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Fundamentals of Contemporary Business Communication (Second Edition)

高级实用英语系列教材

# 现代商务沟通

（第二版）

[美]斯科特·奥伯（Scot Ober） 著

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中国人民大学出版社

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中国人民大学出版社
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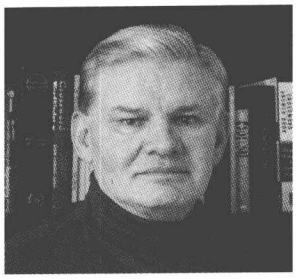
# preface



**Scot Ober**

Students don't have to be convinced of the need for competent communication skills. By the time they enter the business communication class, they know enough about the business environment to appreciate the critical role communication plays in the contemporary organization. They're also aware of the role communication will play in helping them secure an internship or get a job and be successful at work.

To sustain this inherent interest, students need a textbook that is current, fast-paced, and interesting—just like business itself. Thus, a major objective of *Fundamentals of Contemporary Business Communication* is to present comprehensive coverage of real-world concepts in an interesting, lively, and concise manner.

This edition of *Fundamentals* has been considerably revised to provide students with the skills they need to communicate effectively in the complex and ever-changing contemporary work environment. The revision was based on helpful feedback received from current users around the country (and, indeed, around the English-speaking world), changes in the discipline, and changes in the workplace itself.

The following discussion highlights the features of this complete teaching and learning system:

- Objective-Based Organization
- Business Communication—In Context
- The 3Ps—Think First; Write Later
- Streamlined Coverage of Essential Topics
- Basic Skills Emphasis
- Student Portfolios—For Proof of Competence
- Self-Checks—For Feedback and Reinforcement

## Objective-Based Organization

To a greater extent than is true for most other business courses, the content and organization of the basic business communication course differs markedly, depending upon the institution at which it is taught, the department that teaches the course, the level of the student, and the like. For example, some institutions place major emphasis on business report writing, while others may give the topic scant coverage. The same is true, of course, for other topics, such as oral communication, basic English skills, and employment communications. Even more important, there are topics within chapters that, because of time constraints or coverage in other courses, some instructors choose not to cover. Thus, every chapter communication objective (CO) may not be relevant for every business communication class.

The second edition of *Fundamentals* makes it convenient for instructors to easily customize their course to meet their particular needs. Each communication objective that is presented at the beginning of each chapter has been defined to cover an important element of that chapter's content. Each chapter is then organized around these objectives, and the particular objective being covered is identified in the margin. All content relating to that one objective is presented before moving on to the next communication objective, and a Self-Check immediately assesses student knowledge of that objective. Further, the chapter summary is organized around each objective, as are the end-of-chapter exercises and test-bank items.

This means that instructors can easily assign an entire chapter, or only components of the chapter, based upon the communication objectives, and then easily identify the related end-of-chapter exercises and test-bank items.

In addition, all business English coverage has been organized into modules at the back of the text, along with an extensive array of exercises, to provide greater flexibility—and a one-stop reference for students.

Finally, in addition to increased emphasis on ethics, e-mail, and audience analysis throughout the text, each of the following topics has been expanded upon and is now placed in a separate chapter:

- Interpersonal Communication Skills
- The Writing Process
- Revising Your Writing
- Persuasive Letters, Memos, and E-Mail Messages
- Employment Interviewing and Follow-Up

## Business Communication — In Context

Business communication problems in the real world do not occur in a vacuum. Events have happened before the problem and will happen after the problem that affect its resolution. Thus, in addition to typical end-of-chapter exercises, other learning tools in this text provide more complete long-term situations and provide a "slice-of-life" reality students will actually face at work.

***On the Job.*** Each chapter begins with an on-the-job interview with managers from multinational companies, small entrepreneurial companies, and nonprofit organizations. New to this edition are interviews with personnel from World Wrestling Entertainment, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, Monster.com, and PriceWaterhouseCoopers, among others. These insider perspectives set the stage for the particular concepts presented in that chapter.

