Boss About a Problem

In any organization, things sometimes go wrong. Tell your supervisor about a personnel, procedural, or technical problem in your organization, and suggest what should be done.

As your instructor directs

a. Prepare notes for a meeting with your supervisor.
b. Write an email to your supervisor.
c. Give an oral presentation on the problem.
d. Write an email to your instructor explaining the problem, the corporate culture, and the reasons for your solution.

8.9 Telling Customers that Prices Are Going Up

Periodically, organizations raise prices or impose separate fees for services that were previously free. Think of an increase in the prices your customers pay.

As your instructor directs

a. Write an email letter to customers, telling them about the new fees or higher prices.

b. Examine your organization's files for messages sent out the last time prices were raised. Are the messages effective? Why or why not? Include copies of the messages with your analysis of them.

8.10 Refusing to Participate on a Panel

As a prominent speaker, you get many requests to appear before various groups. Today, you've received a request to participate in a panel of three to five professionals who will talk about Investing in Real World Technologies. The session will run from 2 to 5 p.m. on the second Sunday of next month.

You're trying to cut back on outside commitments. Work continues to take much of your time, you have major obligations in a volunteer organization, and you want some time for yourself and your family. This request does not fit your priorities. Decline the invitation.

As your instructor directs

Assume that the request is from one of the following.

a. A university business honour society that expects 250 students at the session
b. The youth group at the church, synagogue, temple, or mosque you attend
c. The Chinese Student Association at the local college or university

8.11 Announcing Cost-Saving Measures

Your company has to cut costs but would prefer to avoid laying off workers. Therefore, you have adopted the following money-saving ideas. Some can be implemented immediately; some will be implemented at renewal dates. The company will no longer pay for

- Flowers at the receptionist's desk and in executive offices
- Skyboxes for professional sporting events
- Employees' dues for professional and trade organizations
- Liquor at business meals

Only essential business travel will be approved. The company will pay only for the lowest cost of air travel (reserve 7 to 14 days in advance, stay over Saturday night).

The company will no longer buy tables or blocks of tickets for charitable events and will not make any cash donations to charity until money is less tight.

Counters will be put on the photocopiers. People must have access numbers to make photocopies; personal photocopies will cost $0.10 a page.

As the chief financial officer, write an email to all employees explaining the changes.

8.12 Giving a Customer Less Credit than She Wants

Yang-Ming Lee applied for a VISA card, asking for a credit limit of $15,000 and a separate card for her husband, Chad Hoang. You've checked the credit references, and they're good enough to merit granting a credit card. But you generally give new customers only a $7,500 limit, even when the family income is very high, as it is in this case. You might make an exception if your bank had a previous relationship with the client, but no such relationship exists here. Although you have no set policy for reviewing and raising credit limits, normally you would expect at least six months of paying the minimum amount promptly.

Write a letter to Ms. Lee, granting her a credit card with a $7,500 limit.

Polishing *your* Prose

Finding Your Narrative Voice

Narrative voice refers to the personality of the writer. Words, phrases, expressions, and tone convey narrative voice. Just as fiction and composition do, business communication uses narrative voice. The “voice” in memos, letters, and reports can be friendly, assertive, bureaucratic, threatening, or confident, to name just a few possibilities. You’ll get the results you want, however, if you *speak* to your reader the way you would want to be spoken to.

Consider the following email message from a student to his instructor. If you were the instructor, how persuasive would you judge this memo?

> To: Kathryn
>
> From: Dave
>
> Subject: report
>
> i am sending my final report. i cant remember when its do but here it is.iknow ive missed alot of classes but i have to work. im going to keep on sending this message until you tell me you got it. Whats my final grade.
>
> Narrative voice is as individual as personality. However, we have control over narrative voice, because we can choose the language we use to make meaning. Knowing your own voice can help you to understand the personality it demonstrates.

Exercises

How would you characterize the narrative voice in each of the following messages? Which voices appeal to you as appropriate for business communication? How could you communicate the same message in a more appropriate voice?

1. Employees will clock in at their designated hour. Employees will follow their assigned schedules to the letter. There will be NO EXCEPTION to these rules.
2. Hi, Mr. Mills! Just stop in to pick up your order when you get a chance. Give us a ring if you want delivery. Thanks!
3. Attention *Balance and Wellness Magazine* Subscriber:

   Thank you for your interest in our magazine. I hope you have enjoyed your two free issues. As you can read in November’s Letters to the Editor, subscribers have responded enthusiastically to October’s article on the health benefits of keeping a journal.

   Perhaps you have already sent your annual subscription fee of $29.98 (plus HST). If so, please accept my thanks. If not, please take a few minutes to enclose your cheque in the postage-paid envelope to enjoy a whole year of healthful reading.

   Sincerely,

   Joe Malone, Editor-in-chief
4. Please find enclosed my resumé, which speaks to my superlative and most relevant qualities as a candidate for the advertised position of account executive with your illustrious organization.
5. Dear Client,

   I am now spending up to four hours a day responding to emails, telephone calls, faxes, tax assessments, etc. As I’m sure you can appreciate, this correspondence contributes to an already overly long day. Please be advised, therefore, that effective immediately, your annual accounting fee will include a correspondence fee of $150.00 plus HST every six months ($28.25 per month).

   Alternatively, I can measure actual time spent and bill accordingly (expensive and time-consuming).

   I enclose a self-addressed envelope.

   Sincerely,

   George Estrada, CA

6. Pertaining to the party of the first part, hereafter called "party first," and excepting any and all objections from the party of the second part, hereafter called "party second," this amendment shall be considered null and void with proper written notice three (3) days prior to the execution of the original agreement.
7. Congratulations on your recent promotion to district manager, Rita. All of us in Accounting look forward to working with you.
8. Martina,

   I've spent at least three hours looking for the invoice, which is a complete waste of my time. Where would you suggest I look NOW??!!
9. In the event of catastrophic LAN failure, users will
   1. Perform SYS/MD-3 shutdown for affected systems
   2. Engage standard recovery matrix (SRM), per #4105.1 in SYS/MD Manual (2000: H3-H12)
   3. Record time and date, RE: LAN Failure, in compliance log, cc. MEISNER
   4. Notify Data Services at ext. 5547, ATTN: J.J. MEISNER
10. Nope. This idea won't work. It's not very good. I'm not sure the project is even worth our time anymore. I'm definitely not interested in having a meeting to discuss it. Don't call me unless you guys have something better.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Answer Key at the end of the text.

MODULE 9

Composing Persuasive Messages

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 9 you will be familiar with

LO1 Persuasive appeals

LO2 Persuasive patterns of organization

By applying the information you will be able to

LO3 Choose and use persuasive strategies

LO4 Organize persuasive messages

LO5 Identify and overcome objections

LO6 Write common kinds of persuasive messages

LO7 Write effective subject lines for persuasive messages

LO8 Further analyze business communication situations

Module Outline

All successful communication contains a persuasive element. Persuasive appeals permeate all parts of our lives—from the personal to the political. Even attracting and holding your audience's attention long enough for you to make your pitch depends on your persuasive ability. In business, people depend on persuasion to sell products and services, to build relationships, and to get quality work done.

LO1 What Do People Find Persuasive?

People are persuaded by their perceptions of the trustworthiness of the messenger, and by the emotional and logical resonances of the message.

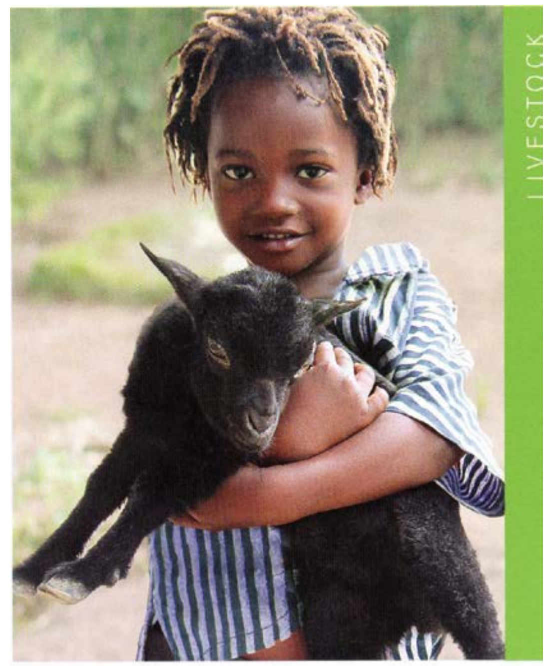
Credibility, emotion, and logic create the alchemy of persuasion.

Audiences pay attention to people whom they see as trustworthy or credible. In fact, perceptions trump facts, as we know from experience: attractive actors and models who peddle everything from painkillers to pizza are really selling a story about how buying the product will transform us. Indeed, we respond most strongly to stories that appeal to our deepest values and beliefs, including those beliefs that defy logic. And the more frequently media present these stories, the more likely our "buy in," as the Kardashian empire demonstrates.

When organizations feature photos of both adorable animals and children (Figure 9.1) the emotional appeals (including the appeal to our positive ego needs) reinforce the logical appeal of a monetary "gift" to support economic self-sufficiency.

FIGURE 9.1

A Persuasive Appeal



Source: Plan Canada

LO1 What Are the Purposes of Persuasive Messages?

Persuasive messages convince the audience to comply willingly.

Persuasive messages have two primary purposes.

- To have the reader act and to overcome any objections that might prevent or delay action
- To provide enough information so that the reader knows exactly what to do

As is true of all messages, persuasive messages should also

- Establish a good impression of the writer
- Build a good image of the writer's organization
- Build a good relationship between the writer and reader
- Reduce or eliminate future correspondence on the same subject

LO1 What Kinds of Persuasive Messages Am I Likely to Create?

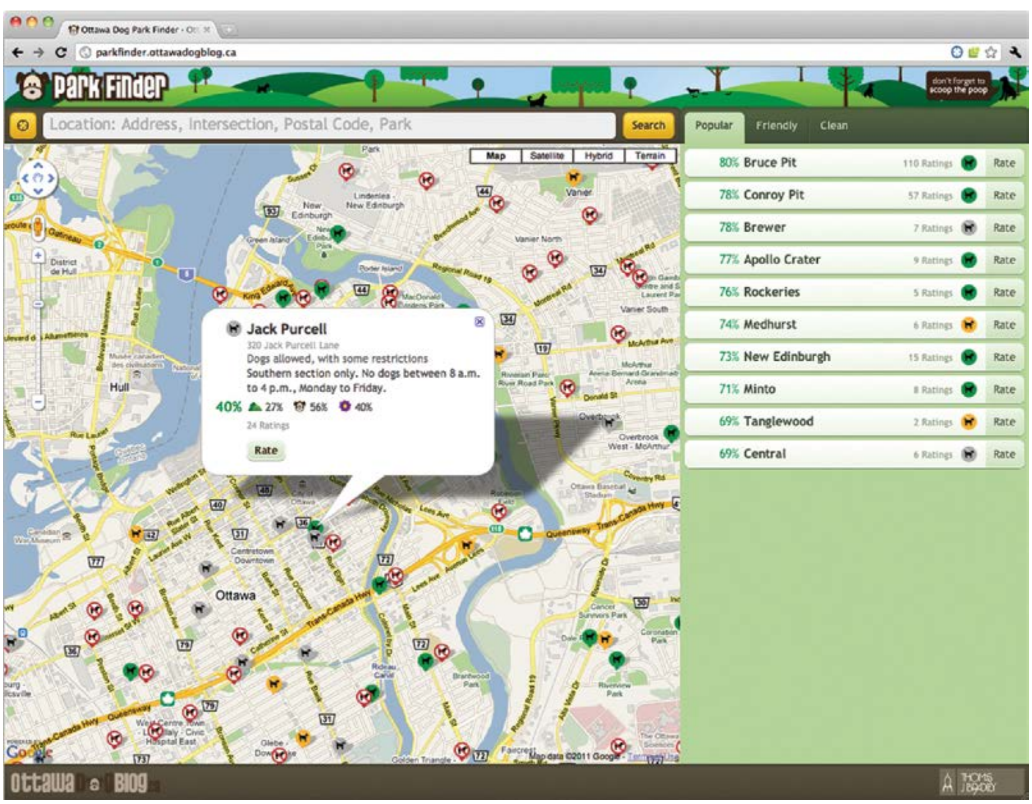
You will likely craft direct and indirect requests, reports (Unit 4), and sales pitches, including job application letters and resumés (Unit 6). You may also write corporate communications and promotions messages—including those distributed via social media, tweets, and blogs.

Ex. 9.2

Social media bombard us with persuasive messages primarily selling products, services, political affiliations, social mores—even lifestyles—as these examples illustrate.

FIGURE 9.2

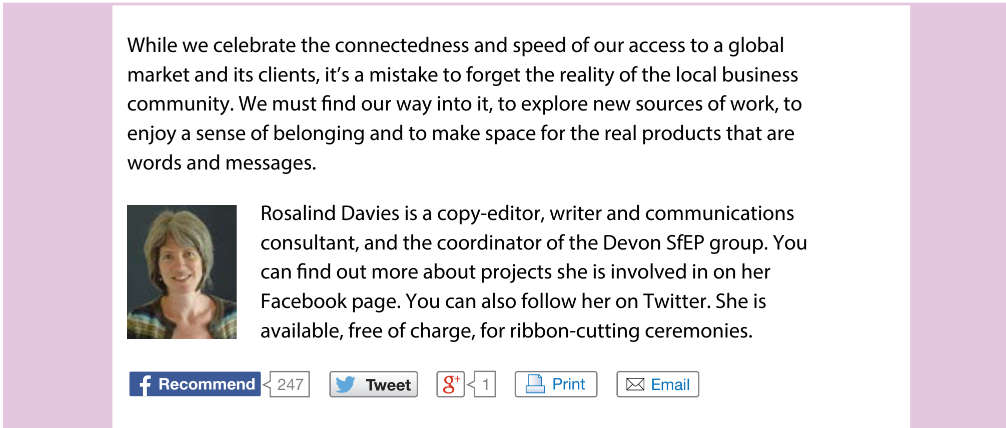
A Persuasive Lifestyle Blog



Source: Thomas J. Bradley, http://parkfinder.ottawadogblog.ca

FIGURE 9.3

Persuasive Blog (excerpt from Society for Editors and Proofreaders [SfEP])



While we celebrate the connectedness and speed of our access to a global market and its clients, it's a mistake to forget the reality of the local business community. We must find our way into it, to explore new sources of work, to enjoy a sense of belonging and to make space for the real products that are words and messages.

Rosalind Davies is a copy-editor, writer and communications consultant, and the coordinator of the Devon SfEP group. You can find out more about projects she is involved in on her Facebook page. You can also follow her on Twitter. She is available, free of charge, for ribbon-cutting ceremonies.

Recommend 247 Tweet 1 Print Email

Source: Rosalind Davies

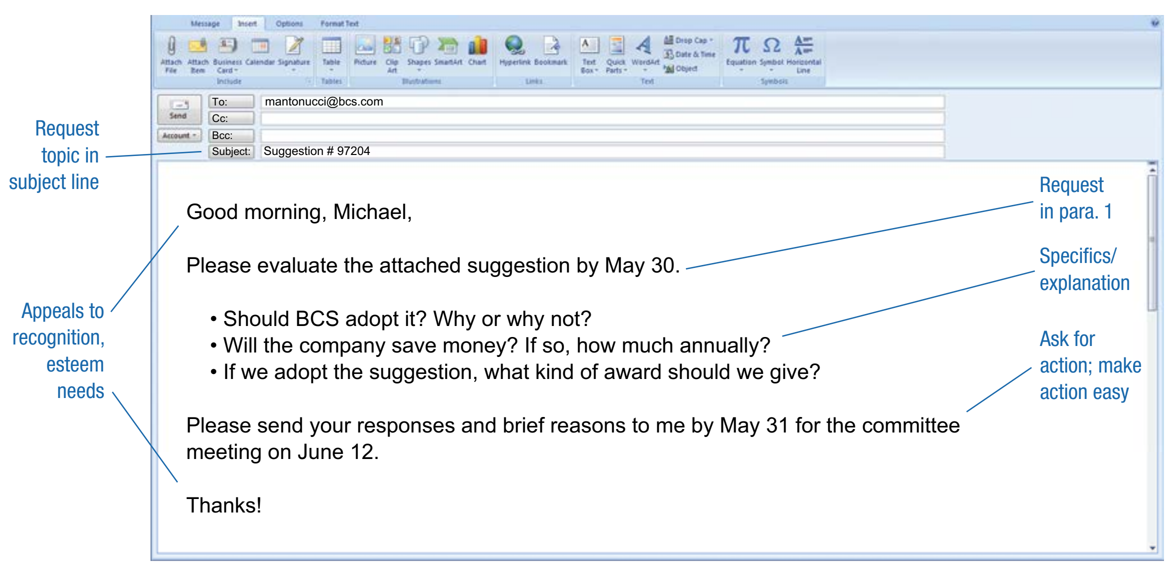
LO2 How Do I Organize Persuasive Messages?

Use PAIBOC analysis to analyze your audience's reaction. Then organize your messages based on your understanding of audience objections.

When you do not anticipate objections, give the message directly (Module 7). The messages in Figures 9.1 through 9.5 use the informative, direct organizational pattern because the writers understand their readers' values and anticipate a positive reaction.

FIGURE 9.4

A Direct Request



However, when you expect resistance from the reader, use the bad news organizational pattern: start with an objective description of the situation.

LO3 Organizing Direct Requests

Ex. 9.2, 9.6, 9.9, 9.10

Start with the request only when you anticipate ready agreement, when you fear that a busy reader may not read a message whose relevance isn't clear, or when your organization's culture prefers direct requests.

1. *Consider asking immediately for the information or service you want.* Delay the request, however, if you need to contextualize the message, if the message seems too abrupt, or if you have several purposes in the message.
2. *Give readers all the information and details they will need to act on your request.* Number your questions or set them off with bullets so the reader can check to see that all of them have been answered.

   In a claim (in which a product is under warranty or a shipment was defective), explain the circumstances so that the reader knows what happened. Be sure to include all the relevant details: date of purchase, model or invoice number, and so on.

   In more complicated direct requests, anticipate possible responses. Suppose you're asking for information about equipment meeting certain specifications. Explain which criteria are most important so that the reader can recommend an alternative if no single product meets all your needs. You may also want to tell the reader what your price constraints are and ask if the item is in stock or must be put on special order.
3. *Ask for the action you want.* Do you want a sale? A cheque? A replacement? A catalogue? Answers to your questions? If you need an answer by a certain time, say so. If possible, show the reader why the time limit is necessary.

Depending on your purposes and audience analysis, you can simply ask for what you need. However, do ask: don't make the reader guess what you want.

Indirect request	Is there a newer version of the 2014 *Accounting Reference Manual*?
Direct request	If there is a newer version of the 2014 *Accounting Reference Manual*, please send it to me.

In some direct requests, your combination of purposes may suggest a different pattern. For example, in a letter asking a prospective employer to reimburse you for expenses after a job interview, you'd want to thank your hosts for their hospitality and reinforce the good impression you made at the interview. To do that, spend the first two paragraphs talking about the trip and the interview. In the last third of the letter (or even in the postscript) make your request for reimbursement. A student who had not yet been reimbursed by a company for a visit to the company's office put the second request in the P.S. of a letter refusing a job offer.

> P.S. The cheque to cover my expenses when I visited your office in March hasn't come yet. Could you please check to see whether you can find a record of it? The amount was $690, including HST (airfare, $490; hotel room, $185; taxi, $15).

Similarly, in a letter asking about a graduate program, a major purpose might be to build a good image of yourself so that your application for financial aid will be viewed positively. To achieve that goal, you would provide information about your qualifications and interest in the field before you ask questions.

FIGURE 9.5

A Detailed Direct Request with Persuasive Rationale

From: Kathryn Hughes Sent: September 23, 2016
To: communicore1@cogeco.ca
Subject: FALL SPECIALS - Eaves/Gutter Cleaning, Christmas Lighting, Window Cleaning, Painting - GTA

FALL IS HERE! TIME TO PREPARE FOR WINTER!
We have begun to schedule our fall/winter services at great rates.
See below for prices and more details.

EAVES/GUTTER CLEANING PACKAGE: Complete eaves/downspout cleaning, eaves inspection also included.
Home size under 2500sq' = Only $100+HST
Home size under 3000sq' = Only $110+HST
Home size under 3500sq' = Only $130+HST
Home size under 4000sq' = Only $170+HST
Homes larger then 4000sq' = Please contact for quote.

STANDARD WASH PACKAGE: Exterior wash of windows, frames and ledges!
Home size under 2500sq' = Only $90+HST
Home size under 3000sq' = Only $100+HST
Home size under 3500sq' = Only $120+HST
Home size under 4000sq' = Only $160+HST
Homes larger then 4000sq' = Please contact for quote.
***Prices are as quoted unless your home has a 3rd storey, is a corner house or has French panes.*
Please contact us if you have any of these 3 things.

COMPLETE WASH PACKAGE: Interior and Exterior wash of windows, frames, ledges, tracks and screens! BEST VALUE!
Home size under 2500sq' = Only $190+HST
Home size under 3000sq' = Only $210+HST
Home size under 3500sq' = Only $250+HST

CHRISTMAS LIGHTING SERVICES: Supply, Install & Remove Christmas Lights.
We offer complete Christmas lighting solutions, no matter how big or elaborate you want to go. Everything from roof-line lighting and trees and shrubs, to garlands and wreaths. We can supply, rent, install and remove many different types of lights for your home and yard. **IF you're interested in a free, no-obligation quote, please contact us through email. When requesting a quote please remember to include your address, house size and a rough idea of the decor options you are considering.**

WHY CHOOSE AGT HOME SERVICES??
**We have been in business over 10 years serving the GTA. We are experienced, insured ($2mil & WSIB) and reliable!*
**Your satisfaction is guaranteed through our excellent service initiatives and top-notch quality expectations.*
**We have many great references for all the services we offer; just ask and we will provide you with more than a few.*

Should you have any questions or inquiries please contact us through email or our phone numbers below. Hope to hear from you and we look forward to another successful year thanks to your business!

HAVE A BEAUTIFUL DAY!

AGT HOME SERVICES INC.
2084 Speers Road, Unit #5
Oakville, ON L6L 2X8
Phone: 289-878-7862 or 416-409-8303
www.agthomeservices.com
email: info@agthomeservices.com

WSIB#9877789
Liability insurance with Economical Insurance Corp.

Source: Courtesy of AGT Home Services Inc.

LO3 Organizing Indirect Requests

Ex. 9.5

Use the indirect (inductive or bad news) organization when you expect resistance from the reader, but you can show that doing what you suggest will resolve the situation or solve the problem.

This pattern allows you to anticipate and overcome objections; you describe all the reasons in favour of your position before you give your readers a chance to say no.

1. *Describe the situation you share (or the problem that your request will solve).* Because you're interested in solving the problem, describe the situation objectively; it's a waste of time and ink to assign blame or mention personalities.
2. *Detail the results of the situation as they affect your reader.* Be specific about the cost in money, time, lost goodwill, inconvenience, and so on. Persuade your readers that *something* must be done before you convince them that your solution is the best one.
3. *Explain your solution.* If you know that the reader will favour another solution, start with that solution and show why it won't work before you present your solution. Present your solution, focusing on practicality, workability, and desirability without using the words *I* or *my*. Appeal to the reader's wallet or sense of enlightened self-interest.
4. *Prove that any negative elements (cost, time, concerns, disruptions) are outweighed by the advantages.*
5. *Summarize any additional benefits of the solution.* You can present the main benefit—solving the problem—briefly, since you have described the problem in detail. However, if there are any additional benefits, mention them.
6. *Ask for the action you want.* Often your reader will authorize or approve something; other people will implement the action. Give your reader a reason to act promptly, perhaps offering a new reader benefit. ("By buying now, we can avoid the next quarter's price hikes.")

Figure 9.6 summarizes the pattern. Figure 9.7 uses the pattern. Reader benefits (Module 10) can be brief in this kind of message, because the biggest benefit is solving the problem.

FIGURE 9.6

How to Organize an Indirect Persuasive Message

FIGURE 9.7

Persuasive Message, Indirect Request

COMMUNITY LIVING

Memorandum

To: All Employees

CC:

From: Janice Hofbauer

Date: February 15, 2016

Re: New Sign-Out System

Directed subject line

Buffer: common ground

Our clients enjoy the times they get to go to the mall or out to lunch, instead of being here all day. And their daily interaction with the community is very important. Recently, however, clients have been taken out on activities without staff members knowing where the clients are or whom they are with.

Shared problem

Specific example

We need to know where clients are at all times, because social workers, psychologists, and relatives constantly stop by unannounced. Last week, a client's parent came by to pick her up for an appointment. Not only was the client not here, but no one knew where she was, or with whom. Not knowing where our clients are, and with whom, damages the reputation of our program and our staff.

Solution

Reader benefit

Starting Monday, February 27, a sign-out board will be located at Magali's desk. Please write down where you and the client are going, and when you expect to return. When signing out, help clients sign out. We can make this a learning experience for our clients. Then, when visitors stop by to see someone who isn't here, we can simply look at the sign-out board to tell where the client is and when he or she will return.

Please help preserve the superb reputation you have helped WestRiver earn as a quality centre for adults with handicaps. Sign clients and yourself out at all times.

Ask for action

FIGURE 9.8

Persuasive Blog with Benefits, Indirect Request

9 Ways to Connect with Your Community

It's guest post day here at Duct Tape Marketing*, and today's guest post is from Roger Connors and Tom Smith—enjoy!*

Feeling out of touch with your business community? No connection, wrangling tough relationships, regularly brokering messy disagreements? Just how does a business owner or manager get back in touch and move the needle on even the most stubborn issues?

With consistent, well-practiced feedback.

Feedback is a principle that, if practiced, is the key to overcoming blind spots and achieving improved results in all aspects of your life—both personal and professional. Individually, with teams, and even entire communities and organizations.

The key? You just have to ask for it.

But before you gather your team or blindly ask what others think of you (highly risky without a bit of practice, by the way), consider these 9 proven tips that will help you get your head right—so you can solicit, respond to, and use feedback to succeed in business.

1. **Go after it.** Feedback doesn't just magically happen with the wave of a wand. You have to be proactive and make it happen. Stay connected with customers or prospects by seeking feedback even when you believe things are going great—sometimes what you think isn't what is actually happening.
2. **Have courage.** Seeking constructive feedback can be scary. Remember, the person you're asking for feedback is already thinking about your performance; you're just hearing what they already believe.
3. **Welcome awkwardness.** Remember that almost everyone fears offering feedback about as much as they fear asking for it. People worry it will backfire, and they value their job or relationship over saying anything—which is why momentum stalls in the first place. Revel in the discomfort and seek feedback anyway.
4. **Be convincing.** Assure your audience, customers, even your employees that you really do want to know what they think. They need to know there won't be any blowback from you if they honestly tell you how they see it.
5. **Get positive.** Though it might be hard to believe, it's easier for people to offer positive rather than negative feedback. You have to *ask* for constructive feedback. Try "What can we do better?" instead of "What are we doing wrong?"
6. **Listen.** After asking for feedback, you need to do the hard part—listen. Listening can be difficult, but it is one of the most meaningful steps of exchanging feedback, and it is important that you listen to everything. Then act on what you hear that makes sense.
7. **Be grateful.** Don't let constructive feedback, no matter how unpleasant, skew your view of the person who's giving valuable input as to how you can improve your processes. Remember, their insight could help improve performance or efficiency. Express sincere gratitude for their willingness to share in the first place (see tip #2, have courage).
8. **Make it a habit.** Make getting feedback a habit, not a one-time thing. Ask if it's okay to follow up, even suggesting you meet again for a reality check just to keep yourself in line.
9. **Be nice.** Finally, be nice to yourself and others. You can't make any important changes overnight.

Right out of the gate you might want to select someone you're comfortable with. Then get started by simply asking, "What feedback do you have for me?" You might need to tag it with some context, such as "How do you think we could have improved this product?" or "What improvements would you like to see in your campaign?" Once you've listened, don't impulsively respond with a long defensive response. Graciously and professionally say, "Thanks for the feedback. We really appreciate it, and want to do anything we can to make your experience with our company better." Your gratitude will signal you aren't defensive (even if you really are) and that you are happy they took the time to share their opinion.

Roger Connors and Tom Smith are co-authors of a new book, *The Wisdom of Oz: Using Personal Accountability to Succeed in Everything You Do* (September 2014, www.thewisdomofozbook.com). They are multiple *New York Times* bestselling authors and innovators of the most extensive body of knowledge on workplace accountability ever written. Their firm, Partners In Leadership (www.partnersinleadership.com), helps management teams facilitate large-scale cultural transition through proven methodologies and has helped clients produce billions of dollars in improved profitability and shareholder value.

Recommend 247 Tweet 1 Print Email

Source: Courtesy of Partners in Leadership

LO5 How Do I Identify and Overcome Objections?

Know your audience. Talk to your audience. Then try these strategies.

Ex. 9.5

The easiest way to learn about audience objections is to ask knowledgeable people in your network or organization.

- *Use open questions and phrase your questions neutrally* so that people feel encouraged to express their opinions honestly: "What concerns would you have about a proposal to do X?" "Who makes a decision about Y?" "What do you like best about (the supplier or practice you want to change)?"
- *Ask follow-up questions* to be sure you understand: "Would you be likely to stay with your current supplier if you could get a lower price from someone else? Why?"

Ex. 9.1

People are most aware of and willing to share objective constraints such as time and money. We are all less willing to acknowledge emotional anxieties. Indeed, when we have a **vested interest** in something because we benefit emotionally, physically, psychologically, or financially, we struggle to keep things as they are, even when logic dictates otherwise. Texting while driving—despite the legal penalties and safety risks—is an example of vested interest behaviour.

Listen to find out the real reasons for your audience's objections. If an objection is false or based on misinformation, do one of the following:

- Give the response to the objection without naming the objection
- Present responses in a "question/answer" format
- State the objection neutrally and then respond: "Some people wonder…"; "Some clients are concerned that…"

If real objections remain, try one or more of the following strategies to counter objections.

1. Specify how much time or money is required—it may not be as much as the reader fears.

   > Distributing flyers to each house or apartment in your neighbourhood will probably take two afternoons.

2. Put the time or money in the context of the benefits they bring.

   > The additional $152,500 will (1) allow the Open Shelter to remain open 24 rather than 16 hours a day, (2) pay for three social workers to help men find work and homes, and (3) keep the neighbourhood bank open, so that men don't have to cash welfare cheques in bars and can save the $800 they need to have up front to rent an apartment.

3. Show that money spent now will save money in the long run.

   > By replacing the boiler now, we'll no longer have to release steam that the overflow tank can't hold. Depending on how severe the winter is, we will save $100 to $750 a year in energy costs. If energy costs rise, we'll save even more.

4. Show that doing as you ask will benefit a group or the reader, although the action may not help the reader directly.

   > By being a Big Brother or a Big Sister, you'll give a child the attention he or she needs to become a well-adjusted, productive adult.

5. Show the reader that a sacrifice is necessary to achieve a larger, more important goal to which he or she is committed.

   > These changes will mean more work for all of us. But we have to cut our costs 25 percent to keep the plant open and to keep our jobs.

6. Show that the advantages as a group outnumber or outweigh the disadvantages as a group.

   > None of the locations is perfect. But the Quebec City location is the most accessible to the most employees.

7. Turn a disadvantage into an opportunity.

   > With the hiring freeze, every department will need more lead time to complete its own work. By hiring a freelance worker, the Planning Department could provide that lead time.

LO5 LO8 Finding Common Ground

Finding common ground builds emotional appeal. To find common ground, you need to understand your audience's needs. And you need to identify with your audience to help them identify with you. Finding this common ground is based on a respect for your audience's position.

People are highly sensitive to manipulative emotional appeals. No matter how much you disagree, you must respect your audience's intelligence in order to understand why they believe or do something, and why they may object to your position. When you can understand your readers' point of view, you'll be more effective. And you won't alienate your readers by talking down to them.

The best common grounds are specific and focus on something the reader cares about.

Weak common ground	We all want the business to be profitable.
Improved common ground	We lost about $186,000 in profits last summer due to a 17 percent drop in productivity.

In your common ground, emphasize the parts of your idea that fit with what your audience already believes or knows. For example, an employee of 3M wanted to develop laser disks. He realized that 3M's previous successful products were thin and flat: Scotch tape, Post-it Notes, magnetic tape. When he made his presentation to the group that chose new products for development, he held his prototype disk horizontally, so his audience saw a flat, thin object rather than a large, round, record-like object. Making his project fit with the audience's previous experience was a subtle and effective emotional tool to make it easier for the audience to say yes.

Establishing common ground: Both picture and text tell a story that makes this marketing notecard memorable.

Source: Courtesy of Communications Connection

Stories and psychological description are also effective ways to build emotional appeal. Even when you need to provide statistics or numbers to convince the careful reader that your anecdote is a representative example, telling a story first makes your message more persuasive. For example, many charities send out letters describing how a person's life has changed because of donors' generosity. These stories motivate people to give.

The language you use creates the tone of your request. When you ask for action, you have several choices. Orders ("Get me the Ervin file") and questions ("Do we have the third-quarter numbers yet?") might work; however, you'll get better results with courtesy. You may need to be firm, but you must always be polite.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Analyzing the Persuasive Factor

Ex. 9.4, 9.6–9.8

Persuasive messages build credibility, engage emotions, use the right tone, and offer a reason to act promptly.

Credibility is the audience's response to the source of the message. People are more easily persuaded by someone they see as expert, powerful, attractive, or trustworthy. When movie stars publically support political, environmental, and/or animal rights causes, for example, the implication is that their attractiveness/fame/wealth makes them models for the rest of us.

We are also more easily persuaded by people whom we perceive to be like us (similar in class, values, and age) and by those who are articulate, confident, and likeable.

When you don't yet have the credibility that comes from being an expert or being powerful, build credibility by the language and strategy you use.

- **Be factual**. Use concrete language, supportive statistics, and exact dollar or time requirements. Don't exaggerate.
- **Be specific**. If you say "X is better," detail how it is better. Show the reader exactly where the savings or other benefits come from so that it's clear that the proposal really is as good as you say it is.
- **Be reliable**. If you suspect that a project will take longer to complete, cost more money, or be less effective than you originally thought, tell your audience *immediately*. Negotiate a new schedule that you can meet.

People make decisions—even business decisions—emotionally as well as logically. **Emotional appeals**, including the organizational patterns you use and the stories you tell, encourage readers to do what you ask.

Avoiding messages that sound parental or preachy is a matter of tone. Saying *please* is important, especially to people on your level or outside the organization. Tone works better when you give reasons for your request.

Parental	Everyone is expected to comply with these regulations. I'm sure you can see that they are common-sense rules needed for our business.
Better	Even on casual days, visitors expect us to look professional. So please let's leave the gym clothes at home.

Writing to superiors is trickier. You may want to tone down your request by using language that shows you aren't taking a yes for granted.

Arrogant	Based on this evidence, I expect you to give me a new smartphone.
Better	If department funds permit, I would like a new smartphone.

Give a reason to act promptly, because the longer people delay the less likely they are to carry through. Request action by a specific date. Always give people at least a week or two; they have other things to do besides respond to your requests.

Set deadlines in the middle of the month, if possible. If you say, "Please return this by March 1," people will think, "I don't need to do this until March." Ask for the response by February 15 instead.

Show why you need a quick response.

- *Show that the time limit is real.* Perhaps you need information quickly to use in a report that has a due date. Perhaps a decision must be made by a certain date to catch the start of the school year, the holiday selling season, or an election campaign. Perhaps you need to be ready for a visit from out-of-town or international colleagues.
- *Show that acting now will save time or money.* If business is slow and your industry isn't doing well, your company needs to act now (to economize, to better serve customers) in order to be competitive. If business is booming and everyone is making a profit, then your company needs to act now to get its fair share of the available profits.
- *Show the cost of delaying action.* Will labour or material costs be higher in the future? Will delay mean more money spent on repairing something that will still need to be replaced?

Raymond Chau Photography

To help pay his way through UBC, Brian Scudamore persuaded people to pay him to junk their junk. The CEO and founder of 1-800-GOT-JUNK? began an industry and now runs an international franchise worth millions.

LO7 What's the Best Subject Line for a Persuasive Message?

For direct requests, use the request, the topic, or a question. For indirect requests, use a topic-related subject line or a reader benefit.

Ex. 9.4–9.10

In a direct request, put the request, the topic of the request, or a question in the subject line.

Direct request subject line	Subject: Request for Updated Software
	My copy of HomeNet does not accept the aliases for Magnus accounts.
Direct request subject line	Subject: Status of Account #3548-003
	Please send me the following information about account #3548-003.
Direct request subject line	Subject: Additional Training Session in October
	The two training sessions scheduled for October will accommodate 40 people. Last month, you said that 57 new staff accountants had been hired. Should we schedule an additional training session in October? Or can the new hires wait until the next regularly scheduled session in February?

When you have a reluctant reader, putting the request in the subject line might elicit a no before your audience even reads your argument.

Depending on the reader resistance you anticipate, you can use a subject line that presents the topic neutrally. In the following examples, the first is the most neutral. The remaining two increasingly reveal the writer's preference.

Directed subject line	Subject: A Review of Our Social Media Usage
Directed subject line	Subject: Why We Need a Social Media Policy
Directed subject line	Subject: Why We Should Focus Our Social Media Presence

Another option is to appeal to common ground or present a reader benefit—something that shows readers that this message will help them.

Reader benefit subject line Subject: Reducing Energy Costs in the Office

Energy costs in our office have risen 12 percent in the past three years, although the cost of gas has risen only 8 percent and the cost of electricity has risen only 5 percent.

Although your first paragraph may be negative in a problem-solving message, your subject line should suggest that you are solving a problem, not just reporting one.

LO4 LO6 How Can PAIBOC Help Me Write Persuasive Messages?

PAIBOC analysis helps you identify the content and organization of your message.

Before you tackle the assignments for this module, examine the following problem. As in Modules 7 and 8, the PAIBOC questions probe the basic points required for a solution.

Use the checklists in Figures 9.10 and 9.11 to evaluate your draft.

Problem

You are the national sales manager for AfterMark Automotive, a small, independent company that manufactures hydraulic hose systems for the Canada-wide automotive and truck markets. Although AfterMark operates in a highly competitive market, the company thrives because of its reputation for sustainable production practices, top-quality products, and excellent customer service.

AfterMark supplies both aftermarket warehouse distributors and larger wholesaler/retailers. However, the company prefers to establish primary relationships with large warehouse distributors to which AfterMark ships large inventory orders and one invoice. These warehouse distributors then sell AfterMark's products to smaller wholesalers and retailers in their area. This distribution and billing system saves AfterMark millions in product shipping and accounting costs. The system also builds excellent business relationships between the warehouse distributors and the smaller area wholesaler/retailers who are their customers.

Last week you received this email from a retailer who purchases your products from Rick's Automotive Supply—a warehouse distributor who is also one of your area distributors.

> Attention: National Sales Mgr
>
> Re: I Am Being Robbed!
>
> By accident one of your sales reps sent along copies of your recent promos with your price lists, and I see that your prices have no resemblance to Rick's Automotive Supply, where I am paying double! For example, you put out a promotion selling your Ultra-Lock Connection System for $69.99. However, Rick charges $140.00! Wholesale!
>
> Why should I pay 100% mark-up when I can buy directly from you? I spend @ $400,000 annually at Rick's. I want to buy directly from you, and double my profits, or in this case, make a profit rather than just break even.
>
> Regards,
>
> Andrej Drago
>
> Drago Auto Parts

Your warehouse distributors get promotional pricing deals to assist their efforts to attract new customers and to sell more AfterMark products. You know they mark up products for their customers, but 100 percent? Now Rick's has potentially lost a customer, and you may have gained a retail client whose inventory stocking and billing will add to your sales rep's workload without appreciable advantage, and with potentially significant disadvantage once it becomes known that Drago Auto Parts is now a direct customer. What happens to your relationship with Rick's, and what happens if and when other area retailers learn about Drago Auto Parts' direct-ship relationship with you?

Before you respond to Andrej you must message Rick. Using PAIBOC analysis and the checklists in Figures 9.9 and 9.10, create the message. (Note: this exercise continues in Problem 9.5 in the end-of-module assignments.)

FIGURE 9.9

PAIBOC Analysis of the Problem

P	What are your **purposes** in writing or speaking?
A	Who is your **audience**? How do members of your audience differ? What audience characteristics are relevant to this particular message?
I	What **information** must your message include?
B	What reasons or reader **benefits** can you use to support your position?
O	What **objections** can you expect your readers to have? What negative elements of your message must you de-emphasize or overcome?
C	How will the **context** affect reader response? Think about your relationship to the reader, the morale in the organization, the economy, the time of year, and any special circumstances.

FIGURE 9.10

Checklist for Direct Requests

- ☐ Do you expect ready agreement to your request?
- ☐ If the message is a memo, does the subject line indicate the request?
- ☐ Is the subject line specific enough to differentiate this message from others on the same subject?
- ☐ Does the first paragraph summarize the request or the specific topic of the message?
- ☐ Does the message give all the relevant information? Is there enough detail?
- ☐ Does the message answer questions or overcome objections that readers may have without introducing unnecessary negatives?
- ☐ Does the last paragraph ask for action? Does it give a deadline if one exists and a reason for acting promptly?

Checklist for All Messages, Not Just Direct Requests

- ☐ Does the message use you-attitude and positive emphasis?
- ☐ Is the style easy to read and friendly?
- ☐ Is the visual design of the message inviting?
- ☐ Is the format correct?
- ☐ Does the message use standard grammar? Is it free of typos?

Add Originality to a Direct Request

- ☐ Provide good lists and visual impact.
- ☐ Think about readers and give details that answer their questions, overcome any objections, and make it easier for them to do as you ask.
- ☐ Add details that show you're thinking of a specific organization and the specific people in that organization.

FIGURE 9.11

Checklist for Indirect Persuasive Messages

- ☐ Do you anticipate audience resistance to your message?
- ☐ What objections will your audience have?
- ☐ If the message is a memo, does the subject line indicate the writer's purpose or offer a reader benefit? Does the subject line avoid making the request?
- ☐ Is the problem presented as a joint problem both writer and reader have an interest in solving, rather than as something the reader is being asked to do for the writer?
- ☐ Does the message give all the relevant information? Is there enough detail?
- ☐ Does the message overcome objections that readers may have?
- ☐ Does the message avoid phrases that sound dictatorial, condescending, or arrogant?
- ☐ Does the last paragraph ask for action? Does it give a deadline if one exists and a reason for acting promptly?

Checklist for All Messages, Not Just Persuasive Ones

- ☐ Does the message use you-attitude and positive emphasis?
- ☐ Is the style easy to read and friendly?
- ☐ Is the visual design of the message inviting?
- ☐ Is the format correct?
- ☐ Does the message use standard grammar? Is it free of typos?

Add Originality to a Problem-Solving Persuasive Message

- ☐ Use a good subject line and common ground.
- ☐ Include a clear and convincing description of the problem.
- ☐ Be sure the content reflects readers' interests, gives details that answer their questions, overcomes objections, and makes it easier for them to do as you ask.
- ☐ Include details that show you're thinking of a specific organization and the specific people in that organization.

MODULE SUMMARY

- All successful communication contains an element of persuasion: you can only get what you need and want when you recognize and try to meet your audience's needs and wants.
- Use PAIBOC analysis when considering how to organize your messages for best results.
- The direct approach works well when you anticipate that your audience has positive or neutral feelings about you and/or your message.
- The indirect, problem-solving approach works best when you anticipate your audience will be resistant to you and/or the message.
- People have a **vested interest** in something if they benefit directly from keeping things as they are.
- Analyze your audience members to understand their positions better and establish common ground.
- To counter objections, use sound logical and emotional appeals.
- Give a deadline to encourage readers to act promptly. Show that the time limit is real and that acting now will save time or money.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 9

Questions for Critical Thinking

9.1 What idea or behaviour do you have a vested interest in? What is the vested interest?

9.2 Why is a request for a letter of reference a persuasive request? When would you use the indirect pattern to ask? Identify two possible objections a teacher might have when asked to write you a reference letter. How would you respond to overcome these objections?

9.3 Choose a discourse community (Module 2) of which you are a member. Based on your experiences and observations, conversations with other members of this community, and media advertising, what specific logical and emotional appeals would persuade people in this discourse community? Why?

9.4 What specific persuasive appeals do infomercials make? Choose an example of an infomercial and identify the persuasion tactics. What story does the infomercial tell?

Exercises and Problems

9.5 Writing Persuasive Messages

Collaborate with two peers on your message to Rick. Together, create one "best" solution.

1. What medium will you use to deliver this message? Why?
2. Write a blog to your instructor and fellow students explaining your choice of content, organization, and medium for your message to Rick.

As your instructor directs

Assume that your message to Rick is successful. Now create a persuasive message for Andrej.

- What media will you use for this message? Why?
- Write a blog to your instructor and fellow students, include your messages to Rick and Andrej, and explain your choice of content, organization, and medium or media.

9.6 Analyzing a Message for Persuasive Quotient

Organizational change requires a variety of media to (1) alert customers to new policies/procedures, and (2) engender positive attitudes towards the change. Recent examples include Canada Post's media campaign about the new community mailbox delivery system and Costco's hard-copy letters concerning its new payment options.

1. Find a hard-copy notification of an organizational change. Using PAIBOC analysis, identify the letter's persuasive quotient, based on the following criteria.
    a. How trustworthy or credible is the source of the message?
    b. How does the message attempt to establish that credibility?
    c. What is the message's organizational pattern? Why?
    d. What logical appeals does the message contain?
    e. What emotional appeals does the message contain?

2. Next, visit the organization's website. Use PAIBOC analysis to identify the site's purpose(s) and audience.
3. Analyze the website's persuasive quotient based on the criteria listed above.
4. Email your instructor with a summary of your findings.

   Considering your analysis of each medium's purpose and audience, answer the following questions.

   a. How persuasive did you find the letter, and how could it be improved?
   b. How persuasive did you find the website, and how could it be improved?
   c. Which medium did you find more persuasive, and why?

9.7 Analyzing a Persuasive Personality

ABC is basing a sitcom on Chris Hadfield's 2013 memoir, *An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth*.[1] Watch Hadfield's cover of David Bowie's "Space Oddity" at www.youtube.com/watch?v=apemYk2oz7M. Then find two additional social media posts or media articles on or by Hadfield.

Write an email to your instructor explaining

1. How Hadfield uses media effectively
2. What persuasion techniques Hadfield uses
3. What Hadfield is selling

Use specific content from your sources to prove your ideas.

9.8 Analyzing Political Information

Propaganda is political persuasion, although some would claim that all persuasion is political. Visit *The Interpreter* at www.interpretermag.com/ and read the About content. Then read a recent post that interests you.

Now visit www.ipolitics.ca/, which claims to be non-partisan and independent, and read a recent article/post that interests you.

Write your instructor an email including the URLs and titles of the two articles you chose. In your email, describe the content you found persuasive in each article. Explain why you found the content persuasive.

9.9 Revising a Form Memo

You've been hired as communications director of a small not-for-profit organization. One of your responsibilities is reviewing internal communications. Going through the files, you find this boilerplate email.

> Subject: Reimbursements
>
> Enclosed a list of expense claims for which we found no receipts. Please be advised Accounting issues reimbursement cheques only with full documentation. You cannot be reimbursed until you give us a receipt for each item for which you desire reimbursement. We must ask that you provide this information. This process may be easier if you use the Expense Report Form, attached.
>
> Thank you for your attention to this matter.

You know this is not a persuasive message. Using PAIBOC analysis

a. Create a new message to ensure that people provide all the documentation needed for them to be reimbursed.

b. Identify the ideal medium to deliver this message.

c. Send your instructor an email with your revised message and choice of medium/media. In the last paragraph of your email, explain your choices of content, organizational method, and medium.

9.10 Recommending a Co-worker for a Bonus or Award

Recommend someone at your workplace for a bonus or award. The award can be something bestowed by the organization itself (Employee of the Month, Dealership of the Year, and so forth), or it can be a community or campus award (Business Person of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Order of Canada, an honorary degree, and so forth).

As your instructor directs

a. Create a document or presentation to achieve the goal.

b. Write an email to your instructor describing the situation at your workplace and explaining your rhetorical choices (medium, strategy, tone, wording, organization, graphics or document design, and so forth).

Polishing *your* Prose

Correcting Run-On Sentences

A sentence with too many ideas, strung together by coordinating conjunctions that lack the required comma, is a run-on. (Remember that you need to use a comma before coordinating conjunctions such as *and*, *or*, *for*, *yet*, and *but* when they connect independent clauses.)

Although most run-on sentences are long, length is not the real problem. Don't confuse run-ons with grammatically correct long sentences in which the ideas are clear to readers. Run-ons confound readers, because there are too many ideas competing for attention and because the missing commas make the ideas harder to follow. The effect is similar to listening to a speaker who does not pause between sentences. Where does one point end and another begin?

Test for run-ons by looking for more than two main ideas in a sentence and a lack of commas with coordinating conjunctions.

> We installed the new computers this morning and they are running fine but there aren't enough computers for everyone so we are going to purchase more on Wednesday and we will install them and then the department will be fully operational.

Count the number of things going on in this sentence. Where are the commas?

Fix a run-on in one of three ways.

1. For short run-ons, add the missing commas.

Incorrect	The purchasing department sent order forms but we received too few so we are requesting more.
Correct	The purchasing department sent order forms, but we received too few so we are requesting more.

2. Rewrite the sentence using subordination.

   Correct Because we received too few order forms, we are requesting more from the purchasing department.

3. For longer run-ons, break the run-on into two or more sentences, add missing commas, and subordinate where appropriate.

   Correct We installed the new computers this morning. They are running fine, but because there aren't enough computers for everyone, we are going to purchase more on Wednesday. We will install them, and then the department will be fully operational.

Exercises

Fix any run-on errors in the following.

1. In England when riding the subway I see people on their cell phones a lot, but at restaurants they tend to be put away and I rarely see people with their phones when they're sitting out on the front patios of pubs having a drink and people go out in public a lot more, so maybe the fact of having a real social life means they don't need to be obsessed with their virtual ones.
2. Apparently Canadians are more attached to their smartphones than any other nation globally because people of other cultures—like Europeans and Middle Easterners—spend their time actively socializing with each other.
3. The marketing department ordered new brochures that are really nice and the brochures are in four colours.
4. All expense accounts should be itemized based on type and cost so remember to include the appropriate shipping confirmation number.
5. Work into your schedule some time to meet next week and we can talk about your promotion so you can transition easily into the new job.
6. We will take a final product inventory on December 1 and managers will report any lost stock so employees should make sure any broken items are reported and managers should record this information in their computer databases.
7. Employees may request benefits changes during the annual enrolment period and supervisors should pass out the required forms and employees should have them completed by the deadline on the form.
8. Ian leaves his computer on overnight but Aaron turns his off and Marilyn leaves hers on, too, and so does Tashi.
9. Mohammed should make sure he specifies 50-lb. rather than 40-lb. paper stock and Jenna should call the print shop and ask them whether they need anything and Bruce needs to tell Ms. Winans we appreciate her letting us know we originally ordered the wrong stock.
10. The Halifax office is planning a new marketing campaign so the St. John's office will help with the promotion but the Fredericton office is coordinating the product show.
11. A few customers are concerned about the shipping date but the mailroom is sure we can ship overnight and I think there's no reason to be concerned.
12. Last week I went to Montreal and Haj went to Miami and this week Tony took a trip too so our travel budget is almost gone.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Answer Key.

UNIT 3 Creating Audience-Focused Messages

MODULE 10

Communicating Audience Benefits

After reading Module 10 you will be familiar with

- LO1 Audience motivations and needs
- LO2 The importance of identifying audience benefits
- LO3 Elements of psychological description

By applying the information you will be able to

- LO4 Analyze messages to identify and define audience benefits
- LO5 Develop logical and detailed audience benefits
- LO6 Match the benefit to the audience

Module Outline

Audience benefits are advantages for the audience when

- Using your services
- Buying your products
- Following your policies
- Adopting your ideas

Staples Canada

Staples' brand reinforces the basic benefit of shopping at Staples: It makes life easy for the customer.

LO1 LO2 How Do Audience Benefits Work?

Audience benefits appeal to the audience's attitudes and actions.

Ex. 10.4, 10.6, 10.8, 10.11

The best-developed audience benefits tell a story[1] that connects to people's emotions. Stories that validate audience attitudes and behaviours motivate people: when you describe benefits that focus on their needs and wants, like those in Figure 10.1, people feel more positive about you and your request.

FIGURE 10.1

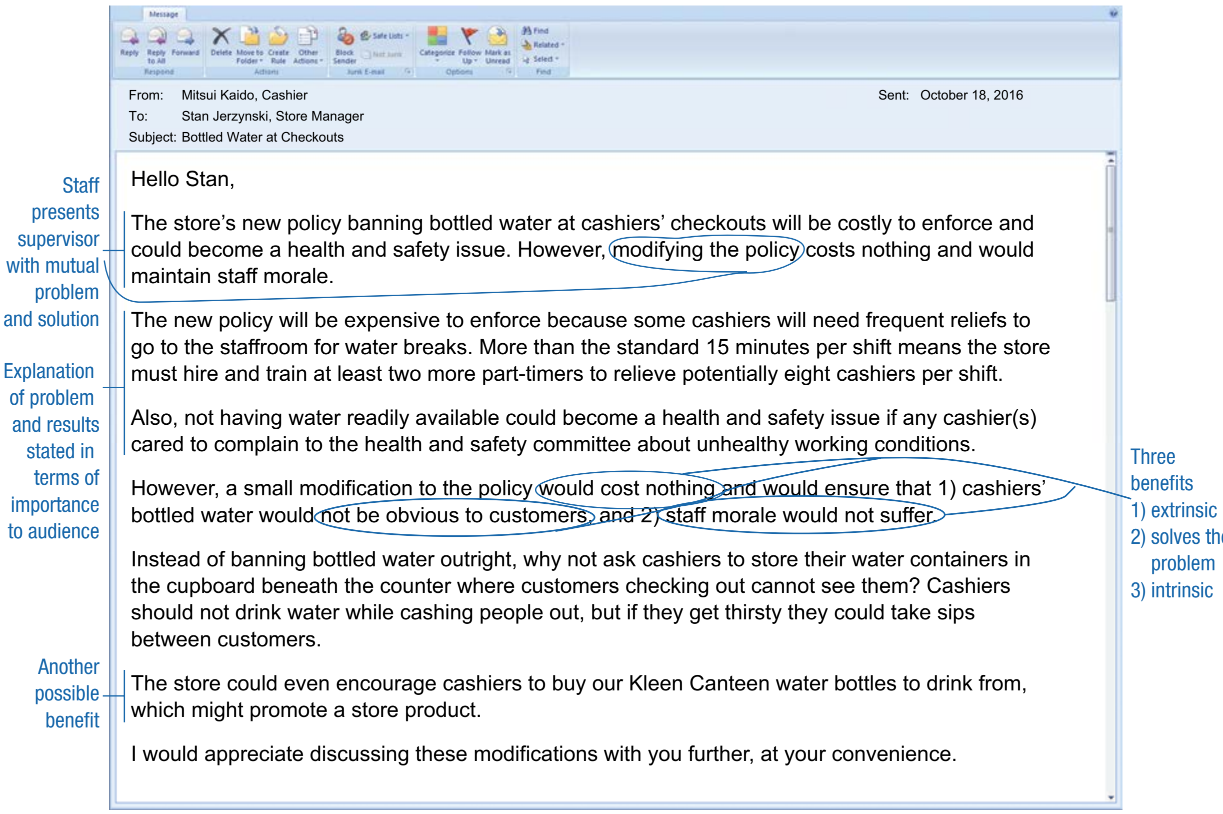
A Persuasive Hard Copy Ad Campaign

Source: Association of Municipalities of Ontario

People try to do their best when they believe that they can succeed and when they want the rewards that success brings. Indeed, studies reveal that how we think about a task determines our feelings about the task "and ultimately our willingness to put our heads down and work."[2]

FIGURE 10.2

A Persuasive Email with Benefits


From: Mitsui Kaido, Cashier Sent: October 18, 2016
To: Stan Jerzynski, Store Manager
Subject: Bottled Water at Checkouts

Hello Stan,

The store's new policy banning bottled water at cashiers' checkouts will be costly to enforce and could become a health and safety issue. However, modifying the policy costs nothing and would maintain staff morale.

The new policy will be expensive to enforce because some cashiers will need frequent reliefs to go to the staffroom for water breaks. More than the standard 15 minutes per shift means the store must hire and train at least two more part-timers to relieve potentially eight cashiers per shift.

Also, not having water readily available could become a health and safety issue if any cashier(s) cared to complain to the health and safety committee about unhealthy working conditions.

However, a small modification to the policy would cost nothing and would ensure that 1) cashiers' bottled water would not be obvious to customers, and 2) staff morale would not suffer.

Instead of banning bottled water outright, why not ask cashiers to store their water containers in the cupboard beneath the counter where customers checking out cannot see them? Cashiers should not drink water while cashing people out, but if they get thirsty they could take sips between customers.

The store could even encourage cashiers to buy our Kleen Canteen water bottles to drink from, which might promote a store product.

I would appreciate discussing these modifications with you further, at your convenience.

LO4 How Do I Identify Audience Benefits?

Use PAIBOC: Analyze your audience and brainstorm.

Ex. 10.9–10.11

Sometimes reader benefits are obvious and easy to describe. When they are harder to identify, brainstorm in two steps.

1. Think of the feelings, values, needs, and fears that may motivate your reader. Then identify features of your service, product, or policy that meet those values or needs.
2. Identify the obvious features of your product or policy. Then think how these features might benefit the audience.

Try to brainstorm three to five possible benefits for every informative message and five to seven benefits for every persuasive message. The more benefits you think of, the easier it will be to choose ones that appeal to your audience.

FIGURE 10.3

PAIBOC Questions for Analysis

P	Why are you communicating? What are your **purposes**? What results do you want?
A	Who is your **audience**? How will they respond to your message? Is it good or bad news for them? What does your audience need? What do they value? What will they find objectionable about your message? What's in it for them?
I	What **information** must your message include? What does your audience already know? What do they need to know? What organizational pattern will emphasize the positive parts of your message? What organizational pattern will de-emphasize the downside?
B	What reasons or reader **benefits** can you use to support your position? How do these benefits meet your audience's needs, match their values, and/or answer, "What's in it for me?"
O	What **objections** can you expect your audience to have? What information will eliminate or reduce these objections?
C	How will the **context** affect audience response? Consider your relationship with the audience, your message medium, and economic, political, social and cultural, and organizational factors that may influence audience perception.

For example, suppose you want to start your own business, a property-management company offering window-washing services. What benefits do your services offer?

Your brainstorming notes might look like those in Table 10.1.

TABLE 10.1

Brainstorming to Identify Audience Benefits of a Window-Washing Service

Customer Feelings, Values, Needs	Service Offers	Service Features	Customer Benefits
Cleaning windows takes a lot of time	We spend the time	We do the work and guarantee results	Save time for other, more interesting activities
Takes a lot of energy	We do the work	We do the work and guarantee results	Use energy on other, more important projects
It's a dirty, menial job	We get dirty	We do the work and guarantee results	Forget about this dirty, menial job; no messy clean-up
Uses many products	We use our own cleaning products.	Materials are all environmentally friendly	Save money on buying these products; save storage space; feel good about not harming environment
Leaves streaks	Trained employees do streak-free job	We guarantee streak-free results	Satisfaction in clean windows
Have to get the ladder out; have to climb up and down ladder; have to work outdoors	We bring and climb ladder. We work outdoors, even in cold weather	Customer comfort, safety and security	Worry- and hassle-free job done right in all seasons
Window-cleaning services cost money.	We offer competitive prices.	Money spent offers peace of mind and quality work	Good value: freedom from low-level chore = time to spend on more interesting, fun projects

1. Consider Your Readers' Needs

Ex. 10.1–10.4

One of the best-known analyses of needs is Abraham H. Maslow's hierarchy of needs.[3] Maslow's model (Figure 10.4) can help you identify the feelings, fears, and needs that may motivate your audience. Physical needs are the most basic, followed by needs for safety and security, for love and a sense of belonging, for esteem and recognition, and finally for self-actualization or self-fulfillment.

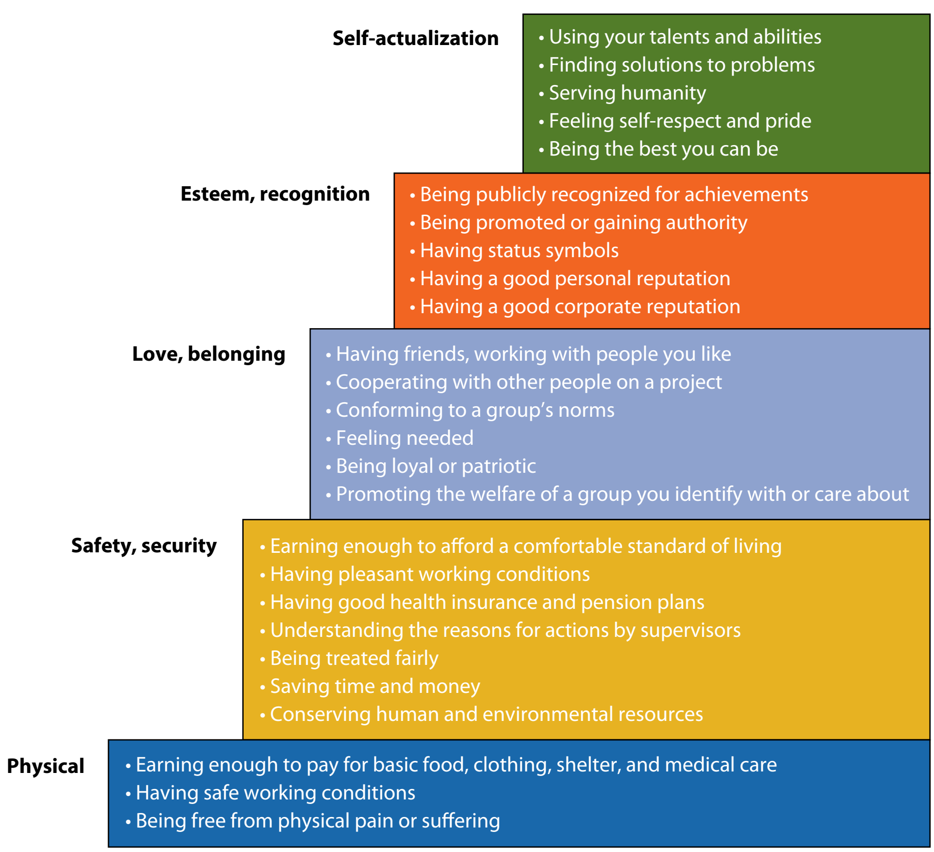
But we do not experience these needs sequentially, the way they are illustrated. Instead, we all go back and forth between higher-level and lower-level needs. Whenever lower-level needs make themselves felt, they take priority. When we're hungry for lunch, for example, that low-level need takes up our attention—we are much less motivated to pay attention to a presentation.

Compare the PAIBOC model with Maslow's hierarchy. Notice that you must define and refine your message **purpose(s)**, **information**, **benefits**, **anticipated objections**, and **context** according to the needs of your **audience**.

Often a product or idea can meet needs on several levels. Focus on the ones that your audience analysis suggests are most relevant for your audience. But remember, even the best analysis may not reveal the most pressing of your reader's needs. For example, a well-paid manager may still be focused on her security needs if her spouse has lost his job, or if the couple is supporting children in college or an elderly parent.

FIGURE 10.4

Organizational Motivations for Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Age—or any other significant cultural affiliation—influences motivation (Module 2). For example, Millennials (people born between 1980 and 2000) value inclusiveness and flexibility. In the workplace, "they want to make a meaningful contribution immediately, and they want their input to be taken seriously." Therefore, challenging work motivates them more than pay or security.[4]

2. Translate Features into Benefits

A feature by itself is not a benefit. A **feature** is a part of the product or service itself, while a **benefit** results from using the feature. For example, a feature of a door-to-door dry cleaning service is that the service picks up your dirty clothes and delivers your clean clothes. The **benefit** to you is saving time and gas. (A benefit you'll pay for, by the way, in higher dry-cleaning costs!)

Often, a feature has several possible benefits.

Feature **Lowering office air conditioning and lighting**

Benefits
Saves energy
Reduces overhead costs
Is easy to do
Could reduce monitor glare
Encourages awareness
Encourages people to feel they can contribute

Feature **Carpooling**

Benefits
Saves fuel costs and vehicle wear and tear
Reduces greenhouse gas emissions
Enables carpoolers to use the high-occupancy highway lane: people can wake up later and get to work sooner
Reduces driving anxiety
Is easy to do
Encourages awareness
Encourages people to feel they can contribute

Feature **Flextime**

Benefits
Enables workers to accommodate personal needs
Helps organizations recruit, retain workers
Makes more workers available in early morning and in evening
Enables office to stay open longer—more service to clients, customers
Enables workers to communicate with colleagues in different time zones more easily

Different features may benefit different subgroups in your audience. Depending on the features a restaurant offers, you might appeal to one or more of the subgroups shown in Table 10.2. To develop your benefits think about the details of each one.

If your selling point is your relaxing atmosphere, think about the specific details that make the restaurant relaxing. If your strong point is elegant dining, consider all the details that contribute to that elegance. Sometimes you may offer features that do not meet any particular need but are still good benefits. In a sales letter for a restaurant you might also want to mention your free coatcheck, your convenient location, free parking or drive-up window, and speedy service.

Whenever you're writing to customers or clients about features that are not unique to your organization, present both the benefits of the features themselves *and* the benefits of dealing with your organization.

> "Urban living at its finest! The 1904 Barclay House Bed and Breakfast in Vancouver has entered the 21st century as a luxurious, modernized, 5-star bed and breakfast. Our personable staff will ensure your stay is both enjoyable and memorable. Relax in our lounge or challenge another guest to a game of chess in our games room. The Barclay House Bed and Breakfast in Vancouver is the ultimate home away from home!"[5]

TABLE 10.2

Audience Subgroups

Subgroup	Features to Meet the Subgroup's Needs
People who work outside the home	A quick lunch; a relaxing place to take clients or colleagues
Parents with small children	High chairs, child-sized portions, and activities to keep the kids entertained while they wait for their order
People who eat out a lot	Variety in both food and decor
People on tight budgets	Economical food; a place where they don't need to tip (cafeteria or fast food)
People on special diets	Low-sodium, gluten-free and low-calorie dishes; vegetarian food; kosher and halal food
People for whom eating out is part of an evening's entertainment	Live music or a floor show, costumed servers, elegant surroundings, reservations so people can get to a show or event after dinner, late hours so they can come to dinner after a show or game

LO6 How Do I Decide Which Benefits to Use?

Describe benefits that appeal to most people's versions of their best selves.

Ex. 10.6–10.8

Three principles guide your choice of reader benefits.

1. Use at least one benefit for each subgroup in your audience.
2. Use intrinsic benefits.
3. Use the benefits you can develop most fully.

LO5 1. Use at Least One Benefit for Each Subgroup in Your Audience

Ex. 10.9

Most messages go to multiple audiences. In an email announcing a company-subsidized daycare program, you want to describe benefits not only for parents who might use the service, but also for people who don't have children or whose children are older. Reader benefits for these last two audiences—including long-term social and economic advantages for all members of the community—help convince them that spending money on daycare is a good use of scarce company funds.

In a letter to consumers or voters, different people will have different concerns. The more of these concerns you address, the more persuasive you'll be.

LO3 LO5 2. Use Intrinsic Benefits

Intrinsic benefits are natural emotional outcomes of doing something or using a product. Such benefits appeal to our need to feel good about ourselves. For example, an intrinsic benefit of helping a friend in need is feeling compassionate or generous. An intrinsic benefit of getting an A on an assignment is feeling affirmed or recognized.

The Beer Store survey (Figure 10.5) offers intrinsic benefits to meet such high-level needs as feeling needed, co-operative, loyal, and recognized.

FIGURE 10.5

A Promotional Handout with Intrinsic and Extrinsic Appeals

Source: Courtesy of The Beer Store

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Creating Audience-Focused Benefits

Develop audience benefits by (1) linking features to audience needs and (2) providing details that make the benefit clear. Tell a story that involves your audience, using concrete, vivid details to paint a mental picture.

You may need several sentences to give enough details about an audience benefit. If you develop two or three reader benefits in depth, you can use just a sentence or two for less important benefits.

Weak We have placemats with riddles.

Better Answering all the riddles on Caesar's special placemats will keep the kids happy until your pizza comes. If they don't have time to finish (and they may not, since your pizza is ready so quickly), just take the riddles home—or answer them on your next visit.

Make your reader benefits specific.

Weak You get quick service.

Better If you only have an hour for lunch, try our Business Buffet. Within minutes, you can choose from a variety of main dishes, vegetables, and a make-your-own-sandwich-and-salad bar. You can put together a lunch that's as light or filling as you want, with time to enjoy it—and still be back to business on time.

Psychological description is a technique you can use to develop vivid, specific reader benefits. Psychological description means creating a scenario rich with sense impressions—what the reader sees, hears, smells, tastes, feels—so readers can picture themselves using your product or service and enjoying its benefits. You can also use psychological description to describe the problem your product will solve. Psychological description works best early in the message to catch readers' attention.

Feature Snooze alarm

Benefit When you press the snooze button the alarm goes off and comes on again nine minutes later.

Psychological description

Some mornings you really want to stay in bed just a few more minutes. With the Sleepytime Snooze Alarm, you can snuggle under the covers for a few extra winks, secure in the knowledge that the alarm will come on again to get you up for that breakfast meeting with an important client. If you want to sleep in, you can hit the snooze alarm for up to an additional 63 minutes of sleep. With Sleepytime, you're in control of your mornings.

Feature Tilt windows

Benefit Easier to clean

Psychological description

No wonder so many cleaners "don't do windows." Balancing precariously on a rickety ladder to clean upper-story windows…shivering outside in the winter winds and broiling in the summer sun as you scrub away…running inside, then outside, then inside again to try to get the spot that always seems to be on the other side. Cleaning traditional windows really is a chore.

You'll find cleaning a breeze with Tilt-in Windows. Just pull the inner window down and pull the bottom toward you. The whole window lifts out! Repeat for the outer window. Clean inside in comfort (sitting down or even watching TV if you choose). Then replace the top of the outer window in its track, slide up, and repeat with the inner window. Presto! Clean windows!

With psychological description, you put your reader in a picture. If the reader doesn't feel that the picture fits however, the technique backfires. To prevent this, psychological description often uses subjunctive verbs ("If you like…" "If you were…") or the words *maybe* and *perhaps*.

You're exhausted after a long day. You're hungry but too tired to cook. Perhaps you are having guests for dinner. Or it's your turn to bring Mom and Dad a meal. Or you only have a half hour for lunch. Whatever the situation, foodathome.com cooks delicious, nutritious meals and delivers them to your door.

You want homemade? We have it! You want plenty of choice? We have it! You want free delivery? We have it! And all at the right price.

So make the convenient, budget-wise choice for your next dining dilemma: order online at foodathome.com.

Extrinsic benefits are "added on"; they do not necessarily come from using the product or doing the action. The Beer Store appeal offers 50 chances to win a prize for completing the online survey. You may not win; chances are that you won't, given the number of people who may choose to participate in the survey. But the extrinsic benefit is the added inducement of the chance to win.

Intrinsic rewards or benefits are better than extrinsic benefits for two reasons.

1. There aren't enough extrinsic rewards available for everyone. You can't give a prize to every customer every time he or she places an order, or give a promotion to every subordinate who does what she or he is supposed to do.
2. Research suggests that you'll motivate people more effectively by stressing the intrinsic benefits of following policies and adopting proposals. People prefer high-level esteem rewards—such as recognition and respect—to more tangible rewards.

Table 10.3 gives examples of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards for three activities.

TABLE 10.3

Extrinsic and Intrinsic Rewards

Activity	Intrinsic Reward	Extrinsic Reward
Making a sale	Pleasure in convincing someone, pride in using your talents to create a strategy and execute it	Getting a commission
Contributing to a company suggestion system	Being autonomous, being creative, solving a problem, making the work environment better, feeling pride in a job well done	Getting a monetary reward when the suggestion is implemented
Writing a report that solves an organizational problem	Pleasure in having an effect on an organization, pride in using your skills to solve problems, pleasure in solving the problem itself	Getting praise, a good performance appraisal, and maybe a raise

Indeed, in a groundbreaking study of employees, Frederick Herzberg found that the things people said they liked about their jobs were all intrinsic rewards—pride in achievement, an enjoyment of the work itself, responsibility. Extrinsic features—pay level, company policy—were sometimes mentioned as things people disliked, but they were never cited as factors that motivated or satisfied them. Even people who made a lot of money did not mention salary as a good point about the job or the organization.[6]

The most successful organizations have discovered that a culture of care attracts clients and keeps employees. The higher salary that a competitor might pay doesn't beat the advantage of working at a supportive, flexible company that values its employees.[7] Certainly different people value different opportunities. But many accept lower salaries to get flextime, stock options, interesting work, or people they want to work with.[8]

LO5 3. Use the Benefits You Can Develop Most Fully

An audience benefit is a reward for the reader if he or she does something. Convincing the audience, therefore, requires two steps: ensuring that the benefit appeals to your reader and really will happen, and explaining it to the reader. One-sentence benefits don't do much. Develop benefits in three to five sentences or more.

Your benefit(s) have to be relevant and real. If the logic behind a claimed reader benefit is faulty or inaccurate, there's no way to make that particular reader benefit convincing. Revise the description of the benefit to make it logical. Brainstorm twice as many audience benefits you think you'll need for a message, then use the ones you can develop most fully.

Faulty logic	Wearing the Nymi wristband means you can forget the passwords forever.
Analysis	The wristband uses each wearer's individual cardiac rhythm to verify his or her identity. Although the biometric device can "control access to the user's personal computer, tablet or Android phone…"[9] people will still have to enter passwords online.
Revised reader benefit	The Nymi wristband provides security as individual as your heartbeat.

If the logic is sound, making that logic evident to the reader is a matter of providing enough evidence and showing how the evidence proves the benefit claim. Always provide enough detail to be vivid and concrete.

Benefit claim	Our unique Advanced Wind-Reel Systems attachment triples your yield.
Vivid, concrete evidence	The AWS system applies a continuous flow of air to the crop as it is cut, providing an even flow into the combine with less crop damage. Consistent feeding allows operation of the combine at full capacity with increased ground speed, better separation and more even residue distribution. The curtain of air sweeps the crop from the knife, reducing shatter loss, enhancing knife performance and greatly increasing yield potential.[10]

You'll need more detail in the following situations.

- The reader may not have thought of the benefit before.
- The benefit depends on the difference between the long run and the short run.
- The reader will be hard to persuade, and you need detail to make the benefit vivid and emotionally convincing.

Does the following statement have enough detail?

You'll save money by using our personal shopping service.

Audiences always believe their own experience. People who have never used a shop-at-home service may think, "If somebody else does my shopping for me, I'll have to pay that person. I'll save money by doing it myself." They might not think of the savings in gas and parking, in travel time, and in less wear and tear on their car.

Readers who already use shop-at-home services may believe you if they compare your items and services with another company's to see that your cost is lower. Even then, you could make saving money seem more forceful and more vivid by telling readers how much they could save and mentioning some of the ways they might use your service.

LO4 What Else Improves Audience Benefits?

Check for audience focus.

If benefits aren't stated in audience-focused terms, they won't be as effective as they could be. It doesn't matter how you phrase audience benefits while you're brainstorming and developing them, but in your final draft, edit for audience focus.

Lacks audience focus	We have the lowest prices in town.
Audience focus	At Abbotsford Honda, you get the best deal in town.

The Beer Store survey request (Figure 10.5) uses audience-focused language throughout. Both the intrinsic appeal (*Your opinion…please answer…*) and the extrinsic benefit (*WIN…*) are emphatically audience based.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Audience benefits are advantages the reader gains from using your services, buying your products, following your policies, or adopting your ideas. The best benefits tell stories that assure readers they can do the job and their success will be rewarded.
- Good benefits are adapted to the audience, based on innate, intrinsic, esteem, and recognition advantages. They are supported by clear logic, detailed, and presented with you-attitude.
- There are not enough extrinsic (external) benefits to reward every desired behaviour; furthermore, extrinsic benefits reduce the high-level satisfaction in doing something for its own sake.
- To create audience benefits
  - Identify the feelings, needs, and fears that may motivate your reader
  - Describe how readers can meet their needs with the features of your service, product, or policy
- Psychological description creates rich sense impressions—what the reader can see, hear, smell, taste, feel—so readers can picture themselves using your product and service and enjoying its benefits.
- Brainstorm twice as many audience benefits you think you'll need for a message. Use the benefits you can develop most fully.
- Make sure you communicate audience benefits with audience focus.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 10

Questions for Critical Thinking

10.1 Different discourse communities value different benefits. What specific benefits motivate people in your most significant discourse community?

10.2 Why do organizations "follow" their customers? Referring to Maslow's hierarchy (Figure 10.4), what specific needs do people feel are being met when organizations follow them?

10.3 Identify three ways you can apply your knowledge of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to improve your professional and interpersonal communications.

Exercises and Problems

10.4 **Brainstorming Benefits to Amend or Dismiss Strange Laws**

Read about the "13 Strange Canadian Laws You Never Knew Existed," at http://www.readersdigest.ca/travel/canada/13-strange-canadian-laws-you-never-knew-existed. Next, read the "Law is Stupid Too" blog entry at http://lawiscool.com. Finally research your local bylaws for laws that you consider silly or inappropriate (for example, a bylaw that makes it illegal to allow your house cats to roam outdoors).

Choose one law still in effect that you think should be repealed or amended; brainstorm all the benefits you can think of for its repeal (or change).

As your instructor directs

a. Write an entry on your own or class blog listing all your ideas, and choosing (and developing) three specific benefits.

b. Tweet a reference to the law and the best possible benefit of its appeal.

c. Write your instructor an email listing all your ideas. Attach a social media post citing the law and your best-developed benefits for its appeal (or amendment).

10.5 Choosing Benefits to Sell Housing First

Research Utah's Housing First initiative (for example, see *The New Yorker's* September 22, 2014 article, "Home Free," at http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/22/home-free).

As your instructor directs

a. Research similar Canadian federal, provincial, and municipal initiatives to end homelessness.

b. Based on your research on the Utah project, identify a minimum of one extrinsic and one intrinsic benefit to adopting a housing-first initiative.

c. Write an entry on your own or the class blog describing the benefits of the housing-first initiative. Include your ideas for first steps in the initiative.

10.6 Identifying and Developing Reader Benefits

Listed here are five things an organization might like its employees to do.

1. Use less paper
2. Attend a brown-bag lunch to discuss ways to improve products or services
3. Become more physically fit
4. Volunteer for community organizations
5. Ease a new hire's transition into the unit

As your instructor directs

a. Identify the motives or needs that might be met by each of the activities.

b. Develop each need or motive as a reader benefit in a full paragraph. Use additional paragraphs for the other needs met by the activity.

10.7 Identifying Objections and Reader Benefits

Consider an organization you know about and answer the following questions for it.

1. Your organization is thinking of creating a training video. What objections might people have to becoming involved in the project? What benefits could videos offer your organization? Which people would be easiest to convince? Most difficult?
2. The advisory council of Nunavut Arctic College recommends that business faculty complete three-month internships with local organizations as a learning experience. What objections might people in your organization have to bringing in faculty interns? What benefits might your organization receive? Which people would be easiest to convince? Most difficult?

3. Your organization wants to start a workplace social networking site. How could the organization benefit? How could employees benefit? What objections might employees have?

As your instructor directs

a. Share your answers orally with a small group of students.
b. Present your answers in an oral presentation to the class.
c. Email your answers to class members.
d. Write a paragraph developing the best reader benefit you identified. Remember to use you-attitude. Email the paragraph to your instructor.

10.8 Identifying and Developing Reader Benefits for Different Audiences

You want to encourage people to do one of the activities listed below. What objections do you anticipate your audiences might have? What benefits can you offer that would overcome these objections?

1. Hire a personal trainer

   Audiences Professional athletes
   Busy managers
   Someone trying to lose weight
   Someone making a major lifestyle change after a heart attack
   Someone who already belongs to a gym

2. Buy a smartphone

   Audiences People who do a lot of driving
   Seniors
   People who already have a cell phone
   People who drive in rural areas
   People who are technophobes

3. Get advice about interior decorating

   Audiences Young people with little money to spend
   Parents with small children
   People upgrading or adding to their furnishings
   Older people moving from single-family homes into apartments or condominiums
   Builders furnishing model homes

4. Get advice on investment strategies

   Audiences New college or university graduates
   People earning more than $100,000 annually
   People responsible for investing funds for a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque
   Parents with small children
   People within 10 years of retirement

5. Gardening

   Audiences People with small children
   People in apartments
   People concerned about reducing pesticides
   People on tight budgets
   Retirees
   Teenagers

6. Buy voice-activated computer software

Audiences	College and university students
	Financial planners who visit clients at home
	Sales representatives who travel constantly
	People who make presentations
	Older people

7. Teach adults to read

Audiences	Retired workers
	Businesspeople
	Students who want to become teachers
	High school, college, and university students
	People concerned about poverty

8. Vacation at a luxury hotel

Audiences	Stressed-out people who want to relax
	Tourists who like to sightsee and absorb the local culture
	Businesspeople who want to stay in touch with the office even on vacation
	Parents with small children
	Weekend athletes who want to have fun

As your instructor directs

a. Identify needs that you could meet for the audiences listed here. In addition to needs that several audiences share, identify at least one need that would be particularly important to each group.

b. Identify a product or service that could meet each need.

c. Write a paragraph or two of reader benefits for each product or service. Remember to use you-attitude.

d. Develop one or more of the benefits using psychological description.

e. Create a specific blog convincing your audience of the benefits of the activity.

Hints

- For this assignment, you can combine benefits or programs as if a single source offered them all.
- Add specific details about particular sports, cities, tourist attractions, activities, and so on, as material for your description.
- Be sure to move beyond benefits to vivid details and sense impressions.
- Phrase your benefits using audience focus.

10.9 Asking for a Raise or Reclassification

Do you deserve a raise? Should your job be reclassified to reflect your increased responsibilities (with more pay, of course!)? If so, write an email to the person with the authority to determine pay and job titles, arguing for what you want.

As your instructor directs

a. Create a document or presentation to achieve the goal.

b. Write an email to your instructor describing the situation at your workplace and explaining your rhetorical choices (medium, strategy, tone, wording, organization, graphics or document design, and so forth).

10.10 Informing Employees About a New Policy or a Policy Change

Organizational policies—such as paying for coffee or personal photocopying—are a reaction to changing circumstances—such as an economic downturn or an increase in personnel. Think of a situation at your workplace that requires a policy or a change in policy. What is the situation, and what are the results? What should people be doing instead, and what would be the benefits?

As your instructor directs

a. Draft the new policy or the policy change.
b. Write an email to your supervisor describing the situation at your workplace and explaining your new/revised policy (and the benefits).
c. In your email to your supervisor, recommend the content and media you think best to convey the new/revised policy (and the benefits). Explain your choices.

Polishing *your* Prose

Plurals and Possessives

Possessives and plurals usually sound the same but don't mean the same to your readers. And they are spelled differently. You add an apostrophe to show possession or ownership. You make nouns plural by adding *s*; when the noun ends in *y*, you drop the y and replace it with *ie*s. However, you almost never add an apostrophe to pluralize a noun.

Right No cameras allowed in the theatre.
Wrong No camera's allowed in the theatre.
Wrong No cameras' allowed in the theatre.

Singular Possessive	Plural Possessive	Plural
company's	companies'	companies
computer's	computers'	computers
family's	families'	families
job's	jobs'	jobs
manager's	managers'	managers
team's	teams'	teams

When possessive nouns and plurals sound the same, you have to look at the logic of your sentence to choose the right punctuation.

Exercises

Choose the right word in each set of parentheses.

1. Canadian (companies, company's) are competing effectively in the global market.
2. We can move your (families, family's) furniture safely and efficiently.
3. (Managers, Manager's, Managers') ability to listen is more important than their technical knowledge.
4. A (memos, memo's) appearance, word choice, paragraph length, and subject heading can positively or negatively influence the reader.

5. The community (social workers, social worker's) tell clients about services available in their neighbourhoods.
6. Savvy employees check the (companies, company's, companies') benefit plan periodically to make sure it continues to serve their needs.
7. Information about the new community makes the (families, family's) move easier.
8. The (managers, manager's) all have open-door policies.
9. (Memos, Memo's) are internal documents, sent to other workers in the same organization. (Letters', Letters, Letter's) are for external readers.
10. Burnout affects an (employees', employees, employee's) productivity and morale.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

MODULE 11

Communicating with Positive Emphasis

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 11 you will be familiar with

- LO1 Methods to reframe information positively
- LO2 The legal and practical advantages of doing business ethically
- LO3 Techniques to convey appropriate tone in your messages

By applying the information you will be able to

- LO4 Emphasize the positive
- LO5 Use positive emphasis ethically
- LO6 Choose an appropriate tone

Module Outline

Positive emphasis is a way of presenting or framing a situation. Framing a position positively—through conscious choices in layout (Module 5); media, format, and organization (Modules 6–9); and word choice—can affect people's perceptions, their behaviour—even their health.[1]

FIGURE 11.1

A Persuasive Email

Positive emphasis here includes the visual—bright, clean colours, a smiling cleaner—and the text: *thoroughly cleaned, environment-friendly, advanced system*.

And positive emphasis is persuasive. Projecting the positive has an impact on your audience's opinion of you and your message. Even when delivering negative messages, doing so clearly, briefly, and honestly can influence your audience in your favour.

LO1 What's the Point of Positive Emphasis?

Positive emphasis is productive.

Ex. 11.6–11.11

A positive work environment is essential to recruit, retain, and motivate employees.[2] And a positive workplace is more productive: "People who cultivate a positive mind-set perform better in the face of challenge….[E]very business outcome shows improvement when the brain is positive."[3]

Positive emphasis is characteristic of successful entrepreneurs, since they perceive opportunities and are undaunted by failure.[4] Furthermore, people who choose to communicate positively tend to live longer and healthier lives.[5] Positive emphasis is part of successful communication.

LO2 What Should I Do If My Message Is Bad News?

Deliver the news responsibly. Be clear, correct, and sensitive.

Ex. 11.6

Not surprisingly, research reflects that "your attitude and communication skills have an enormous impact" on how your audience perceives the message.[6]

For legal, ethical and practical reasons, you want to deliver negative information sensitively. Straightforward negatives build credibility when you have bad news to give the reader, such as announcements of layoffs, product defects and recalls, or price increases. Being honest about the drawbacks of a job situation increases motivation, morale, and the likelihood that employees will stay. Furthermore, negatives may help people take a problem seriously.

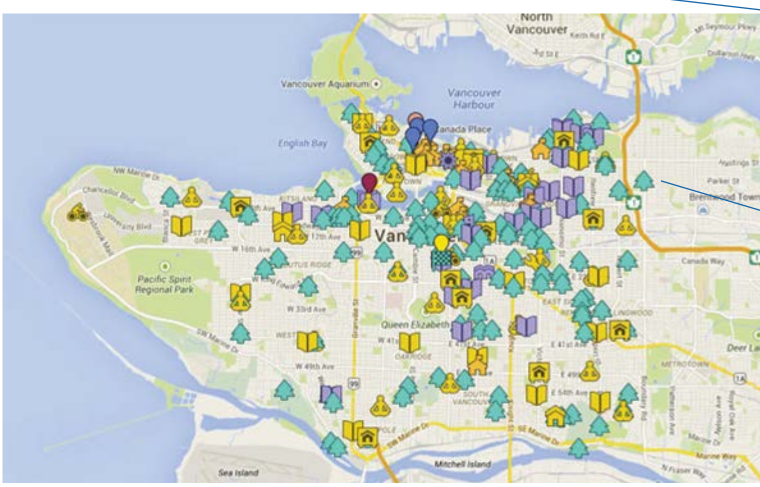
In some messages, such as negative performance appraisals, the purpose is to deliver a rebuke with no alternative. In these situations, supervisors are legally responsible for ensuring that their language conforms to organizational and governmental regulations (in a union environment, to the rules in the collective agreement; in every workplace situation, to the province's *Employment Standards Act/Code* and to the Human Rights Commission mandates concerning issues of harassment and discrimination).

Regardless of the situation, be clear and sincere in your delivery. If possible, try to "identify some solutions"…and "[i]f appropriate, try to find a positive."[7]

FIGURE 11.2

Positive Web Page Visual with Copy

EVENT: MEET VANCOUVER'S SHARING ECONOMY, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16TH
OCTOBER 15, 2014 | BY SPACING



Positive emphasis is evident throughout announcement, beginning with a "talking head" where the understood subject is "you;"cooperative nature of the event implied in "meet" and "sharing."

Visual uses a variety of positive and "green" icons to reinforce the message of sharing for sustainability.

EVENTSVANCOUVER

Entire paragraph uses language for positive emphasis, while final directive reinforces concepts of community and sharing.

The "sharing economy" is a big buzzword these days, but often the talk is all about big tech giants like Airbnb or Uber. What we don't often hear about is the groundswell of community-owned and -operated sharing initiatives that are helping to give more of us access to transportation, tools, education, office space, gardening space, food, art and thing-making space, and even cute dogs, while reducing our cost of living and improving our quality of life.

"Collaborative consumption" also helps us minimize our environmental impact and brings us closer to others in our community—creating a more connected, safer, more resilient city.

Help Spread the Word via Twitter
Meet #Vancouver's #sharingeconomy this Thurs at @MakerLabsVan! RSVP for the #MapJam:
http://ht.ly/COnvy via @Share_Vancouver via Facebook or LinkedIn
http://spacing.ca/vancouver/2014/10/15/event-meet-vancouvers-sharing-economy-thursday-october-16th/

Source: Spacing Media, Map data: 2015 Google

LO3 LO4 How Do I Create Positive Emphasis?

De-emphasize or omit negative words and information.

Ex. 11.3, 11.6, 11.8, 11.10, 11.11

The following five techniques de-emphasize negative information.

1. Avoid negative words and words with negative connotations.
2. Focus on what the reader *can do* rather than on limitations.
3. Justify negative information by giving a reason or linking it to a reader benefit (Modules 8 and 10).
4. Omit the negative if it is unimportant to the reader (Module 8).
5. Put the negative information in the middle and present it compactly.

Figures 11.3 and 11.4 show the difference you can make by framing information positively. You can choose words and organizational patterns that de-emphasize the negative while achieving your purposes and meeting the needs of your audience.

FIGURE 11.3

Draft Email with Negative Emphasis

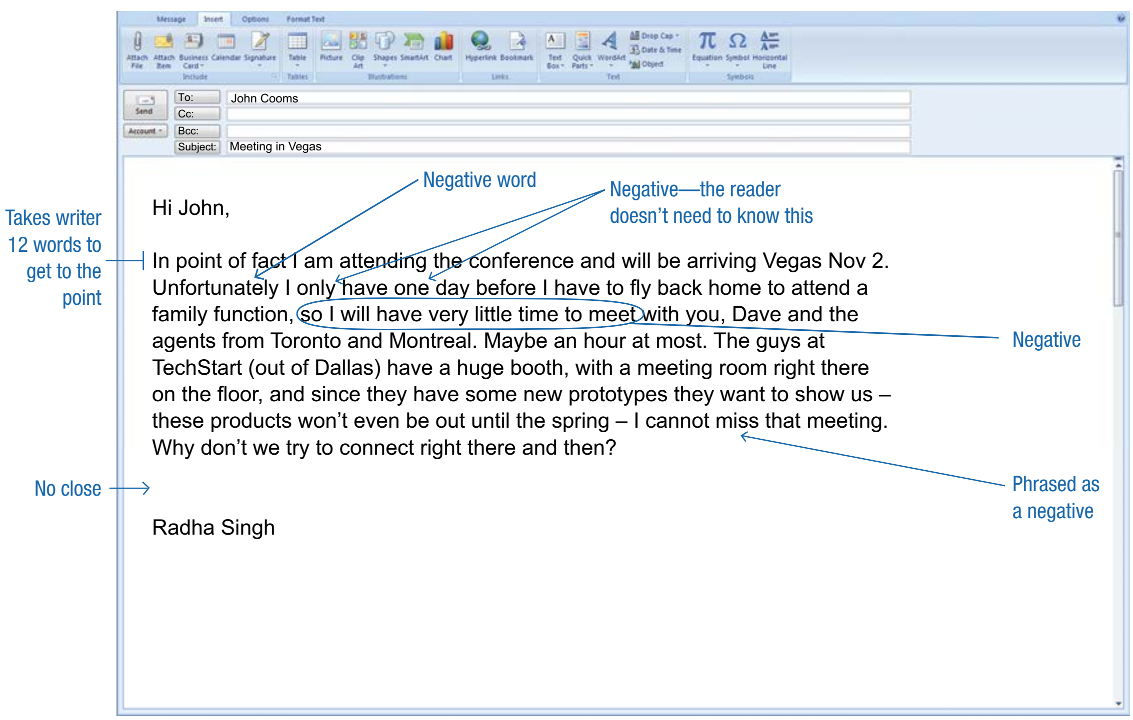


FIGURE 11.4

Revised Email with Positive Emphasis

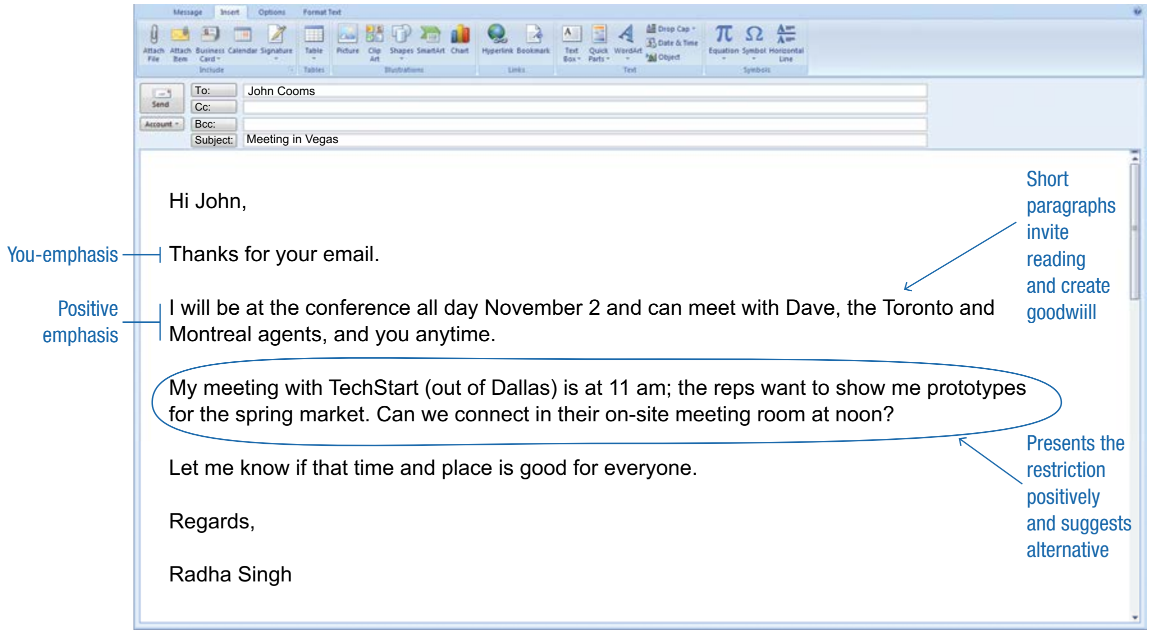


TABLE 11.1

Negative Words to Avoid

Negative Words			Some *dis-* Words	Some *mis-* Words
afraid	fail	objection	disapprove	misfortune
anxious	fault	problem	dishonest	missing
avoid	fear	reject	dissatisfied	mistake
bad	hesitate	reluctant		
careless	ignorant	sorry	**Many *in-* Words**	**Many *un-* Words**
damage	ignore	terrible	inadequate	unclear
delay	impossible	trivial	incomplete	unfair
delinquent	lacking	trouble	inconvenient	unfortunate
deny	loss	wait	injury	unfortunately
difficulty	neglect	weakness	insincere	unpleasant
eliminate	never	worry		unreasonable
error	no	wrong		unreliable
except	not			unsure

Avoid Negative Words and Words with Negative Connotations

Table 11.1 lists some common negative words. If you find one of these words in a draft, substitute a more positive word. When you must use a negative, use the *least negative* term that will convey your meaning.

The following examples show how to replace negative words with positive words.

Negative	We have failed to finish taking inventory.
Better	We haven't finished taking inventory.
Still better	We will be finished taking inventory on Friday.
Negative	If you can't understand this explanation, feel free to call me.
Better	If you have further questions, please call me.
Still better	Omit the sentence.

If a sentence has two negatives, substitute one positive term.

Negative	Do not forget to store your work in the cloud.
Better	Remember to store your work in the cloud.

When you must use a negative term, use the least negative word that is accurate.

Negative	Your balance of $835 is delinquent.
Better	Your balance of $835 is past due.

Sentences with three or more negatives are very hard to comprehend.[8] Getting rid of negatives makes your communication easier to understand.

Beware of **hidden negatives**: words that are not negative in themselves but become negative in context. *But* and *however* indicate a shift, so after a positive statement they are negative. *I hope* and *I trust that* suggest you aren't sure. *Patience* may sound like a virtue, but it is a necessary virtue only when things are slow. Even positives about a service or product may backfire if they suggest that in the past the service or product was bad.

Negative	I hope this is the information you wanted. (Implication: I'm not sure.)
Better	Enclosed is a brochure about road repairs scheduled for 2015–2017.
Still better	The brochure contains a list of all roads and bridges scheduled for repair during 2015–2017. Call Gwen Wong at 604-555-3245 for specific dates when work will start and stop and for alternative routes.
Negative	Please be patient as we switch to the new listings system. (Implication: You can expect problems.)
Better	If you have questions during our transition to the new listings system, call Melissa Morgan.
Still better	You'll be able to get information instantly about any house on the market when the new system is in place. If you have questions during the transition, call Melissa Morgan.
Negative	Now Crispy Krisp tastes better. (Implication: It used to taste terrible.)
Better	Now Crispy Krisp tastes even better.

Removing negatives does not mean being arrogant or pushy.

Negative	I hope that you are satisfied enough to place future orders.
Arrogant	I look forward to receiving all of your future business.
Better	Call Mercury whenever you need transistors.

Courtesy of HP

Hewlett-Packard's free recycling program positively emphasizes free and easy environmental awareness while reinforcing its brand.

When you eliminate negative words, be sure to maintain accuracy. Words that are exact opposites will usually not be accurate. Instead, use specifics to be both positive and accurate.

Negative	The exercycle is not guaranteed for life.
Not true	The exercycle is guaranteed for life.
True	The exercycle is guaranteed for 10 years.

Negative	Customers under 25 are not eligible for the Prime Time discount.
Not true	You must be over 25 to be eligible for the Prime Time discount.
True	If you're 25 or older, you can save 10 percent on all your purchases with RightWay's Prime Time discount.

Legal phrases also have negative connotations for most readers and should be avoided whenever possible. The idea will sound more positive if you use everyday English.

Negative	If your account is still delinquent, a second, legal notice will be sent to you informing you that cancellation of your policy will occur 30 days after the date of the legal notice if we do not receive your cheque.
Better	Even if your cheque is lost in the mail and never reaches us, you still have a 30-day grace period. If you do get a second notice, you will know that your payment hasn't reached us. To keep your account in good standing, stop payment on the first cheque and send a second one.

Focus on What the Reader *Can Do* Rather Than on Limitations

Positive emphasis is a matter of the way you present something. When there are limits, or some options are closed, focus on the alternatives that remain.

Negative	We will not allow you to charge more than $1,500 on your VISA account.
Better	You can charge $1,500 on your new VISA card.
Or	Your new VISA card gives you $1,500 in credit that you can use at thousands of stores nationwide.

As you focus on what will happen, check for you-attitude (Module 12). In the last example, "We will allow you to charge $1,500" is positive, but it lacks you-attitude.

When you have a benefit, and a requirement the reader must meet to get the benefit, the sentence is usually more positive if you put the benefit first.

Negative	You will not qualify for the student membership rate of $25 a year unless you are enrolled for at least 10 hours.
Better	You get all the benefits of membership for only $25 a year if you're enrolled for 10 hours or more.

Justify Negative Information: Give a Reason or Link It to a Reader Benefit

Ex. 11.5

A reason can help your reader see that the information is necessary; a benefit can suggest that the negative aspect is outweighed by positive factors. Be careful, however, to make the logic behind your reason clear and to leave no loopholes.

Negative	We cannot sell print cartridges individually.
Loophole	To keep packaging costs low and to help you save on shipping and handling costs, we sell print cartridges in lots of four or more.

Suppose the customer says, "I'll pay the extra shipping and handling. Send me two." If you can't or won't sell in lots of fewer than four, you need to write

Better	To keep packaging costs low and to help customers save on shipping and handling costs, we sell print cartridges only in lots of four or more.

If you link the negative element to a benefit be sure that it is an audience-based benefit.

Avoid telling people that you're doing things "for their own good." They may have a different notion of what their own good is. You may think you're doing customers a favour by limiting their credit so they don't get in over their heads. They may feel they'd be better off with more credit so they could expand in hopes of making more sales and more profits.

LO4 LO5 Omit the Negative If It Is Truly Unimportant for the Reader

Omit negatives when

- The reader does not need the information to make a decision
- You have already given the reader the information, and he or she has access to the previous communication

The following examples suggest the kind of negatives you can omit.

Negative	A one-year subscription to *Canada Business* is $49.97. That rate is not as low as the rates charged for some magazines.
Better	A one-year subscription to *Canada Business* is $49.97.
Still better	A one-year subscription to *Canada Business* is $49.97. You save 43 percent off the newsstand price of $87.78.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Using Positive Emphasis Ethically

Ex. 11.4

People can misuse positive emphasis. Consider omission. A salesperson for a national wireless telecommunications company asked the customer if she wanted to keep her original cell number when she purchased a new smartphone with the two-year service provider plan. He did not mention the $25.00 fee attached to this "service," which appeared on her bill two months later.

Social media enable companies to fake positive emphasis.

> The worst offenders will use Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) techniques, for example, to hide negative results; will delete negative reviews, posts and comments; create fake accounts and post positive reviews; pay for 'likes' and fans on Facebook;…leverage 'click farms'…[or pay] people to leave positive reviews on their products via Amazon. The recent Brit Awards also saw social media controversy as journalists were invited to attend on the condition that they shared pre-determined tweets about the sponsor MasterCard.[9]

However, social media's focus on and sharing of unethical business practices also increase accountability. As ethicist Chris MacDonald claims, even when businesses act ethically because doing so "is good for the bottom line," everyone benefits. An organization that treats its employees, clients, and shareholders ethically enhances its reputation and builds its business. Furthermore, even when it originates out of self-interest, ethical behaviour can be habit-forming.

Source: Rushworth Kidder (March 12, 2010), "Ethics and the bottom Line: 10 reasons for businesses to do right," http://www.lighthouseconsulting.com/ethics-bottom-line/; Katherine Bradshaw (n.d.). "Doing business ethically makes for better business," *enterprising MATTERS* emagazine, http://www.isbe.org.uk/doingbusinessethicallly; Chris MacDonald (August 4, 2004), "Why act ethically? And does the answer a company gives matter?" http://businessethicsblog.com/

LO4 Place the Negative Information Strategically, and Present It Compactly

To de-emphasize a negative, put it in the middle of a paragraph rather than in the first or last sentence, or in the middle of the message rather than in the first or last paragraph.

The beginning and end of a message are always positions of emphasis. Put negatives there only if you want to emphasize the negative, as you may in a negative message (Module 8).

When a letter or memo runs several pages, remember that the bottom of the first page is also a position of emphasis, even if it is in the middle of a paragraph, because of the extra white space created by the bottom margin. (The first page gets more attention since it is on top, and the reader's eye may catch some lines of the message even when he or she isn't consciously reading it; the tops and bottoms of subsequent pages don't get this extra attention.)

If possible, avoid placing negative information at the bottom of the first page.

Giving a topic plenty of space emphasizes it. You can de-emphasize negative information by giving it as little space as possible. Give negative information only once in your message. Don't list negatives vertically on the page, since lists take space and emphasize material.

LO6 Why Do I Need to Think About Tone and Power?

Think about these factors so that your attitude is always respectful.

Ex. 11.7

Tone is the implied attitude of the writer toward (1) the audience and (2) the topic. No one likes to deal with people who seem condescending or rude. Poorly chosen words can create that sense, whether the sender meant to be rude or not.

Tone is tricky because it interacts with power: the words that might seem friendly from a superior to a subordinate may seem discourteous if used by the subordinate to the superior. Furthermore, courtesy norms are cultural. Language that is acceptable within one group may be unacceptable if used by someone outside the group (Modules 2 and 3).

Cultures that value group cohesiveness put much more emphasis on courtesy than the dominant North American culture does. Politeness spares others' feelings and "saves face" for both message sender and receiver. A direct "no" response is rude in Pakistani and Chinese cultures, for example, and such discourtesy might cost you a deal.

The desirable tone for business writing is businesslike but not stiff, friendly but not phony, confident but not arrogant, polite but not grovelling. The following guidelines will help you achieve the tone you want.

- *Use their formal titles for people outside your organization whom you don't know well.* In many Canadian organizations, people use first names for everyone, whatever their age or rank. But many people don't like being called by their first names by people they don't know or by someone much younger. When you talk or write to people outside your organization, use first names only if they ask you to. If you don't know someone well, use their courtesy title: Ms., Mr., Mrs., Miss, Doctor, etc. (Dear Mr. Reynolds, Dear Ms. Lee). If you are unsure how to address someone, ask.
- *Be aware of the impact of your word choice on your audience.* "Thank you for your co-operation" is generous coming from a superior to a subordinate; it's not appropriate in a message to your superior.

  Different ways of asking for action convey different levels of politeness.

  You need to be more courteous if you're asking for something that will inconvenience the reader *and* help *you* more than the person who does the action. Generally, you might be less polite when you're asking for something small, routine, or to the reader's benefit. Most readers and some cultures, however, prefer that even small requests be made politely.

Lower politeness	To start the scheduling process, please describe your availability for meetings during the second week of the month.
Higher politeness	Could you please let me know what times you'll be free for a meeting the second week of the month?

  Higher levels of politeness may be unclear. In some cases, a question may seem like a request for information that it's acceptable to refuse. In other cases it will be an order, simply phrased in polite terms. Generally, requests sound friendliest when they are framed in conversational language.

Poor tone	Return the draft with any changes by next Tuesday.
Better tone	Let me know by Tuesday whether you'd like any changes in the draft.

Poor tone	Distribution of the low-fat plain granola may be limited in your area. May we suggest that you discuss this matter with your store manager?
Better tone	Our low-fat granola is so popular that there isn't enough to go around. We're expanding production to meet the demand. Ask your store manager to keep putting in orders so that your grocery is on the list of stores that will receive supplies when they become available.
Or	Decisions about what to stock are made by store managers. If your store has stopped carrying our low-fat granola, unfortunately the store manager has stopped ordering it. Talk to the manager. Managers try to meet customer needs, so if you say something you're more likely to get what you want.

- *When you must give bad news, consider how you frame it.* Think about solving a reader's problem; consider the time and place; be clear and respectful; choose neutral language. This "compassionate communication"—focusing on the positive—actually creates empathic brain connections.[10]

LO6 What's the Best Way to Apologize?

Apologize immediately, briefly, and sincerely.

Ex. 11.2, 11.5

Because of the very public and emotionally immediate pressure of social media complaints, organizations struggle to find appropriate responses. And tweeters often respond in a bullying fashion.

However, social media pundits agree that when an apology is appropriate, effective communicators do so promptly, briefly, and sincerely, using the same medium as the unhappy customer.[11]

Apologize once, early in the message. Let the reader move on to other, more positive information.

In fact, when you are at fault, you defuse negative conflict and build goodwill by admitting that fact promptly. However, apologizing to customers can be tricky territory. If you are in an entry position, ask your manager/supervisor how to deal with a situation where you feel an apology is needed. Even people in senior management positions may have to consult legal counsel in high-risk situations.

When you have done everything you can for your customer, and when a delay or problem is due to circumstances you have no control over, you aren't at fault and don't need to apologize. It may be appropriate to include an explanation so the reader knows you weren't negligent. If the news is bad, put the explanation first. If you have good news for the reader, put it before your explanation.

Negative	I'm sorry that I could not answer your question sooner. I had to wait until the sales figures for the second quarter were in.
Better (neutral or bad news)	We needed the sales figures for the second quarter to answer your question. Now that they're in, I can tell you that…
Better (good news)	The new advertising campaign is a success. The sales figures for the second quarter are in, and they show that…

If the delay or problem is long or large, it is respectful to ask the reader whether he or she wants to confirm the original plan or make different arrangements.

Negative	I'm sorry that the chairs will not be ready by August 25 as promised.
Better	Because of a strike at the manufacturer, the desk chairs you ordered will not be ready until November. Do you want to keep the ones you originally chose on back order, or would you like to look at the models available from other suppliers?

Even if major trouble or inconvenience has resulted from your error, you don't need to go on about all the horrible things that have happened. The reader already knows this negative information, and you can omit it. Instead, focus on what you have done to correct the situation. If you don't know whether any inconvenience has resulted, don't raise the issue at all. Why draw attention to a negative your reader may not have thought of?

Negative	I'm sorry I didn't answer your letter sooner. I hope that my delay has not inconvenienced you.
Better	Thank you for your letter. I have the information you need.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Positive communication builds relationships.
- Beware of **hidden negatives**, words not negative in themselves that become negative in context.
- The best business communication tone is businesslike but not stiff, friendly not phony, confident but not arrogant, polite but not grovelling.
  - Use courtesy titles for people outside your organization whom you don't know well.
  - Be aware of the power implications of the words you use.
  - When the stakes are low, be straightforward.
  - When you must give bad news, consider the timing, the place, your audience's feelings, the medium, and your wording.
  - Whenever possible, focus on alternatives or suggest solutions.
- When you do apologize, do it early, briefly, and sincerely.
- Don't apologize if the error is small and if you are correcting the mistake. Don't apologize if you are not at fault. If the delay is long, or the problem large, it is good you-attitude to ask your reader whether s/he wants to make different arrangements.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 11

Questions for Critical Thinking

11.1 What social and traditional media do you find most persuasive? Why?

11.2 How do people say "no" in your culture? In what circumstances is a direct refusal acceptable?

11.3 In several provinces, texting while driving carries a hefty fine. But despite multiple media reports of car accidents and fatalities due to "distracted drivers," people continue to text and drive. What positive-emphasis messages could governments and the media use to get people to drive phone free?

Exercises and Problems

11.4 Analyzing Positive Emphasis Overkill

Find two examples of unethical or inappropriate positive emphasis in hard copy documents and ads or on social media. How is the positive emphasis being misused? What are the implications or consequences for the audience/reader?

1. Write an email to your instructor, including your examples and explaining the misuse.
2. Post your analysis, with your concerns, on a social media site. Invite comments.

11.5 Analyzing Apologies

Find examples of apologies made through social media. Choose two examples and evaluate these apologies based on these three criteria: promptness, brevity, sincerity.

Based on these criteria and your own experience, how effective do you find these examples? Did the apology change your mind about the organization, or person, or the action? Is so, how? What medium could the person have used to make a better impression on you? What positive emphasis, if any, did the person use to attempt to frame the error or mistake? What would have persuaded you more?

As your instructor directs

1. Write an email to your instructor, with copies of the apologies and your analysis.
2. Post your analysis in the Reply or Comment section of the medium where you found the apology.

11.6 Revising to Improve Positive Emphasis

Revise the following elevator signage to improve positive emphasis.

> Attention Residents
>
> Please be advised that the renovation of the lobby is not behind schedule. By Monday, March 7, we hope to be ready to open the west end of the lobby to limited traffic.
>
> The final phase of the renovation will be placing a new marble floor in front of the elevators. This work will not be finished until the end of the month.
>
> Insofar as is possible, the crew will attempt to schedule most of the work during the evenings so that normal business is not disrupted.
>
> Please exercise caution when moving through the construction area. The floor will be uneven and steps will be at unusual heights. Watch your step to avoid accidentally tripping or falling.
>
> We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

11.7 Analyzing Your Discourse Community for Tone, Courtesy, and Power

Analyze the cultural norms for tone, levels of courtesy, and use of power in any discourse community of which you are a member. You can use a social media site; a club or association; social, ethnic, religious, or academic organization; or your place of work.

Identify a minimum of three messages that exemplify the norms and attitudes toward power in the organization. Write an email memo to your instructor and classmates about your findings. Post your findings on your favourite social media site.

11.8 Focusing on the Positive

Revise each of the following sentences to focus on the options that remain, not those that are closed off.

1. As a first-year employee, you are not eligible for dental insurance.
2. I will be out of the country October 25 until November 10 and will not be able to meet with you until I return.
3. You will not get your first magazine for at least four weeks.
4. I'm sorry I'm away from my desk and cannot answer your call.

11.9 Identifying Hidden Negatives

Identify the hidden negatives in the following sentences and revise to eliminate them. In some cases, you may need to add information to revise the sentence effectively.

1. This publication is designed to explain how your company can start a recycling program.
2. I hope you find the information in this brochure beneficial and a valuable reference as you plan your move.
3. In thinking about your role in our group, I remember two occasions where you contributed something.

11.10 Revising Sentences to Improve Positive Emphasis

Revise the following sentences to improve positive emphasis. In some cases, you may need to add or omit information to revise effectively.

1. It will be necessary for you to submit Form PR-47 before you can be reimbursed for your travel expenses.
2. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.
3. I'm sorry you were worried about your health insurance. It is not too late to sign up for a flexible spending account.
4. You cannot return this item for a full refund if you keep it more than 30 days.
5. When you write a report, do not make claims that you cannot support with evidence.
6. Although I was only an intern and didn't actually make presentations to major clients, I was required to prepare slides for the meetings and to answer some of the clients' questions.
7. You will pay $30 more if you wait until after October 1 to register for the conference.
8. To reduce unnecessary delays in processing your order, please check the form at the end of this letter to see that nothing is omitted or incorrect before you sign the form and return it.
9. The figures for budget changes made at the meeting may be wrong, as I got lost during John's presentation. Please check the figures and let me know if they need correction.
10. We cannot process your application to graduate, because you did not supply all of the necessary information.

11.11 Revising Sentences to Improve Positive Emphasis

Revise the following sentences to improve positive emphasis. In some cases, you may need to add or omit information to revise effectively.

1. No subcontractor shall be employed without the previous consent of the director.
2. To avoid unnecessary delays, call for an appointment before coming in to the office.
3. I realize that Wednesday at 10 a.m. is not a convenient time for everyone, but I was unable to arrange a time that is good for everyone.
4. I'm sorry you were worried about the resumé you emailed us. We did not have any problems scanning it into our system.
5. I am anxious to talk with you about the job.
6. People who come to work late may be perceived as unreliable.
7. I hope that you receive the April spreadsheet (three pages) that follows and that the fax quality isn't too poor.
8. I was treasurer of the accounting club. Of course, we didn't have much money so I didn't have much responsibility, but I was able to put into practice principles I learned in the classroom.
9. If you have any problems using your Facebook account, I will try to explain it so that you can understand.
10. If you submitted a travel request, as you claim, we have failed to receive it.

Polishing *your* Prose

Using the Apostrophe to Show Ownership

The apostrophe usually indicates ownership or possession.

- Sidwat's idea
- Veronica's textbook
- Verdun's report

When the noun (company, student, neighbour) doing the owning does not end in *s*, the apostrophe goes between the noun and the *s*.

- company's flagship (flagship of the company)
- student's text (text of the student)
- neighbour's complaint (complaint of the neighbour)

When the noun is a plural ending in *s*, put the apostrophe after the *s*.

- companies' customers (customers of companies)
- students' texts (texts of students)
- neighbours' complaints (complaints of neighbours)

In names that end with *s* or an *s* sound, stylebooks permit either form.

- Thomas'
- Thomas's
- Linux'
- Linux's

Look at the logic of your sentence to choose the right place for the apostrophe. Or turn the ownership phrase around to determine if the noun ends in an *s*.

We welcome our employees opinions

becomes

We welcome the opinions of our employees.

The noun *employees* ends in *s*, so the apostrophe comes after the *s*.

We welcome our employees' opinions.

Exercises

Choose the correct word in each set of parentheses.

1. Research indicates that most Canadians feel responsible for the (world's/worlds') global warming.
2. The winter holiday season can account for one-quarter to one-half of a (store's/stores') annual profits.
3. (Canadian's/Canadians') views of the economy reflect their confidence in the stock market.
4. To sell in another country, you need to understand its (people's/peoples') culture.
5. We meet the municipal, provincial, and federal (government's/governments') standards for quality control.
6. Skirt's/Skirts' lengths reflect the state of the economy: the maxi becomes popular during economic downturns.
7. The (committee's/committees') duties will be completed after it announces its decision.
8. Employees who have worked as Big Sisters have enjoyed seeing the (girl's/girls') progress.
9. We'll decide whether to have more computer training sessions based on (employee's/employees') feedback.
10. The (company's/companies') benefit plan is excellent.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

MODULE 12

Communicating Using You-Attitude

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 12 you will be familiar with

- LO1 The importance of audience-focused messages
- LO2 Revision strategies for audience-focused messages

By applying the information you will be able to

- LO3 Adapt your message to the audience
- LO4 Use persuasion strategies
- LO5 Emphasize what the reader wants to know
- LO6 Assess your messages for audience focus

Module Outline

- What is you-attitude in writing?
- How do I create positive you-attitude?
- Does you-attitude mean using the word *you*?
- I've revised my sentences. What else can I do to create you-attitude?

Module Summary

Assignments for Module 12

Polishing Your Prose: Using the Apostrophe for Contractions and *It's*/*Its*

LO1 Audience-focus or you-attitude is a way of communicating that demonstrates your ability to see another point of view. It means empathizing—putting yourself in the other person's shoes.

Ex. 12.2–12.4

Communicating you-attitude

- Looks at the situation from the audience's point of view
- Emphasizes what the audience wants to know
- Treats the audience with courtesy
- Respects the audience's intelligence
- Protects the audience's ego

Communicating with genuine you-attitude gets positive results. For example, Toni Desrosiers' story about her product, Abeego, a beeswax food wrapping, connects with local conservation and recycling initiatives. Moreover, her product branding speaks to Canadians' concerns about the environment: "We are inspired by nature, and we believe natural materials are ideal for keeping food fresh," says Toni. "This is not a second-rate natural version of plastic. Abeego is versatile, flexible, reusable and biodegradable. Unlike plastic, it allows food to breathe, keeping it fresh and preserving natural flavours to create less food waste."[1]

According to Victoria, B.C., entrepreneur Toni Desrosiers, Abeego, her beeswax wrapper, "is a natural solution to a natural problem."[2] Her company, Abeego Designs Incorporated, tells a compelling, audience-focused story about an alternative to plastic.

Photos: Abeego Designs Incorporated

LO2 What Is You-Attitude in Writing?

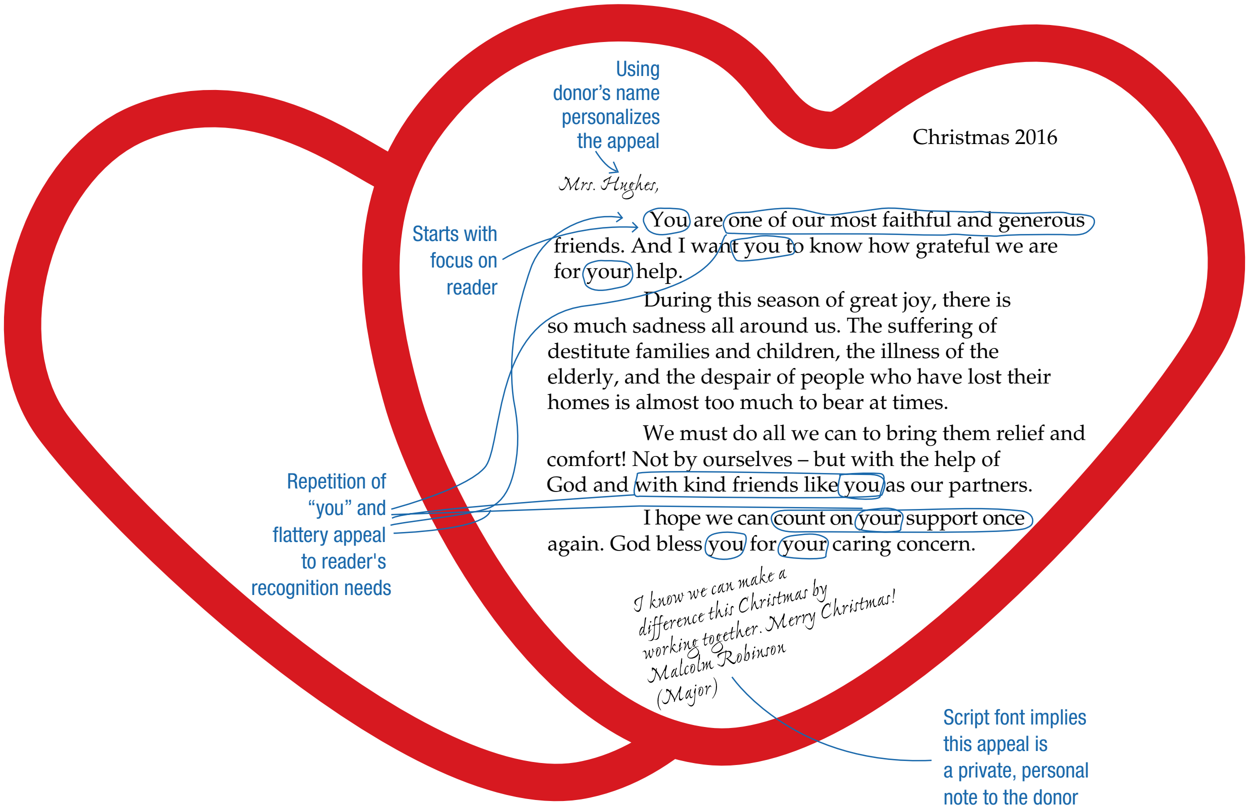
You-attitude messages focus positively and politely on the audience.

Ex. 12.5, 12.10

Writers create you-attitude through conscious communication choices. Appearance, layout, visuals, content, language and medium: all contribute to reader-centred messages, as Figure 12.1 demonstrates.

FIGURE 12.1

Reader-Centred Christmas Appeal from the Salvation Army



Source: Courtesy of The Salvation Army, Ontario Central Division. Reprinted with permission.

Compare the reader-focused language in Figure 12.1 with the language the writer uses in Figure 12.2. This writer-centred memo refers to the author throughout, and the last paragraph sounds condescending: no one would appreciate being spoken to this way. The message demonstrates that the writer did not use the PAIBOC analysis.

LO3 How Do I Create Positive You-Attitude?

Talk about the reader—except in negative situations.

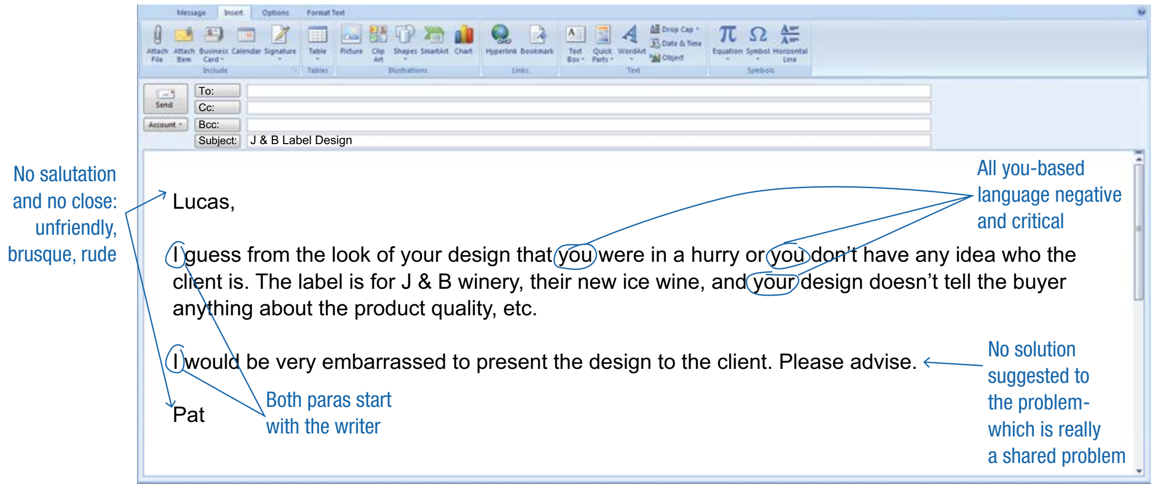
Ex. 12.1–12.4, 12.7–12.9

To create you-attitude

1. Talk about the reader, not about yourself.
2. Avoid talking about feelings, except to congratulate or offer sympathy.
3. Use *you* more often than *I* in positive situations; use *we* when it includes the reader.
4. Avoid the blaming *you* in negative situations.

FIGURE 12.2

Negative, Writer-Centred Memo Without You-Attitude



LO4 1. Talk about the reader, not yourself. Readers want to know how they benefit.

Lacks you-attitude	I have negotiated an agreement with Apex Rent-a-Car for a discount on rental cars.
You-attitude	As a Sun Life employee, you now get a 20 percent discount when you rent a car from Apex.
Lacks you-attitude	We are shipping your order of September 21 this afternoon.
You-attitude	The two dozen print cartridges you ordered will be shipped this afternoon and should reach you by September 28.

The reader is more interested in *when* the order will arrive than when you shipped it.

LO4 2. Avoid talking about feelings, except to congratulate or offer sympathy.

Focus on the information the reader needs, not how you might feel about it.

Lacks you-attitude	We are happy to extend you a credit line of $5,000.
You-attitude	You can now charge up to $5,000 on your Bank of Montreal card.

The reader doesn't care whether you're happy or bored stiff. *All the reader cares about is the situation from his or her point of view.*

Don't talk about the reader's feelings, either. It can be offensive to have someone else tell us how we feel—especially if the writer is wrong.

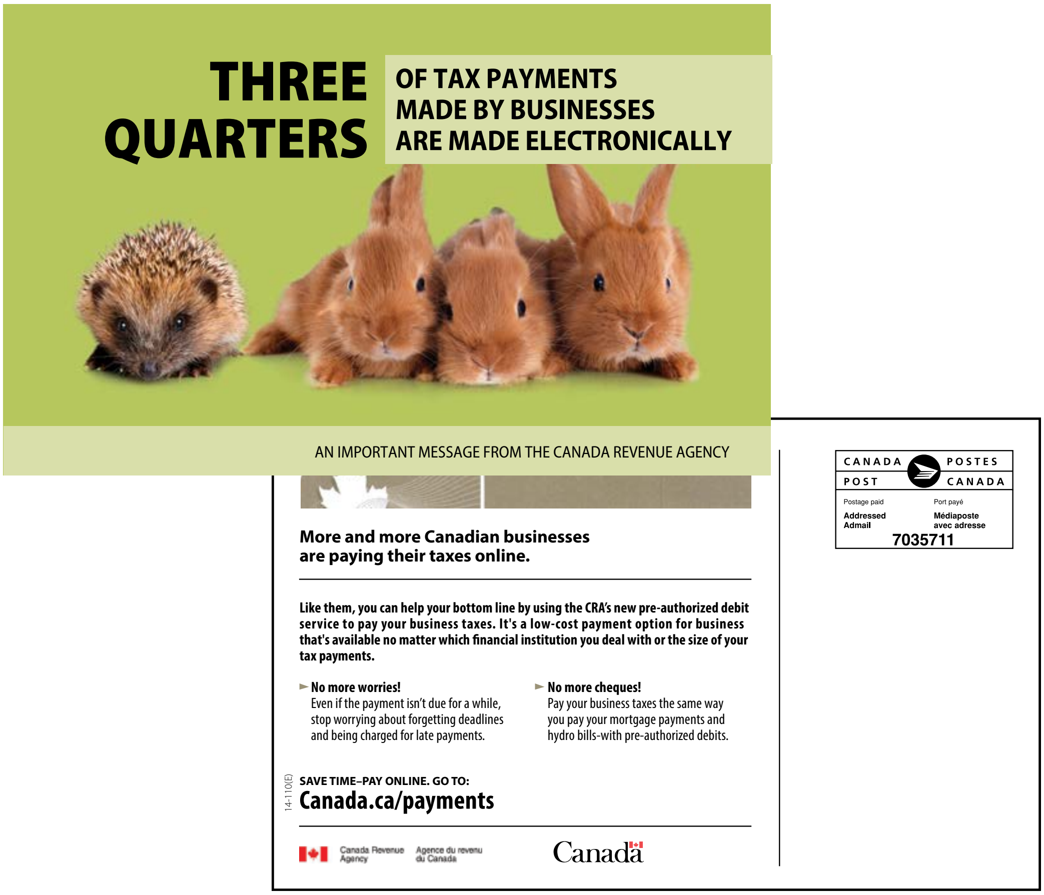
Lacks you-attitude	You'll be happy to hear that Open Grip Walkway Channels meet Occupational Health and Safety requirements.
You-attitude	Open Grip Walkway Channels meet Occupational Health and Safety requirements.

When you have good news for the reader, simply give the good news.

Lacks you-attitude	You'll be happy to hear that your scholarship has been renewed.
You-attitude	Congratulations! Your scholarship has been renewed.

FIGURE 12.3

A Government Postcard Communicating You-Attitude



Canada Revenue Agency postcards use humour, positive emphasis, intrinsic and extrinsic benefits, and you-attitude to encourage Canadian businesses to pay taxes electronically.

Source: Image(s) licensed by Ingram Image.

It *is* appropriate to talk about your own emotions in a message of congratulations or condolences.

You-attitude Congratulations on your promotion to district manager! I was really pleased to read about it.

You-attitude I was sorry to hear that your father died.

Of course, you-attitude also includes choosing the appropriate medium for your message. People prefer to get handwritten cards—not emails or text messages—on important occasions (births, deaths, marriages). Negotiations and conflict-resolution situations demand face-to-face dialogue.

LO4 3. Use *you* more often than *I* in positive situations.

Ex. 12.1

Use *we* when it includes the reader. Talk about the reader, not you or your company.

Lacks you-attitude We provide dental coverage to all employees.

You-attitude Your benefit package as a full-time Clairtone employee includes dental coverage

Depending on your audience and the context, you may certainly use *I* in email messages, letters, and memos. However, avoid beginning the first sentence of any written message with *I*.

Edit external messages to ensure you use *I* rarely. *I* suggests that you're concerned about personal issues, not about the organization's problems, needs, and opportunities. *We* works well when it includes the reader. Avoid *we* if it excludes the reader (as it would in a letter to a customer or supplier, or as it might in a memo about what *we* in management want *you* to do).

LO4 4. Avoid *you* in negative situations.

To avoid blaming the reader, use an impersonal expression or a passive verb. **Impersonal constructions** omit people and talk only about things. **Passive verbs** describe the action performed on something, without necessarily saying who did it.

Lacks you-attitude	You failed to sign your cheque.
You-attitude (impersonal)	Your cheque arrived without a signature.
You-attitude (passive)	Your cheque was lacking a signature.

(See Polishing Your Prose in Module 5 on active and passive voice. See the Revising and Editing Resources at the end of this book for a full discussion of passive verbs.)

Normally, writing is most lively when it's about people and most interesting to readers when it's about them. When you have to report a mistake or bad news, however, you can protect the reader's ego by using an impersonal construction—one in which things, not people, do the acting.

Lacks you-attitude	You made no allowance for inflation in your estimate.
You-attitude (impersonal)	This estimate does not allow for inflation.
You-attitude (passive)	No allowance for inflation has been made in this estimate.

When you restrict the reader's freedom, refer to the group to which the reader belongs rather than to the reader as an individual.

Lacks you-attitude	You must get approval from the communications department before you speak with any media agency.
You-attitude	All employees should check with the communications department before discussing company business with the media.

When you have negatives, the third person (*she*, *he*, *it*) has better you-attitude than second person (*you*), because third person suggests that everyone is being treated the same way.

LO5 Does You-Attitude Mean Using the Word *You*?

No. Communicating you-attitude means making deliberate choices in layout, content, language, organization, and medium—choices that influence your audience to pay attention to and act on your message.

Ex. 12.5, 12.6, 12.10

All reader-centred messages use you-attitude, but the words that achieve the you-attitude depend on the situation.

- In a positive message, focus on what the reader can do. "We give you" lacks you-attitude, because the sentence focuses on what *we* are doing.

- Avoid *you* when it criticizes the reader or limits the reader's freedom.
- In a job application letter, create you-attitude by showing how you can help meet the reader's needs, but keep the word *I* to a minimum (Module 25).

LO6 I've Revised My Sentences. What Else Can I Do to Create You-Attitude?

Emphasize what the reader wants to know, using a reader-centred medium.

Ex. 12.1, 12.6, 12.10

Conscious choices of *layout*, *content*, *organization*, and *message medium*—can build goodwill, as Figure 12.4 demonstrates.

Now consider the email in Figure 12.5. As the marginal notes indicate, many individual sentences in this letter lack you-attitude. The last sentence in paragraph one sounds both highhanded and defensive. The language is stiff, harsh, repetitive, and filled with outdated jargon.

Perhaps the most serious problem is that the information most interesting to the reader is surrounded by negative-sounding statements. Since we have good news for the reader, we should put that information first (Module 7), as the writer does in her revision, Figure 12.6.

FIGURE 12.4

An Audience–Centred Tweet

Source: Activate Good

To create goodwill with *layout*

- Use white space, bold or italics, indents, bullets and/or lists for emphasis
- Keep paragraphs short

To create goodwill with *content*

- Be concise and complete; give the reader the necessary information and *only* the necessary information to get the results you want
- Consider using an appendix or attachment for information that the reader may want to see but that does not directly support your purpose
- Anticipate and answer questions or objections the reader is likely to have
- Explain why information that the reader did not ask for—but that you've included—is important
- Explain to readers how the subject of your message affects them

To create goodwill with *organization*

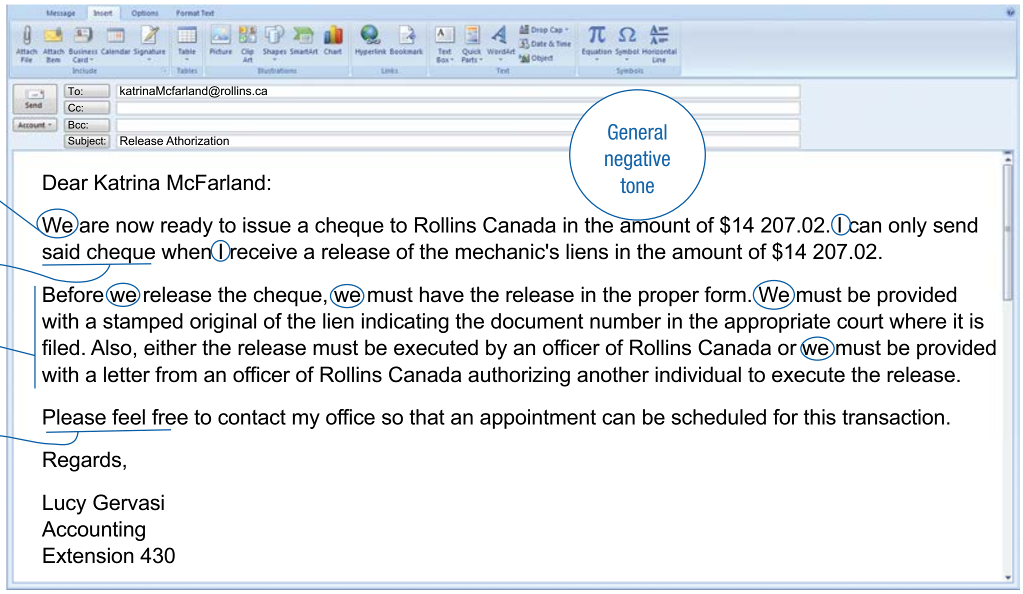
- Put the information that readers are most interested in first
- Arrange the information to meet your reader's needs, not yours
- Use headings and lists so that the reader can find key points quickly

To create goodwill with *medium*, use the medium or media that make the most positive connection to your audience

- Use the checklist in Figure 12.7 to assess your messages for the content, organization, language, and medium that influence audiences positively.

FIGURE 12.5

Email Lacking You-Attitude



To: katrinaMcfarland@rollins.ca
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Release Athorization

Dear Katrina McFarland:

We are now ready to issue a cheque to Rollins Canada in the amount of $14 207.02. I can only send said cheque when I receive a release of the mechanic's liens in the amount of $14 207.02.

Before we release the cheque, we must have the release in the proper form. We must be provided with a stamped original of the lien indicating the document number in the appropriate court where it is filed. Also, either the release must be executed by an officer of Rollins Canada or we must be provided with a letter from an officer of Rollins Canada authorizing another individual to execute the release.

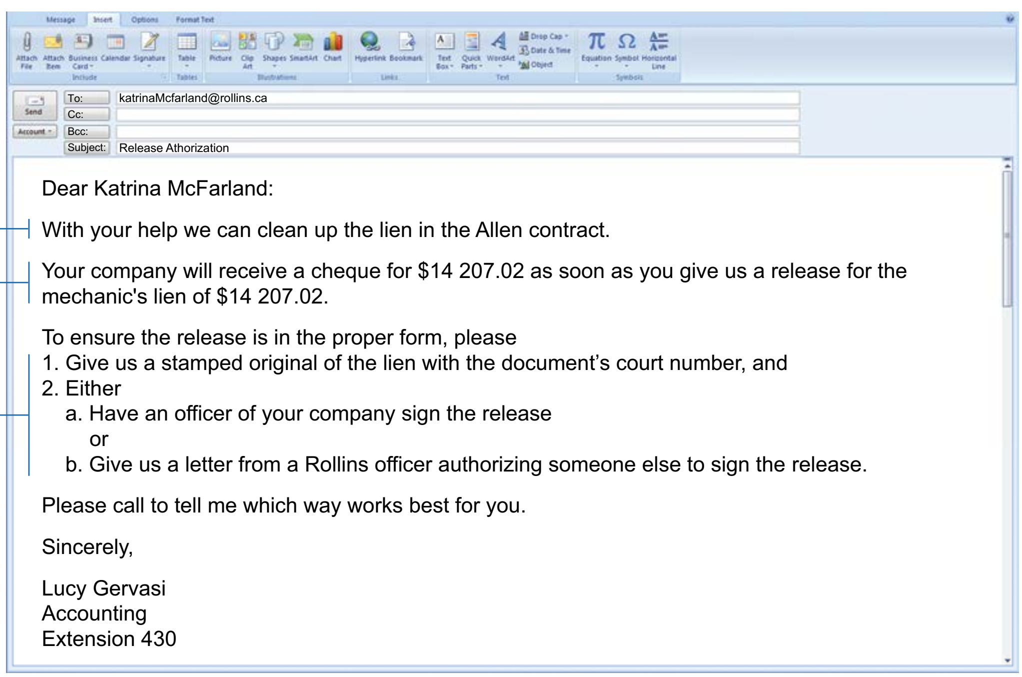
Please feel free to contact my office so that an appointment can be scheduled for this transaction.

Regards,

Lucy Gervasi
Accounting
Extension 430

FIGURE 12.6

Email Revised to Improve You-Attitude



To: katrinaMcfarland@rollins.ca
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Release Athorization

Dear Katrina McFarland:

With your help we can clean up the lien in the Allen contract.

Your company will receive a cheque for $14 207.02 as soon as you give us a release for the mechanic's lien of $14 207.02.

To ensure the release is in the proper form, please
1. Give us a stamped original of the lien with the document's court number, and
2. Either
   a. Have an officer of your company sign the release
      or
   b. Give us a letter from a Rollins officer authorizing someone else to sign the release.

Please call to tell me which way works best for you.

Sincerely,

Lucy Gervasi
Accounting
Extension 430

FIGURE 12.7

Persuasive, Audience-Focused Message Checklist

1. **The message is clear**
   - ☐ Signals to the reader that it's a business message
   - ☐ Uses the reader's medium of choice
   - ☐ Defines the purpose of the message
   - ☐ Organized so that form follows function
   - ☐ Uses business language
   - ☐ Provides specific details in concrete language
2. **The message is concise**
   - ☐ Provides all relevant information using the fewest possible words
3. **The message is comprehensive**
   - ☐ Uses a format appropriate to the purpose, the audience, and the situation
   - ☐ Has a beginning, middle, and end
   - ☐ Uses a thesis to establish unity and coherence
   - ☐ Establishes rapport; is reader-centred
   - ☐ Demonstrates that the writer knows, understands, and respects the audience
   - ☐ Uses transitional words and phrases to lead the reader from one idea to the next
   - ☐ Tells the audience what's in it for them
   - ☐ Uses media appropriate to the purpose, the audience, and the situation
4. **The message is complete**
   - ☐ Gives all necessary proof, explanations, and examples
   - ☐ Anticipates the audience's questions, concerns, and objections
   - ☐ Tells the audience what to do next or what's going to happen next
5. **The message is correct**
   - ☐ Is error-free
   - ☐ Demonstrates revision, editing, and proofreading

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Seeing Another Point of View

Klick Health Media Relations

An entrepreneur by the age of 12, Israeli-born Canadian Leerom Segal's audience focus helped him start and grow Klick Inc., one of Canada's most successful marketing companies. Segal co-founded the independent, people-centric agency when he was only 17 years old—after exiting a previous business he and his partners had sold to a large public company that was more concerned with optics than outcomes.

Segal's work turned from meaningful to deeply personal while researching possible treatments for his father's pancreatic cancer. He connected online with patients similarly diagnosed and found a treatment that allowed his father to live an additional three years with good quality of life.

The experiences of Segal and Klick co-founder, COO Aaron Goldstein, and their interest in individuals' own empowerment led to the invention of Genome, the company's collaborative enterprise operating system. Because they believe "employees perform better when they work in an environment that helps them succeed at every step," they replaced interoffice email with the Genome system. Now all employees working on a project can simultaneously access all that project's information all the time, anytime, from anywhere.

Segal's people-centric attitude continues to contribute to employee engagement and productivity: In 2014, Klick was "named the #1 Canadian Healthcare ICT company…operating in Canada…one of the 10 Best Workplaces in Canada…[and] one of Canada's 10 Most Admired Corporate Cultures, 50 Best Managed Companies, and 50 Best Employers."

Sources: Klick Health, (n.d.). "About Leerom." Retrieved November 8, 2014 from http://www.klick.com/health/author/lsegal/; Marjo Johne, (July 29, 2014). "Leerom Segal: At Klick Health, everyone's in the loop," *The Globe and Mail*, July 29, 2014. Retrieved November 8, 2014 from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/innovators-at-work/at-klick-health-everyones-in-the-loop/article19824829/; Klick Health. " Klick Health named #1 Pure-Play Canadian Healthcare ICT Company. Retrieved November 9, 2014, from http://www.klick.com/health/announcements/klick-health-named-1-pure-play-canadian-healthcare-ict-company/.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Communicating with you-attitude means consciously writing and speaking in a way that
  - Looks at the situation from the audience's point of view
  - Treats the audience with courtesy
  - Respects the audience's intelligence
  - Protects the audience's ego
  - Emphasizes what the audience wants to know
- You convey you-attitude when you choose organization, content, layout, and appropriate media that meet audience needs and expectations.
- You apply you-attitude in sentences when you
  - Talk about the reader/audience, not about yourself
  - Refer specifically to the audience's request or order
  - Don't talk about feelings, except to congratulate or offer sympathy
- In positive situations, use *you* more often than *I*. Use *we* when it includes the reader.
- Avoid the blaming *you* in negative situations.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 12

Questions for Critical Thinking

12.1 When texting and/or creating voicemail messages, what strategies do you use to create audience-focused messages?

12.2 When are you-attitude messages manipulative? Consider print and Internet advertising, and the tactics of telemarketers, or people canvassing or selling something door-to-door. When have you felt uncomfortable or exploited by you-attitude messages?

12.3 Consider the you-attitude of an organization where you have worked. What strategies does this organization use to convey positive you-attitude with customers? With employees? What else could the organization do to convey you-attitude?

12.4 Visit the official Movember site at http://ca.movember.com/. Analyze the site for benefits, positive emphasis, and you-attitude. What specific aspects of the site do you find persuasive, and why?

Exercises and Problems

12.5 **Analyzing Social Media for Positive Audience Focus**

Choose a favourite social media site (LinkedIn, Facebook, MySpace, etc.) or any blog you enjoy. Analyze your choice of site or blog using the checklist in Figure 12.7 or the criteria in Modules 10, 11, and 12 for communicating benefits, communicating positive emphasis, and communicating you-attitude.

As your instructor directs

a. Write an email to your instructor describing the site or blog elements that contribute to positive audience focus. Be sure to include details about layout, content, organization, paragraph and sentence length, word choice, and medium.

b. Describe how you could improve the positive audience focus, while still achieving the purpose of the site or blog.

12.6 Analyzing the Salvation Army Appeal Letter

Consider the Salvation Army Christmas letter (Figure 12.1). What is the purpose of the letter, and who is the audience? What is the context? Specifically, what strategies does the message use to communicate you-attitude? What persuasive appeals does the message use? How effective is the letter?

As your instructor directs

a. Write an email to your instructor describing the purpose, audience, and context of the appeal letter, and the persuasive strategies the writer uses.

b. Describe two specific ways you could improve the letter.

12.7 Using Passives and Impersonal Constructions to Improve You-Attitude

Revise each of these sentences to improve you-attitude, first using a passive verb, then using an impersonal construction (one in which things, not people, do the action). Are both revisions equally good? Why or why not?

1. You should not text while driving.
2. You did not include all the necessary information in your letter.
3. By failing to build a fence around your pool, you have created a safety hazard.
4. Because your section is always late, we miss the deadline and lose marks.
5. You didn't look at the itinerary so you aren't prepared.
6. Your driving a Hummer is neither cost-effective nor environmentally friendly.

12.8 Improving You-Attitude

Revise these sentences to improve you-attitude. Eliminate any awkward phrasing. In some cases, you may need to add information to revise the sentence effectively.

1. We are pleased to offer you the ability to sign up for dental coverage in the cloud.
2. You will be happy to know that you have unlimited texting anywhere in your province.
3. After hours of hard work, I have negotiated a new employee benefit for you.
4. I urge you to attend a meeting about the new benefits package so that we can inform you about your rights and responsibilities.
5. You will be happy to learn that additional cards for your spouse or child are free.
6. We have added another employee benefit for you.
7. Today we shipped the book you ordered.
8. In your report you forgot to tell how many people you surveyed.
9. I hope that it is obvious to you that we want to give you the very best prices on furniture.
10. You didn't order enough doughnuts for the meeting.

12.9 Improving You-Attitude

Revise these sentences to improve you-attitude. Eliminate any awkward phrasing. In some cases, you may need to add information to revise the sentence effectively.

1. Starting next month, the company will offer you a choice of three different health plans.
2. We provide dental coverage to all full-time employees.
3. At the meeting, we'll tell you about the team responsibilities and how we expect you to behave.
4. I have ordered a new laptop for you. I expect it to arrive by the 15th, and I'll get it ready for you to use as soon as my schedule permits.
5. We are happy to enrol you in our stock-purchase plan.
6. You will be happy to learn that you can transfer credits from our business diploma programs to a university commerce degree.
7. We give you the following benefits when you join our Frequent Flier program.
8. We are pleased to send you a copy of "Investing in Stocks," which you requested.
9. Your audit papers did not convert U.S. revenue into Canadian dollars.
10. Of course we want to give you every possible service that you might need or want.

12.10 Evaluating and Revising You-Attitude in Your Learning Management System Documents

Choose a document in your Learning Management System resources (teacher instructions, peer discussion, posts, blogs, etc.) Analyze the document for you-attitude (layout, content, paragraph lengths, sentence structure, word choice). Find the document elements that demonstrate you-attitude. Be specific

Next find elements that you think need revision for you-attitude. Be specific, and suggest revisions.

As your instructor directs

a. Share your examples with a small group of students.
b. Write an email to your instructor, discussing your examples.
c. Post an email message or blog to the class discussing your examples.
d. Present two or three of your examples to the class orally.
e. In a small group, write a collaborative short report to your instructor about the suggested revisions.

Polishing *your* Prose

Using the Apostrophe for Contractions and It's/Its

The apostrophe replaces the missing letter(s) in a contraction.

it is → it's

I have → I've

you will → you'll

we are → we're

you are → you're

they are → they're

With an apostrophe, *it's* is a contraction meaning *it is*. Without an apostrophe, *its* is a possessive pronoun meaning *belonging to it*.

Since *it's* and *its* sound the same, you have to look at the logic of your sentence to choose the right word: if you can substitute *it is*, and the sentence makes sense, use *it's*.

Exercises

Choose the right word in the set of parentheses.

1. (It's/Its) too bad that the team hasn't finished (it's/its) presentation.
2. The company projected that (it's/its) profits would rise during the next quarter.
3. (It's/Its) going to require overtime, because the data centre needs (it's/its) reports quickly.
4. I don't want responsibility for the project unless (it's/its) important.
5. The company will announce (it's/its) new name at a press conference.
6. I'm not sure whether (it's/its) a good idea to offer a conference.
7. (It's/Its) a good idea to keep your travel receipts in a separate file.
8. (It's/Its) good that our computer automatically backs up (it's/its) files.
9. The Saskatoon office will share (it's/its) findings with the other branch offices.
10. (It's/Its) cash reserves protected the company from a hostile takeover.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

MODULE 13

Researching

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 13 you will be familiar with

LO1 How and where to do research

LO2 How to begin to analyze your research

By applying the information you will be able to

LO3 Identify primary and secondary sources

LO4 Find electronic and print information

LO5 Use databases for research

LO6 Analyze sources

LO7 Write questions for surveys and interviews

Module Outline

LO1 Researching includes finding, analyzing, and crediting information. Research methods can be as simple as observing others' behaviours or printing a computer summary of sales for the last month; it may involve interviewing people or finding online material. Whatever your methods, however, your information is only as valuable as your ability to analyze and apply it.

Secondary research retrieves data that someone else has gathered: library research and online searches are well-known kinds of secondary research.

Primary research gathers new information through personal observations, experiences, experiments, interviews, focus groups, and surveys. These methods allow you to gather and analyze new information.

To research effectively, you need to know

- Where and how to find information
- How to evaluate and analyze the information you find
- How to use that information professionally and ethically

This module covers how to research and evaluate primary and secondary research. Module 14 describes how to synthesize the information and how to credit your sources.

LO2 How Do I Begin My Research?

Focus your search: Identify your objectives(s) and draft a working thesis or purpose statement.

Ex. 13.1, 13.5

To narrow your search for useful information, identify your objective. Use PAIBOC analysis (Figure 13.1) to identify what are you looking for and why.

FIGURE 13.1

PAIBOC Questions for Analysis

P	What's the **purpose** of the research? Why are you looking for information? Are you reporting or updating information? Justifying a request for resources? Advocating for change? Writing a proposal to sell a product or service? Creating a business plan to attract investors? Describing a problem and recommending solutions? Are you making a decision? Exploring possibilities? Preparing for a test? Your purposes come from you and your organization; however, you must identify your purpose(s) before you can begin to research efficiently.
A	Who is your **audience**? Who will read/view/hear your plan, request, report, or idea? What are your audience's expectations? What proof or evidence does your audience value? What proof will convince them? What information would maximize your audience's understanding? Why?
I	What **information** will achieve your purpose(s) by meeting your audience's needs? What information will cause your readers to think or act as you want them to? Where can you find the relevant information? What information is available, online, and in print? What about primary sources? Can you use your own experiences and observations? Whom can you interview to get answers?
B	What reasons or reader **benefits** can you find to meet your purpose(s)? What kind of information will emphasize those benefits?
O	What audience **objections** do you anticipate? How expensive are your proposed ideas? What are the resource and personnel costs? What information will overcome or de-emphasize audience objections?
C	What **context** will affect your research? What environmental, economic, organizational, professional, and personal factors will influence why, where, and how you collect information? What context or media would influence the impact of your findings on your audience?

Next, draft a **thesis** or **working purpose statement** to clarify your objective. A thesis/working purpose statement

- Narrows your research parameters: you search for and find the relevant information more efficiently
- Structures your document or presentation
- Becomes part of your document or presentation introduction

In your working purpose statement, include the situation and your argument or position about the situation. Figure 13.2 gives examples of working purpose statements. For more details on writing working purpose statements, see Module 15.

When you have gathered and analyzed enough information, you *might change your thesis or purpose statement* to reflect a different position or argument. However, to begin your search, use a working thesis and PAIBOC analysis.

FIGURE 13.2

Working Purpose Statements

I need to

- Inform my manager and colleagues about the most relevant information I learned at the conference
- Explain why we should change our report templates
- Describe how we can increase productivity by moving Human Resources online
- Examine the property's soil for contamination and report the results
- Prove that we need to hire another salesperson to improve customer service
- Demonstrate that our current window display is ineffective and describe improvements
- Convince the Board that we must hire a communications director with social media savvy
- Convince my professor that I can find the information to write a good research report

LO4 How Can I Find Information?

Learn what resources are available, and learn how to use them

Ex. 13.6, 13.7

Because of technology, you can get billions of bytes of information, anytime, from anywhere. Academic and public libraries offer reference texts, encyclopedias, journals, magazines, newspapers, and searchable databases of academic and popular journals, periodicals, magazines, and newspapers. (See Tables 13.1 and 14.1 for examples.)

Despite the accessibility of all this data, "most people prefer informal, personal forms of information" gathering.[1] In fact, students default "to Google (99 percent), Wikipedia (92 percent) and friends (85 percent) for everyday-life information[,] and to course readings (97 percent) and Google (95 percent) for course-related research. [2]

In response to the overwhelming amount of available data, and to support the development of research skills, libraries offer a variety of innovative resources.

- Faculty and students can ask their research questions online, in real time.
- Many universities offer a personal librarian program "to introduce 1st year students…to the many resources, tools and services available through the Libraries;" every student gets her/his own personal librarian tutor.[3]

And, of course, researchers can use plentiful online resources—like ResearchReady—"to navigate all parts of the research process, from defining a topic and accessing library resources, to citing sources and avoiding plagiarism." [4]

TABLE 13.1

Examples of Searchable Online Databases

ABI Inform Information about most aspects of doing business in the global economy, including company backgrounds, competitive information, and new product development.	
Business Source Premier Full-text journals on business, marketing, accounting, economics, finance, and management. Includes *Harvard Business Review* and country economic reports. Resources include industry and company information, and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) and trends analysis.	
Canadian Business and Current Affairs Complete Collection of journals, magazines, newspapers, and newsletters searchable in full text, including *Canadian Business* and *Maclean's.*	
Canadian Business Online Directory information on more than 1.5 million Canadian businesses, primarily in the wholesale, retail, and manufacturing sectors. Great for market research and sales prospecting.	
Canadian Periodical Index Quarterly Many full-text Canadian magazines and newspapers, including selected articles from the *Globe and Mail.*	
Countries and Cultures eBooks Encyclopedias devoted to the world's countries, their history, geography, peoples, and cultures.	
Euromonitor Reports and databases on international market research information.	
Factiva An excellent resource that offers a collection of information and tools on a wide range of subjects, including communications, technology, linguistics, and political science.	
Gale Canada in Context "Created especially for students and researchers studying Canada, its people and its history, *Canada in Context* spans the North American continent to deliver a full range of country-specific topics (including First Nations and the government of Canada) as well as information on technology, sports, industry, and more."[5]	
InfoTrac Student Edition A great resource for students that includes databases, respected reference materials, over 1200 periodicals, and nearly nine million articles. Updated daily.	
LexisNexis Canada Information resource designed particularly to meet the needs of academic institutions, corporations, law firms, and government.	
Print Measurement Bureau An important source of marketing data.	
WARC An important source of marketing data.	

Source: Interview and email conversation with Shelley Woods, Librarian, Sheridan Institute, January 17, 2012.

LO5 How Can I Search Efficiently?

Use keyword searches.

Ex. 13.2–13.9

Keywords are the terms the computer looks for in a database or on the Web. The ABI/Inform Thesaurus lists synonyms and the hierarchies that index information in various databases.

At the beginning of a search, you might use all the synonyms and keywords you can think of. Skim several of the first sources you find; if they use additional or different terms, search for these new terms as well. You're looking for the keyword or phrase that will yield the specific information you need. This is one advantage of starting your research with Wikipedia to determine the general terms of your subject.

Refine your search.

- Use root words to find variations. A root word such as *stock* followed by the plus sign (*stock*+) will yield *stock*, *stocks*, *stockmarket*, and so forth.
- Use quotation marks for multi-word terms. If you want only sites that use the term "business communication," put quotes around the term.
- Use a **Boolean** search to get more specific hits. "Named after the UK mathematician George Boole (1815–64)…" whose mathematical logic laid the foundation for computers, "the Boolean operators AND, OR, NOT [make] keyword-based text searches more precise."[6] For example, to study the effect of the minimum wage on employment in the restaurant industry, you might specify **(minimum wage) *and* (restaurant *or* fast food) *and* (employment rate *or* unemployment)**. Without *and*, you'd get articles that discuss the minimum wage in general, articles about every aspect of restaurants, and every article that refers to unemployment, although many of these would not be relevant to your topic. The *or* calls up articles that use the term *fast food* but not *restaurant* and vice versa. An article that used the phrase *fast food industry* would be eliminated unless it also used the term *restaurant*. Figure 13.3 illustrates this Boolean search technique.
- Use a variety of search engines. Check www.thesearchenginelist.com/ for a list of current and defunct search engines, or use Google, still the world's most popular search engine, to search for "search engine directories."
- Use others' research. Sharing/networking sites like del.ic.ious, and digg let you browse for information other researchers have found, and to bookmark sites for yourself and other people.
- Use all available resources. Search engines and databases, as well as college, university, and public libraries offer search tips, topic browsing, advanced searches, and refined search topic phrases to help you navigate and focus your search. Databases also provide citation styles, with examples, and pop-ups that format the citation for you (Module 14).
- Make the information come to you: Follow columnists on Twitter and create an **RSS (really simple syndication) Feed** for the most current information available.

LO6 How Do I Analyze the Information I Find?

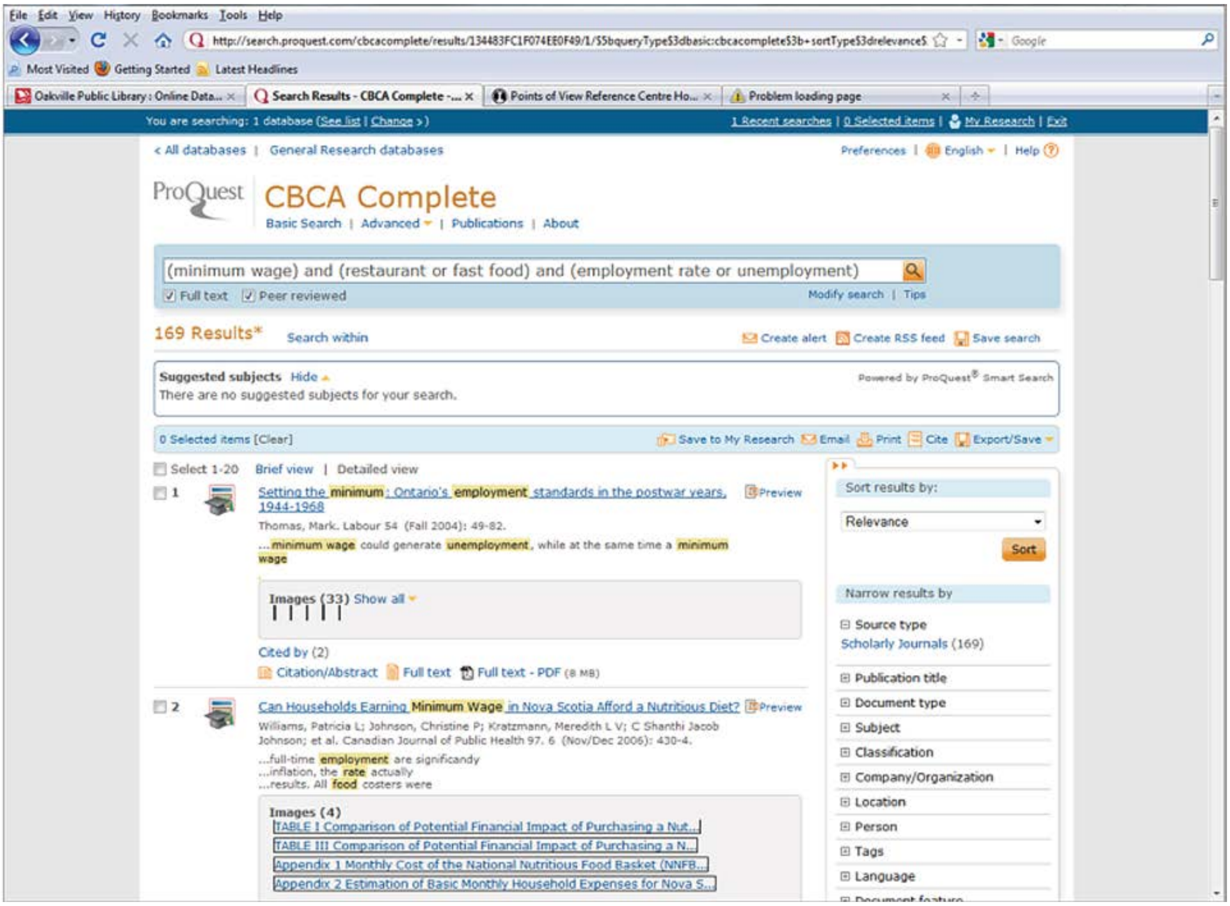
Ask questions to examine data critically.

Ex. 13.4, 13.5, 13.7, 13.9

You can find excellent information assessment tools on your academic and public library sites.

FIGURE 13.3

Example of a Boolean Search Result



For your critical analysis

- *Start with the most credible sources*. Many online and print sources, especially academic and peer-reviewed articles, periodicals, and journals, have an editorial board that reviews material for accuracy and truthfulness. Peer experts often review these sources before they are accepted. The review process helps ensure that information meets high standards.
- *Look for an author*. Do individuals take "ownership" of the information? What are their credentials? Are they subject experts? Where do they work? How can you contact them with questions? Remember that ".edu" sites might be owned by students not yet experts on a subject.
- *Look for the date*. How current is the information?
- *Check the source*. Is the information adapted from other sources? If so, try to get the original.
- *Compare the information with other sources*. Internet sources should complement print sources. When facts are correct, you'll likely find them recorded elsewhere.
- *Look for the bias*. Even sites produced by universities and established companies or organizations are not going to post information that makes them look bad. To get the other side of the story, monitor blogs, bulletin boards, and email lists, or access pages critical of the organization. (Search for "consumer opinion" and the name of the organization.)

Since anyone can post pages on the Web, or create a blog, or tweet, or contribute to Wikipedia, it is absolutely vital to evaluate online sources, especially Web pages. Can you find at least one credible online or print source that agrees with the Web information?

If you want to use citizen journalism, social networking, and community sites like Wikipedia

- First check with your professor or supervisor; many organizations do not accept information from Wikipedia, How Stuff Works, or any encyclopaedia or ".com" (commercial) websites.
- If you do get approval, find other, reliable sources that support the information.

LO3 Where Else Can I Find Information?

Ex. 13.10–13.12

Powerful as it is, the Internet is just one search tool. Ask your reference librarian for research ideas, including print sources. And remember that textbooks and on-file company information, such as annual reports, are useful sources.

You can also do primary research to get new information. You can use your own observations and experiences, and consult topic experts and colleagues for information through interviews and surveys, including online surveys.

LO1 How Do I Decide Whom to Survey or Interview?

Use a random sample for surveys, if time and money permit. Use a judgment sample for interviews.

Defining your population correctly is crucial to getting useful information. For example, suppose you wanted to research and report on why people use social networking sites. First you would have to define your parameters. What do you mean by "use"? Are you considering frequency of visits? The number of hours spent on such sites? The number of contacts? The amount of shared information?

Next you would have to identify the demographic you want to interview: Facebook and MySpace attract very different users from LinkedIn, ZoomInfo, and XpressBook.

RANDOM SAMPLE

You select a **sample** because it is not feasible to survey everyone. If you take a true random sample, you can generalize your findings to the whole population from which your sample comes.

In a **random sample**, each person in the population theoretically has an equal chance of being chosen. When people say they did something *randomly*, they often mean *without conscious bias*. However, unconscious bias always exists. Someone passing out surveys in front of the library will be more likely to approach people who seem friendly and less likely to ask people who seem intimidating, in a hurry, much older or younger, or of a different race, class, or sex. True random samples rely on random-digit tables generated by computers and published in statistics texts and books such as *A Million Random Digits*.

CONVENIENCE SAMPLE

A **convenience sample** is a group of respondents who are easy to reach: students who walk through the student centre, people at a shopping mall, workers in your own unit. Convenience samples are useful for a rough pre-test of a questionnaire. However, you cannot generalize from a convenience sample to a larger group.

JUDGMENT SAMPLE

A **judgment sample** is a group of people whose views seem useful. Someone interested in surveying the kinds of writing done on campus might ask each department for the name of a faculty member who cares about writing and then send surveys to those people. Judgment samples are often good for interviews, where your purpose is to talk to someone whose views are worth hearing.

LO7 How Do I Create Surveys and Write Questions for Interviews?

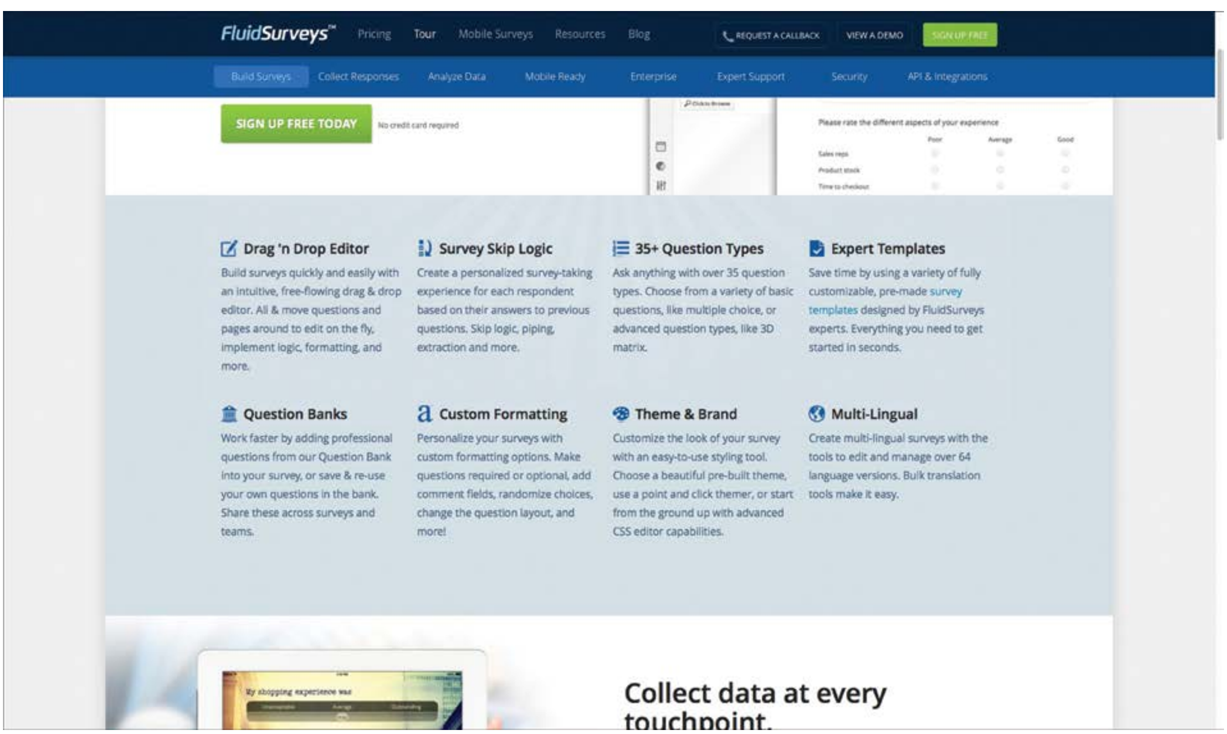
Use free online survey software. Create clear and neutral questions.

Ex. 13.3, 13.8, 13.10

A **survey** questions a large group of people, called **respondents** or subjects. The easiest way to ask many questions is to create a **questionnaire**, a list of questions that people respond to.

FIGURE 13.4

Free Online Survey Builder Options



An interview is a structured conversation with someone able to give you useful information. Surveys and interviews are useful only when the questions are well designed.

Used with permission of SurveyMonkey.com

Ex. 13.3, 13.8, 13.10–13.12

Although survey and interview queries are based on your ideas and a theory—or *working purpose statement*—it's important to phrase questions in a way that won't lead the respondent to the answer you want or bias the response. Remember that *people tend to answer the questions they are asked*. Poor questions yield poor data.

Phrase questions clearly. Use words that mean the same thing to your respondents as they do to you. Whenever you can, use concrete, quantitative, measurable language. Words like *important* and *often* are open to anyone's interpretation.

Vague	Do you use the Web to research often?
Better	How many hours a week do you spend researching on the Web?

Avoid questions that make assumptions about your subjects, unless you are seeking to qualify your respondents. The question "Does your spouse have a job outside the home?" assumes that the respondent is married.

Closed questions—those questions to which people can answer only *yes* or *no*—limit information. **Open questions**—the journalism or "W" questions (*who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, *how*)—encourage information and do not lock the subject into any sort of response. Closed questions are faster for subjects to answer and easier for researchers to score. However, since all answers must fit into chosen categories, closed questions cannot probe the complexities of a subject. You can improve the quality of closed questions by conducting a pre-test with open questions to find categories that matter to respondents.

When you use multiple-choice questions, make sure that only one answer fits in any one category. In the following example of overlapping categories, a person who worked for a company with exactly 25 employees could check either *a* or *b*. The resulting data would be unreliable.

Overlapping categories Indicate the number of full-time employees in your company on May 16.
☐ a. 0–25
☐ b. 25–100
☐ c. 100–500
☐ d. more than 500

Discrete categories Indicate the number of full-time employees in your company on May 16.
☐ a. 0–25
☐ b. 26–100
☐ c. 101–500
☐ d. more than 500

Branching questions direct different respondents to different parts of the questionnaire based on their answers to earlier questions.

> 10. Have you purchased an espresso coffee machine in the last three months?
> Yes ______ No ______
> (If "no," skip to question 14.)

Use closed, multiple-choice questions for potentially embarrassing topics. For example: What is your level of formal education? (a) high school, (b) college diploma, (c) university undergraduate degree, (d) graduate degree. Seeing their own situation listed as one response can help respondents feel that it is acceptable. However, very sensitive issues are perhaps better asked in an interview, where interviewers can build trust and reveal information about themselves to encourage the interviewee to answer.

Put questions that will be easy to answer (like gender or program of study) early in the questionnaire. Put questions that are harder to answer, or that people may be less willing to answer (e.g., age and income) near the end of the questionnaire. Even if people choose not to answer such questions, you'll still have the rest of the survey filled out.

LO6 How Do I Analyze the Data I Collect?

Evaluate your sources; understand your sources; look for patterns and emerging stories.

Ex. 13.3, 13.8, 13.10–13.12

Look for answers to your research questions and for interesting nuggets—that may not have been part of your original focus—that emerge from the data. Such stories can be more convincing in reports and oral presentations than pages of computer printouts.

Look for patterns.

- On which points do respondents agree? Which disagreements can be explained by early theories or numbers that have now changed? By different interpretations of the same data? By different values and criteria? In your interviews and surveys, what patterns do you see?
- Have things changed over time?
- Do geography, gender, or education account for differences?
- What similarities do you see?
- What differences do you see?
- What confirms your hunches?
- What surprises you?

Checking Your Logic

Ex. 13.2

As you analyze your data, differentiate between causation and correlation. **Causation** means that one thing causes or produces another. **Correlation** means that two things happen at the same time. One might cause the other, but both might be caused by a third.

For example, suppose that you're writing a report to justify the purchase of a smartphone for every salesperson in your company. Your survey results indicate that employees who currently have smartphones are more productive than people who don't. Does having a smartphone lead to higher productivity? Perhaps. But perhaps productive people are more likely to push to get smartphones from company funds, while less productive people may be more passive. Perhaps productive people earn more and are more likely to be able to buy their own smartphones if the organization doesn't provide them.

A Question of Ethics

What ethical considerations could face researchers collecting primary information?

Consciously search for at least three possible causes for each phenomenon you've observed and at least three possible solutions for each problem. The more possibilities you brainstorm, the more likely you are to find good options. In your report, mention all the possibilities; discuss in detail only those that will occur to readers and that you think are the real reasons and the best solutions.

When you have identified patterns that seem to represent the causes of the problem or the best solutions, check these ideas against reality. Can you find support in the quotes or in the numbers? Can you answer counterclaims? If you can, you will be able to present evidence for your argument in a convincing way.

If you can't prove the claim you originally hoped to make, you will need to revisit your working thesis or modify your conclusions to fit your data. Even when your market test is a failure, you can still write a useful report.

- Identify changes that might yield a different result (e.g., selling the product at a lower price might enable the company to sell more units).
- Discuss circumstances that may have affected the results.
- Summarize your negative findings in progress reports to let readers down gradually and to give them a chance to modify the research design.
- Remember that negative results are not always disappointing to the audience. A report demonstrating that an idea isn't feasible can save people time and money.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Preparing to Make Notes

Recording information efficiently and effectively enables you remember, understand, and retrieve your research. Creating useful notes is a critical information-processing skill.

To begin the process, and to save time and energy, prepare.

- *Define your purpose*. We take different notes for different purposes. Why are you making notes? How are you going to use the notes? How is the information important? What is valuable, and why?
- *Listen*. Defining your purpose helps you focus on what you need to listen to. What do you want to take away? What's the situation? Will you be writing a report? Taking an exam? What will you make notes about? What do you want to remember?
  - ✓ Listen for understanding: What ideas does the speaker emphasize? If you're listening to a prepared lecture or presentation, what ideas does the speaker highlight in the introduction? What does the speaker repeat or stress in the conclusion? What examples and details are relevant to your purpose?
- *Pre-read*. What are you reading? Will it be relevant to your purpose? Save time and energy by browsing the material to ensure that it's going to be useful. Look for the
  - ✓ Information context or medium: Is it an Intranet Web page? Newspaper? Magazine article? Textbook? Reference book?
  - ✓ Organizational pattern: Information is organized (Module 17) according to the expectations of the discourse community (Module 2). Newspapers and well-written Web pages use the inverse pyramid pattern: all the important information is up front, in the first paragraph, and details follow. Scan that paragraph to see if you need or want to read further.
  - ✓ Summaries, overviews, abstracts, headings, and subheadings: These synthesize key ideas.
  - ✓ Illustrations and visuals: These can condense and clarify text (Module 18). Scan to increase understanding and retention.
  - ✓ Level of technical difficulty: If the material is incomprehensible, making notes won't do you much good. Scan for references to other texts. Pre-read these first.
- *Read to understand*. With your purpose in mind, focus only on relevant information.
  - ✓ Look for the main ideas in the topic sentences in each paragraph (usually the first or second sentence).
  - ✓ Look carefully at visuals: What information can you use?
- Decide what you're going to record.

Module 14 describes how to create useful notes.

MODULE SUMMARY

- **Primary research** gathers new information: personal observations, interviews, and surveys are common methods for gathering new information for business documents.
- **Secondary research** retrieves information that someone else has gathered. Library research and online searches are well-known kinds of secondary research.
- Begin your research by narrowing your focus. What are you looking for, and why?
- Draft a **working purpose statement** to clarify your objectives. This purpose statement
  - Narrows your research parameters
  - Structures your document or presentation
  - Becomes part of your document or presentation introduction
- Next ask your reference librarian about the free resources available in your library.
- To research efficiently online use
  - Keyword and Boolean searches
  - Suggested topics searches
  - Advanced searches
  - A variety of search engines
  - RSS feeds
  - Online tools, topics, and tutorials to navigate and narrow your search
- A **survey** questions a large group of people, called **respondents** or **subjects. A questionnaire** is a written list of questions people fill out. An **interview** is a structured conversation with someone who can give you useful information.
- When creating a questionnaire or interview questions, define your terms and phrase questions clearly. Use words that mean the same thing to your respondents as they do to you. Use concrete, quantitative, measurable language.
- Closed questions limit answers to yes or no. Open questions encourage more information. Branching questions direct different respondents to different parts of the questionnaire based on their answers to earlier questions.
- To find credible information sources
  - Check the source: look for an author.
  - Look for credentials.
  - Look for the date.
  - Is the information adapted from other sources? If so, try to get the original.
  - Compare the information with other sources. Internet sources should complement print sources. When facts are correct, you'll likely find them recorded elsewhere.
- To take and create good notes, prepare beforehand.
  - Define your purpose.
  - Listen actively.
  - Pre-read materials.
  - Focus on the material you want to record.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 13

Questions for Critical Thinking

13.1 What two variables must your working statement contain? Why?

13.2 Why look for alternative explanations for your research findings?

13.3 Why should you know the exact way a question was phrased before using results from the study as evidence?

13.4 How should users assess the credibility of a website? What methods would you use for critical evaluation?

13.5 What are two advantages of starting your research with Wikipedia?

Exercises and Problems

13.6 Finding and Using Search Engine Directories

Research "search engine directories" to find a directory you believe would be useful for researchers to know about. Explore the search engine's offerings.

As your instructor directs

- **a.** Prepare a slide presentation describing the search engine's advantages and disadvantages.
- **b.** Write an email to your instructor and fellow students describing the search engine's advantages and disadvantages.

13.7 Finding and Using Web Resources

Visit the Web resources listed below. Evaluate each resource based on the following questions.

1. What information does the site offer?
2. How can you use this information?
3. How reliable is the site, and the information? How do you know?
4. How accessible is the site? Is it easy to navigate? Moderately difficult? Difficult?

Create an annotated bibliography for five of these sites. Refer to www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/annotated-bibliography for examples. Based on questions 1 to 4 above, which sites were helpful to you? Why? Which were not helpful? Why not?

Web Sources Analysis

- http://wiki.ubc.ca/Library:Evaluating_Information_Sources
- http://help.library.ubc.ca/researching/evaluating-internet-sources/
- http://library.queensu.ca/inforef/tutorials/qcat/evalint.htm
- www.ryerson.ca/library/ref/web_resources.html
- http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/tips-for-evaluating-sources.htm
- www.vuw.ac.nz/staff/alastair_smith/evaln/evaln.htm
- http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_evalsource4.html
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reliability_of_Wikipedia

Web Tutorials

- www.internettutorials.net/finding-scholarly-content.asp
- www.internettutorials.net/best-bet-search.asp
- www.internettutorials.net/choose.asp
- www.lib.berkeley.edu/Help/tutorials.php
- https://blog.bufferapp.com/how-we-research-a-look-inside-the-buffer-blog-process

Alternative Search Engines

- www.virtualprivatelibrary.com
- http://ca.yahoo.com/
- www.stumbleupon.com
- www.bing.com/
- www.lycos.com/

YouTube How-To Videos

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBSxK7sUTIo
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yn1QXC0Yevc
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdQeaDN9Qic
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cql_yVUYj6A
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHrGsxSpM5E

As your instructor directs

a. Post your results to the class on a blog or file-sharing application.

b. Present your results in an email to your instructor.

13.8 Evaluating Survey Questions

Evaluate each of the following questions. How acceptable are they? How can you improve them?

a. Questionnaire on grocery purchases

1. Do you usually shop at the same grocery store?
   a. Yes
   b. No
2. Do you buy locally?
   a. Yes
   b. No
3. Do you buy organic produce?
   a. Yes
   b. No
4. Do you buy organic meat?
   a. Yes
   b. No

5. How much is your average grocery bill?
    a. Under $25
    b. $25–50
    c. $50–100
    d. $100–150
    e. More than $150

b. Survey on technology
    1. Would you generally welcome any technological advancement that allowed information to be sent and received more quickly and in greater quantities than ever before?
    2. Do you think that all people should have free access to all information, or do you think that information should somehow be regulated and monitored?
    3. How often do you check your cellular devices?
    4. How many electronic devices do you own?
    5. What social media sites do you check often?

c. Survey on job skills

    How important are the following skills for getting and keeping a professional-level job in Canadian business and industry today?

	Low				High
Ability to communicate	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership ability	1	2	3	4	5
Public presentation skills	1	2	3	4	5
Selling ability	1	2	3	4	5
Teamwork capability	1	2	3	4	5
Writing ability	1	2	3	4	5

13.9 Evaluating Websites

Choose a report topic you would be interested in researching. Find and evaluate seven websites related to the topic of your report. For each, consider

- Author(s)
- Objectivity
- Information
- Revision date

Based on these criteria, which sites are best for your report? Which are unacceptable? Why?

As your instructor directs

a. Share your results with a small group of students.
b. Present your results in an email to your instructor.
c. Create a class blog on your findings.

13.10 Designing Questions for an Interview

Create questions for a 20 to 30 minute interview on one of the following.

- Interview an international student about the forms of greetings and farewells, topics of small talk, forms of politeness, festivals and holidays, meals at home, size of families, and roles of family members in his or her county.
- Interview the owner of a small business about the strategies the owner has used to increase sales and profits, and the success of these strategies, as well as the owner's attitudes toward possible changes in product line, decor, marketing, hiring, advertising, and money management.
- Interview someone who has information you need for a report you're writing.
- Interview someone on any topic of your choice.

Hints: Interview PAIBOC analysis

- Purpose(s), goal(s)
- Subject (who and why)
- Proposed site, length of interview
- Rationale for order of questions, kinds of questions, wording of questions, choice of branching or follow-up questions

As your instructor directs

a. Share your results with a small group of students.
b. Present your results in an email to your instructor.
c. Create a class blog on your findings.

13.11 Creating an Online Survey

To begin your survey design, use free software available through your college or university, or register for free survey apps on any of

- http://esurv.org/surveyEditor.php?survey_ID=LIINKG_fb96a40c
- https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/how-to-create-surveys/
- http://www.sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/project_ideas/Soc_survey.shtml
- http://www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Survey

Use the details in this module and the online instructions to create your survey questionnaire.

Hints: Questionnaire PAIBOC analysis

- Purpose(s), goal(s)
- Subjects (who, why, how many)
- How and where to be distributed
- Rationale for order of questions, kinds of questions, wording of questions

As your instructor directs

a. Create a survey on one of the following topics.
    - Students' knowledge of and interest in the programs and activities sponsored by a student organization
    - Students' knowledge and use of campus services, such as the counselling, health, career, or tutoring centres

- Students' knowledge and use of library resources for research
- Students' concerns about online bullying/harassment
- Students' willingness to pay more for products that use recycled materials and to buy products packaged with a minimum of waste
- Students and faculty environmental awareness habits and concerns
- Students' awareness of a topic that interests you

As your instructor directs

a. Share your results with a small group of students.

b. Present your results in an email to your instructor.

c. Create a class blog on your findings.

13.12 Surveying and Reporting

Together with three of your peers

a. Form a research team and decide on a relevant investigation topic.

b. Choose a topic related to your audience's interests that will elicit interesting and varied responses (tuition fees, transportation to school, part-time work, researching tips and tricks, social media usage, career plans, hobbies, gender miscommunication, post-secondary choices, quality of teaching).

c. Create an online survey questionnaire (minimum five questions) to interview 20 people who would have the information or opinions you seek.

d. Use closed, open, and probing questions to provide you with enough data for analysis.

As your instructor directs

a. Using your findings, prepare a short oral report for the class, with headings and topic sentences, Arrange your information to reflect the way you want your readers to think about the data: **Introduction:** *topic/purpose, scope, method (number of people interviewed, who)*

b. Create slides to summarize your data.

c. Draw conclusions based on your information. You might want to use your questions as headings throughout the report. **Conclusion:** What did you discover? Why might your audience care?

d. Use APA in-text citations and end with a Reference page (Module 14) indicating your sources.

Polishing *your* Prose

Combining Sentences

Combining sentences is a powerful tool to make your writing more concise and more forceful.

When too many sentences in a paragraph have fewer than ten words and follow the same basic pattern, prose is *choppy*. Choppy prose seems less unified and either robotic or frenzied in tone.

Combining short sentences to create longer flowing ones can eliminate this problem.

Choppy I went to the office supply store. I purchased a laptop, a fax machine, and a laser printer. I went to my office. I installed the equipment. I am more efficient.

Better At the office supply store, I purchased a laptop, a fax machine, and a laser printer. After installing the equipment in my office, I am more efficient.

There are several ways to combine sentences.

1. Use **transitions**, words and phrases that signal connections between ideas. Common transitions are *first, second, third, finally, in addition, likewise, for example, however, on the other hand, nevertheless, because, therefore, before, after, while,* and *in conclusion*.

   Choppy Neil drove the truck to the warehouse. Charlie loaded it with cement. Phil supervised the work.

   Better First Neil drove the truck to the warehouse. Then Charlie loaded it with cement, while Phil supervised the work.

2. Rewrite sentences using **subordinate clauses**. A clause with one of the following words will be subordinate: *after*, *although*, *though*, *because*, or *since*.

   Better After Neil drove the truck to the warehouse, Charlie loaded it with cement. Phil supervised the work.

3. Join simple sentences together with *coordinating conjunctions*, such as *and*, *but*, and *or*. These conjunctions can also function as transitional words. Be sure to use the comma before the conjunction when combining two independent clauses.

   Better Neil drove the truck to the warehouse, Charlie loaded it with cement, and Phil supervised the work.

4. Create a list using commas and coordinating conjunctions.

   Choppy Sam put our old files in the storeroom. Sam placed extra copies of the company telephone directory in the storeroom. Sam put boxes of three-ring binders in the storeroom.

   Better Sam put old files, extra copies of the telephone directory, and boxes of three-ring binders in the storeroom.

Exercises

Combine the following sentences to make them easier to read.

1. You can get promoted quickly at our company. Being organized and on time will help. Not meeting deadlines will not help.
2. There are many reasons to choose Canadian Human Resource Planners as your human resources consulting firm. Our organization has more than twenty years in the business. We have regional offices in Calgary and Toronto. Canadian Human Resource Planners has an international membership of members from industry, government, non-profit groups, educational institutions, and consulting firms.
3. Making a Cobb Salad is easy. Creating a Cobb Salad is pretty. Use romaine or iceberg lettuce. Add three hard-boiled eggs. Add some cooked bacon. Add some cooked chicken. Add some blue cheese. Cut up an avocado and add that. Add a fresh tomato. Put the ingredients in a bowl. Separate them. Add a vinaigrette dressing. The result is delicious.
4. The development team members took a plane to Victoria. That was on Friday. They attended a conference. That was on Saturday. They came home. That was on Sunday. On Friday it rained. The team members used umbrellas. The other two days it did not rain. They did not need umbrellas on those days.
5. The tornado plan for our building has five parts. One part is to go to your designated shelter area in the basement of the building. One part is to listen for the tornado alert siren. One part is to sit down on the floor. One part is to take the stairs and not the elevator. One part is to cover your head with your arms.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

Summarizing and Documenting Information

MODULE 14

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 14 you will be familiar with

- **LO1** How to summarize and paraphrase information
- **LO2** How to create good notes
- **LO3** Why researchers document their sources of information
- **LO4** How to cite and document sources legally, ethically, and correctly

By applying the information you will be able to

- **LO5** Write effective summaries and précis
- **LO6** Take useful notes

Module Outline

This module describes how to note and summarize information, how to use in-text citations for business reports, and how to document sources using APA and MLA styles. Throughout this module, APA style in-text citations credit both primary and secondary sources.

LO5 Why Do I Need to Know How to Sum Up Information?

Summarizing is a fundamental learning and retention skill.

Learning how to sum up or synthesize information enables you to

- Clarify the meaning for yourself
- Retain the information
- Apply the information in multiple contexts—personally, academically, professionally

When you summarize data accurately, you capture the meaning.

LO1 How Do I Sum Up Information?

Look for meaning, then create a synopsis, paraphrase, or précis.

We process information by sorting it into meaningful patterns. This pattern-making includes summarizing and paraphrasing. When you **summarize**, you **condense the data** you're hearing or reading. You include only details that capture the meaning.

LO5 Summarizing Documents

Ex. 14.5, 14.7, 14.9

To summarize text, use active reading strategies.

- Pre-read, skim and scan the article, document, or visual (Module 13).
- Identify and analyze the context; use PAIBOC analysis to answer the following questions.
  - ✓ What's the context? Research report? Scholarly journal? Newspaper? Magazine? Blog? University Web page? Intranet page? Social network page? The medium frames the meaning: every discourse community (Module 2) has its own language rules, dependent on purpose and audience. Academic writing, for example, is often longer, denser, and more formal than business writing. Scientific and technical report writers often use the passive voice to meet audience expectations (see Appendix A: Revising and Editing Resources).
  - ✓ What's the purpose of the document, and who is the intended audience?
  - ✓ Who wrote it? What are the author's credentials? What's the evidence of expertise?
  - ✓ How does the writer develop the argument or thesis? What is the pattern of organization? Comparison/contrast? Problem/solution? Elimination of alternatives? (Module 16)
  - ✓ When was it published? How current is it?
  - ✓ What's the language level?
- Find the thesis or main idea in the abstract or in the introduction.

- Read the concluding paragraph. Does it sum up the information? What does it suggest the reader think or do?
- Find the topic sentences that control each paragraph. How are they related to the thesis?
- Look for proof. How does the author support his or her thesis? What's the evidence? Examples? Statistics? Medical or scientific studies? Experiments? Personal experience? Interviews?
- Set the text aside, and jot down or cluster (Module 4) an overview of the material. Note (1) the main idea, (2) the context (3) the author's name, (4) an example or proof, (5) your questions about the material. Figure 14.1 illustrates a cluster summary of these points.
- Reread the document to ensure your summary information is accurate.
- Find the answers to your questions. If it suits your purpose, add them to your summary.
- Record all source data if you are using the information in your report or presentation.
- Ask a peer or friend to check your summary against the original.
- Add anything else that's relevant.

Table 14.2 lists additional Internet information resources you can research and summarize.

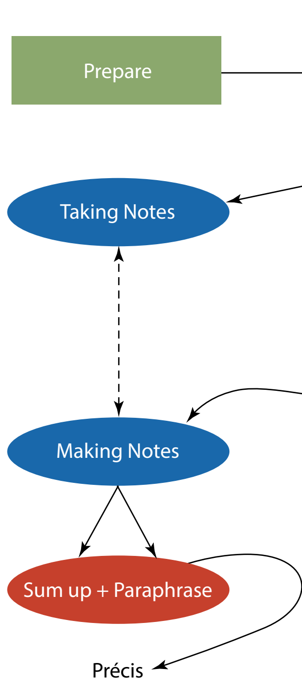
LO5 Summarizing Oral Communications

To summarize a lecture, presentation, interview, or speech

- Listen actively for understanding; identify and analyze the context (Module 19).
  - ✓ Whenever possible, pre-read on the topic.
  - ✓ Listen for an overview. Use PAIBOC analysis: What? Who? Why? When? Where?

FIGURE 14.1

Clustering Information



  - ✓ Identify and note the speaker's purpose.
  - ✓ Identify and note the speaker's expectations of his or her audience.
  - ✓ Listen for and note the thesis.
  - ✓ Identify and analyze the organizational pattern. How does the speaker develop the argument or thesis (Module 16)?
  - ✓ Listen for the proof. Note evidence: examples, statistics, opinions.
  - ✓ Listen for and note points of emphasis.
  - ✓ Listen for and note the close. How does the speaker sum up? What does the speaker want the audience to think or do?
  - ✓ Read the handouts or supplementary material if provided.
  - ✓ Note your questions. What is unclear? What else do you need to know to understand?
  - ✓ Ask your questions, if appropriate to the situation.
- Jot down or cluster (Figure 14.1) an overview of the material: (1) the thesis or main idea, (2) the speaker's name, if relevant to your purpose, (3) evidence and examples, (4) points of emphasis, and (5) the conclusion.
- Check your summary for accuracy.
  - ✓ If possible, ask the speaker to confirm that you have heard and understood all relevant information.
  - ✓ Read related documents.
  - ✓ If possible, compare your summary with that of another audience member.
- Add any other relevant information.

LO5 Paraphrasing

Ex. 14.5, 14.7–14.9

When you **paraphrase**, you put information *into your own words* while maintaining the meaning and the approximate length of the original. Accurately paraphrasing the speaker's words reflects active listening (Module 19).

When you both paraphrase and summarize information, you create a **précis**. A précis interprets, translates, and condenses

- While listening actively (Module 19) during a presentation, lecture or interview
- While listening actively to provide feedback
- When reading material you want to learn
- When translating research data to incorporate the ideas into your reports

When you paraphrase or précis another person's words to include them in your oral and written reports, you don't use quotation marks because the ideas are now in your own words. *However, you must credit the original source of the information with an in-text citation or footnote and in your references.*

TABLE 14.1

Sources for Web Research, Analysis, and Synthesis

Alternatives to Playing Candy Crush

Free smartphone library and learning apps
http://www.accreditedonlineuniversities.com/75-apps-to-turn-your-iphone-into-the-ultimate-personal-library/

Canadian Government Information

Statistics Canada
http://www.statcan.ca
Most recent five years of data, constantly updated
http://www40.statcan.ca/ol/esto1
Profile of Canadian communities, tables for more than 5000 Canadian communities from most recent census, with the ability to create local base maps
http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/home/index.cfm

Canada Business Service Centres
www.cbsc.org

Canada's Business and Consumer Site
www.strategis.ic.gc.ca

Environment Canada
www.ec.gc.ca

Subject Matter Directories

AccountingNet
www.acountingnet.com

The Computer User High Tech Dictionary
www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/Dictionary.html

Education Index
www.educationindex.com

International Business Kiosk
www.calintel.org/kiosk

Management and Entrepreneurship
www.lib.lsu.edu/bus/management/html

The WWW Virtual Library: Marketing
www.knowthis.com

Reference Collections

Britannica Online
www.eb.com

CEO Express
www.ceoexpress.com

Hoovers Online (information on more than 13,000 public and private companies worldwide)
www.hoovers.com/free

Reference Desk
www.refdesk.com

Interactive Atlas of Canada
http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/earth-sciences/geography/atlas-canada

News Sites

Most Popular Business Websites EBizMBA
http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/ebusiness-websites

CBC News
www.cbc.ca/news

CBC Radio
http://cbc.ca/programguide

***Business Week* Online**
www.businessweek.com

***Canadian Business* Online**
www.canadianbusiness.com

The *Globe and Mail* Online
www.globeandmail.com

***Maclean's* Online**
www.macleans.ca

The *National Post* Online
www.nationalpost.com

The *New York Times* Online
www.nyt.com

The *Wall Street Journal* Online
www.wsj.com

Your library offers billions of bytes of information.

LO2 LO3 LO6

How Do I Use My Research?

Use sources strategically; integrate them seamlessly; credit them correctly.

Ex. 14.1–14.5

Researching includes (1) using relevant information to support your point of view, (2) incorporating that information so that it fits seamlessly into your story, and (3) crediting the source of the information with citations and documentation.

Lethbridge Alberta's Wikkerink brothers sold *Dragons' Den* entrepreneurs on the superiority of their research and the quality of their product. The Screamin Brothers Limited allergen-free ice cream "is now available in 200 stores across the country" including Whole Foods (Financial Post, 2014).