***Continuing Text Examples and End-of-Chapter Exercises.*** Continuing examples are often used throughout the chapter in both the text and end-of-chapter exercises. For example, in Chapter 5, students first assume the role of buyer and write a claim letter. Later in the chapter, they assume the role of seller and answer the same claim letter by writing an adjustment letter. In Chapter 6, students write a persuasive request from a subordinate; in Chapter 7, they assume the role of superior and turn down this wellwritten persuasive request.

Such situations are realistic because they give a sense of following a problem through to completion. They are interesting because they provide a continuing thread to the chapters. They also reinforce the concept of audience analysis because students must first assume the role of sender and later the role of receiver for the same communication task.

***Real Company Letterheads.*** Full-page models of each major writing task appear in this text on real company letterheads, shown in complete, ready-to-send format, so that students become familiar with the appropriate format for every major type of writing assignment. Each model provides marginal step-by-step composing notes as well as grammar and mechanics notes that point out specific illustrations of the grammar and mechanics instruction.

***Technology-Centered.*** Every aspect of contemporary business communication—from determining what information to communicate to processing the information and sharing it with others—depends on technology. In *Fundamentals* students learn to:

- Compose, format, and manage e-mail and conduct productive instant-messaging sessions.
- Access the Internet and World Wide Web and evaluate the quality of the information they receive.
- Format electronic and HTML résumés and search online for a job.

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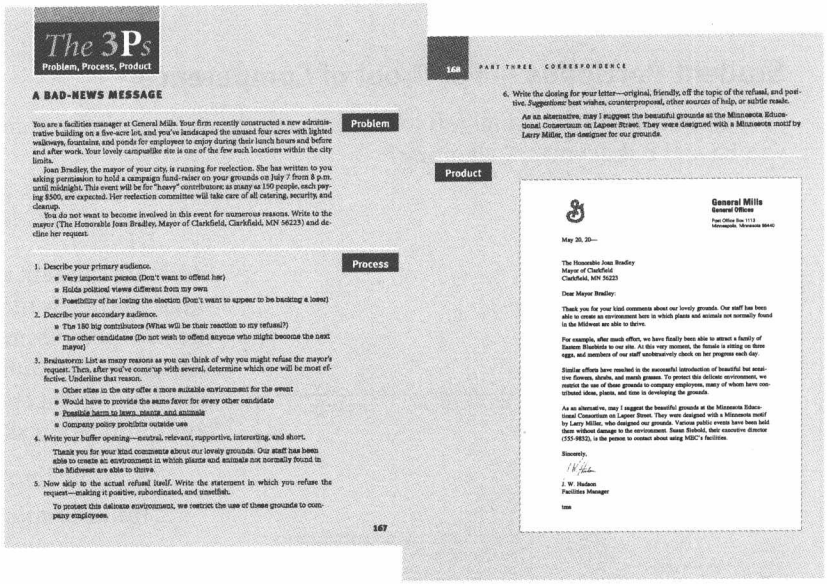
- Prepare and deliver electronic presentations.
- Cite electronic sources such as Web pages, online journals and directories, e-mail, and other Internet sources in business, APA, and MLA formats.