Courtesy of Screamin Brothers Ltd., CBC, and Carmen Cheung, photographer

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Taking Great Notes

Note-taking is not duplicating information verbatim, but translating and recording information in a way *that informs you*. The best notes encode and encapsulate meaning. This interpreting and synthesizing process uses both critical and creative thinking skills.

- First, you have to know *why* you are recording the information; then you have to focus on, filter, analyze, organize, and interpret the information to understand *what* you should record (Module 13).
- You use creative thinking when you note the information in a way that is both meaningful and memorable for you.
- Once you have identified your purpose, the context, and the content you want to record, experiment to find the most efficient note-taking system for you.

Try the following strategies.

- Test all available tools. Don't assume that creating e-notes is the best method for you; indeed, research indicates that note-taking by hand offers significant learning advantages (Pamela Meuller and Daniel Oppenheimer, 2014; *Science Daily*, 2011).
- Try
  - ✓ Taking notes in longhand or by stylus
  - ✓ Recording information on small note cards—one idea, quotation, summary, or paraphrase, with bibliographic information, per card; you can then organize your report information by rearranging the cards
  - ✓ Creating doodle notes, jot-dots, clusters
- Use alphabetic shorthand, as you do when you text. For example, you might write "You cite your sources even when you use your own words" as

  U cte yr srcs evn whn u uz yr wn wrds

- Use common symbols as a shorthand code.

TABLE 14.2

Note-Taking Symbols

Common Note-Taking Symbols	
& or +	and, plus, with (the ampersand is rather difficult to draw freehand; many people use a simple squiggle to represent it)
–	minus, without
=	equals, is the same as, results in
≠	does not equal, is not the same as, does not result in
≈	is approximately equal to, is similar to
<	is less than, is smaller than
>	is greater than, is larger than
↑	increase, rise, growth
⇈	rapid increase
↓	decrease, fall, shrinkage
⇊	rapid decrease
⇒ or ∴	therefore, thus
→	leads on to, produces, causes
x	no, not, incorrect
xx	definitely not, disproved
?	uncertain, possibly, unproven
✓	yes, correct
✓✓	definitely, certain, proven
#	number
*	special, important, notable (when added to a word or phrase)
/	per (e.g., £50/day instead of *fifty pounds per day*)
∞	infinity
Some Common General Abbreviations	
c.	approximately, roughly, about (abbreviation for the Latin *circa*)
e.g.	for example
i.e.	in other words (usually used when adding more detail or an explanation)
cf.	compared to, by comparison with
w/	with
w/o	without
v.	very
vv.	extremely
C	century (e.g., C19 for *nineteenth century*)
etc.	and so on
K or k	a thousand (e.g., 500K for *five hundred thousand*)
m	a million (e.g., $6m for *six million dollars*)
vs.	against

Source: http://www.lsbm.ac.uk/assets/pdf/Helpful-abbreviations-for-speedy-note-taking.pdf

- Create your own code. Make your own symbols to summarize, organize, and emphasize information.
  - ✓ Use mind mapping (Module 4) to note patterns, sequences, hierarchies, and relationships.
  - ✓ Use spacing, different-size fonts, and different colours to highlight information you want to emphasize.
  - ✓ Keep a separate section with reminders about any follow-up that's required: questions, unclear information, and additional resources.

Creating purposeful notes is an acquired skill that depends on your understanding of both content and context. Learning to take great notes is easier when you practise daily, read widely and frequently, and have an extensive vocabulary. Competent note-takers use PAIBOC to analyze purpose and audience, and to recognize the pattern the writer or speaker is using to organize the information.

LO4 Using Quotations

When you quote words and phrases, "integrate them [into your text] as smoothly as possible" to ensure consistency (St. Francis Xavier University, 2012b).

Introduce a full sentence quote with a colon.

> Journalist and professor Leslie Butler is adamant about the ethical ramifications of plagiarism: "It's a personal violation" (L. Butler, July 8, 2015).

Introduce a word or phrase with a comma.

> Plagiarism, as journalist and professor Leslie Butler insists, "is a personal violation" (L. Butler, July 8, 2015).

For long quotations: Indent long quotations on the left and right to set them off from your text. Indented quotations do not need quotation marks; the indentation shows the reader that the passage is a quotation.

Introduce the quotation with a summary sentence that reflects the main point of the quotation. End the sentence with a colon, since it introduces the quotation.

> Researchers believe that manual note-taking is superior to keyboarding for both learning and retention:
>
> > …laptop use can negatively affect performance on educational assessments, even—or perhaps especially—when the computer is used for its intended function of easier note taking…For that reason, laptop use in classrooms should be viewed with a healthy dose of caution; despite their growing popularity, laptops may be doing more harm in classrooms than good. (http://journalistsresource.org/studies/society/education/longhand-versus-laptop-note-taking)

You can also interrupt a quotation to analyze, clarify, or question it. When you add or change words to clarify the quotation, or to make the quotation fit the grammar of your sentence, use square brackets [ ] around the new or changed words. Omit any words in the original source that are not essential for your purposes. Use an ellipsis (…) to indicate omissions.

LO5 Using Your Summaries and Paraphrases

When you summarize and/or translate other's ideas or words, make sure that the rephrasing

- Fits seamlessly into the sentence
- Demonstrates, reinforces or proves the point you are making
- Gives credit to the originator (St. Francis Xavier University, 2012a)

LO4 Crediting Your Sources

Citation means attributing an idea, quote, paraphrase, or précis to its original source.

> "According to the 2012 Census…"

> "Jane Bryant Quinn argues that…"

Documentation means providing the bibliographic information (in an APA References page or a MLA Works Cited page) your readers need to find the original source.

LO3 Why Must I Document My Sources?

Citing your sources of information protects you from charges of plagiarism, demonstrates your honesty, and enhances your credibility.

Ex. 14.1–14.5, 14.7–14.9

Copyright laws protect people's creative output:

> Any original literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work is automatically protected by copyright the moment it's created. The work's creator is usually held to be the copyright owner. However, an employer has copyright for works created by employees unless there is an agreement to the contrary. (Canadian Intellectual Property Office http://www.cipo.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/wr03719.html?Open&wt_src=cipo-cpyrght-main, 2014)

People do not own ideas, but can own the expression of those ideas. For example: "There have been many movies about Pirates, but only one Jack Sparrow" (Click & Copyright, n.d. http://www.clickand-copyright.com/copyright-resources/copyright-infringement.aspx).

Legally, therefore, researchers are required to identify the source of information that they do not originate. *You must credit the source even when you put that information into your own words or recreate a visual with your own software.*

Not doing so—intentionally or unintentionally—means you are *plagiarizing, or stealing someone else's work.* Academic penalties can include a grade failure or expulsion. In business, you can be sued for damages and lost revenue.

You are also *ethically responsible for crediting the ideas, facts, figures, symbols, and words of others.* Using someone else's work without giving him or her credit violates the individual's personal and professional rights. Doing so, even unintentionally, can damage your reputation.

Correctly documenting your sources also *makes you look good.* Investigating and citing a wide range of sources on your topic demonstrate your competence and your analytical and critical thinking skills. Using a variety of authoritative sources

- Suggests alternative points of view that lead to new insights
- Provides you with the evidence you need to develop and prove your point of view

Documenting your research ethically demonstrates your skills and professionalism.

LO4 How Should I Document My Sources?

Use your organization's preferred format, or APA or MLA format.

Ex. 14.7–14.9

The two most widely used formats for endnotes and bibliographies are those of the **American Psychological Association** (APA) and the **Modern Language Association** (MLA). (This module uses APA in-text citations.) Figure 14.2 shows APA documentation style for the sources in this module.

APA style is used to cite and document sources in business, technology, and social sciences. APA in-text citations give authors' last names and the date of the work in parentheses in the text. Use an ampersand between the names of two authors (Paiz & Angeli, 2012) or commas and an ampersand for multiple authors (Paiz, Angeli, Wagner, Lawrick, Moore, & Anderson, 2012), then a comma and the publication year. If there are more than six authors, use the name of the first author followed by the abbreviation et al., which means *and others* (Paiz et al., 2012) Only give the page number for a direct quotation (Paiz et al., 2012, p. 74). If you use the author's name(s) in the sentence, give only the date in parentheses.

The APA **References** page provides the full bibliographic citations, arranged alphabetically by the first author's last name.

FIGURE 14.2

APA Format for Documenting Sources

References

American Psychological Association. (2014). *APA style*. Retrieved from www.apastyle.org.

Association for Psychological Science. (2014, April 24). *Take notes by hand for better long-term comprehension*. Retrieved from http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/releases/take-notes-by-hand-for-better-long-term-comprehension.html

Bitti, M. (2014, November 17). Brothers' ice cream melts dragon's hearts. *Financial Post*. p.5.

Click & Copyright. (n.d.). *Copyright infringement*. Retrieved from www.clickandcopyright.com/copyright-resources/copyright-infringement.aspx

Hampton, M. University of Portsmouth. (OW11: 08/10) Helpful abbreviations for speedy note-taking. University of Portsmouth. Retrieved from http://www.lsbm.ac.uk/assets/pdf/Helpful-abbreviations-for-speedy-note-taking.pdf

Industry Canada (2014). *What is copyright? Ottawa: Canadian Intellectual Property Office*. Retrieved from http://www.cipo.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/wr03719.html?Open&wt_src=cipo-cpyrght-main,%202014)

Journalist's Resource. (2014, July 30). *The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking*. Retrieved from journalistsresource.org/studies/society/education/longhand-versus-laptop-note-taking

Mind Tools Ltd. (1996–2014). *Mind maps, a powerful approach to note taking*. Retrieved from http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS_01.htm

Modern Language Association of America. (2009). *MLA handbook for writers of research papers*. (7th ed.). New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

Paiz, J. M., Angeli, E., Wagner, J., Lawrick, E., Moore, K., Anderson, M., Soderlund, L., Brizee, A., & Keck, R. (2012). *Reference list: Electronic sources* (web publications). *Purdue Online Writing Lab*. Retrieved from http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/10/

St. Francis Xavier University. (2012). *Plagiarism*. Angus L.Macdonald Library. Retrieved from http://library.stfx.ca/help/plagiarism.php

St. Francis Xavier University. (2012b). *Quoting and paraphrasing*. The Writing Centre. Retrieved from http://sites.stfx.ca/writingcentre/Quoting_and_Paraphrasing

Science Daily. (2014, January 11). *Better learning through handwriting*. Retrieved from http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/01/110119095458.htm

Note: Emails and interviews by researcher are not listed in References. Identify emails and your interviews in the text as personal communications. Give name of author or interviewee and as specific a date as possible. Example: (L. Butler, personal communication, July 8, 2015).

Formatting styles, like language itself, constantly evolve; you can find APA (www.apa.org) and MLA (www.mla.org) updates on their respective home pages. And you can find free citing and documenting sources software at http://elearningindustry.com/14-best-online-bibliography-and-citation-tools.

Although citation software, like all technology, is always evolving, it still cannot think for itself. Be aware that the software creates errors (like not capitalizing proper names); if you use it, be prepared to edit thoroughly.

"MLA…style is most commonly used to write papers and cite sources within the liberal arts and humanities" (Paiz et al., 2012b). MLA in-text citations give the author's last name and page number in parentheses in the text. Example: (Paiz and Angeli 74). If you use the author's name in the sentence, give only the page number (74). The **Works Cited** provides the full bibliographic citation, arranged alphabetically by author's last name.

MODULE SUMMARY

- To summarize and/or paraphrase information effectively
    - Prepare: Identify your purposes; pre-read; clarify the context.
    - Listen or read for a broad overview. Look for meaning.
    - Make sure you understand the material; if you don't, keep reading, read other sources, and ask questions until you do.
    - Create your own memorable and meaningful notes.
- To summarize and/or paraphrase information legitimately, ethically, and professionally, document your sources.
- Identifying your sources of information demonstrates your honesty, enhances your credibility, and protects you from charges of **plagiarism**—the conscious or unconscious theft of others' work.
- **Copyright laws** protect people's creative output; you are legally responsible for attributing intellectual property to its owner.
- Using someone else's work without giving credit is also unethical, since it violates the author's personal and professional rights.
- Academic penalties can include a grade failure or expulsion; in business, you can be sued for damages and revenue.
- As you research, document your sources immediately; this habit will save you hours of time and labour when composing your final copy.
- **Citation** means providing the source in the body of the report. When citing sources pay attention to the order of the words and the punctuation. When you use a short quotation that is part of the main body of the text, the sentence period goes after the in-text citation. In a long indented quotation (about 30 words or more), the page number, in parentheses, follows the period at the end of the sentence.
- **Documentation** means giving the bibliographic information readers need to find the original source.
    - **APA** and **MLA** are the most commonly used formats for documenting references and endnotes.
    - Free online software formats your bibliographic information.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 14

Questions for Critical Thinking

14.1 What kind of information would you find most difficult to summarize or paraphrase? Why?

14.2 What is unintentional plagiarism? What three strategies can you use to avoid it?

14.3 During a casual lunch conversation, a person at your table makes a comment that gives you a brilliant idea you can use in your report. Should you credit the person? Why or why not?

14.4 How can a researcher using only secondary sources come up with original material?

Exercises and Problems

14.5 Citing Social Media Sources

How do researchers cite and document their social media sources? Research three online sources to find the correct way to cite social media using APA style.

- **a.** Create notes—either electronically or manually—describing how to cite three popular social media sites.
- **b.** Write an email to your instructor describing the process; attach your e-notes or scan your longhand notes.
- **c.** Create a References page to document both your style guides and social media sites. Attach this page to your email.

14.6 Creating Notes on a Blog

Find a blog on a topic of interest to you. Create notes on the blog.

Before you begin, be sure to

1. Know your purpose. You are making notes to *write a précis* of the information (see Exercise 14.7).
2. Know your audiences. You are creating notes *for your peers, your instructor, and yourself*.
3. Read all these directions and all of the blog *before* making your notes.
4. Pre-read the blog. Skim and scan for context and meaning: skim the material; scan for headings, subheadings, and visuals; note white space, bold, italics, and underlining.
5. Read the blog again as you make your notes. Identify and note the
    - Author, his or her credentials, evidence of expertise
    - Purpose of and audiences for the document
    - Organizational pattern: How does the author develop the argument? Direct or indirect pattern? Chronological? Problem/solution? Functional? Spatial? Elimination of alternatives? (Module 16)
    - Controlling idea or thesis of the blog
    - Three different ways the author proves or demonstrates his or her argument

- Level of difficulty: Is the blog easy to understand? Moderately easy? Difficult? Impossible? Note why you think so.
- Most significant idea you learned by reading the blog
- One way you will apply what you learned
- Questions or information you want to follow up on

Create your notes manually or digitally.

As your instructor directs

a. Use APA or MLA style to credit the source you chose.

b. Exchange notes with at least one peer (more is better) who has created notes on a different source. Read his or her notes. Provide feedback. (1) Do you understand the information based on reading the notes? What information is unclear? Why? (2) What note-taking strategies strike you as unusual, innovative, or particularly useful? Why? Then listen to the other person's feedback about your notes.

c. Reread and revise your notes based on the feedback, if necessary.

d. If you created electronic notes, send these as an email attachment to your instructor and the rest of the class. Be sure to include your APA or MLA documentation.

e. If you created handwritten notes, scan and send these as an email attachment to your instructor and the rest of the class. Be sure to include your APA or MLA documentation.

14.7 Writing a Précis of a Blog

Précis the original document you chose in Exercise 14.6, using only the notes you created and revised.

- Draft a summary of the blog.
- Translate the summary into your own words.
- Revise the paraphrase to one-third its length.

As your instructor directs

a. Use APA or MLA style to credit the source.

b. Exchange your précis with at least one peer (more is better) who has made a précis of a different source. Read his or her précis. Read the original source. Provide feedback. (1) How clear is the précis? Does the précis capture the meaning of the original? What information is missing? Does the précis writer use his or her own words? If not, what words or phrases would have to be put in quotations? Why? (2) How concise is the précis? Is it a third of the original? If not, does the précis writer have good reasons for the length? What are the reasons? Now listen to the other person's feedback on your précis.

c. Reread and revise your précis based on the feedback, if necessary.

d. Send your précis as an email attachment to your instructor and the rest of the class. Be sure to include your APA or MLA documentation.

e. In the email itself, describe what you found most difficult about writing the précis. Identify one specific way you can apply précis writing.

14.8 Researching and Tweeting Plagiarism Scandals

Research recent plagiarism scandals (including people stealing others' blogs and tweets!) and take notes on the details. Using your notes, create a tweet on the scandal you found most interesting/surprising/shocking.

As your instructor directs

a. Send your tweet to your instructor and other students.

b. Tweet the person whose work was stolen.

c. Retweet any response to your instructor and other students.

14.9 Creating Notes and a Précis on a Multimedia Source

Find a podcast or webinar tutorial on any of the topics mentioned in Modules 13 and 14. (Possibilities include copyright; the legal, ethical, or professional implications of research; academic versus business research; and how to add in-text citations, choose a document style, paraphrase, avoid plagiarism, use quotations, write a précis, take notes, write summaries, or synopsize.)

1. Prepare to take handwritten or digital notes on the material.
2. Watch, listen to, and read the resource at least three times. Take notes.
3. Using only your notes, précis the material for the class, your instructor, and yourself.

As your instructor directs

a. Use APA or MLA style to credit the source.

b. Send your précis as an email attachment to your instructor and the rest of the class. Be sure to include your APA or MLA documentation.

c. In the email itself, write a paragraph describing any differences between writing a précis of a written document and writing a précis of a multimedia source. How was it different? Was the difference due to content? To the medium? To your experience of having already done summaries and paraphrases? Explain.

Polishing *your* Prose

Making Pronouns Agree with Their Nouns

Pronouns stand in for nouns, and must agree with the nouns they refer to, so that your meaning is clear to your reader.

For the sake of clarity, make your pronouns agree in person (first, second, third) and number (singular, plural) with the nouns they replace.

	Singular	Plural
First person	I, my, mine,	we, our, us,
	me, myself	ourselves
Second person	you, your,	you, your,
	yourself	yourselves
Third person	he, she, it, him,	they, their, them,
	her, his, hers	themselves

Incorrect	In my internship, I learned that you have to manage your time wisely.
Correct	In my internship, I learned to manage my time wisely.
Incorrect	The sales team reached their goal.
Correct	The sales team reached its goal. (*Team* is a collective or group noun, and takes a singular verb and pronoun.)

In Canada and the United States, company names and the words *company* and *government* are singular nouns. In Great Britain, these nouns are plural and require plural pronouns.

Correct (Canadian)	Clarica trains its agents well.
Correct (U.S.)	Nationwide Insurance trains its agents well.
Correct (U.K.)	Lloyd's of London train their agents well.

Exercises

Identify and correct any errors. Note that some sentences do not contain errors.

1. An administrative assistant should help their boss work efficiently.
2. The mayor should give themselves credit for doing a good job.
3. The company announces their quarterly profits today.
4. Most new employees find that they need to learn a new culture.
5. A CEO's pay is often based on the performance of their company.
6. The union votes today on whether they will go on strike.
7. In my first month of work, I learned that you need to check email at least three times a day.
8. One of the features of my corporate culture is a willingness to share ideas.
9. The team will present its recommendations to the Executive Committee.
10. Every employee is interested in improving their technical skills.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

Writing Information Reports

MODULE 15

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 15 you will be familiar with

- LO1 Types of reports
- LO2 The importance of writing good purpose statements
- LO3 Informal report writing style

After applying the information you will be able to

- LO4 Compose information reports
- LO5 Begin to develop a writing style

Module Outline

Reports provide the information that people in organizations need to record information and to plan, make decisions, and solve problems. Usually reports are written *upward* in an organization: supervisors and managers assign report topics and timelines to subordinates.

Your workplace may have report templates. However, these templates may include dated language and redundant sections.[1] Use language and a report format specific to your audience's needs and your purposes.

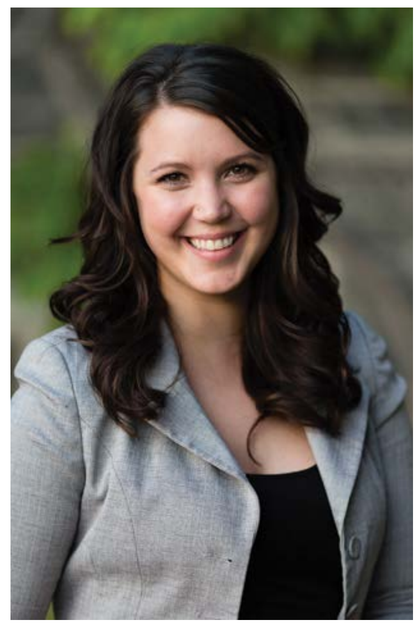
LO1 What Is a Report?

Many different kinds of documents serve as reports.

Ex. 15.1–15.3

In some organizations, one- and two-page memos are called reports. In other organizations, a report is a long document with illustrations and numerical data. Still other companies produce slides as a report.

Informal reports may be letters and memos, slide presentations, website summaries, business cases, or even computer printouts of production or sales figures. **Formal reports** contain formal elements such as a title page, a letter or memo transmittal page, a table of contents, and a list of illustrations (see Module 17). Reports can provide information, provide information and analyze it, and provide information and analysis to support a recommendation (see Table 15.1).



Rachael Dagonas

Rachael Dagonas, Communications and Marketing Coordinator, Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services, writes, revises, and edits a variety of reports for this not-for-profit organization. Many of these reports raise community awareness about the services Polycultural offers; the reports also encourage government and public funding. As part of the writing process, Rachael meets with other organization employees to get feedback on the documents.

What Do Reports Have in Common?

Reports contain an **introduction**, **body**, and **conclusion**.

- The *introduction* establishes context for readers; it could include
  - ✓ A lead-in sentence: "This report describes…"
  - ✓ A purpose statement: "The purpose of this report is to…"
  - ✓ The scope of the report: "In this report I explain the need for the program, and its structure and costs."
  - ✓ A summary of findings or results: "Employee feedback for the program was overwhelmingly positive."
- The *body* presents specifics (facts, figures, statistics, examples, visuals) the audience needs to understand a situation and, in some cases, to make a decision.
- The *conclusion* summarizes the most important information covered in the body and can include
  - ✓ Recommendations, if the report's purpose is to effect change or solve a problem
  - ✓ Supplementary material the audience may want (appendices, questionnaires)
  - ✓ References, when the report uses secondary sources of information (Modules 13 and 14)

TABLE 15.1

Types of Reports

A report's purpose(s) and audience expectations determine the type of report you will write. Of course, PAIBOC analysis also helps you decide on the report's format, organizational pattern, and information, and on its length, language, level of formality, and channel(s) of distribution.

Progress and information
• **Conference, trip, and periodic reports** sum up situation status. • **Incident reports** describe health and safety issues. • **Sales reports** give sales figures for the week or month. • **Quarterly reports** show productivity and profits for the quarter.
Information plus analysis
• **Annual reports** detail financial data and an organization's accomplishments over the past year. • **Audit reports** interpret facts revealed during an audit. • **Make-good or payback reports** calculate the point at which a new capital investment will pay for itself. • **Technical reports** describe scientific/technical processes. • **Business plans** describe and analyze business, market, and financial projections.
Information plus analysis plus a recommendation
• **Feasibility and yardstick reports** analyze and evaluate possibilities, and recommend what the organization should do. • **Justification reports** justify the need for a purchase, an investment, a new hire, or a change in procedure. • **Problem-solving reports** identify the causes of an organizational problem and recommend a solution. • **Proposals** analyze a need and recommend a solution.

FIGURE 15.1

PAIBOC Questions for Analysis

P	Why are you writing the report? What is the report's **purpose**? What is the situation? What results do you want? Are you updating your supervisor on your progress? Introducing a new policy or initiative? Reporting a health and safety issue? Asking for time and money to attend a conference? Justifying buying an expensive piece of equipment? Analyzing the feasibility of an idea?
A	Who is your **audience**? What are your audience's expectations? Does your audience want/need updates? Information? Analysis? Justification? What does your audience value? What is important to your audience? What evidence will convince them?
I	What **information** must your message include? What does your audience already know? What do they need to know? What kind of information will your audience find most persuasive?
B	What reasons or reader **benefits** can you use to support your position? If your solution will cost the reader time or money, what benefits—to the organization, the audience, your colleagues—can you use to rationalize or outweigh those costs?
O	What **objections** can you expect your readers to have? What negative elements of your message must you de-emphasize or overcome? *One important objection is time*: how long will it take your audience to read your report? To overcome that objection, revise your report for clarity and conciseness, edit it for correctness, and have a friend, colleague, or family member proof it.
C	How will the **context** affect the reader's response? Think about your relationship to the reader, the organizational culture and morale, the current economic situation, the time of year, and any special circumstances.

LO2 What Do I Do Before I Write Any Report?

Do your research. Define the situation. Draft a purpose statement.

Ex. 15.4, 15.5

Creating a report includes

- Analyzing and identifying the situation
- Gathering and analyzing the necessary information
- Organizing the information
- Drafting the report
- Revising and editing the report
- Submitting the report

Before you begin to research and draft your report, you need to analyze your purposes and audiences. Part of this process involves defining the situation the report will address.

Your analysis will help you to define the situation or problem. However, you may need to narrow your focus. For example, "we need to use social media more productively" is too broad to use as a topic. Instead, identify the situation and narrow the perspective:

- Employees use social media on company time.
- We need to identify *what* social media are attracting employees, and *why*—what positives are employees getting out of it?
- We need to analyze *how* employees' social media use can benefit the organization.

Your purpose statement might then be "Our social media policy needs to encourage employee participation in ways that benefit the company." Your audience might be your boss and colleagues.

Remember that *how you define the problem shapes the solutions you find*. For example, suppose that a manufacturer of frozen foods isn't making money. If the researcher defines the situation as a marketing problem, s/he may analyze the product's price, image, advertising, and position in the market. But perhaps the real problem is that overhead costs are too high due to poor inventory management, or that an inadequate distribution system does not get the product to its target market. Defining the problem accurately is essential to finding an effective solution.

Writing Purpose Statements

Once you've defined your problem or situation, you're ready to write a purpose statement (also covered in Module 13). The purpose statement goes in the introduction and serves as the organizing principle of every report.

A good **purpose statement** defines

- The situation or problem
- The specific information that must be explored, or questions that must be answered, to resolve the situation or solve the problem
- The report's purpose: for example, to explain, to inform, to recommend, to propose, to prove, to request

The following purpose statements have all three elements.

Current management methods keep the elk population within the carrying capacity of the habitat but require frequent human intervention. Both wildlife conservation specialists and the public would prefer methods that controlled the elk population naturally.

This report will compare the current short-term management techniques (hunting, trapping and transporting, and winter feeding) with two long-term management techniques, habitat modification and the reintroduction of predators. The purpose of this report is to recommend which techniques or combination of techniques would best satisfy the needs of conservationists, hunters, and the public.

Report Audience: Parks Canada Agency, responsible for Alberta's Elk Island National Park

Situation or problem

Organization pattern, method of development

Scope: Information report explores

Purpose: To recommend

Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) is rebating millions of dollars each year to companies that have been found guilty of offences that resulted in employees being killed in workplace accidents.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of occupational health and safety. Hundreds of Ontario workers die every year because of work-related traumatic accidents or diseases.

Recommendation 1:
The WSIB should be subject to regular oversight by a body with expertise and the clout to hold it accountable.

Recommendation 2:
The WSIB should scrap its experience rating system in all its forms and the resulting savings should be reinvested into workplace health and safety, as well as compensation for injured workers and their families.

Report Audience: Government of Ontario and Ontario Federation of Labour decision-makers, public

Source: Ontario Federation of Labour report, *Rewarding Offenders*, November 2014, http://ofl.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2014.11.24-Report-WSIB.Exp_.Rating.pdf

Situation or problem

Information to be explored

Purpose: To effect change

A major insight into human behavior from pre-Internet era studies of communication is the tendency of people not to speak up about policy issues in public—or among their family, friends, and work colleagues—when they believe their own point of view is not widely shared. This tendency is called the "spiral of silence."*

Some social media creators and supporters have hoped that social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter might produce enough different discussion venues that those with minority views might feel freer to express their opinions,thus broadening public discourse and adding new perspectives to everyday discussion of political issues.

The survey cited in this report sought people's opinions about the Snowden leaks, their willingness to talk about the revelations in various in-person and online settings, and their perceptions of the views of those around them in a variety of online and offline contexts.

Overall, the findings indicate that, in the Snowden case, social media did not provide new forums where those who might otherwise remain silent could express their opinions and debate issues. Further, if people thought their friends and followers in social media disagreed with them, they were less likely to say they would state their views on the Snowden-NSA story online or in other contexts, such as gatherings of friends, neighbors, or co-workers.

*Noelle-Neumann, E. (1974). "The spiral of silence: A theory of public opinion." *Journal of Communication*, 24(2): 43-51.

Report Audience: Media, sociologists, politicians, public

Keith Hampton, Lee Rainie, Weixu Lu, Maria Dwyer, Inyoung Shin, and Kristen Purcell, August 26, 2014, "Social Media and the Spiral of Silence," PewResearchCenter. http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/08/26/social-media-and-the-spiral-of-silence/

Situation or problem

Situation or problem

Purpose: To inform and persuade

To write a good purpose statement, you have to understand the basic situation, or problem, and have some idea of the questions that your report will answer. You can (and should) write a working purpose statement (Module 13) to help focus your research, but expect to change your purpose statement as a result of your research findings.

LO3 LO4 What Types of Short Reports Will I Write?

You will write summary reports, documenting information.

Ex. 15.4, 15.6–15.8

Supervisors expect employees to report information using short, informal documents. These internal reports summarize work, conferences, and sales trips, and describe work progress and health and safety incidents, using memo format (Modules 6 and 7).

Information and Closure Reports

An **information report** summarizes your work or research to date. Similarly, a **closure report** summarizes a project and assesses the results.

Information and closure reports include

- An *introduction paragraph*, summarizing the report topic, purposes, and most important outcomes, from the reader's perspective
- An *account* of how the problem was identified plus the subsequent actions and results
- A *concluding paragraph* assessing the success of the project or work

Depending on the writer's purpose, the conclusion might include suggestions for further action. See Figures 15.2 and 15.3 for examples of these two types of reports.

Conference and Trip Reports

Conference reports update your supervisor on industry trends. They also justify the organizational expenditure (in your time and travel costs) by explaining the benefits to the audience. If your organization does not use templates, put the most significant information (for the audience) up front, and try to keep your report to a page or less. An example of a conference report appears in Figure 15.4.

Managers may accompany novice salespeople on client calls and record their observations about the representative's performance. These follow-up **trip reports** are kept in the rep's file for reference and may be copied to sales directors. Figure 15.5 shows an example of a trip report.

Incident Reports

Ex. 14.5

To protect employees, and themselves, most Canadian organizations comply with federal and provincial health and safety regulations. These regulations include **Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System** (WHMIS) training and incident reporting.

Usually your organization will use a template for an **incident report**. When you record an incident, use bullets or brief sentences to describe exactly what happened. Put the information in chronological order, note only observable behaviours, and do not record your inferences, assumptions, or feelings. See Figure 15.6 for an example.

FIGURE 15.2

Information Report, Memo Format

From: Pei Qui
Sent: April 20, 2016
To: Doug Perrin, Operations Manager
Subject: Employee Writing Needs Assessment

Hi Doug,

Over the last month, Dennis MacDonald and I collected and assessed the information you requested about employees' writing concerns. We created a two-page, online survey and sent it to all employees. We held eight interdepartmental focus groups and interviewed managers of five departments: Accounting, Engineering, Human Resources, Sales and Marketing, and Research and Development. Altogether, we spoke to 76 people and received 383 surveys.

Here are our findings and suggestions for next steps.

What We Write

The survey results and interviews indicate that every employee writes emails.

Additionally, employees write any or all of
- Letters
- Reports, including project and final project reports, proposals, RFPs, technical descriptions, feasibility, audits, studies, and formal technical reports
- Contracts
- Research papers
- Articles
- Manuals
- Meeting minutes

What We Want

People were consistent in their concerns. Everyone wanted support in grammar, proofreading, editing, and tone. Additionally, employees said they wanted help with

- Formatting, consistency, and unity
- Writing concisely
- Writing clearly
- Organizing information
- Using appropriate language

Employees had very different opinions about how to learn these skills. The majority liked the idea of onsite training. Others would prefer to take an e-course or get coaching.

We need more information to make a decision. Dennis and I need to research the costs for people's preferences. Please let me know if we should go ahead and when you would like the information.

Regards,
Pei Qui

FIGURE 15.3

Closure Report, Memo Format, Email Attachment

From: Irene Kaushansky, Staff Training and Development   Sent: March 15, 2016
To: Rob Dhillon, Human Resource Director
Subject: Coaching Elisa Roberts

Dear Rob,

During our meeting of January 11, Elisa, you, and I agreed that Elisa would receive training in how to make successful accounts receivable calls. We agreed to hire a professional coach to help Elisa with the skills she needed to be successful in her new role. Further, we agreed that Elisa would identify the coach she felt she could work well with, and begin the training as soon as possible.

The purpose of this report is to describe the coaching program and assess the results so far.

Coaching Elisa in Accounts Receivable Calls

In the week of January 18, Elisa and I interviewed three consultants about the coaching. We agreed that Mara Brady, of Brady and Associates, would be the right person to work with Elisa. Mara offered suggestions, and together she and Elisa decided on the program.

Coaching Parameters

Elisa, Mara, and I agreed on the training objectives.
1. To build Elisa's competence in AR calling
2. To identify AR calling best practices so that Elisa can train two other employees in successful AR calls

Mara recommended three coaching sessions of three hours each, a week apart, to begin January 25.
In the first session, Elisa and Mara agreed to
• Analyze the current AR calling process
• Identify Elisa's telephone communication strengths
• Create SMART goals to build on those strengths

Coaching Methods

Mara suggested she observe Elisa making AR calls and note (in writing) communication strengths and challenges. Together they would identify strategies (including active listening and negotiating techniques) to increase AR calling productivity, measured in
• Elisa's increased confidence
• Increased collection rate, amount to be determined after initial session
• Tips and techniques sheet

Further, they agreed that Elisa would keep a journal reflecting her learning experiences. At the end of each session, Elisa and Mara would create a list of strategies for a best practices tip sheet. At the end of the three sessions, Elisa would evaluate the coaching experience and decide if she needed additional training.

Coaching Results

By the end of the second coaching session I saw noticeable improvement in Elisa's AR calls. A week after the third session I sat with Elisa during her AR calls and saw that she could
• Identify which clients would be motivated by AR calls
• Script a variety of calls
• Be courteous, calm, and confident throughout the call
• Listen to get results
• Control the tone and time of the call
• Ask for a commitment
• Produce written results, including suggestions for follow-up

Elisa has increased her collection rate by 30 percent and is developing the tip sheet and a coaching program for Janine and Armand. She feels she doesn't need more coaching sessions right now, but would like the option of calling Mara in for a follow-up session in a few months.

The cost of the coaching sessions was $1,800 plus HST. Based on Elisa's feedback and her increased productivity, we are very pleased with the results.

Regards,

Irene

FIGURE 15.4

Sample Conference Report, Email Attachment

From: Sai Smith   Sent: May 5, 2016
To: Georgio
Subject: Annual Powering Ontario Conference

Good morning Georgio,

During the two-day conference, I noticed the following themes:

1. Political Insights & Public Perception of Electricity in Ontario

a. Reducing ratepayer cost for electricity is the most important guiding factor for regulators in Ontario; system reliability is a close second.
b. Voters recognize the importance of investing in new, renewable sources of energy.
c. Ontario is seriously considering moving to a capacity market regime, similar to NYISO.

2. Nuclear Refurbishment of Bruce and Darlington

a. Nuclear accounts for 40-50% of the base load in Ontario.
b. Ten reactors need to be refurbished over the next 15 years (6 reactors at Bruce, and 4 at Darlington) at an estimated cost of $25B.
c. These reactors account for a third of Ontario's generation capacity.
d. If the project is successful, electricity rates can be reduced to 8 cents/kWh.
e. If the project is unsuccessful in meeting the project schedule and budget requirements (like the Pickering refurbishment), all potential ratepayer savings will be eliminated.
f. Ontario needs to secure alternate generation capacity (there are discussions underway with Hydro Quebec).

3. Energy Storage Updates

a. Local Distribution Companies (LDCs) are playing a bigger role in procuring and implementing their own energy storage systems (independent of the OPA/IESO's procurement):
   i. Toronto Hydro is commissioning their Lake Ontario compressed air storage project (HydroStor) this week and also has a 500kW solid battery storage unit in North York (eCamion).
   ii. Hydro One is commissioning their 5MW Clear Creek Flywheel project with Temporal Power.
   iii. There is an Energy Storage Ontario workshop on December 3 focused on this topic (on my calendar to attend).
b. There is still a lot of confusion (and no consensus) on how to evaluate the greater benefits of integrating energy storage in our grids (i.e., most evaluations are on direct costs—not indirect savings such as not having to build new generation, making better use of existing generation already in place through peak shifting, etc.)

4. Ontario Power Authority (OPA) Procurement Updates

a. Nothing new. There will be a near-identical Large Renewable Procurement (LRP) process (also 450MW) next year.
b. The OPA is forming Local Advisory Committees (LACs) in 21 regions in Ontario in attempts to further engagethe public in long-term energy planning.

Should you want details on any of these themes, please let me know.

Regards,
Sai

Mortenson construction

www.mortenson.com
Sai Smith, EIT
Design Phase Supervisor
1234 Construction Rd, Town, ON M5E 2N1
direct 555.123.0000
ssmith@mortenson.com

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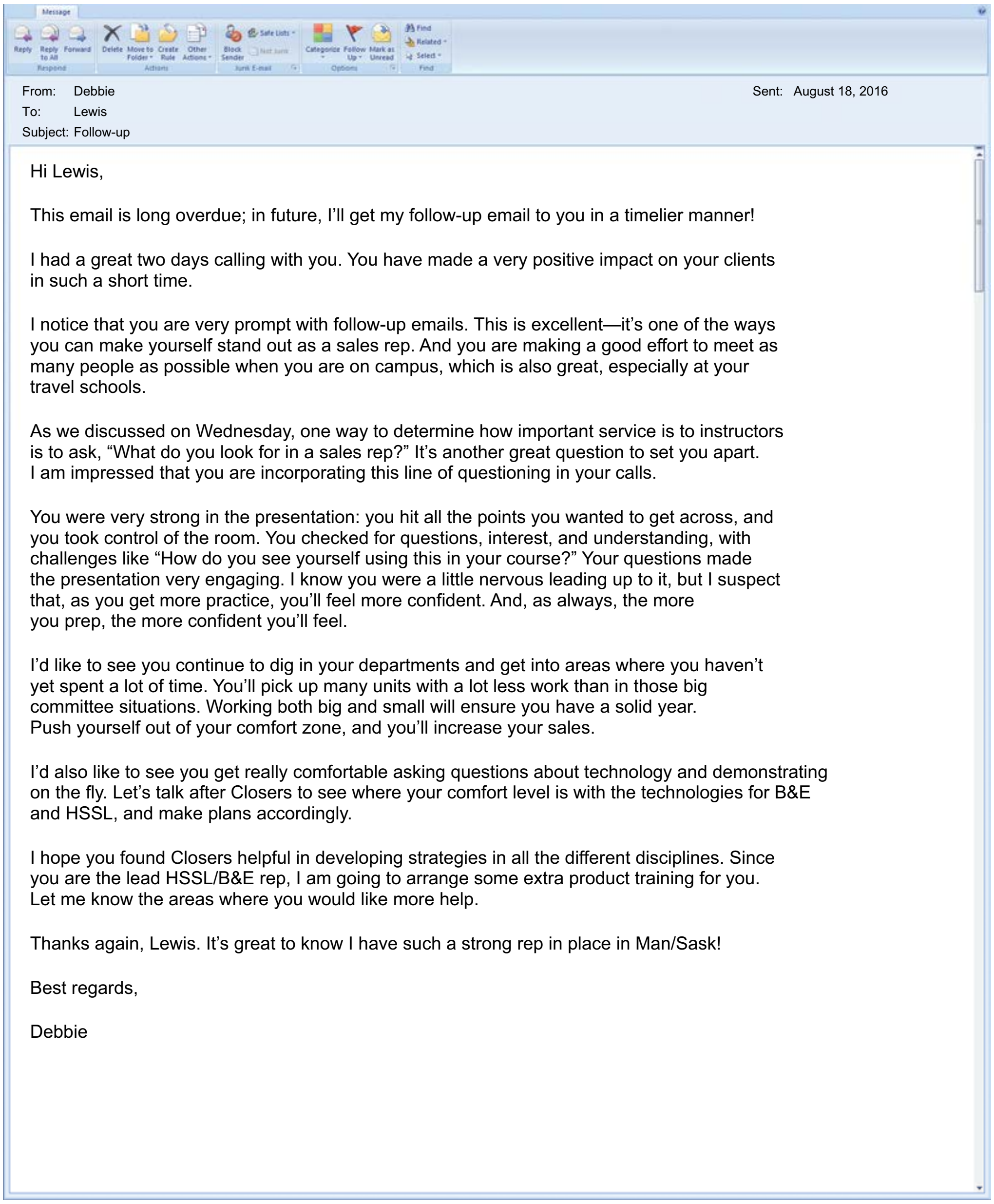
FIGURE 15.5

Sample Trip Report, Email Attachment



From: Debbie

Sent: August 18, 2016

To: Lewis

Subject: Follow-up

Hi Lewis,

This email is long overdue; in future, I'll get my follow-up email to you in a timelier manner!

I had a great two days calling with you. You have made a very positive impact on your clients in such a short time.

I notice that you are very prompt with follow-up emails. This is excellent—it's one of the ways you can make yourself stand out as a sales rep. And you are making a good effort to meet as many people as possible when you are on campus, which is also great, especially at your travel schools.

As we discussed on Wednesday, one way to determine how important service is to instructors is to ask, "What do you look for in a sales rep?" It's another great question to set you apart. I am impressed that you are incorporating this line of questioning in your calls.

You were very strong in the presentation: you hit all the points you wanted to get across, and you took control of the room. You checked for questions, interest, and understanding, with challenges like "How do you see yourself using this in your course?" Your questions made the presentation very engaging. I know you were a little nervous leading up to it, but I suspect that, as you get more practice, you'll feel more confident. And, as always, the more you prep, the more confident you'll feel.

I'd like to see you continue to dig in your departments and get into areas where you haven't yet spent a lot of time. You'll pick up many units with a lot less work than in those big committee situations. Working both big and small will ensure you have a solid year. Push yourself out of your comfort zone, and you'll increase your sales.

I'd also like to see you get really comfortable asking questions about technology and demonstrating on the fly. Let's talk after Closers to see where your comfort level is with the technologies for B&E and HSSL, and make plans accordingly.

I hope you found Closers helpful in developing strategies in all the different disciplines. Since you are the lead HSSL/B&E rep, I am going to arrange some extra product training for you. Let me know the areas where you would like more help.

Thanks again, Lewis. It's great to know I have such a strong rep in place in Man/Sask!

Best regards,

Debbie

Progress Reports

In **progress reports**, you report what you've done, why it's important, and what you will do next.

When you're assigned to a single project that will take a month or more, you may be asked to file one or more progress reports. A progress report assures the employer or funding agency that you're making progress, and allows you and the employer or agency to resolve problems as they arise.

FIGURE 15.6

Incident Report

Accident/Incident Report

Date of Incident: Mar. 13, 2016 Time: 2:13 AM/PM

Name of Injured Person: Delphanie Hess

Address: 22 Longboat Ave., Prince Albert ON

Phone Number(s): 905-123-4567

Date of Birth: Nov. 13, 2016 Male: ____ Female: ✓

Who was the injured person? (circle one) Passenger System Employee

Type of Injury: Verbal abuse

Details of Incident: Patient F. Baum arrived for app't 37 minutes late. When I explained he had missed his app't, he began yelling and swearing at me. He leaned over reception desk and said he would "punch" me. I apologized and asked, "May I give you another app't?" Client turned and walked out door, still yelling. Slammed door.

Injury requires physician/hospital visit? Yes___ No ✓

Name of Physician/Hospital: N/A

Address: N/A

Physician/Hospital Phone Number: N/A

Signature of injured party: ______________________ Date: __________

No medical attention was desired and/or required.

Signature of injured party: D. Hess Date: Mar. 13, 2016

Different readers may have different concerns. An instructor may want to know whether you'll have your report in by the due date. A client may be more interested in what you're learning about the problem. Adapt your progress report to meet the needs of the audience.

You can also use progress reports to do more than just report progress, including

- *Suggest alternatives*. For example, "I could continue to do X (what you approved); I could do Y instead (what I'd like to do now)." The detail in the progress report can help back up your suggestion. Even if the idea is rejected, you don't lose face because you haven't made a separate issue of the alternative.

- *Minimize potential problems.* As you do the work, you may find that implementing your recommendations will be difficult. In your regular progress reports, you can alert your boss or the funding agency to the challenges, preparing your audience psychologically to act on your recommendations.

Subject lines for progress reports are straightforward. Specify the project on which you are reporting your progress.

Subject	Progress on Marketing Blitz Campaign for 2016 Camrys
Subject	Progress on Organizing IABC Toronto Chapter Annual Conference

When submitting weekly or monthly progress reports on a long project, number your progress reports or include the time period in your subject line. Include dates for the work completed since the last report and the work to be completed before the next report.

Report as positively as you honestly can. You build a better image of yourself when you show that you can take minor problems in stride and that you're confident of your own abilities.

Negative	I have not deviated markedly from my schedule, and I feel that I will have very little trouble completing this report by the due date.
Positive	I am back on schedule and expect to complete my report by the due date.

Progress reports can be organized in three ways: chronologically, by task, and by supporting a recommendation.

Chronological Progress Reports

Chronological progress reports focus on what the writer has done and what work remains. Organize the report this way:

1. *Summarize your progress in terms of your goals and your original schedule.* Use measurable statements.

Poor	My progress has been slow.
Better	The research for my report is about one-third complete.

2. *Describe what you have already done (Work Completed).* Be specific, both to support your claims in the first paragraph and to allow the reader to appreciate your hard work. Acknowledge the people who have helped you. Describe any serious obstacles you've encountered and tell how you've dealt with them.

Poor	I have found many articles about Procter & Gamble on the Web. I have had a few problems finding how the company keeps employees safe from chemical fumes.
Better	On the Web, I found Procter & Gamble's home page, its annual report, and its mission statement. No one whom I interviewed could tell me about safety programs specifically at P&G. I have found seven articles about ways to protect workers against pollution in factories, but none mentions P&G.

3. *Describe the work that remains (Work to Be Completed or Next Steps).* If you're more than three days late (for school projects) or two weeks late (for business projects), submit a new schedule, showing how you will be able to meet the original deadline. You may want to discuss Observations or Preliminary Conclusions if you want feedback before writing the final report or if your reader has asked for substantive interim reports.

4. *Either express your confidence that you'll have the report ready by the due date or request a conference to discuss extending the due date or limiting the project.* If you are behind your original schedule but believe you can catch up, show why you think you can still finish the project on time.

Figure 15.7 shows a chronological progress report.

Task Progress Reports

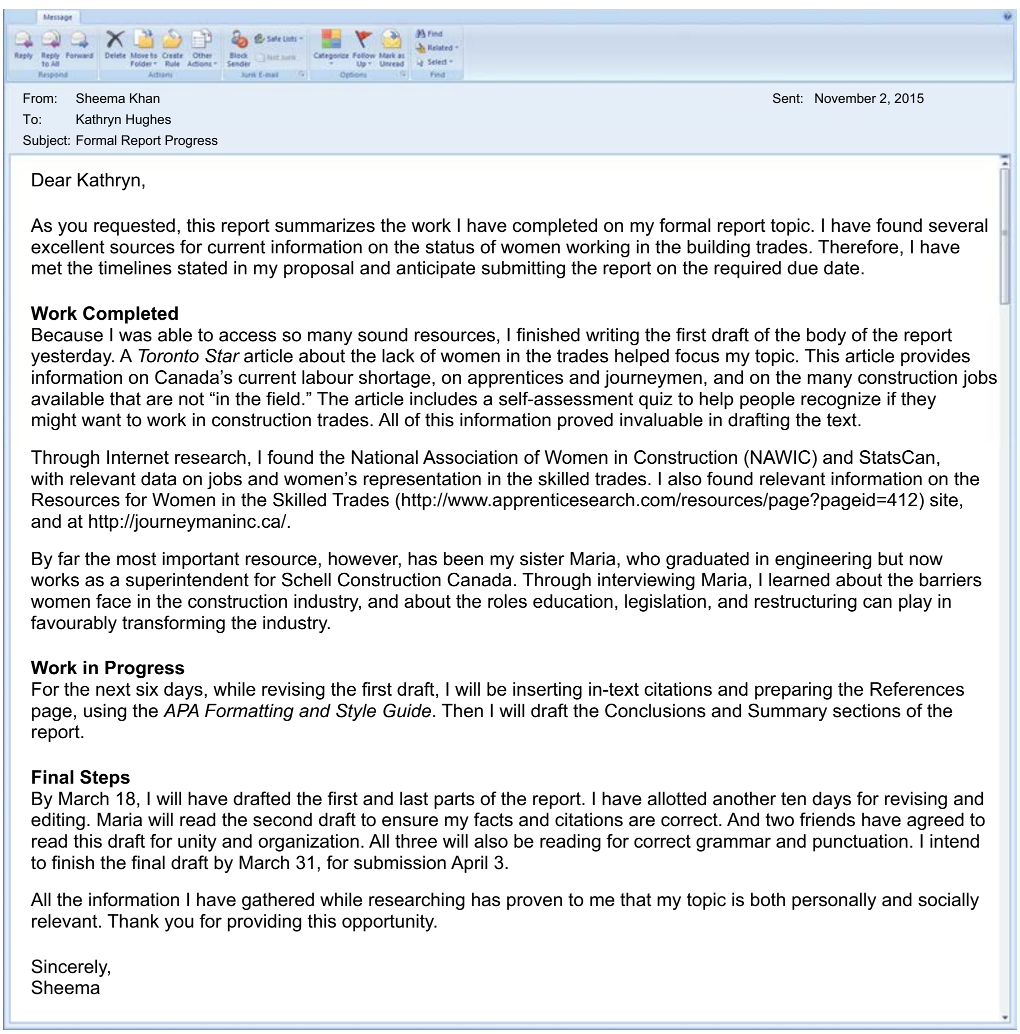
In a task progress report, organize information under the various tasks you have worked on during the period. For example, a task progress report for a group report project might use headings such as

Finding Background Information on the Web and in Print
Analyzing Our Survey Data
Working on the Introduction of the Report and the Appendices

Under each heading, the group might discuss the tasks it has completed and those that remain.

FIGURE 15.7

Sample Chronological Progress Report



From: Sheema Khan

Sent: November 2, 2015

To: Kathryn Hughes

Subject: Formal Report Progress

Dear Kathryn,

As you requested, this report summarizes the work I have completed on my formal report topic. I have found several excellent sources for current information on the status of women working in the building trades. Therefore, I have met the timelines stated in my proposal and anticipate submitting the report on the required due date.

Work Completed

Because I was able to access so many sound resources, I finished writing the first draft of the body of the report yesterday. A *Toronto Star* article about the lack of women in the trades helped focus my topic. This article provides information on Canada's current labour shortage, on apprentices and journeymen, and on the many construction jobs available that are not "in the field." The article includes a self-assessment quiz to help people recognize if they might want to work in construction trades. All of this information proved invaluable in drafting the text.

Through Internet research, I found the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) and StatsCan, with relevant data on jobs and women's representation in the skilled trades. I also found relevant information on the Resources for Women in the Skilled Trades (http://www.apprenticesearch.com/resources/page?pageid=412) site, and at http://journeymaninc.ca/.

By far the most important resource, however, has been my sister Maria, who graduated in engineering but now works as a superintendent for Schell Construction Canada. Through interviewing Maria, I learned about the barriers women face in the construction industry, and about the roles education, legislation, and restructuring can play in favourably transforming the industry.

Work in Progress

For the next six days, while revising the first draft, I will be inserting in-text citations and preparing the References page, using the *APA Formatting and Style Guide*. Then I will draft the Conclusions and Summary sections of the report.

Final Steps

By March 18, I will have drafted the first and last parts of the report. I have allotted another ten days for revising and editing. Maria will read the second draft to ensure my facts and citations are correct. And two friends have agreed to read this draft for unity and organization. All three will also be reading for correct grammar and punctuation. I intend to finish the final draft by March 31, for submission April 3.

All the information I have gathered while researching has proven to me that my topic is both personally and socially relevant. Thank you for providing this opportunity.

Sincerely,
Sheema

LO3 LO4 LO5 Recommendation Progress Reports

Recommendation progress reports recommend action: resourcing a new idea, increasing the funding for a project or changing its direction, cancelling a project that isn't working out. When the recommendation will be easy for the reader to accept, use the direct request pattern of organization from Module 7. If your recommendation is likely to meet strong resistance, the problem-solving pattern (Module 8) might be more effective.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Writing with Style

People's writing style conveys their attitudes about the subject and their audience. Good business writing is natural, polite, concise, and correct, indicating respect for readers. You develop your own writing style through knowledge and practice.

Make Your Writing Natural

Natural style is not spontaneous, but the result of critical thinking and revision.

- Use PAIBOC to analyze your purpose and your audience's expectations. In informal reports
  - ✓ Use first person (*I*) and second person (*you*).
  - ✓ Put your readers in your sentences ("Thank you for…" "As you requested…").
  - ✓ Keep your paragraphs short.
  - ✓ Vary sentence structure and length. Remember, however, that the most readable sentences are between 14 and 20 words, and structured subject + verb + object.
  - ✓ Use active, action verbs (see the Writing and Editing Resources).
  - ✓ Use concrete nouns.
  - ✓ Avoid jargon and technical language.
  - ✓ Use parallel structure (see the Writing and Editing Resources).

Make Your Writing Polite

- Address your audience by name: people want to be recognized and treated as individuals.
- Research the names and preferred courtesy titles (Module 6) of the people whom you write to and for, and use them.
- Include the information your audience needs to know (purpose, scope, results) up front, in your introduction.
- Use neutral or positive language; avoid the negative.
- Rewrite as if you were the reader: reader-centred writing uses an organization pattern, sentence structure, and language that meet the audience's needs for clarity and understanding (Module 13).

Make Your Writing Concise and Correct

- Compose drafts and sections of longer documents as soon you can; make notes on your research; summarize; paraphrase (Module 14).
- Save a significant amount of time for revision; use proven revision strategies.
  - ✓ Apply WIFM? (What's in it for me?) from the perspective of your audience. How do they benefit?
  - ✓ Apply WIRMI (What I Really Mean Is…) as you read your sentences and paragraphs.
  - ✓ Eliminate every unnecessary word.
  - ✓ Use readers: ask colleagues or friends to read your writing; ask for specific feedback; revise.
- Edit for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Ask a friend to proof your final copy.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Any kind of document or slide show can be a report. Usually, supervisors assign report topics and timelines to subordinates.
- **Information reports** collect data for the reader; **analytical reports** present and interpret data; **recommendation reports** recommend action or a solution.
- Creating a report includes
  - Defining the situation
  - Gathering and analyzing the necessary information
  - Organizing the information
  - Drafting the report
  - Revising and editing the report
  - Submitting the report
- Before you write any report
  - Do your research
  - Define the situation
  - Draft a good purpose statement
- A good **purpose statement** frames your message for the reader. A good purpose statement clarifies
  - The organizational situation or problem
  - The specific questions that must be answered to resolve the situation or solve the problem
  - The rhetorical purposes (to describe, to explain, to request, to propose, to recommend) the report is written to achieve
- In information, closure, conference, and incident reports, provide the information chronologically.
- In progress reports focus the reader on what you have done and what work remains.
  - Summarize your progress in terms of your goals and original work schedule.
  - Use headings—Work Completed, Next Steps—to describe what you have done and will do.
  - Express your confidence in meeting the due date, or request a meeting to discuss extending the due date or limiting the project.
- Use **positive emphasis** in progress reports to demonstrate confidence and competence.
- Good business writing style is natural, polite, concise, and correct. You develop your own style through knowledge and practice.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 15

Questions for Critical Thinking

15.1 How important is the title of your report? Why?

15.2 How do you decide what kind of language—formal, informal, technical, jargon—to use when writing a report?

15.3 How can you create a reader-friendly report? Identify three ways you can make your report more readable for your audience(s).

Exercises and Problems

15.4 Reporting on Your Social Media Policy

Research your university/college social media policy. How does the institution use social media and why? What restrictions exist? How are social media monitored? What consequences face users who misuse social media or ignore policy?

As part of your research, interview students and faculty to determine their awareness of the policy.

As your instructor directs

a. Combine your research findings with two other students.
b. Write an information report on your findings.

15.5 Reporting on LinkedIn Profiles

What characteristics distinguish the best LinkedIn profiles? Research a minimum of ten profiles to find examples of excellent LinkedIn profiles. Write an information report to your instructor describing five characteristics that the best profiles share. Describe the effect these characteristics have on the reader.

15.6 Reporting an Incident

Write an incident report to your supervisor describing a recent organizational or workplace accident, or a health and safety transgression that you observed. If your organization has a template, use it; if not, create your own.

As your instructor directs

Attach the completed report to an email. Send the email to

a. Your supervisor
b. Your instructor

15.7 Reporting on Your Progress

Write an email summarizing your progress on a major report that you have to write.

In the introductory paragraph, summarize your progress in terms of your schedule and your goals. Under the heading Work Completed, describe what you have already done. Under Work to Be Completed, describe what you still have to do. If you are more than two days behind your original schedule, include a revised schedule, listing the completion dates for the activities that remain.

In your last paragraph, either indicate your confidence in completing the report by the due date or ask for a conference to resolve the problems you are encountering.

As your instructor directs

Email the report to

a. The other members of your group
b. Your instructor

Polishing *your* Prose

Who/Whom and *I/Me*

Even experienced writers sometimes get confused about when to use *who* versus *whom* and *I* versus *me*. These pronouns serve different functions in a sentence or part of a sentence.

Use *who* or *I* as the subject of a sentence or clause.

Correct Who put the file on my desk?

(*Who* did the action, *put*.)

Correct Keisha and I gave the presentation at our annual meeting.

(Both *Keisha* and *I* did the action, *gave*.)

Correct Ai-Lan, who just received a PhD in management science, was promoted to vice-president.

(*Who* is the subject of the clause "who just received a PhD in management science.")

Use *whom* and *me* as the object of a verb or a preposition.

Correct Whom did you write the report for?

(*Whom* is the object of the preposition *for*.)

Correct She recommended Thuy and me for promotions.

(*Me* is an object of the verb *recommended*.)

Though some print sources may use *who* and *whom* interchangeably, stick to the rules until this practice becomes widely acceptable.

If you're not sure whether a pronoun is being used as a subject or object, try substituting *he* or *him*. If *he* would work, the pronoun is a subject. If *him* sounds right, the pronoun is an object.

Correct He wrote the report.

Correct I wrote the report for him.

Exercises

Choose the correct word in each set of brackets.

1. Karen and [I/me] visited St. Francis Xavier University last week.
2. For [who/whom] is this letter intended?
3. Dr. Jacobsen, [who/whom] serves on the board of directors, is retiring.
4. Take it from Les and [I/me]: it pays to be prepared in business.
5. [Who/Whom] is the most experienced person on your staff?
6. There was only about an hour for Kelly, Maria, and [I/me] to get to the airport.
7. Between you and [I/me], my supervisor told me the committee will decide [who/whom] gets the promotion.
8. It is the customer for [who/whom] we make our product.
9. Three people at the firm [who/whom] can speak a second language are Van, Chang, and [I/me].
10. Trust [I/me]: it's not a good idea to begin a letter with "To [who/whom] it may concern," even if people frequently do.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

MODULE 16

Writing Proposals and Analytical Reports

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 16 you will be familiar with

- LO1 How to compose more complex reports
- LO2 How to organize report information
- LO3 How to increase document readability

After applying the information you will be able to

- LO4 Draft and revise analytical reports
- LO5 Choose an appropriate organizing pattern
- LO6 Increase document readability

Module Outline

Easy-to-read messages motivate people to do as you ask. When you write reports, organize the information to meet readers' expectations. Audiences usually want answers up front: Is the soil contaminated or not? Is the design going to work? How and why? Should the bylaw proposal be accepted? Why? Should we expand or not?

As you revise, use PAIBOC analysis to (1) include only the information your reader needs and (2) organize that information to influence your readers positively.

LO1 LO2 LO4

What Other Kinds of Reports Will I Be Asked to Write?

You'll be asked to write reports that analyze information and justify decisions.

Ex. 16.1–16.8

Many business documents—such as feasibility, yardstick, justification reports, and proposals—organize and analyze information to persuade readers to accept the writer's recommendations.

These reports may be brief; regardless of length, well-written reports are organized according to the writer's purposes and the audience's expectations.

All reports include an *introduction* with the report's purpose and scope, and summarizing the problems or successes of the project. And all reports *conclude* with a summary of the writer's key findings: this summary suggests next steps or *recommends* action, depending on the writer's purpose and audience expectations.

Successful reports deliver audience-focused messages, as Brian Wong, CEO and co-founder of Kiip, demonstrated. "[O]ne of the youngest people to raise venture capital in the world," Brian used infographics to propose to prospective clients that they invest in his "category-creating mobile rewards" business.[1]

Source: Kiip.me

Feasibility Reports

Ex. 16.4, 16.7

Feasibility or **yardstick reports** assess a plan or idea based on a set of criteria established by the organization or the writer. Potential or immediate profit is a key criterion of all feasibility reports.

Feasibility and yardstick reports normally open by explaining the decision to be made, listing available alternatives, and explaining the criteria. Examples of feasibility reports include business plans, new product design assessments, and market research.

Business plans are developed in feasibility reports: the goal is to prove that the business idea is so sound that the audience—banks, angel investors, or venture capitalists—should invest in it (Figure 16.1).

Company culture and the readers' expectations determine whether recommendations should come at the beginning or the end of the report, or be repeated in both sections. Most readers want the "bottom line" up front.

However, if your proposed solution will cost time or money, you may want to provide all your evidence before giving the recommendation (Modules 8 and 9).

FIGURE 16.1

Criteria Discussed in a New Business Venture Feasibility Study

A. Business Description (Summary)

The Company

- Mission Statement
- Vision
- Values
- Brand Personality
- Location
- The Market
- Strategic Positioning

B. Products and Services

- Products
- Services

C. Location

- Test Market
- Channels

D. Market Analysis

- Economic Factors
- Environmental Factors
- Political/Legal Factors
- Social/Cultural Factors
- Demographic Factors
- Primary Customers
- Secondary Customers

E. Competitive Analysis

- Direct Competitors
- Indirect Competitors

F. Financials

G. Conclusions

- Summary of Business, Market, and Potential Returns

H. Appendix

I. References

Justification Reports

Ex. 16.5, 16.6, 16.7

Justification reports recommend (justify) a purchase, investment, hire, or change in policy. If your organization has a standard format for justification reports, follow that format.

When you can choose your headings and organization, and your recommendation is easy for your reader to accept, use the *direct*, *deductive*, or *good news* pattern (Module 7) to

1. *Indicate what you're asking for and why it's needed.* When the reader has not asked for the report, you must link your request to organizational goals.
2. *Briefly give the background of the problem or need.*
3. *Explain each of the possible solutions.* For each, give the cost, and the advantages and disadvantages.
4. *Summarize the action needed to implement your recommendation.* If several people will be involved, indicate who will do what and how long each step will take.
5. *Ask for the action you want.*
6. *Conclude with a short paragraph linking the recommended solution to a benefit outcome.*

However, when the reader is reluctant to grant your request because action will cost time or money, use the *indirect*, *inductive*, or *bad news* variation of the problem-solving pattern (Modules 8 and 9).

1. *Describe the organizational problem that your request will solve.* Provide specific examples (the results) to demonstrate the seriousness of the problem.
2. *Prove that easier or less expensive solutions will not solve the problem.*
3. *Present your solution impersonally.*
4. *Show that the advantages of your solution outweigh the disadvantages.*

5. *Summarize the action needed to implement your recommendation.* If several people will be involved, indicate who will do what and how long each step will take.
6. *Ask for the action you want.*
7. *Conclude with a short paragraph linking the recommended solution to beneficial outcomes.*

FIGURE 16.2

Planning Justification Report

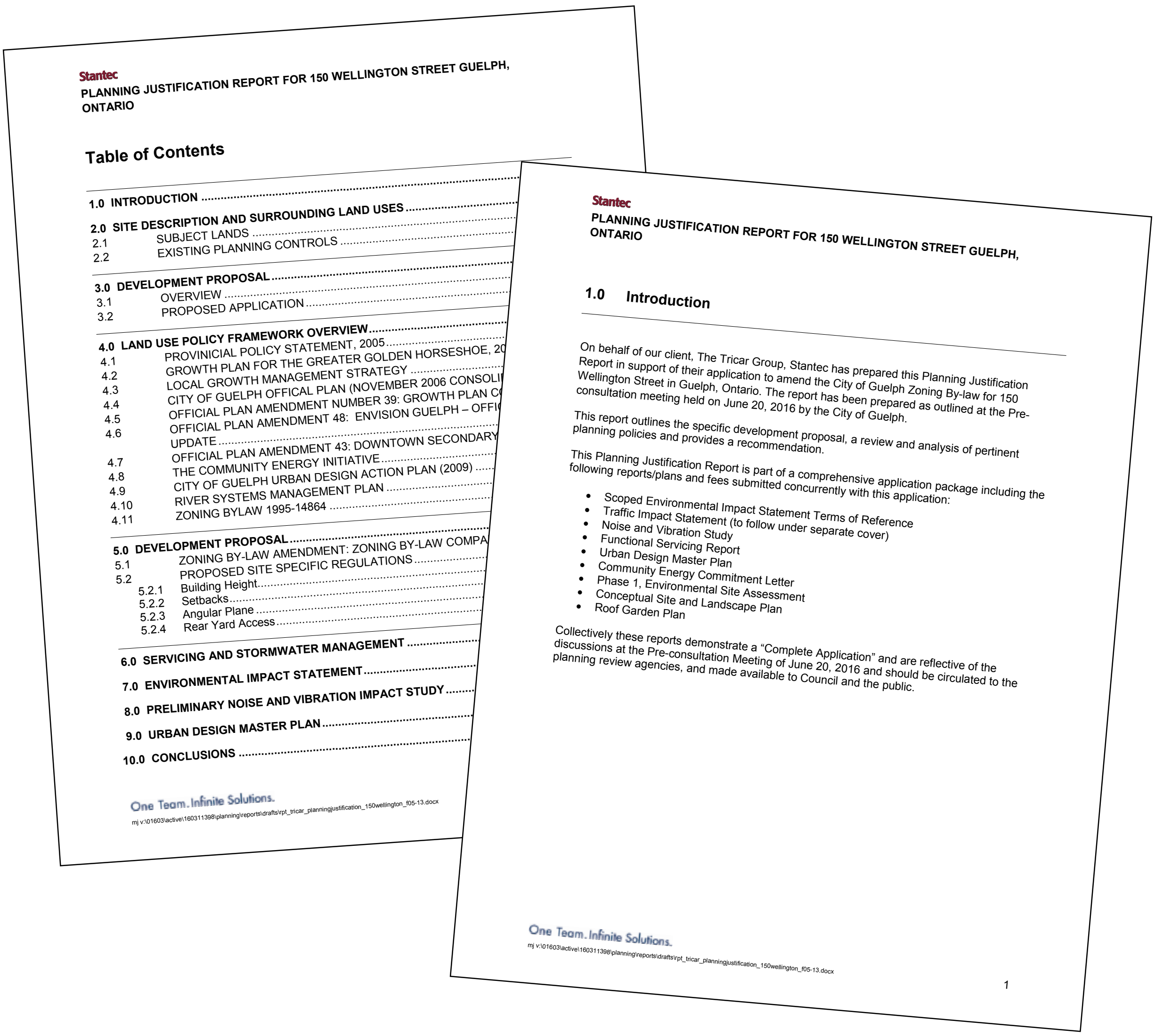

Stantec
PLANNING JUSTIFICATION REPORT FOR 150 WELLINGTON STREET GUELPH, ONTARIO

Table of Contents

One Team. Infinite Solutions.
mj v:\01603\active\160311398\planning\reports\drafts\rpt_tricar_planningjustification_150wellington_f05-13.docx

Stantec
PLANNING JUSTIFICATION REPORT FOR 150 WELLINGTON STREET GUELPH, ONTARIO

1.0 Introduction

On behalf of our client, The Tricar Group, Stantec has prepared this Planning Justification Report in support of their application to amend the City of Guelph Zoning By-law for 150 Wellington Street in Guelph, Ontario. The report has been prepared as outlined at the Pre-consultation meeting held on June 20, 2016 by the City of Guelph.

This report outlines the specific development proposal, a review and analysis of pertinent planning policies and provides a recommendation.

This Planning Justification Report is part of a comprehensive application package including the following reports/plans and fees submitted concurrently with this application:

- Scoped Environmental Impact Statement Terms of Reference
- Traffic Impact Statement (to follow under separate cover)
- Noise and Vibration Study
- Functional Servicing Report
- Urban Design Master Plan
- Community Energy Commitment Letter
- Phase 1, Environmental Site Assessment
- Conceptual Site and Landscape Plan
- Roof Garden Plan

Collectively these reports demonstrate a "Complete Application" and are reflective of the discussions at the Pre-consultation Meeting of June 20, 2016 and should be circulated to the planning review agencies, and made available to Council and the public.

One Team. Infinite Solutions.
mj v:\01603\active\160311398\planning\reports\drafts\rpt_tricar_planningjustification_150wellington_f05-13.docx

1

Courtesy of Stantic Consulting Ltd.

The amount of detail you need to give in a justification report depends on your reader's knowledge of and attitude toward your recommendation, and on the corporate culture. Many organizations expect justification reports to be short—only one or two pages. Other organizations may expect longer reports with much more detailed budgets and a full discussion of the problem and each possible solution.

Proposals

Proposals are reports that describe a method for solving a problem. Proposals have two goals: to get the project accepted and to obtain support for the writer to do the job. The best proposals stress reader benefits and provide specific supporting details.

To write a good proposal, you need to have a clear view of the problem you hope to solve and the kind of research or other action needed to solve it. A proposal must answer the following questions convincingly.

- What problem are you going to solve?
- How are you going to solve it?
- What exactly will you provide?
- How can you deliver what you promise?
- What benefits can you offer?
- When will you complete the work?
- How much will you charge?

Figure 16.3 shows a sample proposal selling services.

Shep Ysselstein, Gunn's Hill Artisan Cheese, and Business Development Bank Canada

Shep Ysselstein's proposal for an additional "climate-controlled curing and aging storing space" earned him the $100,000 grand prize as "2014 Business Development Bank of Canada's BDC Young Entrepreneur." Owner of Gunn's Hill Artisan Cheese, Ysselstein joins a tradition of cheese "producers that have been making cheese in Oxford [Ontario] since the 1800's."[2]

FIGURE 16.3

Proposal for Services (Indirect Pattern of Development, Modules 8 and 9)

communicore inc
48 Highland Road Oakville, Ontario L6K 1S7 Tel/Fax: 905.844.5814
communicore1@cogeco.ca http://www.communicore.on.ca

November 16, 2016
Sen Lee Chang, President
Tel-Direct Systems Inc.
1011 Bloor Street West
Oshawa, ON L1H 7K6

Dear Sen Lee Chang:

Thank you for considering communicore for your training needs. Based on our conversation last Friday, I am pleased to propose this preliminary outline of the customer service workshop and to suggest ways to maximize your return on investment.

Workshop Overview
The two-day Customer Service Strategies workshop encourages participants to define and refine the criteria for superior customer service. During the workshop, participants will
- Begin with an ice-breaker, followed by self-assessment and goal-setting exercises
- Role-play active listening, questioning, and problem-solving strategies
- Analyze and identify excellent customer service attitudes and behaviours
- Identify and apply two conflict negotiating models
- Articulate best-practices behaviours as the organizational standard
- Set a goal for further development

Depending on participants' preference, we can begin at 8 or 8:30 a.m., and finish at 4 or 4:30 p.m. I've attached a proposed agenda for your approval.

Methods
Using a variety of interactive exercises—including case analysis, taped role-play, peer feedback, and peer and self-assessment—your employees will review, describe, and apply behaviours that build customer relationships. Since customized content contributes to learning transfer, I would like to visit your locations for a few hours to observe your service representatives before the training dates. This complimentary needs assessment will allow me to gather information about current practices and to see your training facilities.

Resources
As we discussed, your employees will need uninterrupted time to review and practise customer service techniques. Because participants will be working together and moving around, they will need group seating, four to a table, and enough room to comfortably accommodate 16 people.

You mentioned that the room is equipped with networked computers, a projector, and screen; participants will need a USB key and one flip chart per table. We will be bringing our own camera.

Qualifications
Our facilitators offer over 20 years' training experience, as well as expertise and accreditation in adult education principles, business, and interpersonal communications skills. As we agreed, I am attaching client reviews of our most recent training in customer service skills. Please visit our website: http://www.communicore.on.ca for more reviews.

Costs
The needs assessment is free. The cost for the training, including tailoring materials and exercises to participants' experiences, material printing and copying, two-day interactive facilitation, workshop evaluation sheet and summary, and written best-practices recommendations specific to your organization, is $6 000, plus HST.

Again, thank you for your interest and consideration. At your convenience, please call or email me about your proposed employee training.

Sincerely

Kathryn Hughes
President

Sales Proposals, Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and Grants

Ex. 16.2

Government agencies and companies issue **Requests for Proposals**, known as **RFPs**, when contracting out work. The RFP details the project and vendor requirements in "a formal document describing…how the contract companies should respond, how the proposals will be reviewed, and contact information."[3] Figure 16.4 provides common government sources for requests for proposals.

FIGURE 16.4

RFP Sites

Requests for Proposal Sites

Recommend 247 | Tweet | 1 | Print | Email

www.merx.com

MERX offers public and private sector contract opportunities (tenders) in Canada. New opportunities are listed daily from all levels of government including the federal and provincial governments as well as the MASH sector (Municipal, Academic, School Boards and Hospitals) from across Canada. You can search across 32 products and 19 service categories.

In addition MERX allows purchasers and project managers complete control over the tendering process allowing them to: publish tenders online to an invited group of suppliers or reach over 50,000 Canadian suppliers and contractors; manage tender document distribution; control supplier and contractor information and to receive bids.

This is a subscription-based service that offers two levels of pricing depending upon the level of detail and services required by a subscriber. Available in English and French.

www.rfpsource.ca

RFPSource.ca replaced SourceCan which was discontinued. RFPSource offers small-and mediumsized companies the opportunity to bid, post opportunities and pursue strategic partnerships in Canada, the United States and internationally.

Users must register and create a profile in order to access opportunities. RFPSource features a Business Opportunities section where companies can define what types of opportunities (bids) they are interested in and would like to have matched to their profile. RFPSource's Match Profile tool allows companies to include keywords and industry codes to identify bids that are of interest to your company. In addition you also have the ability to post opportunities and have them matched against other listed companies.

RFPSource will send you regular e-mail messages to notify you of the latest business opportunity matches to your profile.

www.bidsCanada.com

A Canadian search engine that specializes in indexing brief descriptions and links to tenders, Requests for Proposal (RFP), Requests for Quotation (RFQ) and other solicitations posted on Canadian public sector websites. Although these bid solicitations are freely available from a variety of public websites, bidsCanada.com eliminates the need to search each and every website individually. The search engine is updated daily to ensure that you always receive the most accurate and up-to-date information available.

In addition bidsCanada.com has an e-mail notification service where you can opt in to receive a daily e-mail message that consolidates details of Canadian public sector bid solicitations based on your area of business.

www.iTenders.com

Currently in the midst of a redesign, this site is a business-to-business and business-to consumer service that helps companies develop new business relationships, attract new customers and find suppliers for their services.

Follow the RFP sections and instructions exactly when you respond. Competitive proposals are often scored by giving points in each category. Evaluators look only under the headings specified in the RFP. If information isn't there, the proposal gets no points in that category.

Provide a one-page cover letter—known as a transmittal letter—with long proposals. Organize the cover letter this way.

1. Catch the reader's attention and summarize up to three major benefits you offer.
2. Discuss each of the major benefits in the order in which you mention them in the first paragraph.
3. Deal with any objections or concerns the reader may have.
4. Mention other benefits briefly.
5. Ask the reader to approve your proposal. Provide a reason for acting promptly.

PROPOSALS FOR FUNDING

Ex. 16.2

If you need money for a new or continuing public service project, you may want to submit a proposal for funding to a foundation, corporation, government agency, or religious agency. In a proposal for funding, stress the needs your project will meet and show how your project helps fulfill the goals of the organization from which you are requesting funds. Every funding source has certain priorities; most post lists of the projects they have funded in the past.

ESTIMATING THE BUDGET

A good budget is crucial to making the winning bid. Ask for everything you need to do a quality job. Asking for too little may backfire, leading the decision maker to assume you don't understand the scope of the project.

Read the RFP to find out what is and isn't fundable. Do your research: talk to the program officer and read successful past proposals to discover

- What size projects will the organization fund in theory?
- Does the funder prefer making a few big grants or many smaller grants?
- Does the funder expect you to provide in-kind or matching funds from other sources?

Think about exactly what will be done and who will do it. What will it cost to get that person? What supplies or materials will he or she need? Also, think about indirect costs for office space, retirement and health benefits and salaries, office supplies, administration, and infrastructure.

Be specific in your estimates.

Weak	75 hours of transcribing interviews	$1,875 plus HST
Better	25 hours of interviews; a skilled transcriber can complete an hour of interviews in 3 hours; 75 hours @ $25/hour	$1,875 plus HST

Without inflating your costs, give yourself a cushion. For example, if the going rate for skilled transcribers is $25 an hour, but you think you might be able to train someone and pay only $17 an hour, use the higher figure. Then, even if your grant is cut, you'll still be able to do the project well.

FIGURE 16.5

Proposal for Foundation Repair (Indirect Pattern, Modules 8 and 9)

Bowen Foundation Repair
BFR
bfr.ca

Contract/EST#: 7565

Bowen Foundation Repair Inc.
2486 Kingston Rd.; Scarborough, ON M1N 1V3
Tel: 555-866-0547 Fax: 555-866-1275 www.bfr.ca
LIC# B-19658

Date: March 12, 2016

Client Name: Judy Green **Cell Phone No:** ________ **Home Phone No:** 555-321-5267
Work Phone No: ________ **Email:** ________
Jobsite: 24 Queen Mary Rd.

The undersigned proposes to furnish all materials and provide all material and labour necessary to complete all repairs described below.

Exterior Waterproofing Repair:

Trench 51 linear ft from 1' to 2' deep, sloping toward rear of property. Place filter-cloth in bottom of trenched area. Install 4" perforated weeping tile with nylon sock. Pour ¾" gravel over weeping tile system. Remove and dispose of all soil. Clean up work area. Remove and dump all debris. All material and labour included.

20-year transferable warranty against leakage in repaired area.
(Please retain this contract for warranty purposes.)

No deposit required. Payment due in full upon completion of work.

All of the above work to be completed in a good and workmanlike manner for the sum of:

	($990.00) DOLLARS
GST# 85151766 RT0001	($128.70) HST
	($1,118.70) TOTAL

All changes in the work to be charged for same shall be made in writing.

This estimate is made on the basis of current material and labour costs. This estimate is valid for 90 days from date above. Any delay in acceptance of this estimate beyond 90 days shall void this estimate, and a review of this estimate shall be performed before any agreement between the Client and Bowen Foundation Repair Inc. becomes binding.

All warranties are based on normal weather conditions.

BFR is not responsible for ground settlement.

BFR is not responsible for leakage due to grade change and or acts of God, i.e., tornadoes, flooding, hurricane, and the like.

ACCEPTANCE

You are hereby authorized to furnish all materials and labour to complete the work mentioned in the above proposal, for which the undersigned agrees to pay the amount mentioned in said proposal, and according to the terms thereof.

Date: ________

________ INDIVIDUAL/COMPANY NAME

Collen Bowen
BOWEN FOUNDATION REPAIR INC.

Courtesy of BFR Inc.

LO3 LO5 LO6 How Do I Organize Reports?

Use PAIBOC analysis to determine the organization that best meets your audience's needs and achieves your purposes.

Ex. 16.3–16.8

Any of these patterns can be used for all or part of a report.

1. General-to-particular or particular-to-general
2. Chronological
3. Compare or contrast
4. Problem–solution (the bad news pattern)
5. Elimination of alternatives
6. Geographic or spatial
7. Functional

1. General-to-Particular or Particular-to-General

General-to-particular starts with the situation as it affects the organization, or as it exists in general, and then moves to a discussion of the parts of the situation and solutions to each of these parts. Particular-to-general starts with the problem as the audience defines it and moves to larger issues of which the problem is a part. Both are useful; choose the one that will frame the problem most effectively.

For example, the directors of a student volunteer organization, Students Mentoring Students (SMS), have defined their problem as "not enough volunteers." After doing their research, the writers are convinced that poor training, an inadequate structure, and low campus awareness are responsible for both the high dropout rate and low recruitment rate. The general-to-particular pattern helps the audience see the problem in a new way.

Why Students Helping Students (SMS) Needs More Volunteers

Why Some SMS Volunteers Drop Out
- Inadequate Training
- Feeling that SMS Takes Too Much Time
- Feeling that the Work is Too Emotionally Demanding

Why Some Students Do Not Volunteer
- Feeling that SMS Takes Too Much Time
- Feeling that the Work is Too Emotionally Demanding
- Preference for Volunteering with Another Organization
- Lack of Knowledge About SMS Operations

How SMS Volunteers Are Trained

Emotional Demands on SMS Volunteers

Ways to Increase Volunteer Commitment and Motivation
- Improve Training
- Improve the Flexibility of Volunteer Hours
- Provide Emotional Support to Volunteers
- Provide More Information about Community Needs and SMS Services

2. Chronological

A chronological report records events in the order in which they happened or are planned to happen. Many information and progress reports use a chronological pattern.

> Ice Storm Damage Repairs Completed in December
>
> Ice Storm Damage Repairs Completed In January
>
> Work Planned for February and March

3. Compare or Contrast

Comparing or contrasting examines each alternative in turn, discussing strengths and weaknesses. Feasibility studies and yardstick reports usually use this pattern.

A variation of this is the **pro–con pattern**. In this pattern, under each specific heading are the arguments for and against that alternative.

A report recommending new plantings for a garden over an expressway, for example, uses the pro–con pattern.

> Advantages of Ornamental Grasses
>   High Productivity
>   Visual Symmetry
> Disadvantages of Ornamental Grasses
>   Investments and Replacement Costs
>   Visual Monotony

Note that whatever information comes second carries more psychological weight. This pattern is not effective when you want to de-emphasize the disadvantages of a proposed solution, because it does not permit you to bury the disadvantages between neutral or positive material.

4. Problem–Solution

This pattern is often used to convey bad news and has four elements: (1) identify the problem, (2) explain its background or history, (3) discuss the extent and seriousness of the problem, and (4) identify its causes. The problem–solution pattern offers the opportunity to discuss the factors (criteria) that affect the decision, and analyze the advantages and disadvantages of possible solutions. Conclusions and recommendations can go either first or last, depending on the length of the report and preferences of your reader. This pattern works well when the reader is neutral.

A report recommending ways to eliminate solidification of granular bleach during production, for example, uses the problem–solution pattern.

> Reformulation for Alpha Bleach
> Problems in Maintaining Alpha's Granular Structure
>   Solidifying During Storage and Transportation
>   Customer Complaints about "Blocks" of Alpha in Boxes
> Why Alpha Bleach "Cakes"
> Alpha's Formula
>   The Manufacturing Process
>   The Chemical Process
> Modifications Needed to Keep Alpha Flowing Freely

5. Elimination of Alternatives

This pattern works well when the solutions the reader is likely to favour will not work, while the solution you recommend is likely to be perceived as expensive, intrusive, or radical. After discussing the problem and its causes, discuss the *impractical* solutions first, showing why they will not work. End with the most practical solution.

A report on toy commercials, for example, eliminates the alternatives before concluding with the recommended solution.

> Effect of TV Ads on Children
> Camera Techniques Used in TV Advertisements
> Alternative Solutions to Problems in TV Toy Ads
>   Leave Ads Unchanged
>   Mandate Ad Blockers on All TV Production
>   Ask the Industry to Self-Regulate
>   Give CRTC Authority to Regulate TV Ads Directed at Children

6. Geographic or Spatial

In a geographic or spatial pattern, problems and solutions are discussed in units by their physical arrangement. Move from office to office, building to building, factory to factory, province to province, region to region, and so on.

Sales and market research reports, for example, may use a geographic pattern of organization.

> Sales Have Risen in the European Economic Community
>
> Sales Have Fallen Slightly in Asia
>
> Sales Have Fallen in North America

7. Functional

Functional patterns discuss the problems and solutions of each functional unit. For example, a report on a new plant might divide data into sections on the costs of land and building, on the availability of personnel, on the convenience of raw materials, and so on. A government report might divide data into the different functions an office performed, taking each in turn.

PST Plant Move

- Manufacturing
  - Equipment
  - Offices
- Sales and Marketing
  - Furniture
  - Filing Cabinets
- Executive Offices
  - Furniture
  - Filing Cabinets

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Increasing Readability

Ex. 16.1, 16.8

Readers do not read every word in a business document. They scan, expecting the information in business documents—including reports—to be as quickly available as in the best Web pages.[4]

What Increases Readability?

Writers increase readability with blueprints, transitions, topic sentences, white space, talking headings, and plain language.

Blueprints forecast what you will discuss in a section or in the entire report. In an overview paragraph, blueprints tell the reader how many points there are and number them. This overview paragraph establishes **repetition for reinforcement**: the blueprint establishes a contract with readers, who now know what they are going to read and in what order.

Paragraph without blueprint

> Employee Stock Ownership Programs (ESOPs) have several advantages. They provide tax benefits for the company. ESOPs also create tax benefits for employees and for lenders. They provide a defence against takeovers. In some organizations, productivity increases because workers now have a financial stake in the company's profits. ESOPs help the company hire and retain good employees.

Revised paragraph with blueprint

> Employee Stock Ownership Programs (ESOPs) provide four benefits. First, ESOPs provide tax benefits for the company, its employees, and lenders to the plan. Second, ESOPs help create a defence against takeovers. Third, ESOPs may increase productivity by giving workers a stake in the company's profits. Fourth, as an attractive employee benefit, ESOPs help the company hire and retain good employees.

Transitions are words, phrases, and sentences that tell the reader the discussion is continuing on the same point or is shifting points.

There are economic benefits, too.	Tells the reader that the discussion is still on advantages, and now moving to economic advantages.
An alternative plan is…	Tells the reader that a second option is coming up.
These advantages, however, only apply in the case of short-term patients and not to those in long-term care.	Prepares reader for a shift from short-term patients to those in long-term care.

The **topic sentence** introduces or summarizes the main idea of a paragraph. Competent readers skim documents by searching for topic sentences at the beginning of paragraphs, because that's where competent writers put them.

Paragraph without a summarizing topic sentence

> Another main use of ice is to keep the fish fresh. Each of the seven different kinds of fish served at the restaurant requires almost 3.78 litres twice a day, for a total of 52.9 litres. An additional 22.7 litres a day are required for the salad bar.

Revised paragraph with summarizing topic sentence

> Seventy-six litres of ice a day are needed to keep food fresh. Of this, the largest portion (52.9 litres) is used to keep the fish fresh. Each of the seven varieties requires almost four litres twice a day ($7 \times 7.56 = 52.9$ litres). The salad bar requires an additional 22.7 litres a day.

White space increases reading ease because it separates and emphasizes ideas (Modules 5 and 6). To create white space, use
- Headings and subheadings
- Short paragraphs
- Tabs or indents
- Lists—with numbers or bullets

Headings are signposts that divide your letter, memo, or report into sections. **Subheadings** signal a subsection: the writer is providing specifics within the section. The best headings and subheadings "talk" to the reader because they
- Are short and specific
- Use highlighting: bold or italics
- Are differentiated: subheadings use a smaller or different font
- Summarize what the reader is about to read
- Cover all the material until the next heading
- Are parallel (i.e., use the same grammatical structure)

> The following suggestions can help employers avoid bias in job interviews:
> 1. Base questions on the job description.
> 2. Ask the same questions of all applicants.
> 3. Select and train interviewers carefully.

Plain language uses concrete nouns, action verbs, the active voice, short sentences (approximately 14 words), short paragraphs, and open punctuation to create clear, concise, and complete documents (see Revising and Editing Resources for more information.)

Revising for readability creates a story line your readers can readily follow.

MODULE SUMMARY

- **Feasibility**, **yardstick**, and **justification** reports analyze and evaluate information readers need to make decisions.
- **Proposals** are reports that describe a method for finding information, or solving a problem.
- PAIBOC analysis will help you choose the **content** and **organizational pattern** that best meet your audience's needs and expectations, and serve your purpose(s). You can organize your information using any of seven patterns.
    - **General-to-particular** or **particular-to-general**. **General-to-particular** begins with the situation as it affects the organization or manifests itself in general. Then the report discusses the parts of the problem and offers solutions to each of these parts. **Particular-to-general** starts with specifics and then discusses the larger implications for the organization.
    - **Chronological** records events in the order in which they happened or are planned to happen.
    - **Compare or contrast** examines each alternative in turn; one variation, the **pro–con pattern** gives the arguments for and against that alternative under specific headings.
    - The **problem–solution** pattern identifies the situation, explains causes, and analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of possible solutions.
    - **Elimination of alternatives** identifies the situation, explains causes, and discusses the least practical solution first, ending with the solution the writer favours.

    - **Geographic or spatial** patterns discuss the problems and solutions by units.
    - The **functional pattern** divides the information into appropriate units and examines the problems and solutions of each separately.
- Revising for readability (using blueprints, transitions, topic sentences, white space, “talking” headings and subheadings, and plain language techniques) makes your writing reader-friendly.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 16

Questions for Critical Thinking

16.1 What is plain language? Identify three reasons that plain language writing is important.

16.2 What kind(s) of reports do writers in your academic institution produce? Why?

16.3 Why do organizational patterns matter?

Exercises and Problems

16.4 **Writing a Yardstick Report**

Write a two-page yardstick report to your instructor and peers suggesting how users can protect themselves from cyber crime on social networking sites. Choose a specific site (Facebook, MySpace, etc.) and research specific examples (fraud, identity theft, scams). Using primary and secondary sources (your own observations and experiences as well as expert advice), identify three possible solutions. Establish specific criteria by which to measure the solutions. Evaluate each based on your criteria. Conclude your report by identifying the best way users can protect themselves.

16.5 **Writing a Justification Report**

Write a two-page report to your supervisor justifying a change in policy, or a purchase, investment, or hire. Choose a topic that you can cover in two pages, and use an organizational pattern that your reader will find convincing. Possible topics include

- Introducing flex hours
- Downloading a particular app
- Funding a course you would like to take
- Purchasing a new coffee machine
- Bringing pets to work
- Hiring an new employee
- Rearranging office or classroom space
- Articulating a harassment and bullying policy

16.6 **Explain *Best Practices***

Write a report describing the best practices of a unit or team of which you are a member. Convince your reader that other teams in your organization/college/university should adopt these practices.

16.7 Writing a Feasibility or Yardstick Report Recommending Action

Write a report identifying alternative actions your unit or organization could take, evaluating each solution and recommending the best choice. Address your report to the person who has the power to approve your recommendation. Possibilities are

- Making your organization more eco-friendly
- Finding an additional worker for your department
- Making your organization more employee-friendly
- Making a change to improve efficiency
- Making changes to improve accessibility for customers or employees with disabilities

16.8 Assessing Readability

Assess the readability of three different blogs or three LinkedIn profiles. Examine the text for elements that increase reading ease, including layout, white space, visuals, headings, bullets and other symbols of emphasis, font type and size, pronoun choice, noun choice, verb choice, sentence length, and paragraph length.

Enable and use your word processor's document readability test tool as part of your analysis. What is the readability, and what should it be and why?

Write a one-page report to your instructor and fellow students (1) analyzing your findings and (2) proposing specific changes to at least one of your chosen documents.

Polishing *your* Prose

Writing Subject Lines and Headings

Subject lines are the title of a letter, memo, or email message. Headings within a document tell the reader what information you will discuss in that section. Good subject lines are specific, concise, and appropriate for your purposes and the response you expect from the reader. Subject lines are required in memos but optional in letters.

- Put in good news if you have it.
- If information is neutral, summarize it.
- Use negative subject lines if the reader may not read the message, or needs the information to act, or if the negative is your error.
- In a request that is easy for the reader to grant, put the subject of that request, or a direct question, in the subject line.
- When you must persuade a reluctant reader, use a common ground, a reader benefit, or a directed subject line that makes your stance on the issue clear.

Headings are single words, short phrases, or complete sentences that indicate the topic in a document section. Headings must be *parallel*—that is, they must use the same grammatical structure—and must cover all the information until the next heading.

The most useful headings are **informative** or **talking heads**, which sum up the content of the section.

Weak	*Problem* Cause 1 Cause 2 Cause 3
Better	*Communication Problems Between Air Traffic Controllers and Pilots* Selective Listening Indirect Conversational Style Limitations of Short-Term Memory

Exercises

Write a good subject line for each of the following situations.

1. I'm your new boss
2. I wanted those annual enrolment forms back from you last week
3. Blood donor clinic
4. Not that it will really affect you, but starting next week there will be an opportunity for non-hourly workers (you're hourly) to also get overtime compensation for extra hours worked.
5. We're going to raise your insurance rates

Make the following statements into effective headings using parallel form.

6. Making the Most of Undergraduate Years; Making the Most of Graduate School; Now What?
7. Research; Logistics: What's in it for us?
8. Pros of Investing in Short-Term Mutual Funds; Cons of Investing in Short-Term Mutual Funds; The Market
9. Clemente Research Group's Five-Year Goals; What We Want to Accomplish in Ten Years; Our Fifteen-Year Goals
10. Overview: Budget; The Problem of Avondale Expanding into the US.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

MODULE 17

Writing Formal Reports

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 17 you will be familiar with

LO1 The formal report

LO2 Report formats and style choices

LO3 The importance of summaries

After applying the information you will be able to

LO4 Create a formal report

LO5 Begin to write summaries

LO6 Use PAIBOC to analyze and identify audience-appropriate report formats and style

Module Outline

Many organizations report to decision-makers, investors, and donors in long, formal documents. Multiple audiences, expectations of transparency and accountability, and resource-rich recommendations require extensive supporting documentation. Formal reports differ from informal letter and memo reports in length, layout, and additional components.

LO1 What Does a Formal Report Look Like?

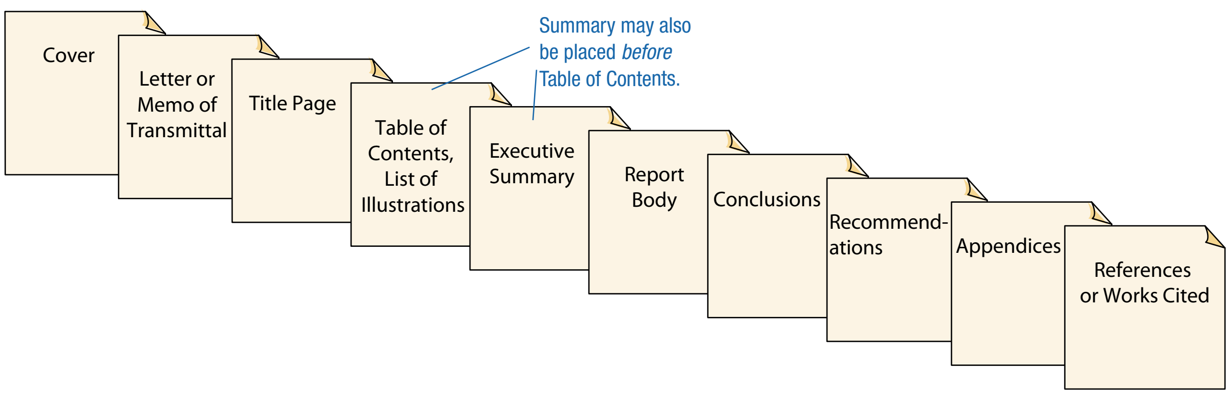
Formal reports use formal language and begin with an Executive Summary.

A full formal report *may* contain the following components.

- Cover
- Letter or Memo of Transmittal
- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- List of Illustrations
- Executive Summary

FIGURE 17.1

Parts of the Formal Report



- Report Body
  - ✓ Introduction (States purpose and scope; may also cover limitations, assumptions, and methods.)
  - ✓ Background/history of the problem (Serves as context for later readers of the report.)
  - ✓ Body (Presents and interprets data in words and visuals. Analyzes the situation or problem, identifies and describes solutions, or evaluates possible solutions. Specific headings depend on the topic of the report.)
- Conclusions (Summarizes main points of the report.)
- Recommendations (Proposes actions to solve the problem. May be combined with Conclusions or may be put before the body rather than at the end.)
- Appendices (Provides additional material that the careful reader may need: transcripts of interviews, copies of questionnaires, tallies of all the questions, computer printouts, previous reports.)
- References or Works Cited (Lists sources of information used in the report.)

LO4 LO6 How Do I Manage My Time?

Write each section as soon as you can. Spend most of your time on sections that support your recommendations.

Ex. 17.1, 17.3–17.6

Begin by analyzing and identifying your purposes and audiences: PAIBOC analysis will help you decide on the length, structure, organization, content, and language of your report.

FIGURE 17.2

PAIBOC Questions for Analysis

P	What are the **purposes** of the report? Are you providing information? Justifying a plan or decision? Providing information and analysis? Rationalizing and recommending change? Your purposes come from your organization and your audiences.
A	Who will read/view your report? What are your **audiences'** expectations? What do they already know? What do they need to know? How are they going to use your report?
I	What **information** must the report cover? What is your evidence? What primary research can you use: Observations? Experiments? Experience? Discussions with colleagues, clients or managers, other department personnel? What information will your audience find relevant? What information will convince your audience? Where will you get this information? Will your report include visuals? How can you organize this information for maximum clarity and influence?
B	What reasons or reader **benefits** support your position? What reasons will best appeal to your audience? How do these benefits meet your audience's needs or reinforce your audience's perceptions?
O	What **objections** will occur to your audience as they read your report? What information will your audience perceive as negative? How costly are your recommendations—in time and money? How can you organize the report to overcome audience objections or de-emphasize negative elements (Modules 8, 9 and 16)?
C	What **context** will affect reader response? Consider your relationship to the reader, the reader's values and expectations, the economy, the environment, organizational culture, current morale, social mores, and the time of year.

When you've decided what kind of report you're writing (Modules 15 and 16), break the project into manageable pieces. Use a timeline to plan work on the whole project; start with your report due date, and work backward, establishing specific, realistic dates for each process and product (see Figure 17.3).

FIGURE 17.3

Plan Your Report

May 4	May 12	May 20	May 25	May 27	May 28	May 31	June 4
Report assigned; write working thesis and begin research	Do PAIBOC analysis; draft body	Draft visuals	Have peer read body; start revisions; begin Conclusions and Recommendations	Finish Conclusions, Recommendations, and References	Start Summary	Have peer read Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations; revise and proof	Report due

To use your time efficiently, think about the parts of the report while you draft headings. Spend most of your researching and writing time on the sections of the report that are most important to your reader. Draft the important sections early so you won't spend all your time on the background or history of the problem. Instead, you'll get to the meat of your report.

LO2 LO4 How Do I Draft the Report?

Draft the report body first, then the ending sections, then write the beginning parts of the formal report.

You may want to start by composing the report body, because every other part of the report depends on your findings, supported by research. Draft the conclusions and recommendations next, because these sections flow naturally out of your research and findings.

As you revise for clarity and conciseness, organize the different report sections to meet your purposes and your audience's needs. For example, you might organize the proof in your body section using a compare–contrast, problem–solution, or elimination-of-alternatives pattern. However, in your beginning (Transmittal, Executive Summary, and the introduction to the Report Body) and ending (Conclusions and Recommendations) sections you will probably find a chronological development most useful to your purposes and readers (Module 16).

As you read about the content in each section below, turn to the corresponding pages of the long report in Figure 17.5 to see how each section is organized and how it relates to the total report.

Report Body

INTRODUCTION

The introduction pulls the reader into the situation and previews the body of the report. The introduction may include

- **Purpose** Identifies the organizational problem the report addresses, the research or method the report summarizes, and the rhetorical purposes of the report: to explain, to analyze, to evaluate, to solve, to recommend.
- **Scope** Covers the report topics. For example, Company TSC is losing money on its line of customized, home-cooked meals. Does the report investigate the quality of the meals? The advertising campaign? The cost of cooking? The market for home-cooked meals? When writers define the scope, they *contain* the content of the report: if the report is to examine only advertising, then readers cannot fault the writer for not considering other factors.
- **Limitations** Describes constraints, like time or money, that limit full research and make the recommendations less valid, or valid only under certain conditions. For example, a campus pizza restaurant considering expanding its menu might not have enough money to take a random sample of students and non-students. Without a random sample, the writer cannot generalize from the sample to the larger population.

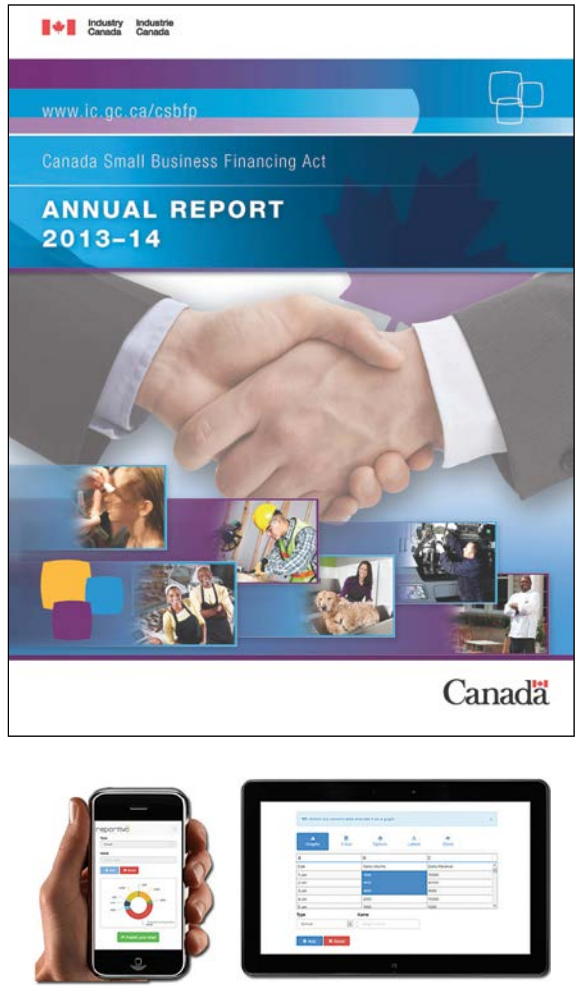
  Many feasibility studies and report recommendations remain valid for a limited time. For example, in a business plan, the business location might be ideal at the time of writing, but economic or demographic changes may cause the location to lose its lustre. Or a store may want to investigate the kinds of clothing that will appeal to university students. The recommendations will remain in force only for a short time; a year from now, styles and tastes may have changed.

- **Assumptions** Presumes certain realities that the writer uses to support the conclusions and recommendations. If the assumptions are incorrect, the conclusion will be wrong, too. For example, recommendations about what cars appeal to drivers aged 18 to 34 would be based on assumptions about the economy and gas prices. In a major recession, people buy fewer new cars. When gas prices radically rise or fall, young adults want different kinds of cars.
- **Methods** Describes the report data: what the writer observed; whom s/he chose to survey and interview; and how, when, and where respondents were interviewed. If the report is based solely on library and online research, writers simply cite their sources in the text and document them in the References or Works Cited section. See Module 14 for how to cite and document sources.

BACKGROUND OR HISTORY

Although the current audience for the report probably knows the situation, reports are filed and then consulted years later. These later audiences will probably not know the background, although it may be crucial for understanding the options available at the time.

In some cases, the history section might cover many years. For example, a report recommending that a Quebec consortium purchase an Ontario-based newspaper will probably provide the history of the newspaper's ownership, readership, and any editorial changes. In other cases, the background or history is much briefer, covering just the immediate situation.



Technology has transformed the annual report, which readers can now find online, into something interactive and visually appealing.

Source: (a) Industry Canada. *Canada Small Business Financing Act Annual Report* 2013-14. Reproduced with the permission of Industry Canada, 2015. (b) Reporting system built by Reportivo (http://www.reportivo.com), using visualisation tools provided by ShieldUI (www.shieldui.com)

FINDINGS

The findings section of the report provides the proof of your position. Here you present the facts, gathered through primary and secondary research (Modules 13 and 14), to demonstrate that your conclusions are accurate and your recommendations inevitable.

Spend a significant amount of time composing, rewriting, and revising this section. Pay particular attention to the organization: you want to frame the situation and your solutions to influence your readers to your point of view. Through your PAIBOC analysis, you identify reader benefits and objections. Use this information to structure your argument: emphasize benefits through placement of text and headings (Module 16); de-emphasize negatives by offering alternatives (Modules 8 and 9). Use talking heads to describe what is coming next in the text, to preview the subsequent content for the reader, and to contribute to clarity and understanding.

Report Ending

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All communication is an act of creation: when we make meaning, we create order out of chaos. Reports, too, can be creative. However, unlike fiction writing, your report should not contain any surprises for your intended audiences.

Because formal reports are often long, they use a great deal of repetition for reinforcement. The ending sections do not introduce any new information; your conclusions and recommendations concisely and clearly summarize information covered in the body.

The Conclusions section sums up the key ideas proven by the facts in the body of the report. Note that you may present your conclusions in paragraphs or single sentences, depending on your readers' expectations and how full an explanation you have offered in the body. Use "should" throughout ("Ardene should hire one more full-time staff for the holiday season") because the writer and reader share the assumption that the points have been proven.

The Recommendations section identifies action items that will solve or partially solve the problem. Again, you have already explained these actions in the body, where your skill in finding, organizing, and presenting the relevant facts led the reader to the inevitability of your recommendations.

Be sure to number the recommendations to make them easy to discuss. If your readers might find your recommendations expensive, difficult, or controversial, include a brief rationale after each recommendation. If your recommendations will be easy for the audience to accept, simply list them without comments or reasons.

Depending on audience expectations, some recommendations use the imperative verb tense ("Do this").

1. *Create* Positions for Co-op Students
2. *Set* Salaries
3. *Choose* Supervisors and Mentors
4. *Publicize* the Program
5. *Recruit* Students

Formal reports contain a great deal of repetition because of their length and because repeated information increases readability and retention. Therefore, your recommendations also go in the Summary and, if possible, are included in the report's title and the transmittal letter or memo.

APPENDICES AND REFERENCES OR WORKS CITED

Place supplemental information, including visuals, questionnaires, scientific and survey data, historical documents, and even glossaries in appendices at the end of the report, before your references/works cited. When deciding if you need an appendix, follow the norms of your discourse community: if your readers expect plenty of supporting documentation, provide it.

If you are undecided about where to place such documentation, assess its value to the reader and to your proof. If the data are necessary to prove your point of view, place them in the body. If the information provides useful background to your argument, place it in an appendix. If the information is superfluous to your argument, omit it.

Your report's credibility and your own reputation depend on your careful documentation of sources and resources (Module 14). Again, follow the norms of your discourse community when deciding whether to use endnotes or in-text citations, and APA or MLA formats for your References or Works Cited, respectively.

Report Beginning

TITLE PAGE

The title page of a report contains four items: the title of the report, who the report is for (the audience), who prepared the report, and the release date. The title of the report should be as informative as possible.

Poor title	Privacy Concerns
Better title	The End of Privacy: What Canadians Need to Know

In many cases, the title states the recommendation in the report: Improving Productivity at Cambridge International: Updating Communications Policies. However, omit the recommendations in the title when

- The reader will find the recommendations hard to accept
- Putting the recommendations in the title would make the title too long
- The report is not supposed to offer recommendations

If the title does not contain the recommendation, it usually indicates the problem that the report solves: Best-Practices Analysis, City of Montreal: The Social Media Connection.

LETTER OR MEMO OF TRANSMITTAL

The transmittal has several purposes: to send the report, to orient the reader to the report, and to influence the reader favourably toward the report and the writer. Use a *memo of transmittal* if you are a regular employee of the organization for which you prepare the report; use a *letter of transmittal* if you are not.

When organizing the transmittal

1. State the report's purpose as well as when and by whom the report was authorized.
2. Summarize your conclusions and recommendations.
3. Indicate minor problems you encountered in your investigation and show how you overcame them.
4. Thank people who helped you.
5. Point out additional research required (if any).
6. Thank the reader for the opportunity to do the work and offer to answer questions. Even if you did not enjoy writing the report, readers expect some positive acknowledgment about the experience. An example of a transmittal memo is included in the long report (Figure 17.5-ii).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

In the Table of Contents, list the headings exactly as they appear in the body of the report. If the report is shorter than 25 pages, list all the headings. In a very long report, list the two or three highest levels of headings. Include your List of Illustrations in your Table of Contents.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Report visuals are both tables and figures. **Tables** are words or numbers arranged in rows and columns. **Figures** are everything else: bar graphs, pie charts, maps, drawings, photographs, computer printouts, and so forth (see Module 18). Number tables and figures independently, so you may have both a Table 1 and a Figure 1. In a report with maps and graphs but no other visuals, the visuals are sometimes called Map 1 and Graph 1. Whatever you call the illustrations, list them in the order in which they appear in the report; give the name of each visual as well as its number. See Module 18 for information about how to design and label visuals.

LO3 LO5 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ex. 17.8

The Executive Summary provides a précis (Module 14) of the whole report. For many readers, the Summary is the most important part of the report; here the writer grabs audience attention and sells the solution.[1]

Although the Summary goes first, you create it last, because to write the Summary, you must know the report's methods, findings, and recommendations. Write and revise the Summary last, as a stand-alone document.

1. In the first paragraph, identify the report's recommendations or main point (purpose). State the situation briefly.
2. In the Summary body, identify the major supporting points for your argument. Include all the information decision makers will need.
3. Briefly describe your research methods.
4. If your report ends with conclusions, provide the conclusions section in the Summary.
5. If your report includes recommendations, provide the recommendations in the Summary.

FIGURE 17.4

Excerpt from an Executive Summary

Main point and purpose	Home Staging is the process of preparing and presenting the seller's house for the real estate market. As a marketing and selling tool, home staging broadens the house's appeal to a wider range of potential buyers.
Conclusions	A professional home stager can create a neutral, welcoming environment that potential buyers envision themselves living in. As this report proves, well-staged properties sell three times faster and for a much higher amount than do non-staged homes.

Source: Sabrina Woodstock

LO4 How Do I Submit the Report?

Follow instructions carefully. If you don't know, ask.

Pay attention to the receiver's instructions whenever you send any documents. If you don't, your material may not be read. Many organizations accept only job applications and resumés sent electronically. Government RFPs define not only the format, content, and organization of vendors' responses, but also the method, date, and cut-off time of submission. The RFP might specify that the vendors' pricing description must be submitted in a separate envelope from that containing the work proposal. Proposals that do not conform to the submission specifications (for example, those submitted after the designated deadline) are not accepted.

Your organizational culture may have very clearly defined specifications about how to send reports to internal and external audiences. If you don't know the expectations of your discourse community, ask a colleague or your supervisor.

FIGURE 17.5-i

A Formal Report Example

POLYCULTURAL
IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services (Polycultural)
Communications Plan 2014–2015**

Prepared for

Marwan Ismail, Executive Director; Slavek Suszek, Director, Finance and Administration; Harriet Obodo, Director, Human Resources; Nadia Sokhan, Director of Monitoring, Reporting and Partnerships; Polycultural's Board of Directors

Name(s) of reader(s)
Job title(s)

Prepared by
Rachael Dagonas
Communications & Marketing Coordinator

Name(s) of writer(s) and Job title(s) if relevant

October 24, 2014

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-ii

A Formal Report Example

Date:	**October 24, 2014**
To:	**Marwan Ismail, Slavek Suszek, Harriet Obodo, Nadia Sokhan, Polycultural's Board of Directors**
From:	Rachael Dagonas
Subject:	Polycultural's Communications Plan 2014–2015

This report provides a communications plan that will promote our values and community presence over the next year. Social media in particular offer relevant and budget-conscious opportunities for expanded community visibility and engagement.

Transmittal memo summarizes findings; defines research and report scope; acknowledges others' participation, support and insights; and thanks supervisor(s) for opportunity

My research indicates that all Polycultural employees and endeavours should be committed to

1. Increasing public awareness of Polycultural's tradition of programming excellence and encouraging collaboration
2. Building relationships with past and present employees, program or service recipients (alumni), administrators and volunteers
3. Encouraging private and business donations to increase annual revenues
4. Encouraging community, private and public relationships, and cooperation
5. Building on employee satisfaction by keeping them better informed and engaged, and fostering a sense of teamwork and community

My research included lengthy interviews with employees and senior staff; I am grateful for their informed experiences and insightful ideas.

Because the Communications and Marketing role is a new position, and because the advantages of social media are still being explored, this report does not fully explore all the marketing potential possible in the communications plan. Beginning January 2015, employees, directors, and I will be developing marketing strategies aligned with the communications plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to review Polycultural's current communication tactics and to suggest strategies to build the Polycultural brand.

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES ii

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-iii

A Formal Report Example

Executive Summary

This report describes how we can create measurable, organizational communications strategies to build community visibility and revenue to expand our products and services.

The purpose of this plan is to streamline and centralize communications processes.

This report recommends that Polycultural employees commit to the following communications objectives:

1. Increase public awareness of Polycultural's tradition of programming excellence, and encourage collaboration
2. Build and maintain relationships with past and present employees, program or service recipients (alumni), administrators and volunteers
3. Encourage private and business donations to increase annual revenues
4. Encourage community, private and public relationships, and cooperation
5. Build on employee satisfaction by keeping them better informed and engaged, and fostering a sense of teamwork and community

The report's focus is on creating a communications plan that will strengthen Polycultural's community presence and build consistent revenue streams to support Polycultural's community endeavours.

Information in this report is based on interviews with Polycultural employees, and research in contemporary social media and communications theory and practice.

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES iii

Writer chooses to place Executive Summary before Table of Contents

Recommendations (or Conclusions if the report does not make recommendations) go up front for readers.

Executive Summary—approximately one-tenth of report—summarizes the whole report concisely.

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-iv

A Formal Report Example

Table of Contents

Use lowercase roman numerals for all pages before the Introduction.

Begin page 1 with the Introduction.

For readability, make major headings parallel with each other; make sub-headings parallel with each other.

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES iv

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-1

A Formal Report Example

Introduction

Provides readers with necessary background information

Our Mission: Individuals and communities served by Polycultural have an equal opportunity to be productive members of the Canadian society.

Our Mandate: To provide initiatives, activities, and services that respond to the varying needs of our clients.

Our Focus: To assist newcomers, youth, women, and seniors; to provide individuals with skills that allow them to be productive; and to build healthy people and strong communities

Our Values: Through our 40 year history, Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services has developed an inclusive and welcoming environment based on values of

- Integrity and transparency
- Volunteerism
- Promoting respect and dignity
- Collaboration and partnership
- Inclusion and equity

(http://www.polycultural.org/who-we-are/about-us/vision-mission-values)

Polycultural is dedicated to assisting individuals and communities throughout the GTA to engage with, contribute to, and participate fully in Canadian society. Our vision is to be the organization of choice for individuals and communities seeking support.

The purpose of this report is to

1. Assess the current communications structure used by Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services (Polycultural)
2. Recommend a plan for effective communications and marketing throughout our organization
3. Establish measurements for evaluating the plan

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 1

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-2

A Formal Report Example

Situational Analysis

Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services operates in and is influenced by specific political, public, and media environments. These environments and Polycultural's organizational capacity must change for the organization to grow.

Our Environment

The current Canadian political environment is less favorable for not-for-profits. The federal government is squeezing charities and not-for-profit ventures by increasing the number of audits and decreasing government funding for many programs. As a result of these pressures, not-for-profit ventures must spend more time and staff resources on housekeeping tasks and less on programming.

However, Polycultural could continue to receive current or even increased government funding by registering and graduating newcomers to Canada at a similar or better rate than 2013-2014. Thus, it is essential to Polycultural's growth to continue to enrol at current or better levels, while exploring broader, alternative funding options.

(http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/giving/non-profits-worried-new-law-will-hurt-smaller-agencies/article4255315/), (http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2011/2011-02-26/pdf/g1-14509.pdf, page 788)

The public environment also poses challenges to today's not-for-profit sector. The volume of charities and not-for-profit agencies competing for attention and monies makes it difficult to fundraise, or to improve the social standing of Polycultural. To compete effectively, Polycultural needs a communications program that allows this community organization to work with the broader community at large.

(http://sectorsource.ca/research-and-impact/sector-impact)

The media environment in Toronto is increasingly difficult to infiltrate. Members of the media are invited to multiple events on any given day, and good-news stories do not get as much attention from the mainstream media in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Ethnic media are much easier to develop relationships with, and these media tend to appreciate good-news community stories that highlight the successes of newcomers from their own home countries. Polycultural has a distinct opportunity for earned media coverage with ethnic media news sources because of our positive message about newcomers to Canada and their impact on our communities.

Polycultural's allies are employees, students, and alumni, and other local community organizations and not-for-profits. We work with a number of community organizations, including the Region of Peel, the United Way, The Academy of Learning College, and the Heart & Stroke Foundation. Were Polycultural to expand its community connections, the organization could increase its visibility in the broader GTA area. We could collaborate with other not-for-profits to increase our connections and gain support for our programs. Indeed, Polycultural's organizational culture fosters development of new community partnerships in order to improve the range and quality of programming and services available to newcomers.

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 2

Major and sub "talking heads" review subsequent text and lead reader through analysis.

Topic sentences begin and structure each paragraph.

APA-style in-text citations for both direct quotes and paraphrases.

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-3

A Formal Report Example

First Step in Increasing Capacity

Polycultural's organizational capacity for communications and outreach has expanded since hiring a dedicated communications professional. Generally, organizations of a similar size have departments dedicated to communications and public relations, including media relations, social media, event planning, crisis communications, and graphic and website design. Hiring a staff member dedicated to these tasks is the first step in increasing our organizational capacity.

The other vital area of organizational capacity relates to budget allocation. Executing social media and advertising campaigns requires an investment of resources. Recording equipment – including a high-quality video camera and tripod -- paid advertising or page boosting/promotion: all are important. However, capital costs and promotional campaign allocations can be distributed over several investment periods.

Polycultural needs to further expand its organizational capacity. Lists of funders, government contacts, local political contacts, event attendees, media representatives, past clients, and all other contacts belong in one central database that can be updated by managers across the organization.

Current Communications Vehicles Summary

Create sub-headings to increase readability and present more specific information

Polycultural's current communication vehicles include

- Annual Report
- Social media, including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn
- Hard copy flyers and marketing materials
- Polycultural website
- Events: annual Polylicious event; local, ad hoc and community events that include Polycultural's written materials, signage and flyers, Web media promotion, volunteer presence or speeches

Overall, visibility both in the community and through social media channels remains low. However, according to the Government of Ontario website, positive visibility

- Helps clients, donors, and other stakeholders feel loyal to us and clearly understand who we are as an organization
- Reinforces pride and confidence in Polycultural
- Makes employees, volunteers, fundraisers, and donors feel good about being on and joining our team
- Maximizes the chances that donors will choose Polycultural
- Helps us to build relationships with government and local communities
- Will help Polycultural survive bad press or any public mistakes
- Creates, when consistent, confidence in Polycultural's trustworthiness and reliability

(http://serviceontario.ca/NotForProfits)

Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services needs to have a strong presence and reputation to 1) differentiate itself as the organization of choice for immigrant communities and other target audiences and 2) stand out as the obvious, accessible choice for individuals.

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 3

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-4

A Formal Report Example

Current Communications Vehicles Analysis

Annual Report: The Annual Report is distributed in September/October. It is visually appealing and assists in communicating to funders, stakeholders, media, and the public in a concise format. Generally this document is well written, but will need better editing to produce a product of the quality of competitors and expected by private funders.

Twitter: With hundreds of thousands of users, Twitter is the fastest-growing social media network in Canada (http://www.forbes.com/sites/tjmccue/2013/01/29/twitter-ranked-fastest-growing-social-platform-in-the-world/). Polycultural has reduced its two accounts to one main account on Twitter: @Polycultural.

- @Polycultural is the only official Twitter account for Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services
- As at September 1, 2014, @Polycultural had
    - 258 tweets, including 18 photos/videos shared
    - Registered users since May, 2009 (approximately 64 months or 1948 days)
    - Average of 4 tweets/month
    - 438 followers
    - 358 following

Facebook: Facebook is ubiquitous in Canada, with 19 million users, 14 million of whom return almost daily to check their newsfeeds (Canadian Press via McLean's Magazine Online, http://www.macleans.ca/news/facebook-releases-stats-about-canadian-usage-14-million-daily-users/) Polycultural Canada can be found at: http://facebook.com/Polycularal. This account manages the Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services Page, also at http://www.facebook.com/Polycultural.

The Polycultural Canada Facebook page also administers two separate groups for youth programming: the Beautiful Girls and Youth Achievers programs. These programs benefit from a closed group environment where members are encouraged to communicate with other group members and ask questions of Polycultural employees. Keeping the group closed protects individual privacy of members, most of whom are minors. The Polycultural Canada profile administers the page and keeps an eye on conversations happening within the group, but rarely, if ever, participates.

As at September 1, 2014, Polycultural Canada had

- 47 Friends
- 176 Likes

Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services page is linked to the Twitter account (unique tweets by @Polycultural will appear on the Polycultural Facebook Page seen by those who have liked our page).

Linkedin: Our LinkedIn account, Polycultural Canada, can be found at: http://bit.ly/Polycultural. This account manages the Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services organizational page.

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 4

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-5

A Formal Report Example

As at September 1, 2014, Polycultural Canada had

- 30 connections and ranked in the lower 50% of profile views amongst connections
- 108 listed employees
- 578 followers
- An Employment Support Group with 175 members

Website: Our website, Polycultural.org, offers valuable information. The content looks visually appealing and is easy to navigate, but is infrequently updated.

Events: Polycultural's annual event, Polylicious, is a fundraiser grossing approximately $15,000–$20,000/year. Five smaller fundraising events specifically aimed at raising funds for Polycultural programs include holiday functions and summer BBQs. Most events that Polycultural participates in are joint events with community partners spanning the GTA. These events provide opportunities for Polycultural to increase community awareness and to gather information about prospective clients and donors.

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 5

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-6

A Formal Report Example

Target Audiences Analysis

Start major headings on a new page for emphasis.

Polycultural needs to address two target audiences: primary – the decision-makers – and secondary – influencers, opinion leaders, and key publics. Polycultural must tailor each of its messages to a specific audience need to produce desired outcomes

- **Government**
  - Motivators: integration of newcomers through successful government-funded programs reflects well on all governments: municipal, provincial, and federal
  - Our stories can emphasize the success of all settlement programs in the GTA, making the quality and effectiveness of our impact stories important
  - Our government audiences are aware that Polycultural exists and offers quality programs
  - Event and photo opportunities are likely to keep government engagement high to increase their profiles in our communities
- **Funding partners**
  - Motivators: our non-government funding partners are driven to assist newcomers to Canada as a part of their corporate, social-support mandates
  - Our non-government funders are interested in success stories
  - Our non-government funders are interested in event opportunities featuring their brands
- **Media: Ethnic media and mainstream Canadian press**
  - Radio, TV, newspaper → editors, journalists, publishers, managers, news directors are interested in immigration and settlement stories and local happenings
  - Motivators: a "scoop" or good story line, or a story to supplement a piece focusing on a study or trend in Canadian immigration builds readership
  - Small local publications are much more likely to be receptive to our good-news stories or to attend our events and fundraisers
- **Newcomers to Canada → those who might benefit from our services**
  - Diverse group of languages and cultures come from a wide range of countries
  - Visibility limited: This group relies on referrals from case workers, family, friends and community members
- **Newcomers to Canada → current program participants**
  - Diverse group of languages and cultures come from a wide range of countries
  - Polycultural is well known to our students and participants
  - This audience can promote our events, programs, services and social media outlets
- **Local ethnic communities, both new and established**
  - Diverse group of languages and cultures come from a wide range of countries
  - Visibility depends on whether members of any one group have had a positive experience with Polycultural
  - Motivation: to integrate into Canadian society without losing cultural traditions

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 6

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-7

A Formal Report Example

- **Volunteers and potential volunteers**
  - Motivators: to promote a valued cause
    - May be members of other groups: alumni, donors, partner associations, or the general public
  - Diverse group of languages and cultures come from a wide range of educational backgrounds and industries
  - Appeal will be our success stories and assisting others
  - Current volunteers will know a lot about Polycultural, while potential volunteers may not. Potential volunteers are drawn from the general public
- **Donors and potential donors**
  - Motivators: to assist a good cause
    - May be members of other groups: alumni, donors, partner associations or the general public
  - Diverse group of languages and cultures come from a wide range of educational backgrounds and industries
  - Appeal is promoting our success stories and assisting their neighbours
  - Donors know a great deal about Polycultural and continue to monitor the organization They appreciate being recognized and informed and would benefit from receiving email communications
  - Potential donors are drawn from the general public group and may donate at an event or give online after learning more about Polycultural's programs
- **Partner asssociations and community groups**
  - A large network comprised of organizations ranging in size and scope with a common goal of community betterment.
  - Polycultural is not visible with these organizational peers because of low social media engagement and ad hoc communications style. Partners don't know how they can benefit from collaborative projects with Polycultural
- **Competing associations or organizations**
  - Motivators: this group is also interested in the success of newcomers to Canada This group may or may not know about Polycultural and its programs and services, and may present an opportunity for collaboration
  - Communications with these organizations should be similar in tone to the communications with partner associations and community groups to draw increased attention.
- **Past program participants (alumni)**
  - Our visibility is excellent within this group
  - This group will be receptive to hearing news and updates from Polycultural
- **The public**
  - A broad range of residents living in the GTA and Peel Regions
  - Our visibility is low with this group

(http://serviceontario.ca/NotForProfits)

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 7

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-8

A Formal Report Example

Key Messaging Analysis

Key messages represent Polycultural's story: the narrative all Polycultural employees and clients convey to our audiences so that our message is accurate, consistent, and clear. New key messages will develop as situations evolve, and individual employees may modify key messages at any time, as long as the intent and impact of the message stays the same.

Criteria for Key Messaging: Polycultural and Polycultural programs are accurately represented

- The message is concise and positive, and can be expanded if further information is required
- The message is clear: No confusion for our audiences
- The message assists in achieving a specified goal, or applies to a specific situation
- The message reinforces Polycultural's place in the community using appropriate language (inclusive, community, grateful, excellent, proud)

Polycultural's Key Messages

1. Polycultural Immigration & Community Services continues to build on our 40 year tradition of excellence in support and settlement services and programming for New Canadians*
2. Polycultural Immigration & Community Services encourages inclusion and diversity in the Greater Toronto Area.
3. Polycultural Immigration & Community Services is grateful to our government and community partners for allowing us to assist thousands of New Canadians over the past 40 years*
4. Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services is not just for immigrants – we are proud to support the communities that we live and work in
5. Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services is the organization of choice for newcomers to Canada who are seeking support
6. Polycultural Immigration & Community Services supports and encourages newcomers to allow for the easiest transition for families, and the best experience possible*
7. Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services' experienced staff will guide you through the transition to your new home in Canada

*Use Polycultural rather than Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services on social media to allow room for a hashtag.

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 8

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-9

A Formal Report Example

Communications Strategies Analysis

Realizing Polycultural's communication goal – to provide valued information on a consistent and timely basis to our members and target audiences -- will increase our visibility and enhance our reputation in the Greater Toronto Area and internationally.

Polycultural employees and directors play pivotal roles in the communications plan's success.

Strategy 1: Increase public awareness of Polycultural's tradition of programming excellence and encourage collaboration.

Through social media

- Increase the number of followers on Twitter by 40% through the course of the year, a real gain of 175 followers (based on September 1, 2014 number of 438 followers)
- Increase frequency of engagement via tweets (and retweets) to an average minimum of 20 per week throughout the year
- Increase our number of Facebook likes by 15% through the course of the year, a real gain of 27 likes (based on September 1, 2014 number of 176 likes)
- Monitor the analytics pages for all social media including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn
- Encourage Polycultural staff to join our social media campaigns by liking our Facebook page, interacting on Twitter and connecting with Polycultural on LinkedIn
- Encourage participants and key contacts to do the same
- Promote the Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services Facebook page using paid promotion to double or triple the number of likes overall. This increase will guide more organic traffic and foster engagement with Polycultural's social media sites and website for easier promotion of events and programs
- Promote Polycultural and community partners' events using Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn whenever appropriate
- Use all social media channel logos with links to our profiles on Polycultural's website and print materials consistently to further demonstrate social media activity
- Integrate Instagram, Google+, and YouTube into Polycultural's weekly online communications
- Add a videos page to Polycultural's website that links YouTube media to further integrate social media channels

All bullets start with the same part of speech, in this case, verbs.

Through events and appearances

- Seek opportunities to engage communities at local events, including job fairs, ethnic community events, and local collaborative events where Polycultural's executive director or program manager can speak about programs, or an alumnus can speak to her/his experience with Polycultural programming
- Create opportunities to host small and informal gatherings open to the community where alumni can meet new/prospective participants

Through all communications channels

- Assign one contact for media inquiries and maintain a clear and consistent message when speaking to the media

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 9

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-10

A Formal Report Example

- Ensure that community partners, funders, and government offices receive up-to-date print newsletters, flyers, and other promotional materials
- Maintain consistency of message through all communications

Through Polycultural staff and volunteers, as positive brand ambassadors in our communities

Bold emphasizes sub-topics and breaks up dense text.

- Encourage employees and volunteers to support Polycultural initiatives in their own social media and off-line networks
- Encourage employees and volunteers to communicate relevant information with managers or with the communications contact to ensure accurate and timely promotions

Strategy 2: Build and maintain relationships with past employees and program/service recipients (alumni), administrators and volunteers.

- Create and distribute an e-newsletter to be sent to our database quarterly to
  - Keep records up-to-date
  - Encourage individual donations
  - Encourage dialogue with former members or service recipients and key community contacts
  - Encourage excitement about success stories, milestones, and upcoming events
- **Create an online exit survey for all clients upon completion of each program.** This exit survey will allow Polycultural to
  - Develop continued insight into client satisfaction
  - Analyse response data and react to requests and comments
  - Maintain a dialogue and connection with alumni, and encourage their opinions and insights
- **Create a referral program that rewards each alumnus for referring friends, neighbours and family members to Polycultural**. (Referral rewards could include free admission to Polylicious or another key event). This program will
  - Drive membership
  - Encourage positive alumni relations
  - Develop brand consciousness and loyalty in communities

Strategy 3: Encourage private and business donations to increase annual revenues.

- Generate 15% in additional private sector and personal donation revenues
- Feature stories about the impact of private donations on website and through social media
- Include private and business contacts on external newsletter list to ensure donor recognition and brand loyalty
- Increase Polylicious and other events promotion: include personal invitations to encourage the attendance of influencers (media, government, local community leaders)
  - Write thank-you notes to those who participate in events such as Polylicious, and personally invite them to other events
- Include links on our websites to our funders/sponsors/partners' websites to drive traffic, and ensure that Polycultural is highlighted on their websites if possible
- Track funders, government contacts, local political contacts, event attendees, media contacts (when they were last contacted, what requests they tend to respond to, etc.),

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 10

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-11

A Formal Report Example

past clients, and other relationships in one central database that can be updated by managers across the organization

Strategy 4: Encourage community, private and public relationships and cooperation.

- Refresh the Polycultural.org website to ensure easy navigation and accurate and current information
  - Update success stories and information as needed
  - Refresh the content of the Polycultural.org website on an ongoing basis, quarterly at minimum
- Create general flyers promoting Polycultural's broad range of programs and services; distribute to local businesses, government offices, and partner organization offices
  - Create easy-to-read and visually appealing flyers in Polycultural's brand colours
  - Print in-office

Strategy 5: Build on employee satisfaction by keeping them better informed and engaged, and fostering a sense of teamwork and community.

- Centralize the communications function of Polycultural while emphasizing staff contributions: for example, sharing details of upcoming events, providing photos for social media distribution, recommending success stories, encouraging participants to connect with us online, recognizing staff milestones and anniversaries
- Create a quarterly internal newsletter emphasizing real gains (progress toward internal communications goals), staff achievements, and important events

Measurement and Evaluation Mechanisms

To assess the outcomes of the communication plan, Polycultural's Communication Director will

- Analyze the effectiveness of our communication activities
- Determine which topics and materials were most relevant to our audiences
- Research whether key messages reached chosen audiences
- Determine which stories achieved media pickup

Research

Specific methods to measure the efficacy of the communications plan through 2015-2017 include

- Interviewing stakeholders
- Observing reactions
- Hosting focus groups → mix of ages, backgrounds, professions
- Conducting surveys → post-program, in the community, amongst our stakeholders, amongst our staff
- Sending out email questionnaires → alumni, donors, stakeholders, staff
- Monitoring media coverage → social media and online media monitoring of traditional news sources

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 11

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-12

A Formal Report Example

Work Plan and Timelines

Polycultural Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

As described in **Communications Strategies Analysis**, Polycultural staff should

- Update the communications lead with upcoming monthly calendars of program start and end dates, events they are hosting, community events that they are participating in, and community events that might be of interest to our audiences at least 14 days prior to the event or program start date
- Participate in the planning for each upcoming edition of the e-newsletter (internal and external)
- Share photos and videos from events and special initiatives with the communications lead within seven (7) days of the event happening (whenever possible)
- Adhere to the guidelines in the Branding Guide for Polycultural Employees (**Appendix A**, pages 18-19) including the use of colours, logos, and hashtags.
- Submit suggestions for upcoming events or improvements to social media channels
- "Like" our Facebook page, and share our posts
- Encourage colleagues, clients, and potential donors on social media accounts—including Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram—to follow and interact with Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services
- Follow local ethnic media, to pass on and translate significant articles for sharing on social media

Communications Director Responsibilities

The Communications Director is responsible for guiding and measuring the Polycultural communications plan. The Communications Director, Executive Director, and communications team will implement, review and update the plan. Additionally, the Communications Director will

- Create the requisite timelines for each strategy and materials
- Maintain the staff responsibilities matrix
- Create and manage a budget for presentation to the executive director
- Monitor and allocate the appropriate resources to complete each plan component
- Initiate discussion of the marketing component of the plan, January 2015

Communications Team Responsibilities

The communications team may consist of paid staff, volunteers, or program participants. These individuals will assist the communications lead staff person in executing the components of this communications plan as required. This may include

- Posting to social media
- Re-posting and interacting with Polycultural's social media channels
- Assisting with event set-up and promotion

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 12

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-13

A Formal Report Example

Budget and Resources Analysis

For initial set-up and first year operating, the requirement will be approximately $10,000.00 CAD, as follows:

Price	Item	Total
$1,200.00	Equipment (estimate)– Camera, lens, lighting, extra battery, editing software	
$1,100.00*	Estimate – First Facebook and Twitter campaigns as experiment to best understand whether future campaigns will be necessary	
$7,700.00	Paid advertising and promotions printing, design, materials, etc. – local newspapers, ethnic community media, etc.	$10,000

*NB: If social media campaigns are not successful as anticipated, this money could applied to paid advertising and materials after 2015.

Conclusions

Conclusions section summarizes the most important ideas presented throughout the report

Polycultural is dedicated to assisting individuals and communities throughout the GTA to engage with, contribute to and participate fully in Canadian society. To achieve this mission as outlined in our new Mission Statement and Vision, Polycultural's communications plan strategies are to

1. Increase public awareness of Polycultural's tradition of programming excellence and encourage collaboration
2. Build and maintain relationships with past and present employees, program or service recipients (Alumni), administrators, and volunteers
3. Encourage private and business donations to increase annual revenues
4. Encourage community, private, and public relationships and cooperation
5. Build on employee satisfaction by keeping them better informed and engaged, and fostering a sense of teamwork and community

Recommendations

Recommendations tell readers how to solve the problem or resolve the situation.

This report recommends that Polycultural employees commit their energies to implementing, evaluating, and updating the organizational communications' plan to strengthen Polycultural's community presence and build consistent revenue streams to support our vision, mission, and values.

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 13

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-14

A Formal Report Example

Appendix A: Basic Branding Guide for Polycultural Employees

Our Logo

A diamond with a P in the centre with POLYCULTURAL in caps above the words "Immigrant & Community Services." The only acceptable short version of the logo is the diamond with the P in the centre, only when used with our official colours and fonts.

Our Colours and Fonts

Polycultural Orange – Hex #da5827

Our Hashtags

#cdnimm, #diversity, #polycultural, #jobsTO, #Toronto, #Youth, #VolunteerTO, #Polylicious

Suggested Tweets

Tweets are to encourage community engagement. Your Communications & Marketing contact may send out communications to staff with new or updated tweets or other social media posts, but you can send similar tweets any time:

#FF to @polycultural. They offer a broad range of services & programming for newcomers to Canada! #cdnimm

Event Posting Requirements

To communicate effectively with our target audiences we must provide timely and relevant information.

We will post events on the Polycultural website and broadcast on our social media networks as soon as a date, time, and description are confirmed. We can add location details later.

For a complete event posting please include

Date

Time

Location

Host (is Polycultural the host? Is a program hosting? Is a community group the host?)

Description/purpose

Event appeal (for example, if the event is a job fair, perhaps it appeals to engineers or accountants)

Ticketing and pricing

Contact information

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-15

A Formal Report Example

Share-Worthy Photos

Visual documentation of Polycultural events, people, and services is essential to the social media success of our communications plan. Here are some important tips.

- The goal of good event photos is to make the event look inviting. The feel of your photos should be casual and friendly, not posed.
- We want to keep the photos! Have an event organizer take photos, or give your camera to a volunteer.
- Is the shot clear? If the shot is fuzzy, or a head or hand is in the way, take another. Pay attention to what is happening behind the people in the shot.
- Is the logo visible? Whether you are taking a photo of a speaker, or a group of attendees, ensure whenever possible that some Polycultural branding is clearly visible. Examples of potential branding inlcude
    - Banners
    - Podium sign
    - Backdrop
    - Posters
- Avoid taking a picture of anyone eating or drinking. Generally the results aren't flattering.
- Try a different perspective. Play with angles. Not everything will turn out, but switching up your angles keeps the visual interesting. Remember to be aware of the branding! (http://branded4good.com/blog/15---tips---great---nonprofit---event---photos/)

Send all photos to SocialMedia@polycultural.org along with names of the people appearing in the photos so they can be featured.

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 15

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-16

A Formal Report Example

Appendix B: Crisis Communications Strategy

It's important to develop a communications plan before a crisis descends in order to ensure prompt, honest communications with staff, customers, the media and other stakeholders in the event of a crisis.

What is a potential crisis?

A potential communications crisis is any situation that could harm the reputation of Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services, its staff, participants, funders, government partners, community partners or volunteers. Because of the nature of our organization, Polycultural staff continuously interact with people from a wide variety of backgrounds, spanning the entire range of demographics in terms of age, sex, race, language, etc. which may lead to a host of issues. Polycultural has in place a number of procedures designed to protect our staff and stakeholders.

According to the ServiceOntario website

> … a risk is the possibility of a circumstance, accident, loss, lawsuit, or adverse event that could, potentially, threaten your ability to accomplish your mission. In practical terms, this means that risks are anything that threatens the assets vital to your day-to-day activities and long-term survival, such as
>
> - Your people—board members, volunteers, employees, clients, donors, and the general public
> - Your property—buildings, facilities, equipment, materials, copyrights, and trademarks
> - Your income—sales, grants, and contributions
> - Your reputation—the goodwill you have generated in your community, your stature, your ability to raise funds, and your ability to appeal to prospective volunteers. (https://www.appmybizaccount.gov.on.ca)

Situational Analysis

Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services is dedicated to its reputation as a service provider with 40 years of delivering excellence in its programs and services. Polycultural will do everything we can as an organization to ensure that our staff and stakeholders are protected. These procedures are in place so that as an organization, we can speak to all stakeholders the most clear and concise manner, meaning that there will be no confusion about the situation or the remedy.

Key Messages

Our key messaging will depend greatly on the nature of the incident or crisis. Staff and volunteers are required to respect Polycultural's procedures in the event that a negative incident should occur, meaning that they will not speak about any incident unless they are the designated spokesperson, and they will report any potentially negative events to their managers.

Polycultural acknowledges that staff will be asked by friends, family, and members of their own communities about crises that affect the reputation of Polycultural, and key messages will be distributed for use in a social setting should you need them.

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 16

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-17

A Formal Report Example

What to Do in a Crisis

In the unfortunate event that something should happen, Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services should, as soon as possible

- Distribute a backgrounder and key messages regarding this crisis amongst board members and staff, with instructions NOT to speak to the media
- Assign one key spokesperson (the Executive Director) and a backup spokesperson (the Communications Lead) to represent Polycultural and its employees to any external stakeholders including the media. This spokesperson will deliver honest information frequently, frankly, and promptly while adhering to the Five C's:
    - Care—making sure our spokesperson can express empathy and compassion
    - Commitment to describing the mission of Polycultural and our commitment to investigating the situation and preventing it from happening again
    - Consistency in our messages
    - Coherence in our message – say what we need to say and no more
    - Clarity—clear, jargon-free information
- This spokesperson will keep people in the loop by
    - Sending top people to talk directly to communities affected
    - Briefing key personnel and other stakeholders
    - Working with the media
        - Stick to your key messages.
        - Tell the truth.
        - Admit to our mistakes or the role we played in the situation.
        - If possible, accommodate special requests such as interviews in Polycultural headquarters or regular news briefings.
        - Don't avoid the press—if the crisis is bad enough, someone else outside your organization will invariably surface and speak to the media, and you cannot tell that person what to say.
    - Developing and distributing key documents
        - A summary statement that describes what happened, what Polycultural is doing about it, and how Polycultural feels
        - A question-and-answer fact sheet that addresses what happened and who's responsible, assesses the danger of the situation, describes what Polycultural is doing about it, and is updated with answers to any other questions that arise
        - A media kit that provides background on Polycultural
        - Working with an outside party, such as a public relations firm, if necessary, to prepare media releases or help you repair your reputation

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 17

Source: Rachael Dagonas

FIGURE 17.5-18

A Formal Report Example

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Use APA style to document all sources.

POLYCULTURAL IMMIGRANT & COMMUNITY SERVICES 18

Source: Rachael Dagonas

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Choosing a Long Report Format and Style

Ex. 17.1–17.3

Many types of long reports exist in the workplace. Their formats and styles vary according to purpose, audience expectations, organization, and context.

Corporate annual reports are typically printed on glossy stock, filled with colour photos, charts, and graphs, and focused on information, like financial statistics, important to investors. These reports may have dozens of pages and be bound like a magazine or paperback book. Other organizations choose to use fewer colours and pages, and inexpensive binding. Still other organizations put their reports online only, saving money and paper.

Reports on scientific and engineering projects, such as soil contamination remediation, highway repair efforts, or technology research and development, are frequently text heavy, including jargon, but relatively light on visuals, which may be only the most technical of diagrams. They may have hundreds of pages and be bound in three-ring binders. A government report on the bereavement industry or tax law revisions might also be dense with text. Plain covers and paper stock closer to copy bond are typical.

Text in reports may be arranged in single or multiple columns, and feature a *drop cap*—an enlarged letter at the beginning of an opening paragraph—and *pull quotes*—portions of the body text repeated and set apart graphically from the rest. Online reports routinely include hypertext links to other documents.

Long reports are written formally. They

- Use the third person (*employees, waste management services, the retail sales team, finance graduates*)
- Are impersonal (avoid *I* and *you* because the data are more important than the writer); in a document to multiple, even global audiences, it is not clear who the "you" is
- Avoid contractions (use *they will* instead of *they'll*, *it is* instead of *it's*)

Use your resources to decide on the appropriate format and style.

- Start with PAIBOC analysis.
- Review organizational models. Many organizations have a databank of reports and generic report templates. Writers customize these for their purposes and audiences.
- Many organizations publish reports online, and some public and postsecondary libraries keep copies of government and annual reports. Use your research techniques to find these.
- Look at the report templates online. Microsoft Office Online provides a variety of templates; BDC offers templates and user guides to help writers prepare a business plan (www.bdc.ca/en/business_tools/business_plan/default.htm).
- Consult texts on writing reports, experts in your organization, or professional writers and graphic designers.
- Test your drafts with colleagues and, where possible, with audiences similar to ones that will read your report.

The more specialized the report, the more likely it is that experienced writers will produce it. However, many organizations expect novice writers to participate. Use this opportunity to begin to learn a valuable transferable skill.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Long formal reports might include a Transmittal, Executive Summary, Table of Contents with List of Illustrations, the body of the report itself, and Conclusions and Recommendations.
- Writing a long report requires project management techniques.
  - Create a timeline for parts of the report.
  - Write the report in sections, starting with the body where you present facts that prove your position.
  - Jot down potential headings, both for the whole report and for the sections in the body (e.g., The Problem, The Results, The Solution, The Benefits).
  - When you revise the report, reshape the headings into talking heads to preview the subsequent content for the reader and contribute to clarity and understanding.
  - As you research and analyze your information, prepare a bibliography of your sources. Use APA or MLA documentation according to the standards of your discourse community (Module 14).
- All reports should include an overview, to preview the report's contents for the reader. In a formal report, this overview is called an **Executive Summary**. The summary
  - Sums up the whole report and includes conclusions and recommendations
  - Goes first, on a separate page
  - Is about one-tenth the length of the whole report
- Formal reports also include the
  - **Introduction**—the statement of purpose and scope. The **purpose** statement includes the situation the report addresses, the investigations it summarizes, and the rhetorical purposes (to explain, to describe, to recommend). The scope statement identifies the topics the report covers. The introduction may also include
    - **Limitations**—the factors or problems that limit the scope of the report or the validity of your recommendations
    - **Assumptions**—statements whose truth you assume and that you use to prove your ideas
    - **Methods**—explanations of how you gathered your data
    - **Background** or **history**—information for audiences who may need to read to report years later
  - **Report Body**—the findings obtained through research
  - **Conclusions**—a summary, included in all types of reports, of the document's main ideas
  - **Recommendations**—action items that would solve, or partially solve, the problem
- Add additional appendices, responses to questionnaires, figures and tables, and background information only if they are useful to the reader.
- Your choice of report format, style, and method of submission are as important as your content. Pay attention to the rules and norms of your discourse community. If you are unsure, ask someone who knows.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 17

Questions for Critical Thinking

17.1 Identify the organizational patterns of the summary and the body of the sample report (Figure 17.5).

17.2 Report writers can present their findings in a variety of ways to influence readers' responses. Is manipulating the way information is presented ethical? Why or why not?

17.3 How do you decide how much background information to provide in a report?

Exercises and Problems

As your instructor directs

Submit the following documents for Problems 17.4 through 17.7.

a. Two copies of the report, including

- Cover
- Letter or Memo of Transmittal
- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- List of Illustrations
- Executive Summary
- Body (introduction, all information—your instructor may specify a minimum length, a minimum number or kind of sources, and a minimum number of visuals).
- Conclusions and Recommendations
- Appendices, if useful or relevant
- References or Works Cited

b. Your notes and rough drafts

17.4 Writing a Research Report

Write an individual or group research report. Possible topics include the ethics of using social media for charity campaigns, preventing cyber bullying, the value of Wikipedia, your province's healthcare policies, your city's strategies for providing homeless shelters, Canadian copyright or defamation legislation related to Internet material, your province's small business support resources, or your province's welfare strategies. Or, with your professor's permission, choose your own topic.

Start the project by finding the most current information online and in print.

17.5 Writing a Feasibility Study

Write an individual or group report evaluating the feasibility of a plan or idea. Explain your criteria clearly, evaluate each alternative, and recommend the best course of action. For example

1. What is the feasibility of your business idea? Write a business plan evaluating the opportunity for the start-up of an entrepreneurial business.
2. What is the feasibility of the electric car for common use in your province?
3. What is the feasibility of high-speed commuter trains in your province? If such trains already exist, what is the feasibility of increasing their use, so that they become the primary mode of transportation throughout your province?
4. What is the feasibility of starting a blog for students in your program or for employees in your organization?
5. What is the feasibility of starting a mentorship affiliation in your organization, or in your college/university program? What businesses or non-profits might you affiliate with? What benefits would the mentors enjoy?
6. With your instructor's permission, choose your own topic.

17.6 Writing a Recommendation Report

Write an individual or group recommendation report. Possible topics include

1. ***Recommending courses*** What skills are in demand in your community? What courses at what levels should the local college or university offer? What accreditation courses should graduates in your programs pursue to increase their marketability and salaries?
2. ***Improving sales and profits*** Recommend ways a small business in your community can increase sales and profits. Focus on one or more of the following: the products or services it offers, its advertising, its decor, its location, its accounting methods, its cash management, or anything else that may be keeping the company from achieving its potential. Address your report to the owner of the business.
3. ***Increasing student involvement*** How might an organization on campus persuade more of the students who are eligible to join or to become active in its programs? Do students know that it exists? Is it offering programs that interest students? Is it retaining current members? What changes should the organization make? Address your report to the officers of the organization.
4. ***Evaluating a potential employer*** What training is available to new employees? How soon is the average entry-level person promoted? How much travel and weekend work are expected? Is there a busy season, or is the workload consistent year-round? What fringe benefits are offered? What is the corporate culture? Is the climate open, friendly, and encouraging? Non-discriminatory? How economically strong is the company? How is it affected by current economic, demographic, and political trends?

Address your report to your college or university placement office; recommend whether the placement office should encourage students to work at this company.

Or, with your professor's permission, choose your own topic. Start the project by finding the most current information available online and in print.

17.7 Writing Up a Survey

Survey two groups of people on a topic that interests you. (For help in creating your survey, go to http://ezinearticles.com/?20-Top-Tips-To-Writing-Effective-Surveys&id=2622.) Possible groups are men and women, people in business and in English programs, younger and older students, students and non-students. Non-random samples are acceptable.

As your instructor directs

a. Survey 40 to 50 people.

b. Team up with your classmates. Survey 50 to 80 people if your group has two members, 75 to 120 people if it has three members, 100 to 150 people if it has four members, and 125 to 200 people if it has five members.

c. Keep a journal during your group meetings and submit it to your instructor. (See Module 20, Working and Writing in Teams.)

d. Attach your findings as a report and email it to your instructor.

As you conduct your survey, make careful notes about what you do so that you can use this information when you write your report. If you work with a group, record who does what.

Your report subject line should be clear. Omit unnecessary words such as "survey of." Your first paragraph serves as an introduction, but it needs no heading. The rest of the body of your memo might be divided into four sections with the following headings: Purpose, Procedure, Results, and Discussion. Alternatively, make your survey report more interesting by using talking headings.

In your first paragraph, briefly summarize (not necessarily in this order) who conducted the experiment or survey, when it was conducted, where it was conducted, who the subjects were, what your purpose was, and what you found out.

In your **Purpose** section, explain why you conducted the survey. What were you trying to learn? Why did this subject seem interesting or important? In your **Procedure** section, describe in detail exactly what you did. In your **Results** section, indicate whether or not your results supported your hypothesis. Use both visuals and words to explain what your numbers show. (See Module 18 on how to design visuals.) Process your raw data in a way that will be useful to your reader. In your **Discussion** section, evaluate your survey and discuss the implications of your results. Consider these questions.

1. Do you think a scientifically valid survey would have produced the same results? Why or why not?
2. Were there any sources of bias either in the way the questions were phrased or in the way the subjects were chosen? If you were running the survey again, what changes would you make to eliminate or reduce these sources of bias?
3. Do you think your subjects answered honestly and completely? What factors may have intruded? Was it relevant that you did or didn't know them, or that they were or weren't of the same gender?
4. What causes the phenomenon your results reveal? If several causes together account for the phenomenon, or if it is impossible to be sure of the cause, admit this. Identify possible causes and assess the likelihood of each.
5. What action should the reader take?

The Discussion section gives you the opportunity to analyze the significance of your survey.

17.8 Writing a Summary

Go to www.transcanada.com/keystone.html to view the TransCanada Corporation's overview of the Keystone Pipeline Project. Read any of the following sections: *About the Project, Jobs and Economic Benefits, Environmental Responsibility, Energy Security*. Create a one-paragraph Executive Summary of the section you chose for your instructor and fellow students.

As your instructor directs

1. Form a team with two other students who chose the same section to create their summary.
2. Read and discuss your versions of the Executive Summary.
3. Together, rewrite and revise to create your team's version of the Executive Summary.
4. Submit for grading.

Polishing *your* Prose

Improving Paragraphs

Good paragraphs demonstrate unity, detail, and variety. The following paragraph from a sales letter illustrates these three qualities.

> The best reason to consider a Schroen Heat Pump is its low cost. Schroen Heat Pumps cost 25 percent less than the cheapest competitor's. Moreover, unlike the competition, the Schroen Heat Pump will pay for itself in less than a year in energy savings. That's just 12 months. All this value comes with a 10-year unlimited warranty—if anything goes wrong, we'll repair or replace the pump at no cost to you. That means no expensive repair bills and no dollars out of your pocket.

A paragraph is **unified** when all its sentences focus on a single central idea. As long as a paragraph is about just one idea, a topic sentence expressing that idea is not required. However, using a topic sentence makes it easier for the reader to skim the document. (Essays use a *thesis statement* for the central idea of the entire document.) Sentences throughout the paragraph should support the topic sentence or offer relevant examples.

Transitions connect ideas from one point to another. Common transitions are *and, also, first, second, third, in addition, likewise, similarly, for example* (e.g.), *for instance, indeed, to illustrate, namely, specifically, in contrast,* and *on the other hand*.

Detail makes your points clearer and more vivid. Good details express clearly and completely what you mean. Use concrete words, especially strong nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that paint a picture in the reader's mind and say what you mean. Avoid unnecessary repetition.

Variety is expressed first in sentence length and patterns, and second in the number of sentences in each paragraph. Most sentences in business writing should be 14 to 20 words, but an occasional longer or very short sentence gives punch to your writing.

The basic pattern for sentences is subject + verb + object (SVO): *Our building supervisor sent the forms*. Vary the SVO pattern by changing the order, using transitions and clauses, and combining sentences.

Also, vary paragraph length. First and last paragraphs can be quite short. Body paragraphs will be longer. Whenever a paragraph runs eight typed lines or more, think about dividing it into two paragraphs.

Exercises

Rewrite the following paragraphs to improve unity, detail, and variety.

1. I used to work for McCandless Realty as a receptionist. My many experiences in the accounting field make me an ideal candidate for a position as senior administrative assistant with Graham, Chang, and Associates. I answered phones at McCandless. I typed there. I worked at Dufresne Plastics as a secretary. At McCandless, I also handled payroll. There are a lot of reasons why I liked Dufresne. These included the opportunity for training in data entry and Microsoft Word. I learned to type 70 wpm with no mistakes.
2. Mr. Walter Pruitt visited our business communication class yesterday. He spoke about the importance of co-op placements. Mr. Pruitt works for Global Energy. Global Energy provides network and service management to companies around the world. Mr. Pruitt, who works for Global Energy, told us he got his first job because of a co-op. A co-op is an opportunity for students to work with a company for a period of time to get business experience. Mr. Pruitt went to university and worked at a co-op placement for Global Energy. At first, Global Energy only wanted him to work for 10 weeks. Mr. Pruitt did such a good job, they kept him on another 10 weeks and another. Mr. Pruitt was offered a job by Global Energy when he graduated.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

MODULE

18

Using Visuals to Tell Stories

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 18 you will be familiar with

LO1 How visuals tell stories

LO2 How to choose appropriate visuals

By applying the information you will be able to

LO3 Choose visuals to tell a story

LO4 Match the visual to your story

LO5 Choose ethical visuals

LO6 Use visuals in your documents and presentations

Module Outline

Pictures tell stories: charts and infographics clarify numbers; mall maps orient us; your graduation photos document a rite of passage. And ever-evolving technology lets us emphasize visuals to tell meaningful stories.

LO1 Why Use Visuals?

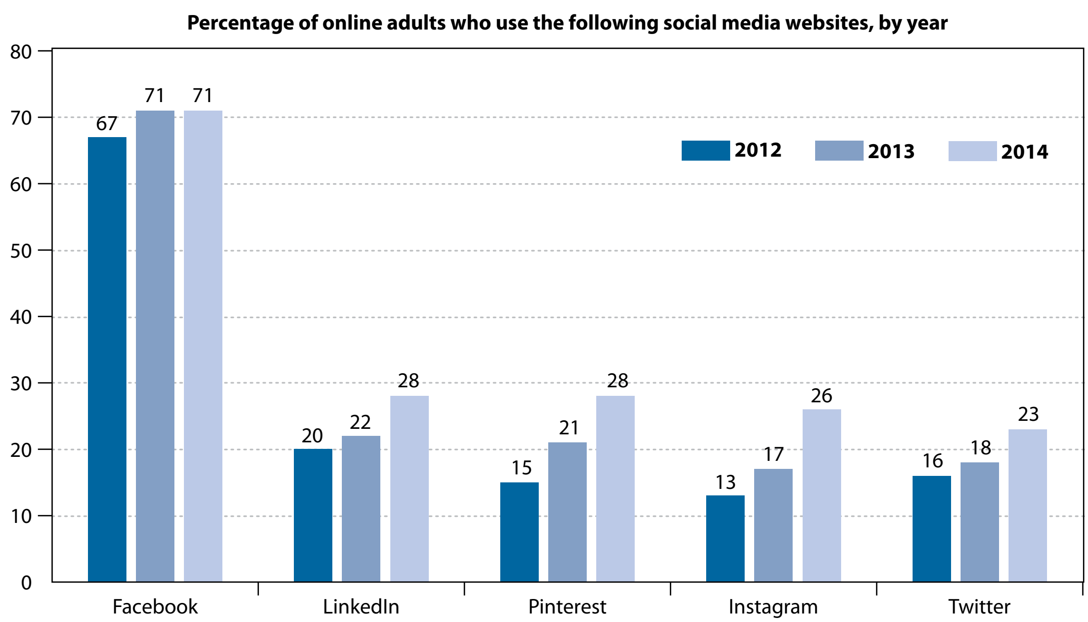
Appropriate, attractive visuals create immediate stories: audiences understand them quickly and remember them easily.

Ex. 18.1, 18.5–18.9

Visuals condense and clarify data. Visuals appeal to both logic and emotion, making them more immediate and memorable than text alone,[1] as Figure 18.1 demonstrates. And because technology allows us to skim and share infinite amounts of information, savvy communicators replace text with graphics to convey complex data.[2]

FIGURE 18.1

The Expansion of Visual Social Media



Technology, especially social media and the mobile phone, enables users to emphasize data visualization.

Source: Pew Research Center

LO2 Business Visuals

Traditionally, formal visuals are divided into tables and figures. **Tables** are numbers or words arranged in rows and columns; **figures** are everything else. In a document, formal visuals have both numbers and titles, as in Figure 18.1, The Expansion of Visual Social Media.

In an oral presentation, the title is usually used without the number: **The Expansion of Visual Social Media**. The title puts the story in context, indicating what your audience should look for in the visual and why it is important.

In a document draft

- *Use visuals to see that ideas are presented completely*. A table, for example, can show you whether you've included all the items in a comparison.
- *Use visuals to find relationships*. For example, charting sales on a map may show that the sales representatives who made their quotas all have territories on the West Coast or in the Atlantic provinces. Is the product one that appeals to coastal lifestyles? Is advertising reaching the coasts but not the prairie provinces, Ontario, or Quebec? Even if you don't use the visual in your final document, creating the map may lead you to questions you wouldn't otherwise ask.

In the final presentation or document, try using visuals

- *To make points vivid*, because readers skim memos and reports. A visual catches the eye. The brain processes visuals immediately, as Figure 18.2 shows. Understanding words—written or oral—takes more time.
- *To emphasize material* that might be skipped if it were buried in a paragraph.
- *To present material more compactly and with less repetition* than words alone can.

FIGURE 18.2

Using Colour to Make Meaning Immediate

Source: Designmantic.com

The kind of visuals you need depends on your purposes, your information, and the audience. You'll present information pictorially when you want to show relationships, when the information is complex or contains extensive numbers, and when the audience values visuals.

However, your visual is only as good as the underlying data. Be sure that your data is based on a reliable source (Module 13).

FIGURE 18.3

PAIBOC Questions for Analysis

P	What are your **purposes** in communicating with visuals? Why are you using tables, charts, graphs, and infographics? Your purposes come from you, your organization, and the information you intend to convey. What's your story, and why are you telling it?
A	Who is your **audience**? Who will read your message? What do they need to know? How will they use your visuals? Will they use them to follow instructions? To understand directions? To assemble something? To understand how a machine, a department or a process works? To see the future if they act a certain way now? What graphics/illustrations would most appeal to your audience? Why? What visuals would maximize your audience's understanding? Why?
I	What **information** must your visual include? What visual will cause your readers to think or do as you want them to? What images could tell your story dramatically and immediately? What numerical or quantitative data are you representing? What visuals would best convey that information?
B	What reasons or reader **benefits** support your position? What visuals would emphasize those benefits?
O	What audience **objections** do you anticipate? How can you use visuals to de-emphasize or overcome audience objections?
C	What **context** will affect reader response? Consider your relationship to your readers, organizational culture, the economy, recent organizational developments, current morale, and the time of year. When choosing and creating your visuals, consider also your audience demographic, cultural values, and norms. For example, if your audience relies primarily on mobile devices for information, use a visual that will have the greatest impact when viewed using that medium.

LO3 What Are Stories, and How Do I Find Them?

Stories interpret or frame situations in ways that resonate for readers. Look for relationships and/or patterns that are significant to your audiences.

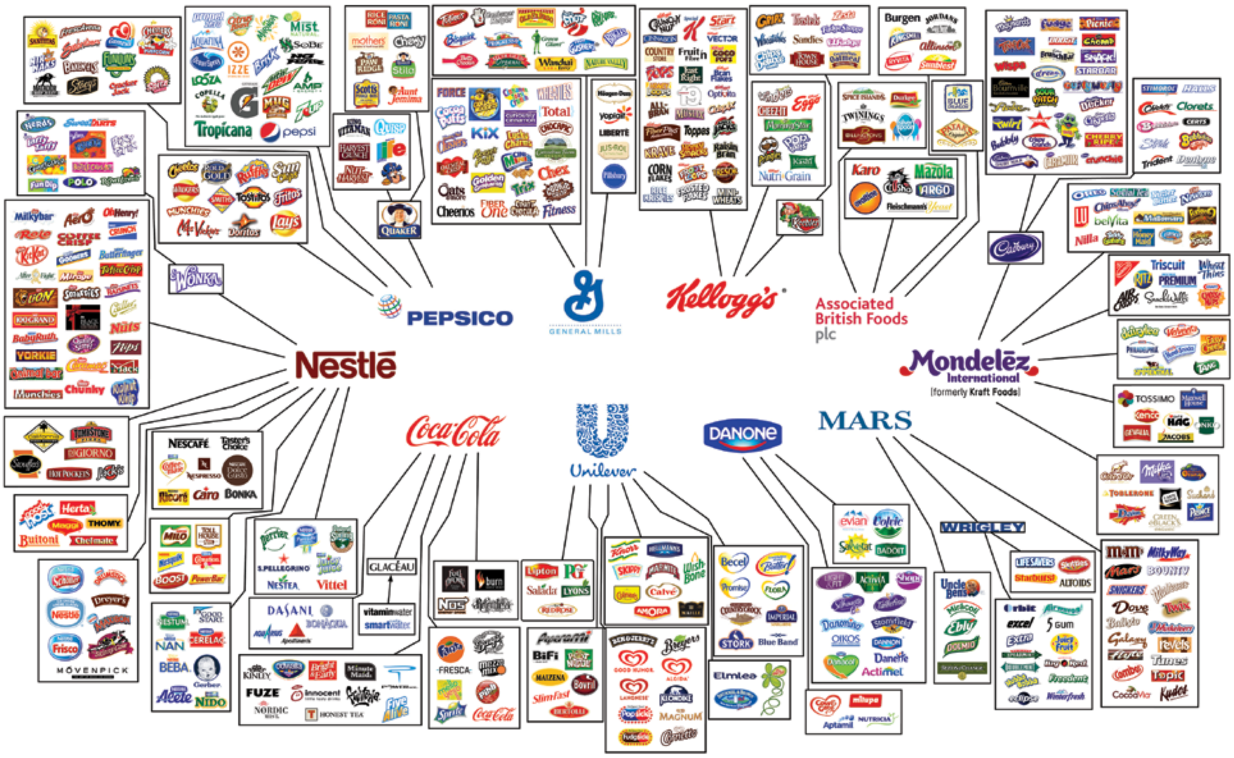
Ex. 18.3, 18.8, 18.9

Alamy Images/Getstock

Stories are made up of symbols—words, images, and colours—that enable us to create and translate meaning. The garbage-can icon by the words Recycle Bin translates the computer's binary code into a story about what happens when we hit Delete. An organization's brand tells the story of its purposes and values. In Figure 18.4, the visual conceptualizes corporate hegemony.

FIGURE 18.4

A Handful of Companies Own the World's Brands



Every good visual should tell a story that is meaningful to your audience. Use the title of the visual to give your story context and emphasis.
Not a story: Multinationals Dominate
A story: A Handful of Companies Own the World's Brands

Source: Joki Desnommée-Gauthier/convergencealimentaire.info

Optimal Stories

The best stories

- Support a hunch you have
- Surprise or challenge so-called common knowledge
- Show trends or changes you didn't know existed
- Have commercial, cultural, or social significance
- Provide information needed for action
- Have personal relevance to you and the audience

You can find stories in three ways.

1. *Focus on a topic* (starting salaries, alternative music choices, Twitter demographics).
2. *Simplify the data* on that topic and convert the numbers to simple, easy-to-understand units.
3. *Look for relationships and changes*; for example, compare two or more groups: Do men and women have the same attitudes? Look for changes over time. Look for items that can be seen as part of the

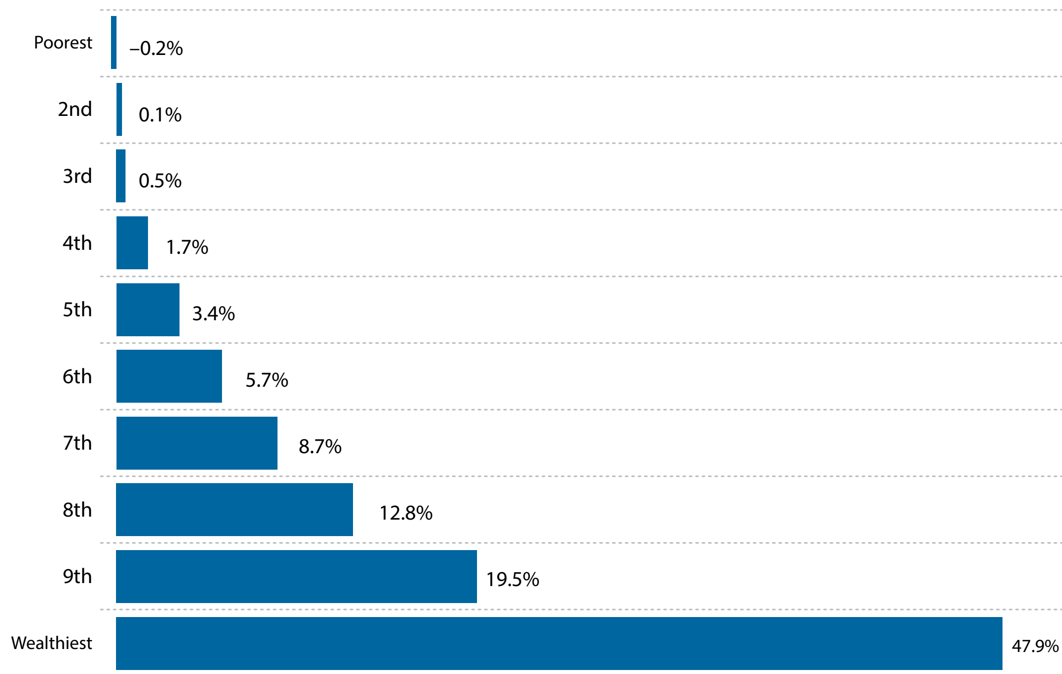
same group; for example, to find stories about Internet ads you might group ads in the same product category—ads for cars, for food, for beverages.

When you think you have a story to tell, test it against all the data for accuracy.

Some stories are simple narratives that can be illustrated in a table, as Figure 18.5 demonstrates.

FIGURE 18.5

The Poverty Gap



Source: Statistics Canada. Poverty Gap. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of Statistics Canada.

More complex stories will need more vivid illustration. And sometimes the best story arises from the juxtaposition of two or more stories. In Figures 18.6a and b, for example, the bar graphs compare children's and adults' cyber-bullying experiences by their relationship to the bully.

Almost every data set allows you to tell several stories. Choose the story you want to tell based on your PAIBOC analysis. Whatever the story, your visual should clarify and condense it.

Optimal Emphasis

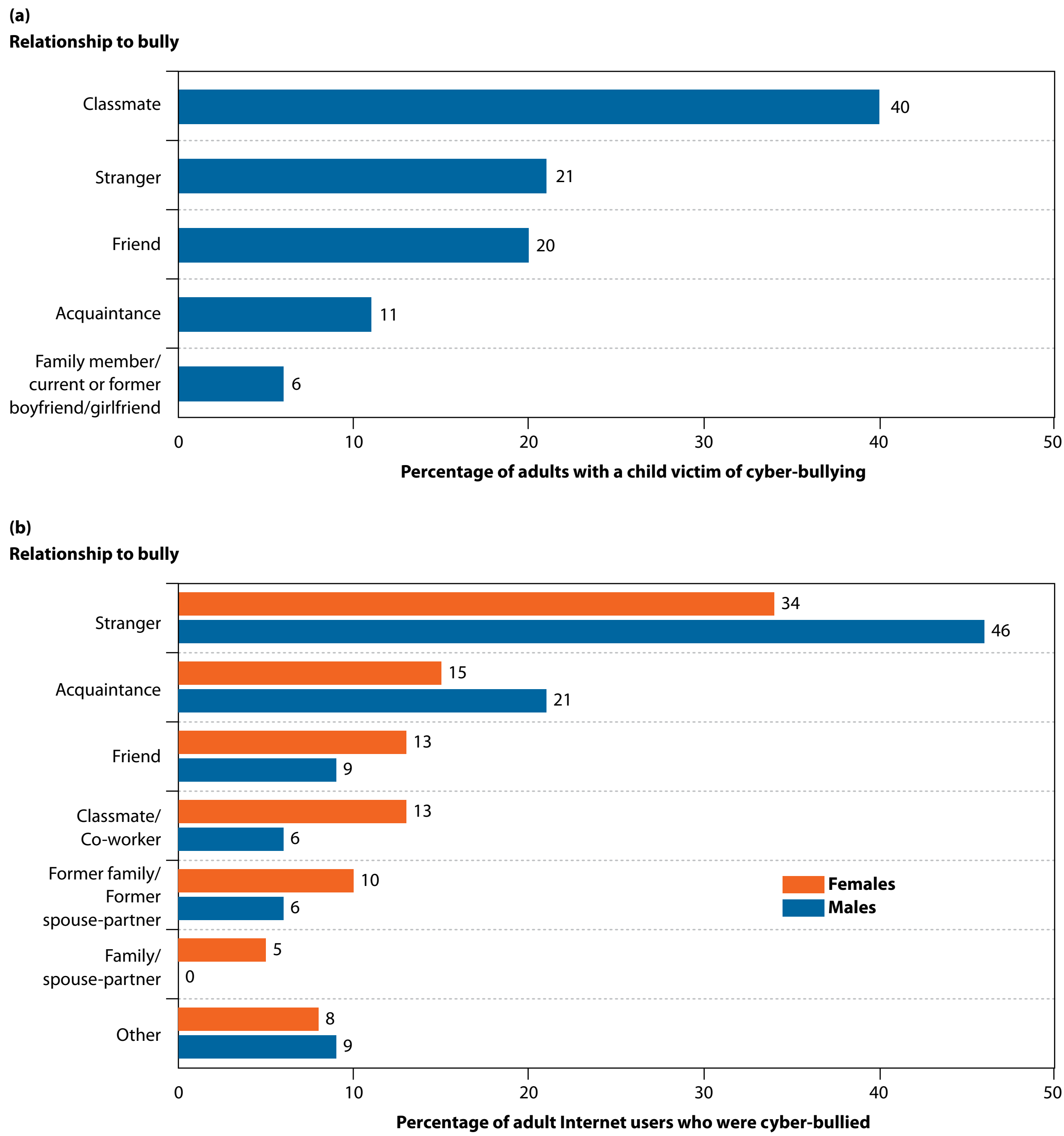
For optimum information impact, tell—show—tell.

- First, *tell* your readers or listeners what they are about to see.
- Next, *show* your audience what you promised to show them.
- Finally, *tell* them the significance of the visual.

And, of course, use the visual to depict exactly what you said it would.

FIGURE 18.6

Bar Graphs Tell Stories



Source: (a) Statistics Canada. Percentage of adults with a child victim of cyber-bullying. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of Statistics Canada. (b) Statistics Canada. Percentage of adult Internet users who were cyber-bullied.Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of Statistics Canada.

LO4 Does It Matter What Kind of Visual I Use?

The visual should emphasize and expand the story.

Ex. 18.1, 18.5, 18.7

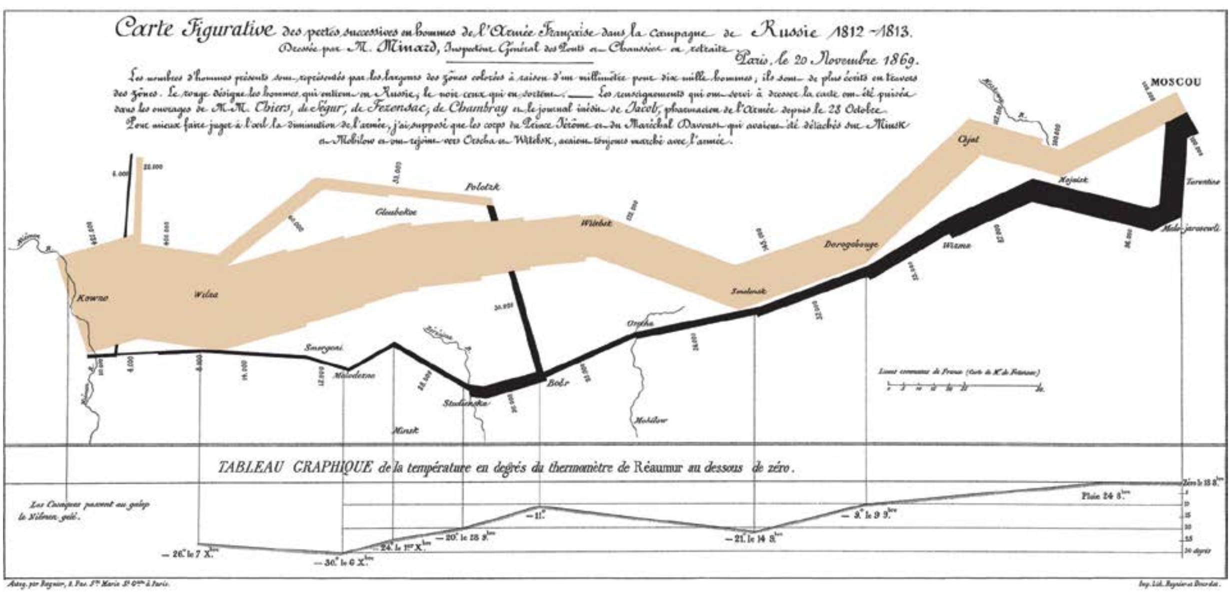
Create or find visuals that clarify your story in interesting, elegant, or surprising ways.

Use software to make infographics, charts, graphs, tables, and figures, and use a digital camera to capture vignettes.

- Use video and graphics, including **maps** and **diagrams**, to convey complex information (Figure 18.7).
- Use **images** and **artwork** to reinforce themes (Figure 18.8).
- Use **tables** to identify exact values (Figure 18.9a).
- Use **charts** or **graphs** to make comparisons and/or focus on relationships.[3]
  - ✓ To compare a part to the whole, use a **pie graph** (Figure 18.9b).
  - ✓ To compare one item to another item, or items over time, use a **bar graph** or a **line graph** (Figures 18.9c and 18.9d).

FIGURE 18.7

Infographics Can Tell Complicated Tales

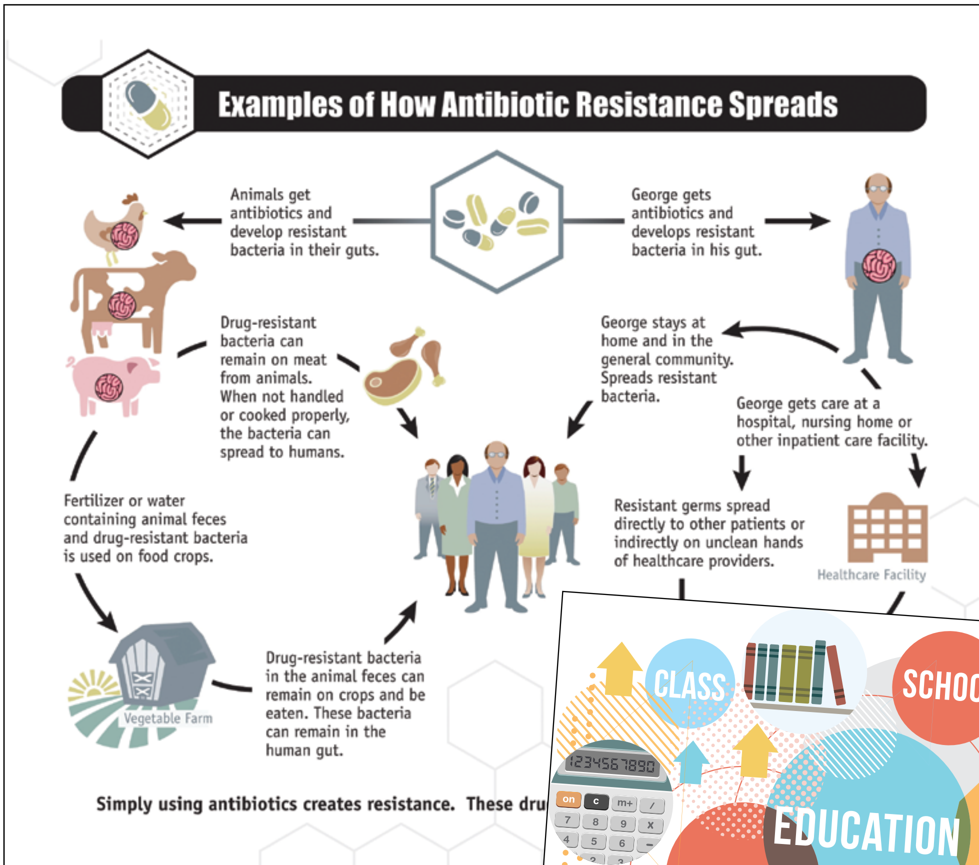


Yale professor Edward Tufte, advocate and populariser of intelligent graphic design, claims that Charles Joseph Minard's 1869 rendering of Napoleon's disastrous Russian campaign (1812–13) is "the best statistical graphic ever drawn."[4] Minard tells his story by conflating six variables: "Given any time during the campaign, the chart conveys the army's direction, size, and loss relative to the start; on the retreat, the chart also conveys the timeline, position of the army, and the temperature."[5]

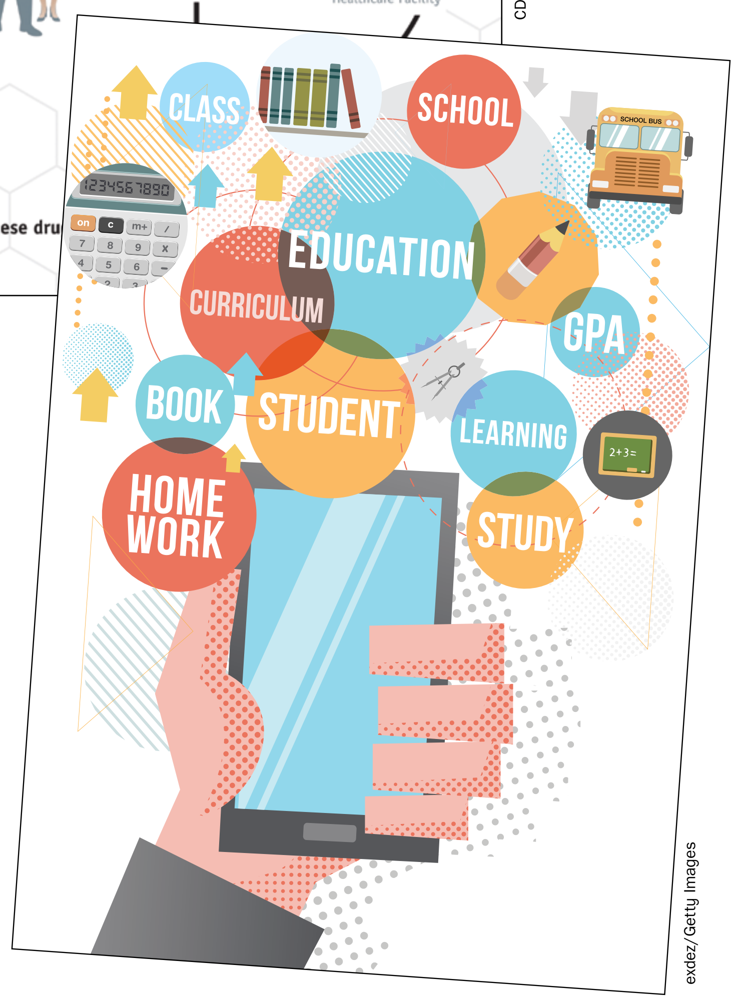
Minard's visual demonstrates that infographics have been around for a very long time.

FIGURE 18.8

Images and Artwork Reinforce Themes



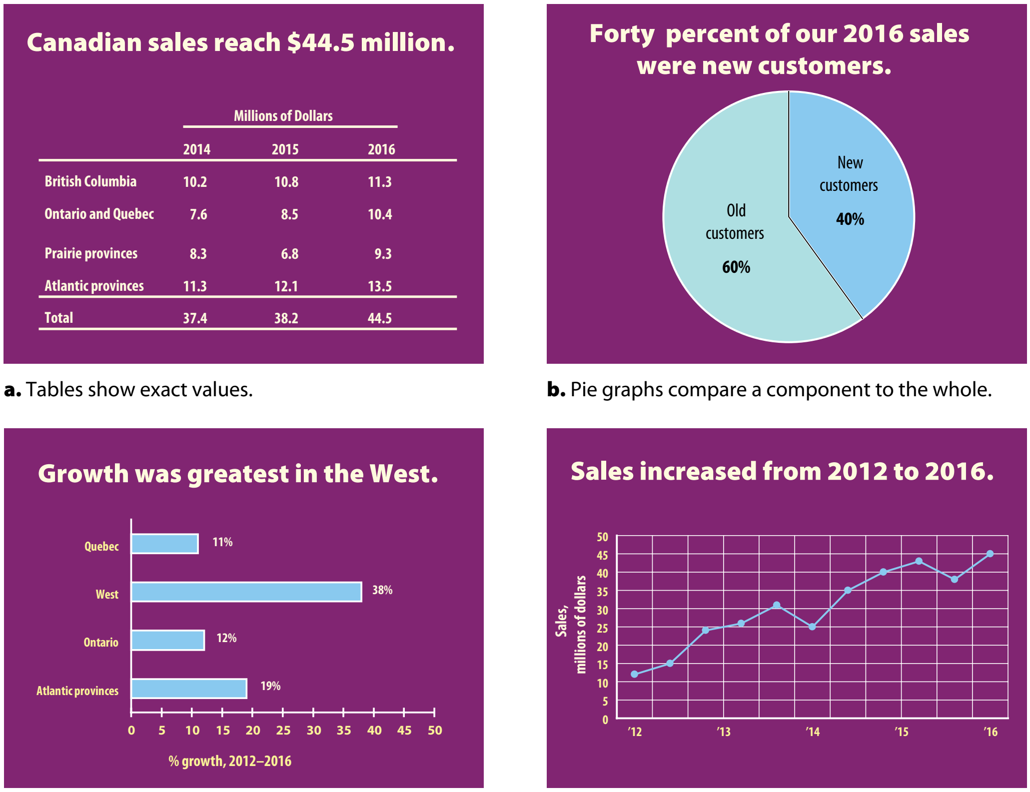
CDC/Melissa Brower



exdez/Getty Images

FIGURE 18.9

Visuals Clarify and Expand Stories



a. Tables show exact values.

b. Pie graphs compare a component to the whole.

c. Bar graphs compare items or show distribution or correlation.

d. Line charts compare items over time or show distribution or correlation.

Tables

Use tables only when you want the audience to focus on specific numbers.

- Round off to simplify the data (e.g., 35 percent rather than 35.27 percent; 34,000 rather than 33,942). Provide column and row totals or averages when they're relevant.
- Put the items you want readers to compare in columns rather than in rows to assist mental subtraction and division.
- When you have many rows, screen alternate entries or double-space after every five entries to help readers line up items accurately.

Pie Graphs

Use graphs to make comparisons memorable.

Pie graphs force the audience to measure area. Research shows that people can judge position or length (which a bar graph uses) much more accurately than they can judge area. Use a pie graph only when you are comparing one segment to the whole. When you are comparing one segment to another, use a bar graph, a line graph, or a map—even though the data may be expressed in percentages.

- Start at 12 o'clock with the largest percentage or the percentage you want to focus on. Go clockwise to each smaller percentage or to each percentage in some other logical order.

- Make the pie graph a perfect circle. Perspective circles distort the data.
- Limit the number of segments to five or seven. If your data have more divisions, combine the smallest or the least important into a single “miscellaneous” or “other” category.
- Label the segments outside the circle. Internal labels are hard to read.

Bar Graphs

Bar graphs are easy to interpret, because they ask people to compare distance along a common scale, which most people judge accurately. Bar graphs are useful to compare one item to another, to compare items over time, and to show correlations. Use horizontal bars when your labels are long; when the labels are short, either horizontal or vertical bars will work.

- Order the bars in a logical or chronological order.
- Put the bars close enough together to make comparisons easy.
- Label both horizontal and vertical axes.
- Put all labels inside the bars *or* outside them. When some labels are inside and some are outside, the labels carry the visual weight of longer bars, distorting the data.
- Make all the bars the same width.
- Use different colours for different bars only when their meanings are different (estimates as opposed to known numbers, negative as opposed to positive numbers).
- Avoid using perspective. Perspective makes the values harder to read and can make comparison difficult.

Use the type of bar graph that best suits your purposes.

- **Grouped bar graphs** allow you to compare several aspects of each item or several items over time.
- **Segmented, subdivided, or stacked bars** sum the components of an item. It’s hard to identify the values in specific segments; grouped bar charts are almost always easier to use.
- **Deviation bar graphs** identify positive and negative values, or winners and losers.
- **Paired bar graphs** show the correlation between two items.
- **Histograms** or **pictographs** use images to create the bars.

Line Graphs

Line graphs are also easy to interpret. Use line graphs to compare items over time, to show frequency or distribution, and to show correlations.

- Label both horizontal and vertical axes.
- When time is a variable, put it on the horizontal axis.
- Avoid using more than three different lines on one graph. Even three lines may be too many if they cross each other.
- Avoid using perspective. Perspective makes the values harder to read and can make comparison difficult.

A Question of Ethics

To celebrate the 150th year of Confederation in 2017, the Government of Canada held a logo contest. Aspiring graphic designers were invited to submit their logo design ideas online; the winner received recognition and $5,000.

What ethical concerns might you have about this contest—as a graphic design student? As a professional graphic designer?

FIGURE 18.10

Pie Graphs Measure Area

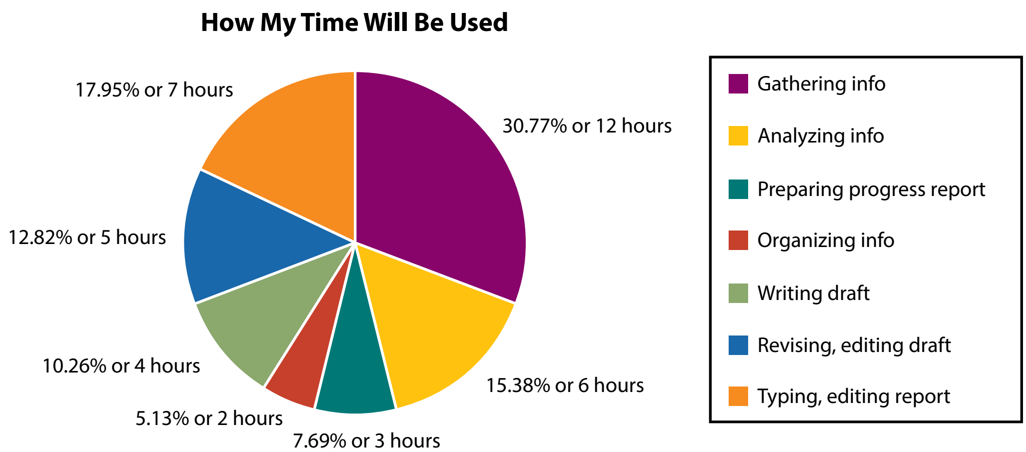
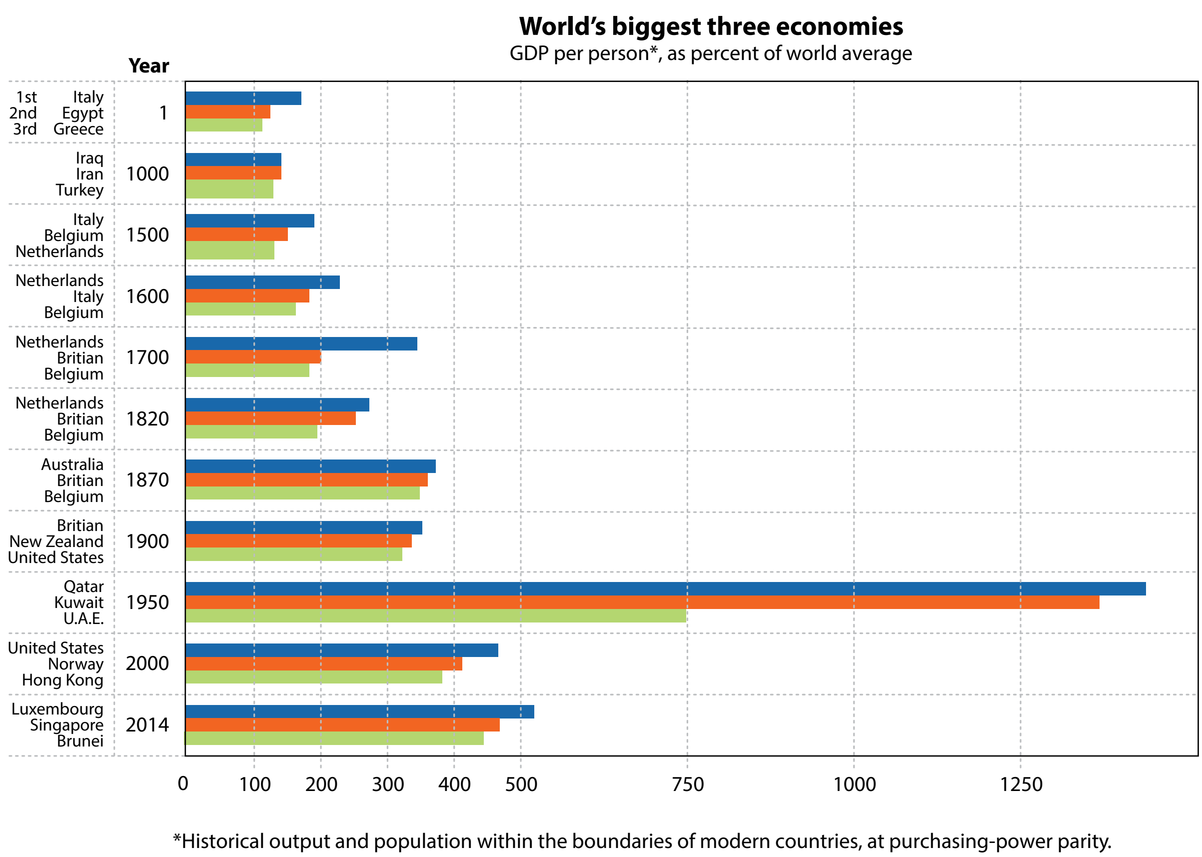


FIGURE 18.11

A Grouped Bar Graph Allows You to Compare Several Items over Time



Source: ©The Economist Newspaper Limited, London.

LO5 What Design Conventions Do I Follow?

Tell your story effectively and ethically. Provide the context. Cite your sources.

Ex. 18.2, 18.6, 18.8, 18.9

Tell Your Story Effectively

Plan your visuals to achieve your purposes and meet audience needs.

- Use clear, simple, and relevant images.
- Use metaphors and pictures that make connections and patterns obvious.
- Put people in the picture: show people using and enjoying the product, service, or idea you are selling.

Provide the Context

Every visual should

1. Have a title that tells the story the visual shows
2. Clearly indicate the data
3. Clearly label units
4. Provide labels or legends identifying axes, colours, symbols, and so forth
5. Give the source of the data, if you create the visual from data someone else gathered and compiled
6. Give the source of the visual, if you reproduce a visual that someone else created

Cite Your Sources

Ex. 18.6, 18.9

Like all intellectual property, visuals are protected by copyright. Whenever you use others' illustrations, artwork, graphics—any visual—you must credit the original source. Information on how to cite images correctly is available online, in style guide sites, and on your local and university and college library sites (Modules 13 and 14).

LO6 Can I Use Colour?

Use colour carefully.

Ex. 18.4

Colour makes visuals more dramatic, but creates at least two problems. First, readers try to interpret colour, an interpretation that may not be appropriate. Second, meanings assigned to colours differ depending on the audience's culture and profession.

Connotations for colour vary from culture to culture and within cultures (Module 3). Blue suggests masculinity in North America, criminality in France, strength or fertility in Egypt, and villainy in Japan. Red is sometimes used to suggest danger or stop in North American culture; it means go in China and is associated with festivities. Yellow suggests caution or cowardice in North America, prosperity in Egypt, grace in Japan, and femininity in many parts of the world.[6]

Corporate, national, or professional brand associations may override these general cultural associations. Some people associate blue with IBM or Hewlett-Packard and red with Coca-Cola, communism, or Japan. People in specific professions learn other meanings for colours. Blue suggests *reliability* to financial managers, *water or coldness* to engineers, and *death* to healthcare professionals. Red means *losing money* to financial managers and *danger* to engineers, but *healthy* to healthcare professionals. Green usually means *safe* to engineers, but *infected* to healthcare professionals.[7]

These various associations suggest that colour is safest with a homogenous audience that you know well. In an increasingly multicultural workforce, colour may send signals you do not intend.

In any visual, use as little shading and as few lines as are necessary for clarity. Don't clutter up the visual with extra marks. When you design black-and-white graphs, use shades of grey rather than stripes, wavy lines, and checks to indicate different segments or items. Test your design to ensure your chosen shades of grey make your story obvious to the reader.