## The 3Ps — Think First; Write Later


The 3Ps
Problem, Process, Product
A BAD-NEWS MESSAGE
Problem
You are a facilities manager at General Mills. Your firm recently constructed a new administrative building on a five-acre lot, and you've landscaped the unused four acres with lighted walkways, fountains, and ponds for employees to enjoy during their lunch hours and before and after work. Your lovely campuslike site is one of the few such locations within the city limits.
Joan Bradley, the mayor of your city, is running for reelection. She has written to you asking permission to hold a campaign fund-raiser on your grounds on July 7 from 8 p.m. until midnight. This event will be for "heavy" contributors; as many as 150 people, each paying $500, are expected. Her reelection committee will take care of all catering, security, and cleanup.
You do not want to become involved in this event for numerous reasons. Write to the mayor (The Honorable Joan Bradley, Mayor of Clarkfield, Clarkfield, MN 56223) and decline her request.
Process
1. Describe your primary audience.
   - Very important person (Don't want to offend her)
   - Holds political views different from my own
   - Possibility of her losing the election (Don't want to appear to be backing a loser)
2. Describe your secondary audience.
   - The 150 big contributors (What will be their reaction to my refusal?)
   - The other candidates (Do not wish to offend anyone who might become the next mayor)
3. Brainstorm List as many reasons as you can think of why you might refuse the mayor's request. Then, after you've come up with several, determine which one will be most effective. Underline that reason.
   - Other sites in the city offer a more suitable environment for the event
   - Would have to provide the same favor for every other candidate
   - Possible harm to lawn, plants, and animals
   - Company policy prohibits outside use
4. Write your buffer opening—neutral, relevant, supportive, interesting, and short.
   Thank you for your kind comments about our lovely grounds. Our staff has been able to create an environment in which plants and animals not normally found in the Midwest are able to thrive.
5. Now skip to the actual refusal itself. Write the statement in which you refuse the request—making it positive, subordinated, and unselfish.
   To protect this delicate environment, we restrict the use of these grounds to company employees.
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168 PART THREE CORRESPONDENCE
6. Write the closing for your letter—original, friendly, off the topic of the refusal, and positive. Suggestions: best wishes, counterproposal, other sources of help, or subtle reader.
   As an alternative, may I suggest the beautiful grounds at the Minnesota Educational Consortium on Lapeer Street. They were designed with a Minnesota motif by Larry Miller, the designer for our grounds.
Product
General Mills
General Offices
May 20, 20—
The Honorable Joan Bradley
Mayor of Clarkfield
Clarkfield, MN 56223
Dear Mayor Bradley:
Thank you for your kind comments about our lovely grounds. Our staff has been able to create an environment here in which plants and animals not normally found in the Midwest are able to thrive.
For example, after much effort, we have finally been able to attract a family of Eastern Bluebirds to our site. At this very moment, the female is sitting on three eggs, and members of our staff unobtrusively check on her progress each day.
Similar efforts have resulted in the successful introduction of beautiful but sensitive flowers, shrubs, and marsh grasses. To protect this delicate environment, we restrict the use of these grounds to company employees, many of whom have contributed ideas, plants, and time in developing the grounds.
As an alternative, may I suggest the beautiful grounds at the Minnesota Educational Consortium on Lapeer Street. They were designed with a Minnesota motif by Larry Miller, who designed our grounds. Various public events have been held there without damage to the environment. Susan Siebold, their executive director (555-9832), is the person to contact about using MEC's facilities.
Sincerely,
J. W. Hudson
Facilities Manager
tms

Probably the most important thing I have learned in my many years of teaching business communication is the importance of *guiding* the student's practice. And the reason is this: As soon as most students are given a writing assignment, they quickly scan the problem and then immediately begin composing what they think is the final draft—without first planning the best strategy to use.

The result, naturally enough, is the need for extensive revision—based upon instructor feedback, which of course requires extensive grading time. The 3Ps exercises (Problem, Process, and Product) found in every chapter of *Fundamentals* force students to spend adequate time planning their strategy before they start to write.

For most business writing tasks, there are only two or three parts that cause students any real problems. Therefore, students should spend most of their time carefully planning these critical elements. If they do, then the other parts will almost write themselves.

Each 3Ps activity begins with a *problem*—a typical business situation that requires some sort of communication task. The *process* questions force students to concentrate on the critical elements of the situation; that is, they must delay their impulse to begin writing until after they've thought through (and solved) these important issues. Better writing skills and less grading time will result. The activity ends with the *product*—the final, ready-to-submit formatted document.

## Streamlined Coverage of Essential Topics

As the body of knowledge comprising the theory, research, and practice of business communication has grown, textbooks have expanded to include the new coverage. They have become longer and longer, often making it difficult to cover all the material in a typical course.

Students learn to communicate by *communicating*—not by just *reading* about communicating. They need a text that presents comprehensive coverage in a concise format—so that they then have sufficient time to practice and refine their craft after each chapter.

*Fundamentals* is true to its name: it presents the fundamental traditional and emerging topics in business communication in less than 300 pages. This means students will have more time (both in and out of class) to plan, draft, and revise their documents.

In short, *Fundamentals* provides unmatched flexibility in presenting job-essential coverage of business communication. It is clear and concise—just like effective business writing itself.

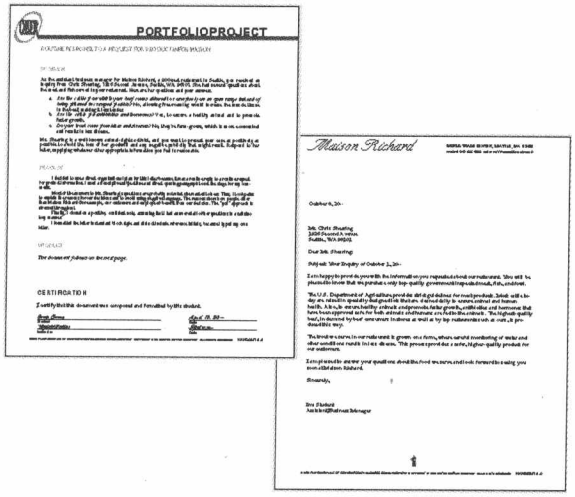
## Basic Skills Emphasis

No one can communicate effectively if he or she cannot communicate *correctly*. It is an unfortunate fact of life that many contemporary students today have not had the advantage of the nuts-and-bolts grammar and mechanics instruction that their instructors took for granted in their own prior education. Students *must* learn these basic skills at some point, and the collegiate business communication course is probably their last opportunity.

## Student Portfolios — For Proof of Competence

"When you are in an actual job interview, you do not want to just claim you have a skill. You want to *prove* you have the skill you are claiming."

—Richard Nelson Bolles, author of *What Color Is Your Parachute? Practical Guide for Job-Hunters and Career Changers*


PORTFOLIOPROJECT

Maison Richard

Students can talk about their competent communication skills all they want, but nothing is as effective as showing the prospective employer actual examples of their work. Unique to *Fundamentals* is a planned progression of eight portfolio projects designed to demonstrate students' communication skills. The eight projects are these:

1. Routine informational message
2. Routine adjustment letter
3. Persuasive request
4. Bad-news message
5. Situational business report
6. Videotape of an oral business presentation
7. Résumé and cover letter
8. Videotape of a practice interview

Instructors are encouraged to provide opportunities for revision of each project so that the student's final effort reflects successful attainment of the particular communication skill. To help employers more accurately evaluate the quality of the student's output, the first page of each portfolio project provides the problem (the situation that requires a response), and a process section in which the student describes the strategic thinking that went into the final product, which is then presented in final, ready-to-submit format.

The student portfolio projects, along with the comprehensive instruction on employment communications included in Chapters 10 and 11, will go a long way toward ensuring that students will be successful in getting a job.

## Self-Checks — for Feedback and Reinforcement

Many students need an opportunity to test their comprehension immediately, rather than waiting for the end-of-chapter problems. *Fundamentals* features frequent Self-Checks throughout the chapter that provide immediate feedback and reinforcement of the principles introduced in the previous few pages. Space is provided directly on the page for student responses. These Self-Checks are organized according to increasing levels of difficulty.

SELFcheck 8.1

**RECALL** Write a capital T for *true* or F for *false* before each statement.

1. ___ Conclusions are always based on the findings of a report.
2. ___ The more headings a report contains, the easier it is for the reader to follow.
3. ___ The most logical basis for organizing the data in most analytical and recommendation reports is by the criteria you used to solve the problem.
4. ___ Conclusions and recommendations may be presented either at the beginning or at the end of the report, depending on the situation.
5. ___ Formal reports should use talking headings.

There is typically one Self-Check for each communication objective; each is organized as follows:

- *Recall:* Five true/false test items that test the student's retention of the material just presented.
- *Vocabulary:* Students are asked to define the key terms in their own words and to provide an original example.
- *Comprehension:* Students are asked to apply their new knowledge in short, focused exercises.
- *Critical Thinking:* This question (for which there is generally no one correct answer) provides students with both an opportunity to think analytically and to compose a short paragraph.