LO5 LO6 What Else Do I Need to Check For?

Be sure that the visual is clear, accurate, and ethical.

Ex. 18.2, 18.4–18.6, 18.9

Although the technology to create exciting, interactive 3D visuals exists, resist the temptation. Remember, your audience's needs in the age of over-information are for clarity and conciseness. Visual pyrotechnics diminish and trivialize content.

Visual design expert Edward Tufte uses the term **chartjunk** for visual details—"the encoded legends, the meaningless color[,] the logo-type branding"—that at best are irrelevant to the visual, and at worst mislead the reader.[8]

Turning a line graph into a highway to show kilometres driven makes it more difficult to read: it's hard to separate the data line from lines that are merely decorative. Similarly, MS Office charts can create distortion—especially the 3D options for pie charts and the shadowing options for bar charts.

Always double-check your visuals to be sure that the information is accurate. Be aware, however, that many visuals have accurate labels but misleading visual shapes. Visuals communicate quickly; audiences remember the shape, not the labels. If the reader has to study the labels to get the right picture, the visual is unethical even if the labels are accurate.

Data can also be distorted when the context is omitted. For example, a drop may be part of a regular cycle, a correction after an atypical increase, or a permanent drop to a new, lower plateau.

To make your visuals more accurate

- Differentiate between actual and estimated or projected values.
- When you must truncate a scale, do so clearly with a break in the bars or in the background.
- Avoid perspective and three-dimensional graphs.
- Avoid combining graphs with different scales.
- Use images of people carefully to avoid sexist, racist, or other exclusionary visual statements.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Integrating Visuals into Your Text

To keep your reader in your story, tell—show—tell: make sure every visual gives momentum to your story.

> TD Canada Trust continues to rank highest for customer satisfaction among the Big 5 banks, as Figure 18–11, demonstrates.
>
> **FIGURE 18.12**
>
> J. D Power Canadian Retail Banking Customer Satisfaction Study
>
> 
>
>
> Source: J.D. Power 2014 Canadian Retail Banking Customer Satisfaction Study

Normally give the table or figure number in the text, but not the title. Put the visual as soon after your reference as space and page design permit. If the visual must go on another page, tell the reader where to find it.

> As Figure 3 shows (p. 10)...
>
> (See Table 2 on page 3.)

Summarize the main point of a visual before you present the visual itself. Then, when readers get to it, they'll see it as confirmation of your point.

Weak Listed below are the results.

Better As Figure 4 shows, sales doubled in the last decade.

Help the reader find key data points in complex visuals. If the point is important, discuss its implications in some detail. However, one sentence about a visual may be enough when

- The audience is already familiar with the topic and data
- The visual is simple and well designed
- The information in the visual is a minor part of your proof

When you discuss visuals, spell out numbers that fall at the beginning of a sentence. If spelling out the number or year is cumbersome, revise the sentence so that it does not begin with a number.

Correct Forty-five percent of the cost goes to pay wages and salaries.

Correct The year 2011 marked the EU economic crisis.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Appropriate, attractive visuals tell stories concisely and immediately; visuals make information memorable.
- In your rough draft, use visuals to see that ideas are presented completely and to identify patterns and relationships. In your reports and presentations, use visuals to make points vivid, to emphasize material the audience might overlook, and to present material more efficiently and more compactly than words alone can do.
- Use more visuals when you want to show relationships, when the information is complex or contains extensive numerical data, and when the audience values visuals.
- Pick data to tell a story, to make your point. To find stories, look for relationships and changes. Writers and illustrators create worthy stories through research when they
    - Follow up on hunches
    - Find data that challenge accepted wisdom; have commercial, cultural, or social significance; or indicate new trends
    - Identify information that requires immediate action or has personal relevance for them and their audiences
- When you think you have a story, test it against all the data to be sure it's accurate.
- Formal visuals are divided into tables and figures. Tables are numbers or words arranged in rows and columns; figures are everything else, including illustrations and photographs.
- Choosing the best visual depends on the kind of data and the point you want to make with the data.
- Visuals represent a point of view; they are never neutral. You are legally and ethically responsible for creating and using visuals that
    - Represent data accurately, both literally and by implication
    - Avoid chartjunk—decorations and details that are irrelevant or misleading
    - Give the source of the data
- Appropriate visuals are both accurate and ethical. They
    - Give a title that tells the story the visual shows
    - Clearly indicate the data
    - Have clearly labelled units
    - Provide labels or legends identifying axes, colours, symbols, and so forth
    - Give the source of the data, if you created the visual from data someone else gathered and compiled
    - Give the source of the visual, if you reproduce a visual someone else created

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 18

Questions for Critical Thinking

18.1 What three specific types of reports rely heavily on visuals?

18.2 How might MS Office chart styles create distortion? Find an example of a ready-made chart that distorts the data.

18.3 How could you take a photograph to tell a story?

18.4 Is it ethical to use dramatic pictures and visual metaphors to motivate people to give to charity? Why or why not?

Exercises and Problems

18.5 Reviewing Expert Advice on Creating Visuals

Read Professor Tuft's compendium for creating the best visuals at http://www.sealthreinhold.com/tuftes-rules/rule_ten.php, and Naveen Srivatsav's blog *Insights for Visualizations* at http://www.hastac.org/blogs/nsrivatsav/2014/02/16/insights-visualizations-edward-tufte.

a. Summarize their ideas in a tips sheet.

b. Apply your tips to Exercises 18.6 through 18.9.

18.6 Creating Visuals to Enhance Text

Review Module 17's formal report example. Wherever you think the report text could benefit from visual support

a. Create an original visual.

b. Find an appropriate visual and cite its source.

c. Write an email to your instructor explaining your choice and placement of the visuals.

d. Attach your visuals to the email.

18.7 Matching Visuals with Stories

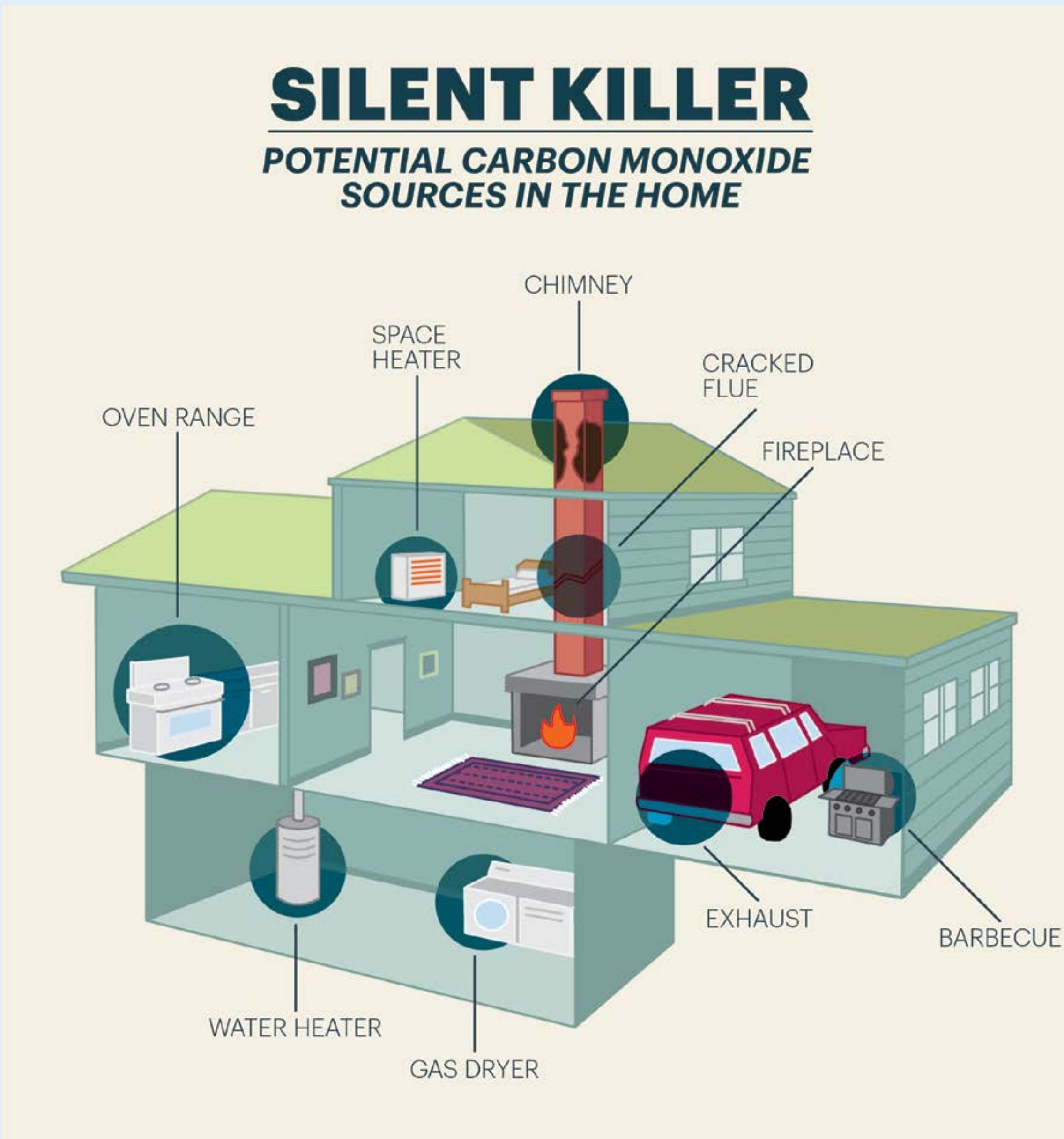
What visual(s) would make it easiest to see each of the following stories?

1. In Canada, the gap between rich and poor is widening.
2. An increasing number of young adults (ages 17 to 24) are politically active.
3. Canadians are the largest population on Facebook.
4. Vegetarianism is becoming a lifestyle choice among young adults.
5. Visuals can distort data and mislead readers.
6. Number of years of postsecondary education correspond to employment success.

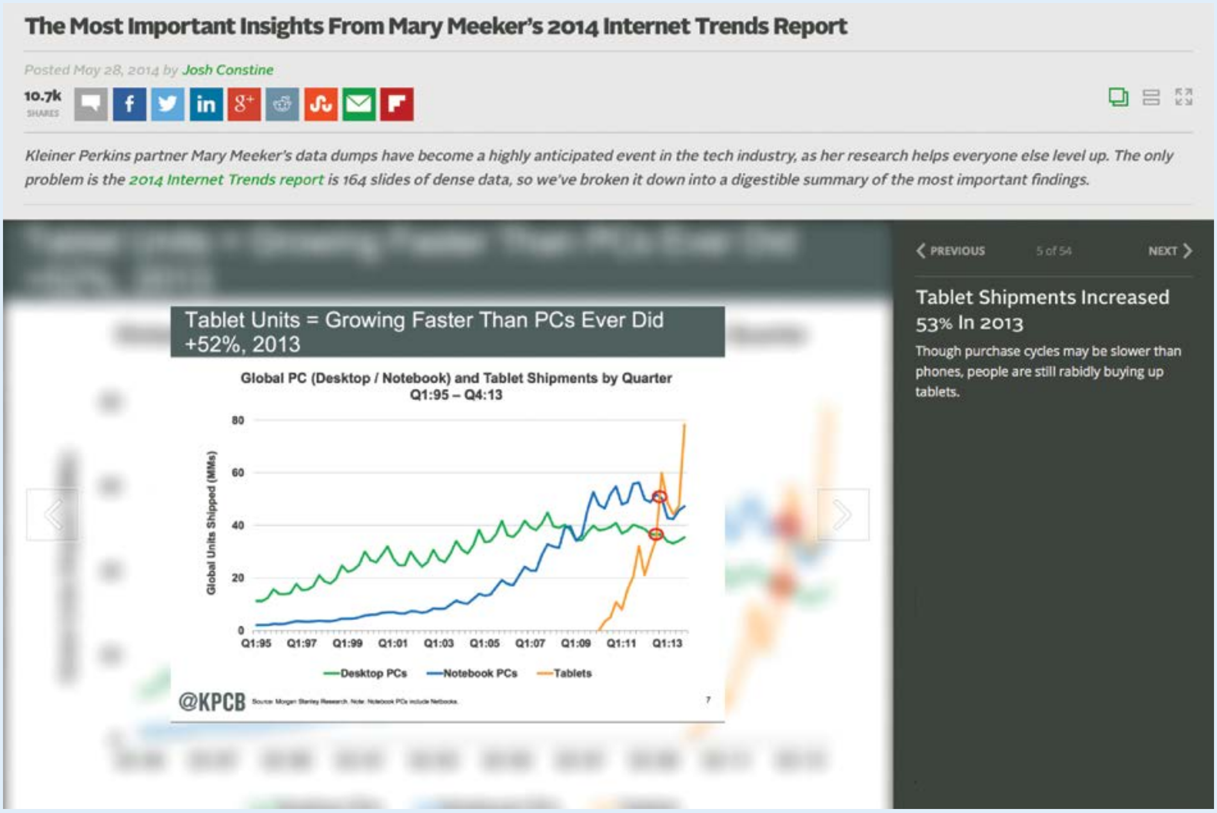
18.8 Evaluating Visuals

Evaluate each of the following visuals using Tufte's rules and these questions.

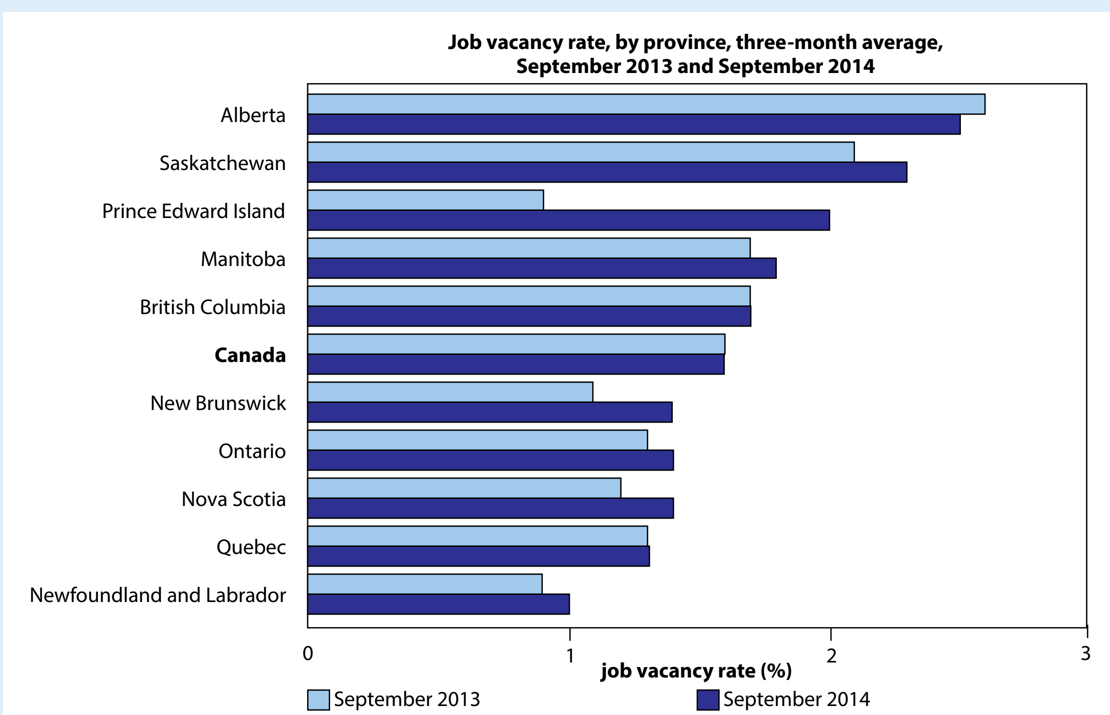
- Is the visual's message clear?
- Is it the right visual for the story?
- Is the visual designed appropriately? Is colour, if any, used appropriately?
- Is the visual free from chartjunk?
- Does the visual distort data or mislead the reader in any way?



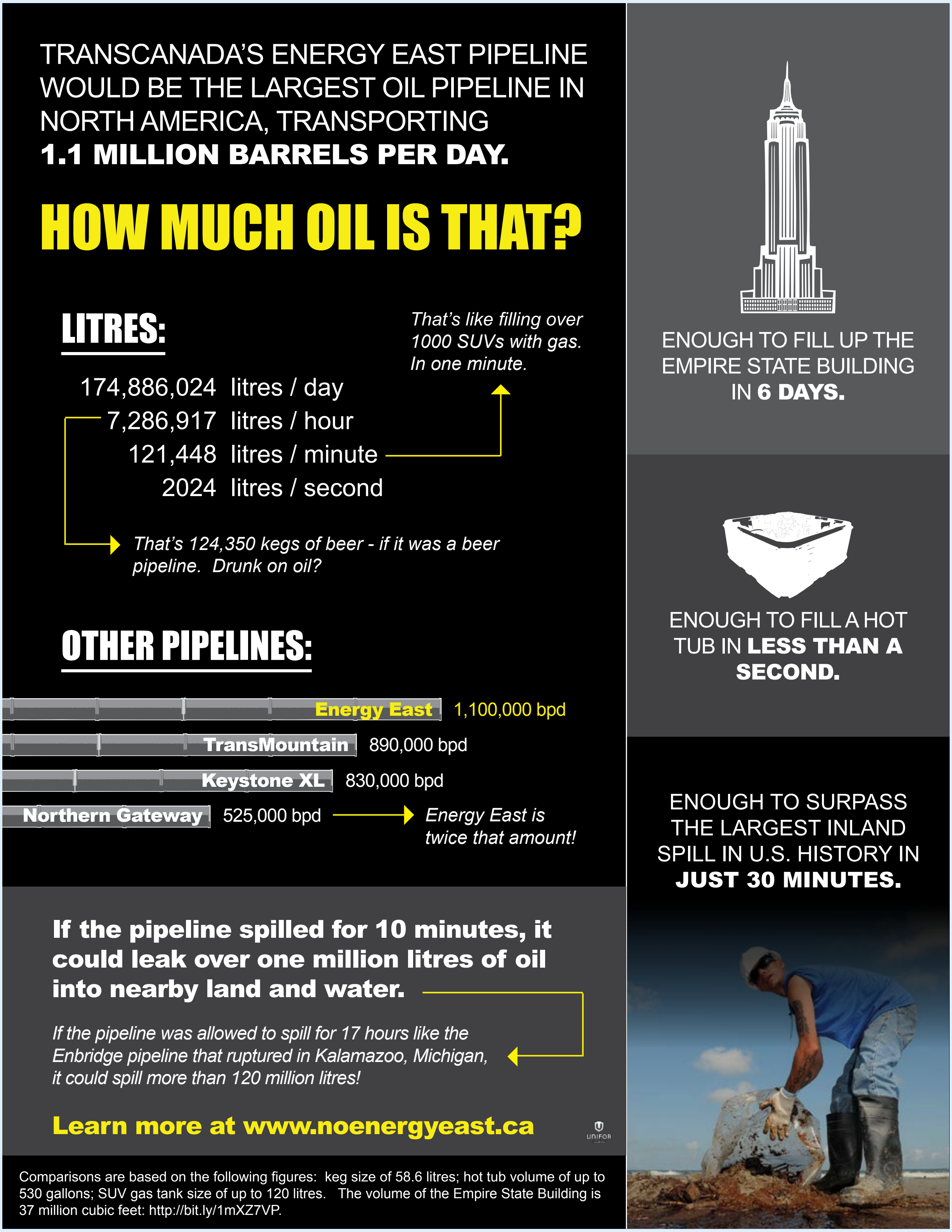
Alex Mathers



Source: Mary Meeker Internet Trends Report

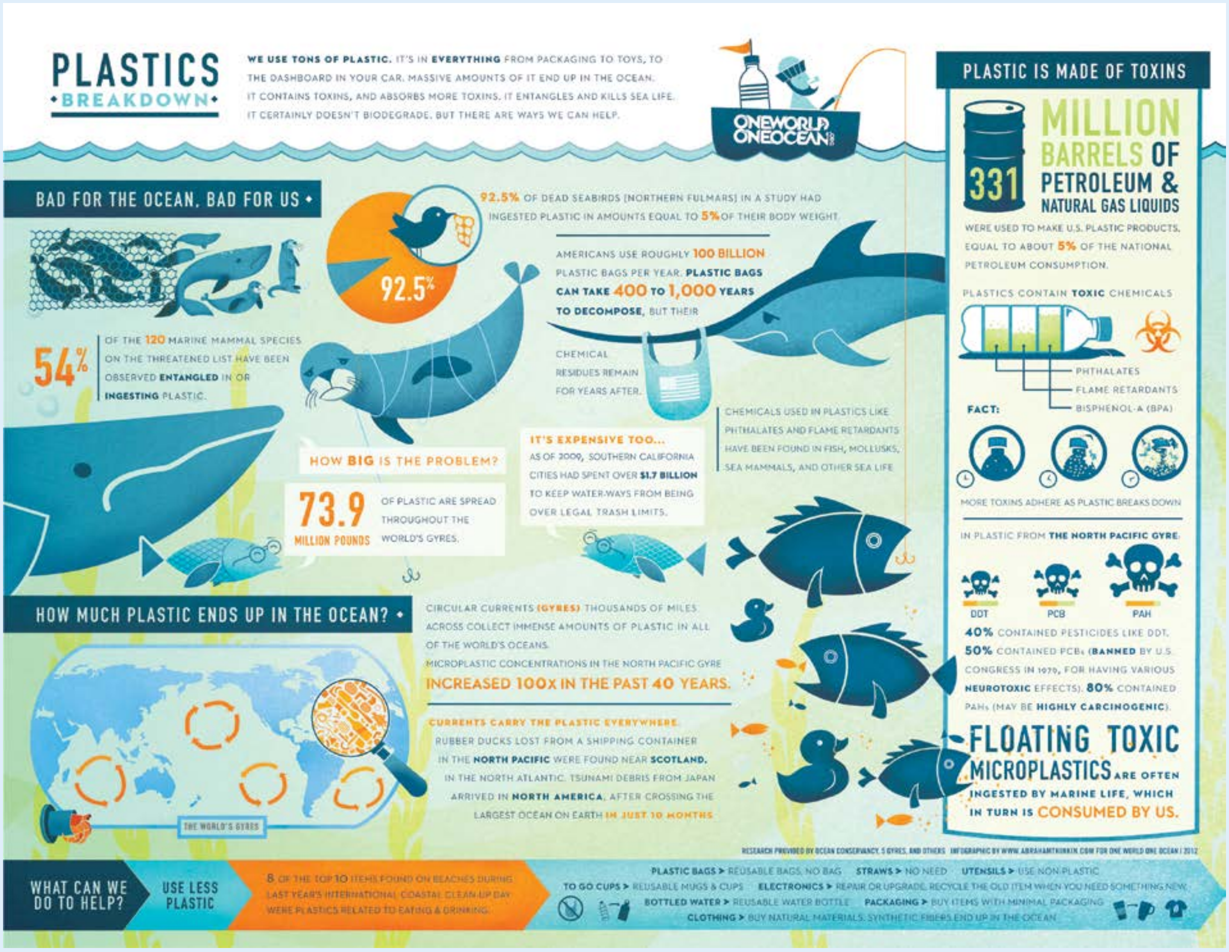


Source: Statistics Canada. Job vacancy rate, by province, three-month average, September 2013 and September 2014. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of Statistics Canada.



U.S. Coast Guard Photo

Source: The Council of Canadians



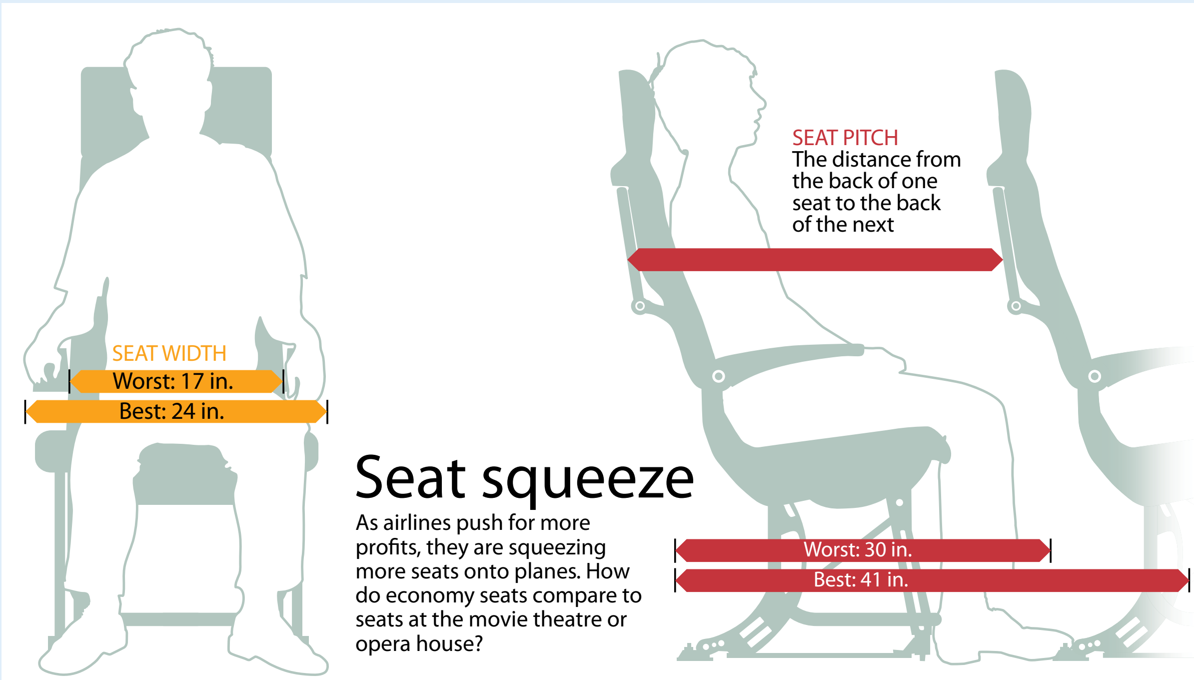
Source: One World, One Ocean

TABLE 2

The Contribution of Background Family Characteristics

	Median number of months between high school graduation and start of first postsecondary education program
Parents' highest level of educational attainment	
High school or less	14
Some postsecondary	13
Postsecondary graduate	3
Importance to parents that child obtains a postsecondary education	
Not important at all / slightly important	27
Fairly important	15
Very important	3
Frequency with which youth and parent talked about future education and career options	
Never	14
Less than once a year	15
A few times a year	4
A few times a month	3
A few times a week / daily	7

Source: Statistics Canada. Youth in Transition Survey. Cohort B. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of Statistics Canada.



SEAT WIDTH	SURVEYED SEATS	SEAT PITCH
17.375 in.	WestJet 737 economy	31 to 32 in.
17 in.	Air Canada 777 economy	31 in.
17.5 in.	Air Canada Rouge 767 economy	30 in.
20 in.	Air Canada 777 premium economy	38 in.
17 in.	Porter	32 in.
17 in.	TTC subway car	36.5 to 41 in.
19.5 in.	Via Rail economy seat	38 in.
18 in.	GO bus	33.5 in.
21 to 24 in.	Four Seasons Centre	38.5 in.
23 to 24 in.	Cineplex Odeon	35 in.

SOURCE: Air Canada, WestJet Airlines, Porter Airlines, TTC, Via Rail, Metrolinx, Canadian Opera Company and Cineplex Odeon TORONTO STAR GRAPHIC

Source: Torstar Syndication Services

18.9 Graphing Data from the Web

Find data on the Web about a topic that interests you.

As your instructor directs

a. Identify at least seven stories in the data.

b. Create visuals for three of the stories.

c. Write an email to your instructor explaining why you chose these stories and why you chose these visuals to display them.

d. Write a short report to some group that might be interested in your findings, presenting your visuals as part of the short report.

Polishing *your* Prose

Being Concise

Being concise means using only necessary words to make your point, without sacrificing courtesy or clarity. Wordy sentences may confuse or slow readers.

Wordy	All of our employees at Haddenfield and Dunne should make themselves available for a seminar meeting on the 5th of August 2016, at 10 o'clock in the morning. Please make sure you come to the conference room on the 2nd Floor of the Main Complex.
Concise	Please plan to attend a seminar at 10 a.m., August 5, 2016, in the Main Complex 2nd Floor conference room.

Being concise does not mean eliminating necessary information. Sometimes you'll have to write longer sentences to be clear.

Nor does being concise mean using short, choppy sentences.

Choppy	We have a new copier. It is in the supply room. Use it during regular hours. After 5 p.m., it will be shut down.
Concise	A new copier is available in the supply room for use before 5 p.m.

Use concrete words. Instead of vague nouns and verbs with strings of modifiers, be specific.

Vague	The person who drops off packages talked about the subject of how much to charge.
Concrete	The delivery person discussed fees.

Avoid vague or empty modifiers. Words like *very, some, many, few, much, kind of/sort of,* and so forth, usually can be cut.

Cut redundant words or phrases. Don't say the same thing twice. *Cease and desist, first and foremost, the newest and latest, official company policy, 24 storeys tall, said out loud*, and *return back* are all redundant.

Avoid unnecessarily complex constructions. Instead of *the bid that won the contract*, use *the winning bid*.

Stick to simple verb tenses. Standard edited English prefers them. Instead of "I *have been attending* Royal Roads University" use "I *attend* Royal Roads University." Instead of "By 2018, I *will have completed my degree*" use "I *will graduate* in 2018."

Exercises

Rewrite the following sentences to make them concise.

1. It would be in your best interest to return the order form to us as quickly as possible.
2. Please ensure that you remember to bring all the handouts you received for the second session.
3. The automobile that is blue belongs to the woman in charge of legal affairs.
4. The office policy means that employees may use their own mobile phones for business research, texts, and calls.
5. Call us on the telephone or email us or text us if you want to confirm your order.
6. We faxed a reproduced copy of the application on the fax machine.
7. Enclosed along with the rest of this job application letter is a list of references who can talk about my job qualifications because I used to work for them.
8. I enjoyed the presentation very much.
9. To begin with, let me start by telling you some stories about our guest of honour.
10. The guy who runs our advertising department yelled loudly across the parking lot that a delivery truck had left its two headlights on.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

UNIT 5 Building Emotional Intelligence: Interpersonal Communication

MODULE 19

Listening Actively

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 19 you will be familiar with

LO1 The fundamentals of good listening practice

LO2 Active listening as a core communication skill

After applying the information you will be able to

LO3 Listen actively

LO4 Listen for understanding

LO5 Continue to learn how to influence others positively

Module Outline

LO1 **Listening** means decoding and interpreting both verbal and non-verbal symbols, as the speaker intends them. Listening skills are part of the communication competencies employers rank as essential. "Listening…occupies almost 50 percent of our daily communications,"[1] and in our digital, surround-sound world, good listening is more difficult and more important than ever. Yet we rarely receive formal training in this key skill.

Good listening is active, and takes energy and practice. Good listening is active because, to truly tune in to another person, we must

- Focus on accurately interpreting the speaker's words, gestures, and tone *in the moment*
- Reduce physical, emotional, and psychological distractions
- Clear our minds of our own preoccupations and biases

Obviously good listening demands practice because focusing on another person in an open, uncritical way does not come naturally to any of us.

Ex. 19.2, 19.5

Terry Vine/Blend Images/Getty Images

Good listening takes energy and practice.

LO2 What Do Good Listeners Do?

They prepare by using PAIBOC to analyze the situation. Then they consciously follow four practices.

Ex. 19.1, 19.4, 19.5, 19.6

After analyzing the listening situation, good listeners pay attention, focus on the other speaker(s) in a generous way, avoid making assumptions, and listen for feelings as well as for facts.

1. Good Listeners Pay Attention

Good listening requires energy. You have to resist distractions and tune out noise (Module 2), whether it's a text or call, a nearby conversation, or a concern about your parking meter expiring.

You can do several things to avoid listening errors caused by not paying attention.

- Before the conversation, use PAIBOC analysis to anticipate the information you need. Make a list of your questions. When is the project due? What resources do you have? What is the most important aspect of this project from the other person's point of view?
- During the conversation, listen for answers to your questions.
- At the end of the conversation, check your understanding with the other person. Especially check who does what next.
- During or after the conversation, write down key points that affect deadlines or work assessment.

FIGURE 19.1

Use PAIBOC to Activate Your Listening

P	What is the **purpose** of my listening? What do I want or need? What am I listening for, and why is it important to me?
A	What is my role as **audience**? What is my relationship to the speaker? What are the expectations, values, and needs of the speaker? What are my priorities? Does the face-to-face conversation take precedence over the text or phone call? Why or why not?
I	What **information** do I want or need? What do I already know? What do I need to know?
B	What can I get out of listening? What **benefits**? What's in it for me?
O	What **objections** to the speaker, or the content, do I need to ignore or overcome until I hear the entire message?
C	What is the **context** of my listening? Am I listening for information only? Trying to establish or build a relationship? Trying to convince the speaker of my interest and enthusiasm? Trying to find out more about a prospective job? Listening as a sounding board? Listening to learn?

2. Good Listeners Focus on the Other Speaker(s) in a Generous Way

Often we miss meaning because we attend to our own internal monologues.[2] We focus on factors incidental to the topic or look for flaws: "What an ugly tie." "She sounds like a little girl." "There's a typo in that slide." Often we listen only for the pause that signifies it's our turn to speak or, as if the discussion were a competition, collect weapons to attack the other speaker: "Ah-ha! You're wrong about *that*!"

Good listeners, in contrast, use enlightened self-interest to block out the noise inside their heads. They focus on the message, not on the messenger's shortcomings. They concentrate on what's in the message for themselves: *What's going on here?*

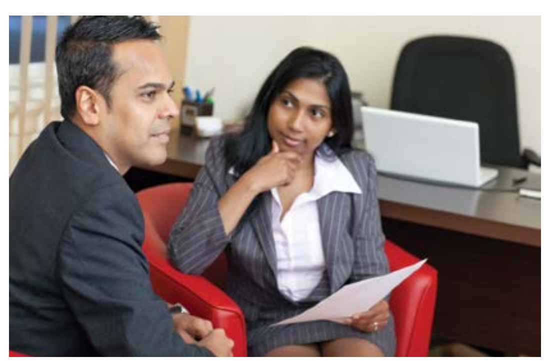
Good listeners know that even people who are poor speakers may have something worthwhile to say. They realize that they can learn and use something even from people they do not like, or do not agree with. Good listeners

- Focus on the content, on what the speaker says, not his or her appearance or delivery
- Spend time evaluating what the speaker says, not just planning a rebuttal
- Consciously work to learn something from every speaker

3. Good Listeners Avoid Making Assumptions

Each of us brings our own perceptions to the communication process. Many listening errors, therefore, come from making faulty assumptions, based on a natural tendency to focus on our own ego needs and to interpret the speaker's meaning according to our own experiences. Furthermore, we perceive experience through our own cultural biases.

We are socialized to communicate the way we do. People from different cultures speak and listen very differently (Modules 2 and 3). Good listeners strive to listen for understanding without making assumptions.[3]



©Ruslan Dashinsky/istockphoto

Good listeners pay attention and listen for feelings as well as for facts.

Indeed, good listeners wait to ask questions to get and clarify information. Superb salespeople, for example, listen closely to client questions and objections to better identify and respond to the sticking points of a sale. You avoid listening errors caused by faulty assumptions when you

- Focus on the other person's background and experiences. Why is this point important to the speaker? What might he or she mean by it? How can its importance to the speaker benefit you?
- Politely query instructions you think are unnecessary. Before you do something else, check with the order giver to see if there is a reason for the instruction.
- Paraphrase what the speaker has said, giving him/her a chance to correct your understanding.

The Chinese character for listening includes references to the eyes, the ears, and the heart.

4. Good Listeners Listen for Feelings *and* Facts

Sometimes someone just needs to blow off steam, to vent. Sometimes people just want to have a chance to express themselves fully: winning or losing does not matter. Sometimes people may have objections that they can't quite put into words.

You can learn to avoid listening errors caused by focusing solely on facts by

- Consciously listening for feelings
- Paying attention to tone of voice, facial expression, and body language

LO3 How Do I Make Good Listening Active?

Active listening includes feeding back the literal meaning, or the emotional content, or both.

In **active listening**, receivers actively demonstrate that they've heard and understood by feeding back to the speaker either the literal meaning or the emotional content, or both. Other techniques in active listening include asking for more information and stating your own feelings.

After listening without interrupting, use these five strategies to create active responses.


Pixtal/AGEphotostock

Active listening includes giving feedback.

1. Paraphrase the content. Suggest the meaning, as you understand it, in your own words.
2. Mirror the speaker's feelings. Identify the feelings you think you hear.
3. State your own feelings neutrally. This strategy works especially well when you are angry (Module 20).
4. Ask for information or clarification.
5. Ask how you can help.

Instead of mirroring what the other person says, many of us express our own needs by attempting to analyze, solve, or dismiss the problem. People with problems need to know, above all, that we hear that they're having a rough time. Table 19.1 compares some responses that block communication to those that demonstrate active listening.

TABLE 19.1

Blocking Responses versus Active Listening

Blocking Response	Possible Active Response
Ordering, threatening "I don't care how you do it. Just get that report on my desk by Friday."	**Paraphrasing content** "You're saying that you don't have time to finish the report by Friday."
Preaching, criticizing "You should know better than to air the department's problems in a general meeting."	**Mirroring feelings** "It sounds like the department's problems really bother you."
Interrogating "Why didn't you tell me that you didn't understand the instructions?"	**Stating one's own feelings** "I'm frustrated that the job isn't completed yet, and I'm worried about getting it done on time."
Minimizing the problem "You think that's bad. You should see what I have to do this week."	**Asking for information or clarification** "What parts of the problem seem most difficult to solve?"
Advising "Well, why don't you try listing everything you have to do and seeing which items are most important?"	**Offering to help solve the problem together** "What can I do to help?"

Source: Thomas Gordon and Judith Gordon Sands (1976), *P.E.T. in action* (New York: Wyden): 117–18.

LO4 What's In It For Me?

Ex. 19.3, 19.5, 19.7

Clearly, active listening takes time and energy. Even people who are skilled listeners can't do it all the time, because the listener's own (natural) ego needs interfere with open reception.

Furthermore, active listening works only if you genuinely accept the other person's ideas and feelings. Active listening can reduce the conflict that results from miscommunication; however, active listening alone cannot reduce the conflict that comes when two people want apparently inconsistent things or when one person wants to change someone else.

The payback (PAIBOC), however, is well worth the effort.

- Active listening is essential to providing the feedback necessary for true meaning exchange (Module 2).
- Active listening enables you to identify and solve problems.
- Active listening helps you identify what motivates the speaker, since you must really pay attention to understand someone else's point of view

Because active listening enables you to identify the customer's needs, it is key strategy for navigating our wired world. Today's customers are well informed and shop with high expectations of both products and services. Most important, customers use the Internet to "control the conversation." They "expect to be heard," and want "individual treatment."[4] And when they feel aggrieved, they don't just go elsewhere; they post their negative experiences for a global audience.

In response, savvy organizations use social media to engage meaningfully with their customers, and to demonstrate that they are listening.[5]

LO4 How Do I Show People That I'm Listening to Them?

Acknowledge their comments in words, in non-verbal symbols, and in actions.

Ex. 19.5, 19.8–19.10

Active listening is a good way to show people that you are listening. Referring to another person's comment is another way: "I agree with Diana that…"

Acknowledgment responses or **conversation regulators**—nods, uh-huhs, smiles, frowns—also help carry the message that you're listening. Remember, however, that listening responses vary from culture to culture.

Canadians of European background indicate attention and involvement by making eye contact, leaning forward, and making acknowledgment responses. However, as Module 3 shows, some cultures show respect by looking down. In a multicultural workforce, you won't always know whether a colleague who listens silently is agreeing with what you say—or disagrees but is too polite to say so. The best thing to do is to observe the behaviour, without assigning a meaning to it: "You aren't saying much." Then let the other person speak.

Of course, if you go through the motions of active listening but then act with disrespect—such as interrupting a conversation important to the speaker to check your cell phone—people will feel that you are not really listening. When you focus on what people say, you reassure them that they are being heard.

LO5 Can I Use These Techniques If I Really Disagree with Someone?

Truly listening to someone opens the door to understanding.

Ex. 19.5, 19.8–19.10

Most of us do our worst listening when we are in highly charged emotional situations, such as talking with someone with whom we really disagree, getting bad news, or being criticized. But at work you need to listen even to people with whom you have major conflicts.

At a minimum, good listening enables you to find out why the speaker objects to the programs or ideas you support. Understanding the objections to your ideas is essential if you are to create a persuasive campaign to overcome those objections.

Good listening is crucial when you are being criticized, especially by your boss. You need to know which areas are most important and exactly what kind of improvement counts. Otherwise, you might spend your time and energy adapting your behaviour, but changing it in a way not valued by your organization.

Listening can accomplish even more. Listening is learning. Listening to people is an indication that you're taking them seriously. If you really listen to the people you disagree with, you show that you respect them. And taking that step may encourage them to respect you and listen to you.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Learning by Listening

Kimberley Aiken

The most effective managers lead by listening. Listening for understanding creates environments where people flourish. Indeed, listening to and meeting the needs of their employees distinguishes the cultures of Canada's best places to work.

You don't have to be in business to start to develop listening skills. While studying for a Business Accounting degree, University of Waterloo student Kim Aitken found it difficult to simultaneously listen to lectures and take notes. Kim began listening to understand the lecturer; instead of taking verbatim notes, Kim started writing down the key ideas so that they made sense to her.

Fortunately, Kim has had plenty of listening practice. In her accounting firm co-op job, Kim had learned that it was important to listen and remember what "partners and seniors would tell me [about] a client or file so as not to have to ask them to repeat themselves later." Kim started to take a note pad with her everywhere, "so that I can not only listen but write down notes for later."

In her third year, Kim applied for and won a coveted place in Waterloo University's School of Accounting and Finance Fellowship program. As ambassadors for Waterloo and the School of Accounting and Finance program, fellows receive leadership training and opportunities. They must maintain an 80 percent average while tutoring and coaching other students. "When I am tutoring, I must listen closely. We are not there to give students answers; instead, I must encourage students to tell me what they think and then figure out what they know so I can help them discover the answer. I must listen to their questions and pay attention to their thought processes, so as not to confuse them with an explanation they do not understand."

Now a CPA, CA, Kim works at the regional accounting firm, RLB LLP, named one of the 50 best small and medium employers in Canada. Clearly Kim's active listening habit has proved a lifetime benefit.

Sources: Canadian Business (10 November 2014). "Canada's Best Employers 2015: The top 50 Large Companies." Retrieved January 9, 2015 from http://www.canadianbusiness.com/lists-and-rankings/best-jobs/2015-best-employers-top-50/; Profit Guide. (6 November 2014). "Meet the 50 Small and Medium Employers in Canada, retrieved January 9, 2015, from http://www.profitguide.com/manage-grow/human-resources/meet-the-50-best-small-and-medium-employers-in-canada-71198.; RLB Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors. (10 January 2015). "Let's Start the Conversation." Retrieved January 10 from http://www.bizactions.com/n.cfm/page/e105/key/285922869G1561J5980291N0P0P10293323T0/.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Hearing means having the physical ability to perceive sounds. Listening means decoding these sounds and interpreting them the way the speaker intended. Information overload and the prevalence of technology mean that good listening skills are more important than ever.
- Good listeners pay attention, focus on the speaker rather than themselves, avoid making assumptions, and listen for feelings as well as facts.
- To avoid listening errors caused by inattention
    - Be conscious of the points you need to know, and listen for them.
    - At the end of the conversation, check your understanding with the speaker.
    - During or after the conversation, make notes: write down key points, deadlines, and evaluation procedures.
- To avoid listening errors caused by self-absorption
    - Focus on what the speaker says, not on his/her appearance or delivery.
    - Focus on understanding and assessing what the speaker says, not on your rebuttal.
    - Consciously work to learn something from every speaker.
- To reduce errors caused by misinterpretation
    - Pay attention to instructions.
    - Assess the speaker's background and experiences. As yourself why this point is important to the speaker.
    - Paraphrase what the speaker has said, giving him/her a chance to correct your understanding.
- To avoid listening errors caused by focusing solely on the facts
    - Consciously listen for feelings.
    - Pay attention to tone of voice, pauses, facial expression, and body language.
    - Don't ever assume that silence means agreement; invite the other person to speak.
- In active listening, you demonstrate that you have heard and understood a speaker by feeding back the literal meaning, or the emotional meaning, or both. To do this, you can
    - Paraphrase the content
    - Mirror the speaker's feelings
    - State your own feelings
    - Ask for information or clarification
    - Ask how you can help solve the problem

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 19

Questions for Critical Thinking

19.1 Think about someone who is a good listener. Why do you think this person is a good listener? List all the other qualities this person possesses. How does being a good listener enhance this person's other qualities?

19.2 Based on your own experience(s) describe some of the real-life effects of not listening. Describe what happened when you weren't listening in a work, relationship, or social situation.

19.3 How do you decide if it's appropriate to use your phone while you are in a face-to-face conversation with another person? For example, how do you decide whether or not to read or respond to a text, or check a phone message when you are dining with someone else, talking to a salesperson or teller, or otherwise engaged face-to-face with someone else? What criteria do you use when deciding to attend to your messages instead of the person?

19.4 Think about a time when you really felt that another person listened to you and a time when you felt unheard. How did you know the other person was listening? What behaviours and words caused you to feel unheard? What was different in each situation?

19.5 How well do you listen when on social media or your mobile phone? What strategies do you use to help you listen well?

Exercises and Problems

19.6 Reflecting on Your Own Listening

Keep a listening log for a week. Note how you listened, for how long, what barriers you encountered, and what strategies you used to listen more actively and more effectively. What situations were easiest? Which were most difficult? What cultural assumptions affected how and when you listened? What discourse communities have influenced your listening habits? Which parts of listening do you need to work hardest on?

After you analyze your listening behaviours, create a plan—with specific strategies—to improve your listening skills by 35 percent.

As your instructor directs

a. Share your plan with a small group of fellow students.
b. Present your findings orally to the class.
c. Present your findings in an email memo to your instructor.
d. Join with other students to present your findings in a group report or presentation.

19.7 Diagramming Your Active Listening

Choose a class lecture or peer presentation that requires you to listen. Instead of taking linear notes of the speaker's ideas, cluster or mind-map (Module 4) the content.

As your instructor directs

a. Present your findings orally to the class.

b. Share your information with a small group of students in your class.
c. Present your findings in an email memo to your instructor, with your cluster diagram.
d. Join with other students to present your findings in a group report or presentation.

19.8 Analyzing Social Media Listening Tools

Research a minimum of three social media listening tools according to specific criteria you define as if you worked

- As a marketer for a large telecommunications company
- As a communications specialist for a large telecommunications company
- As the communications director for a small, not-for-profit organization dependent on government and private funding
- As manager of sales for a large automobile company
- As operations manager for a small, private health clinic

Choose the best tool, according to your criteria.

As your instructor directs

a. Present your findings in an email memo to your instructor.
b. Join with other students to present your findings in a group report or presentation.

19.9 Interviewing Workers About Listening

Interview an employee or employer (choose an organization where you would like to work) about his or her on-the-job listening. Possible questions include

- Whom do you listen to as part of your job? Subordinates? Managers? Peers? Customers or clients? Who else?
- How much time a day do you spend listening? What people do you talk to as part of your job? How do you tell whether they are listening?
- What strategies do you use to encourage others to listen to you?
- What strategies do you use to listen effectively?
- What prevents people from listening effectively? What advice do you have on how to listen more accurately?

As your instructor directs

a. Share your information with a small group of students in the class.
b. Present your findings orally to the class.
c. Present your findings in an email to your instructor.
d. Present your findings in a group report to the class.

19.10 Reflecting on Acknowledgment Responses

Try to be part of at least three conversations involving people from more than one culture. What acknowledgment responses do you observe? Which seem to yield the most positive results? If possible, talk to the other participants about what verbal and non-verbal cues show attentive listening in their cultures.

As your instructor directs

a. Share your information with a small group of students in your class.

b. Present your findings orally to the class.

c. Present your findings in an email to your instructor.

d. Present your findings in a group report to the class.

19.11 Listening for Understanding

Do this exercise as a class. Let each student complain about something (large or small) that really bothers him or her. Then the next student(s) will

a. Check his or her understanding of what the speaker said

b. Paraphrase the statement

c. Check for feelings that might lie behind the statement

d. Ask questions to clarify the problem

Note: The instructor should choose a group of student assessors (four or five) to note and comment on the accuracy of the paraphrasing and questioning responses.

Polishing *your* Prose

Using Colons and Semicolons

Using colons and semicolons can help you to combine sentences efficiently. Indeed, colons and semicolons contribute to a sophisticated writing style. The trick is to learn to use them correctly.

Colons introduce lists, explanations, or qualifications.

> Think of it this way: only the informed citizen can be part of a democracy.
>
> His best feature was his fairness: all encompassing, just, and charitable.
>
> CA, CPA, or CMA: after your work placement, you'll have a better idea of which certification would be best for you.

Note that when you use a colon, you need only one complete thought, either before or after the colon.

Semicolons have the same emphasis as periods; however, you can use them only between two complete thoughts. Using a semicolon suggests that the thoughts are connected. Often writers use a transitional word or phrase after the semicolon to emphasize this connection further. The result is that the semicolon contributes to the unity and flow of the sentence and allows the reader to write longer sentences without losing readers.

> Jasmine just spent two hours searching for the bill; she's reviewed the customer's last six months, checked for incorrect entries, and done a manual search.
>
> Toyota cannot keep up with the demand for its hybrid cars; apparently, Canadians have finally woken up and smelled the gas fumes.
>
> Most people appear delighted to use online banking services; for example, they pay bills, make deposits, and even invest electronically.
>
> Facebook holds plenty of problems for the uninformed: you can be the object of bullying; you can be taken off someone's list; perhaps most important, your past is globally open to any potential employer.

Exercises

Use appropriate punctuation to combine the following sentences.

1. That file on the Richman proposal. Can you send me a copy by tomorrow, please?
2. Ms. Amarotti will arrive tomorrow. Nevertheless, we have enough time to find her a great space.
3. Watch out. Some people think there's a certain "ick" factor to social networking.
4. Take a moment to read the instructions before completing the form. Then bring it to the processing desk.
5. Strange. I thought I had already signed up for another six months.
6. Darcy got the promotion he's been working for. Now he's human resources assistant manager.
7. Remember. When we turn on the break room lights, everyone is to yell, "Happy Birthday, Susharita,"
8. You have to make three copies for three different departments. Accounting, legal, and sales.
9. The best gig he ever had was his ten-month posting in Amsterdam. The nightlife is spectacular. Everything's open. Museums, pubs, shops. He was sad to come home.
10. Here's another effective career search question. What do you most enjoy doing?

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

MODULE 20

Working and Writing in Teams

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 20 you will be familiar with

- LO1 The ground rules for working well with others
- LO2 Roles people play in groups
- LO3 The characteristics of successful work teams

By applying the information you will be able to

- LO4 Work productively in a team
- LO5 Resolve conflicts constructively
- LO6 Write collaboratively

Module Outline

LO1 Teamwork is fundamental to doing business today. People work in teams—including virtual teams—to create new products, streamline processes, hire employees, identify and solve problems, and brainstorm, articulate, and implement strategic organizational goals.

In an ideal world, we get to work in teams whose members share our values. In reality, we often work with people who hold very different ideas from ours and who believe in the rightness of these ideas as insistently as we do our own.

Ex. 20.2

The most effective teams communicate to agree on and adopt explicit ground rules and outcomes. Team members operate on two basic behavioural principles: *What gets rewarded gets repeated; what gets measured gets done.*

Table 20.1 lists some common behavioural ground rules collaborative workers use.

Table 20.2 lists some of the most common task-focused outcomes for workplace teams.

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Successful crowdsourcing campaigns demonstrate the power of technology-based teamwork. Entrepreneur partners Ali Zahid, Sohib Zazhid, Niv Yahel, and Adil Aftab used Kickstarter to fund production for their smart bike, the Vanhawks Valour.[1]

TABLE 20.1

Group Ground Rules

Start on time; end on time.	Practise NOSTUESO (No one speaks twice until everyone speaks once).
Come to the meeting prepared.	If you have a problem with another person, tell that person, not everyone else.
Focus comments on the issues.	Communicate immediately if you think you may not be able to fulfill an agreement.
Avoid personal attacks.	If you agree to do something, do it.
Listen to and respect members' opinions.	Everyone must be 70 percent comfortable with the decision and 100 percent committed to implementing it.

Sources: "How to manage remote working teams." (April 2014). *Powownow*. Retrieved January 11, 2015 from http://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/powwownow-partnerzone/remote-working-manage-teams; Susan M. Heathfield. (2015). "How to build a teamwork culture," *About.com*. Retrieved January 11, 2015 from http://humanresources.about.com/od/involvementteams/a/team_culture.htm; MindTools (1996–2015). "Team Briefings: Sharing Organizational Information Efficiently." Retrieved January 2015 from http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_42.htm; 3M Meeting Network, Groundrules and Agreements, (1995–2015). Retrieved January 11, 2015 from http://www.3rd-force.org/meetingnetwork/readingroom/meetingguide_grndrules.html; David Sirota, Louis A. Mischkind, and Michael Irwin Meltzer. (2006). "Why your employees are losing motivation." *Harvard Business School Working Knowledge*. Retrieved January 11, 2015, from http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/5289.html.

TABLE 20.2

Group Task Outcomes

- Define, articulate, and agree on the goal(s) of the project.
- Describe the goal(s) in writing.
- Create time-management guidelines (**who** does **what**, **when**) to reach desired goal(s).
- Create measurements that describe both successful products (proposals, interviews, visuals) that work toward the goal and the successful final product (an A+ on the report; winning the sales contract; increase in site hits; increased sales).
- Ensure every team member has a copy of the goals, the timeline, individual responsibilities, and the criteria for success.

LO1 What Kinds of Communication Happen in Groups?

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Different messages occur at different points in a group's development.

Ex. 20.7, 20.8

Group messages fall into three categories: *informational* messages and *procedural* messages relate to getting the task done; *interpersonal* messages focus on maintaining group norms and fostering group cohesion.

1. **Informational messages** focus on content: the problem or challenge, data, and possible solutions.
2. **Procedural messages** focus on method and process. How will the group make decisions? Who will do what? When will assignments be due?
3. **Interpersonal messages** focus on people, promoting friendliness, cooperation, and group loyalty.

Different messages dominate during the various stages of group development.

During **orientation**, when members meet and begin to define their task, people who want to work well together consciously communicate in ways that foster mutuality and interdependence. Group members work toward some sort of social cohesiveness and develop procedures for meeting and acting. Interpersonal and procedural messages reduce the tension that exists in a new group. Insisting on information at this stage of the process can impede the group's productivity.

Conflicts almost always arise when the group chooses a leader and defines the problem. In this **formation** phase, people use interpersonal communication to resolve the conflicts that surface. Good leaders clarify procedures and roles, so that each person understands what s/he is supposed to do. Successful groups define, analyze, and agree on the problem carefully before they begin to search for solutions.

Coordination is the longest phase, during which most of the group's work is done. Procedural and interpersonal communications maintain the trust necessary to gather and focus on the task information. Creative conflict reoccurs as the group members debate alternative solutions.

In **formalization,** the group seeks consensus. In this stage, the group tries to forget earlier conflicts as members focus on agreeing to the solution. The success of this phase determines how well the group's decision will be implemented.

How Do People Develop Group Unity?

Developing team unity depends on building relationships (Module 19). Collective cultures (Module 3) focus strongly on relationship building to ensure mutual respect among team members. Establishing and fostering this respect are vital processes for team productivity.

Indeed, businesses that incorporate the group dynamics of collective cultures enjoy higher employee retention and productivity rates: "Aboriginal community-building concepts such as talking circles, collective decision making, holistic approaches to life, cooperation, and respect for others and respect of self" help companies keep valuable employees.[2] In our increasingly virtual, diverse and complex workplaces—where teams often work autonomously—building relationships must be the first order of team business.[3]

Used appropriately, technology can contribute to building workplace relationships. Company-managed social networking sites and blogs can foster a sense of community, especially when employees are encouraged to express their concerns openly. Telecommuting and field employees use a variety of virtual connecting tools to stay in touch with team members kilometers or countries away.

Caiaimage/Sam Edwards/Getty Images

David Hancock/Getstock.com

Talking circles help to build the relationships that make teams work.

LO2 LO4 What Roles Do People Play in Groups?

People play both group maintenance and task roles, and every role can be positive or negative.

Ex. 20.5

Positive *maintenance* roles and actions that help the group build loyalty, resolve conflicts, and function smoothly to achieve task goals include [4]

- ***Listening actively*** Showing group members that they have been heard and that their ideas are being taken seriously (Module 19)
- ***Encouraging participation*** Demonstrating openness and acceptance, recognizing the contributions of members, calling on quieter group members
- ***Relieving tensions*** Joking and suggesting breaks and activities
- ***Checking feelings*** Asking members how they feel about group activities and sharing one's own feelings with others
- ***Solving interpersonal problems*** Opening discussion of interpersonal problems in the group and suggesting ways to solve them

Positive roles and actions that help the group achieve its *task* goals include

- ***Seeking information and opinions*** Asking questions, identifying gaps in the group's knowledge
- ***Giving information and opinions*** Answering questions, providing relevant information
- ***Summarizing*** Restating major points, pulling ideas together, summarizing decisions
- ***Evaluating*** Comparing group processes and products to standards and goals
- ***Coordinating*** Planning work, giving directions, and fitting together contributions of group members

Negative roles and actions that hurt the group's *products* and *processes* include

- ***Blocking*** Disagreeing with everything proposed. Criticizing ideas is necessary if the group is to produce the best solution, but criticizing every single idea without suggesting possible solutions blocks a group.
- ***Dominating*** Trying to run the group by ordering, shutting out others, and insisting on one's own way. Active listening strategies (Module 19) build relationships, defuse conflict, and encourage participation. Authoritarian, tyrannical people don't just alienate others; they reduce or eliminate productivity.
- ***Clowning*** Making unproductive jokes and diverting the group from the task. Jokes can defuse tension and make the group more creative, but too many or inappropriate jokes can frustrate or offend team members, or impede progress.

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- ***Withdrawing*** Being silent in meetings, not contributing, not helping with the work, not attending meetings. Silently listening encourages others to contribute; passive-aggressive behaviours can create a dysfunctional team.

Leadership in Groups

The most successful group leaders communicate often and well. Effective leaders demonstrate high emotional intelligence, and are inclusive and flexible.[5]

Effective groups balance three kinds of leadership, which parallel the three group development dimensions.

1. **Informational leaders** generate and evaluate ideas and text.
2. **Interpersonal leaders** monitor the group's process, check people's feelings, and resolve conflicts.
3. **Procedural leaders** set the agenda, make sure that everyone knows what's due for the next meeting, communicate with absent group members, and check to be sure that assignments are carried out.

Although it's possible for one person to take on all these responsibilities, in many groups, three (or more) different people take on the three kinds of leadership. Some groups formally or informally rotate or share these responsibilities, so that everyone—and no one—is a leader. Groups that rotate or share leadership roles are more productive, because more members assume responsibility for the group's success.

LO3 Characteristics of Successful Groups

Ex. 20.3, 20.7, 20.8

Research proves—not surprisingly—that effective communication differentiates successful groups from less successful group.[6]

1. In successful groups, leaders set clear deadlines and schedule frequent meetings. Members spend more time analyzing and identifying the task. Members communicate more often with each other, and deal directly with conflict. In less successful groups, members attempt to solve the task without discussing or defining it. Members depend on the leader for direction. Less successful groups meet less often, and they avoid talking about conflicts.

2. Successful groups consist of members actively engaged in both maintenance and task responsibilities. Members listen to each other, attend to criticism and make important decisions together. In less successful groups, fewer people actively participate in maintenance and task functions. The leader or members of a subgroup make decisions and tell other members what's been decided.

A Question of Ethics

Anyone with a smartphone can capture any incident, anytime, anywhere, and then post the record for the world to comment on.

What ethical concerns would you have before recording and posting an unflattering portrait of someone—a teacher, peer, or stranger?

Peer Pressure and Groupthink

Groupthink is the tendency for groups to put such a high premium on agreement that they directly or indirectly punish dissent. Groups whose members never express conflict may be experiencing groupthink.

Group members who "go along with the crowd" and suppress conflict

- Ignore the full range of alternatives
- Seek only information that supports the positions they already favour
- Fail to prepare contingency plans to cope with foreseeable setbacks

A business suffering from groupthink may launch a new product that senior executives support but for which there is no demand. Student teams suffering from groupthink turn in inferior documents.

The best correctives to groupthink are to

- Brainstorm for additional alternatives.
- Test assumptions against those of a range of other people.
- Encourage disagreement, perhaps even assigning someone to be "devil's advocate."
- Protect the right of people in a group to disagree.

LO5 How Can Team Members Handle Conflict?

Listen actively to get at the real issue and repair bad feelings.

Ex. 20.3, 20.4

Conflicts arise in any group of intelligent people who care about the task. Many of us feel so uncomfortable with conflict that we pretend it doesn't exist. However, unacknowledged conflicts rarely go away: they fester, impeding progress and productivity.

Try the following ways to reduce the number of conflicts in a group.

- Make responsibilities and ground rules clear at the beginning.
- Frame ideas positively.
- Acknowledge verbal and non-verbal messages of discomfort, anger, or hostility.
- Discuss problems as they arise, rather than letting them fester until people explode.
- Realize that group members are not responsible for each other's feelings.

Table 20.3 suggests possible solutions to frequent sources of group conflict. Often the symptom arises from a feeling of not being respected or appreciated by the group.

Groups whose members take the time to analyze and agree on the task, objectives, and group norms (expected, acceptable, and unacceptable behaviours) have less destructive conflict. Many groups articulate these objectives and behaviours in a contract, with defined rewards and penalties, which all members sign.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Leading with Integrity

According to Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmondson, teams fail because (1) some members don't believe their knowledge is interesting or relevant, (2) people are oblivious to other members' opposing interests, and (3) some members deliberately withhold information. Conversely, people who work together well tend to consult one another openly, honestly, and frequently. Members of successful teams act with integrity: they take responsibility for both task and maintenance functions, they tend to share power, and as team leaders or members, they act on the assumption that every person has a valuable contribution to make to the team.

In their book, *Integrity Works*, authors Adrian Telford and Dana Gostick identify ten behaviours that characterize leaders with integrity.

- You know that the little things count.
- You find the white when others see the grey.
- In a situation you mess up, you fess up.
- You create a culture of trust.
- You keep your word.
- You care about the greater good.
- You're honest but modest.
- You act as if you're being watched.
- You hire integrity.
- You stay the course.

You can begin to lead your team with integrity by putting some of these behaviours into action.

- ***Smile*** Get to know the other members of your group as individuals. Invite members to say something about themselves, perhaps what job they're hoping to get and one fact about their lives outside schoolwork.
- ***Share*** Tell people about your own work style and obligations, and ask others to share their styles and obligations. Savvy group members play to each other's strengths and devise strategies for dealing with differences. The earlier you know what those differences are, the easier it will be to deal with them.
- ***Suggest*** "Could we talk about what we see as our purposes in this presentation?" "One of the things we need to do is…" "One idea I had for a project is…" Presenting your ideas as suggestions gets the group started without suggesting that you expect your views to prevail.
- ***Think*** Leaders look at the goal and identify the steps needed to get there. "Our proposal is due in two weeks. Let's list the tasks we need to do in order to write a rough draft."
- ***Volunteer*** Volunteer to take notes, to gather some of the data the group will need, or to prepare the charts after the data are in. Volunteer, not just for the interesting parts of the job (such as surfing the Web to find visuals for your presentation), but for some of the dull but essential work, such as proofreading.
- ***Ask*** Bring other people into the conversation. Learn about their knowledge, interests, and skills so that you'll have as much as possible to draw on as you complete your group projects.

Sources: Dan Collns. (2014). "Characteristics of a good team and good team member." *The Team Building Directory*. Retrieved January 11, 2015 from http://www.innovativeteambuilding.co.uk/characteristics-of-a-good-team-and-team-member/; Amy C. Edmondson, James R. Dillon, and Kathryn S. Roloff (2006), *Three perspectives on team learning outcome improvement, task mastery, and group process*, Harvard Business School website, www.hbs.edu/research/pdf/07-029.pdf, retrieved September 13, 2012; Jared Sandberg (2004, October 1), "Teamwork: When it's a bad idea," *Globe and Mail*, C7; Harvey Schachter (June 15, 2005), Where integrity leads, and where it lags, *Globe and Mail*, C3. Dana Telford and Adrian Gostick. Integrity works: Strategies for becoming a trusted, respected and admired leader. Gibbs Smith, 2005.

TABLE 20.3

Troubleshooting Group Problems

Behaviour	Possible Solutions
We can't find a time to meet that works for all of us.	a. Find out why people can't meet at certain times. Some reasons suggest their own solutions. For example, if someone has to stay home with small children, perhaps the group could meet at that person's home. b. Assign out-of-class work to smaller committees to work on parts of the project. c. Meet virtually to share, discuss, and revise drafts.
One person isn't doing his or her fair share.	a. Ask for information. Is the person overcommitted? Does he or she feel unappreciated? You'd solve those different problems in different ways. b. Early on, do things to build group loyalty. Get to know each other as writers and as people. Sometimes, do something interesting together. c. Encourage the person to contribute. "Maria, what do you think?" "Savio, which part of this would you like to draft?" Then find something to praise in the work. "Thanks for getting us started." d. If someone misses a meeting, assign someone else to bring the person up to speed. People who miss meetings for legitimate reasons (job interviews, illness) but don't find out what happened may become less committed to the group. e. Consider whether strict equality is the most important criterion. On a given project, some people may have more knowledge or time than others. Sometimes the best group product results from letting people do different amounts of work. f. Even if you divide the work, make all decisions as a group: what to write about, which evidence to include, what graphs to use, what revisions to make. People excluded from decisions become less committed to the group.
I seem to be the only one in the group who cares about quality.	a. Find out why other members "don't care." If they received low grades on early assignments, stress that good ideas and attention to detail can raise grades. Perhaps the group should meet with the instructor to discuss what kinds of work will pay the highest dividends. b. Volunteer to do extra work. Sometimes people settle for something that's "just OK" because they don't have the time or resources to do excellent work. They might be happy for the work to be done—if they don't have to do it themselves. c. Be sure that you're respecting what each person can contribute. Group members sometimes withdraw when one person dominates and suggests that he or she is "better" than other members.
People in the group don't seem willing to disagree. We end up going with the first idea suggested.	a. Appoint someone as "devil's advocate." b. Brainstorm so you have several possibilities to consider. c. After an idea is suggested, have each person in the group suggest a way it could be improved. d. Have each person in the group write a draft. It's likely the drafts will be different, and you'll have several options to mix and match. e. Talk about ways to offer positive and constructive feedback. Sometimes people don't disagree because they're afraid other group members won't tolerate disagreement.
One person just criticizes everything.	a. Ask the person to follow up the criticism with a suggestion for improvement. b. Talk about ways to express criticism tactfully. "I think we need to think about X" is more tactful than "You're wrong." c. If the criticism is about ideas and writing (not about people), value it. Ideas and documents need criticism to improve them.

Steps in Conflict Resolution

Negotiating and resolving conflict start with active listening (Module 19). Dealing successfully with conflict requires attention to both the issues and to people's feelings, which you cannot understand unless you stop talking and listen. Taking notes helps you focus your listening.[7]

Then follow this five-step procedure to help you resolve conflicts constructively.

1. MAKE SURE THAT THE PEOPLE INVOLVED REALLY DISAGREE

Sometimes someone who's under a lot of pressure may appear upset. But the speaker may just be **venting** anger and frustration; he or she may not in fact be angry with the person who receives the explosion. One way to find out whether a person is just venting is to ask, "Is there something you'd like me to do?"

2. CHECK TO SEE THAT EVERYONE'S INFORMATION IS CORRECT

Sometimes different conversational styles (Module 3) or cultural differences create apparent conflicts when no real disagreement exists. Similarly, misunderstanding can arise from faulty assumptions. Ask open questions (*Who? What? Why? When? Where? How?*) to clarify concerns.

3. DISCOVER THE NEEDS EACH PERSON IS TRYING TO MEET

Sometimes identifying the real need makes it possible to see a new solution. The **presenting problem** (the subject of the conflict) may or may not be the real problem. For example, a worker who complains about the hours he's putting in may in fact be complaining not about the hours themselves but about not feeling appreciated. A supervisor who complains that the other supervisors don't invite her to meetings may really feel that the other managers don't accept her as a peer.

Sometimes people have trouble seeing beyond the problem because they've been taught to suppress their anger, especially toward powerful people. One way to tell whether the presenting problem is the real problem is to ask, "If this were solved, would I be satisfied?" If the answer is no, then the problem that presents itself is not, in fact, the real problem. Solving the presenting problem won't solve the conflict. Keep probing until you get to the real conflict.

4. SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES

Sometimes people get into conflict because they see too few alternatives. Indeed, people often see only two polarized choices—known as the *either–or logical fallacy*.

Creative people train themselves to think in terms of possibilities—the more the better. This technique, known as **brainstorming**, is an essential part of every step in the problem-solving process!

5. REPAIR BAD FEELINGS

Conflict can emerge without anger and without escalating the disagreement, as the next section shows. But if people's feelings have been hurt, the group needs to deal with those feelings to resolve the conflict constructively. Only when people feel respected and taken seriously can they take the next step of trusting others in the group.

Responding to Criticism

Conflict is particularly difficult to resolve when someone else criticizes or attacks us directly. When we are criticized, our natural reaction is to defend ourselves—perhaps by counterattacking. The counterattack prompts the critic to defend him or herself. The conflict escalates, feelings are hurt, and issues get muddied and more difficult to work out.

Just as resolving conflict depends on identifying the needs each person is trying to meet, dealing with criticism depends on understanding the real concern of the critic. Constructive ways to respond to criticism and get closer to the real concern include

- Paraphrasing
- Checking for feelings
- Checking for inferences
- Buying time with limited agreement

Paraphrasing

To **paraphrase**, repeat in your own words, in a neutral tone, the verbal content of the critic's message. The purposes of paraphrasing are (1) to be sure that you have heard the critic accurately, (2) to let the critic know what his or her statement means to you, and (3) to communicate the feeling that you are taking the critic and his or her feelings seriously.

Criticism	You people are stonewalling my requests for information.
Paraphrase	You're saying that we don't give you the information you need quickly enough.

Checking for Feelings

When you **check the speaker's feelings**, you identify the emotions that the critic seems to be expressing verbally or non-verbally. The purposes of checking feelings are to try to understand (1) the critic's emotions, (2) the importance of the criticism for the critic, and (3) the unspoken ideas and feelings that may actually be more important than the voiced criticism.

Criticism	You people are stonewalling my requests for information.
Feeling check	You sound pretty angry. Are you angry?

Always *ask* the other person if you are right in your perception. Even the best reader of non-verbal cues is sometimes wrong.

Checking for Inferences

When you **check the inferences** you draw from criticism, you identify the implied meaning of the verbal and non-verbal content of the criticism. You take the statement a step further than the words of the speaker, to try to understand why the person is bothered by the action or attitude under discussion. The purposes of checking inferences are (1) to identify the real (as opposed to the presenting) problem and (2) to communicate the feeling that you care about resolving the conflict.

Criticism	You people are stonewalling my requests for information.
Inference	Are you saying that you need more information from our group?

Inferences can be faulty. In the above interchange, the critic might respond, "I don't need more information. I just think you should give it to me without my having to send you three emails every time I want some data."

Buying Time with Limited Agreement

Buying time is a useful strategy for dealing with criticisms that really sting. When you buy time with limited agreement, you avoid escalating the conflict (as an angry statement might do) but also avoid yielding to the critic's point of view. To buy time, restate the part of the criticism that you agree is true. (This is often a fact, rather than the interpretation or evaluation the critic has made of that fact.) *Then let the critic respond, before you say anything else.* The purposes of buying time are (1) to allow you time to think when a criticism really hits home and threatens you, so that you can respond to the criticism rather than simply reacting defensively and (2) to suggest to the critic that you are genuinely listening to what he or she is saying.

Criticism	You people are stonewalling my requests for information.
Limited agreement	It's true that the cost projections you asked for last week still aren't ready.

Do *not* go on to justify or explain. A "Yes, but…" statement is not a time-buyer.

You-Attitude in Conflict Resolution

You-attitude (Module 12) means looking at the situation from the audience's point of view, respecting the audience, and protecting the audience's ego. The critical *you* statements that many of us use when we are upset do not illustrate respect for the audience. These statements make recipients feel attacked and defensive, destroying any possibility for dialogue.

In conflict resolution, I-based statements about your own feelings and perceptions can initiate positive conversation. I-based statements show good you-attitude.

Inflammatory (Lacks positive you-attitude)	You never do your share of the work.
I-based statement	I feel that I'm doing more than my share of the work on this project.
Inflammatory (Lacks positive you-attitude)	Even you should be able to run the report through a spell checker.
I-based statement	I'm not willing to have my name on a report with so many spelling errors. I did lots of the writing, and I don't think I should have to do the proofreading and spell-checking, too.

LO6 How Can Teams Co-Author Good Documents?

Talk about your purposes and audiences; discuss drafts and revisions as a group.

Ex. 20.1, 20.3, 20.6–20.8

Whatever your career choices, many of the documents you produce will be written as part of a group. Business, government, and academic organizations use collaboration because

- It promotes learning[8]
- The task is too big or the time is too short for one person to do all the work

- No one person has all the knowledge required to do the task
- A group representing different perspectives must reach a consensus
- The organization wants the best efforts of as many people as possible
- Technology facilitates the process[9]

Collaborative writing can be done by two people or by a much larger group. The group can be democratic or run by a leader who makes decisions alone. The group may share or divide responsibility for each of the stages in the writing process (Module 4).

Research into collaborative writing consistently demonstrates that frequent, open communication is key to success. A case study of two collaborative writing teams in an agency found that the successful group

- Distributed power equally
- Worked to soothe hurt feelings
- Was careful to involve all group members

In terms of the writing process, the successful group analyzed for purpose and audience, planned revisions as a group, saw supervisors' comments as legitimate, and had a positive attitude toward revision.[10]

Professors Ede and Lunsford's detailed case studies of collaborative teams in business, government, and science create an "emerging profile of effective collaborative writers." The profile reflects those interpersonal competencies characteristic of successful team members: "They are flexible; respectful of others; attentive and analytical listeners; able to speak and write clearly and articulately; dependable and able to meet deadlines; able to designate and share responsibility, to lead and to follow; open to criticism but confident in their own abilities; ready to engage in creative conflict."[11]

Planning the Work and the Document

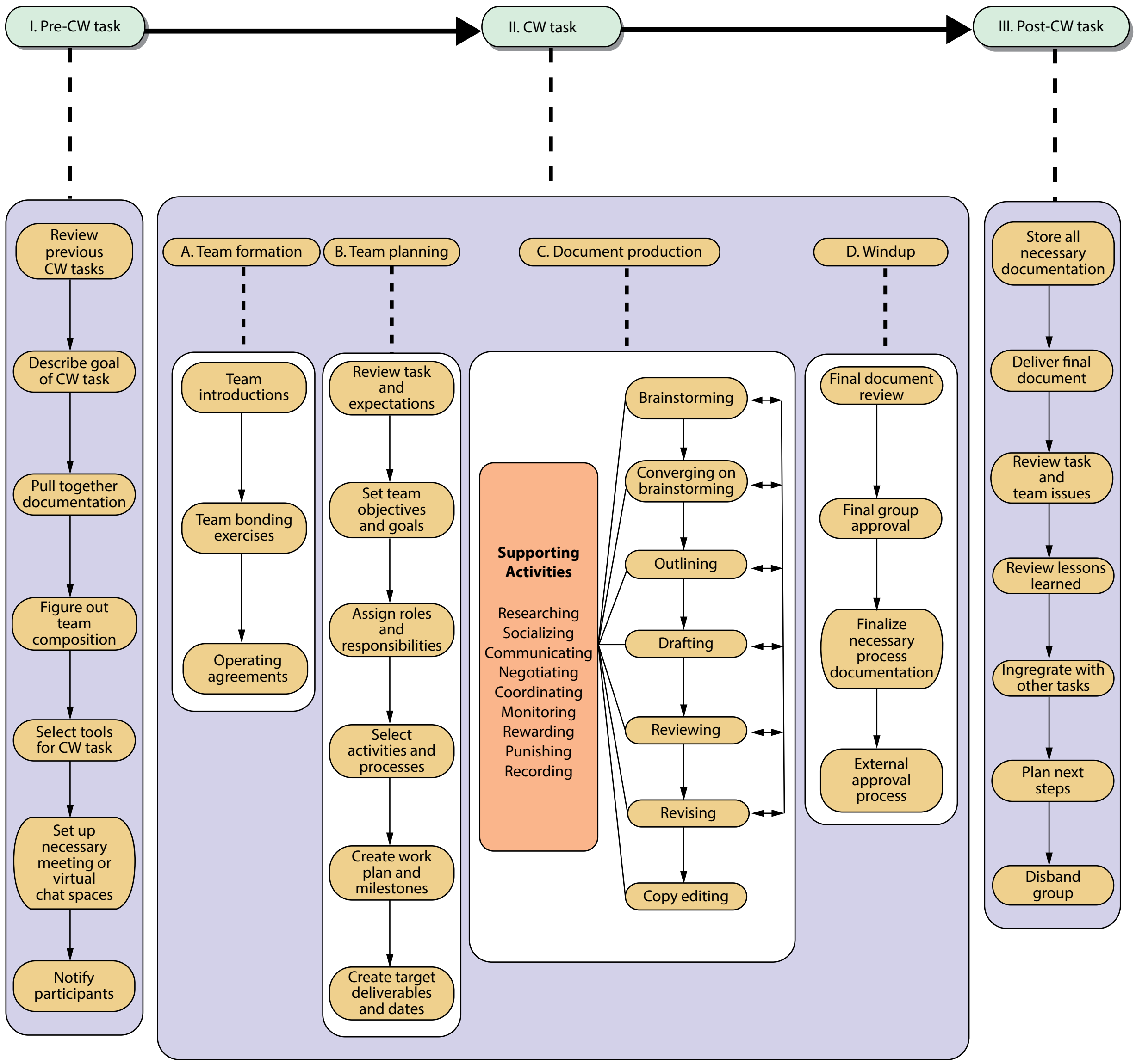
Collaborative writing is complicated because it is both a social and intellectual process, as Figure 20.1 illustrates. To be successful, members must focus on building the team, and establishing norms and roles, before beginning to plan the document.

When you plan a collaborative writing project, put the plan in writing.

- Make your analysis of the problem, the audience, and your purposes explicit so that you know where you agree and where you disagree.
- Articulate and agree on the organization, format, and style of the document before anyone begins to write, to make it easier to blend sections written by different authors.
- Establish project-management timelines that meet members' needs, and maximize individual's communication strengths. Consider your work styles and other commitments. A writer working alone can stay up all night to finish a single-author document. But members of a group need to work together to accommodate each other's styles and enable members to meet other commitments.
- Consider creating a team contract that defines members' roles and responsibilities.
- Use online, cloud, and computer applications that enable frequent virtual meetings and real-time composing, revising, and editing.
- Build some leeway into your deadlines. It's harder for a group to finish a document when one person's part is missing than it is for a single writer to finish the last section of a document on which he or she has done all the work.

FIGURE 20.1

Collaborative Writing Activities



Source: Paul Benjamin Lowry, Aaron Curtis, and Michelle Rene Lowry, "Building a taxonomy and nomenclature of collaborative writing to improve interdisciplinary research and practice," *Journal of Business Communication* 41 (1) (January 2004): 84, by American Business Communication Association; Association for Business Communication (U.S.) Reproduced with permission of Sage Publications, in the format republish in a book/journal via Copyright Clearance Centre.

Composing the Drafts

Most writers find that composing alone is faster than composing in a group. However, composing together may reduce revision time later, since group members can examine every choice as it is made. Virtual meeting and collaboration technology enable members to meet, compose, and provide feedback immediately and accurately.

Encourage each member to choose task and maintenance roles (leader, summariser, reviser, editor) that best use his or her strengths. Have the best writer(s) draft the document after everyone has gathered the necessary information.

Revising the Document

Revising a collaborative document requires attention to content, organization, and style. The following guidelines can make the revision process more effective.

- Evaluate the content and discuss possible revisions as a group. Brainstorm ways to improve each section so the person doing the revisions has some guidance.
- Recognize that different people favour different writing styles. If the style satisfies the demands of Standard English and the conventions of business writing, accept it even if you wouldn't say it that way.
- When the group is satisfied with the content of the document, one person—probably the best writer—should make any changes necessary to make the writing style consistent throughout.

Editing and Proofreading the Document

Since mastery of Standard English varies between writers, a group report needs careful editing and proofreading.

- Have at least one person read the whole document for consistency of appearance and tone (e.g., formatting, numbering).
- Have another group member check the whole document for correct grammar, spelling, and usage.
- Use a spell-checker.
- Have all group members proofread the document one last time, because spell-checkers cannot think and therefore cannot catch out-of-context misspellings (e.g., there, their, and they're).

Making the Group Process Work

Collaborative writing requires special attention to group process.

- Allow plenty of time to discuss problems and find solutions. Successful collaborative writing demands hours of communicating to manage project activities and to keep members aware and engaged.[12]
- Take the time to get to know group members and to build group loyalty. Group members will work harder and the final document will be better if the group is important to its members.
- Be a responsible group member. Attend all the meetings, do what you've committed to do, and plan so you will meet deadlines.
- Be aware that people have different ways of experiencing reality and of expressing themselves.
- Keep the communication open. Don't assume that because the discussion went smoothly, a draft written by one person will necessarily be acceptable.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Effective groups balance informational leadership, interpersonal leadership, and procedural leadership.
- In productive groups, members communicate often, establish clear goals, define deadlines, deal directly with conflict, have an inclusive decision-making style, allow for others' individual working styles, actively contribute, and assume responsibility for meeting deadlines. Shared leadership is also characteristic of productive teams.
- Groupthink is the tendency for members to put such a high premium on agreement that they directly or indirectly punish dissent. To avoid groupthink, consciously brainstorm alternatives, test your assumptions against those of a range of other people, and protect the right of people in a group to disagree.
- To negotiate conflict, first make sure that the people involved really disagree. Next, ensure that everyone has the correct information. The problem causing dissention may not be the real problem. Encourage people to voice their real concerns and brainstorm alternatives.
- Constructive ways to respond to criticism include paraphrasing, checking for feelings and inferences, buying time through limited agreement, and using *I*-based statements to express observable behaviours and feelings.
- Collaborative writing is a complex social and intellectual process. Writers producing a collaborative document are most productive when they first focus on the processes of group orientation and formation.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 20

Questions for Critical Thinking

20.1 What privacy concerns might you have using online collaboration tools (OCT)? What protocols can team members adopt to reduce these concerns?

20.2 When working collaboratively, what norms and expectations would you want in writing? Why?

20.3 What do you find most difficult about collaborative writing? Please refer to Figure 20.1, Collaborative Writing Activities, as you consider your answer. What strategies have you developed to make your contributions more effective?

Exercises and Problems

20.4 Assessing Your Negotiating Style

(*Note:* Students may want to complete exercises 20.4 and 20.5 before submitting a report.)

To get an idea of your negotiating style and skills, visit http://www.tero.com/assessment/negassessment.pdf and http://www.cengage.com/resource_uploads/downloads/0538481986_365415.docx. Answer the questions in both self-assessments. Read the analysis of your style.

As your instructor directs

a. Identify the common results of the two self-assessments.

b. Ask a minimum of two close friends and/or family member how accurate the results are.

c. Write an email to your instructor describing your results, analyzing their accuracy, and providing a specific example that proves (or disproves) the results.

20.5 Assessing Your Teamworking Skills

To get an idea of your teamwork skills, visit http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sk/teamwork.htm and answer the questions. Read the analysis of your style.

As your instructor directs

a. Identify the common results of all three tests.

b. Consider a recent situation in which you were a team member. How did you deal with conflict in that situation? How accurate were your results in the negotiating and teamworking self-assessments? What results surprised you? Why?

c. Write a short report to your instructor describing your results, analyzing their accuracy, and providing a specific strategy that you will use to improve your teamworking skills.

20.6 Assessing Online Collaboration Tools (OCT): A Yardstick Report

As resources manager for your team, it is your responsibility to identify the best online collaboration tools for team activities, including researching and writing a report. Your task is to assess the available software according to criteria that you define and then report your findings (Module 16).

As your instructor directs

a. Create a list of criteria (minimum of six) that the ideal OCT should meet to serve your team members' consulting and writing needs.

b. Form a virtual team with three other students.

c. Compare your criteria and choose a total of six criteria from among members' lists.

d. As a team, assess nine OCTs according to the designated criteria.

e. Choose the ideal OCT.

f. Write your instructor and other students a two-page yardstick report (Module 16) explaining your choice.

Hint:

For inspiration, examine the activities illustrated in Figure 20.1, Collaborative Writing Activities.

20.7 Identifying and Analyzing Group Roles

Observe your behaviours and the behaviours of others in the group to identify and analyze team roles and interpersonal leadership qualities.

a. Each group member writes his/her answers to the following questions after each group meeting.

b. Each member shares his/her perceptions with the group.

c. Each member identifies one leadership or positive team role he/she has demonstrated.

d. Each member identifies one leadership or positive team role he/she wants to develop.

Group Process Analysis

Write down your answers to the following questions

- How do you help others in the group to talk and give their opinions? How do other members encourage your opinions? What could group members do to encourage greater participation?
- Describe your active listening techniques. Describe how other group members demonstrate they are listening. What could other members do to improve their listening techniques? What could you do?
- What kinds of questions are you asking each other: Open-ended? Encouraging? Paraphrasing? Interested? Closed? Who asks the most questions? The fewest?
- How does the group keep track of discussions and tasks to be done? Who takes notes? How was that person chosen? What happens to those notes?
- Describe how the group reaches agreement. Describe what happens when members disagree.
- Describe how you usually deal with conflict. Describe how every other member deals with conflict. Assess how well these strategies work.

As your instructor directs

a. Send an email to group members with your revised notes. Be clear about your assessments and the leadership or positive team role (or both) you want to develop.

b. Meet in person or virtually as a group to discuss your interpretations and your personal development goals, and the strategies you will use to reach those goals.

c. As a group, write an information report (Module15) to your instructor describing your group's dynamics and each person's personal development goals and strategies.

20.8 Creating a Group Contract

Although group work is ubiquitous, and often produces Eureka! moments that working alone may not, most of us find group work troublesome at times. Could a members' contract that all members create and agree to reduce or even eliminate the conflicts that occur in teamwork?

Create a one-page group contract to manage the task and maintenance behaviours of members assigned to any of the exercises following, or for a group you are currently working in.

As your instructor directs

a. Form a group with three of your peers, and share each other's sample contracts.

b. Create one contract that all members can agree on.

c. Post your contract on a class blog.

d. As a class, choose the three best team contracts, and identify why they are the best.

Polishing *your* Prose

Delivering Criticism

No one likes to be told that his or her work isn't good. But criticism is necessary if people and documents are to improve.

Depending on the situation, you may be able to use one of these strategies.

1. Notice what's good as well as what needs work.

   The charts are great. We need to make the text as good as they are.

   I really like the ideas you've used in the slides. We need to edit the bulleted points so they're parallel.

2. Ask questions.

   Were you able to find any books and articles, in addition to sources on the Internet?

   What do you see as the most important revisions to make for the next draft?

3. Refer to the textbook or another authority.

   The module on design says that italic type is hard to read.

   Our instructor told us that presentations should have just three main points.

4. Make statements about your own reaction.

   I'm not sure what you're getting at in this section.

   I wouldn't be convinced by the arguments here.

5. Criticize what's wrong, without making global attacks on the entire document or on the writer as a person.

   There are many typos in this draft.

   You begin almost every sentence with "There is."

Exercises

Rewrite each criticism to make it less hurtful. You may add or omit information as needed.

1. This is the worst report I've ever seen.
2. My 10-year-old can spell better than you do.
3. I can't believe that you didn't go to the library to get any sources.
4. You've used four different fonts in this report. Didn't you read the book? Don't you know that we're not supposed to use more than two?
5. This design is really lame. It looks like every other brochure I've ever seen.
6. There's no way we'll get a passing grade if we turn this in.
7. Were you asleep? Didn't you hear our instructor say that we had to use at least five sources?
8. This is really creative. You've written the perfect illustration for How to Fail This Course.
9. This proposal makes no sense.
10. This photo is sexist. There's no way we should use it.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

MODULE 21

Planning, Managing, and Recording Meetings

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 21 you will be familiar with

LO1 Meeting management

LO2 Virtual meetings

By applying the information you will be able to

LO3 Plan a meeting

LO4 Lead a meeting

LO5 Participate in meetings

LO6 Take good meeting minutes

Module Outline

Although meetings have always made up the largest part of the average manager's day, emphasis on teamwork and collaboration (Module 20) translates into even more frequent meetings for all employees. Meanwhile, technological innovation continues to transform virtual meetings. Whether meeting virtually or face to face, however, people want their meetings to be productive.

LO1 What Kinds of Meetings Happen?

People meet in a variety of venues.

People in organizations meet in many ways.

- **Informal**, **one-on-one meetings** are the most significant; people see these encounters as an opportunity to exchange meaningful information. Employees talk by the photocopier or the refrigerator. One person walks into a colleague's office or cubicle to ask a question. A supervisor stops to chat with an employee to ask how things are going and thereby "manages by walking around." These informal meetings create or reinforce company culture, support networking, and can facilitate career advancement.
- **Team meetings** bring people together to manage projects, solve problems, and collaborate on documents (Module 20). Recorded agendas and minutes formalize these meetings.
- **Regular staff meetings** provide information, announce new policies and products, answer questions, share ideas, and motivate people. Recorded agendas and minutes formalize these meetings.
- Other frequent **organizational** meetings include **sales meetings**, **staff training sessions**, **conventions**, and **retreats**. These sessions allow people to develop themselves professionally, to build teams, and/or to do long-range planning.
- **Parliamentary proceedings** are the most formal types of meetings, run according to strict rules like those summarized in *Robert's Rules of Order*. These meetings are common only for boards of directors and legislative bodies.

Evolving technology enables people who are continents apart to meet virtually and simultaneously, and supports hybrid meetings where experts can virtually drop in on a face-to-face meeting for a few minutes of conversation.

Digital Vision/Getty Images

Many important meetings are informal.

Regardless of the sophistication of the technology, meetings are about content: the meeting's purposes, people, place, and timing affect outcomes. And because technology means we are now more overwhelmed with more information than ever, people have much less patience with meandering, meaningless meetings. People want their meetings to produce tangible results.[1] Whether initiator or attendee, you can create more productive meetings.

LO3 What Planning Should Precede a Meeting?

Identify your purpose(s), and plan with an agenda.

Ex. 21.1, 21.6, 2.7, 21.10

Identify Your Purpose(s)

Meetings are needed

- To share information
- To brainstorm ideas
- To evaluate ideas
- To make decisions
- To create a document
- To motivate members

In many meetings, for example, some items are presented for information. Discussion is encouraged, but attendees are not making a decision. Other items are presented for action: the group will be asked to vote.

A business meeting might specify that the first half-hour will be spent brainstorming and the second half-hour will be spent evaluating the ideas generated. Telling participants how their input will be used clarifies expectations and focuses the meeting.[2]

FIGURE 21.1

Use PAIBOC Analysis to Plan Successful Meetings

P	Why are you holding/attending the meeting? What is the **purpose**? What specific outcomes do you want/need?
A	Who is **attending**? Why? What is your relationship to attendees? What are their expectations, values, and needs? What action(s) do you want/expect from attendees? How can you expect them to react? If it's a virtual meeting, what technology will maximize the kind of participation you want and meet your purposes?
I	What **information** do people already know? What do they need to know for you to achieve your intended purpose(s)? What's the best way to prepare them?
B	How can participating in the meeting **benefit** your attendees? What's in it for them? Who else will benefit from the meeting, should you realize your purpose(s)?
O	What **objections** might attendees have to the meeting content, time, length, medium, and outcome(s), or to you? How can you overcome or reduce these objections?
C	What is the meeting **context**? How long is the meeting? What time is the meeting? How will the meeting length and time of day affect attendees and outcome? What economic, environmental, political, and organizational realities will influence attendees' attitudes, feelings, and beliefs? How can you use technology to realize your intended outcomes?

LO4 Create a Meeting Agenda

Ex. 21.6, 21.7

Once you've identified your purposes, think about how you can make them happen. Your meeting **agenda** should be a blueprint of your expectations and objectives.

Intel trains all its employees to participate fully in meetings and circulates its meeting agendas "several days before a meeting to let participants react to and modify it." The company uses a template for its agenda, which "lists the meeting's key topics, who will lead which parts of the discussion, how long each segment will take, [and] what the expected outcomes are…."[3] And to clarify the meeting's purpose and define outcomes, Intel's agendas also specify *how* decisions will be made. The company uses four different decision-making processes.

- **Authoritative**: The leader makes the decision alone
- **Consultative**: The leader hears group comments but then makes the decision alone
- **Voting**: The majority wins
- **Consensual**: Discussion continues until everyone can support the decision[4]

If you want a participatory meeting (the most productive) (Module 20)

1. Make sure attendees receive all the necessary information before the meeting
2. Make your expectations clear: ask people to read materials in advance
3. Ask people to bring required materials and information to the meeting

Distribute your agenda several days before the meeting. If possible, give participants a chance to comment, then revise the agenda in response to those comments. A good agenda answers five questions.

- **When and where?** Time and place of the meeting
- **What?** Agenda items
- **Why?** Each item flagged for purpose—information, discussion, or decision
- **Who?** Participants and individuals sponsoring or introducing each item
- **How?** Meeting duration and time allotted for each item

Figure 21.2 shows examples of meeting agenda templates.

Many groups put routine items first because getting agreement will be easy. However, it's important to schedule controversial items early in the meeting for two important reasons: (1) people's energy levels are high, and (2) people have enough time for full discussion. Giving a controversial item only half an hour at the end of the meeting leads people to suspect that the leaders are trying to manipulate them.

LO2 What Do I Need to Know About Virtual Meetings?

Be aware of the limitations of the technology. Build in some real meetings as well as virtual ones.

Ex 21.2, 21.4, 21.6, 21.7, 21.10

Technology enables members of today's global village to meet anytime, anywhere. However, the technology—no matter how sophisticated—does not produce better meetings.

When you meet technologically, you lose the informal interaction: going to lunch or chatting during a break. These personal meetings create bonds that encourage people to work together. Face time also gives people a chance to work out many small misunderstandings.

FIGURE 21.2

Meeting Agenda Template Examples

MEETING AGENDA – [MEETING TITLE]

MEETING INFORMATION

Objective:	[Enter the objective of the meeting here.]		
Date:	01/01/2000	***Location:***	[Enter Room Number]
Time:	6:00 AM	***Meeting Type:***	[Identify type of meeting]
Call-In Number:	[List call in number]	***Call-In Code:***	[Enter call in code]
Called By:	[List Name]	***Facilitator:***	[List Name]
Timekeeper:	[List Name]	***Note Taker:***	[List Name]
Attendees:	[List Names]		

PREPARATION FOR MEETING

Please Read:

Please Bring:

ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING		RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE
1	[List Action Item 1]	[Name]	[Date]
2			
3			

AGENDA ITEMS

1 [List Agenda Item 1]
2
3
4

NEW ACTION ITEMS

1 [List New Action Item 1]
2
3

OTHER NOTES OR INFORMATION

(a)

Team Meeting

[Date]
[Time]
[Location]

Meeting called by:	**Type of meeting:**
Facilitator:	**Note taker:**
Timekeeper:	
Attendees:	

Please read:

Please bring:

Agenda Items

Topic	Presenter	Time Allotted
✓		
✓		
✓		
✓		
✓		
✓		
✓		
✓		
✓		
✓		

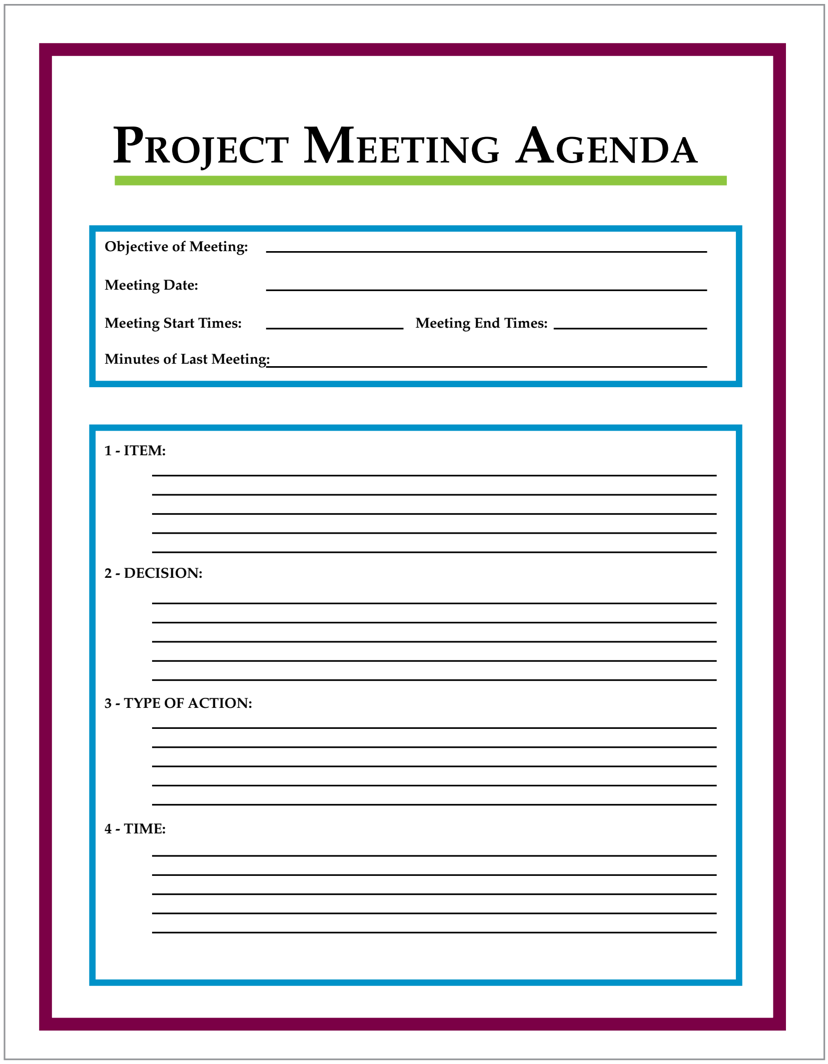
Other Information

Observers:

Resources:

Special notes:

(b)



PROJECT MEETING AGENDA

Objective of Meeting: ______

Meeting Date: ______

Meeting Start Times: ______ Meeting End Times: ______

Minutes of Last Meeting: ______

1 - ITEM:

2 - DECISION:

3 - TYPE OF ACTION:

4 - TIME:

(c)

The most productive meetings are planned ahead via an agenda sent out for participants' input and information.

Sources: (b) http://img.docstoccdn.com/thumb/orig/126081566.png; (c) http://www.free-word-templates.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Meeting-Agenda-Template.gif

And the technology limits the exchange of meaning. Audio messages provide tone of voice but not the non-verbal signals that tell you whether someone wants to make a comment or understands what you're saying. Videoconferencing and Skyping give you only the picture in the camera's lens. In virtual meetings, therefore, participants need to pay particular attention to their interpersonal skills: active listening and participation, positive team roles, and the negotiation of conflicts.

Cultural differences can also create "significant challenges" for virtual teams.[5] Culture and management consultants Salvador Apud and Talis Apud-Martinez maintain that team success depends not only on "a knowledgeable multicultural leader…assessment and alignment of both national and organizational cultures, and the proper use of the technology available" but also on an "[i]nitial face-to-face teambuilding meeting."[6]

LO4 When I'm in Charge, How Do I Keep the Meeting on Track?

Pay attention to both task and process.

Ex 21.4, 21.5, 21.9, 21.10

The best meetings encourage participation, creativity, and fun. If you are organizing a long meeting, a training session or conference, for example, make time for networking and socializing. These activities are vital to participants' perceptions of the value of the meeting. Allow for breaks often, generous breaks twice a day so participants can chat informally, and social activities so people can get to know one another.

In any virtual or face-to-face meeting, your goals as chair are to (1) make sure you invite the right people—people necessary to the process and to the decision making, (2) clarify the purpose of the meeting, and (3) help participants work through agenda items in the time allotted.

For productive meetings[7]

- Make expectations explicit (Module 20). Ground rules should cover participants' responsibilities to each other and to the tasks. For example, participants should be clear about arrival time, digital device etiquette, and meeting duration: do they stay for the whole meeting or may participants drop in and out?
- Keep meetings brief, invite only the participants you need to accomplish meeting goals, and clarify their responsibilities in advance.
- Introduce newcomers and each person as he or she covers an agenda item.
- Pay attention to people and process. In small groups, invite everyone to speak.
- Use positive reinforcements—seeking opinions, giving information, summarizing, evaluating, and coordinating (Module 20)—to remind the group of its progress: "We're a bit behind schedule. Let's try to get through the committee reports quickly."
- Acknowledge and negotiate conflict; shape the discussion or summarize issues when the issues are complex, or when members have major disagreements: "We're really talking about two things: whether the change would save money and whether our customers would like it. Does it make sense to keep those two together, or could we talk about customer reaction first and then deal with the financial issues?"
- If the issue is contentious, ask speakers for and against a recommendation to take turns speaking. If no one remains on one side, you can stop the discussion.
- If conflict escalates, focus on ways the group could deal with the conflict (Module 20) before getting back to the issue.
- If the group doesn't formally vote, summarize the group consensus after each point so that everyone knows what the decision is, who is responsible for implementing it or following up, and what the deadlines are.

People's attachment to their digital devices mean that some participants will text, tweet, and surf during discussions. Meeting managers recommend holding brief (30 minutes), standing-only meetings to increase participant engagement and discourage under-the-table texting.[8]

Ex. 21.3, 21.5, 21.7

You might want to leave five minutes at the end of the meeting to evaluate it. What went well? What could be better? What do you want to change next time?

LO4 What Decision-Making Strategies Work Well in Meetings?

The best decision-making strategies happen long before the meeting. Make the meeting objective explicit and prepare participants. In the meeting, use a decision tree, dot planning, or standard agenda.

Ex 21.2, 21.3, 21.9

Meeting management includes strategies that focus participants, save time, and accomplish the meeting purpose. When your purpose is to have participants make a decision, design your meeting appropriately ahead of time.

- Declare the meeting purpose
- Ask only the people required to make the decision
- Meet briefly with individual participants well before the meeting to ensure everyone understands what's being decided[9]

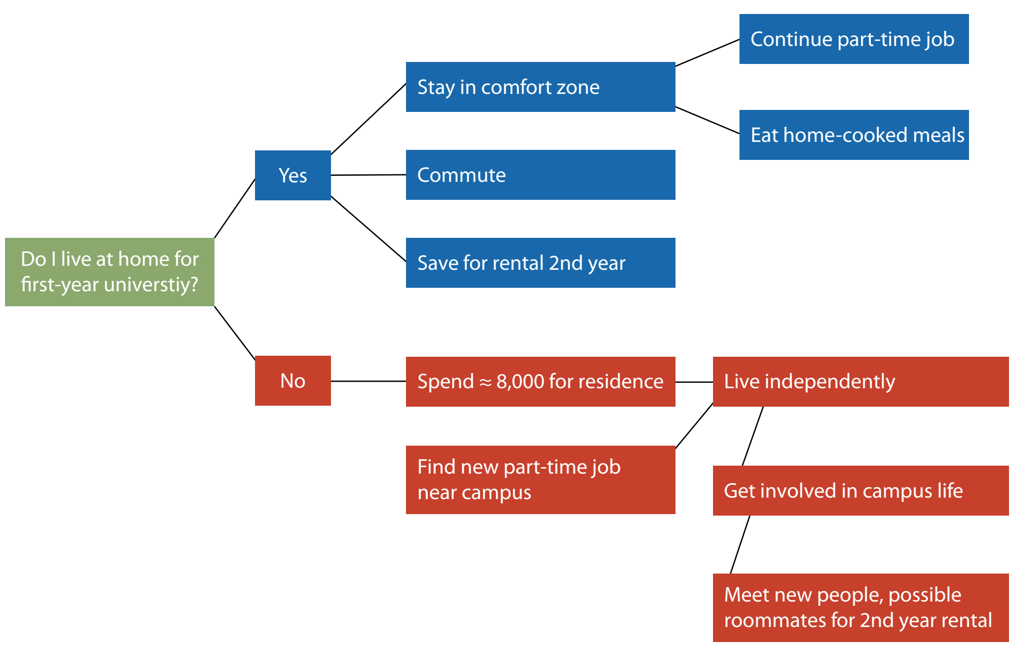
During the meeting, you can use a variety of decision-making tools.

The Decision Tree

Any decision-maker can use decision trees, a form of mind-mapping or clustering (Module 4), to (1) diagram options, solutions and consequences and (2) score the solutions and consequences to evaluate them (Figure 21.3).[10]

FIGURE 21.3

The Decision Tree Presents and Measures Options, Solutions, and Consequences



Dot Planning

Dot planning offers a way for groups to choose priorities quickly.

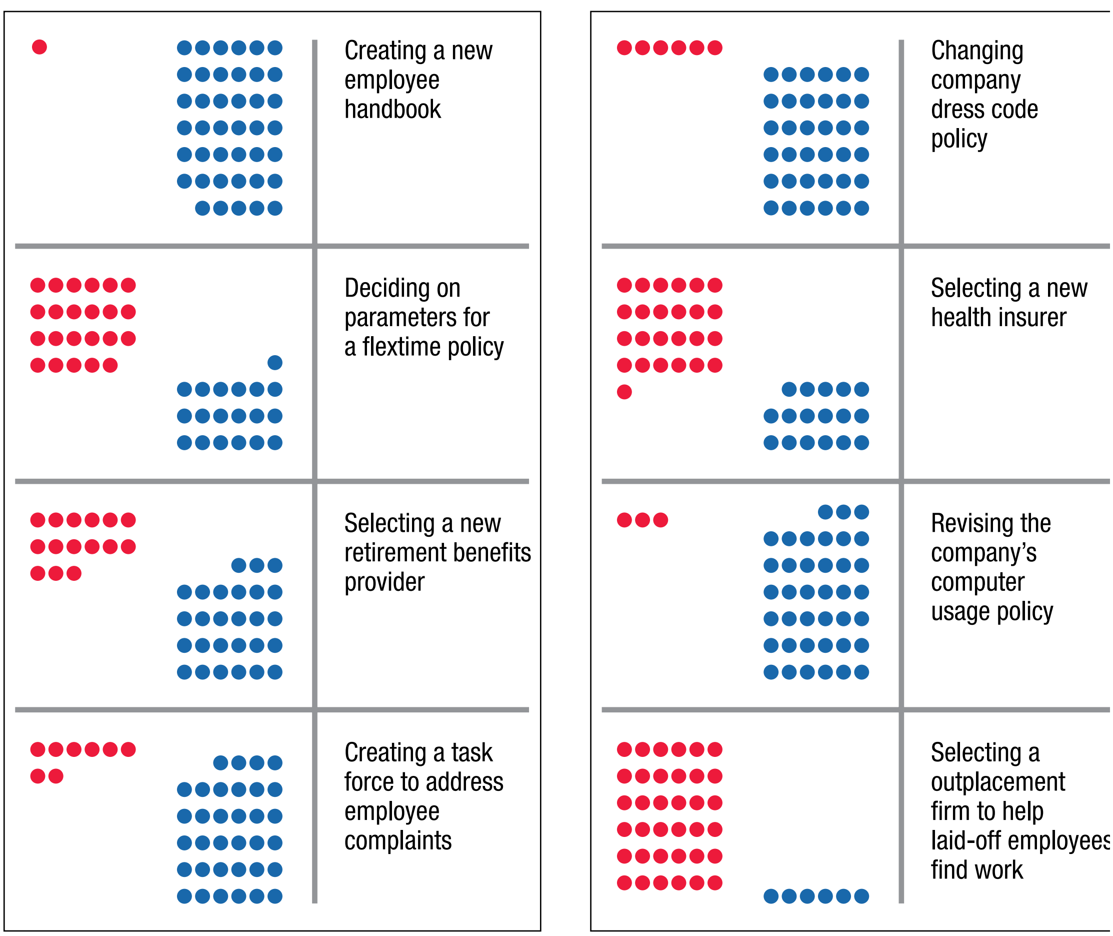
1. First, the group brainstorms ideas, recording each on pages that are put on the wall.
2. Each individual gets three to five adhesive dots in two colours. One colour represents high priority, the other lower priority.
3. People walk up to the pages and place dots beside the points they care most about. Some groups allow only one dot from one person on any one item; others allow someone who is passionate about an idea to put all of his or her dots on it.

As Figure 21.4 shows, the dots make it easy to see which items the group believes are most important.

FIGURE 21.4

Dot Planning Allows Groups to Set Priorities Quickly

Here, red dots mean high priority; blue dots mean low priority. Group members can see at a glance which items have widespread support, which are controversial, and which are low priority.



The Standard Agenda

The **standard agenda** is a seven-step decision-making process for solving problems.

1. *Clarify and reach agreement on the task:* what the group has to deliver, in what form, by what due date. Identify available resources.
2. *Identify and reach agreement on the problem or the situation:* What question is the group trying to answer? What exactly is the issue?
3. *Gather information, share it with all group members, and examine it critically.*
4. *Establish criteria:* What would the ideal solution include? Which elements of that solution would be part of a less-than-ideal but still acceptable solution? What legal, financial, ethical, or other limitations might keep a solution from being implemented?
5. *Generate alternative solutions:* Brainstorm and record ideas for the next step.
6. *Measure the alternatives against the criteria.*
7. *Choose the best solution.*[11]

LO5 How Can I Be an Effective Meeting Participant?

Prepare.

Ex 21.2, 21.4, 21.5, 21.9, 21.10

In a small meeting, you'll probably get several chances to speak. To prepare for meetings

- Read the materials distributed before the meeting; think about the discussion topics.
- Bring those materials to the meeting, with note-taking tools. Taking notes enhances recall, and your notes may capture important nuances that meeting minutes do not.
- Arrive on time: five to ten minutes early. Your timely attendance shows respect for other participants, and for the meeting content. And you get your choice of seats; the best place is directly opposite the meeting chairperson because you can make direct eye contact and you can observe subtle non-verbal messages.

In a large meeting, you may get just one chance to speak. Make notes of what you want to say so that you can be concise, correct, and complete.

LO6 What Should Be in Meeting Minutes?

Minutes should include attendees' names, discussion topics, and action items: lists of who does what next.

The best meeting minutes record

1. Decisions reached
2. Action items, where someone needs to implement or follow up on something
3. Open items—topics not resolved[12]

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Creating the Productive Meeting Culture

The amount of time people are spending in virtual meetings is increasing dramatically. Sophisticated meeting and collaboration software supports participation in team activities and online communities.

That's a good thing for employee communication. Virtual meetings can democratize the workplace and foster autonomous interdisciplinary and intercultural teams. Despite our passion for all things digital, however, technology does not make the meeting work: productive meetings depend on purposeful (human) design.

Meeting managers must consider their purposes and create the content and culture that will achieve these purposes. Whether physical or virtual, some aspects of meeting planning are obvious.

- Establish the purpose of the meeting.
- Send the agenda in advance and ask for input.
- Invite only the people required to accomplish the identified purpose(s).
- State expectations: who is going to talk about what, and for how long.

Ensure that someone is taking detailed notes.

Some experts also suggest that you

- Keep meetings short—15 to 30 minutes.
- Remove the chairs: standing meetings encourage engagement.
- Meet mid-week—Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays—when people can better focus.
- Meet in the afternoon, at 3 p.m., when people have already accomplished some work.
- Create a culture of accountability and team responsibility: ban digital interruptions and devices (taking notes longhand increases retention); expect everyone to arrive prepared and leave with a specific task.
- Train all employees to participate meaningfully in meetings.
- Design a "productive meeting" template.
- Rotate the role of note-taker.

Sources: Kevan Lee, "9 science-backed methods for more productive meetings," *FastCompany*, Retrieved January 19, 2015 from http://www.fastcompany.com/3033232/the-future-of-work/9-science-backed-methods-for-more-productive-meetings; Ann Gomez, "Finally! A great meeting," *Paralegal Management*, Retrieved January 18, 2015 from http://www.pmmag.org/2013/10/finally-a-great-meeting/; Laura Vanderkam, "4 tiny tweaks to make meetings vastly more productive," *FastCompany*, Retrieved January 19, 2015 from tweakshttp://www.fastcompany.com/3037137/how-to-be-a-success-at-everything/5-tiny-tweaks-to-make-meetings-vastly-more-productive; Sean Blanda, "How to run your meetings like Apple and Google," *99u.* Retrieved January 16, 2015, from http://99u.com/articles/7220/how-to-run-your-meetings-like-apple-and-google

Minutes of formal meetings include who was present and absent, the wording of motions and amendments, and the votes. Committee reports are often attached for later reference.

For less formal meetings, brief minutes are fine.

The most important items are the decisions and action assignments. Long minutes are most helpful when assignments are set off visually from the narrative.

> We discussed whether we should initiate an online company social network.
>
> **Action:** Menhua will research options and best practices for next month's meeting.
>
> **Action:** Sophie will survey employees online to get their opinions.

Many people file meeting minutes under G for garbage. If you want to write meeting minutes that will be read, summarize them in a page or less, write in the active voice, and highlight the most important information (**who** *does* **what, when**).

FIGURE 21.5

Sample Meeting Minutes

Finance Team Presentation Meeting, Course FIN 2103: Reports and Presentations

Tuesday, October 29, 2016, 8–11 a.m., Room C122

Present: C. Cardiff, A. Borne, L. Monahan, M. Sidwath

Regrets: None

Acting Chair: Martina Sidwath

Acting Secretary: Lawrence Monahan

1. Martina called the meeting to order, and we approved last week's minutes.
2. New business.

Mohammed asked about the guest speaker: when should the guest speak, for how long, who was taking responsibility for introducing the guest, and what gift would we be giving the speaker? We discussed.

3. Old business.
    a. We discussed how to involve the class.
    b. We discussed rehearsal dates and times.
4. We adjourned the meeting at 11 a.m.

Agreed

Anita introduces speaker.

Guest speaks for 3 minutes.

Anita thanks speaker, does icebreaker, introduces us, gives overview.

We give guest bottle of wine, end of presentation.

In intro, Anita stresses quiz and prizes.

Lawrence introduces short video for his part.

We will all find at least two relevant videos; bring to next week's meeting.

We rehearse twice after next week's meeting.

Lawrence will to send a copy of the minutes to everyone by 5 p.m. today.

MODULE SUMMARY

- People meet in person and virtually as part of their routine responsibilities.
- If you are calling the meeting, plan carefully to make the meeting productive.
    - Analyze your purpose(s).
    - Consider how you can best engage participants.
    - Determine what meeting medium, what time of day, and what meeting duration would make the meeting most effective.
    - Distribute an agenda ahead of time.
    - State the purpose of the meeting at the beginning.
    - Pay attention to people and the process as well as to the task.
    - Allow enough time for people to discuss controversial items.
- A good agenda indicates
    - The meeting date, time, and place
    - Items for information, discussion, and decision, and the time allotted for each
    - The person introducing or sponsoring each item
- If you don't take formal votes, summarize the group's consensus after each point. At the end of the meeting, summarize all decisions and action items, and remind the group who is responsible for doing what, when.

- Team members can use a variety of consensus-creating tools including the **decision tree, dot planning**, and **standard agenda**.
- Minutes should record
  - People present
  - Decisions reached
  - Action items, in which someone needs to do something
  - Open issues—topics raised but not resolved
- Participants in virtual meetings must pay particular attention to their interpersonal skills to compensate for the limitations of the technology.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 21

Questions for Critical Thinking

21.1 What is a "consent agenda" and what purpose(s) does it serve?

21.2 Consider virtual meetings you have been part of. How does the "virtual" aspect affect task and maintenance roles? What additional emphasis, if any, is on your interpersonal skills? What skills must you pay particular attention to, and why?

21.3 Describe the decision-making strategies used in the meetings you attend most frequently. How well do these strategies work?

21.4 In the groups of which you're a member (at school, at work, and in volunteer organizations), what kinds of comments are most valued in meetings?

21.5 What online communities do you belong to? What criteria do you use to decide to join a social network? What career benefits do social networks offer you?

Exercises and Problems

21.6 Assessing Virtual Meeting Tools

As Chief Information Officer, you are responsible for researching and identifying the best virtual meeting software tools for a variety of meetings in your organization. Your task is to assess the available software according to criteria that you define, and report your findings in a yardstick report (Module16).

As your instructor directs

a. Identify three different types of meetings your organization holds.

b. For each of three different meeting types, create *at least* six criteria that the ideal visual meeting software must have to support the meeting's purposes.

c. Form a virtual team with three other students.

d. Compare your criteria, and agree on a total of six criteria per meeting type.

e. As a team, assess a minimum of nine kinds of virtual meeting software, according to your designated criteria for each type of meeting.

f. Choose the ideal virtual meeting software for each type of meeting.

g. Write your instructor and other students a two-page yardstick report (Module 16) explaining your choices.

21.7 Writing an Agenda

Write an agenda for your next collaborative group meeting.

As your instructor directs

a. Write an email to your instructor, explaining the choices you made.

b. Use any collaborative software to share your draft agenda with two other groups.

c. After your group has given and gotten feedback, revise your agenda and email a copy to the rest of the class.

21.8 Taking Minutes

As your instructor directs

Have two or more people take minutes of each class or collaborative group meeting for a week. Using collaborative software, compare the accounts of the same meeting.

- To what extent do they agree on what happened?
- Does one contain information missing in other accounts?
- Do any accounts disagree on a particular fact?
- How do you account for the differences you find?

21.9 Planning Scripts for Informal Meetings

Create a script for a 90-second statement to your boss for each of the following.

1. Describe the progress on a project you're working on.
2. Provide an update on a problem the boss already knows about.
3. Tell about a success or achievement.
4. Tell about a problem and ask approval for the action you recommend.
5. Ask for resources you need for a project.
6. Ask for training you'd like to receive.
7. Lay the groundwork for a major request you need to make.

As your instructor directs

a. Discuss your scripts with a small group of students.

b. Present your best script to the class.

c. Write an email to your instructor, including your best script, explaining the choices you have made in terms of content, organization, and word choice.

21.10 Writing a Meeting Management Tips Sheet

Create a tips sheet on meeting management for a discourse community you are a member of: for example, your school, a social or sports club, an online community/social media site, a team, your family. Post your tips sheet on a blog, cite your sources, and ask for feedback.

Polishing *your* Prose

Using Hyphens and Dashes

Hyphens and dashes are forms of punctuation used within sentences. Use a hyphen to

1. Indicate that a word has been divided between two lines.

   Correct Our biggest competitor announced plans to introduce new models of com-
   puters into the European market.

   Divide words only at syllable breaks. If you aren't sure where the syllables break, look up the word in a dictionary. When a word has several syllables, divide it after a vowel or between two consonants.

   Although many word-processing programs automatically hyphenate for you, knowing where and when to divide words is important for words the program may not recognize or for special cases. For instance, don't divide words of one syllable (e.g., *used*), and don't divide a two-syllable word if one of the syllables is only one letter long (e.g., *amid*).

2. Join two or more words used as a single adjective.

   Correct After a flurry of requests, we are marketing new lines of specialty dinners for Asian- and Jamaican-Canadian customers.

   Order five 10- or 12-metre lengths.

   Here, hyphens prevent misreading. Without the hyphen, readers might interpret *Asian-Canadian* incorrectly as Asian. (Typically, compound adjectives such as *Asian-Canadian* and *Jamaican-Canadian* are not hyphenated when used as nouns, e.g., "I am an Asian Canadian.") In the second sentence, five lengths are needed, not lengths of 5, 10, or 12 metres.

3. Use a dash to emphasize a break in thought.

   Correct Despite our best efforts—which included sending a design team to Paris and increasing our promotional budget—sales are lagging.

   Create a dash by typing the hyphen key twice. With some word processors, if you set up the Options that way, this double hyphen will automatically be replaced with a longer, single dash (called an em dash), which is used in typesetting. (The dashes in the above example are em dashes.)

Exercises

Supply necessary dashes or hyphens in the following sentences. If no punctuation is needed—if a space is correct—leave the parentheses blank.

1. Our biggest competitors( )including those in the Asian and European markets( )introduced more product models during the fourth quarter.
2. Our cutting( )edge fashions sell best in French( )Canadian cities like Montreal.
3. Please pick up three( )2( )by( )4 posts at the lumberyard.
4. Next Monday, *The Aboriginal Times* magazine will do a cover story on a thriving new business created by Native( )Canadians.
5. Painters from the building( )services department plan to give Tarik's office two( )coats of paint.
6. Our gift certificates come in 5( ), 10( ), and 15( )dollar denominations.
7. The latest weather reports suggest that travel over South( ) and Latin( )America may be interrupted by storms.
8. We need to work on more cost( )effective versions of our best( )selling software( )programs.
9. You can email the results to my office in the early( )morning.
10. Katrina gave us four( )options during the sales( )meeting on Friday afternoon.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

MODULE 22

Making Presentations

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 22 you will be familiar with

- LO1 Types of presentations
- LO2 The criteria for effective presentations

By applying the information you will be able to

- LO3 Plan and deliver presentations
- LO4 Develop a good speaking voice
- LO5 Prepare and deliver group presentations

Module Outline

- What kinds of presentations are there?
- How do I plan a presentation?
- How do I organize a presentation?
- How do I create a strong opening and closing?
- How do I use visuals?
- How do I deliver an effective presentation?
- How do I handle questions from the audience?
- What about group presentations?

Module Summary

Assignments for Module 22

Polishing Your Prose: Choosing Levels of Formality

In every new communication situation, you have only a few seconds to make that first—and lasting—impression. Effective communicators make those seconds work for them.

LO1 LO2 What Kinds of Presentations Are There?

People present to inform, sell, and build goodwill. Regardless of the obvious purposes, the goal of most presentations is to get to yes.

Ex 22.6

Most presentations serve more than one purpose, and every presentation contains an element of persuasion: you must attract and hold your audience's attention if you want them to listen. The best presentations keep the audience engaged throughout.

Informative presentations inform or teach the audience. For example, health and safety training sessions are primarily informative. Secondary purposes may be to tell people how to conform to legislation or meet ISO standards, to persuade employees to follow organizational procedures, and to orient new employees (Module 2).

Ex. 22.4, 22.7–22.11

Persuasive and **sales presentations** motivate the audience to believe and to act. Giving information and evidence persuades through appeals to credibility and reason (Module 9). The speaker must also build goodwill by appearing trustworthy and sensitive to the audience's needs.

In business presentations, speakers want to persuade the audience to buy their product, proposal, or idea. Sometimes the goal is to change attitudes and behaviours or to reinforce existing attitudes.

For example, the speaker at a workers' compensation and benefits information meeting might stress the importance of following safety procedures; the speaker at a city council meeting might talk about the problem of homelessness in the community to try to build support for homeless shelters.

Goodwill presentations entertain and validate the audience. In an after-dinner speech, the audience wants to be entertained. Presentations at sales meetings may be designed to stroke the audience members' egos and to validate their commitment to organizational goals.

Me to We, Michael Rajzman

As philanthropist brothers Craig and Marc Kielburger—founders of Me to We and Free the Children—demonstrate, all successful presentations are persuasive.

Regardless of the presentation purpose, the best presenters work the three Ps: plan, prepare, and practise.

1. **Plan** a strategy by analyzing the situation (PAIBOC analysis, Figure 22.1)
2. **Prepare** examples, stories, and visuals relevant to your audience
3. **Practise** until you are completely comfortable with the content

All this preparation increases confidence and reduces the anxiety most speakers experience.

FIGURE 22.1

PAIBOC Questions to Plan Powerful Presentations

P	What is the **purpose** of your presentation? What do you want to happen because of your presentation? What do you want your audience to think, say, or do?
A	Who is your **audience**? What do they already know? What do they need to know? What do they care about? What will motivate them to do as you want? How do members of your audience differ? What cultural/corporate values and norms shape their perceptions? How can you grab your audience's attention positively? What's in it for them?
I	How long is your presentation time? What is your key message? What idea do you want the audience members to take away with them? What do you have to say that is important to them? How can you make the **information** relevant and achieve your purpose(s)? How can you use the information to involve the audience? What information can you omit?
B	What **benefits** does your message offer the audience? How can you highlight these benefits? How can you enable the audience to discover the benefits themselves?
O	What **objections** will your audience have to your message? How will you overcome those objections? What are the negative aspects of your message? How can you de-emphasize, compensate for, or overcome these negatives?
C	What is the **context** of your message? What economic, environmental, professional, and/or personal realities will affect how your audience perceives your message? How much time do you have? What time of day is your presentation? In what kind of room is it? How can you make your presentation interactive, engaging, and stimulating? What technology will you use, and why?

LO3 How Do I Plan a Presentation?

Clarify your purpose and your main idea. Then analyze your audience and your environment.

Ex. 21.1–22.4, 22.7–22.11

In all successful design, form follows function. You design your presentation format based on your purpose (function). Your purpose is the principle that guides your decisions as you plan your presentation.

During your PAIBOC (Figure 22.1) analysis, identify why you are presenting. As part of your purpose, clarify the essential takeaway—one key idea—you want the audience to remember. Then frame the essential takeaway so that it benefits the audience.

Weak	The purpose of my presentation is to discuss saving for retirement.
Better	The purpose of my presentation is to persuade my audience to put their retirement funds in stocks and bonds, not in money market accounts and GICs.
Even Better	The purpose of my presentation is to explain how to calculate how much money someone needs to save to enjoy a specific lifestyle after retirement.

Because a spoken message needs to be simpler than a written message to the same audience, you need to reinforce your critical takeaway through clarity, repetition, and emphasis.

- Simplify your supporting detail so it's easy to follow.
- Explain in concrete nouns, action verbs and brief sentences.
- Use visuals that can be taken in at a glance.

Analyze the Audience

Analyze your audience for an oral presentation just as you do for a written message. Who is your audience? What are their expectations? What do they need and value?

From your audience's perspective, what in your presentation is important, relevant, or useful? How will your critical takeaway affect them personally or professionally? How can they benefit from your key idea? What's the downside?

Your presentation will only be as successful as your ability to convince your audience that there is something beneficial in it for them.

Always tell your audience what's in it for them.

Analyze the Environment

Your purpose(s) and the audience's expectations shape your presentation content. So does the presentation context: Before you can plan your presentation, you need to know *for how long*, *where*, and *when* you will be speaking. The amount of time you have, the size and comfort of the room, and the time of day will impact your presentation plan.

Will the group be large or small? What size is the room? Is the seating flexible? Does the room have tiered seating? What technology is available?

Will the audience be tired at the end of a long day of listening? Sleepy after a big meal?

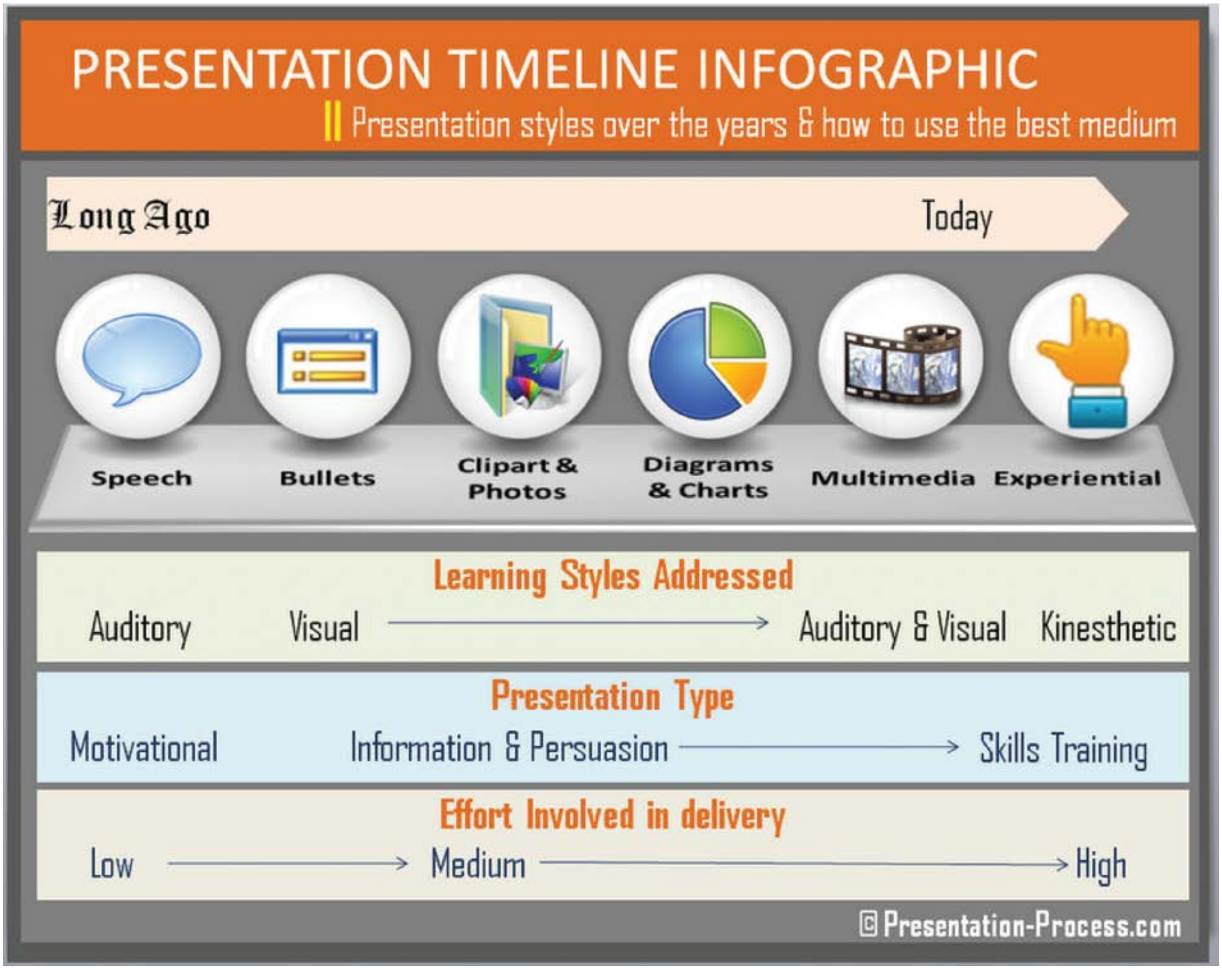
The more you know about your audience and your environment, the better you can shape your presentation for maximum persuasive impact. And that knowledge is power: the more you know, the more in control you will feel.

Choose a Presentation Style

When you have identified your purpose and your audience's needs, and considered your time, you can decide how to shape your presentation. Because people want to be involved, you need to build in ways to involve the audience, even when your speaking time is limited.

FIGURE 22.2

Evolving Presentation Styles



The best presentations are interactive.

Source: © Presentation-Process.com

A Question of Ethics

After the National Research Council database was hacked, the federal government waited several days—until it had a communications strategy in place—to announce the incident. What ethical concerns does this news delay raise? (See the following websites for more information on the incident.)

http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/01/21/federal-government-stayed-silent-on-cyberattack-documents-show.html

http://metronews.ca/news/canada/1266976/ottawa-stayed-silent-on-alleged-china-sponsored-cyber-attack-for-days-documents-show/

http://news.store-1.net/193352/federal-government-stayed-silent-on-cyberattack-documents-show/

LO3 How Do I Organize a Presentation?

Organize for maximum audience impact.

Ex. 21.1–22.11

Based on your purpose and audience analysis, you can use one of five standard patterns of organization.

- **Chronological** Start with the past, move to the present, and end by looking ahead.
- **Problem/causes/solution** Explain the symptoms of the problem, identify its causes, and suggest a solution. This pattern works best when the audience will find your solution easy to accept.
- **Exclude alternatives** Explain the symptoms of the problem. Explain the obvious solutions first and show why they won't solve the problem. End by discussing a solution that will work. This pattern may be necessary when the audience will find the solution hard to accept.
- **Pro/Con** Give all the reasons in favour of something, then those against it. This pattern works well when you want the audience to see the weaknesses in its position.
- **1-2-3** Discuss three aspects of a topic. This pattern works well to organize short, informative briefings. "Today I'll review our sales, production, and profits for the last quarter."

Because of people's limited attention spans, the best speakers organize content through **repetition for reinforcement** and **transitions**. These verbal indicators help keep the audience in the conversation.

Repetition for Reinforcement

Repetition, a key element of persuasion, is crucial to the success of every oral presentation. Remember to tell 'em, tell 'em, and tell 'em again.

Early in your talk—perhaps immediately after your opener—provide an agenda or overview of your main points.

> In the next twenty minutes, I'm going to describe how you can make our city a safer, saner place. First, I'd like to talk about the people who are homeless on Vancouver's East Side. Second, I'll talk about the services the Open Shelter provides. Finally, I'll talk about what you—either individually or as a group—can do to help.

The introduction previews your main ideas and provides a mental blueprint for your audience. When you finish your presentation, remind people of your main ideas.

> Today over 80 percent of the more than 2,000 homeless on Vancouver's East Side use Open Shelter services for safety, shelter, and food. But temporary measures are no longer enough. To create a safer, saner community, we need to provide the housing, health, and educational resources people need to rescue themselves. It's time for every one of us to share in the responsibility of creating that community.

And, throughout your presentation, summarize the content relevance to your audience after each main point. Then transition to your next idea.

Transitions

Offer a clear signpost or **transition** as you move from idea to idea. Move or transition with an explicit statement of the point you have reached. Choose words that suit your own style.

Now we come to the third point: what you can do as a group or as individuals to help homeless people in Vancouver.
So much for what we're doing. Now let's talk about what you can do to help.
You might be wondering, what can I do to help?
As you can see, the shelter is trying to do many things. We need to do more, and can do more with your help.

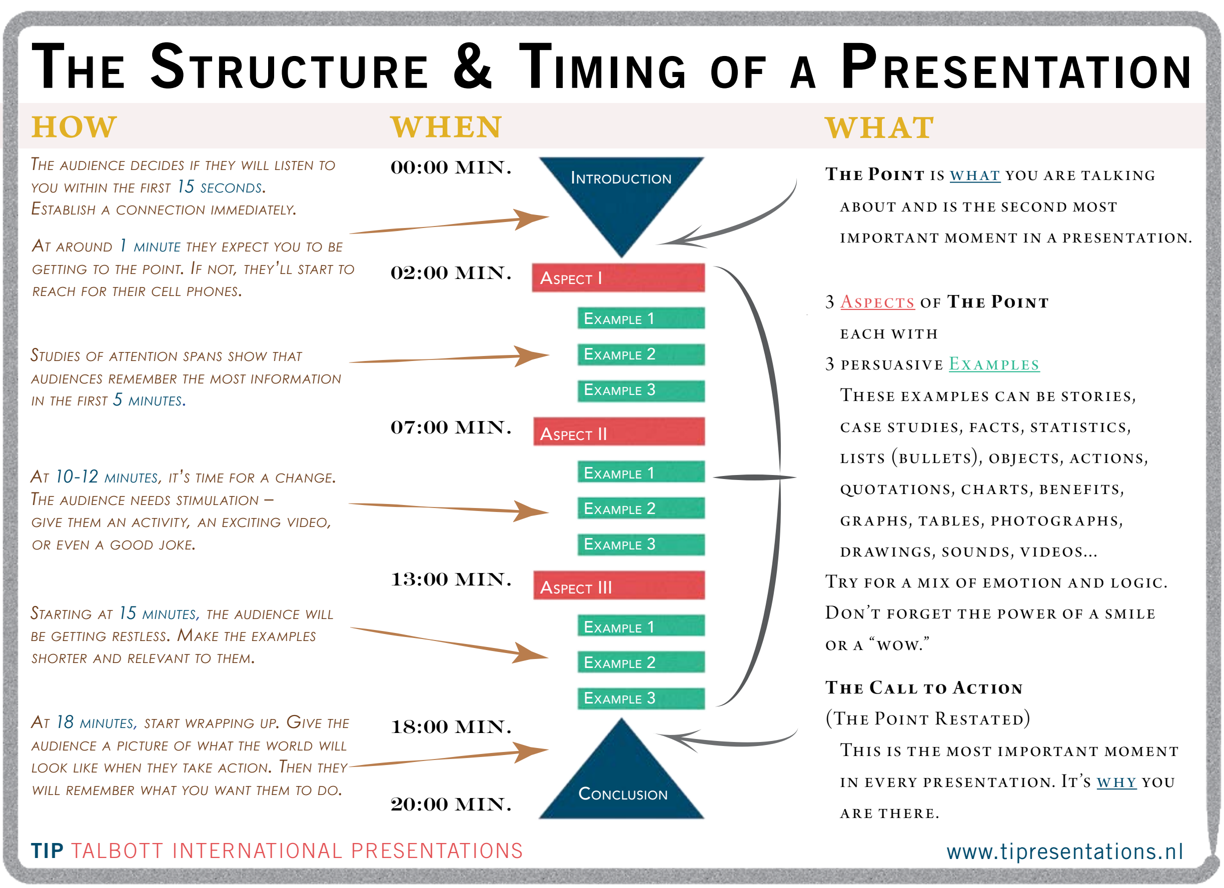
How Do I Keep Audience Interest?

Ex. 22.2–22.4, 22.6–22.11

Keep things moving! Technology teaches instant, interactive gratification. So that's what audiences expect. Remember that people can take in only so much information (about five minutes of listening at a time) before they tune out, as Figure 22.3 illustrates.

FIGURE 22.3

The Structure and Timing of a Presentation



The best presentations provide plenty of visual and intellectual stimulation.

Source: TIP Talbott International Presentations

During your presentation, vary sensory stimulations every 10 to 15 minutes.

- Move people into groups for activities
- Embed or link topics to short videos
- Use content creation software for interactive puzzles, quizzes, and questions
- Call frequent breaks
- Tell good stories

When you want people to listen, tell them a story. If your audience is indifferent, skeptical, or hostile, focus on the part of your message the audience will find most interesting and easiest to accept.

Remember to make your stories relevant by

1. Linking what you have to say to the audience's experiences, interests, and needs
2. Showing your audience members that the story affects them directly
3. Using language the audience knows and understands
4. Relating your purposes to some everyday experience

LO3 How Do I Create a Strong Opening and Closing?

Use your introduction and your conclusion as points of emphasis.

Ex. 22.6–22.11

Use the introduction and conclusion to attract audience attention, and emphasize your main point. Keep your introduction and close brief—just a sentence or two—and practise them until they sound natural.

Open with…

Your introduction is particularly important to establish rapport with the audience. Some speakers use light, self-deprecating humour to make a connection.

But humour is only one way to put the audience at ease. Smile at your audience before you begin; let them see that you're a real person and a pleasant one.

To catch and hold audience attention

- Stand still
- Focus on your audience
- Hook their interest with a **dramatic statement or question**
- Make the hook or grabber relevant to them

The more you personalize your opener for your audience, the better.

DRAMATIC STATEMENT

> Twelve of our customers have cancelled orders in the past month.

This presentation to a company's executive committee went on to show that the company's distribution system was inadequate and to recommend an additional warehouse located in the Prairies.

QUESTION

> Are you going to have enough money to do the things you want to when you retire?

This presentation to a group of potential clients discusses the value of using the services of a professional financial planner to achieve retirement goals.

Close with…

The end of your presentation needs to remind your audience of the critical take-away as it relates to their enlightened self-interest.

- Refer to your opener to frame your presentation.
- End with a vivid, positive picture.
- Tell the audience exactly what to do to resolve the situation or solve the problem you've discussed.

The following close from a fundraising speech combines a restatement of the main point with a call for action, telling the audience what to do.

> Plain and simple, we need money to run the foundation, just as you need money to develop new products. We need money to make this work. We need money from you. Pick up that pledge card. Fill it out. Turn it in at the door as you leave. Make it a statement about your commitment…make it a big statement.[1]

As you notice, speaking style uses shorter sentences and shorter, simpler words than writing does. Oral style can even sound a bit choppy when it is read. Oral style uses more personal pronouns, a less varied vocabulary, and much more repetition.

When you write out your opening and closing, remember that listeners can take in only so much information; then they disengage and tune out. Use the *KISS* formula: *Keep it short and simple.*

LO3 How Do I Use Visuals?

Keep visuals simple and specific. Use activities that involve the audience.

Ex. 22.1–22.4, 22.7–22.11

The best presentations depend on the speaker's preparedness and rapport with the audience. For North American audiences, your face is your number-one visual aid. Making eye contact with audience members is vital. And audience rapport comes from creating stories that speak to people's values and beliefs.

You can, however, add excitement with visuals, dramatizations, demonstrations, questionnaires, quizzes, video clips, and role-plays.

The best visuals are simple, clear, and specific. Illustrations should reinforce your message honestly and ethically (Module 18). Use images and graphics immediately familiar to your audience. Keep text to a minimum. And when in doubt…leave it out.[2]

Although slides and YouTube videos can be entertaining and instructive, they are not interactive. Consider the many other ways you can get your audience members involved.

- Students presenting on intercultural business communications demonstrated the way Chinese, Japanese, and Canadians exchange business cards by asking audience members to role-play the differences.
- Another student discussing the need for low-salt products brought in a container of salt, a measuring cup, a measuring spoon, and two plates. As he discussed the body's need for salt, he measured out three teaspoons onto one plate: the amount the body needs in a month. As he discussed the amount

of salt the average diet provides, he continued to measure out salt onto the other plate, stopping only when he had 500 grams of salt—the amount in the average North American diet. The demonstration made the discrepancy clear in a way words or even a chart could not have done.[3]

- Some presenters use quizzes, game formats, and dramatizations to encourage audience members to share their expertise with others.

Hero Images/Getty Images

Effective presentations engage the audience in relevant activities.

LO3 LO4 How Do I Deliver an Effective Presentation?

Turn your nervousness into energy, look at the audience, and use natural gestures.

Ex. 22.1, 22.5, 22.7–22.11

Audience members want you to succeed in your presentation out of a vested self-interest: they don't want to feel uncomfortable for you. They also want the sense that

- You're talking directly to them
- You've taken the time and trouble to prepare
- You're interested in your subject
- You care about their interest

They'll forgive you if you get tangled up in a sentence and end it ungrammatically. They won't forgive you if you seem to have a "canned" talk, if you are not prepared, if you speak in a monotone, or if you have no interest in their reaction.

Convey a sense of caring to your audience by making direct eye contact, by using a conversational style, and by being prepared.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Finding Your Best Voice

Paralanguage—*how* we say what we say—accounts for more than 30 percent of the meaning in our messages. Next to your face, therefore, your voice is your most important presentation aid! Effective speakers use their voices to support and enhance content. Your best voice will vary pitch, intonation, tempo, and volume to express energy and enthusiasm.

Pitch

Pitch measures whether a voice uses sounds that are low (like the bass notes on a piano) or high. Low-pitched voices project more credibility than high-pitched voices. Low-pitched presenters are perceived as being more authoritative and more pleasant to listen to. Most voices go up in pitch when the speaker is angry or excited; some people raise pitch when they increase volume. People whose normal speaking voices are high might need to practise projecting their voices to avoid becoming shrill when they speak to large groups.

Intonation

Intonation marks variation in pitch, stress, or tone. Speakers who use many changes in pitch, stress, and tone usually seem more enthusiastic; often they also seem more energetic and more intelligent. Someone who speaks in a monotone may seem apathetic or unintelligent. Speakers whose first language does not use tone, pitch, and stress to convey meaning and attitude may want to practise varying these voice qualities.

Avoid raising your voice at the end of a sentence, since in English a rising intonation signals a question. Therefore, speakers who end sentences on a questioning or high tone—known as *uptalk*—sound immature or uncertain of what they're saying.

Tempo

Tempo is a measure of speed. In a conversation, match your tempo to the other speaker's to build rapport. In a formal presentation, vary your tempo. Speakers who vary both tempo and volume are more effective.

Volume

Volume is a measure of loudness or softness. Very soft voices, especially if they are also breathy and high-pitched, give the impression of youth and inexperience. Practise projecting your voice to increase your volume without shouting.

Sources: Rebecca Knight (2014), "How to give a stellar presentation," *Harvard Business Review*, retrieved January 17, 2015 from https://hbr.org/2014/11/how-to-give-a-stellar-presentation; Carmine Gallo, "Manage your fear of public speaking," http://www.bloomberg.com/bw/stories/2008-12-30/manage-your-fear-of-public-speakingbusinessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice; Carmine Gallo. (16 June 2014). "Five presentation lessons from Apple's new rising star," retrieved January 17, 2015 from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/small-business/sb-tools/sb-how-to/five-presentation-lessons-from-apples-new-rising-star/article19155592/; *The Total Communicator*, Volume II, Issue 3(2004),"There's a Message in Your Voice," retrieved January 25, 2015 from http://totalcommunicator.com/vol2_3/voicemessage.html; SkillsYouNeed, (2-11-2015), "Aspects of effective speaking," Retrieved January 25, 2015, from http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/effective-speaking.html

Putting Your Nervousness to Work

Feeling nervous is normal. Indeed, we are genetically programmed to feel anxious about speaking in public: being aware of other community members' perceptions was an essential survival mechanism for our ancestors.[4]

But you can harness that nervous energy to do your best work. To calm your nerves as you prepare to give an oral presentation

- *Be prepared.* Analyze your audience, organize your thoughts, prepare engaging exercises, practise your opening and closing, check out the arrangements.

- *Practise, practise, practise.*
- *Use positive emphasis to reframe what you're feeling.* Instead of saying, "I'm scared," try saying, "My adrenaline is up." Adrenaline sharpens our reflexes and helps us do our best.
- *Visualize your success.* See yourself moving naturally and confidently around the room; see people jumping up, smiling, and clapping as you end your presentation.
- *Focus on what you know you have done to succeed.* "I've practised the presentation; I know it really well; I've checked out the room, I know how I'm going to get people involved; I'm prepared for most questions."
- *Use only the amount of caffeine you normally use.* More or less may make you jumpy.
- *Avoid alcoholic beverages.*

Just before your presentation, use relaxation techniques.

- Consciously contract and then relax your muscles, starting with your feet and calves and going up to your shoulders, arms, and hands.
- Take several deep breaths from your diaphragm.

During your presentation, be sure to

- Pause and look at the audience before you begin speaking
- Concentrate on communicating well
- Channel your body energy into emphatic gestures and movement

Using Eye Contact

People want to feel that you're talking to them. Making eye contact establishes one-on-one contact with the individual members of your audience. Looking directly at individuals also enables you to be more conscious of feedback from the audience, so that you can modify your approach whenever necessary.

Standing and Gesturing

Stand with your feet far enough apart for good balance, with your knees flexed. Unless the presentation is very formal or you're on camera, you can walk if you want to. Some speakers like to come out from the lectern to remove that barrier between themselves and the audience.

Build on your natural style for gestures. Gestures usually work best when they're big and confident.

Using Notes and Visuals

Unless you're giving a very short presentation, you'll probably want to use notes. Even experts use notes. The more you know about the subject, the greater the temptation to add relevant points that occur to you as you talk. Adding an occasional point can help to clarify something for the audience, but adding too many points will overwhelm the audience, destroy your outline, and put you over the time limit.

Put your notes on cards or on sturdy pieces of paper. Use prompts (opening and closing sentences, then your points, large font, highlighting, reference to visuals) that work for you. Practise your presentation using your notes, and make whatever changes increase your comfort level.

During your presentation, look at your notes infrequently. Direct your eyes to members of the audience. Hold your notes high enough so that your head doesn't bob up and down like a yo-yo as you look from the audience to your notes and back again.

If you know your topic well you won't need to look at your notes, and you'll feel more confident. You can focus on being yourself and establishing rapport with your audience.

Get out of the way of your visuals: stand to the side of the screen, and *face the audience, not the screen*. Never read your visuals; the audience members can read for themselves. If your talk is lengthy and the topic complicated, prepare handouts for your audience. Many people expect speakers to provide a copy of their slides at the end of the presentation.

Keep the room lights on if possible. Turning them off makes it easier for people to fall asleep and harder for them to concentrate on you.

LO3 How Do I Handle Questions from the Audience?

Use PAIBOC to anticipate audience questions. Be honest. Rephrase biased or hostile questions.

Ex. 22.4, 22.7–22.11

Prepare for questions by listing every fact or opinion you can think of that challenges your position. Treat every objection seriously and try to think of a way to deal with it. If you're talking about a controversial issue, you may want to save one point for the question period, rather than making it during the presentation. Speakers who have visuals to answer questions seem especially well prepared.

During your presentation, tell the audience how you'll handle questions. If you have a choice, save questions for the end. In your talk, answer the questions or objections that you expect your audience to have.

During the question period, acknowledge questions by looking directly at the questioner. As you answer the question, expand your focus to take in the entire group.

If the audience may not have heard the question, or if you want more time to think, repeat the question before you answer it. Link your answers to the points you made in your presentation. Keep the purpose of your presentation in mind, and select information that advances your goals.

If a question is hostile or biased, rephrase it before you answer it: "You're asking whether…" Or suggest an alternative: "I think there are problems with both the positions you describe. It seems to me that a third possibility is…"

If someone asks about something that you already explained in your presentation, simply answer the question without embarrassing the questioner. Even when actively participating, audiences remember only about 70 percent of what you say.

If you don't know the answer to a question, say so and promise to get the information and respond as soon as possible. Write down the question so that you can look up the answer before the next session.

You may also want to refer questions to your audience, which both involves and flatters them. At the end of the question period, take two minutes to summarize your main point once more. (This can be a restatement of your close.) Questions may or may not focus on the key point of your talk. Take advantage of having the floor to repeat your message briefly and forcefully.

LO5 What About Group Presentations?

In the best presentations, voices take turns within each point.

Ex 22.9, 22.10, 22.11

Plan carefully to involve as many members of the group as possible in speaking roles. The easiest way to make a group presentation is to outline the presentation and then divide the topics, giving one to each group member. Another member can be responsible for the opener and the close. During the question period, each member answers questions that relate to his or her topic.

In this kind of divided presentation, be sure to

- Plan transitions
- Strictly enforce time limits
- Coordinate your visuals so that the presentation seems a coherent whole
- Choreograph the presentation: plan each member's movement and seating arrangements as the group transitions from speaker to speaker; take turns managing the visual support so that each speaker can focus on content and delivery
- Practise the presentation as a group at least once; more often is better

The best group presentations appear fully integrated; together, the members of the group should

- Write a very detailed outline
- Choose points and examples
- Create visuals
- Identify and answer possible objections and questions

Then, *within* each point, speakers take turns, and different speakers field the questions they have prepared for.

This presentation format is most effective because each voice speaks only a minute or two before a new voice comes in. However, it works only when all group members know the subject well, and when the group plans carefully and practises extensively.

Whatever form of group presentation you use, introduce each member of the team to the audience at the beginning of the presentation and at each transition: use the next person's name when you change speakers: "Now Jason will explain how we evaluated the Web pages."

As a team member, pay close attention to your fellow speakers; don't ever have sidebar conversations with others in the group. If other members of the team seem uninterested in the speaker, the audience gets the sense that that speaker isn't worth listening to.

MODULE SUMMARY

- People present to inform, persuade, and build goodwill.
- Oral presentations use simpler words and shorter sentences than written messages.
- The most effective presentations
  - Adapt the message to the audience's experiences, beliefs, and interests
  - Use the beginning and end as points of emphasis
  - Involve the audience
  - Use clear, simple, and relevant visuals
  - Use a direct pattern of organization: put the strongest reason first
- Limit your talk to three main points. After your opener, **provide an overview of the main points** you will make. Give a clear signpost as you transition to each new point. This verbal signal is an explicit statement of the point you have reached.

- Even the most seasoned speakers feel nervous when giving a presentation. Such anxiety is natural and normal. To reduce apprehension about presenting
  - Be prepared: analyze your audience, plan your content, prepare visuals, practise, create notes, check out the presentation room and arrangements.
  - Drink your usual amount of coffee; avoid alcohol.
  - Visualize scenarios of your presentation success.
  - Reframe your nervousness into positive affirmations.
- Just before your presentation
  - Consciously contract and then relax your muscles, starting with your feet and calves and moving up to your shoulders, arms, and hands.
  - Take several deep breaths from your diaphragm.
- During your presentation
  - Pause and look at your audience before you begin to speak.
  - Concentrate on communicating confidently.
  - Use your energy in strong gestures and movement.
- Establish rapport with the audience members by making direct eye contact and using a conversational style.
- Treat questions as opportunities to give more detailed information. Connect your answers to the points you made in your presentation. Whenever possible, involve your audience by asking for their answers or opinions.
- Repeat the question before answering it if you think that the audience may not have heard it or you want more time to think. Rephrase hostile or biased questions before you answer them.
- The most effective group presentations result when the group writes a very detailed outline, chooses points and examples, creates visuals collaboratively, and, within each point, allows members' voices to alternate with one another.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 22

Questions for Critical Thinking

22.1 What bookmarking sites do you use to manage your research? Which SBS would you recommend to others, and why?

22.2 When and how would you use images or a video clip in a brief presentation? What copyright laws apply to such use?

22.3 What presentation software do you consider superior? Why? How do you test your slides for audience reaction?

22.4 How could you use social media to involve the audience during your presentation?

22.5 What strategies do you use to overcome presentation anxiety?

Exercises and Problems

22.6 Evaluating Monroe's Motivated Sequence as a Presentation Guide

Watch any of the many videos on Monroe's Motivated Sequence, a five-step pattern of persuasion (for example, search YouTube for KP's Speech Class—Monroe's Motivated Sequence).

As your instructor directs

Create a short (two-to-five-minute) presentation, supported by appropriate visuals, on your opinion of the quality of the video and the usefulness of the pattern.

22.7 Creating a Presentation Skills Evaluation Matrix

Research the best presentations ever (for example, at https://www.powtoon.com/ scroll to the bottom of the home page and under ARTICLES click on the link for The 5 Best Presentations), and note what experts claim are characteristic of superior speakers.

Based on your research, create written descriptions of superior presentation skills; describe "best" behaviours for content (intro and conclusion, organizational pattern, transitions, stories, examples, visuals, demonstrations), and delivery (eye contact, body language, voice, etc).

As your instructor directs

a. Together with three peers, create an evaluation matrix to assess your class presentations. As a group
    - List specific presentation criteria content and delivery
    - Use evaluation headings (*Excellent, Good, Needs Improvement*) and beneath each heading, describe the behaviours
b. Use collaborative software to share your evaluation matrix with the rest of the class.

22.8 Making a Short Presentation

As your instructor directs

Make a short (two-to-five-minute) presentation, supported by appropriate visual aids, on one of the following.

a. A skill you've learned in a class, in campus activities, or at work, that will be useful to you after graduation
b. Someone who is successful in the field you hope to enter; explain what makes him or her successful
c. A communication situation that was handled well or badly
d. A challenge (e.g., technology, ethics, international competition) that the field you hope to enter is facing
e. The best presentation slides software

Note: Use your presentation matrix to design and deliver the best possible presentation.

22.9 Making a Longer Presentation

As your instructor directs

Create a five-to-twelve-minute individual or group presentation on one of the following topics. Use any appropriate visual communication, *excluding slides*, to make your talk powerful.

a. Cell phone etiquette; include examples of when one should not be texting or talking

b. Social media etiquette; include examples of the good, the bad, and the ugly

c. The best charitable organizations; show why

d. A positive change your organization should make

e. A new product: sell it

f. Educational software: advantages and disadvantages

Note: Use your presentation matrix to design and deliver the best possible presentation.

22.10 Making a Group Oral Presentation

As your instructor directs

Create a group presentation (five to twelve minutes) using any demonstrations, visual support, and audience activities on any relevant topic.

Note: Use your presentation matrix to design and deliver the best possible presentation.

22.11 Presenting to Global Audiences

What tips can you give your peers about presenting to culturally diverse audiences?

As your instructor directs

Create a twelve-to-fifteen-minute group presentation with communication visuals on presenting to a global audience.

- What specifically should presenters be aware of/sensitive to?
- How can presenters compensate for cultural diversity?
- What North American presentation norms should presenters particularly avoid?

Polishing *your* Prose

Choosing Levels of Formality

Some words are more formal than others. Generally, business messages call for a middle-of-the-road formality, not too formal, but not so casual as to seem sloppy.

Formal and Stuffy	Short and Simple
ameliorate	improve
commence	begin, start
enumerate	list
finalize	finish, complete
prioritize	rank
utilize	use
viable option	choice
Sloppy	**Casual**
befuddled	confused
diss	criticize
guess	assume
haggle	negotiate
nosy	curious
wishy-washy	indecisive, flexible

What makes choosing words so challenging is that the level of formality depends on your purposes, the audience, and the situation. What's just right for a written report will be too formal for an oral presentation or an advertisement. The level of formality that works in one discourse community might be inappropriate for another.

Listen to the language that people in your discourse community use. What words seem to have positive connotations? What words persuade? As you identify these terms, use them in your own messages.

Exercises

In each sentence, choose the better word or phrase. Justify your choice.

1. On Monday, I (took a look at/inspected) our (stuff/inventory).
2. (Starting/commencing) at 5 p.m., all qualifying employees may (commence/begin) their (leave times/vacations).
3. Though their (guy/representative) was (firm/stubborn), we eventually (hashed out/negotiated) a settlement.
4. Text to schedule (some time/a meeting) with me to (talk about/deliberate on the issues in) your report.
5. The manager (postponed making/waited until she had more information before making) a decision.
6. Rick has (done his job/performed) well as (top dog/manager) of our sales department.
7. In my last job, I (ran many errands/worked as a gofer) for the marketing manager.
8. Please (contact/communicate with) (me/the undersigned) if you (have questions/desire further information or knowledge).
9. This report (has problems/stinks).
10. In this report, I have (guessed/assumed) that the economy will continue to grow.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

UNIT 6 Job Hunting

MODULE 23

Researching Jobs

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 23 you will be familiar with

- LO1 Job search strategies
- LO2 Information interviews
- LO3 The hidden job market
- LO4 Job interview practices

By applying the information you will be able to

- LO5 Begin to realistically self-assess
- LO6 Find information about employers
- LO7 Use the Internet and social media in your job search
- LO8 Present your non-traditional experience positively
- LO9 Prepare for job interviews

Module Outline

The first step in any job search is to assess your own abilities and interests.[1] The second step is to establish and nourish contacts—digitally and in person, through acquaintances, friends, friends of friends, and family.

Ex 23.1–23.11

LO1 LO5 What Do I Need to Know About Myself to Job-Hunt?

You need to know your skills, abilities, interests, and values. Realistic self-assessment gives you an advantage throughout the process.

Ex 23.5

Knowing what work makes you happy enables you to prepare for the job search process.

Once you have identified in writing what is most important to you, look at the job market to find what you want. For example, your greatest interest is athletics, but you aren't good enough for the pros. Your job market analysis might suggest several alternatives. You might

- Teach sports and physical fitness as a high school coach or a corporate fitness director
- Cover sports for a media outlet
- Go into management or sales for a professional sports team, a health club, or a company that sells sports equipment
- Create or manage a sports blog or website

And knowing yourself enables you to impress prospective employers during the job interview, when you answer specific questions about your work interests, strengths, and values, such as

- What achievements have given you the most satisfaction? Why did you enjoy them?
- Would you rather have firm deadlines or a flexible schedule? Do you prefer working alone or with other people? Do you prefer specific instructions and standards for evaluation, or freedom and uncertainty? How comfortable are you with pressure? How do you manage multiple deadlines? How much challenge do you want?
- Are you willing to take work home? Are you prepared to travel? How important is recognition to you? How important is money compared to having time to spend with family and friends?
- Where do you want to live? What features in terms of weather, geography, and cultural and social life do you see as ideal?
- What do you want from your work? What aspects of organizational culture are important to you?

Carlos Osorio/Toronto Star

Marta Iwanek/Getstock.com

In any job market, self-recruitment demonstrates self-confidence and initiative. University of Toronto grad Xingyi Yan used creative methods to get her dream job.

LO6 What Do I Need to Know About Companies That Might Hire Me?

Research to find out as much as you can.

Ex. 23.1, 23.4. 23.8–23.11

Organizations always have room for people who demonstrate motivation, energy, and critical thinking. Preparation through research demonstrates all these skills. And so that you can customize your letter and resumé for a specific organization, and to shine at the interview, you need information about both the employer and the job itself. You can find this information freely available through numerous resources (see Figure 23.1).

You'll need to know what jobs are available. Start your research online and at the career centre and library of your college or university.

Bricks-and-mortar campus placement offices often have fuller job descriptions than appear in ads. And these career centres provide contacts with alumni already in the job market.

Libraries' research databases provide resources for every part of your job hunt: the best local and national companies to work for (www.canadastop100.com/fp10); postings on Workopolis, Monster.ca, and Working.com; the trade and professional websites that are crucial for knowledge of industry regulations, developments and conferences; municipal, provincial, and national labour market, apprenticeship, and skilled trades information—even salary averages and negotiation tips.

Talk to friends who have graduated recently to learn what their jobs involve. Request information interviews to learn more about opportunities that interest you.

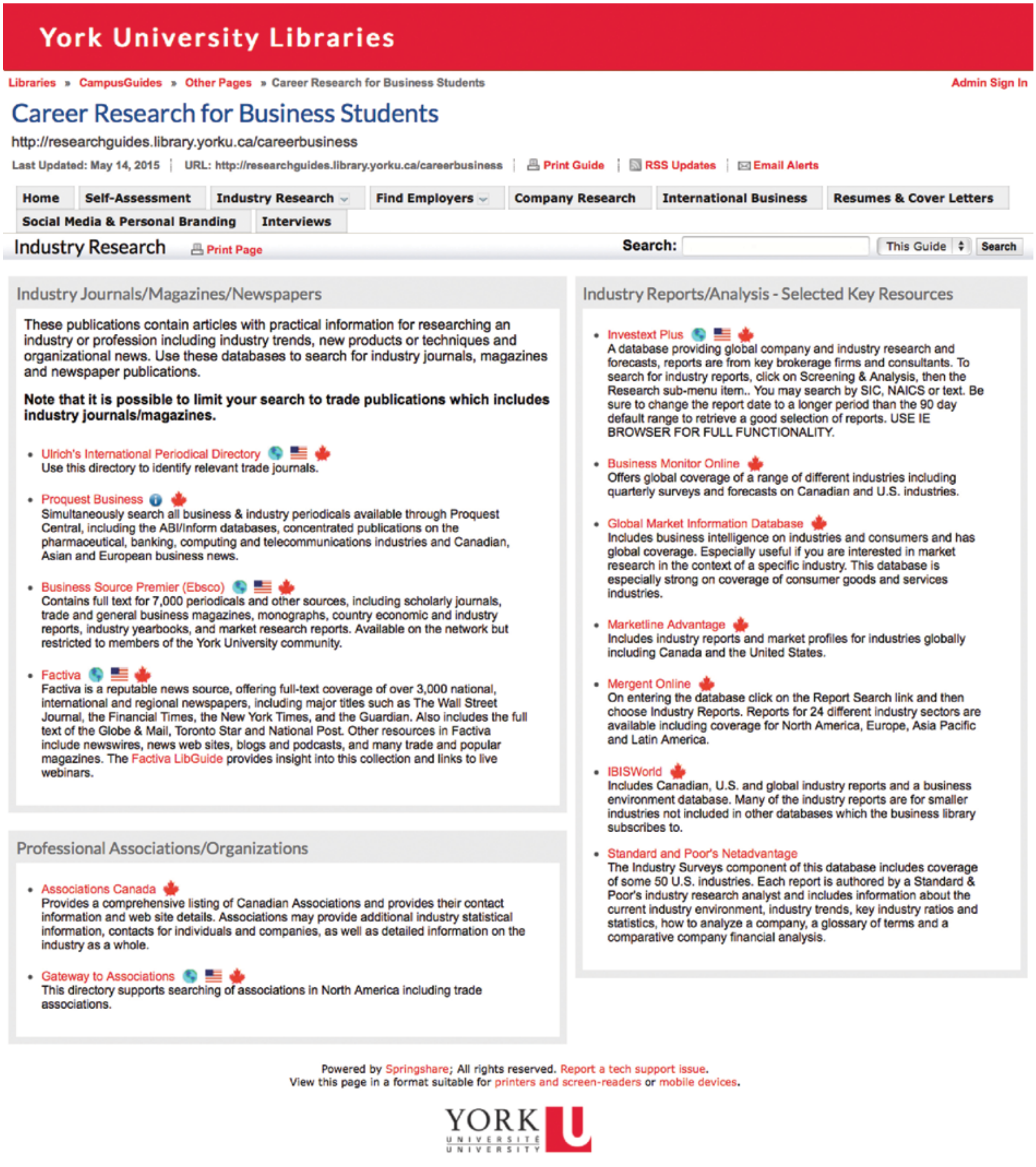
Use social networking sites to expand your positive digital profile; network with peers, mentors, and prospective employers; and explore job opportunities.[2] Use them to find

- ***Contact information*** Check the ad or the organization's website, or call the company. An advantage of calling is that you can find out whether your contact prefers a courtesy title (Mr., Ms., or Mrs.).
- ***At least four or five facts about the organization and what it does*** Knowing the organization's products and services enables you to describe how you can contribute. Understanding the organization's values, goals, market, and competition allows you to define specifically how your skills outshine those of other candidates. Useful facts include
  - ✓ Market share
  - ✓ Competitive position
  - ✓ New products, services, or promotions
  - ✓ Technology or manufacturing equipment applications
  - ✓ Plans for growth or downsizing
  - ✓ Challenges the organization faces
  - ✓ The corporate culture (Module 2)

You can find these facts and information about corporate culture—even anonymous statements from employees—on the Internet. Check blogs, professional electronic mailing lists, and electronic bulletin boards. Employers post specialized jobs online; they're always a good way to get information about the industry you hope to enter.

FIGURE 23.1

Career Research Resources



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Industry Journals/Magazines/Newspapers

These publications contain articles with practical information for researching an industry or profession including industry trends, new products or techniques and organizational news. Use these databases to search for industry journals, magazines and newspaper publications.

Note that it is possible to limit your search to trade publications which includes industry journals/magazines.

- Ulrich's International Periodical Directory
  Use this directory to identify relevant trade journals.
- Proquest Business
  Simultaneously search all business & industry periodicals available through Proquest Central, including the ABI/Inform databases, concentrated publications on the pharmaceutical, banking, computing and telecommunications industries and Canadian, Asian and European business news.
- Business Source Premier (Ebsco)
  Contains full text for 7,000 periodicals and other sources, including scholarly journals, trade and general business magazines, monographs, country economic and industry reports, industry yearbooks, and market research reports. Available on the network but restricted to members of the York University community.
- Factiva
  Factiva is a reputable news source, offering full-text coverage of over 3,000 national, international and regional newspapers, including major titles such as The Wall Street Journal, the Financial Times, the New York Times, and the Guardian. Also includes the full text of the Globe & Mail, Toronto Star and National Post. Other resources in Factiva include newswires, news web sites, blogs and podcasts, and many trade and popular magazines. The Factiva LibGuide provides insight into this collection and links to live webinars.

Professional Associations/Organizations

- Associations Canada
  Provides a comprehensive listing of Canadian Associations and provides their contact information and web site details. Associations may provide additional industry statistical information, contacts for individuals and companies, as well as detailed information on the industry as a whole.
- Gateway to Associations
  This directory supports searching of associations in North America including trade associations.

Industry Reports/Analysis - Selected Key Resources

- Investext Plus
  A database providing global company and industry research and forecasts, reports are from key brokerage firms and consultants. To search for industry reports, click on Screening & Analysis, then the Research sub-menu item.. You may search by SIC, NAICS or text. Be sure to change the report date to a longer period than the 90 day default range to retrieve a good selection of reports. USE IE BROWSER FOR FULL FUNCTIONALITY.
- Business Monitor Online
  Offers global coverage of a range of different industries including quarterly surveys and forecasts on Canadian and U.S. industries.
- Global Market Information Database
  Includes business intelligence on industries and consumers and has global coverage. Especially useful if you are interested in market research in the context of a specific industry. This database is especially strong on coverage of consumer goods and services industries.
- Marketline Advantage
  Includes industry reports and market profiles for industries globally including Canada and the United States.
- Mergent Online
  On entering the database click on the Report Search link and then choose Industry Reports. Reports for 24 different industry sectors are available including coverage for North America, Europe, Asia Pacific and Latin America.
- IBISWorld
  Includes Canadian, U.S. and global industry reports and a business environment database. Many of the industry reports are for smaller industries not included in other databases which the business library subscribes to.
- Standard and Poor's Netadvantage
  The Industry Surveys component of this database includes coverage of some 50 U.S. industries. Each report is authored by a Standard & Poor's industry research analyst and includes information about the current industry environment, industry trends, key industry ratios and statistics, how to analyze a company, a glossary of terms and a comparative company financial analysis.

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YORK U UNIVERSITÉ UNIVERSITY

Libraries offer resources for every part of your job hunt.

Source: Angie An, York University

Industry Canada's free, searchable Canadian Company Capabilities database (CCC, at https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ccc-rec.nsf/eng/home) provides full data, including contact names, for over 60,000 national businesses.[3]

The directories listed in Table 23.1 provide information such as net worth, market share, principal products, and the names of officers and directors. Ask your librarian to identify additional directories. To get specific financial data (and to see how the organization presents itself to the public), get the company's annual report on the Web (www.orderannualreports.com). (*Note:* Only companies whose stock is publicly traded are required to issue annual reports. In this day of mergers and buyouts, many companies are owned by other companies. The parent company may be the only one to issue an annual report.)

Many company websites provide information about training programs and career paths for new hires. To learn about new products, plans for growth, or solutions to industry challenges, read business newspapers such as the *Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Financial Post*; business magazines such as *Report on Business*, *Canadian Business*, *Strategy Magazine*, *Fortune*, *Business Week*, and *Forbes*; and trade journals. Each of these has indices listing which companies are discussed in a specific issue. A few of the trade journals available are listed in Table 23.2.

TABLE 23.1

Where to Get Addresses and Facts about Companies

General Directories	Specialized Directories and Resource Books
• *Canadian Business Directory* www.canadianbusinessdirectory.ca	• *Accounting Firms and Practitioners*
• *Canadian Federation of Independent Business* www.cfib-fcei.ca	• *Directory of Hotel and Motel Systems*
• *LexisNexis Corporate Affiliations*	• *Franchise Annual Directory*
• *Dun's Million Dollar Directory*	• *Hoover's Handbook of American Business*
• *Standard & Poor's Register of Corporations, Directors and Executives*	• *O'Dwyer's Directory of Public Relations Firms*
• *Thomas Register of American Manufacturers*	• *The Rand McNally Bankers Directory*
	• *Scott's Business Directory*
	• *Standard Directory of Advertisers* ("Red Book")
	• *Television Factbook*
	• *Traders*

TABLE 23.2

Examples of Trade Journals and Magazines

Ex. 23.8

Advertising Age	*Computer Dealer News*	*Graphic Arts Monthly*
BtoB Magazine	*Computing Canada*	*HR Focus*
CPA Magazine	*Direction Informatique*	*Information Highways*
Canada Employment Weekly	*Essence* (Canadian Federation of Chefs and Cooks)	*Medical Post*
Canadian Auto World	*Farm & Country* (Ontario commercial farmer trade)	*Northern Miner* (mining news)
Canadian Business	*Financial Analysts Journal*	*Quill & Quire* (publishing news)
The Canadian Firefighter		*The Western Producer* (Saskatoon)
Canadian Musician		

LO7 How Do I Use Social Networking Sites?

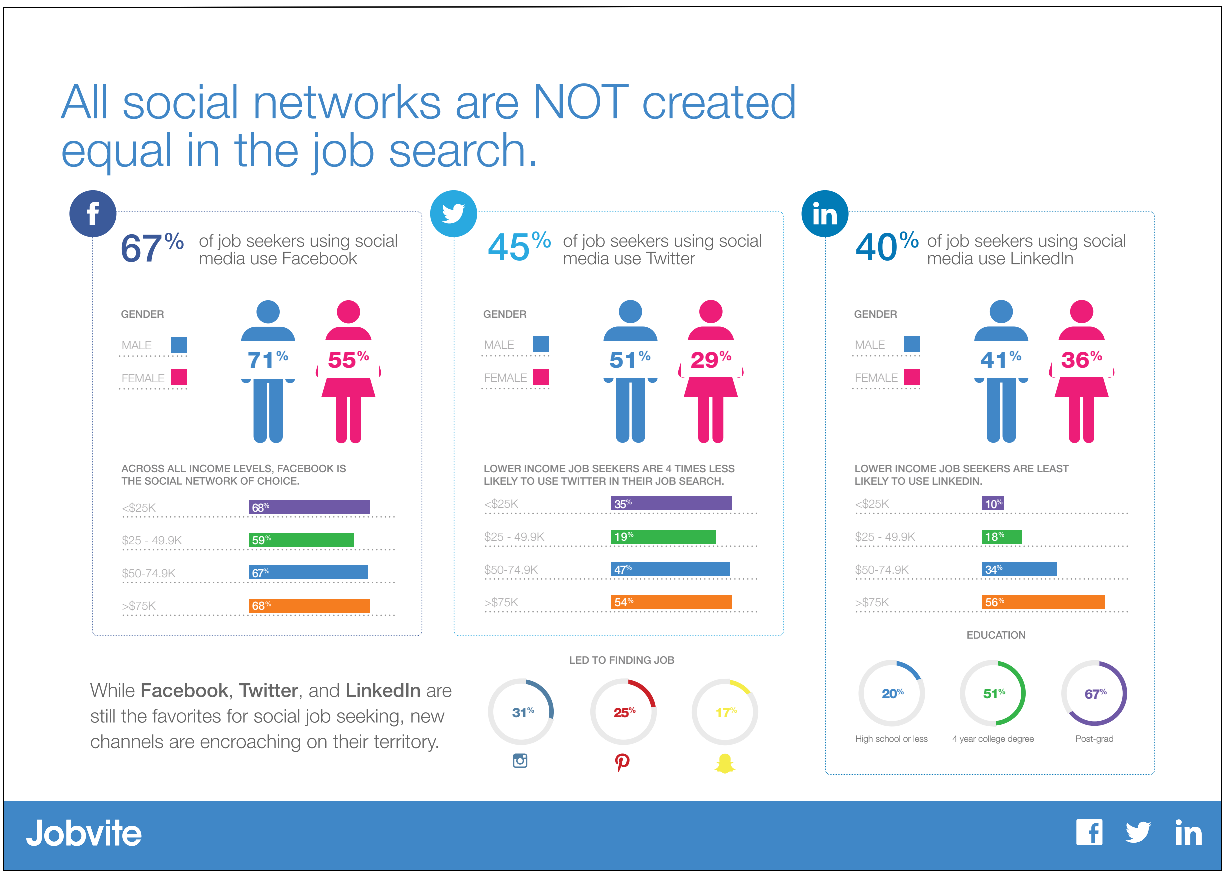
Consider your purpose and audiences: post a specific profile on appropriate sites, keep it updated, nurture your contacts, and tend your digital tattoo.

Ex. 23.1, 23.2, 23.6, 23.8, 23.9

Career coaching professionals recommend using specific sites and strategies to attract the attention of recruiters.[4]

FIGURE 23.2

Social Media and the Job Search



Recruiters and employers routinely search social networking sites for information on likely candidates.

Source: Jobvite, Inc.

- Network on sites that would most likely attract people (and employers) in the industries you are most interested in.
- Join in the online discussions whenever you have an opportunity to share your knowledge.
- Network on those sites offering the most technological advantages, and use them for positive influence. For example, create presentations to showcase your skills.
- Use the Internet for instructions on how and why job searchers should use these sites.

- Be discreet.
  - ✓ Limit your digital networking to career-related sites.
  - ✓ Keep your profile updated.
  - ✓ Check your privacy box.

Be aware that your digital identity is accessible to anybody, anytime. "With options like Pipli or Persona or Spezify it's a breeze to look someone up. Persona is an interesting and frightening experience because it uses key words like *character* and *sports* and *education* and *genealogy* and *management* to create a character timeline of who you are. It's never too early to take control of your digital identity."[5]

LO2 What Is the Information Interview?

Information interviews are a sophisticated form of networking.

Ex. 23.10, 23.11

Although you will want to use every medium possible to demonstrate your desirability as an employee, remember that people tend to hire people they know, and no technology can match the sense of familiarity that face-to-face time brings.

In an **information interview**, you can talk face to face with someone who works in the area you hope to enter. The interview allows you to find out what the day-to-day work involves, and how you can best prepare to enter that field. If you're prepared, however, you can use the information interview to make a positive impression and to self-recruit (I want to work for you!).

An information interview can

- Establish a positive image of you in the mind of the person, so that he or she thinks of you when openings arise
- Help you decide whether you'd like the job
- Give you specific information that you can use to present yourself effectively in your resumé and application letter

To set up an information interview, phone or send an email (like the one in Figure 23.2). If you send an email, phone the following week to set up a specific time to begin to establish that all-important personal contact.

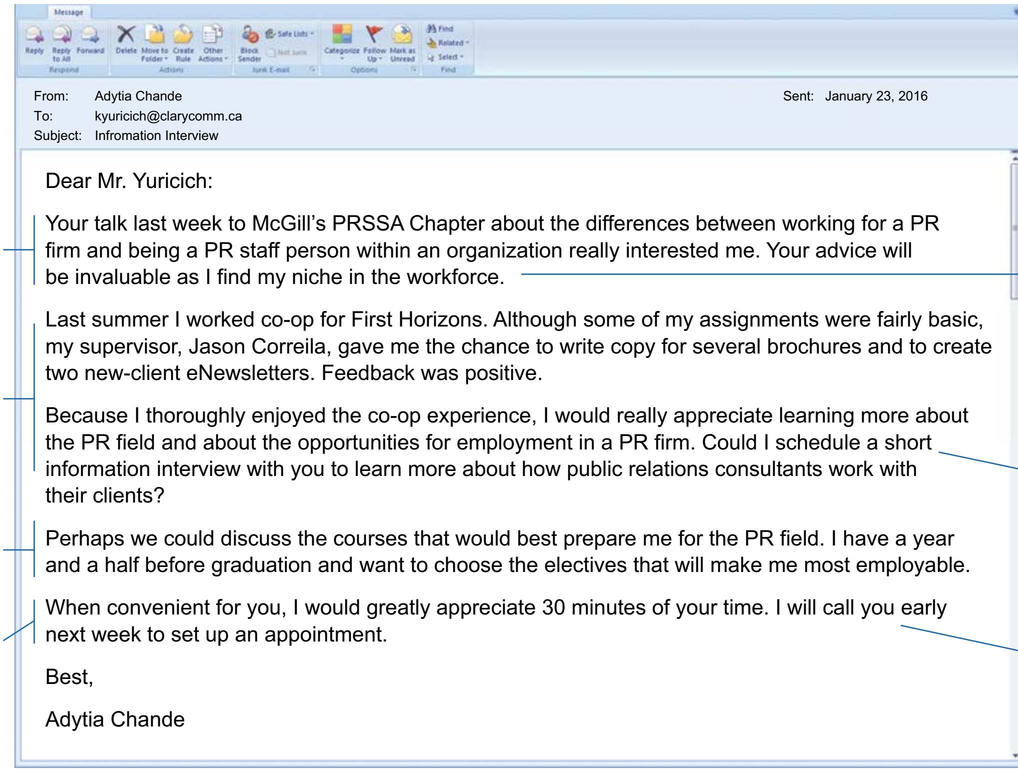
In an information interview, you might ask

- What are you working on right now?
- How do you spend your typical day?
- How does what you do make or save the organization time or money?
- How have your duties changed since you first started working here?
- What do you like best about your job? What do you like least?
- What do you think the future holds for this kind of work?
- How did you get this job?
- What courses, activities, and/or jobs would you recommend to someone who wants to do this kind of work?

Immediately after your interview, mail a handwritten note thanking the person for his or her time and information. A graceful thank-you letter demonstrates your emotional and social intelligence—critical interpersonal skills when employers are making hiring decisions.

FIGURE 23.3

Email Requesting an Information Interview



From: Adytia Chande Sent: January 23, 2016
To: kyuricich@clarycomm.ca
Subject: Infromation Interview

Dear Mr. Yuricich:

Your talk last week to McGill's PRSSA Chapter about the differences between working for a PR firm and being a PR staff person within an organization really interested me. Your advice will be invaluable as I find my niche in the workforce.

Last summer I worked co-op for First Horizons. Although some of my assignments were fairly basic, my supervisor, Jason Correila, gave me the chance to write copy for several brochures and to create two new-client eNewsletters. Feedback was positive.

Because I thoroughly enjoyed the co-op experience, I would really appreciate learning more about the PR field and about the opportunities for employment in a PR firm. Could I schedule a short information interview with you to learn more about how public relations consultants work with their clients?

Perhaps we could discuss the courses that would best prepare me for the PR field. I have a year and a half before graduation and want to choose the electives that will make me most employable.

When convenient for you, I would greatly appreciate 30 minutes of your time. I will call you early next week to set up an appointment.

Best,

Adytia Chande

LO3 What Is the "Hidden Job Market"? How Do I Tap In to It?

The hidden market—jobs that are never advertised—is open to those who know how to use networking techniques. Referral interviews and prospecting letters can help you find it.

Ex. 23.2

Most great jobs are never advertised—and the number rises the higher up the job ladder you go. Experts estimate over 60 percent of all new jobs come not from responding to an ad but from networking with personal contacts.[6] Some of these jobs are created especially for a specific person. These unadvertised jobs are called the **hidden job market**.

In-person and social media networking are the optimum method for tapping into this market. Create opportunities to meet and work with others informally—through on-campus political and social activities, and volunteer community involvement, for example.

What is the Referral Interview?

Ex 23.1, 23.2, 23.11

Referral interviews, an organized method of networking, offer another way to tap into these jobs. The goal of a referral interview is to put you face to face with someone with the power to hire you: the owner of a small company, the division vice-president or branch manager of a big company, or the director of the local office of a provincial or federal agency.

Ask for a referral interview to learn about current job opportunities in your field. Sometimes an interview that starts out as an information interview turns into a referral interview.

A referral interview

- Gives you information about current opportunities available in your area of interest
- Refers you to other people who can tell you about job opportunities
- Enables the interviewer to see that you could contribute to his or her organization

Start by scheduling interviews with people you know who may know something about that field—professors, co-workers, neighbours, friends.

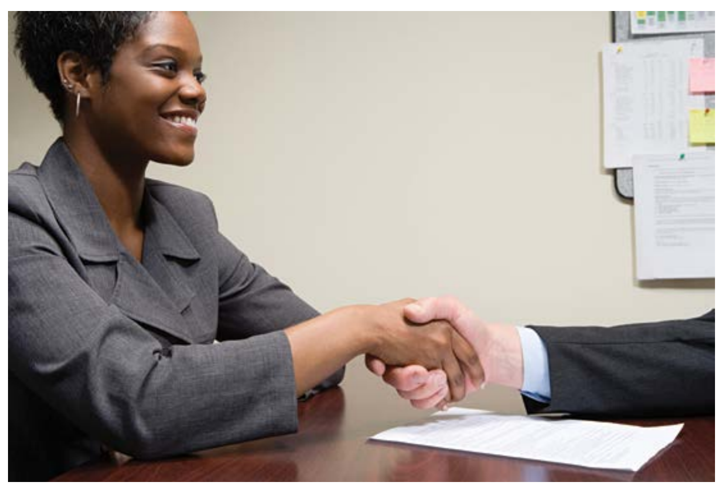
Join your alumni association; network with alumni who now work where you would like to work. Your purpose in talking to them is to

1. Get advice about improving your resumé and about general job-hunting strategies
2. Become a known commodity and thereby get referrals to other people

Go into the interview with the names of people you'd like to talk to. If the interviewee doesn't suggest anyone, ask, "Do you think it would be a good idea for me to talk to X?"

Then, armed with a referral from someone you know, call person X and say, "So-and-so suggested I talk with you about job-hunting strategies." If the person says, "We aren't hiring," you say, "Oh, I'm not asking you for a job. I'd just like some advice from a knowledgeable person about the opportunities in banking (or desktop publishing, technical services, etc.) in this city." If this person does not have the power to create a position, ask for more referrals at the end of this interview. You can also polish your resumé if you get good suggestions along the way.

Even when you talk to the person who could create a job for you, do not ask for a job. To give you advice about your resumé, however, the person has to look at it. When a powerful person focuses on your skills, s/he will naturally think about the problems and needs in that organization. When there's a match between what you can do and what the organization needs, that person may be able to create a position for you.



Networking through information and referral interviews can lead to job offers.

Remember the two truisms of job hunting: (1) *self-recruitment is still the number one way to get hired, and (2) people hire people they know*. Although the idea of cold-calling may seem daunting, you'll find most people receptive. You are likely to get the interview when you mention a familiar name ("So-and-so suggested I talk with you") and sound enthusiastic. Prepare as carefully for these interviews as you would for a job interview. Think of good questions in advance; know something about the general field or industry; learn as much as you can about the specific company.

Always follow up information and referral interviews with personal thank-you letters. Use specifics to show that you paid attention during the interview, and enclose a copy of your revised resumé.

LO4 LO8 LO9

How Do I Present My Non-Traditional Experience?

Address the employer's potential concerns positively.

Ex 23.3

People bring a variety of non-traditional experiences to the job search. These experiences often build on the transferable skills for which employers search. In a world where the ability to learn is recognized as the key to employability, your communication skills will determine whether you get the job. Consider how to present your previous experiences positively.

"I've Been Out of the Job Market for a While"

Prove to a potential employer that you're up to date and motivated.

- Research changes in your field to identify prospective employers' priorities. When you can demonstrate that you can make an immediate contribution, you'll have a much easier sell. To do that, however, you need to know what the employer needs: What skills are employers looking for?
- Be active in professional organizations. Network through relevant social media. Read blogs, magazines, newspapers, and trade journals.
- Learn the software important in your field.
- Show how your at-home experience relates directly to the workplace. Multi-tasking, organizing food bank drives, managing projects, dealing with unpredictable situations, building consensus, listening, raising money, and making presentations are all transferable skills.
- Create an up-to-date e-portfolio of your work to track and demonstrate your expertise. Most of Canada's provinces and territories offer prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) to adults with work experience. Based on a demonstration of the requisite knowledge and skills, you can get credit for post-secondary courses. Most high-level courses require that candidates prepare a proposal and a portfolio of academic and work projects to demonstrate subject knowledge and skills.

"I Don't Have Any Experience"

You can get experience in several ways.

- Take a fast-food job—and keep it: If you do well, you might be promoted to a supervisor within a year. Use every opportunity to learn about the management and financial aspects of the business.
- Volunteer: Coach a community little-league team, join the PTA, help at your local food bank, canvass for charity. If you work hard, you'll quickly get an opportunity to do more: manage a budget, create fundraising materials, and supervise other volunteers.
- Freelance: Design brochures, create websites, do tax returns for small businesses. Use your skills—for free, if you have to at first.
- Write: Create a portfolio of ads, instructions, or whatever documents are relevant for the field you want to enter. Ask a professional—an instructor, a local businessperson, someone from a professional organization—to critique them. Volunteer your services to local fundraising organizations and small businesses.

Pick activities where you work with other people, so you can show you work well in an organization.

If you're in the job market now, think carefully about what you've really done. Think about your experiences and skills development in courses, in volunteer work, in unpaid activities.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Selling Yourself in the New Work World

Ex 23.2–23.10

Non-traditional employment has replaced the cradle-to-grave job security of your grandparents. Increasingly Canadians earn their living as part-timers and contract workers or as self-employed consultants.

Although small and medium-sized businesses offer the best employment opportunities for today's job seekers, all employers, regardless of company size, seek people who are well prepared, can think on their feet, and demonstrate attitudes that match the values of the organization.

To ensure that match, hiring processes are also evolving. Because the traditional employment interview has proven inadequate, employers are trying other methods, including multiple interviews, team interviews, behavioural interviews, and psychological testing. Aspiring candidates should adopt an entrepreneurial mindset to best respond to the most important hiring question: What do you have to offer that will keep us competitive?

To maximize your audience impact

- Research the organization, the industry, and current challenges.
- Know the corporate culture, and be prepared to describe specifically how your skills and values fit that culture.
- Prepare to answer behavioural questions, such as "Describe a situation in which you diffused a potential conflict"; "Describe a situation in which you demonstrated leadership skills"; "Why did you apply for this job?"; "Give an example of a difficult situation you were in with people and how you handled it."
- Prepare for expert recruiters who will dig for unrehearsed answers (and character insights) with such queries as "When is it okay to lie? How far would you go to close a deal? What does independence mean to you?"

Astute interviewees understand that even the deceptively simple, kickoff question, "Tell me about yourself," translates as "Tell me specifically why I should hire you." Savvy job searchers come prepared with specific examples to answer that question.

Sources: Carol Goar, "Is part-time work the new normal?" (February 15, 2015), http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2014/09/07/is_parttime_work_the_new_normal_goar.html; Tavia Grant, " 15-hour workweek: Canada's part-time problem," (October 4, 2014), http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/the-15-hour-workweek-canadas-part-time-problem/article20926986/; Chris Sorenson, "The end of the job," (January 20, 2012), http://www.macleans.ca/economy/business/the-end-of-the-job/

Focus especially on your communications skills: problem solving, critical thinking, managing projects, working as part of a team, persuasive speaking, and writing. Solving a problem for a hypothetical firm in an accounting class, thinking critically about a report problem in business communication, working with a group in a marketing class, and communicating with people at the seniors' centre where you volunteer are all valuable experiences, even if no one paid you.

If you're not actually looking for a job but just need to create a resumé for this course, ask your instructor whether you may assume that you're graduating and add the things you hope to do between now and that time.

"I'm a Lot Older Than the Other Employees"

Mature workers remain in demand for their sophisticated interpersonal and communications abilities. Uninformed employers are concerned that older people won't be flexible, up to date, or willing to be supervised by someone younger. You can counter these fears.

- Keep up to date. Read trade journals; attend professional meetings.
- Learn the computer programs your field uses. Refer to technology in the resumé, job letter, and interview: "Yes, I saw the specifications for your new product on your website."
- Work with younger people, in classroom teams, in volunteer work, or on the job. Be able to cite specific cases where you've learned from young people and worked well with them.

- Use positive emphasis (Module 11). Talk about your ability to relate to mature customers, the valuable perspective you bring. Focus on recent events, not ones from twenty years ago.
- Show energy and enthusiasm.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Begin your job search by assessing your priorities, abilities, and interests. Do this assessment in writing, to make it real and to note the information that might go on your resumé.
- Use social media, directories, annual reports, recruiting literature, business periodicals, trade journals, and websites to get information about employers, and job search tips.
- The most effective way to find the job you want is to self-recruit. The second most effective way is through a referral. Both these methods depend on your ability to network.
- Information and referral interviews can help you tap into the **hidden job market**—jobs that are not advertised. Collect contact names by networking: contribute on relevant social media; talk to friends, relatives, salespeople, and suppliers; do volunteer and community work. Ask for an **information interview** to find out what the daily work involves, and how you can best prepare to enter the field. Or schedule brief **referral interviews** to learn about current job opportunities in your field.
- Prepare carefully for these interviews: these people know other people, and can offer suggestions and other referrals.
- Use social networking sites discreetly. Join business/industry-related sites, get involved in online discussions, update your profile frequently, and use the site's technology to showcase your skills.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 23

Questions for Critical Thinking

23.1 What social media sites would be most relevant for networking for a career in your field? Why?

23.2 Identify three community and/or volunteer activities that would expand your networking opportunities.

23.3 What if you have been fired from your job? How should you deal with this problem in your job search?

23.4 What tools can you use to begin to build a compelling e-portfolio?

Exercises and Problems

23.5 Beginning Your Self-Inventory

Initiate the job-hunting process on the nextSteps.org job search site (www.nextsteps.ca/career/start.php) by completing the inventory questionnaire. Note the results to prepare to create your resumé and cover letter.

23.6 Assessing your Digital Identity

Research your digital tattoo to discover what employers can readily find online about you.

As your instructor directs

a. Share your findings with a small group of students.

b. Summarize your findings in an email to your instructor.

23.7 Networking

Contact a friend, family member, or acquaintance who is already in the workforce, and ask

- What jobs in your field are available in your contact's organization?
- If a job is available, can your contact provide information, beyond the job listing, that will help you write a more detailed, persuasive letter? (Specify the kind of information you'd like to have.)
- Who else can your contact suggest who might be useful to you in your job search? (Ask about any organizations you're especially interested in.)

23.8 Networking with Social Media

Social media experts suggest specific strategies for online job networking. Research the most current advice for networking and for your job searching via social media.

As your instructor directs

a. Establish or revise your professional online presence based on your research.

b. Use your social media sites to present your new/revised professional presence to 10 classmates.

c. Request specific feedback.

d. Based on feedback, revise your professional social media profile.

d. Write an email to your instructor summarizing the results.

23.9 Gathering Information About an Industry

Find three online and/or print trade journals with articles on three to five trends, developments, or issues that are important in the industry you want to work in.

As your instructor directs

a. Share your findings with a small group of students.

b. Summarize your findings in an email to your instructor.

c. Present your findings orally to the class.

d. Email your findings to the other members of the class.

e. Form a group with two other students to write a blog summarizing the results of this research.

23.10 Gathering Information About a Specific Organization

Gather information about a specific organization, using a minimum of three of the following methods.

- Use the most current edition of *The Career Directory*.
- Check the company's website.
- Read a blog about the organization.

- Read the company's annual report.
- Talk to someone who works there.
- Pick up relevant information at your local board of trade or chamber of commerce.
- Read articles in trade publications and online at the *Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Financial Post* that mention the organization (check the indices).
- Get the names and addresses of its officers (from a directory or from the Web).
- Read recruiting literature provided by the company.

As your instructor directs

a. Share your findings with a small group of students.
b. Summarize your findings in an email to your instructor.
c. Present your findings orally to the class.
d. Email your findings to the other members of the class.
e. Form a group with two other students to write a blog summarizing the results of this research.

23.11 Conducting an Information Interview

Interview someone working in a field you're interested in. Use the questions listed in the module or this shorter list.

- How did you get started in this field?
- What do you like about your job?
- What do you dislike about your job?
- What three other people could give me additional information about this job?

As your instructor directs

a. Share the results of your interview with a small group of students.
b. Write up your interview in an email to your instructor.
c. Present the results of your interview orally to the class.
d. Email a summary of your interview to other members of your class.
e. Write to the interviewee thanking him or her for taking the time to talk to you.

Polishing *your* Prose

Using Details

Details are especially important in audience benefits (Module 10), reports, resumés, job applications, and sales letters. Customers or potential employers look for specific details to help them make decisions, such as what makes your product better than the competition's or how your experience would help the employer. Here's an example.

> I can offer you more than ten years of advertising experience, including five years of broadcast sales in Ottawa, where I generated more than $19 million in revenue, as well as three years with J. Walter Thompson, a leading advertising agency. For the first four years of my career, I also wrote advertising copy, including hundreds of local and regional radio spots for such diverse products as cookies, cat food, fishing tackle, and children's toys. I also wrote print pieces, including the entire 15-month campaign for Vancouver-based Uncle Bill's Electronic Bazaar, which increased sales by nearly 37 percent during that period.

Audience Benefits

What features or experiences make your product or service unique? Useful? Cost-effective?

Weak With the Stereobooster, your car will sound great.