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PART

1

# Foundations of Business Communication

CHAPTER 1
**Understanding Business Communication**

CHAPTER 2
**Interpersonal Communication Skills**

# 1 Understanding Business Communication

communication

**OBJECTIVES**

**After you have finished this chapter, you should be able to:**

1. **Describe the components of communication.**
2. **Identify the common forms of verbal communication.**
3. **Identify the major barriers to verbal communication.**

Steering communication upward, downward, horizontally, and across business and borders—at full throttle—is part of a race that never ends for Debra Sanchez Fair. As vice president of corporate communications for Nissan North America, Inc., she and her 43-person staff drive all communications for the automaker's operations in the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

Fair uses various media to share information within the organization, ranging from e-mail, videoconferencing, and satellite television to more traditional newsletters, meetings, and memos. Before selecting any medium, however, she carefully plans what she wants to achieve. "First, you have to think about your objective, the audience you are targeting, and your communication strategy," Fair says. "Then you think about the tactics. Every situation or initiative may require a different approach."

To find out whether audiences understand Nissan's messages, at least once a year Fair surveys employees, business leaders, and media representatives. Monitoring this feedback helps Fair and her team analyze audience response and keep Nissan's communication on track in the race that never ends.

## ■ Communicating in Organizations

As Debra Sanchez Fair of Nissan North America knows firsthand, effective communication drives successful businesses. Walk through the hallways of any contemporary organization—no matter whether it's a small start-up entrepreneurial firm, a *Fortune 500* global giant, a state government office, or a not-for-profit organization. What do you see? You see employees:

- Reading documents
- Drafting messages
- Attending meetings
- Conducting interviews
- Talking on the telephone

- Conferring with others
- Reading mail
- Typing on the computer
- Making presentations

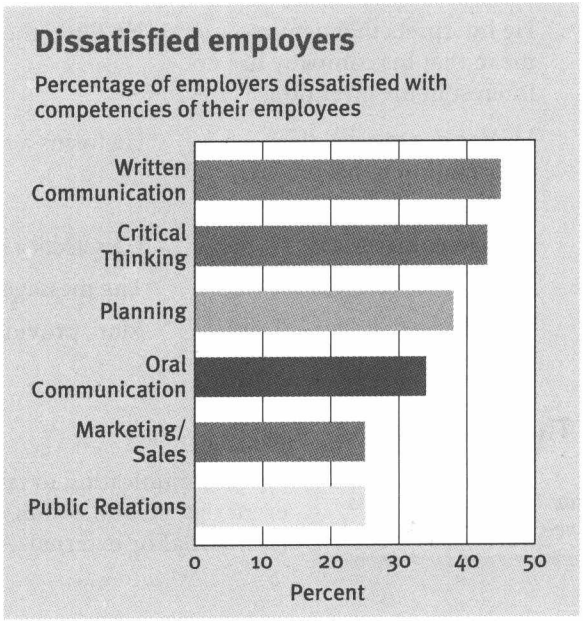
In short, you see people *communicating*. An organization is a group of people working together to achieve a common goal. Communication, of course, is a vital part of that process. Indeed, communication must have occurred before a common goal could even be established because communication is the means by which information is shared, activities are coordinated, and decisions are made.

*Communication is necessary if an organization is to achieve its goals.*

Understanding how communication works in business and how employees communicate competently within an organization will help you participate more effectively in every aspect of business. Good communication skills are crucial to your success in the organization. Competent writing and speaking skills will help you get hired, perform well, and earn promotions. If you decide to go into business for yourself, excellent writing and speaking skills will help you obtain start-up funds, promote your product, and manage your employees. The same skills will also help you achieve your personal and social goals.

It is no wonder then that, according to Mark H. McCormack, chairperson of International Management Group and bestselling author of *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School*, "People's written communications are probably more revealing than any other single item in the workplace."[1] Communication Snapshot 1 shows that the lack of competent written communication skills is the number one source of dissatisfaction that employers have about their employees.

## communication snapshot 1




## The Components of Communication

**CO1. Describe the components of communication.**

Because communication is such a vital part of the organizational structure, our study of communication begins with an analysis of its components. **Communication** is the process of sending and receiving messages—sometimes through spoken or written words and sometimes through nonverbal means such as facial expressions, gestures, and voice qualities.

***communication:*** *The process of sending and receiving verbal and nonverbal messages*

Thus, if someone communicates the following message to you and you receive it, communication will have taken place. The communication will be successful, however, only if you understand Chinese.* 危机

*Illustrated here is the Chinese word for *crisis*, which is composed of the words *danger* and *opportunity*, perhaps an inspirational reminder to always remain hopeful.

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