Better The Stereobooster safely gives your car audio system a full 30 watts per channel of sheer sound excitement—double that of other systems on the market—all for under $50.

The Five Senses

Describe sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell. Some sensations are so powerful that they immediately conjure up thoughts or emotions—the smell of fresh coffee, the sound of ocean waves, the feeling of sunlight against the skin.

Concrete Nouns and Verbs

Concrete nouns and verbs are better than more general nouns and verbs combined with adjectives and adverbs. For instance, *manager* and *15 months* are more concrete than *the person in charge* or *awhile*. Concrete words make meaning clear and vivid.

Weak At my last job, I did data entry.

Better As an executive assistant for Hughes and Associates, I revised and edited hundreds of emails, letters, and reports.

Increase your vocabulary by reading a variety of materials. Keep a dictionary and thesaurus handy. Do crossword puzzles or computer word games to practise what you know.

Adjectives and Adverbs that Count

Omit or replace vague or overused adjectives and adverbs: *basically*, *some*, *very*, *many*, *a lot*, *kind of*, *sort of*, *partly*, *eventually*. Increasingly, novice writers are using *so* as an adjective, as in "He was so happy about the promotion." Exactly how happy is this?

Conversational English, Not Jargon or Obscure Words

Choose the plainer, more conversational option over jargon or obscure words: *sign*, *use*, *exit*, rather than *signage*, *usage*, and *egress*.

Exercises

Add details to the following sentences.

1. I work for a company.
2. The person in charge of our department wants some files.
3. Sometime in the future I will get a job in my field.
4. I network on a lot of social media sites.
5. Our product will help you.
6. There are lots of reasons why you should hire me.
7. This product is so much better than its competitors.
8. We tend to have meetings in the afternoon.
9. My experience makes me a good candidate for this job.
10. We plan to travel to a couple of provinces sometime next month.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

MODULE 24

Creating Persuasive Resumés

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 24 you will be familiar with

LO1 Current resumé-writing practices

By applying the information you will be able to

LO2 Create the resumé that best showcases your qualifications

LO3 Make your experience relevant to employers

LO4 Increase the number of "hits" your resumé receives

Module Outline

A **resumé** summarizes your fit with the organization so persuasively that you get an interview.

When you're in the job market, having a resumé prepares you for every opportunity. When you're employed, having a current resumé allows you to assess your skills' improvement; this ongoing inventory makes it easier for you to take advantage of other job opportunities that come up.

Even if you're several years away from job hunting, preparing a resumé now will make you more conscious of what to do in the next two or three years to make yourself a more attractive candidate. Writing a resumé is also an ego-building experience: the person who looks so impressive is *you*!

FIGURE 24.1

PAIBOC Questions for Analysis

P	What are your **purposes** in creating a resumé? The resumé must display your knowledge, skills, and analytical abilities: you are recording your interpersonal and vocational aptitudes and shaping a persuasive story. Your ultimate purpose is to get the interview.
A	Who is your **audience**? Who will scan/read your resumé? What specific skills and attitudes is your audience looking for? How can you discern what is important to your audience? What can you emphasize in your resumé that will get you the interview?
I	What **information** should you include in your resumé? What keywords does the job posting emphasize? What important facts do you know about the organization? What important facts do you know about the industry? What life/work experiences will make you stand out from other candidates? What keywords can you use to mirror the posting and frame that information for immediate and maximum positive emphasis?
B	How does the appearance of your resumé **benefit** the recruiter? What information in your resumé offers immediate **benefits** for the potential employer?
O	What reader/recruiter **objections** do you anticipate? How can you create a resumé that stands out positively among all those others?
C	What **context** will affect your reader's response? Consider your relationship to the reader, the reader's values and expectations, the economy, recent organizational developments, current morale, the time of year, and the medium of transmission.

LO1 How Do Employers Read Resumés?

Your resumé can be screened in two ways: electronically or by a person.

If people do the reading, employers may skim the resumés quickly, putting them into two piles: "reject" and "maybe." In the first round, each resumé may get as little as 2.9 seconds of the reader's attention. Then the reader goes through the "maybe" pile again, weeding out more documents. If there are many resumés (and some companies get 2,000 a week), resumés may get only 10 to 30 seconds at this stage. After the initial pile has been culled, whether it's to one-half or one-hundredth of the initial pile, the remaining documents will be read more carefully to choose the people invited for interviews.

Alternatively, your resumé may be electronically scanned into a job-applicant tracking system. Then a computer does the first set of cuts. The employer specifies the keywords from the job description, listing the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the ideal applicant should have. Sometimes personal characteristics (e.g., *hard worker*, *good writer*, *willing to travel*) are included. The employer receives the resumés that match the keywords, arranged with the most "hits" first. The employer then chooses the interviewees.

LO2 How Can I Encourage an Employer to Pay Attention to My Resumé?

Demonstrate that your qualifications fit the job and the company.

Ex. 24.1, 24.3, 24.7–24.10

You may need both a traditional resumé that's attractive to the human eye and a scannable resumé for a job-applicant tracking system.

To increase the chances that a human being will select your resumé

- Keep your resumé to one or two pages; if you want to add more, use hyperlinks.
- Left justify and bold the major headings.
- Use plenty of white space and an attractive, easy-to-read font.
- Telegraph pertinent information using bullets; huge blocks of text are a big turn-off.
- Use a "brand" header on each page: your name, address, email address and phone/cell number.
- Ensure the resumé is absolutely error-free.[1]

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For content

- Begin with a Skills or Summary statement: specifically describe your value to the organization (Figure 24.3).
- Frame your skills and activities in measurable terms: "increased sales 10 percent"; "supervised five people"; "implemented a data entry system that saved the company $5,000."

Ex. 24.3, 24.6, 24.7

- Emphasize achievements that
  - ✓ Are most relevant to the position for which you're applying
  - ✓ Demonstrate your superiority to other applicants
  - ✓ Are recent
- Use the keywords and technical terms of the industry and the organization; find these in the ad, in trade journals, and from job descriptions.

The best resumés convey relevant details as concisely and attractively as possible.

You may need to create several different resumés. *But the more you customize your resumé to a specific employer, the greater your chances of getting an interview.*

LO2 LO4 What Kind of Resumé Should I Use?

Use the format that makes you look best.

Ex. 24.7

Depending on their experience and the audience, people use one of three kinds of resumés: **chronological**, **functional,** or **combination**.

The chronological resumé summarizes what you have accomplished, starting with the most recent events and going backward: that is, using **reverse chronology**. It emphasizes dates. Figure 24.2 shows a chronological resumé. Use a chronological resumé when you have limited relevant work experience but your education and experience show

- A logical preparation for the position for which you're applying
- A steady progression leading to the present

FIGURE 24.2

A Chronological Resumé

Mohammed Shafer
210 Steeles Avenue West, Brampton, ON L6Y 2K3
905.555.3828 mshafe@bell.live linkedin.com/pub/mohammed-shafer

Objective

To find a challenging materials engineer position where my communication and technical skills can make a contribution.

Profile

Detail-oriented, analytical problem-solver
Experienced in customer service and negotiating skills
Experienced LAN, Internet, and Intranet user
Hardware certified: IBM and MAC
Trained in WHMIS and MSDS
Work well with others, without supervision, and to deadlines

Education

2016	Diploma	Chemical Engineering Technology Co-op Program Sheridan Institute, Brampton, ON

Graduated with a GPA of 3.96/4.0

Work Experience

2012–present Summers	Assembly Line	FAN Personnel Solutions Brampton, ON
2010–2012 Summers	Property maintenance	Self-employed

Hobbies and Interests

Carpentry, electrical wiring, plumbing, canoeing, hiking, hockey

References

Upon request

Resumé emphasizes skills to compensate for limited work experience

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Creating Attention-Getting Resumés

Keep your resumé simple and specific: you have only a few minutes to attract and hold a recruiter's attention. Follow these strategies to create a resumé that gets you the job interview.

Play with Layout and Design

If submitting a hard copy

- Use a laser printer to print your resumé on high-quality letter-sized paper. White paper is standard for business resumés; cream, pale grey, and parchment colours are also acceptable.
- Make your resumé readable and attractive.
  - ✓ Use the Tables tool in your word processor to create invisible columns.
  - ✓ Use the same font throughout: Arial and Times New Roman are business standards.
  - ✓ Vary font size: use 12-point for headings, and 11-point type for the text to get more on a page.
  - ✓ Bold and italicize for emphasis; use bullets in lists.
  - ✓ Highlight your desktop publishing skills: try smaller margins; use lines or borders.
  - ✓ Use enough white space to make your resumé easy to read.
- Explore resumé templates to expand your range of options.

If emailing your resumé

- Attach it as a Word or PDF document.
- Save the document with your name included in the filename so that the recruiter can easily find it among others.

Consider the Content

Employers want to interview eligible candidates. Ensure your resumé emphasizes your eligibility.

- Use the job application keywords as resumé headings.
- Connect your resumé to your LinkedIn profile
- Be specific: reframe experiences into skills; provide facts and numbers.
- Be clear: use short, concrete nouns and active verbs to describe your skills.
- Be honest. Employers check, and lies and exaggerations are often glaringly obvious.

Proofread

Employers assume that the resumé represents your best work. Proofread, and then have at least two other people proofread for you, to ensure the document is perfect. Especially check

- Spelling of your college, university, and your employers
- Parallelism (Module 7)
- Consistency: headings, bullets, abbreviations
- Dates
- Phone numbers, email addresses, and URLs

Sources: Alison Doyle, "Best resume writing tips for 2014," *about careers*, retrieved from http://jobsearch.about.com/od/resumetips/fl/best-resume-tips-2014.htm; Peter Harris, "The three things that employers want to see in your resume," *Workopolis*, http://www.workopolis.com/content/advice/article/the-three-things-that-employers-want-to-see-in-your-resume/; Brian Platz, (2015) "Resume writing tips for a technology-savvy world, *about careers*, retrieved from http://jobsearch.about.com/od/resumewriting/a/resumetechtips.htm

The **functional resumé** emphasizes the applicant's most important (to the reader) job titles and responsibilities or functions, regardless of chronology. Use the functional/combination resumé if

- Your work experiences match the position responsibilities
- Your skills and expertise match the position requirements
- Your education and experience are not the usual route to the position for which you're applying
- You want to de-emphasize your formal education

FIGURE 24.3

A Functional Resumé

Dennis Crawford
Barrie, ON L4N 0J6 705.555.4807
dcrawford@rogers.ca
linkedin.com/pub/dennis-crawford
Twitter @denniscrawford

Resumé describes audience-appropriate function or roles in measurable terms.

Summary of Qualifications

- A highly skilled executive sales professional specializing in the CCTV/Video Surveillance marketplace
- Inducted into the company's President's Club four times for exceeding sales by 115% to 149%

Recognized for achievements in

- Regional & National Account Management
- Sales & Marketing Strategies
- Consultative Sales
- Product Management & Promotion
- Project Management
- Technical Sales Training
- Systems Design & Implementation
- Forecasting & Budgets

Professional Experience

Job titles and responsibilities are emphasized over dates.

Panasonic Canada Inc., Mississauga, ON
A global leader in consumer and industrial electronics manufacturing and sales

National Account Manager, Professional Imaging & Display Solutions Group *(2014–2015)*
Identified and managed high-profile national re-seller accounts while developing new growth opportunities through strategic networking with large national end-user accounts within Canada

- Developed a new national sales and marketing strategy while managing the Panasonic sales activities of 3 high-profile national re-seller accounts with over 35 sales professionals between them
- Identified, engaged, and closed new business opportunities with national re-seller accounts for a projected increase in sales of $500K within year one
- Successfully presented B2B strategies to high-profile end-user accounts securing net new business in excess of $1.5 million for select re-seller accounts
- Consultant to professional engineers, architects, sales professionals, and end users for the design and implementation of complex video solutions that exceed customer expectations
- Key liaison and consultant to product manager for industry trade shows and national marketing initiatives, often collaborating on booth design, marketing concepts, and product presentations for large industry trade shows, national technical sales seminars, and new product launches

Regional Account Manager, Central Division
Professional Imaging & Display Solutions Group *(2006–2014)*
Identified and managed regional re-seller accounts while developing new growth opportunities through strategic networking with Ontario regional and national end user accounts

- Developed sales and marketing strategies that successfully managed the Panasonic sales activities of 14 regional re-seller accounts with over 80 sales professionals
- Increased sales and market share within a territory that represented 40% of the department's annual sales forecast and budget
- Presented B2B strategies to several high-profile end-user and regional accounts resulting in a P.O. for over $1 million, setting a new record within the department
- Successfully organized, managed, and led an offsite national sales meeting on behalf of National Sales & Marketing Manager, opening channels of communication to a new level within the department; still considered by my peers to be the most effective and constructive sales meeting of record for the department
- Created and led successful product and sales training seminars, presenting at industry trade shows and technical product launches across Canada. Educated over 100 sales personnel and several hundred end users and consultants on the benefits of technology and products offered by Panasonic Canada Inc.

Dennis Crawford
Barrie, ON L4N 0J6 705.555.4807
dcrawford@rogers.ca
linkedin.com/pub/dennis-crawford
Twitter @denniscrawford

Product Manager, Professional Imaging & Display Solutions Group *(2005–2006)*
Technical product sales liaison among Panasonic factories, internal sales, service, and upper management representatives, external sales, and end-user clientele

- Redesigned, developed, and deployed a struggling national product training program targeted at over 35 Panasonic re-sellers with sales representatives in excess of 150 people; several hundred end users, consultants, and engineers; and over a dozen internal sales, service, and management staff across Canada
- Developed and presented strategies to factory representatives based on competitive product and market data, resulting in a more focused approach to product development for the North American market
- Managed product promotion and Regional Account Manager's involvement at industry trade shows both locally and nationally, aiding in the increase of product awareness and knowledge of our sales and customer base
- Successfully provided pre- and post-technical sales and system design support to over 35 re-sellers and three distribution accounts with a combined sales force of over 200 people, and over a dozen Panasonic internal sales, marketing, and technical service support people

KM Video & Security, Mississauga, ON *(2002–2006)*
An industry leader in the design and implementation of complex video surveillance systems for medium and large businesses

Service Technician, CCTV Products *(2004–2006)*
Technical service representative responsible for maintaining complex video solutions for KM clientele

- Maintained a high level of customer service support by successfully diagnosing and repairing complex system/product faults, effectively reducing system downtime and maintaining the integrity of security solution
- Facilitated open communication between sales and customer service departments, resulting in more efficient customer service for our key clientele
- Designed, developed, and maintained weekly/monthly/yearly service contract schedule for key customers and successfully delegated work orders to service technicians for service contract clientele, increasing productivity by over 25%, which increased sales

Installation Technician, CCTV Products *(2002–2004)*
Installed complex video surveillance solutions

- Team lead, responsible for the installation and commissioning of complex video surveillance solutions
- Consultant to sales staff regarding installation estimates and project management, ensuring efficient use of installer's time and meeting strict deadlines to ensure project profitability
- Trainer of end users, internal sales people, and service staff on the operation of complex video solutions

Education

York University, Schulich School of Business

Sheridan College, School of Applied Arts & Technology
Architectural Technician Diploma (2003–2005)

Panasonic Canada Inc.

Canadian Professional Sales Association

FIGURE 24.4

A Combination/Skills Resumé for Changing Jobs

On the first page of a skills resumé, put skills directly related to the job for which you're applying.

The centred format is eye-catching but it can be hard to read. Here, bold headings draw the reader's eye.

Marcella G. Cope

370 Mahon Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V7M 3E1
250-555-1997
mcope@postbox.com

Objective

To help create high-quality interactive online products in Metatec's New Media Solutions Division

Put company's name in objective.

Editing and Proofreading Experience

- **Edited** a textbook published by Simon & Schuster, revising with attention to format, consistency, coherence, document integrity, and document design.
- **Proofed** training and instructor manuals, policy statements, student essays and research papers, internal documents, and promotional materials.
- **Worked with authors** in a variety of fields including English, communication, business, marketing, economics, education, history, sociology, biology, agriculture, computer science, law, and medicine to revise their prose and improve their writing skills by giving them oral and written feedback.

Writing Experience

- **Wrote** training and instructor manuals, professional papers, and letters, memos, and reports.
- **Co-authored** the foreword to a forthcoming textbook (Fall 2016) from NCTE press.
- **Contributed** to a textbook forthcoming (Fall 2016) from Bedford Books/St. Martin's Press.
- **Blogs** about writing and editing at The Cope Trope

Computer Experience

Computer experience is crucial for almost every job. Specify the software and hardware you've worked with.

- **Designed** a Web page using Adobe Dreamweaver (www.cohums.ohio-state.edu/english/People/Bracken.1/Sedgwick/)
- **Learned and used** a variety of programs on both Macintosh and PC platforms:
  Word processing and spreadsheets
  Microsoft Project
  Adobe InDesign
  Quark Xpress
  Trello (online collaboration tool)
  Storyspace (a hypertext writing environment)
  Prezi

Other Business and Management Experience

- **Developed** policies, procedures, and vision statements.
- **Supervised** new staff members in a mentoring program.
- **Coordinated** program and individual schedules, planned work and estimated costs, set goals, and evaluated progress and results.
- **Member of team that directed** the nation's largest first-year writing program.

Marcella G. Cope

Page 2

Employment History

- **Graduate Teaching Associate,** Department of English, University of Victoria, September 2015–Present. Taught Intermediate and First-Year Composition.
- **Writing Consultant,** University Writing Centre, Simon Fraser University, January–April 2014
- **Program Administrator,** First-Year Writing Program, University of Victoria, September 2010–January 2014

Honours

- **Phi Kappa Phi Honour Society,** inducted 2015. Membership based on performance in top 10 percent of graduate students nationwide.
- **Letters of Commendation,** 2014. Issued by the Director of Graduate Studies in recognition of outstanding achievement.
- **Dean's List**

Education

- **Master of Arts,** June 2015, the University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C. Cumulative GPA: 4.0/4.0
- **Bachelor of Arts,** June 2014, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. Graduated with Honours

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The **combination/skills resumé** (Figure 24.4) emphasizes skills you've acquired through work experience. Use a skills resumé when

- You want to combine experience from paid jobs, activities or volunteer work, and courses to show the extent of your experience in transferable and technical skills: administration, finance, public speaking, and so on.
- Your education and experience do not provide the usual route to the position for which you're applying.
- You're changing fields.
- Your recent work history might create the wrong impression (e.g., it has gaps, shows a demotion, shows job-hopping, etc.).

LO2 How Do Resumé Formats Differ?

They highlight your skills differently, depending on your experiences, your purpose (the job you're applying for), and your audience.

A chronological resumé, such as the one in Figure 24.2, focuses on *when*, then *what*, and emphasizes academic qualifications. Experience is organized by date, with the most recent job first.

The functional resumé (Figure 24.3) highlights the applicant's qualifications according to relevant job functions or responsibilities. Extensive experience, not dates or academic degrees, is the focus. Seasoned and highly qualified applicants use this format.

A combination/skills resumé, such as the one in Figure 24.4, summarizes experience and acquired skills needed for the job. Under each heading, the resumé lists, in order of importance, paid and unpaid work (in classes, activities, and community groups). An Employment History section lists job titles (or functions), employers, city, and province.

Chronological Resumés

In a chronological resumé, start with the heading most relevant to the reader. Under Work Experience or Employment History, include employment dates, position or job title, organization, city, province, and other details: seasonal, full- or part-time status, job duties, special responsibilities, and promotions within companies.

Include unpaid jobs and self-employment if they provided relevant skills (e.g., supervising people, budgeting, planning, persuading).

If you've held co-op or intern placements (very significant to employers), include these under a separate heading such as Co-operative Placement Experience.

Normally, go back as far as the summer after high school. Include earlier jobs if you started working somewhere before graduating from high school but continued working there after graduation. However, give minimal detail about high school jobs. If you worked full-time after high school, make that clear.

If, as an undergraduate, you've earned a substantial portion of your college or university expenses, say so, either under Experience or in the Interpersonal or Profile section with which you can begin the resumé (graduate students are expected to support themselves).

- These jobs paid 40 percent of my university expenses.
- Paid for 65 percent of expenses with jobs, scholarships, and loans.

Omit information about low-level jobs, unless they illustrate experience important to your audience.

Use details to display your attitudes, abilities, or talents. Tell how many people you trained or supervised, how much money you budgeted or raised. Describe the aspects of the job you did.

Too vague	2013–2015	Sales Manager, the *Daily Collegian*, Mount Royal University, AB. Supervised staff; promoted ad sales.
Good details	2013–2015	Sales Manager, the *Daily Collegian*, Mount Royal University, AB. Supervised 22-member sales staff; helped recruit, interview, and select staff; assigned duties and scheduled work; recommended best performer for promotion. Motivated staff to increase paid ad sales 10 percent over previous year's sales.

Verbs or gerunds (the *-ing* form of verbs) always create a more dynamic image than do nouns, so use them on resumés that will be read by people rather than computers. In the revisions below, nouns, verbs, and gerunds are in bold type.

Nouns	2013–2016	Chair, Income Tax Assistance Committee, Winnipeg, MB. Responsibilities: **recruitment** of volunteers; flyer **design**, **writing**, and **distribution** for **promotion** of program; **speeches** to various community groups and nursing homes to advertise the service.
Verbs	2013–2016	Chair, Income Tax Assistance Committee, Winnipeg, MB. **Recruited** volunteers for the program. **Designed**, **wrote**, and **distributed** a flyer to promote the program; **made presentations** to various community groups and nursing homes to advertise the service.
Gerunds	2013–2016	Chair, Income Tax Assistance Committee, Winnipeg, MB. Responsibilities included **recruiting** volunteers for the program; **designing**, **writing**, and **distributing** a flyer to promote the program; and **presenting** to various community groups and nursing homes to advertise the service.

Note that the items in the list must be in parallel structure. Table 24.1 lists action verbs that work well in resumés.

TABLE 24.1

Action Verbs for Resumés

accomplished	changed	derived	filled	licensed	priced	set
achieved	charted	described	financed	located	printed	set up
acted	clarified	designed	finalized	maintained	produced	settled
adapted	classified	detailed	formed	managed	programmed	sold
addressed	collaborated	detected	forwarded	manipulated	projected	solicited
acquired	collected	determined	founded	manufactured	protected	started
activated	combined	developed	furnished	mapped	provided	stimulated
adjusted	communicated	devised	gathered	marketed	published	studied
administered	compiled	diagnosed	generated	maximized	purchased	strengthened
adopted	completed	differentiated	graded	measured	qualified	submitted
advised	composed	directed	graduated	mechanized	questioned	summarized
advanced	computed	discharged	granted	mediated	rated	supervised
aided	conceived	discussed	guarded	minimized	received	supplied
allocated	conducted	dispensed	guided	mobilized	recommended	supported
altered	concluded	displayed	handled	modelled	recorded	surveyed
analyzed	condensed	disseminated	helped	modified	rectified	taught
announced	conferred	documented	identified	monitored	reduced	tested
answered	constructed	drafted	illustrated	motivated	referred	theorized
appointed	consulted	earned	implemented	negotiated	refined	timed
appraised	contracted	edited	imported	observed	regulated	traced
approved	contributed	educated	improved	obtained	related	trained
arranged	controlled	elected	improvised	officiated	released	transferred
ascertained	converted	eliminated	incorporated	operated	removed	transformed
assembled	cooperated	employed	induced	orchestrated	reorganized	translated
assessed	co-ordinated	engaged	inducted	organized	repaired	transmitted
assigned	corresponded	engineered	influenced	oversaw	reported	transported
assisted	corrected	ensured	informed	packaged	represented	transposed
assured	costed	entertained	initiated	paid	researched	treated
attended	counselled	equipped	inquired	participated	responded	tutored
audited	created	estimated	inspected	performed	restored	updated
authorized	cultivated	evaluated	instituted	persuaded	retained	upgraded
automated	customized	examined	instructed	planned	retrieved	used
began	debugged	exchanged	insured	positioned	reviewed	utilized
billed	decided	expanded	integrated	practised	revised	validated
budgeted	decreased	expedited	interfaced	precipitated	sampled	valued
built	dedicated	experimented	interpreted	predicted	saved	verified
calculated	defined	explained	interviewed	prepared	scheduled	visited
calibrated	delegated	explored	introduced	prescribed	screened	worked
canvassed	delineated	extracted	invented	presented	searched	wrote
carried out	delivered	fabricated	investigated	preserved	secured	
categorized	demonstrated	facilitated	justified	presided	selected	
caused	depicted	filed	labelled	prevented	served	

Functional Resumés

The functional resumé focuses on the *what*; this format provides the flexibility to highlight relevant job responsibilities or functions, and to include a variety of experiences. Mature, highly skilled people with the right job credentials use the functional resumé to describe their extensive skills.

Begin with Career Achievements or Career Highlights, where you summarize your primary professional accomplishments. The Employment History is most important: describe your work responsibilities and subsequent skills as they relate to the position for which you are applying.

Later in the resumé, identify conferences, clubs, and professional associations in reverse chronology to demonstrate your industry currency. Unless applying for a job for which your education credentials are paramount (like an academic position) and you have those credentials, place Education near the end of this format.

Combination and Skills Resumés

Combination/skills resumés use the *skills* or *aspects* of the job you are applying for as headings, rather than the category title or the dates of the jobs you've held (as in a chronological resumé). For entries under each skill, combine experience from paid jobs, unpaid work, classes, activities, and community service.

Use headings that reflect the jargon of the job for which you're applying: *logistics* rather than *planning* for a technical job; *procurement* rather than *purchasing* for a civilian job with the military. Figure 24.4 shows a skills resumé for someone who is changing fields. Marcella suggests that she already knows a lot about the field she hopes to enter by using its jargon for the headings.

Try to have least three headings related to the job in a combination resumé. Give enough detail to convince the reader that you have developed the requisite skill sets through a variety of experience. Put the most important category—**from the reader's perspective**—first.

The job description can give you ideas for headings. Possible headings and subheadings for skills resumés include

Administration Alternatives or Subheadings	Communication Alternatives or Subheadings
Coordinating	Conducting Meetings
Evaluating	Editing
Implementing	Fundraising
Negotiating	Interviewing
Planning	Speaking
Keeping Records	Negotiating
Scheduling	Persuading
Solving Problems	Proposal Writing
Budgeting	Report Writing
Supervising	

Many jobs require a mix of skills. Include the skills that you know will be needed in the job you want.

In a combination resumé, list your paid jobs under Employment History near the end of the resumé (see Figure 24.4). List only job title, employer, city, province, and dates. Omit details about what you did, since you will have already used them under Experience.

LO1 What Parts of Resumé Formats Are the Same?

Increasingly all resumés begin with an attention-grabbing heading, such as Profile, Career Achievements, Career Highlights, or Communication and Technical Skills.

Every resumé should have an overview of your communication skills and an Education section. Career Objective, Honours and Awards, and References are optional.

Career Objective

If you want to include a career objective statement, write it like the job description the employer might use in a job listing. Keep your statement brief—two or three lines at most. Tell what you want to do and what level of responsibility you want to hold.

Ineffective career objective	To offer a company my excellent academic foundation in hospital technology and my outstanding skills in oral and written communication.
Better career objective	Selling state-of-the-art Siemens medical equipment.

Including the employer's name in the objective is a nice touch.

As an alternative to writing a career objective statement, put the job title or field under your name.

Joan Larson Ooyen Marketing	Terence Garvey Technical Writer	David R. Lunde Corporate Fitness Director

Career Achievements

Highlight proficiency in foreign and computer languages, and identify your outstanding communication skills, in order of importance to the reader.

- Excellent researcher, writer, and editor
- Conversant in all software applications
- Multilingual: speak, read, and write English, Arabic, and Punjabi
- Proficient in cloud computing

The functional or combination resumé uses career achievements to highlight measurable accomplishments.

- Started seasonal landscaping business Spring 2012; by Spring 2015 employed six full-time employees, generating revenues of $300,000
- Generated revenue of $2.5 million over quota as Western Division Sales Manager
- Implemented employee-mentoring program resulting in a 40 percent increase in retention
- Created new assembly procedure that cut production costs by 25 percent
- Developed procedures manual now used in every national and international office

Education

Education can be your first major category if you've just earned (or are about to earn) a degree, if you have a degree that is essential or desirable for the position you're seeking, or if you lack relevant work experience. Put Education later if you need all of page one to emphasize your skills and experience, or if you lack a degree that other applicants may have.

Include summer school if you took optional courses or extra electives to graduate early. Include study abroad, even if you didn't earn college credits. If you got a certificate for international study, give the name of the program and explain the significance of the certificate.

Professional certifications can be listed under Education, under or after your name, or in a separate category.

Include your GPA only if it's good. Because grade point systems vary, specify what your GPA is based on: "3.4/4.0" means 3.4 on a 4.0 scale. If your GPA is under 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, use words rather than numbers: "B average." If your GPA isn't impressive, calculate your average in your major and your average for your last 60 hours. If these are higher than your overall GPA, consider using them.

List the following in reverse chronological order: each degree earned; field of study; date; school, city, province, or state of any graduate work; short courses and professional certification courses; university, college, community college, or school from which you transferred.

B.S. in personnel management, June 2015, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON
A.S. in office management, June 2015, Georgian College, Barrie, ON

To fill a page, you can also list selected courses, using short descriptive titles rather than course numbers. Use a subhead such as "Courses Related to Major" or "Courses Related to Financial Management" that will allow you to list all the courses (including psychology, speech, and business communication) that will help you in the job for which you're applying.

> Bachelor of Science in management, May 2015, University of Guelph, Guelph, ON
>
> GPA: 3.8/4.0
>
> Courses Related to Management:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Personnel Administration | Business Decision-Making |
> | Finance | International Business |
> | Management I and II | Marketing |
> | Accounting I and II | Legal Environment of Business |
> | Business Report Writing | Business Speaking |
>
> Salutatorian, Eastview High School, June 2011, Toronto, ON

A third option is to list the number of hours in various subjects, especially if the combination of courses qualifies you for the position for which you're applying.

> B.Sc. in Marketing, May 2015, St. Francis Xavier University, Nova Scotia
> 30 hours in Marketing
> 15 hours in Spanish
> 9 hours in Human Resources Management

Honours and Awards

The Honours and Awards heading creates a positive impression even when the reader skims the resumé. Include this category for all awards that reflect your drive for achievement and recognition.

Include the following kinds of entries in this category.

- Listings in recognition books (e.g., *Who's Who in Web Design*)
- Academic honour societies (Specify the nature of Greek-letter honour societies so the reader understands that these are more than social clubs.)

- Fellowships and scholarships
- Awards given by professional societies and community associations
- Major awards given by civic groups
- Music accreditation and awards; varsity letters; selection to provincial or national sports teams; finishes in provincial, national, or Olympic meets. (These might also go under Activities but may look more impressive under Honours. Put them under one category or the other—not both.)

As a new graduate, you should try to put Honours on page one. In a skills and functional or combination resumé, place Honours and Awards on page two or three, depending on the space your Work Experience takes.

Build your praise eportfolio: keep a file of letters, emails, thank-you cards, and notes praising your job performance.

References

Including references on a separate page anticipates the employer's needs and removes a potential barrier to your getting the job. You can omit this category on your resumé, however, since prospective employers now take it for granted that applicants will supply references when required.

When you list references, use three to five. Include at least one professor and at least one employer or advisor—someone who can comment on your work habits and leadership skills.

Always ask the person's permission to list him or her as a reference. Don't say, "May I list you as a reference?" Instead, say, "Can you speak specifically and positively about my work?" Jog the person's mind by taking along copies of work you did for him or her and a copy of your current resumé. Tell your references what points you'd like them to stress in a letter.

Keep your list of references up to date. If it's been a year or more since you asked someone, ask again—and tell the person about your recent achievements.

References the reader knows are by far the most impressive. In a functional and skills resumé, choose people to recommend you who can testify to your abilities in the most important skills areas.

LO3 What Do I Do if the Standard Categories Don't Fit?

Create new ones.

Ex. 24.3, 24.6–24.10

Create headings that match your qualifications: Computer Skills, Military Experience, Volunteer Experience, Foreign Languages, Summer and Part-Time Jobs, Marketing Experience, Social Media Skills Publications, Exhibitions, Professional Associations.

The items Education and Experience (if you use the latter term) always stand as separate categories, even if you have only one item under each heading. Combine other headings so that you have at least two long or three short items under each heading. For example, if you're in one honour society, two social clubs, and on one athletic team, combine them all under Activities and Honours.

If you have more than seven items under a heading, consider using subheadings. For example, a student who had a great many activities might divide them into Student Government, Other Campus or Extracurricular Activities, and Community Service.

Put your strongest categories near the top and at the bottom of the first page. If you have impressive work experience, you might want to put that category first after your name, Education in the middle of the page, and your address at the bottom.

LO4 How Do I Create a Scannable Resumé?

Take out all the formatting.

Ex. 24.9

Some organizations use software to select appropriate resumés *before* a human being scans them. Figure 24.5 shows an example of a scannable resumé.

To increase the chances that the resumé is scanned correctly[2]

- Use a standard font: Helvetica, Futura, Optima, Times Roman, or Arial.
- Use 12- or 14-point type.
- Use the "ragged right" style. Scanners can't always handle the extra spaces between words and letters that justification creates.
- Don't italicize or underline words—even for titles of books or newspapers that grammatically require such treatment.
- Put the text in bold to make sure letters don't touch each other. Then remove the bold.
- Don't use lines, boxes, script, leader dots, or borders.
- Don't use two-column format, indents, or centred text.
- Put each phone number on a separate line.
- Use plenty of white space.
- Don't fold or staple the pages.
- Don't write anything by hand on your resumé.
- Send a laser copy. Stray marks defeat scanners.

To increase the number of matches or "hits"[3]

- Use a Keywords section under your name, address, and phone numbers. Put the following in this section:
  - ✓ Degrees, job field or title, accomplishments
  - ✓ Interpersonal strengths and attitudes: *dependable, skilled in time management, critical thinker, diligent.*
- Use industry buzzwords and jargon, even if redundant. For example, "Web page design and HTML coding" will "match" either "Web" or "HTML" as a keyword.
  - ✓ Use nouns. Some systems don't handle verbs well.
  - ✓ Use common headings such as Summary of Qualifications, Strengths, Certifications, as well as Education, Experience, and so on.
- Use as many pages as necessary.

FIGURE 24.5

A Scannable Resumé

Jerry A. Jackson

Keywords: family financial management; financial planning; retirement planning; investment sales; computer modelling; competitive; self-starter; hard worker; responsible; self-managing; collegiate athletics; sales experience

Campus Address
St. Mary's Road
Winnipeg, SK R2H 1J2
(306) 555-5718
Email address: jjackson@ccw.sk.ca

Created a Web page on saving for life goals, such as a home, children's education, and retirement: http://hotmail.com/jackson.2495/home.htm

Permanent Address
2105 East Hill Avenue
Saskatoon, SK S7J 3C8
(306) 555-4108

Summary of Qualifications
High energy. Played sports during two years of college. Started two businesses.
Sales experience. Sold both clothing and investments successfully.
Presentation skills. In individual and group presentations, spoke to groups ranging from 2 to 75 people. Gave informative, persuasive, and inspirational talks.
Financial experience. Knowledgeable about stocks and bonds, especially energy and telecommunication companies.
Computer experience. Microsoft Word, Excel, SPSS, Prezi, and Dreamweaver.
Experience creating Web pages.

Education
A.A.S. in Finance, May 2016, Community College of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, MB
B Average
Comprehensive courses related to program provide not only the basics of family financial management but also skills in communication, writing, speaking, small groups, and computer modelling
Intermediate Accounting I and II
Business Writing
Consumer Finance
Financial Management
Interpersonal Communication
Investments
Microeconomics
Presentation Skills
Public Speaking
Report and Technical Writing
Sociology of Marriage and Family
Statistics

Use 12- or 14-point type in a standard typeface. Here, Times Roman is used.

In keywords, use labels and terms that employers might include in job listings.

Give as much information as you like. The computer doesn't care how long the document is.

Don't use columns. Scanners can't handle them.

Sports Experience
Intramural Hockey Team (Champions, Winter 2014)
Two-Year Varsity Letterman, Community College of Winnipeg
Men's NCAA Division II Basketball

Experience
Financial Sales Representative, Primerica Company, Winnipeg, MB, February 2014–present. Work with clients to plan investment strategies; recommend specific investments, including stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and annuities.

Entrepreneur, Winnipeg, MB, and Saskatoon, SK, September 2011–January 2013. Created a saleable product, secured financial backing, found a manufacturer, supervised production, and sold product—12 dozen T-shirts at a $5.25 profit each—to help pay for school expenses.

Landscape Maintenance Supervisor, Saskatoon, SK, Summers 2008–2010. Formed a company to cut lawns, put up fences, fertilize, garden, and paint houses. Hired, fired, trained, motivated, and paid friends to complete jobs. Managerial experience.

Collector and Repairman, ACN Inc., Saskatoon, SK, Summer 2010. Collected and counted up to $10 000 a day. Worked with technicians to troubleshoot and repair electronic and coin mechanisms of video and pinball games, cigarette machines, and jukeboxes. Drove company cars and trucks throughout Saskatoon metro area to collect cash, and move and repair machines.

Willing to relocate
Willing to travel
Canadian citizen

Don't justify margins. Doing so creates extra spaces that confuse scanners.

- Mention specific software (e.g., Adobe Dreamweaver, WordPress) that you've used.
- Be specific and quantifiable. "Managed $2 million building materials account" will generate more hits than "manager" or "managerial experience." Listing WordPress as a skill won't help as much as "Used WordPress to design an interactive website for a national fashion retailer, with links to information about style trends, current store promotions, employment opportunities, and an online video fashion show."
- Spell out Greek-letter societies (the scanner will mangle Greek characters, even if your computer has them): "Pi Sigma Alpha Honour Society." For English words, spell out the organization name; follow it with the abbreviation in parentheses: "Canadian University Press (CUP)." That way, the resumé will be tagged whether the recruiter searches for the full name or the acronym.
- Put everything in the resumé, rather than "saving" some material for the cover letter. Although some applicant tracking systems can search for keywords in cover letters and other application materials, most only extract information from the resumé, even though they store the other papers. The length of the resumé doesn't matter.

MODULE SUMMARY

- Your resumé should fill at least one page. Use two or more pages if you have extensive experience and activities.
- Make the resumé attractive and readable: use plenty of white space, bold headings, and revise and edit to perfection.
- Emphasize your key points.
  - Put them in headings
  - Use keywords
  - List them vertically
  - Provide details
- Emphasize information that is
  - Relevant to the job you want
  - Expressed in industry- and ad-related language
  - Specific about how you can contribute to the job
- Resumés use sentence fragments. Make items concise and parallel. Emphasize action verbs and gerunds.
- The **chronological** resumé summarizes your experiences and activities in a timeline, starting with the most recent events and going backward. It emphasizes degrees, dates, and job titles. Use a chronological resumé when your education and experience
  - Provide a logical preparation for the position
  - Show a steady progression leading to the present
- **Functional** and **skills** resumés emphasize your experiences and applied skills. Use a skills resumé when
  - Your education and experience are not the usual route to the position for which you are applying
  - You are changing fields
  - You want to highlight the extent of your experience based on a combination of paid jobs and community and volunteer work
  - Your recent work history may create the wrong impression (has gaps, indicates a demotion, shows job-hopping, etc.)
- To write a scannable resumé, create a plain text using industry jargon, buzzwords, and acronyms.
- In a Web resumé, put your strongest qualification(s) first, and specify the position you want. Omit street addresses and phone numbers, consider having links to parts of the resumé, and proofread carefully.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 24

Questions for Critical Thinking

24.1 What resumé-writing resources are available at your career centre, or library, or both? How would you rate these resources in terms of accessibility, reliability, and currency?

24.2 How would you create a Skills Statement for Mohammed Shaffer's resumé (Figure 24.2)?

24.3 How would you quantify an important transferable skill you have developed? Choose one transferable skill you know would benefit any employer and describe it in measurable terms.

24.4 When would you consider creating a video resumé?

Exercises and Problems

24.5 Analyzing Job Postings

1. Find three job postings (print or digital) for an entry-level position you are interested in.
2. For each job posting, identify the keyword descriptors, including those for interpersonal, intrapersonal, communication, technological, and technical skills.
3. Create a list of these keywords to use for your headings and information for Exercises 24.6 through 24.10.

24.6 Analyzing Your Accomplishments

1. List the 10 accomplishments that give you the most personal satisfaction—perhaps achievements that other people wouldn't notice. They can be accomplishments or things you did years ago.

   Use jot notes or clustering to answer the following questions for each accomplishment.

   a. What skills or knowledge did you use?
   b. What personal traits did you exhibit?
   c. What about this accomplishment makes it personally satisfying for you?
2. Find a print or Web ad for a company or industry that appeals to you.
3. Create skills statements about each of your accomplishments.
   a. Use the language of the advertised position and the industry.
   b. Start with your accomplishments that appear most relevant to the position.
   c. Quantify your accomplishments when possible.

As your instructor directs

a. Share your answers with a small group of students.
b. Summarize your answers in an email to your instructor.
c. List the most significant of these on your resumé.

24.7 Chronicling Your Accomplishments

Use the following list to jog your memory about what you've done. For each, give three or four details as well as a general statement.

Describe a time when you

1. Used research to gain agreement on an important point
2. Made a presentation or a speech to a group
3. Identified a problem faced by a group or organization and developed a plan for solving the problem
4. Responded to criticism
5. Interested other people in something that was important to you and persuaded them to take the actions you wanted
6. Helped a group deal constructively with conflict
7. Demonstrated creativity

As your instructor directs

a. Identify which job(s) each detail is relevant for.
b. Identify which details would work well on a resumé.
c. Identify which details, further developed, would work well in a job letter.

24.8 Comparing Resumé Formats

Select a job posting from Exercise 24.5 or find a new one for a job/position you are interested in. Create a chronological resumé in response to the posting. Be sure to adapt your resumé to the specific company you want to work for.

As your instructor directs

a. Write a functional and combination resumé for the same position.
b. Share all three resumés with two class members, and with two friends already employed. Ask for feedback.
c. Based on the feedback, attach the resumé that best showcases your qualifications for the position in an email to your instructor.
d. In the email, summarize the specific feedback that identified the attached resumé as the best for your qualifications, and for the position.

24.9 Evaluating Career Objective Statements

None of the following career objective statements is effective. What is wrong with each as it stands? Which could you revise to be satisfactory? Which would you drop?

1. To use my acquired knowledge of accounting to eventually own my own business
2. A progressively responsible position as a MARKETING MANAGER where education and ability would have valuable application and lead to advancement
3. To work with people responsibly and creatively, helping them develop personal and professional skills

4. A position in international marketing that makes use of my specialization in marketing and my knowledge of foreign markets
5. To design and maintain websites

24.10 Writing a Scannable Resumé

Create a scannable, electronic version of one of the resumés you created for Exercise 24.8. Post your resumé on three industry-specific websites.

24.11 Creating a Video Resumé

Create a video resumé.

As your instructor directs

a. Share your video with three peers and get feedback.
b. Reshoot your video based on peer feedback.
c. Upload your video and request class and viewer feedback.
d. Upload your final version.

Polishing *your* Prose

Proofreading

Wait until the final draft is complete to edit and proofread. There is no point in proofreading words and passages that might change.

- **Editing** Check for you-attitude and positive emphasis, fixing any sexist or biased language, and correcting grammatical errors.
- **Proofreading** Make sure that the document is free from typos.
- **Spelling** Scan for misspelled or misused words that spell-checkers don't catch: *not* instead of *now*, *you* instead of *your*, *its* instead of *it's*, *their* instead of *there* or *they're*, *one* instead of *won*, and so forth.
- **Consistency** Check abbreviations and special terms.
- **Names** Double-check the reader's name.
- **Punctuation** Make sure that parentheses and quotation marks come in pairs. Be on the lookout for missing or extra commas and periods.
- **Format** Look for errors in spacing, margins, and document design, especially if you compose your document on one computer and print it out at another. Use the correct format for citations—MLA, APA, *Chicago Manual of Style*, and so on.
- **Numbers and Dates** Double-check all numbers to make sure they add up. Make sure page numbers appear where they should and are sequential. Do the same for tables of contents or appendices. Check dates.

Proofreading is as individual as writing style. Try these methods or invent your own.

- *Read the document from the last word to the first* to catch spelling errors.
- *Read the document in stages*—first page, second page, third page—with plenty of time in between so you are fresh for each page.
- *Read pages out of sequence* so you can concentrate on the characters on the page rather than the meaning.
- *Read the document aloud*, listening for awkward or incorrect phrasing.
- *Ask a friend to read the document aloud* while you follow along with the original.

Whatever your approach, build time into the composing process for proofreading. If possible, finish the document a day or two before it's due to allow enough time. (If the document is a 100-page report, allow even more time.) If you're in a hurry, use a spell-checker, proof the document yourself, and ask a friend or colleague to proof it as well.

Exercises

Proofread the following passages.

1. Ours are a company worth doing business with. Your can count on our promiss to provide not only the best service but, also the finest in materials, fit, and, finish. All of are products our made to exacting specifications meaning that you received the best product for the best prices. If you aren't satisfied for any reason, simply call the toll-free hotline at 1-800-555-1212 to get a promp refund. Or you can right us at: The John Doe Company, 123 Main Street Anytown Canada M6V 2B4. Remember; our moto is "the customers is always's right?

2. *Resumee for Kathy Jones*
   332 West Long Strt.
   Moncton, New Brunswick E4Z 1Z8
   614-555-8188

   Objection
   A management position in fullfilament services where my skills, expereince can be best be used to help your company acheeve it's goals.

   Relevent Experience:
   2010 to Present Day: Ass. Manager for high-end sports equipment distributor. Responsible for checking new customers out.
   2005–2010: Owned and Operated Jones, Inc., a telephone order procesing company for lady's apparel.
   2008: Received a plague for Must Promising Executive of the Year" from *Monthly* Magazine.
   2010: Delivery address to local high school seniors on why accuracy is important in business.

   Special Skills
   Type 7 or more words per minute
   Studied English all my life. Fluent in French.
   Shot at local gun club.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

Creating Persuasive Application/Cover Letters

MODULE 25

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 25 you will be familiar with

LO1 Application letter formats

By applying the information you will be able to

LO2 Organize the solicited application letter

LO3 Organize the prospecting application letter

LO4 Catch the reader's interest even when the company isn't planning to hire

LO5 Show that you have the qualifications for the job

LO6 Persuade the employer that you're in the very top group of applicants

LO7 Use information about the company effectively in your letter

Module Outline

LO4 LO6 LO7 What's the Point of the Application/Cover Letter?

A well-written application/cover letter captures the recruiter's interest, so he or she will read your resumé. The letter also shows the specific company what you can offer.

Ex. 25.1, 25.3, 25.4

The best letters are customized for their audiences, focusing on

- Requirements of the job, using the language in the job posting
- Skills and knowledge that differentiate you from other applicants
- Language and information that demonstrate your knowledge of the organization and the industry
- Experience expressed in transferable, marketable skills

Whether you're job-seeking in your home province, nationally, or internationally, PAIBOC analysis (Figure 25.1) can help you compose a first-rate cover letter.

FIGURE 25.1

PAIBOC Questions for Analysis

P	What are your **purposes** in writing? As usual, you have several: to attract and hold attention, to stand out favourably from other candidates, to demonstrate you have researched the organization and the position, and to preview your resumé.
A	Who is your **audience**? What audience characteristics are relevant to this particular message? What does your audience want to know? How much time will your audience give your message? What can you do to influence your audience favourably to continue reading?
I	What **information** must your message include? In a cover letter, highlight (1) the superiority of your skills, and (2) the fit between the organization's needs and your qualifications.
B	What reasons or reader **benefits** can you use to support your position? Use the application letter to summarize briefly the qualifications you bring to the position and their value to the organization.
O	What **objections** can you expect your readers to have? What elements of your message will your audience perceive as negative? How can you write to overcome audience objections or de-emphasize negative elements?
C	How will the **context** affect reader response? Consider your relationship to the reader, the reader's values and expectations, recent organizational history and current morale, the economy, the time of year, and any special circumstances surrounding the message exchange. *Here is the overriding cultural context: recruiters want to interview only those prospects whose application letter and resumé demonstrate value to the organization.*

Follow these guidelines to make your application letter professional.

- Create your letter as an email, unless the posting directs you otherwise. Use the same font style and size as in your resumé.
- Whenever possible, address your letter to a specific person; if you do not know the person's name, address your letter to Human Resources.
- Use the language of the job posting, the organization, and the industry.

- Use the names of contacts you have within the organization if the reader knows them and thinks well of them, if they think well of you and will say good things about you, and if you have permission to use their names.
- Always connect an experience (course work, co-op placement, community involvement) with a skill that you know the prospective employer wants.
- Keep your letter short: no more than a page.
- Unless you're applying for a creative job, use business language and style: few contractions and no sentence fragments, clichés, or slang.
- Edit the letter carefully and proof it several times to make sure it's perfect.

Ex. 25.1

LO1 What Kind of Letter Do I Write?

It depends on whether or not the company has asked for applications.

Ex. 25.7, 25.8

Two different hiring situations call for two different kinds of application letters. Write a **solicited letter** when you know that the company is hiring because

- You've found a post or an ad
- You've been advised to apply by a friend or acquaintance
- You've read online or in a trade publication that the company is expanding

Sometimes, however, the advertised positions may not be what you want, or you may want to work for an organization that has not announced that it has openings in your area. Then the situation calls for an **unsolicited** or **prospecting letter**.

A prospecting letter will help you tap into the hidden job market (Module 23). In some cases, your prospecting letter may arrive at a company that has decided to hire but has not yet announced the job. In other cases, companies create positions to get a good person who is on the market.

LO1 LO2 LO3 How Are the Two Letters Different?

They begin and end differently.

Ex. 25.7, 25.8

When you know the company is hiring

1. State that you're applying for the job (phrase the job title as your source phrased it). Briefly show that you have the major qualifications required by the ad: a degree, professional certification, job experience, and so forth. Summarize your other qualifications briefly in the same order in which you plan to discuss them in the letter. This **summary sentence** or **paragraph** covers everything you will talk about and serves as an organizing device for your letter.

I have a good background in standard accounting principles and procedures, and a working knowledge of some of the special accounting practices of the oil industry. This knowledge is based on practical experience in the oil fields: I've pumped, tailed rods, and worked as a roustabout.
Let me put my oil industry experience and accounting knowledge to work for Standard Oil.

2. Detail your major qualifications. Be specific about what you've done; relate your achievements to the work you'd be doing in this new job. This is not the place for modesty.
3. Develop your other qualifications, even if the ad doesn't ask for them. (If the position description states numerous qualifications, pick the most important three or four.) Show what separates you from the other prospects who will also apply.
4. Demonstrate your knowledge of the organization; specify the match between your skills and experience and the organization's needs
5. Ask for an interview; tell when you'll be available to be interviewed. End on a positive note.

Figures 25.2 and 25.3 are examples of solicited letters.

FIGURE 25.2

Solicited Email Cover Letter (1)

From: mshafe@bell.live
To: Human Resources
Subject: Job Application
Sent: February 1, 2016

Open punctuation

Attention Human Resources

Subject: Job/95423-134317
HHW Facility Operator (Co-op)

As a second-year Chemical Engineering Technology Co-op student at Sheridan Institute, I have the skills and knowledge to contribute to the operation of your Hazardous Waste facility. Through practical application, I understand the Occupational Health and Safety Act (WHMIS). Furthermore, in my summer jobs I learned how to handle and store hazardous materials.

Letter uses short sentences, clear language and language of the industry, and job posting throughout

At Sheridan I have also developed excellent written and oral communication skills which enable me to communicate information about hazardous waste and depot services to the public clearly and helpfully.

I have my Class G driver's license, a clean driving record, and my own vehicle. I am very flexible and am able to work rotating shifts and weekends. I am used to hard physical shift work. For the past two summers, I worked rotating shifts at an auto parts factory to pay my college tuition. You can count on me to be at work on time and complete tasks to the best of my ability. I take initiative and work well in a team environment.

My Grade Point Average of 3.96 (out of 4.0) illustrates that I am diligent and a quick learner. I will quickly adapt to the Region of Peel's system of receiving, categorizing, storing, and co-coordinating waste shipment.

Letter asks for the interview

Please contact me to arrange an interview to further discuss how I can contribute to your organization.

Sincerely

Mohammed Shafer

Encl.

FIGURE 25.3

Solicited Letter: Email Attachment (2)

638 Changery Court
Lethbridge, AB T1J 2A5
May 21, 2016

Shelley Aquina
Human Resources Manager
Home Outfitters
425 18 Avenue Northwest
Calgary, AB T2N 2G6

Addresses reader as ad indicates

Dear Shelley Aquina:
RE: File # 7664566-F

Quotes file number as ad requests

Thesis or controlling paragraph tells the reader what's going to be proven in the letter

Repeats words of the ad

Please consider me for the position of sales manager, advertised in the *Calgary Sun*, Saturday, May 20. I possess the educational background, work experience, and exceptional organizational and communication skills for which you have advertised.

Specificsdirectly connect the exper-ience with the resul-tant skill

In June I will graduate with a business administration diploma from Mount Royal University, Calgary, Alberta. Throughout my college career I worked with peers on a variety of projects, including sales proposals, formal reports, and sales presentations. In my third year I was chosen team captain for our marketing project, a year-long analysis, and oral and written report of possible marketing initiatives for a Calgary client, MediaWaves. My responsibilities included identifying time lines, delegating tasks, negotiating conflicts among group members, reporting to the client and our Marketing professor, and revising and editing the final 30-page report. Our team project not only secured the top grade in the class, but the client also accepted our recommendations, resulting in an immediate 10 percent sales increase for MediaWaves.

Jargon of the marketing industry

Since Grade 11, I have worked part-time and summers at Canadian Tire in Lethbridge, Alberta. Starting as a stock clerk, I worked my way up to sales associate. My supervisor has commented on my excellent sales skills, particularly my product knowledge and ability to up-sell. During my employment with Canadian Tire—a high-energy, fast-paced environment—I learned to focus calmly on clients' concerns and to communicate confidently. As a result of my performance, I was promoted to assistant manager. While working part-time, attending school, and participating in varsity basketball, I learned to juggle multiple priorities, to manage my time, and to problem-solve.

Skills would have been identified in the ad as necessary for the position

Please see my resumé for further details.

Demonstrates research and industry awareness

The market for home decorations and furnishings has become increasingly competitive, and with the entry of American big-box stores like Heritage Homes, it promises to become even more so. I would welcome an opportunity to apply my skills to increase your market share. Please call me at 403-555-4339 to arrange an interview time and date at your convenience.

Asks for the interview

Sincerely,

Carlos DeLeon
ENC: Resumé

LO3 Prospecting Letters

Ex. 25.5, 25.8

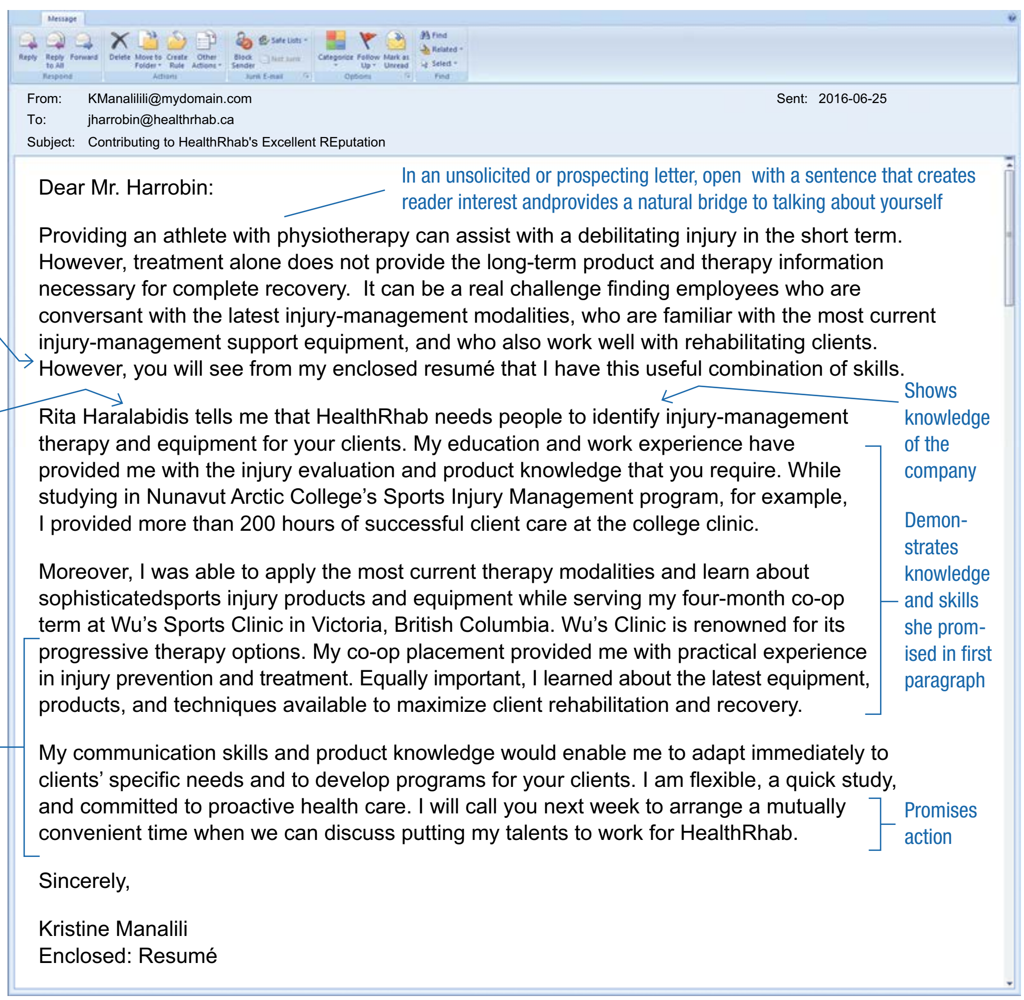
When you don't have any evidence that the company is hiring

1. Catch the reader's interest.
2. Create a **bridge** between the attention-getter and your qualifications. Focus on what you know and can do. Since the employer is not planning to hire, he or she won't be impressed with the fact that you're graduating. Summarize your qualifications briefly in the same order in which you plan to discuss them in the letter.
3. Develop your strong points in detail. Be specific. Relate what you've done in the past to what you could do for this company. Show that you know something about the company. Identify the niche you want to fill.
4. Ask for an interview and tell when you'll be available for interviews. (Don't tell when you can begin work.) End on a positive, forward-looking note.

Figure 25.4 shows an example of a prospecting letter.

FIGURE 25.4

A Prospecting Email Letter



From: KManalilili@mydomain.com Sent: 2016-06-25
To: jharrobin@healthrhab.ca
Subject: Contributing to HealthRhab's Excellent REputation

Dear Mr. Harrobin:

Providing an athlete with physiotherapy can assist with a debilitating injury in the short term. However, treatment alone does not provide the long-term product and therapy information necessary for complete recovery. It can be a real challenge finding employees who are conversant with the latest injury-management modalities, who are familiar with the most current injury-management support equipment, and who also work well with rehabilitating clients. However, you will see from my enclosed resumé that I have this useful combination of skills.

Rita Haralabidis tells me that HealthRhab needs people to identify injury-management therapy and equipment for your clients. My education and work experience have provided me with the injury evaluation and product knowledge that you require. While studying in Nunavut Arctic College's Sports Injury Management program, for example, I provided more than 200 hours of successful client care at the college clinic.

Moreover, I was able to apply the most current therapy modalities and learn about sophisticatedsports injury products and equipment while serving my four-month co-op term at Wu's Sports Clinic in Victoria, British Columbia. Wu's Clinic is renowned for its progressive therapy options. My co-op placement provided me with practical experience in injury prevention and treatment. Equally important, I learned about the latest equipment, products, and techniques available to maximize client rehabilitation and recovery.

My communication skills and product knowledge would enable me to adapt immediately to clients' specific needs and to develop programs for your clients. I am flexible, a quick study, and committed to proactive health care. I will call you next week to arrange a mutually convenient time when we can discuss putting my talents to work for HealthRhab.

Sincerely,

Kristine Manalili
Enclosed: Resumé

LO2 The First Paragraph of a Solicited Letter

When you know that the firm is hiring, refer to the specific position in the Subject line or your first sentence. Identify where you learned about the job: "the position of junior accountant announced in Sunday's *Vancouver Sun*," "Kaji Kado, our placement director, told me that you are looking for…"

Note how the following paragraph picks up several of the characteristics of the posting.

Posting Business Education Instructor at University of New Brunswick. Candidate must possess a Master's degree in Business Education. Will be responsible for providing in-house training to business and government leaders. Candidate should have at least six months' office experience. Prior teaching experience not required.

Letter Please consider me for the position of **Business Education Instructor**, advertised on Workopolis.com. My Masters degree in Business Education, knowledge of adult education principles, and previous office experience make me the ideal candidate for the position.

Good word choices can help set your letter apart from the hundreds of letters the company is likely to get in response to an ad. The following first paragraph of a letter in response to an ad by Allstate Insurance Company shows knowledge of the firm's advertising slogan and sets itself apart from the dozens of letters that start with "I would like to apply for…"

> The Allstate Insurance Company is famous for its "Good Hands" policy. I would like to lend a helping hand to Allstate as a financial analyst, as advertised in yesterday's *National Post*. I have an Accounting Co-op diploma from Georgian College and I have worked with figures, computers, and people.

Note that the last sentence forecasts the organization of the letter, preparing for paragraphs about the student's academic background and (in this order) experience with "figures, computers, and people."

LO4 First Paragraphs of Prospecting Letters

In a prospecting letter, use the first paragraph to catch the reader's interest. Then, in the second paragraph, shift the focus to your skills and experience, showing how the employer can benefit.

Here are effective first and second paragraphs for a letter applying to be a computer programmer for an insurance company.

> Computers alone aren't the answer to demands for higher productivity in the competitive insurance business. Merging a poorly written letter with a database of customers just sends out bad letters more quickly. But you know how hard it is to find people who can both program computers and write well.

> My education and training have given me this useful combination of skills. I'd like to put my degree in computer technology and my business writing experience to work in Sun Canada's service approach to insurance.

LO1 Last Paragraphs

In the last paragraph, indicate when you'd be available for an interview. If you're free any time, say so. But it's likely that you have responsibilities in class and work. If you'd have to go out of town for an interview, there may be only certain days of the week or certain weeks that you could leave town for several days. Use a sentence that fits your situation.

> I could come to Thunder Bay for an interview anytime between March 17 and 21.

> Please call me at 519-555-4229 for an interview time and date at your convenience.

Should you wait for the employer to call you, or should you call the employer to request an interview? In a solicited letter, you may want to wait to be contacted: you know the employer wants to hire someone, and if your letter and resumé show that you're one of the top applicants, you'll get an interview.

In a prospecting letter, call the employer. Because the employer is not planning to hire, you'll get a higher percentage of interviews if you're assertive. When you do call, be polite to the person who answers the phone.

If you're writing a prospecting letter to a firm that's more than a few hours away by car, say that you'll be in the area the week of such-and-such and could stop by for an interview. Some companies pay for follow-up visits, but not for first interviews. A company may be reluctant to ask you to make an expensive trip when it isn't yet sure it wants to hire you.

End the letter on a positive note that suggests you look forward to the interview and that you see yourself as a person who has something to contribute, not as someone who just needs a job.

> On Wednesday, April 25, I will call you between 9:00 and 9:30 a.m. to schedule a time when we can discuss how my skills can contribute to ISM Canada's continued growth.

LO2 LO3 How Are the Two Letters the Same?

The body paragraphs discussing your qualifications are the same.

In both solicited and prospecting email letters, you should follow these guidelines.

- Address the email to a specific person.
- Refer to the position for which you're applying.
- Be specific about your qualifications.
- Show what separates you from other applicants.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the company and the position.
- Refer to your resumé (which you would attach).
- Ask for an interview.

LO7 Showing Knowledge of the Position and the Company

If you can substitute another inside address and salutation, and send out the letter without any further changes, it isn't specific enough. Use your knowledge of the position and the company to choose relevant evidence from what you've done to support your claims that you could help the company.

One or two specific details are usually enough to demonstrate your knowledge. Be sure to connect your company knowledge with your experience and expertise, to demonstrate what you can do for the organization.

LO6 Separating Yourself from Other Applicants

Your knowledge of the company separates you from other applicants. You can also use course work, an understanding of the field, and experience in jobs and extracurricular events to show that you're unique.

This student uses summer jobs and course work to set herself apart from other applicants.

> A company as diverse as Desjardins Credit Union produces numerous internal and external communications. Both my summer jobs and my course work have prepared me for these responsibilities. As office manager for Safety Express Limited, I created the company social media policies and protocols, which included model examples of both marketing and customer service messages. I often wrote or responded to more than 100 Facebook and Twitter messages a day. In business and technical writing courses, I learned how to write persuasive letters and memos and how to present extensive data in clear, concise reports.

LO1 How Long Should My Letter Be?

Highlight the fit between the position and your qualifications clearly and concisely.

Your cover letter and resumé may be one of hundreds under review. The more readable your application letter, the more likely you will attract the favourable attention of those responsible for deciding whom to interview. Keep your letter as concise and clear as possible. Try to keep it to one page.

Without eliminating content, make each sentence concise to be sure that you're using space as efficiently as possible. If your letter is still slightly over a page, use smaller margins, or a type size that's one point smaller.

If you really need more than one page, though, use it. The extra space gives you room to be more specific about what you've done and to add details about your experience that separate you from other applicants. Employers don't want longer letters, but will read them *if* the letter is well written and *if* you establish early in the letter that you have the credentials and skills the company needs.

LO5 How Do I Create the Right Tone?

Use you-attitude and positive emphasis.

Ex. 25.2, 25.5, 25.6

You-attitude and positive emphasis help you sound assertive without being arrogant.

You-Attitude

Create you-attitude (Module 12) by describing exactly what you have done and showing how that relates to what you could do for this employer.

Lacks you-attitude	An inventive and improvising individual like me is a necessity in your business.
You-attitude	Building a landscaping business gave me the opportunity to find creative solutions to both commercial and interpersonal challenges.

Remember that the word *you* refers to your reader. Using *you* when you really mean yourself or "all people" can insult your reader by implying that he or she still has a lot to learn about business.

Since you're talking about yourself, you'll use *I* in your letter. Do so sparingly. Reduce the number of *I*'s by revising some sentences to use *me* or *my*.

Under my presidency, the Agronomy Club…
Courses in media and advertising management gave me a chance to…
My responsibilities as a co-op student included…

In particular, avoid beginning every paragraph with *I*. Begin sentences with adverbs (*presently*, *currently*), prepositional phrases, or introductory clauses.

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Targeting a Specific Company in Your Letter

When you must compete against dozens—perhaps hundreds or even thousands—of applicants for an interview, you need to target your letter to the specific company. Of course, researching a specific company also helps you prepare for the job interview.

Online searches and university and college employment resources can provide the information you need.

You could start by researching Canada's top 50 employers, to find a thriving corporate culture. Grantek Systems Integration—offering automated manufacturing operations services—is one such employer.

Grantek Systems Integration

Check the Company Website

Like most organizational websites, http://grantek.com/offers dozens of facts about the company. Here you can learn about the company's history, products and services. You can also view the client list, and read testimonials praising both the company's customized operations solutions, and its superb customer service.

The company blog offers in-depth text, visual and video coverage on every aspect of the organization—including new office expansions, the latest in manufacturing IT, advice on developing a network manufacturing strategy, current organizational hosting and employee training events, peer and employee networking initiatives, and current job openings.

Check the Corporate Culture

Perhaps most important, the Grantek website and blog content reflect a positive, employee-supportive culture, as demonstrated by its recent ranking as one of Canada's Best Small and Medium Employers. On every page of the positive, easy-to-navigate site, readers are encouraged to use the accessible contact options for more information or employment opportunities.

Sources: Aon Hewitt, "The 2015 list of best small and medium employers," *AON*, 2014, http://www.aon.com/canada/products-services/human-capital-consulting/consulting/best_employers/bes_the_winners.html; Profitguide (November 6, 2014), "Meet the 50 Best Small and Medium Employers in Canada," http://www.profitguide.com/manage-grow/human-resources/meet-the-50-best-small-and-medium-employers-in-canada-71198/3; "Grantek ranked 16th best small and medium employers in Canada," September 15, 2014, http://grantek.com/grantek-ranked-16th-best-small-and-medium-employers-in-canada/

Positive Emphasis

Be positive.

Avoid word choices with negative connotations (Module 11). Note how the following revisions make the writer sound more confident.

Negative I have learned an excessive amount about writing through courses in journalism and advertising.

Excessive suggests that you think the courses covered too much—hardly an opinion likely to endear you to an employer.

Positive Courses in journalism and advertising have taught me to recognize and to write good copy. My profile of a professor was published in the campus newspaper; I earned an A on my direct mail campaign for the Canadian Dental Association to persuade young adults to see their dentists more often.

MODULE SUMMARY

- When you know the company is hiring, send a solicited application. When self-recruiting, send a prospecting or unsolicited cover letter.
- Organize your solicited email to
    - State that you are applying for the job, and tell where you learned about the job (posting, referral, etc.). Briefly show that you have the major qualifications for the position. In your opening paragraph, summarize your qualifications in the order in which you discuss them in the letter.
    - Develop your major qualifications in detail.
    - Develop your other qualifications. Show what separates you from the other candidates who will apply.
    - Demonstrate your knowledge of the organization.
    - Ask for an interview; say when you are available to be interviewed and to begin work. End on a positive note.
- Organize your prospecting email or letter to
    - Catch the reader's interest.
    - Create a bridge between the opening and your qualifications. Summarize your qualifications in the order in which you discuss them in the letter.
    - Develop your strong points in detail. Relate what you've done in the past to what you could do for this company. Demonstrate your knowledge of the company. Identify the specific position you are interested in.
    - Ask for an interview and state when you are available for interviews. End on a positive note.
- In both letters
    - Address the letter to a specific person.
    - Indicate the specific position for which you are applying.
    - Be specific about your qualifications.
    - Show what separates you from the other applicants.
    - Demonstrate your knowledge about the company and the position.
    - Refer to your resumé (which you attach to an email or enclose with a letter).
    - Ask for an interview.
    - Use your knowledge of the company, your course work, your understanding of the field, and your experience in jobs and extracurricular activities to show that you're unique.
    - Use you-attitude by providing specific details and by relating what you have done using the knowledge or experience the employer needs. Use positive emphasis to sound confident.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 25

Questions for Critical Thinking

25.1 What collaborative software can you use to get feedback on your cover letters? What would be your first choice and why?

25.2 What specific techniques can you use to create you-attitude throughout your letter?

25.3 Based on your research and experience, identify five common cover-letter mistakes that cost applicants the interview.

25.4 When you submit both your application letter and resumé as attachments, what should you write in the email itself?

Exercises and Problems

25.5 Analyzing First Paragraphs of Prospecting Letters

The following first paragraphs in prospecting letters were written by new graduates. Evaluate the paragraphs on these criteria.

- Is the paragraph likely to interest the reader and motivate him or her to read the rest of the letter?
- Does the paragraph have some content that the student can use to create a transition to talking about his or her qualifications?
- Does the paragraph avoid asking for a job?

1. Ann Gibbs suggested that I contact you.
2. Each year, the holiday shopping rush makes more work for everyone at the Bay, especially for the Credit Department. While working for the Bay's Credit Department for three holiday seasons and summer vacations, I became aware of many credit situations.
3. Whether to plate a five-centimetre eyebolt with cadmium for a tough, brilliant shine or with zinc for a rust-resistant, less-expensive finish is a tough question. But your salespeople must answer similar questions daily. With my experience in the electroplating industry, I can contribute greatly to your customer growth.
4. Prudential Insurance Company did much to help my university career, as the sponsor of my Merit Scholarship. Now I think I can give something back to Prudential. I'd like to put my education, including a university degree in Finance, to work in your Investment Department.
5. Since the beginning of Delta Electric Construction Co. in 1997, the size and profits have grown steadily. My father, who is a stockholder and vice-president, often discusses company dealings with me. Although the company has prospered, I understand there have been a few problems of mismanagement. I feel with my present and future qualifications, I could help ease these problems.

25.6 Improving You-Attitude and Positive Emphasis in Job Letters

Revise each of these sentences to improve you-attitude and positive emphasis. You may need to add information.

1. I understand that your company has had problems due to the mistranslation of documents for international ad campaigns.
2. Included in my resumé are the courses in finance that earned me a fairly attractive grade average.
3. I am looking for a position that gives me a chance to advance quickly.
4. Although short on experience, I am long on effort and enthusiasm.
5. I have been with the company from its beginning to its present unfortunate state of bankruptcy.

25.7 Writing a Solicited Letter

Write a letter of application in response to an opening for a job or co-op position for which you are qualified. Respond to a posting that you find online, through the alumni or placement office, in a newspaper, or in a professional journal.

Revise and edit the letter. Submit a copy to your instructor, and email the letter to the appropriate person, with your resumé attached.

25.8 Writing a Prospecting Letter

1. Look online and in the business sections of your local and national newspapers for stories that suggest an organization is expanding and may be hiring for positions in various areas. Identify an area or department (accounting, finance, human resources, information technology, marketing, social media, research and development, etc.) in which you would like to work.
2. Write a prospecting letter applying for a specific position. The position can be one that already exists, or one that you would create, if you could, to match your unique blend of talents. Be sure that you are fully qualified for the job.
3. Research to get the name and address of the person with the power to create a job for you.
4. Revise and edit the letter. Submit a copy to your instructor, and email the letter to the person you identified.

Polishing *your* Prose

Using *You* and *I*

You-attitude (Module 12) means that you'll use lots of *you*s in business messages. However, use *you* only when it refers to your reader. When you mean "people in general," use another term.

Incorrect	When I visited your office, I learned that you need to find a way to manage your email.
Correct	When I visited your office, I saw the importance of managing one's email.
Incorrect	Older customers may not like it if you call them by their first names.
Correct	Older customers may prefer being called by courtesy titles and their last names.

Omit *you* when it criticizes or attacks the reader.

Not you-attitude	You didn't turn your expense report in by the deadline.
You-attitude	Expense reports are due by the fifth of each month. We have no record of receiving your report.

When you talk about what you've done, use *I*.

Correct	In the past month, I have completed three audits.

In general, keep *I*'s to a minimum. They make you sound less confident and more self-centred.

Weak	I think that we would save money if we bought a copier instead of leasing it.
Better	We would save money by buying a copier instead of leasing it.
Weak	I want to be sure that I understand how I will be affected by this project.
Better	How will this project affect our unit?

When you write a document that focuses on yourself (such as a progress report or a job application letter), vary sentence structure so that you don't begin every sentence with *I*.

Correct	This job gave me the opportunity to…
Correct	As an intern, I…
Correct	Working with a team, I…

When you use a first-person pronoun as part of a compound subject or object, put the first-person pronoun last.

Correct	She asked you and me to make the presentation.
Correct	You, Mohammed, and I will have a chance to talk to members of the audience before the dinner.

Be sure to use the right case. For the above two examples, you might omit the other part(s) of the compound to see the case you should use, for example

She asked me…

I will have a chance…

These are grammatically correct, so you would use the same form when you restore the other words.

Exercises

Revise the following sentences to eliminate errors and improve the use of *you* and *I*.

1. I worked with a team to create a class website. I was responsible for much of the initial design and some of the HTML coding. I also tested the page with three people to see how easily they could navigate it. I and the other team members presented the page to a committee of local businesspeople.
2. I have taken a lot of time and trouble to get a copy of *Using Excel* for each of you.
3. If you offend someone in the team, you need to resolve the conflict you have created.
4. Please return the draft to me and Mehtap.
5. I think that it would be a good idea for us to distribute an agenda before the meeting.
6. I have asked each department head if he or she had information to announce at the meeting, collated the responses, and arranged the topics to cover in an agenda. I have indicated how much time each topic will take. I am herewith distributing the agenda for Friday's meeting.
7. You haven't made the website accessible to users with impaired vision.
8. My last job showed me that you have to be able to solve problems quickly.
9. I observed department meetings during my co-op. I also sat in on client meetings. I designed Prezi slides for client presentations. I participated in strategy sessions. Finally, I drafted brochures.
10. The client asked me and my supervisor to explain our strategy more fully.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

MODULE 26

Managing the Interview Process

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Module 26 you will be familiar with

- **LO1** Job interview best practices
- **LO2** The attitudes and behaviours employers seek

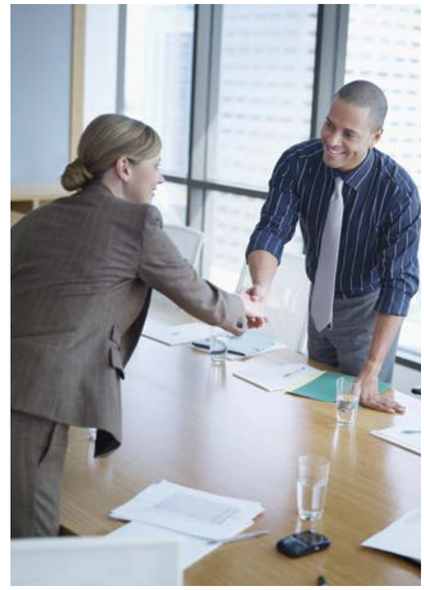
By applying the information you will be able to

- **LO3** Be your best self at a job interview
- **LO4** Plan and practise for the interview
- **LO5** Answer traditional interview questions
- **LO6** Prepare for behavioural and situational interviews
- **LO7** Participate in phone or video interviews
- **LO8** Make a good impression in follow-up letters and emails

Module Outline

Today's job candidates can expect to

- Participate in many kinds of interviews, including a panel or group interview. In a group interview, several people in the organization are present throughout. Each person is assigned a question to ask the candidate, and the whole team assesses the applicant's interview performance.
- Have one or more interviews by phone, computer, or video.
- Take one or more tests, including psychological/personality assessments, aptitude tests, computer simulations, and essay exams where candidates explain what they'd do in a specific situation.
- Be approved by the team they'll be joining. In companies with self-managed work teams, the team has a say in who is hired.
- Provide—at the interview or right after it—a sample of the work they are applying to do. Candidates may be asked to write a memo or a proposal, calculate a budget on a spreadsheet, make a presentation, or do a mini-teach.



Successful job applicants prepare an interview strategy tailored to their audience.

Ex. 26.2

LO1 What's the Best Interview Strategy?

Prepare.

Ex. 26.1–26.9

Recruiters, employers, and everyone who has gone through the process agree that successful candidates come prepared.[1] If you want to present your best self in the interview, prepare an overall strategy based on your answers to these three questions.

1. *What do you need to know about the job and the organization to decide whether it is a fit for you?* Do your homework. Analyze the company website: its language, colours, and navigation can tell you plenty about organizational values. Read the organization's Facebook page, Twitter feed, blogs, and bulletins, as well as associated industry journals. In the interview, questions such as "Why do you want to work for us?" are meant to discover (1) whether you've done the research, and (2) whether you are a fit.

2. *What do you want the interviewer to know about you?* Pick two to five points that represent your strengths for that particular job. These may be achievements, positive character traits (such as enthusiasm, attention to detail, creativity), and experiences that qualify you for the job and separate you from other applicants.

   Identify and write down a specific action or accomplishment to support each strength (Module 24). For example, be ready to give an example to prove that you're "hardworking." Show how you have saved money, served customers better, or led the team in other organizations where you've worked. Practise your responses and stories.

   At the interview, listen to every question to see how you can make one of your key points part of your answer. If the questions don't allow you to make your points, bring them up at the end of the interview.

3. *What disadvantages or weaknesses do you need to minimize?* Expect to be asked to explain apparent weaknesses in your profile: lack of experience, so-so grades, or gaps in your record. Use these questions to describe interpersonal and/or technical skills you are currently developing.

Network as Part of Your Strategy

Network to better prepare for the interview. Use information interviews (Module 23) as opportunities to scope out the reception area, the way visitors are greeted and treated, congruence between mission statement and morale. Talk to as many employees and friends of employees as you can.

Keep a list of topics you want to research further. Before the interview, prioritize these, and reframe them as questions to ask during the interview.

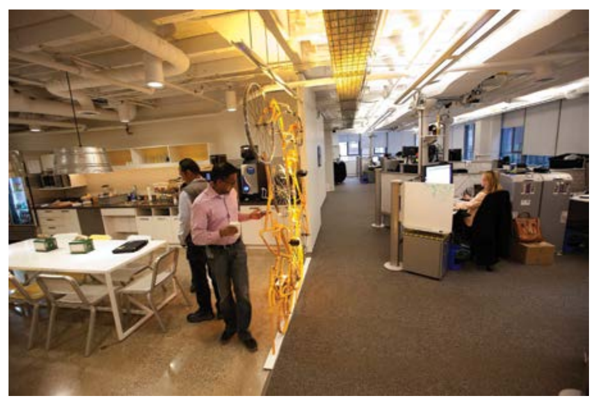
LO3 LO4 What Details Do I Need to Think About?

Decide what you'll wear, how to get there, and what you'll take with you.

What to Wear

Your interview clothing should match the job: it's important to look the part you're hoping to play. Choose your clothes and accessories based on your knowledge of the corporate culture. And when the interview is scheduled, ask the person who invites you if the company has a dress policy. Even if the dress is "casual," wear a good-quality shirt and skirt or pants, not jeans.

If you're interviewing for a management or office job, wear a business suit in a conservative colour (black, grey, or navy) and a seasonally appropriate fabric. If you have good taste and a good eye for colour, follow your instincts.



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In Google's Toronto office, employees are hired because they possess both the skills to do the job and the creativity to imagine original ideas. Applicants' portfolios are expected to contain evidence of both.

If fashion isn't your strong point, visit Pinterest and thumb through newspapers and magazines for ideas, or visit stores, noting details—the exact shade of blue in a suit, the number of buttons on the sleeve, the placement of pockets, the width of lapels. You can find quality clothes at bargain prices in second-hand and vintage clothing shops in your town or city.

Choose comfortable shoes. The last thing you want to be thinking about during an important interview is how much your feet hurt! You may also do a fair amount of walking during the office visit or plant trip.

Take care of all the details. Check your heels to make sure they aren't run-down; make sure your shoes are shined. Have your hair cut or styled conservatively. Keep jewellery and makeup understated. Personal hygiene must be impeccable. If you wear cologne or perfume, keep it to a minimum. More and more workplaces have scent-free policies to accommodate people with allergies.

How to Get There

If you're going to a place you haven't been before, do a practice run at the same time of day your interview is scheduled for. Check out bus transfers or parking fees. On the day of the interview, leave early enough that you'll get to the interview 15 minutes early.

Use the extra time to check your appearance in the restroom mirror and to look through the company publications in the waiting room. If an accident does delay you, call to say you'll be late.

What to Take to the Interview

Take extra copies of your resumé. If your campus placement office has already given the interviewer a data sheet, present the resumé at the beginning of the interview: "I thought you might like a little more information about me."

Bring something to write on, something to write with, and *a typed list of the questions you want to ask.*

Bring copies of your work or a portfolio: an engineering design, a copy of a report you wrote on a job or in a business writing class, an article you wrote for the campus paper. You don't need to present these unless the interview calls for them, but they can be very effective.

Bring the names, addresses, and phone numbers of your references if you haven't already provided them.

Bring complete details about your work history and education, including dates and street addresses, in case you're asked to fill out an application form.

If you can afford it, buy a briefcase to carry these items. An inexpensive briefcase is fine.

What Notes to Take

During or immediately after the interview, write down the details.

- The name of the interviewer, or all the people you talked to if it's a group interview or an office visit (the easiest way to get the interviewer's name is to ask for his or her card)
- The traits/facts the interviewer seemed to like best about you
- Any negative points or concerns that came up that you need to counter in your follow-up letter or phone calls
- Answers to your questions about the job and company
- The date you'll hear from the company
- Details you'll want to include in your follow-up thank-you letter

LO3 LO4 What Do I Practise Before the Interview?

Practise everything, and often; practice builds confidence.

Ex. 26.7

Your interviewing skills will improve with practice. Rehearse everything you can: put on the clothes you'll wear and practise entering a room, shaking hands, sitting down, and answering questions. Ask a friend to interview you, and video the interview. Answering questions aloud is surprisingly harder than answering them in your head. Recording is more valuable if you can do it at least twice, so you can modify your behaviour the second time and check to see if the modification works.

Your Best Self

Should you "be yourself"? There's no point in assuming a radically different persona. If you do, you run the risk of getting into a job that you'll hate (though the persona you assumed might have loved it). On the other hand, we all have several selves: we can be lazy, insensitive, bored, slow-witted, and tongue-tied, but we can also be energetic, perceptive, interested, intelligent, and articulate. Prepare to be your best self at the interview.

To increase your confidence, review your positive personality traits and accomplishments—the things you're especially proud of having done—in writing (Module 24). You'll feel more confident and make a better impression when you can talk specifically about the match between the position and your skills.

Experts agree on the importance of a positive demeanor and confident body language.[2] Shake hands firmly, sit up straight, make and maintain eye contact, smile, keep your voice pleasant, and avoid fillers ("basically," "so," "like," "you know").

Office visits that involve meals and semi-social occasions call for sensible choices. When you order, choose something that's easy and not messy to eat. Watch your table manners. Eat a light lunch, with no alcohol, so that you'll be alert during the afternoon. At dinner or an evening party, decline alcohol if you don't drink or are underage. If you do drink, accept just one drink: you're still being evaluated. Be aware that many people respond negatively to smoking.

Parts of the Interview

Every interview has an opening, a body, and a close.

In the **opening** (two to five minutes), good interviewers will try to put you at ease. Some interviewers will open with easy questions about your major or interests. Others open by telling you about the job or the company. If this happens, listen so you can answer later questions to show that you can do the job and contribute to the company that's being described.

The **body** of the interview (10 minutes to an hour) is an all-too-brief time for you to highlight your qualifications and find out what you need to know to decide if you want to accept a second interview. Expect questions that allow you to highlight your strong points and questions that probe any weaknesses evident from your resumé. ("You were neither in school nor working last fall. What were you doing?") Normally the interviewer will also try to sell you on the company and give you an opportunity to ask questions.

Be aware of time so that you can make sure to get to your key points and questions: "We haven't covered it yet, but I want you to know that I…" "I'm aware that it's almost 10:30. I do have some more questions that I'd like to ask about the company."

In the **close** of the interview (two to five minutes), the interviewer will usually tell you what happens next: "We'll be bringing our top candidates to the office in February. You should hear from us in three weeks." Close with a positive, assertive statement. Depending on the circumstances, you could say, "I've enjoyed learning more about ITracks; I'd really like to see the new system you talked about," "This job seems to be a good match with my qualifications and expertise."

LO2 LO4 What Do Successful Candidates Do?

They prepare and practise to take an active role in the interview process.

Ex. 26.1–26.11

Successful applicants prepare and practise so that they can

- Use the company name during the interview
- Support their claims with specific details
- Ask specific questions about the job, the company, and the industry

Additionally, successful applicants demonstrate the behaviours described in Table 26.1.

TABLE 26.1

Communication Behaviours of Successful Interviewees

Behaviour	Successful Interviewees
Statements about the position	Were specific and consistent about the position they wanted; were able to tell why they wanted the position
Use of company name	Referred to the company by name four times as often as unsuccessful interviewees
Knowledge about company and position	Made it clear that they had researched the company; referred to specific Web pages, posts, journals, or people who had given them information
Level of interest, enthusiasm	Expressed approval of information verbally and non-verbally; explicitly indicated desire to work for this particular company
Non-verbals	Made eye contact often; smiled
Verbals	Answered positively and confidently—and backed up the claim with a specific example of “problem solving” or “toughness”
Response to topic shift by interviewer	Accepted topic shift
Use of industry terms and technical jargon	Used technical jargon: “point of purchase display,” “NCR charge,” “two-column approach,” “direct mail,” “big pharma”
Use of specifics	Supported claims with specific personal experiences, comparisons, statistics, statements of teachers and employers
Questions	Asked specific questions based on knowledge of the industry and the company; personalized questions (“What would my duties be?”)
Control of time and topics	Talked 55 percent of the total time, initiated subjects 56 percent of the time.

Sources: Katharine Hanson, (n.d.) “The unspoken secrets of job interviewing: How your nonverbal presentation and behaviors impact the impression you make,” *Quintessential Careers,* http://www.quintcareers.com/interviewing_unspoken_secrets.html; Alan Chapman, (2014). “Sample job interviews questions and answers—for interviewers and interviewees,” *businessballs.com*, http://www.businessballs.com/interviews.htm#job_hunting_career_help; Andreas von der Heydt, (12 September 2013). “How you succeed at every job interview,” *Pulse*, https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20130912053712-175081329-how-you-succeed-at-every-job-interview; also based on research reported by Lois J. Einhorn (1981, July), “An inner view of the job interview: An investigation of successful communicative behaviors,” *Communication Education*, 30, 217–28; Robert W. Elder and Michael M. Harris, Eds. (1999), *The employment interview handbook,* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage): 300, 303, 327–28.

LO5 How Do I Answer Traditional Interview Questions?

Choose answers that fit your qualifications and your interview strategy.

Ex 26.1, 26.5–26.7

Interviewers frequently ask the following questions during interviews. Prepare on paper before the interview so that you’ll be able to come up with answers that are responsive, honest, and paint a positive picture of you.

Choose answers that fit your qualifications and your interview strategy.

1. *Tell me about yourself.*

   Don’t launch into an autobiography. Instead, talk about your achievements as they relate to the organization’s culture and goals. Give specific examples to prove each of your strengths.

2. *What makes you think you're qualified to work for this company? (or) I'm interviewing 120 people for two jobs. Why should I hire you?*

   This question might feel like an attack. Use it as an opportunity to state your strong points: your qualifications for the job, the skills, knowledge, and character traits that separate you from other applicants.

3. *What two or three accomplishments have given you the greatest satisfaction?*

   Pick accomplishments that you're proud of, that create the image you want to project, and that enable you to share one of the things you want the interviewer to know about you (Module 24, Exercises 24.6 and 24.7). Focus not just on the desired result, but also on the transferable skills—teamwork, problem solving, and critical thinking—that made the achievement possible.

4. *Why do you want to work for us? What is your ideal job?*

   Even if you're interviewing just for practice, make sure you have a good answer—preferably two or three reasons you'd like to work for that company. Do your homework; know everything possible about the company and the job. If you don't seem to be taking the interview seriously, the interviewer won't take you seriously, and you won't even get good practice.

5. *What college or university courses did you like best and least? Why?*

   This question may be an icebreaker; it may be designed to discover the kind of applicant the organization is looking for. If your favourite class was something outside your program, prepare an answer that shows that you have qualities that can help you in the job you're applying for: "My favourite class was Canadian Literature. We got a chance to think on our own, rather than just regurgitate facts; we made presentations to the class every week. I found I really like sharing my ideas with other people and presenting reasons for my conclusions about something."

6. *Why are your grades so low?*

   If possible, show that the cause of low grades has now been solved or isn't relevant to the job you're applying for: "My father almost died last year, and my schoolwork really suffered." "When I started, I didn't have any firm goals. Since I discovered the program that is right for me, my grades have all been B's or better." "I'm not good at multiple-choice tests. But you need someone who can work with people, not someone who can take tests."

7. *What have you read recently? What movies have you seen recently?*

   These questions may be icebreakers; they may be designed to probe your intellectual depth. Be prepared: read at least one book or magazine (regularly) and see at least one movie that you could discuss at an interview.

8. *Show me some samples of your writing.*

   The year you're interviewing, go through your old papers and select the best ones, editing and reformatting them, if necessary, so that you'll have samples if you're asked for them. Show interviewers essays, reports, or business documents, not poetry or song lyrics.

   If you don't have samples at the interview, mail them to the interviewer immediately after the interview.

9. *Where do you see yourself in five years?*

   Employers ask this question to find out if you are a self-starter or if you passively respond to what happens. You may want to have several scenarios for five years from now to use in different kinds of interviews. Or you may want to say, "Well, my goals may change as opportunities arise. But right now, I want to…"

10. *What are your interests outside of work? What campus or community activities have you been involved in?*

    Although it's desirable to be well rounded, naming 10 interests might work against you: the interviewer might wonder when you'll have time to work. If you mention your fiancé(e), spouse, or children in response to this question ("Well, my fiancé and I like to go sailing"), it is perfectly legal for the interviewer to ask follow-up questions ("What would you do if your spouse got a job offer in another town?"), even though the same question would be illegal if the interviewer brought up the subject first.

11. *What have you done to learn about this company?*

    An employer may ask this to see what you already know about the company (if you've read the recruiting literature, the interviewer doesn't need to repeat it). This question may also be used to see how active a role you're taking in the job search and how interested you are in this job.

12. *What adjectives would you use to describe yourself?*

    Use only positive ones. Be ready to illustrate each with a specific example of something you've done.

13. *What is your greatest strength?*

    Employers ask this question to give you a chance to sell yourself and to learn something about your values. Pick a strength related to work, school, or activities: "I'm good at working with people." "I can really sell things." "I'm good at solving problems." "I learn quickly." "I'm reliable. When I say I'll do something, I do it." Be ready to illustrate each with a specific example of something you've done.

14. *What is your greatest weakness?*

    Employers ask this question to get a sense of your values and self-awareness. Use a work-related negative, and emphasize what you're doing about it. Interviewers won't let you get away with a "weakness" like being a workaholic or just not having any experience yet. Instead

    a. Discuss a weakness that is not related to the job you're being considered for, and that will not be needed even when you're promoted. End your answer with a positive related to the job.

    > **For a creative job in advertising:** I don't like accounting. I know it's important, but I don't like it. I even hire someone to do my taxes. I'm much more interested in being creative and working with people, which is why I find this position interesting.
    >
    > **For a job in administration:** I don't like selling products. I hated selling cookies when I was a Girl Guide. I'd much rather work with ideas—and I really like selling the ideas that I believe in.

    b. Discuss a weakness that you are working to improve.

    > In the past, I wasn't a strong writer. But last term I took a course in business writing that taught me how to organize my ideas and how to revise. Now I'm a lot more confident that I can write effective reports and memos.

    c. Discuss a work-related weakness.

    > Sometimes I procrastinate. Fortunately, I work well under pressure, but a couple of times I've really put myself in a bind.

15. *Why are you looking for another job?*

    Stress what you're looking for in a new job, not why you want to get away from your old one. If you were fired, say so. There are four acceptable ways to explain why you were fired.

    a. You lost your job, along with many others, when the company downsized for economic reasons.

b. It wasn't a good match. Add what you now know you need in a job, and ask what the employer can offer in this area.

c. You and your supervisor had a personality conflict. Make sure you show that this was an isolated incident and that you normally get along well with people.

d. You made mistakes, but you've learned from them and are now ready to work well. Be ready to offer a specific anecdote proving that you have indeed changed.

16. *What questions do you have?*

Your questions tell the interviewer the extent of your preparedness and research, and give the interviewer a sense of your priorities and values.

Prepare a typed list of specific questions that demonstrate your genuine interest in the position and the fit between your values and the company culture. Sample questions include

- What would I be doing on a day-to-day basis?
- What kind of training programs do you have? If, as I'm rotating among departments, I find that I prefer one area, can I specialize in it when the training program is over?
- How do you evaluate employees? How often do you review them? Where would you expect a new trainee (banker, staff accountant, salesperson) to be three years from now?
- What happened to the last person who had this job?
- How are interest rates (a new product from competitors, imports, demographic trends, government regulation, etc.) affecting your company?
- How would you describe the company's culture?
- This sounds like a great job. What are the drawbacks?

You won't be able to anticipate every question you may get. However, you can research online and with other people who have interviewed recently to find out what questions are being asked in your field.

LO6 How Do I Prepare for Behavioural and Situational Interviews?

Think about skills you've used that could transfer to other jobs. Learn as much as you can about the culture of the company you hope to join.

Ex 26.8

Many companies are now using behavioural or situational interviews. **Behavioural interviews** ask the applicant to describe actual behaviours, rather than plans or general principles. Thus, instead of asking, "How would you motivate people?" the interviewer might ask, "Tell me what happened the last time you wanted to get other people to do something." Follow-up questions might include, "What exactly did you do to handle the situation? How did you feel about the results? How did the other people feel? How did your superior feel about the results?"

In your answer

- Describe the situation.
- Tell what you did.

- Describe the outcome.
- Show that you understand the implications of what you did and suggest how you might modify your behaviour in other situations.

For example, if you did the extra work yourself when a team member didn't do his or her share, does that fact suggest that you do not handle conflict well or prefer to work alone? You might go on to demonstrate that doing the extra work was appropriate in that situation, but that you could respond differently in other situations.

Since behavioural questions require applicants to tell what they actually did—rather than to say what ought to be done—interviewers feel they offer better insight into how someone will actually function as an employee. Figure 26.1 lists common behavioural questions.

Situational interviews put you in a situation that allows the interviewer to see whether you have the qualities the company is seeking.

Situational interviews may also be conducted using traditional questions but evaluating behaviours other than the answers. For its customer assistance centre, Greyhound hired applicants who made eye contact with the interviewer and smiled at least five times during a 15-minute interview.[3]

Note the transferable skills you gained through your work, academic, and volunteer experiences. These skills are invaluable assets in a job candidate and employee.

Increasingly common is the situational interview that asks you to do—on the spot—the kind of thing the job would require. An interviewer for a sales job handed applicants a ballpoint pen and said, "Sell me this pen." (It's OK to ask who the target market is and whether this is a repeat or a new customer.)

Other interview requests include asking applicants to participate in role-plays, to make presentations, or to lead meetings.

LO7 How Do I Prepare for Phone or Skype Interviews?

Prepare as you would for the in-person interview. Practise until you feel comfortable.

Ex. 26.1, 26.7–26.9

Try to schedule phone interviews for home, not work, and for a time when things will be quiet. If a company wants to interview you on the spot, accept only if the timing is good. If it isn't, say so: "We just sat down to dinner. May I call you back in 30 minutes?" Then get your information about the company, ask your roommates to be quiet, and get your thoughts in order. Use a landline, not a cell phone, to ensure good reception.

FIGURE 26.1

Behavioural Interview Questions

Describe a situation in which you

1. Created an opportunity for yourself in a job or volunteer position
2. Used writing to achieve your goal
3. Went beyond the call of duty to get a job done
4. Communicated successfully with someone you disliked
5. Had to make a decision quickly
6. Overcame a major obstacle
7. Took a project from start to finish
8. Were unable to complete a project on time
9. Used good judgment and logic in solving a problem
10. Worked under a tight deadline
11. Worked with a tough boss
12. Handled a difficult situation with a co-worker
13. Made an unpopular decision
14. Gave a presentation
15. Worked with someone who wasn't doing his or her share of the work

Three strategies are important when preparing for a phone interview.

- Research the company information, and identify in writing how your qualifications can contribute.
- Record yourself so you can make any adjustments in pronunciation and voice qualities.
- Practise short answers to questions. After giving a short answer in the interview, say, "Would you like more information?" Without a visual channel, you can't see the body language that tells you someone else wants to speak.

During the interview, listen closely to the questions, and speak slowly and clearly.

For Skype interviews, use the same guidelines as those for the in-person and phone interview. Dress as you would for the in-person interview.

As technology changes, many companies are changing their interview practices. If the company sends a list of questions, asking you to pre-record the responses

- Practise your answers.
- Record the interview as many times as necessary to present yourself at your best.
- Be specific. Since the employer can't ask follow-up questions, you need to be detailed about how your credentials could help the employer.

For phone, Skype, or pre-recorded interviews, smile when you talk to put more energy into your voice.

LO8 How Should I Follow Up the Interview?

Send a letter that reinforces positives and overcomes any negatives. Use PAIBOC analysis to clarify your message content.

Ex. 26.10

Following up after the interview is a multi-step process. Immediately after the interview, note any questions and ideas that impressed you. These notes can help focus your first letter.

Then, based on your PAIBOC analysis, send an email or hard copy letter to

- Reinforce positives from the first interview
- Overcome any negatives
- Get information you can use to persuade the interviewer to hire you (see Figure 26.2)

FIGURE 26.2

PAIBOC Questions for Analysis

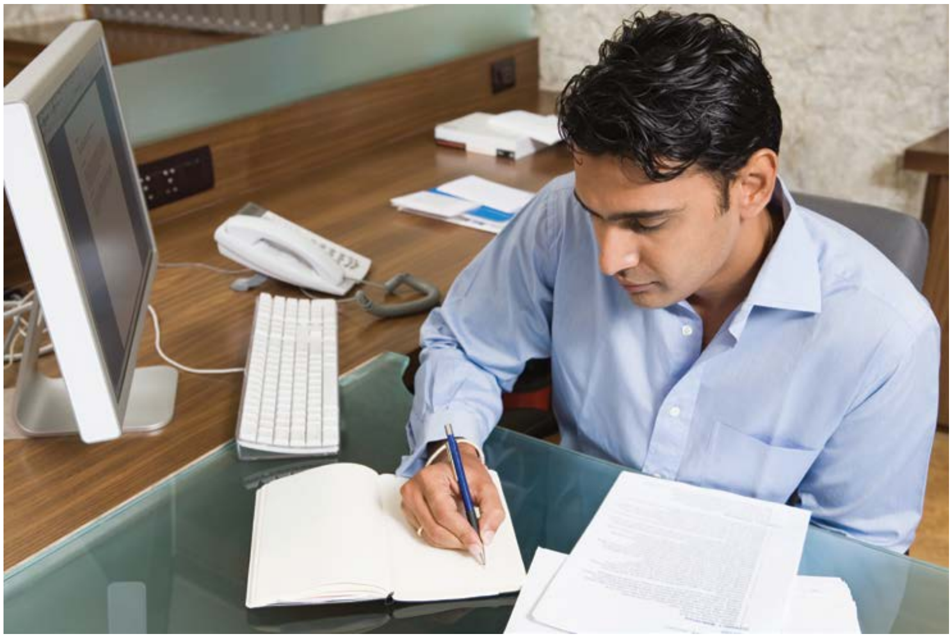
P	What are your **purposes** in writing? You have several: to demonstrate your emotional intelligence, to emphasize your interest in the job, to reinforce the fit between the organization and you, and to influence the recruiter's opinion positively.
A	Who is your **audience**? What do they value? What do they need? How can you further demonstrate to your audiences that you have the qualifications and interpersonal skills they seek?
I	What **information** must your message include? What information—about the company and the position—did the interviewers emphasize? What further information can you provide to impress your readers favourably?
B	What reasons or reader **benefits** can you use to support your position?
O	What **objections** can you expect your readers to have? What negative elements of your message must you de-emphasize or overcome?
C	How will the **context** affect the reader's response? Think about your relationship to the reader, the economy, the goals of the organization, the time of year, and any special circumstances.

A letter (whether a hard copy or an email attachment) is a more formal follow-up message than an email. Base your decision about which to send on your audience analysis. A letter thanking your hosts is essential, however, when your interview includes an office visit or other form of hospitality. A well-written, error-free letter can be the deciding factor that gets you the job.[4]

In your letter, be sure to

- Thank the interviewer for his or her time and hospitality.
- Reinforce the interviewer's positive impressions.
- Counter any negative impressions that may have come up at the interview.
- Use the language of the company, and refer to specific things you learned during your interview or saw during your visit.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Refer to the next step: whether you'll wait to hear from the employer or you will call to learn about the status of your application.

Figures 26.3 and 26.4 offer examples of follow-up messages.



Take notes during and immediately after the interview: they're the source of your follow-up letters.

FIGURE 26.3

A Follow-Up Email

From: Ahmed Dhanray <adhanray@address.ca> Sent: Monday, August 11, 2015, 5:45 PM
To: dland@notime.ca
Subject: Thank you

Dear Delmarie Land:

Acknowledges hospitality and reinforces interest in the position

Thank you for your hospitality during my interview last Thursday. After visiting Notime International and speaking with you and your team, I am convinced that a career in logistics is the right choice for me.

Reminds the reader of strengths

Seeing Kelly, Gene, and Leah work together to coordinate an international client's shipment gave me a sense of the deadlines you have to meet and of the collaboration required for customer service success. As we discussed, I learned to meet deadlines and work collaboratively during mysummer co-op placement with Crowley Logistics. As I mentioned during the interview, my team at Crowley suggested a computerized warehouse system that saved the company more than $30,000 in its first year of implementation. I welcome the opportunity to make a similar contribution at Notime.

Follow-up makes it easy for the reader

Please call me at 416-555-4567 if you have additional questions, or if I can provide you with more information.

Sincerely,
Ahmed Dhanray

FIGURE 26.4

A Follow-Up Letter

71 Autumn Ridge Road
Kitchener, ON N2P 2J6

March 23, 2016

Mr. Gino Focasio
Human Resources Department
Perlmutter Canada
8069 Lawson Road
Milton, ON L9T 5C4

Dear Mr. Focasio:

Thank you for interviewing me for the industrial engineering technician position, available in your Milton plant. I appreciate the time that Ms. Rossiter, Mr. Alverez, Mr. Storino, and you gave me.

Reminds interviewer of his strong points

My expertise in jig and fixture design, and in AutoCAD software, would contribute to your commitment to continuous improvement, as described by Mr. Storino during the interview. Seeing your machining and assembly processes assured me that I would be able to apply my CNC programming experience to benefit the company.

Refers to important items he saw and heard during the interview

Again, thank you for your time and for the plant tour. I am very excited at the prospect of working with Perlmutter Canada. Please call me at 519-555-5912, or email me at zhang@address.com if you have any additional questions.

Provides positive confirmation of interest in the position

Makes it easy for the reader to respond

Sincerely,

Zhang Huang

Zhang Huang

LO1 What If My First Offer Isn't for the Job I Most Want?

Phone your first-choice employer to find out where you are on that list.

Ex. 26.11

Some employers offer jobs at the end of the office visit. In other cases, you may wait for weeks or even months to hear. Employers usually offer jobs orally. You must say something in response immediately, so plan some strategies.

If your first offer is not from your first choice, express your pleasure at being offered the job, but do not accept it on the phone. "That's great! May I let you know?" Most firms will give you a week to decide.

Then call the other companies you're interested in. Explain, "I've just gotten a job offer, but I'd rather work for you. Can you tell me what the status of my application is?" Nobody will put that information in writing, but almost everyone will tell you over the phone. With this information, you're in a better position to decide whether to accept the original offer.

Make your acceptance contingent on a written job offer confirming the terms. That letter should spell out not only salary but also fringe benefits and any special provisions you have negotiated. If something is missing, call the interviewer for clarification: "We agreed that I'd be reviewed for a promotion and higher salary in six months, but I don't see that in the letter." You have more power to resolve misunderstandings now than you will after six months or a year on the job.

When you've accepted one job, let the other places you visited know that you're no longer interested. Then they can go to their second choices. If you're second on someone else's list, you'd appreciate other candidates' removing themselves so the way is clear for you. Because the world is a small place, because everyone is the customer, and because you may someday want to work for the company you're currently turning down, follow the *KISS* formula: *Keep it short and simple.*

> Dear Jackson Phillips:
>
> Thank you for offering me the sales position in your electronics division.
>
> Since Allied Signal enjoys an international reputation for innovative quality products, I'm pleased to be considered for an opportunity with the Allied team.
>
> After a great deal of thought, however, I have decided to look for employment opportunities closer to home while investigating courses for an advanced degree. I must, therefore, decline your offer.
>
> Again, thank you for your consideration.
>
> Sincerely,

Expanding *a* CRITICAL SKILL

Projecting Professional Attitude

As more Canadians use clothing to reflect their personalities and/or ethnicities, organizations are adopting more flexible dress codes.

Even on dress-down or casual Fridays, however, organizations still expect employees to take care of business. Attention to detail, organization, accuracy, economy, and courtesy are the norm. According to Max Messruer, chair of Accountemps and author of the best-selling *Job Hunting for Dummies* (IDG Books Worldwide), what you wear determines others' perceptions of you and directly affects your career advancement.

On casual days, wear clothes in good condition that are one or two "notches" below what you'd wear on other days. If suits are the norm, choose blazers and slacks or skirts. If blazers and slacks or skirts are the norm, choose sweaters or knit sport shirts; khakis, simple skirts, or dressier jeans; or simple dresses. Wear good shoes and always be well groomed. Avoid anything that's ill fitting or revealing.

Other symbols also convey professionalism. Your work area, for instance, says a lot about you. If your organization allows employees to personalize their desks or offices with photographs, knickknacks, and posters, don't display so much that you seem frivolous. And never display offensive photos or slogans, even in an attempt to be funny. The same caution goes for screen savers and radio stations. It isn't professional to play a morning "shock jock" who uses coarse language and offensive stereotypes.

If your organization allows employees to listen to music, keep the volume at a reasonable level. If your organization allows, consider wearing headphones.

Avoid playing computer games, surfing the Web inappropriately, or ordering personal items on company time. These activities are fine on your own time, but unethical, and in some cases illegal, on the organization's clock. You can be fired for browsing inappropriate material online.

Keep your voice mail messages succinct and professional—find out what co-workers say in theirs.

Keep your desk organized. File papers; keep stacks to a minimum. Throw away anything you don't need. Don't store food in your office. Clean periodically. Water your plants.

The volume of your voice can also disturb others. Although most people wouldn't shout across an office, many of us don't realize how loud our voices can be when we're excited or happy. Keep personal conversations to a minimum, in person and on the phone.

Learn the culture of your organization and fit into it as much as you can. When in doubt, model your dress and behaviour on someone the organization respects.

MODULE SUMMARY

- To be your best self at the interview
  - Develop an overall interview management strategy based on your answers to these three questions.
    1. What do you need to know about the organization and the job to decide whether you want to accept this job if it is offered to you?
    2. What two to five personal or professional characteristics do you want the interviewer to know about you?
    3. What disadvantages or weaknesses do you want to overcome or minimize?
  - Plan the interview logistics—what to wear, how to get there, what to bring—so that you can concentrate on rehearsing a confident interview session.
    1. Wear clothes appropriate for the position.
    2. Bring an extra copy of your resumé, something to write on and with, copies of your best work, and a list of typed questions you want to ask.
  - Rehearse: ask a friend to interview you; watch a recording of yourself so that you can evaluate and modify your behaviour.
  - During and immediately after the interview, note the name of the interviewer, positives and negatives, answers to your questions, and the date you will hear from the company.
- Successful applicants are prepared. They
  - Know what they want to do
  - Use the company name throughout the interview
  - Demonstrate that they have researched the company
  - Support claims with specific examples and stories
  - Use industry and company jargon
  - Ask specific questions
  - Talk more of the time
- In behavioural interviews, recruiters ask applicants to describe actual behaviours and outcomes.
  - To answer a behavioural question, describe the situation, tell what you did, describe the outcome, show that you understand the implications of your behaviour, and describe how you might modify your behaviour in other situations.
- Situational interviews put you in a position that allows the interviewer to see if you have the qualities the company is seeking.
- For a phone or Skype interview, prepare. During the interview ensure you have no distractions, and listen carefully to each question before giving concise answers.
- If you make a recording, make sure to re-record to show your best self.
- Use follow-up phone calls to reinforce positives from the first interview, to overcome any negatives, and to get information you can use to persuade the interviewer to hire you.

- Use a follow-up letter to
    - Remind the reviewer of your qualities
    - Counter any negative impressions
    - Use the language of the industry and company to refer to specifics that came up in the interview, or that you saw in your visit
    - Be enthusiastic
    - Refer to next steps

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 26

Questions for Critical Thinking

26.1 What interviewing resources are available on YouTube? Watch two of these resources and assess their relevance. What important tips do these videos offer?

26.2 How can you present your best self during the panel interview? Research to find five tips on acing the panel interview.

26.3 What is the STAR interview technique? Research to discover how to use the STAR technique to answer interview questions.

26.4 Why is "mirroring" an interviewer's communication style a good interview tactic?

Exercises and Problems

26.5 Interviewing Job Hunters

Talk to students at your school who are interviewing for jobs this term. Possible questions to ask them include

- What field are you in? How good is the job market in that field this year?
- What questions have you been asked at job interviews? Were you asked any illegal or sexist questions? Any really oddball questions?
- What answers seemed to go over well? What answers bombed?
- Were you asked to take any tests (skills, physical)?
- How long did you have to wait after a first interview to learn whether you were being invited for an office visit? How long after an office visit did it take to learn whether you were being offered a job? How much time did the company give you to decide?
- What advice would you have for someone who will be interviewing next term or next year?

As your instructor directs

a. Summarize your findings in an email to your instructor.

b. Report your findings orally to the class.

c. Join a group of two or three other students to write a blog describing the results of your interviews.

26.6 Interviewing an Interviewer

Talk to someone who regularly interviews candidates for entry-level jobs. Possible questions to ask are

- How long have you been interviewing for your organization? Does everyone on the management ladder at your company do some interviewing, or do people specialize in it?
- Do you follow a set structure for interviews? What are some of the standard questions you ask?
- What are you looking for? How important are (1) good grades, (2) leadership roles in extracurricular groups, and (3) relevant work experience? What advice would you give to someone who doesn't have one or more of these?
- What behaviours do students exhibit that create a poor impression? Think about the worst candidate you've interviewed. What did he or she do (or not do) to create such a negative impression?
- What behaviours make a good impression? Recall the best student you've ever interviewed. Why did he or she impress you so much?
- How does your employer evaluate and reward your success as an interviewer?
- What advice would you give to someone who still has a year or so before the job hunt begins?

As your instructor directs

a. Summarize your findings in an email to your instructor.
b. Report your findings orally to the class.
c. Team up with a small group of students to write a group report describing the results of your interviews.
d. Write to the interviewer thanking him or her for taking the time to talk to you.

26.7 Preparing an Interview Strategy

Based on your research for Exercises 26.1 through 26.4, and for Problems 26.5 and 26.6, prepare an interview strategy. As part of the strategy

1. List two to five things about yourself that you want the interviewer to know before you leave the interview.
2. Identify any weaknesses or apparent weaknesses in your record and plan ways to explain or minimize them.
3. List the points you need to learn about an employer to decide whether to accept an office visit or plant trip.

As your instructor directs

a. Share your strategy with a small group of students.
b. Describe your strategy in an email to your instructor.
c. Present your strategy orally to the class.

26.8 Preparing Answers to Behavioural Interview Questions

Think about

1. A conflict you have been part of and your role in resolving it
2. A team you have worked on and the role you played
3. A time you were asked to behave in a way you thought was unethical
4. A time you were unable to complete a project by the due date
5. A time you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker
6. A time you overcame a major obstacle
7. A time you adapted to a difficult situation

As your instructor directs

a. Share your answers with a small group of students.
b. Present your answers in an email to your instructor, and explain why you've chosen the examples you describe.
c. Present your answers orally to the class.

26.9 Preparing Questions to Ask Employers

Prepare a list of questions to ask at job interviews.

1. Prepare a list of three to five general questions that apply to most employers in your field.
2. Prepare two to five specific questions for each of the three companies you are most interested in.

As your instructor directs

a. Share the questions with a small group of students.
b. List the questions in an email to your instructor.
c. Present your questions orally to the class.

26.10 Writing a Follow-Up Letter After an Office Visit or Plant Trip

Write a follow-up email message or letter after an office visit or plant trip. Thank your hosts for their hospitality, relate your strong points to things you learned about the company during the visit, overcome any negatives that may remain, be enthusiastic about the company, and submit receipts for your expenses so you can be reimbursed, if the company has indicated they will do so.

26.11 Clarifying the Terms of a Job Offer

Last week, you got a job offer from your first-choice company, and you accepted it over the phone. Today, the written confirmation arrived. The letter specifies the starting salary and fringe benefits you had negotiated. However, during the office visit, you were promised a 5 percent raise after six months on the job. The job offer says nothing about the raise. You do want the job, but you want it on the terms you thought you had negotiated.

Write an email to your contact at the company, Damon Winters.

Polishing *your* Prose

Matters on Which Experts Disagree

Any living language changes. New usages appear first in speaking. Here are five issues on which experts currently disagree.

1. Plural pronouns to refer to *everybody*, *everyone*, and *each*. Standard grammar says these words require singular pronouns: *his* or *hers* rather than *their*.
2. Split infinitives. An infinitive is the form of a verb that contains to: *to understand*. An infinitive is "split" when another word separates the to form the rest of n infinitive: *to easily understand*, *to boldly go*. The most recent edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* allows split infinitives.
3. *Hopefully* to mean *I hope that*. *Hopefully* means "in a hopeful manner." However, a speaker who says "Hopefully the rain will stop" is talking about the speaker's hope, not the rain's.
4. *Verbal* to mean *oral*. *Verbal* means "using words." Therefore, both writing and speaking are verbal communication. Non-verbal communication (e.g., body language) does not use words.
5. Comma before *and* (the series or serial comma). In a series of three or more items, some experts require a comma after the next-to-last item (the item before the *and*); others don't. This book uses serial commas.

Ask your instructor and your boss if they are willing to accept the less formal usage. When you write to someone you don't know, use standard grammar and usage.

Exercises

Each of the following sentences illustrates informal usage. (a) Which would your instructor or boss accept? (b) Rewrite each of the sentences using standard grammar and usage.

1. Everyone should bring their laptops to the sales meeting.
2. The schedule includes new product information, role-plays with common selling situations, and awards to the top salespeople.
3. To really take advantage of the meeting, you need to bring all of your new product info.
4. Prepare to make a brief verbal report on a challenging sales situation.
5. Think of a time when it was hard to even get in the door to see a potential customer.
6. Hopefully, we will have time to work through many of these situations in our role-plays.
7. Awards include best rookie sales representative, the most improved region, everyone who beat their quota, and sales representative of the year.
8. We'll feature verbal quotes from customers in our radio ads.
9. Our website will let people listen to each customer summarizing verbally what they like best about our products.
10. Hopefully, the website will be live so that we can access it during the meeting.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises in the Polishing Your Prose Answer Key.

APPENDIX A

Revising Sentences and Paragraphs

Writing *style* results from the conscious choices writers make to convey meaning. Style elements include everything the writer uses, including

- Medium (for example, tweet, text, email, letter attachment, oral presentation)
- Layout and design
- White space, bullets, headings, and subheadings
- Format and organizational pattern
- Paragraph and sentence length
- Word choice
- Typeface and size

Style describes the way writers choose to use these elements.

Good business style creates messages that are easy for the audience to read and understand. Effective writers work on their individual styles through revision and editing, consciously shaping the style of each document to meet the needs of their audiences and to achieve their purposes.

What Is Good Business Writing Style?

Good business style is polite, friendly, and natural.

Good business writing sounds like one person talking to another. Although academic writing is traditionally more formal than business writing (see Table A.1), professors also like essays that are lively, engaging, and grammatically correct.

Most people have several styles of talking, which they vary *depending on the audience*. Good writers have several styles, too. A text to your boss about supplier delays may be informal, perhaps even chatty, depending on your relationship; an email to the supplier demanding better service will be more formal.

Keep the following points in mind when you choose a level of formality for a specific document.

- Always err on the side of courtesy: use a friendly, informal style for someone you've talked with.
- Avoid contractions, slang, and even minor grammatical lapses in messages and texts you write to people you don't know. Abbreviations are only acceptable in emails if they're part of the group's culture.

- Avoid *business-speak* and clichés that obscure meaning and add clutter.
- Pay particular attention to your style when you have to write uncomfortable messages, such as when you write to people in power or when you must give bad news.

TABLE A.1

Different Types of Style

	Conversational Style	Good Business Style	Traditional Term-Paper Style
Formality	Highly informal	Conversational; sounds like a real person talking	More formal than conversation would be, but retains a human voice
Use of contractions	Many contractions	OK to use occasional contractions	Few contractions, if any
Pronouns	Uses *I*, first- and second-person pronouns	Uses *I*, first- and second-person pronouns	First- and second-person pronouns kept to a minimum
Level of friendliness	Friendly	Friendly	No effort to make style friendly
Personal	Personal; refers to specific circumstances of conversation	Personal; may refer to reader by name; refers to specific circumstances of readers	Impersonal; may generally refer to "readers" but does not name them or refer to their circumstances
Word choice	Short, simple words; slang	Short, simple words but avoids slang	Many abstract words; scholarly, technical terms
Sentence and paragraph length	Incomplete sentences; no paragraphs	Short sentences and paragraphs	Sentences and paragraphs usually long
Grammar	Can be ungrammatical	Uses standard edited English	Uses standard edited English
Visual impact	Not applicable	Attention to visual impact, especially information given prominent placement	No particular attention to visual impact

Good business style allows for individual variation. Your writing style contributes to your narrative voice (see Polishing Your Prose, Module 8) and expresses how you feel about both your audience and your topic.

What Style Rules Do I Follow?

In writing, as in design, less is more: keep it short and specific.

Readers rate writers who use clear, simple language and easy-to-read fonts as more intelligent than those who choose to express themselves in a more complicated style.[1]

You can do several things to create your own, readable style.

- Read and write every day. Reading not only expands your vocabulary; regular reading also improves syntax (the way you put words together to make sentences), and your grammar, punctuation, and usage. Furthermore, research proves that reading fiction makes you smarter. Psychology professor, researcher, and novelist Keith Oatley proved that reading fiction improved people's social intelligence.[2]
- Start with a clean page or screen, so that you aren't locked into old sentence structures.
- Try WIRMI: What I Really Mean Is.[3] And apply WIFM: What's In It For Me? (from the audience's perspective). Then revise accordingly.

- Try reading your draft aloud to someone sitting nearby. If the words sound stiff, they'll seem stiff to a reader, too.
- Ask someone else to read your draft aloud. Readers stumble if the words on the page aren't what they expect to see. Revise for clarity in the places readers stumble.

What Do I Look for When I Revise Sentences?

Try these six techniques to make your writing readable.

1. Use active verbs whenever possible.
2. Use strong action verbs to carry the weight of your sentences.
3. Make your writing concise.
4. Vary sentence length and sentence structure.
5. Use parallel structure.
6. Put your readers in your sentences.

1. Use Active Verbs Whenever Possible

"Who does what" sentences emphasize the action that creates clear and interesting writing.

A verb is **active** if the subject of the sentence does the action the verb describes. Business communication favours the use of active verbs. A verb is **passive** if the subject is acted on. Passives are usually made up of a form of the verb *to be* plus a past participle. Passive has nothing to do with the past tense. Passives can be past, present, or future.

were received (passive past)
is recommended (passive present)
will be implemented (passive future)

To identify a passive verb, find the verb. If the verb describes something that the subject is doing, the verb is active. If the verb describes something that is being done to the subject, the verb is passive.

Active	**Passive**
The customer received 500 widgets.	Five hundred widgets were received by the customer.
I recommend this method.	This method is recommended by me.
The provincial agencies will implement the program.	The program will be implemented by the provincial agencies.

To change a passive verb to an active one, you must make the agent the new subject. If no agent is specified in the sentence, you must supply one to make the sentence active.

Passive	**Active**
The request was approved by the <plant manager>.	The plant manager approved the request.
A decision will be made next month. (No agent in sentence.)	The committee will make a decision next month.
An email will be sent informing the customer of the change. (No agent in sentence.)	[You] send the customer an email informing her about the change. (The agent in an imperative sentence is understood to be "you.")

If the active sentence does not have a direct object, no passive equivalent exists.

Active	No Passive Exists
I would like to go to the conference.	
The freight charge will be $1,400.	
The phone rang.	

Passive verbs have at least three disadvantages.

1. If all the information in the original sentence is retained, passive verbs make the sentence longer. Passives take more time to understand.[4]
2. If the agent is omitted, it's not clear who is responsible for doing the action.
3. When many passive verbs are used, or when passives are used in material with many big words, the writing can be boring and pompous.

However, passive verbs are desirable in some situations.

- Use passives to *emphasize the object receiving the action*, not the agent.

  > Your order was shipped November 15.

  The customer's order, not the shipping clerk, is important.

- Use passives to *provide coherence within a paragraph*. A sentence is easier to read if "old" information comes at the beginning of a sentence. When you have been discussing a topic, use the word again as your subject even if that requires a passive verb.

  > The bank made several risky loans in 2008. These loans were written off as "uncollectable" in 2014.

  Using loans as the subject of the second sentence provides a link between the two sentences, making the paragraph as a whole easier to read.

- Use passives to *avoid assigning blame*.

  > The order was damaged during shipment.

  An active verb would require the writer to specify who damaged the order. The passive here is more tactful.

2. Use Strong Action Verbs to Carry the Weight of Your Sentence

The verb is the most important part of an English sentence, and action verbs (*send*, *met*, *see*, *ask*, *reply*, *tell*, *start*, *end*, *fall*, *rise*) create word pictures for clarity that linking verbs (*is*, *are*, *was*, *were*, *seem*, *appear*, *become*, *became*) cannot.

Since the verb is the most important word in any English sentence, put the weight of your sentence in the verb.

When the verb is a form of *to be*, revise the sentence to use a more forceful verb.

Weak	The financial advantage of owning this equipment, instead of leasing it, is 10 percent after taxes.
Better	Owning this equipment rather than leasing it will save us 10 percent after taxes.

Nouns ending in *-ment*, *-ion*, *-al*, and *-ance* often hide verbs.

make an adjustment	adjust
make a payment	pay
make a decision	decide
reach a conclusion	conclude
take into consideration	consider
make a referral	refer
provide assistance	assist

Use verbs to present the information more forcefully.

Weak	We will perform an investigation of the problem.
Better	We will investigate the problem.
Weak	Selection of a program should be based on the client's needs.
Better	Select the program that best fits the client's needs.

3. Make Your Writing Concise

Writing is **wordy** if the same idea can be expressed in fewer words. Unnecessary words bore your reader and make your writing more difficult to follow, since the reader has to keep all the extra words in mind while trying to understand your meaning.

Good writing is concise. Sometimes you may be able to look at a draft and see immediately how to tighten it. When wordiness isn't obvious, try the following strategies to make your writing more concise.

- Eliminate words that say nothing.
- Use gerunds (the *-ing* form of verbs) and infinitives to make sentences shorter and smoother.
- Combine sentences to eliminate unnecessary words.
- Put the meaning of your sentence into the subject and verb to use fewer words.

The following examples show how to use these four techniques.

ELIMINATE WORDS THAT SAY NOTHING

Cut words that are already clear from other words in the sentence. Substitute single words for wordy phrases.

Wordy	Keep this information on file for future reference.
More Concise	Keep this information for reference.
	File this information.
Wordy	Ideally, it would be best to put the billing ticket just below the screen and above the keyboard.
More Concise	If possible, put the billing ticket between the screen and the keyboard.

Phrases beginning with *of*, *which*, and *that* can often be shortened.

Wordy	the question of most importance
More Concise	the most important question
Wordy	the estimate that is enclosed
More Concise	the enclosed estimate

Sentences beginning with *There is/are* or *It is* delay important information and bore the reader. Tighten these sentences for readability.

Wordy	There are three reasons for the success of the project.
More Concise	Three reasons explain the project's success.
Wordy	It is the case that college and university graduates make more money.
More Concise	College and university graduates make more money.

Check your draft. If you find these phrases or any unnecessary words, eliminate them.

USE GERUNDS AND INFINITIVES TO MAKE SENTENCES SHORTER AND SMOOTHER

A **gerund** is the *-ing* form of a verb; grammatically, it is a verb used as a noun. In the sentence, "Running is my favourite activity," *running* is the subject of the sentence.

An **infinitive** is the form of the verb that is preceded by *to*: *to run* is the infinitive.

In the revision below, a gerund (*purchasing*) and an infinitive (*to transmit*) tighten the sentence.

Wordy	A plant suggestion has been made where they would purchase a dedicated line for the purpose of transmitting test reports between plants.
More Concise	The plant suggests purchasing a dedicated line to transmit test reports between plants.

Even when gerunds and infinitives do not greatly affect length, they often make sentences smoother and more conversational.

COMBINE SENTENCES TO ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY WORDS

In addition to saving words, combining sentences focuses the reader's attention on key points, makes your writing sound more sophisticated, and sharpens the relationship between ideas, making your writing more coherent.

Wordy	I conducted this survey by telephone on March 22. I questioned two groups of third-year and fourth-year students—male and female—who, according to the Student Directory, were still living in student housing. The purpose of this survey was to find out why some third-year and fourth-year students continue to live in student housing when the university does not make it mandatory. I also wanted to find out if there were any differences between male and female third-year and fourth-year students in their reasons for choosing to remain in student housing.
More Concise	On March 22, I phoned male and female third-year and fourth-year students living in student housing to find out (1) why they continue to live in student housing even though they are no longer required to do so and (2) whether men and women had the same reasons for staying in student housing.

PUT THE MEANING OF YOUR SENTENCE INTO THE SUBJECT AND VERB TO USE FEWER WORDS

Put the core of your meaning into the subject and verb of your main clause. Think about what you mean and try saying the same thing in several different ways. Some alternatives will be more concise than others. Choose the most concise one.

Wordy	The reason we are recommending putting this process in the cloud is because it will reduce the time required to obtain data and will give us more accurate data.

Better	We are recommending putting this process in the cloud because it will save time and increase accuracy.
Concise	Cloud storage will give us more accurate data, faster.
Wordy	The purpose of this letter is to indicate that if we are unable to mutually benefit from our seller–buyer relationship, with satisfactory material and satisfactory payment, then we have no alternative other than to sever the relationship. In other words, unless the account is handled in 45 days, we will have to change our terms to a permanent COD basis.
Better	A good buyer–seller relationship depends on satisfactory material and satisfactory payment. You can continue to charge your purchases from us only if you clear your present balance within 45 days.

4. Vary Sentence Length and Sentence Structure

Readable prose mixes sentence lengths and varies sentence structure. Most sentences should be between 14 and 20 words. A really short sentence (fewer than 10 words) can add punch to your prose. Really long sentences (more than 30 words) are danger signs.

You can vary sentence patterns in several ways. First, you can mix simple, compound, and complex sentences. **Simple sentences** have one main clause.

> We will open a new store this month.

Compound sentences have two main clauses joined with *and*, *but*, *or*, or another conjunction. Compound sentences work best when the ideas in the two clauses are closely related.

> We have hired staff, and they will complete their training next week.

> We wanted to have a local radio station broadcast from the store during its grand opening, but the DJs were already booked.

Complex sentences have at least one main and one subordinate clause; they are good for showing logical relationships.

> When the stores open, we will have balloons and specials in every department.

> Because we already have a strong customer base in the north, we expect the new store to be just as successful as the store in the City Centre Mall.

Compound-complex sentences have two or more main clauses with one or more subordinate clauses; these sentences combine interdependent, complex ideas.

> Although we have a strong customer base in the north, we expect the new store to attract younger, urban professionals; therefore, we'll be focusing our promotional efforts on this particular demographic.

You can also vary sentences by changing the order of elements. Normally the subject comes first.

> We will survey customers later in the year to see if demand warrants a third store on campus.

To create variety, begin some sentences with a phrase or a dependent clause.

> Later in the year, we will survey customers to see if demand warrants a third store on campus.

> To see if demand warrants a third store on campus, we will survey customers later in the year.

Use these guidelines for sentence length and structure.

- Always edit sentences for conciseness. Even a 15-word sentence can be wordy.
- When your subject matter is complicated or full of numbers, make a special effort to keep sentences short.
- Use longer sentences
  - ✓ To show how ideas are linked to each other
  - ✓ To avoid a series of short, choppy sentences
  - ✓ To reduce repetition
- Group the words in long and medium-length sentences into chunks that the reader can process quickly.[5]
- In a long sentence, keep the subject and verb close together.

Let's see how to apply the last three principles.

TRY FOR AN AVERAGE SENTENCE LENGTH OF 14 TO 20 WORDS

The sentence below is hard to read, not simply because it is long but because it is shapeless. Just cutting it into a series of short, choppy sentences doesn't help. The best revision uses medium-length sentences (between 15 and 20 words) to show the relationship between ideas.

Too long	It should also be noted in the historical patterns presented in the summary that though there were delays in January and February, which we realized were occurring, we are now back where we were about a year ago, and although we are not off line in our collect receivables as compared to last year at this time, we do show a considerable over-budget figure because of an ultraconservative goal on the receivable investment.
Choppy	There were delays in January and February. We knew about them at the time. We are now back to where we were about a year ago. The summary shows this. Our present collect receivables are in line with last year's. However, they exceed the budget. The reason they exceed the budget is that our goal for receivable investment was very conservative.
Better	As the summary shows, we have regained our position of a year ago, although there were delays in January and February (of which we were aware). Because our receivable investment goal was conservative, our present collectables exceed the budget and are in line with last year's.

GROUP WORDS IN SENTENCES INTO CHUNKS

The "better" revision above has seven chunks. In the list below, the chunks starting immediately after the numbers are main clauses. The indented chunks indicate subordinate clauses and parenthetical phrases.

1.   As the summary shows,
2. we have now regained our position of a year ago,
3.   although there were delays in January and February
4.   (of which we were aware).
5.   Because our receivable investment goal was very conservative,
6. our present collectables exceed the budget,
7. and are in line with last year's.

The first sentence has four chunks: (1) a subordinate clause, (2) the main clause of the first sentence, (3) and another subordinate clause followed by (4) a parenthetical phrase. The second sentence begins with (5) a subordinate clause explaining the reason for the reversal. The sentence's (6) main clause, followed by the conjunction *and*, shows that a further explanation is coming. Another main clause (7) completes the sentence. At 27 and 20 words, respectively, these sentences aren't short, but they're readable because no chunk is longer than 10 words.

Any sentence pattern will become boring if it is repeated sentence after sentence. Use different sentence patterns—different kinds and lengths of chunks—to keep your prose interesting.

KEEP THE SUBJECT AND VERB CLOSE TOGETHER

Often you can move the subject and verb closer together if you put the modifying material in a list at the end of the sentence. For maximum readability, present the list vertically.

Hard to read Movements resulting from termination, layoffs and leaves, recalls and reinstatements, transfers in, transfers out, promotions in, promotions out, and promotions within are presently documented through the Payroll Authorization Form.

Smoother The following movements are documented on the Payroll Authorization Form: termination, layoffs and leaves, recalls and reinstatements, transfers in and out, and promotions in, out, and within.

Still better The following movements are documented on the Payroll Authorization Form:
- Termination
- Layoffs and leaves
- Recalls and reinstatements
- Transfers in and out
- Promotions in, out, and within

Sometimes you will need to change the verb and revise the word order to put the modifying material at the end of the sentence.

Hard to read The size sequence code, which is currently used for sorting the items in the NOSROP lists and the composite stock list, is not part of the online file.

Smoother The online file does not contain the size sequence code, which is currently used for sorting the items in the composite stock lists and the NOSROP lists.

5. Use Parallel Structure

Words or ideas that share the same logical role in your sentence must also be in the same grammatical form. Whatever part of speech (noun or verb; verb recommended) you choose to begin your list must start every other part of the list; otherwise, your reader has to work harder to understand your meaning.

Parallelism is a powerful device for making your writing smoother and more forceful. Note the **parallel structure** in the following examples.

Faulty Errors can be checked by reviewing the daily exception report or note the number of errors you uncover when you match the lading copy with the file copy of the invoice.

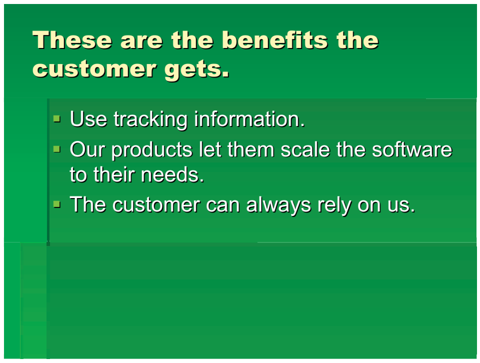
Parallel Errors can be checked by reviewing the daily exception report or by noting the number of errors you uncover when you match the lading copy with the file copy of the invoice.

Also parallel Check errors by noting
1. The number of items on the daily exception report
2. The number of errors discovered when the lading copy and the file copy are matched

Note that a list in parallel structure has to fit grammatically into the umbrella sentence (or stem) that introduces the list. (See Figure A.1, below.)

FIGURE A.1

Use Parallelism to Make Your Writing More Concise



6. Put Your Readers in Your Sentences

Use second-person pronouns (*you*) rather than third-person (*he*, *she*, *one*) to give your writing more impact. *You* is both singular and plural; it can refer to a single person or to every member of your organization.

Third person	Funds in a participating employee's account at the end of each six months will automatically be used to buy more stock unless a Notice of Election Not to Exercise Purchase Rights form is received from the employee.
Second person	Once you begin to participate, funds in your account at the end of each six months will automatically be used to buy more stock unless you submit a Notice of Election Not to Exercise Purchase Rights form.

Be careful to use *you* only when it refers to *your reader*.

Incorrect	My visit with the outside sales rep showed me that your schedule can change quickly.
Correct	My visit with the outside sales rep showed me that schedules can change quickly.

What Should I Look For When I Revise Paragraphs?

Check for topic sentences and transitions.

Paragraphs are visual and logical units. Use them to chunk your sentences.

1. Begin Most Paragraphs with Topic Sentences

A good paragraph has **unity**: it develops only one idea or topic. The **topic sentence** states the main idea and provides a base on which to structure your document. Your writing will be easier to read if you make the topic sentence explicit and put it near the beginning of the paragraph.[6]

Hard to read (no topic sentence)	In fiscal 2015, the company filed claims for refund of federal income taxes of \$3,199,000 and interest of \$969,000 paid as a result of an examination of the company's federal income tax returns by the Canada Revenue Agency for the years 2010 through 2013. It is uncertain what amount, if any, may ultimately be recovered.
Better (paragraph starts with topic sentence)	The company and the Canada Revenue Agency disagree about whether the company is liable for back taxes. In fiscal 2015, the company filed claims for a refund of federal income taxes of \$3,199,000 and interest of \$969,000, paid as a result of an examination of the company's federal income tax returns by the Canada Revenue Agency for the years 2010 through 2013. It is uncertain what amount, if any, may ultimately be recovered.

A good topic sentence provides *reader redundancy*: it forecasts the structure and content of the paragraph.

> Plan B has economic advantages.

(Prepares the reader for a discussion of B's economic advantages.)

> We had several personnel changes in June.

(Prepares the reader for a list of the month's terminations and hires.)

> Employees have complained about one part of our new policy on parental leaves.

(Prepares the reader for a discussion of the problem.)

When the first sentence of a paragraph is not the topic sentence, readers who skim may miss the main point. Move the topic sentence to the beginning of the paragraph. If the paragraph does not have a topic sentence, you will need to write one. Without a single sentence that serves as an "umbrella" to cover every sentence, the paragraph lacks unity. To solve the problem, either split the paragraph into two, or eliminate the sentence that digresses from the main point.

2. Use Transitions to Link Ideas

Transition words and sentences signal connections between ideas.

Transitions tell whether the next sentence continues the previous thought or starts a new idea; they tell whether the idea that comes next is more or less important than the previous thought. Table A.2 lists some of the most common transition words and phrases.

How Does Corporate Culture Affect Style?

Different cultures may prefer different styles.

Different organizations and bosses may have different ideas about what constitutes good writing. If the style the company prefers seems reasonable, use it.

If the style doesn't seem reasonable—if you work for someone who likes flowery language or wordy paragraphs, for example—you have several choices.

- Use the proven techniques discussed in this text. Sometimes seeing good writing changes people's minds about the style they prefer.
- Help your organization learn about writing. Add up-to-date writing reference texts to the company library. (If your company doesn't already offer employees a reference library, start one online.)

TABLE A.2

Transition Words and Phrases

To Show Addition or Continuation of the Same Idea	To Introduce an Example	To Show that the Contrast Is More Important than the Previous Idea
and also first, second, third in addition likewise similarly	for example (e.g.) that is (i.e.) indeed to illustrate namely specifically	but however nevertheless on the contrary
To Show Time	**To Introduce the Last or Most Important Item**	**To Contrast**
after as before	finally furthermore moreover	in contrast on the other hand or
To Show Cause and Effect	**To Indicate Time Relations**	**To Summarize or End**
as a result because consequently for this reason therefore	next then until when while	in conclusion in summary finally

- Recognize that a style serves many communication purposes. An abstract, hard-to-read style may forge group identity or emphasize exclusivity. For example, government, medical, and legal writing reflect highly specialized knowledge accessible only to the initiated. When big words, jargon, and wordiness are central to a group's self-image, change will be difficult, since changing style will mean changing the corporate culture.
- Ask. Often the documents that end up in files aren't especially good. Later, other workers may find these documents and imitate them, thinking they represent a corporate standard. Bosses may prefer better writing.

Building your own writing style takes energy and effort, but it's well worth the work. Good style makes every document more effective; moreover, developing a good style builds confidence, critical thinking, and competence, and makes you, the writer, valuable to every organization.

REVISING EXERCISES AND PROBLEMS

A.1 Changing Verbs from Passive to Active

Identify the passive verbs in the following sentences and convert them to active verbs. In some cases, you may need to add information to do so. You may use different words as long as you retain the basic meaning of the sentence. Remember that imperative verbs are active, too (e.g. "Prepare a marketing plan.")

1. The marketing plan was prepared by Needra Smith.
2. Inventory records are updated and invoices are automatically issued when an order is entered by one of our customers.

3. When the Web page is finalized, it is recommended that it be routed to all managers for final approval.
4. As stated in my resumé, Polish is a language I speak fluently.
5. All employees being budgeted should be listed by name and position. Any employee whose name does not appear on the September Listing of Salaried Employees must be explained. If this employee is a planned replacement, indicate who will be replaced and when. If it is an addition, the reason must be explained.

A.2 Using Strong Verbs

Revise each of the following sentences to use stronger verbs.

1. The advantage of using colour is that the document is more memorable.
2. Customers who make payments in cash will receive a 1 percent rebate on all purchases.
3. When you make an evaluation of media buys, take into consideration the demographics of the group seeing the ad.
4. We provide assistance to clients who are in the process of reaching a decision about the purchase of hardware and software.
5. We maintain the belief that Web ads are a good investment.

A.3 Reducing Wordiness

1. Eliminate words that say nothing. You may use different words.
   a. It is necessary that we reach a decision about whether or not it is desirable to make a request that the office be allowed the opportunity and option of hiring additional workers.
   b. The purchase of the new software will allow us to produce form letters quickly. In addition, return on investment could be calculated for proposed repairs. Another use is that the computer could check databases to make sure that claims are paid only once.
   c. There are many subjects that interest me.
2. Use gerunds and infinitives to make these sentences shorter and smoother.
   a. The completion of the project requires the collection and analysis of additional data.
   b. Allowing individuals to use their own phones at work will make possible increased production.
   c. The treasurer has the authority for the investment of assets for the gain of higher returns.
3. Combine sentences to show how ideas are related and to eliminate unnecessary words.
   a. Some buyers want low prices. Other buyers are willing to pay higher prices for convenience or service.
   b. We projected sales of $34 million in the third quarter. Our actual sales have fallen short of that figure by $2.5 million.
   c. We conducted this survey by emailing questionnaires on January 10, 11, and 12. Our office surveyed 100 customers. We wanted to see whether they would like to be able to leave voicemail messages for their representatives. We also wanted to find out whether our hours are convenient for them. Finally, we asked whether adequate parking was available.

A.4 Improving Parallel Structure

Revise each of the following sentences to create parallelism.

1. Training programs
   - Allow employees to build skills needed for current and future positions
   - Employees enjoy the break from routine work
   - Training programs are "fringe benefits" that help to attract and retain good employees
2. E-newsletters enhance credibility, four times as many people read them as read standard ad formats, and allow soft-sell introduction to prospective customers.
3. When you leave a voicemail message, it gives the listener a poor impression when you start with a negative or an apology.
   - Summarize your main point in a sentence or two.
   - The name and phone number should be given slowly and distinctly.
   - The speaker should give enough information so that the recipient can act on the message.
   - Tell when you'll be available to receive the recipient's return call.

A.5 Editing Sentences to Improve Style

Revise these sentences to make them smoother, less wordy, and easier to read. Eliminate jargon and repetition. Keep the information; you may reword or reorganize it. If the original is not clear, you may need to add information to write a clear revision.

1. The table provided was unclear because of hard-to-understand headings.
2. By working a co-op or intern position, you may have to be in school an additional year to complete the requirements for graduation, but this extra year is paid for by the income you make in the co-op or intern position.
3. There is a seasonality factor in the workload, with the heaviest being immediately prior to quarterly due dates for estimated tax payments.
4. Informational meetings will be held during next month at different dates and times. These meetings will explain the health insurance options. Meeting times are as follows:

   October 17, 12:00 p.m.–1:00 p.m.
   October 20, 4:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.
   October 24, 2:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.
5. Listed below are some benefits you get with OHIP:
   - Routine doctors' visits will be free.
   - No hassle about where to get your prescriptions filled.
   - Hospitalization is covered 100 percent.

A.6 Putting Readers in Your Sentences

Revise each of the following sentences to put readers in them. As you revise, use active verbs and simple words.

1. Mutual funds can be purchased from banks, brokers, financial planners, or from the fund itself.

2. Every employee will receive a copy of the new policy within 60 days after the labour agreement is signed.
3. Another aspect of the university is campus life, with an assortment of activities and student groups to participate in and lectures and sports events to attend.

A.7 Using Topic Sentences

Make each of the following paragraphs more readable by opening each paragraph with a topic sentence. You may be able to find a topic sentence in the paragraph and move it to the beginning. In other cases, you'll need to write a new sentence.

1. At Disney World a lunch put on an expense account is "on the mouse." McDonald's employees "have ketchup in their veins." Business slang flourishes at companies with rich corporate cultures. Memos at Procter & Gamble are called "reco's" because the model P&G memo begins with a recommendation.
2. The first item on the agenda is the hiring for the coming year. Nicky has also asked that we review the agency goals for the next fiscal year. We should cover this early in the meeting since it may affect our hiring preferences. Finally, we need to announce the deadlines for grant proposals, decide which grants to apply for, and set up a committee to draft each proposal.
3. Separate materials that can be recycled from your regular trash. Pass along old clothing, toys, or appliances to someone else who can use them. When you purchase products, choose those with minimal packaging. If you have a yard, put your yard waste and kitchen scraps (excluding meat and fat) in a compost pile. You can reduce the amount of solid waste your household produces in four ways.

A.8 Writing Paragraphs

Write a paragraph on each of the following topics.

1. Discuss your current communication style. Include as evidence your use of e-devices and your use of space.
2. Visit BMO Bank of Montreal's Business Coach podcasts for small business owners at http://www.bmo.com/podcast/en/?businessCoach. Summarize one of the podcasts for your peers.
3. Explain how social media is affecting the field you plan to enter.
4. Explain why you have or have not decided to work while you attend college or university.
5. Write a profile of someone who is successful in the field you hope to enter.

As your instructor directs

a. Label topic sentences, active verbs, and parallel structure.
b. Edit a classmate's paragraphs to make the writing more concise and smoother.
c. Post your revised and edited paragraph on your blog.

Editing for Grammar and Punctuation

APPENDIX B

Business messages with mechanical errors interfere with readability, reflect poorly on the quality of your work, and ultimately cost time and money. Fortunately, you need to know only a few specific grammar practices to create clean prose.

What Grammatical Errors Do I Focus On?

Focus on editing for

- Subject–verb agreement
- Noun–pronoun agreement
- Pronoun case
- Dangling and misplaced modifiers
- Parallelism
- Predication
- Punctuation

Agreement

Singular subjects use singular verbs; plural subjects use plural verbs.

Incorrect	Social media is revolutionizing business communications.
Correct	Social media are revolutionizing business practices.

Subject–verb agreement errors often occur when other words come between the subject and the verb. Edit your draft by finding the subject and the verb of each sentence.

Canadian and American usage treats company names and the words *company* and *government* as singular nouns. British usage treats them as plural.

Correct (Canada)	Clarica Insurance trains its agents well.
Correct (U.S.)	Allstate Insurance trains its agents well.
Correct (U.K.)	Lloyd's of London train their agents well.

Use a plural verb when two or more singular subjects are joined by *and*.

Correct	Larry McGreevy and I are planning to visit the client.

Use a singular verb when two or more singular subjects are joined by *or*, *nor*, or *but*.

Correct	Either the shipping clerk or the superintendent has to sign the order.

When the sentence begins with *Here* or *There*, make the verb agree with the subject that follows the verb.

Correct	Here is the booklet you asked for.
Correct	There are the blueprints I wanted.

Note that some words that end in *s* are considered singular and require singular verbs.

Correct	A series of meetings is planned.

When a situation doesn't seem to fit the rules, or when following a rule produces an awkward sentence, revise the sentence to avoid the problem.

Problematic	The plant manager, in addition to the sales representative, (was, were?) pleased with the new system.
Better	The plant manager and the sales representative were pleased with the new system.
Problematic	None of us (is, are?) perfect.
Better	All of us have faults.

Errors in *noun–pronoun agreement* occur if a pronoun is of a different number (singular or plural) or person than the word it refers to.

Incorrect	All drivers of leased automobiles are billed $100 if damages to his automobile are caused by a collision.
Correct	All drivers of leased automobiles are billed $100 if damages to their automobiles are caused by collisions.
Incorrect	A manager has only yourself to blame if things go wrong.
Correct	As a manager, you have only yourself to blame if things go wrong.

The following words require a singular pronoun.

anyone	each	everyone	nobody
everybody	either	neither	a person

Correct	Everyone should bring his or her copy of the manual to the next session on changes in the law.

Because pronoun pairs (*his* or *her*) used to avoid sexism may seem cumbersome, substitute words that take plural pronouns (*people*, *employees*, *persons*) or use second person (*you*).

Each pronoun must refer to a specific word. If a pronoun does not refer to a specific term, add a word to correct the error.

Incorrect	We will open three new stores in the suburbs. This will bring us closer to our customers.
Correct	We will open three new stores in the suburbs. This strategy will bring us closer to our customers.

Hint: Make sure *this* and *it* refer to a specific noun in the previous sentence. If either refers to an idea, add a noun ("this strategy") to make the sentence grammatically correct.

Use *who* and *whom* to refer to people and *which* and *that* to refer to objects.

Correct	The new executive director, who moved here from St. John's, is already making friends.
Correct	The information that she wants will be available tomorrow.
Correct	This confirms the price, which I quoted you this morning, is correct.

Case

Case refers to the grammatical role a noun or pronoun plays in a sentence. Table B.1 identifies the case of each personal pronoun.

Use **subject** or **nominative** pronouns for the **subject** of a clause.

Correct	Shannon Weaver and I talked to the customer, who was interested in learning more about integrated software.

Use **possessive** pronouns to show who or what something belongs to.

Correct	The latest Microsoft Office will exactly meet her needs.

Use **object pronouns** as **objects** of verbs or prepositions.

Correct	When you send in the quote, thank her for the courtesy she showed Shannon and me.

Hint: Use *whom* when *him* or *her* would fit grammatically in the same place in your sentence.

I am writing this letter to (who, whom?) it may concern.
I am writing this letter to him.

Whom is correct.

Have we decided (who, whom?) will take notes?
Have we decided she will take notes?

Who is correct.

TABLE B.1

The Case of the Personal Pronoun

	Subject	Possessive	Object	Reflexive/Intensive
Singular				
1st person	I	my, mine	me	myself
2nd person	you	your, yours	you	yourself
3rd person	he/she/it one/who	his/her(s)/its one's/whose	him/her/it one/whom	himself/herself/itself oneself
Plural				
1st person	we	our, ours	us	ourselves
2nd person	you	your, yours	you	yourselves
3rd person	they	their, theirs	them	themselves

Use a **reflexive pronoun** when it refers to the subject of the sentence.

He prefers to think for himself.

Resist the temptation to use a reflexive pronoun to emphasize the writer or speaker unnecessarily.

I myself think the call was very productive.

Do not use reflexive pronouns as subjects of clauses, or as objects of verbs or propositions.

Incorrect	Elaine and myself will follow up on this order.
Correct	Elaine and I will follow up on this order.
Incorrect	He gave the order to Dan and myself.
Correct	He gave the order to Dan and me.

Note that the first-person pronoun comes *after* names or pronouns that refer to other people.

Dangling Modifiers

Modifiers are words or phrases that give more information about the subject, verb, or object in a clause. A dangling modifier modifies a word that is not actually in the sentence. The solution is to reword the modifier so that it is grammatically correct.

Incorrect	Confirming our conversation, the truck will leave Monday. (The speaker is doing the confirming. But the speaker isn't in the sentence.)
Incorrect	At the age of eight, I began teaching my children about business. (This sentence says that the author was eight when s/he had children who could understand business.)

To correct a dangling modifier

1. Recast the modifier as a subordinate clause.

Correct	As I told you, the truck will leave Monday.
Correct	When they were eight, I began teaching my children about business.

2. Revise the main clause so its subject or object can be modified by the now-dangling phrase.

Correct	Confirming our conversation, I have scheduled the truck to leave Monday.
Correct	At the age of eight, my children began learning about business.

Hint: Whenever you use a verb or adjective that ends in *-ing*, make sure it modifies the grammatical subject of your sentence. If it doesn't, reword the sentence.

Misplaced Modifiers

A **misplaced modifier** is a word, phrase, or clause that appears beside a different element of the sentence than the one it modifies, causing confusion or misinterpretation.

Incorrect	Customers who complain often alert us to changes we need to make. (Does the sentence mean that customers must complain frequently to teach us something? Or is the meaning that frequently we learn from complaints?)

Correct a misplaced modifier by moving it closer to the word it modifies or by adding punctuation to clarify your meaning. If a modifier modifies the whole sentence, use it as an introductory phrase or clause; follow it with a comma.

Correct	Often, customers who complain alert us to changes we need to make.

Parallelism

Items in a series or list must have the same grammatical structure.

Not parallel In the second month of your internship you will

1. Learn how to resolve customer complaints
2. Supervision of desk staff
3. Interns will help plan store displays

Parallel In the second month of your internship you will

1. Learn how to resolve customer complaints
2. Supervise desk staff
3. Plan store displays

Also parallel Duties in the second month of your internship include resolving customer complaints, supervising desk staff, and planning store displays.

Hint: When you have two or three items in a list (whether the list is horizontal or vertical), make sure the items are in the same grammatical form. Write lists vertically to make them easier to see.

Predication Errors

The predicate of a sentence must fit grammatically and logically with the subject to avoid **predication errors**. In sentences using *is* and other linking verbs, the complement must be a noun, an adjective, or a noun clause.

Incorrect The reason for this change is because the OSC now requires fuller disclosure.

Correct The reason for this change is that the OSC now requires fuller disclosure.

Make sure that the verb describes the action done by or done to the subject.

Incorrect Our goals should begin immediately.

Correct Implementing our goals should begin immediately.

How Can I Fix Sentence Errors?

Learn to recognize main clauses.

A **sentence** contains at least one main clause. A **main** or **independent clause** is a complete statement, with a subject and a verb. A **subordinate** or **dependent clause** contains both a subject and a verb, but is not a complete statement and cannot stand by itself; it depends on an independent clause (a sentence or complete thought) for meaning. A phrase is a group of words that does not contain a verb.

Main/Independent Clauses

Your order will arrive Thursday.
He dreaded talking to his supplier.
I plan to enrol in summer-school classes.

Subordinate/Dependent Clauses

If you place your order by Monday
Because he was afraid the product would be out of stock
Since I want to graduate next spring
Although I was prepared for the test

Phrases

With our current schedule
As a result

A clause with one of the following words will be subordinate.

after	if
although, though	since
because	when, whenever
before	until, while, as

Using the correct punctuation will enable you to avoid three major sentence errors: comma splices, run-on sentences, and sentence fragments.

Comma Splices

A **comma splice** or **comma fault** occurs when writers join two main clauses with only a comma.

Incorrect The contest will start in June, the date has not been set.

Correct a comma splice in one of the following four ways.

1. If the ideas are closely related, use a semicolon rather than a comma.

   Correct The contest will start in June; the exact date has not been set.

2. If they aren't closely related, start a new sentence.

   Correct The contest will start in June. We need to determine the exact date.

3. Add a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, for, nor, yet*).

   Correct The contest will start in June, but the exact date has not been set.

4. Subordinate one of the clauses.

   Correct Although the contest will start in June, the date has not been set.

Remember that you cannot use just a comma with the following transitional words when they begin an independent clause.

however	therefore	nevertheless	moreover

Instead, use a semicolon to separate the clauses, or start a new sentence.

Incorrect Computerized grammar checkers do not catch every error, however, they may be useful as a first check before an editor reads the material.

Correct Computerized grammar checkers do not catch every error; however, they may be useful as a first check before an editor reads the material.

Language Focus

If the word *however* begins a new thought, use a semicolon. If the word *however* is being used to add to a thought, as in "Julian thought that the movie was terrible. I, however, thought it was fantastic," use a comma.

Run-On Sentences

A **run-on sentence** strings together several main clauses using *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*, and *for*. Run-on sentences and comma splices are *mirror faults*. A comma splice uses *only* the comma and omits the coordinating conjunction, while a run-on sentence uses *only* the conjunction and omits the comma. Correct a short run-on sentence by adding a comma. Separate a long run-on sentence into two or more sentences. Consider subordinating one or more of the clauses.

Incorrect We will end up with a much smaller markup but they use a lot of this material so the volume would be high so try to sell them on fast delivery and tell them our quality is very high.

Correct Although we will end up with a much smaller markup, volume will be high since they use a lot of this material. Try to sell them on fast delivery and high quality.

Sentence Fragments

In a **sentence fragment** a group of words that is not a complete sentence is punctuated as if it were a complete sentence. Sentence fragments often occur when a writer thinks of additional detail that the reader needs. Fragments are acceptable in resumés, advertising, and sales letters, but they're rarely acceptable in other business documents.

Incorrect Observing these people, I have learned two things about the program. The time it takes. The rewards it brings.

To fix a sentence fragment, either add whatever parts of the sentence are missing or incorporate the fragment into the sentence before it or after it.

Correct Observing these people, I have learned that the program is time-consuming but rewarding.

Remember that clauses with the following words are not complete sentences. Join them to a main clause.

after	if
although, though	since
because	when, whenever
before	until, while, as

Incorrect We need to encourage employees to use their own devices. Because that will increase productivity.

Correct We need to encourage employees to use their own devices because that will increase productivity.

When Should I Use Commas?

Use commas to signal the reader.

Commas, like other punctuation marks, are road signs to help readers predict what comes next, thereby contributing to ease and speed of reading, or **readability**. The easier you make it for the reader to scan and understand the text

- The more credible you appear
- The more likely it is that the reader will be persuaded to your point of view

When you move from the subject to the verb, you're going in a straight line; no comma is needed. When you end an introductory phrase or clause, the comma tells readers the introduction is over and you're turning to the main clause. When words interrupt the main clause, like this, commas tell the reader when to turn off the main clause for a short aside and when to return.

What Punctuation Should I Use Inside Sentences?

Use punctuation to clarify meaning for your reader.

A good writer knows how to use the following punctuation marks: apostrophes, colons, commas, dashes, hyphens, parentheses, periods, and semicolons. Table B.2 outlines what some of these marks tell the reader.

TABLE B.2

What Punctuation Tells the Reader

Mark	Tells the Reader
Period	We're stopping.
Semicolon	What comes next is another complete thought, closely related to what I just said.
Colon	What comes next is an illustration, an example, or a qualification of what I just said.
Dash	What comes next is a dramatic example of or a shift from what I just said.
Comma	What comes next is a slight turn, but we're going in the same direction.

Apostrophes

1. Use an apostrophe in a contraction to indicate that a letter has been omitted or to indicate a number has been omitted.

We're trying to renegotiate the contract.
The '90s were years of restructuring for our company.

2. To indicate possession, add an apostrophe and an *s* to the word.

The corporation's home office is in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Apostrophes to indicate possession are especially important when one noun in a comparison is omitted.

This year's sales will be higher than last year's.

When a word already ends in an *s*, you may add only an apostrophe to make it possessive.

The meeting will be held at St. Johns' convention centre.

Adding an *s* and an apostrophe would not be incorrect, but doing that can make pronunciation difficult.

With many terms, the placement of the apostrophe indicates whether the noun is singular or plural.

Incorrect	The program should increase the participant's knowledge. (Implies that only one participant is in the program.)
Correct	The program should increase the participants' knowledge. (Many participants are in the program.)

Hint: Use *of* in the sentence to see where the apostrophe goes.

The figures of last year = last year's figures
The needs of our customers = our customers' needs

Possessive pronouns (e.g., *his*, *ours*, *its*) do not have apostrophes. The only exception is *one's*.

The company needs the goodwill of its stockholders.
His promotion was announced yesterday.
One's greatest asset is the willingness to work hard.

3. Use an apostrophe to make plurals that could be confused for other words. However, other plurals do not use apostrophes.

I earned A's in all my business courses.

Colons

1. Use a colon to separate the main clause (sentence) from a list, explanation, or qualification that explains the last element in the clause. The items in the list are specific examples of the word that appears immediately before the colon.

Please order the following supplies:
printer ribbons
computer paper (20-lb. white bond)
bond paper (25-lb., white, 25% cotton)
company letterhead
company envelopes

Because English is a living language, grammar, punctuation, and usage rules evolve over time; however, current contemporary Canadian usage indicates a preference for lowercase after the colon.

Please order the following supplies: printer ribbons, computer paper (20-lb. white bond), bond paper (25-lb., white, 25% cotton), company letterhead, and company envelopes.

Avoid using a colon when the list is grammatically part of the main clause.

Incorrect	The rooms will have coordinated decors in natural colours such as: eggplant, moss, and mushroom.
Correct	The rooms will have coordinated decors in natural colours such as eggplant, moss, and mushroom.
Correct	The rooms will have coordinated decors in a variety of natural colours: eggplant, moss, and mushroom.

Even if the list is presented vertically, there is no need to introduce the list with a colon if the words in the stem are not a complete sentence.

2. Use a colon to join two independent clauses when the second clause explains or restates the first clause.

> Selling is simple: give people the service they need, and they'll come back with more orders.

Language Focus

Use a colon only if the sentence before or after it is a complete thought, such as in "I need the following supplies for camping: a tent, a sleeping bag, and a canteen." Do not use a colon if the list is part of the sentence, as in "I need a tent, a sleeping bag, and a canteen."

Commas

1. Use commas to separate the main clause from an introductory clause, the reader's name, or words that interrupt the main clause. Note that commas both precede and follow the interrupting information.

> J. Camaya, the new sales manager, comes to us from the Saskatoon office.

A **non-essential clause** gives extra information that is not needed to identify the noun it modifies. Because non-essential clauses give extra information, they need extra commas.

> Sue Decker, who wants to advance in the organization, has signed up for the company training program in sales techniques.

Do not use commas to set off information that restricts the meaning of a noun or pronoun. **Essential clauses** give essential, not extra, information.

Incorrect	Anyone who wants to advance in the organization, should take advantage of on-the-job training.
Correct	Anyone who wants to advance in the organization should take advantage of on-the-job training.

Do not use commas to separate the subject from the verb, even if you would take a breath after a long subject.

Incorrect	Laws regarding anyone collecting $5,000 or more on behalf of another person, apply to schools and private individuals as well to charitable groups and professional fundraisers.
Correct	Laws regarding anyone collecting $5,000 or more on behalf of another person apply to schools and private individuals as well to charitable groups and professional fundraisers.

2. Use a comma after the first clause in a compound sentence if the clauses are very long or if they have different subjects.

This policy eliminates all sick leave credit of the employee at the time of retirement, and payment will be made only once to any individual.

Do not use commas to join independent clauses without a conjunction. Doing so produces comma splices.

3. Use commas to separate items in a series. Using a comma before the *and* or *or* is not required by some authorities, but using a comma always adds clarity. The comma is essential if any of the items in the series themselves contain the word *and*.

The company contributes equally to full hospital coverage for eligible employees, spouses, and unmarried dependent children under age 21.

Language Focus

Many students are taught the pause rule for comma use. This rule states that if you were to pause when reading, add a comma. This is a broad overgeneralization and not appropriate for a business level of writing.

Dashes

Use dashes to emphasize an aside, or break in thought.

Ryertex comes in 30 grades—each with a special use.

To type a dash, use two hyphens with no space before or after.

Hyphens

1. Use a hyphen to indicate that a word has been divided between two lines.

Attach the original receipts for lodging, trans- portation, and registration fees.

Divide words at syllable breaks. If you aren't sure where the syllables divide, look up the word in a dictionary. When a word has several syllables, divide it after a vowel or between two consonants. Don't divide words of one syllable (e.g., *used*); don't divide a two-syllable word if one of the syllables is only one letter long (e.g., *acre*).

2. Use hyphens to join two or more words used as a single adjective.

Order five 10- or 12-metre lengths.
It's a 10-year-old plan.
The computer-prepared Income and Expense statements will be ready next Friday.

The hyphen clarifies meaning. In the first example, five lengths are needed, not lengths of 5, 10, or 12 metres. In the third example, without the hyphen, the reader might think that *computer* was the subject and *prepared* was the verb.

Parentheses

1. Use parentheses to set off words, phrases, or sentences explaining or commenting on the main idea.

For the thinnest Ryertex (1 mm) only a single layer of the base material may be used, while the thickest (10 cm) may contain more than 600 greatly compressed layers of fabric or paper. By varying the fabric used (cotton, asbestos, glass, or nylon) or the type of paper, and by changing the kind of resin (phenolic, melamine, silicone, or epoxy), we can produce 30 different grades.

Any additional punctuation goes outside the second parenthesis when the punctuation applies to the whole sentence. It goes inside when it applies only to the words in the parentheses.

Please check the invoice to see whether credit should be issued. (A copy of the invoice is attached.)

2. Use parentheses for the second of two numbers presented both in words and in digits.

Construction must be completed within two (2) years of the date of the contract.

Periods

1. Use a period at the end of a sentence. Leave only one space before the next sentence.
2. Use a period after some abbreviations. When a period replaces a person's name, leave one space after the period before the next word. In other abbreviations, no space is necessary.

P. Chow has been named vice-president of marketing.
The B.C. division plans to hire 10 new M.B.A.s in the next year.

The tendency today is to reduce the use of punctuation. It would also be correct to write

The BC division plans to hire 10 new MBAs in the next year.

Semicolons

1. Use semicolons to join two independent clauses when they are closely related.

We'll do our best to fill your order promptly; however, we cannot guarantee a delivery date.

Using a semicolon suggests that the two ideas are very closely connected. Using a period and a new sentence is also correct but implies nothing about how closely related the two sentences are.

2. Use semicolons to separate items in a series when the items themselves contain punctuation.

The final choices for the new plant are Edmonton, Alberta; Sydney, Nova Scotia; Mississauga, Ontario; Quebec City, Quebec; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Yellowknife, Northwest Territories; and Victoria, British Columbia.
Hospital benefits are also provided for certain specialized care services such as diagnostic admissions directed toward a definite disease or injury; normal maternity delivery, Caesarean-section delivery, or complications of pregnancy; and inpatient admissions for dental procedures necessary to safeguard the patient's life or health.

Hint: A semicolon could be replaced by a period and the next word capitalized. It has a sentence on both sides.

What Do I Use When I Quote Sources?

Use quotation marks, square brackets, and ellipses when quoting sources.

Quotation marks, square brackets, ellipses, and underlining are necessary when you quote material.

Quotation Marks

1. Use quotation marks around the names of brochures, pamphlets, and magazine articles.

Enclosed are 30 copies of our pamphlet "Saving Energy."
You'll find YouTube videos on everything from "How to Improve Your Golf Game" to "How to Build a Rock Garden."

   In Canada and the United States, periods and commas go inside quotation marks. Colons and semicolons go outside. Question marks and exclamation marks go inside if they are part of the material being quoted.

2. Use quotation marks around words to indicate that you think the term is misleading.

These "pro-business" policies actually increase corporate taxes.

3. Use quotation marks around words that you are discussing as words.

Forty percent of the respondents answered "yes" to the first question.
Use "Ms." as a courtesy title for a woman unless you know she prefers another title.

   It is also acceptable to underline or italicize words instead of using quotation marks. Choose one method and use it consistently.

4. Use quotation marks around words or sentences that you quote from someone else.

"The Fog Index," says its inventor, Robert Gunning, is "an effective warning system against drifting into needless complexity."

Square Brackets

Use square brackets to add your own words to or make changes in quoted material.

MPP Smith's statement	"These measures will increase the deficit."
Your use of Smith's statement	According to MPP Smith, "These measures [in the new tax bill] will increase the deficit."

The square brackets show that Smith did not say these words; you add them only so that the quotation makes sense in your document.

Ellipses

Ellipses, which indicate omissions or pacing, are made up of three spaced dots.

When an ellipsis comes at the end of a sentence, use a period immediately after the last letter of the sentence. Then add the ellipsis. A space follows the last of the dots.

1. Use ellipses to indicate that one or more words have been omitted in the middle of quoted material. You do not need ellipses at the beginning or end of a quote.

The Wall Street Journal notes that Japanese magazines and newspapers include advertisements for a "$5.1 million home in New York's posh Riverdale section … 185 acres of farmland [and] … luxury condos on Manhattan's Upper East Side."

2. In advertising, direct mail, and tweets use ellipses to imply the pace of spoken comments.

If you've ever wanted to live on a tropical island … cruise to the Bahamas … or live in a castle in Spain … you can make your dreams come true with Vacations Extraordinaire.

Italics versus Underlining

1. Underlining causes the reader's eye to **fixate**, or stop unnecessarily, thereby interfering with both reading speed and retention. Unless you're typing or handwriting documents, it is preferable to use italics to indicate titles.

Calgary Sun
Maclean's
The Bishop's Man

   Titles of brochures and pamphlets are put in quotation marks rather than in italics.

2. Italicize words to emphasize them.

Here's a bulletin that gives you, in handy chart form, *workable data* on more than 50 different types of tubing and pipe.

   Note: You may use bold instead of italics to emphasize words.

How Do I Write Numbers and Dates?

Spell out numbers under 10 and those used at the beginning of sentences.

Spell out numbers from one to nine. Use digits for numbers 10 and over in most cases. Always use digits for amounts of money.

Numbers (e.g., *19 percent*) should not begin sentences. Spell out any number that appears at the beginning of a sentence. If spelling it out is impractical, revise the sentence so that it does not begin with a number.

Fifty students filled out the survey.
The year 1992 marked the official beginning of the European Economic Community.

When two numbers follow each other, use words for the smaller number and digits for the larger number.

In dates, use digits for the day and year. The month is normally spelled out. Be sure to spell out the month in international business communication. Canadian standardized usage is year/month/day: *2016-01-16* means *January 13, 2016*. United States usage puts the month first, so *01/10/16* means *January 10, 2016*. European usage puts the day first, so *10/01/16* means *January 10, 2016*.

Modern punctuation uses a comma before the year only when you give both the month and the day of the month, so

May 1, 2016

but

Summers 2014–16
August 2016
Fall 2016

No punctuation is needed in military or European usage, which puts the day of the month first: 13 July 2016. Do not use spaces before or after the slash used to separate parts of the date: 5/16–10/16.

Use a short dash (en dash) to join inclusive dates.

March–August 2016 (or write out: March to August 2016)
’08–’16
1996–2016

Note: You do not need to repeat the century in the date that follows the dash: 2016–19. But do give the century when it changes: 1999–2016.

How Do I Mark Errors I Find When Proofreading?

Use these standard proofreading symbols.

Use the proofreading symbols in Figure B.1 to make corrections when you don’t have access to a computer. Figure B.2 shows how the symbols can be used to correct a typed text.

FIGURE B.1

Proofreading Symbols

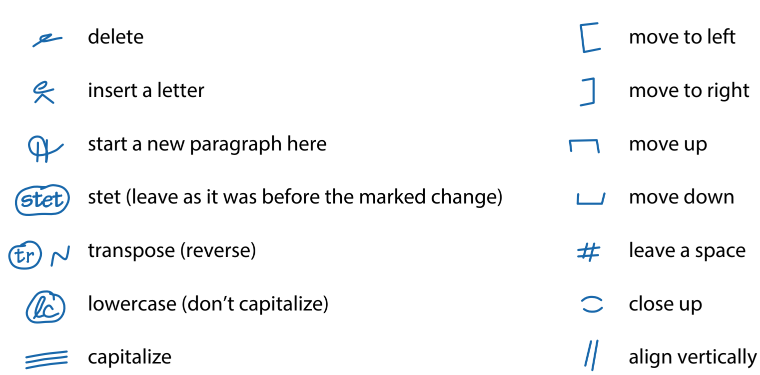
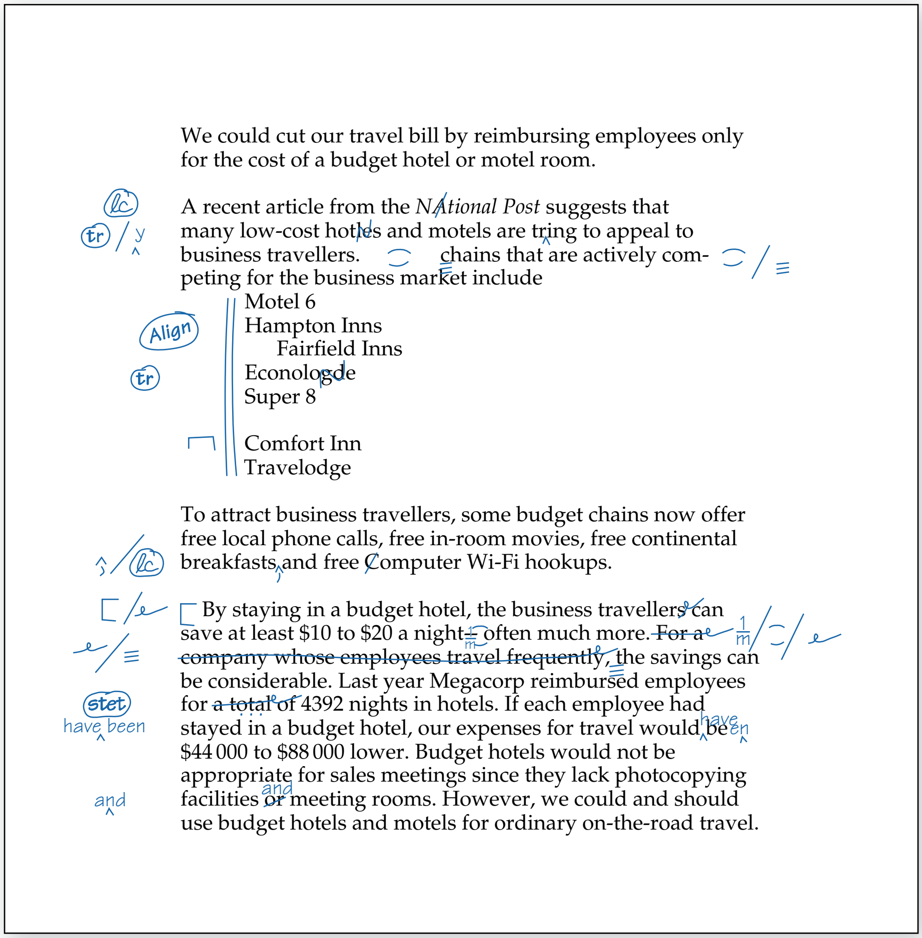


FIGURE B.2

Marked Text



We could cut our travel bill by reimbursing employees only for the cost of a budget hotel or motel room.

A recent article from the *NAtional Post* suggests that many low-cost hotles and motels are tring to appeal to business travellers. chains that are actively competing for the business market include

Motel 6
Hampton Inns
Fairfield Inns
Econologde
Super 8

Comfort Inn
Travelodge

To attract business travellers, some budget chains now offer free local phone calls, free in-room movies, free continental breakfasts and free Computer Wi-Fi hookups.

By staying in a budget hotel, the business travellers can save at least $10 to $20 a night often much more. ~~For a company whose employees travel frequently~~, the savings can be considerable. Last year Megacorp reimbursed employees for ~~a total~~ of 4392 nights in hotels. If each employee had stayed in a budget hotel, our expenses for travel would be $44 000 to $88 000 lower. Budget hotels would not be appropriate for sales meetings since they lack photocopying facilities or meeting rooms. However, we could and should use budget hotels and motels for ordinary on-the-road travel.

EDITING EXERCISES AND PROBLEMS

B.1 Making Subjects and Verbs Agree

Identify and correct the errors in the following sentences.

1. My education and training has prepared me to contribute to your company.
2. I know from my business experience that good communication among people and departments are essential in running a successful corporation.
3. A team of people from marketing, finance, and production are preparing the proposal.
4. The present solutions that has been suggested are not adequate.
5. There has also been suggestions for improving the airflow in the building.

B.2 Using the Right Pronoun

Identify and correct the errors in the following sentences.

1. A new employee should try to read verbal and nonverbal signals to see which aspects of your job are most important.
2. With people like yourself giving gifts, the Habitat for Humanity program will be able to grow.
3. If a group member doesn't complete their assigned work, it slows down the whole project.
4. Todd drew the graphs after him and I discussed the ideas for them.
5. Thank you for the help you gave Joanne Jackson and myself.

B.3 Fixing Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers

Identify and correct the errors in the following sentences.

1. As one of the students in a good program, our company is interested in interviewing you.
2. By making an early reservation, it will give us more time to coordinate our trucks to better serve your needs.
3. Children are referred to the Big Brother or Big Sister program by their school social workers, often from underprivileged homes.
4. At times while typing and editing, the text on your screen may not look correct.
5. All employees are asked to cut back on energy waste by the manager.

B.4 Creating Parallel Structure

Identify and correct the errors in the following sentences.

1. We help clients
   - Manage change
   - Marketing/promotion
   - Developing better billing systems
2. Volunteers need a better orientation to Planned Parenthood as a whole, to the overall clinic function, and to the staff there is also a need to clarify volunteer responsibilities.
3. The benefits of an online catalogue are
   1. We will be able to keep records up to date
   2. Broad access to the catalogue system from any networked terminal on campus
   3. The consolidation of the main catalogue and the catalogues in the departmental and branch libraries
   4. Cost savings
4. You can get a reduced rate on your life insurance if you have an annual medical exam. Another rebate is available to employees who do not smoke. Exercising for 30 minutes a day three times a week also entitles employees to an insurance rebate.

5. The ideal job candidate will be able to
   - Create and maintain Web pages
   - The ability to create presentation slides is expected
   - It would be best if the candidate could speak a second language

B.5 Correcting Sentence Errors

Identify and correct the errors in the following sentences.

1. Videoconferencing can be frustrating. Simply because little time is available for casual conversation.
2. Not everyone is promoted after six months some people might remain in the training program a year before being moved to a permanent assignment.
3. Pay yourself with the Automatic Savings Account, with this account any amount you choose will be transferred automatically from your chequing account to your savings account each month.
4. You can take advantage of several banking services. Such as automatic withdrawal of a house or car payment and direct deposit of your paycheque.
5. Our group met seven times outside class, we would have met even more if we could have found times when we could all get together.

B.6 Providing Punctuation Within Sentences

Provide the necessary punctuation in the following sentences. Note that not every box requires punctuation.

1. The system ☐ s ☐ user ☐ friendly design ☐ provides screen displays of work codes ☐ rates ☐ and client information.
2. Many other factors also shape the organization ☐ s ☐ image ☐ advertising ☐ brochures ☐ proposals ☐ stationery ☐ calling cards ☐ and so on.
3. Miss Manners ☐ author of ☐ *Miss Manners'* ☐ *Book of Modern Manners* ☐☐ says ☐☐ Try to mention specifics of the conversation to fix the interview permanently in the interviewer ☐ s ☐ mind and be sure to mail the letter the same day ☐ before the hiring decision is made ☐☐
4. What are your room rates and charges for food service ☐
5. We will need accommodations for 150 people ☐ five meeting rooms ☐ one large room and four small ones ☐☐ coffee served during morning and afternoon breaks ☐ and lunches and dinners.
6. The Operational Readiness Inspection ☐ which occurs once every three years ☐ is a realistic exercise ☐ that evaluates the ☐ Royal Canadian Air Cadet ☐ s ☐ ability to mobilize ☐ deploy ☐ and fight.
7. Most computer packages will calculate three different sets of percentages ☐ row percentages ☐ column percentages ☐ and table percentages

8. In today □ s □ economy □ it □ s almost impossible for a firm to extend credit beyond it □ s □ regular terms.
9. The Ministry of Transportation does not have statutory authority to grant easements □ however □ we do have authority to lease unused areas of highway right □ of □ way.
10. The program has two goals □ to identify employees with promise □ and to see that they get the training they need to advance.

B.7 Providing Punctuation

Provide the necessary punctuation in the following sentences. Note that not every box requires punctuation.

1. To reduce executive assistants □ overtime hours □ the office should hire part □ time secretaries to work from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.
2. Since memberships can begin at any time during the year □ all member □ s □ dues are recognized on a cash basis □ when they are received.
3. I would be interested in working on the committee □ however □ I have decided to do less community work □ so that I have more time to spend with my family.
4. One of the insurance companies □ Allstate Insurance □□ Fredericton □□ NB □ said it hopes to persuade the provincial government to reconsider the rule.
5. The city already has five □ two □ hundred □ bed hospitals.
6. Students □ run the whole organization □ and are advised by a board of directors from the community.
7. I suggest putting a bulletin board in the rear hallway with all the interviewer □ s □ pictures on it.
8. Most small businesses just get enough money to open the doors □□ says Mr. Quinn □ adding □ that the $10 000 or so of savings he used to start up simply wasn □ t enough □□
9. Otis Conward Jr □□ who grew up in this area □ now heads the Council for Economic Development.
10. Volunteers also participate in a one □ on □ one pal program.

B.8 Fixing Errors in Grammar and Punctuation

Identify and correct the errors in the following passages.

a. Company's are finding it to their advantage to cultivate their suppliers. Partnerships between a company and its suppliers can yield hefty payoffs for both company and supplier. One example is Bombardier, a Montreal headquartered company. Bombardier makes airplanes, subway cars and control systems. They treat suppliers almost like departments of their own company. When a Bombardier employee passes a laser scanner over a bins bar code the supplier is instantly alerted to send more parts.

b. Entrepreneur Trip Hawkins appears in Japanese ads for the video game system his company designed. It plugs into the future! he says in one ad, in a cameo spliced into shots of U.S kids playing the games. Hawkins is one of several U.S. celebrities and business people whom plug products on Japanese TV.

c. Between 1989 and 2009 the number of self-employed grew by more than 40 percent to 2.4 million; but this growth includes a huge increase of one person operations. "The self-employed sector now accounts for more than 16 percent of all workers; an increase from 13 percent in 1989. According to bizSmarts report Self-Employment in Canada, Trend's and Prospect's, over the next ten years, self-employment will become even more dominant in the Canadian labour market

B.9 Identifying Audience Concerns About Grammar

Most readers care passionately about only a few points of grammar. Survey one or more readers (including your boss, if you have a job) to find out which kinds of errors concern them. Use a separate copy of this survey for each reader.

Directions: Each of the following sentences contains an error. Please circle Y if the error bothers you significantly, S if the error bothers you slightly, and N if you would not be bothered by the error (or perhaps even notice it).

Y S N **1.** She brung her secretary with her.

Y S N **2.** Him and Richard were the last ones hired.

Y S N **3.** Wanted to tell you that the meeting will be November 10.

Y S N **4.** Each representative should bring a list of their clients to the meeting.

Y S N **5.** A team of people from administration, human services, and animal control are preparing the proposal.

Y S N **6.** We cannot predict, how high the number of clients may rise.

Y S N **7.** He treats his clients bad.

Y S N **8.** She asked Eva and I to give a presentation.

Y S N **9.** Update the directory by reviewing each record in the database and note any discrepancies.

Y S N **10.** He has went to a lot of trouble to meet our needs.

Y S N **11.** She gave the report to Davlic and myself.

Y S N **12.** I was unable to complete the report. Because I had a very busy week.

Y S N **13.** The benefits of an online directory are

- **a.** We will be able to keep records up-to-date
- **b.** Access to the directory from any terminal with a modem in the county
- **c.** Cost savings

Y S N **14.** By making an early reservation, it will give us more time to plan the session to meet your needs.

Y S N **15.** She doesn't have no idea how to use the computer.

Y S N **16.** The change will not effect our service to customers.

Y S N **17.** Confirming our conversation, the truck will leave Monday.

Y S N **18.** The sessions will begin January 4 we will pass around a sign-up sheet early in December.

Y S N **19.** I will be unable to attend the meeting, however I will send someone else from my office.

Y S N **20.** Its too soon to tell how many proposals we will receive.

Compare your responses with those of a small group of students.

- Which errors were most annoying to the largest number of readers?
- How much variation do you find in a single workplace? In a single type of business?

As your instructor directs

a. Present your findings to the class in a short group report.

b. Present your findings to the class orally.

Polishing Your Prose: Answer Key

Here are possible solutions to the odd-numbered Polishing Your Prose exercises. Check with your instructor about any other solutions you propose.

Module 1: Sentence Fragments

1. Because people are constantly fiddling with their smartphones, even during meetings and training sessions, we need to establish some ground rules about checking and rechecking smartphones. People also surf the Web on their laptops and leave meetings to look at email and listen to voicemail messages. I am not convinced that our preoccupation with technology is really saving us time and money or contributing to productivity.

Module 2: Comma Splices

1. The conference call came at 1 p.m., and we took it immediately.
3. After Janelle drafted her problem-solving report, she sent a copy to each committee member for review.
5. Katy called the hotel in Montreal for a reservation; the desk staff booked a room for her immediately.
7. I'll have Tina call the main office, and you ask Polsun to set up an appointment for the four of us tomorrow.
9. I wish I were more confident making presentations; I'd like to find ways to make them fun.

Module 3: Subject–Verb Agreement

1. Each of us is entitled to company healthcare benefits.
3. The price of our stocks is increasing.
5. We order a dozen new toner cartridges each month.
7. Marina Schiff and her assistant are attending the conference in Halifax.
9. Professor Beauparlant, Mr. Kincaid, and Ms. Carolla are on the guest list and plan to sit at the same table.

Module 4: Commas in Lists

1. Please send the "flowers of the month" in April, May, June, and July. (Last comma is optional.)
3. The special parts division is opening offices in Brampton, Ontario; Fredericton, New Brunswick; and Big Salmon, Yukon.
5. I need to telephone Mary, Frank, and Paul, to finish my report, and mail copies of it to Ted, Sam, and Latanya. (While semicolons might be used after *Paul* and *report*, commas are acceptable because the groupings of listed items are understandable with commas.)
7. The weather affects our offices in Montreal, New York City, and Philadelphia.
9. Elizabeth, Tyrone, Mark, and Sara presented the team's recommendations.

Module 5: Active and Passive Voice

1. Unless the context of the sentence is negative, change to active voice: The vice-president of finance signed the contract.
3. The visitors' arrival is more important than who is expecting them. Therefore, use passive voice.
5. Changing this sentence to active voice would cast blame. Therefore, use passive voice.
7. The human resources administrator returned phone calls.
9. Return phone calls within 24 hours.

Module 6: Correcting Dangling Modifiers

1. After working here a year, you are covered by dental insurance.
3. I bought my daughter her first share of stock when she was 10.
5. By calling ahead of time, you can make reservations efficiently.
7. Posting risqué material on Facebook shows poor judgment, because potential employers can access this material even years later.
9. When you share files with our legal department, our attorneys can work better with you.

Module 7: Applying Parallel Structure

1. Last week, Alain and Rochelle flew to Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City, and Halifax.

3. To ship a package
    1. Fill out an address form.
    2. Specify on the form how the package should be sent.
    3. Have your supervisor initial the appropriate box on the address form if you want the package shipped by overnight mail.
5. Appointments can be scheduled in 5-minute, 10-minute, 15-minute, or 20-minute intervals.
7. This report discusses Why We Should Upgrade Capital Equipment, Why We Should Increase Staff by 25 Percent, Why We Should Decrease Employee Turnover, and Why We Should Identify New Product Markets.
9. Use the telephone to answer customer questions, email to send order confirmations, our Web page to take orders, and social media for crisis communications.

Module 8: Finding Your Narrative Voice

1. This voice sounds authoritative, perhaps even threatening, due to the constant use of *will* commands and all caps for *no exception*.
3. Appropriate
5. Writer's choice of language and emphasis on his/her time creates a rude, aggressive voice.
7. Appropriate
9. Third-person directives in techno-babble make this voice unintelligible.

Module 9: Correcting Run-On Sentences

1. In England people use their cell phones on the subway but not at restaurants. In fact, I rarely see people with their phones when they're sitting out on the front patios of pubs having a drink. British people tend to socialize in public a lot more than Canadians. Maybe having a real social life means people aren't obsessed with their virtual ones.
3. The marketing department ordered new, four-colour brochures. They are really nice.
5. Let's schedule a meeting next week. We'll talk about your promotion so you can transition easily into the new job.
7. Employees may request benefits changes during the annual enrolment period. Supervisors should pass out the required forms, and employees should have them completed by the deadline on the form.
9. Mohammed should make sure he specifies 50-lb. rather than 40-lb. paper stock, Jenna should call the print shop and ask whether the employees need anything, and Bruce should tell Ms. Winans we appreciate her letting us know we originally ordered the wrong stock.
11. A few customers are concerned about the shipping date, but the mailroom is sure we can ship overnight. I think there's no reason to be concerned.

Module 10: Plurals and Possessives

1. Canadian companies are competing effectively in the global market.
3. Managers' ability to listen is more important than their technical knowledge.
5. The community social workers tell clients about services available in their neighbourhoods.
7. Information about the new community makes the family's move easier.
9. Memos are internal documents, sent to other workers in the same organization. Letters are for external readers.

Module 11: Using the Apostrophe to Show Ownership

1. Research indicates most Canadians feel responsible for the world's global warming.
3. Canadians' views of the economy reflect their confidence in the stock market.
5. We meet the municipal, provincial, and federal governments' standards for quality control.
7. The committee's duties will be completed after it announces its decision.
9. We'll decide whether to have more computer training sessions based on employees' feedback.

Module 12: Using the Apostrophe for Contractions and *It's/Its*

1. It's too bad that the team hasn't finished its presentation.
3. It's going to require overtime, because the data centre needs its reports quickly.
5. The company will announce its new name at a press conference.
7. It's a good idea to keep your travel receipts in a separate file.
9. The Saskatoon office will share its findings with the other branch offices.

Module 13: Combining Sentences

1. To get promoted quickly at our company, be organized, be on time, and meet deadlines.
3. Making a Cobb Salad is easy. Use romaine or iceberg lettuce, and add three hard-boiled eggs, some cooked bacon, chicken, and blue cheese. Add a cut-up tomato and avocado. Put the ingredients separately in a bowl, and dress with a vinaigrette. The result is pretty and delicious.
5. The tornado plan for our building has five parts: first, listen for the tornado alert siren; second, go to your designated shelter area in the basement of the building; third, be sure to take the stairs and not the elevator; fourth, sit down on the floor; fifth, cover your head with your arms.

Module 14: Making Pronouns Agree with Their Nouns

1. An administrative assistant should help his/her boss work efficiently. *Or:* Administrative assistants should help their bosses work efficiently.
3. The company announces its quarterly profits today.
5. A CEO's pay is often based on the performance of his/her company. *Or:* CEOs' pay is often based on the performance of their companies.
7. In my first month of work, I learned to check my email at least three times a day.
9. The team will present its recommendations to the Executive Committee. (Correct.)

Module 15: *Who/Whom* and *I/Me*

1. Karen and I visited St Francis Xavier University last week.
3. Dr. Jacobsen, who serves on the Board of Directors, is retiring.
5. Who is the most experienced person on your staff?
7. Between you and me, my supervisor told me the committee will decide who gets the promotion.
9. Three people at the firm who can speak a second language are Van, Chang, and I.

Module 16: Writing Subject Lines and Headings

1. Hello from (Claudia Balan)
3. Your Donation Tuesday Can Save a Life
5. Insurance Rates Increase
7. Research; Logistics; Profit
9. Clemente Research Group's Five-Year Goals; Clemente Research Group's Ten-Year Goals; Clemente Research Group's Fifteen-Year Goals

Module 17: Improving Paragraphs

1. My experience in the secretarial field makes me an ideal candidate for a position as senior administrative assistant with Graham, Chang, and Associates. As a receptionist at McCandless Realty, I typed, answered phones, and handled payroll. Then, as a secretary at Dufresne Plastics, I took training courses in data entry and Microsoft Word, and learned to type at 70 wpm, error-free.

Module 18: Being Concise

1. Please return the order form ASAP.
3. The blue car is the legal affairs director's.
5. Contact us to confirm your order.
7. The enclosed references can discuss my job qualifications further.
9. Let me start by sharing stories about our guest of honour.

Module 19: Using Colons and Semicolons

1. That file on the Richman proposal: can you send me a copy by tomorrow, please?
3. Watch out: some people think there's a certain "ick" factor to social networking.
5. Strange: I thought I already signed up for another six months.
7. Remember: when we turn on the break room lights, everyone is to yell, "Happy Birthday, Susharita."
9. The best gig he ever had was his ten-month posting in Amsterdam. The nightlife is spectacular; everything's open: museums, pubs, shops. He was sad to come home.

Module 20: Delivering Criticism

1. We need to make this report meet our company's standards.
3. This assignment could use some library resources.
5. The information in this brochure is terrific. Let's work on making the design match the content.
7. Our instructor said that we have to use at least five sources.
9. Would you help me to better understand this proposal?

Module 21: Using Hyphens and Dashes

1. Our biggest competitors—including those in the Asian and European markets—introduced more product models during the fourth quarter.
3. Please pick up three 2-by-4 posts at the lumberyard.
5. Painters from the building services department plan to give Tarik's office two coats of paint.
7. The latest weather reports suggest that travel over South and Latin America may be interrupted by storms.
9. You can email the results to my office in the early morning.

Module 22: Choosing Levels of Formality

1. On Monday, I inspected our inventory.
3. Though the representative was firm, we eventually negotiated a settlement.
5. The manager postponed making a decision until she had more information.
7. In my last job, I worked as a gofer for the marketing manager.
9. This report has problems.

Module 23: Using Details

1. I am the webmaster for the Jessica London Company.
3. In June, I plan to graduate from Seneca Community College and start my career in respiratory therapy at St. Ann's Hospital.
5. Fortified with antioxidants and Vitamins D and K, EnVigorate Power Drink will make you feel healthy and energetic all day long.
7. The new Mark VII pool filter is 33 percent more energy efficient than competitors' filters and features a 10-year warranty, the best on the market.
9. More than 17 years of experience and $7.9 million in real estate sales make me the ideal candidate for district sales manager.

Module 24: Proofreading

1. Ours is a company worth doing business with. You can count on our promise to provide not only the best service but also the finest in materials, fit, and finish. All of our products are made to exacting specifications, meaning that you receive the best product for the best prices. If you aren't satisfied for any reason, simply call the toll-free hotline at 1-800-555-1212 to get a prompt refund. Or you can write us at The John Doe Company, 123 Main Street, Anytown, Canada M6V 2B4. Remember: our motto is "The customer is always right."

Module 25: Using *You* and *I*

1. Our team created a class Web page. I was responsible for much of the initial design and some of the HTML coding. Four of us tested the page to see how easily we could navigate it. We presented the page to a committee of local businesspeople.
3. Team members should resolve any conflicts they have created with other team members.
5. Let's distribute an agenda before the meeting.
7. Please make the Web page accessible to users with impaired vision.
9. During my co-op placement, I observed department meetings, sat in on client meetings, designed slides for client presentations, participated in strategy sessions, and drafted brochures.

Module 26: Matters on Which Experts Disagree

1. Everyone should bring his or her laptop to the sales meeting.
3. To take advantage of the meeting fully, you need to bring all of your new product information.
5. Think of a time when it was hard even to get in the door to see a potential customer.
7. Awards include best rookie sales representative, the most improved region, everyone who beat his or her sales quota, and sales representative of the year.
9. Our Web page will let people listen to each customer summarizing orally what he or she likes best about our products.

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