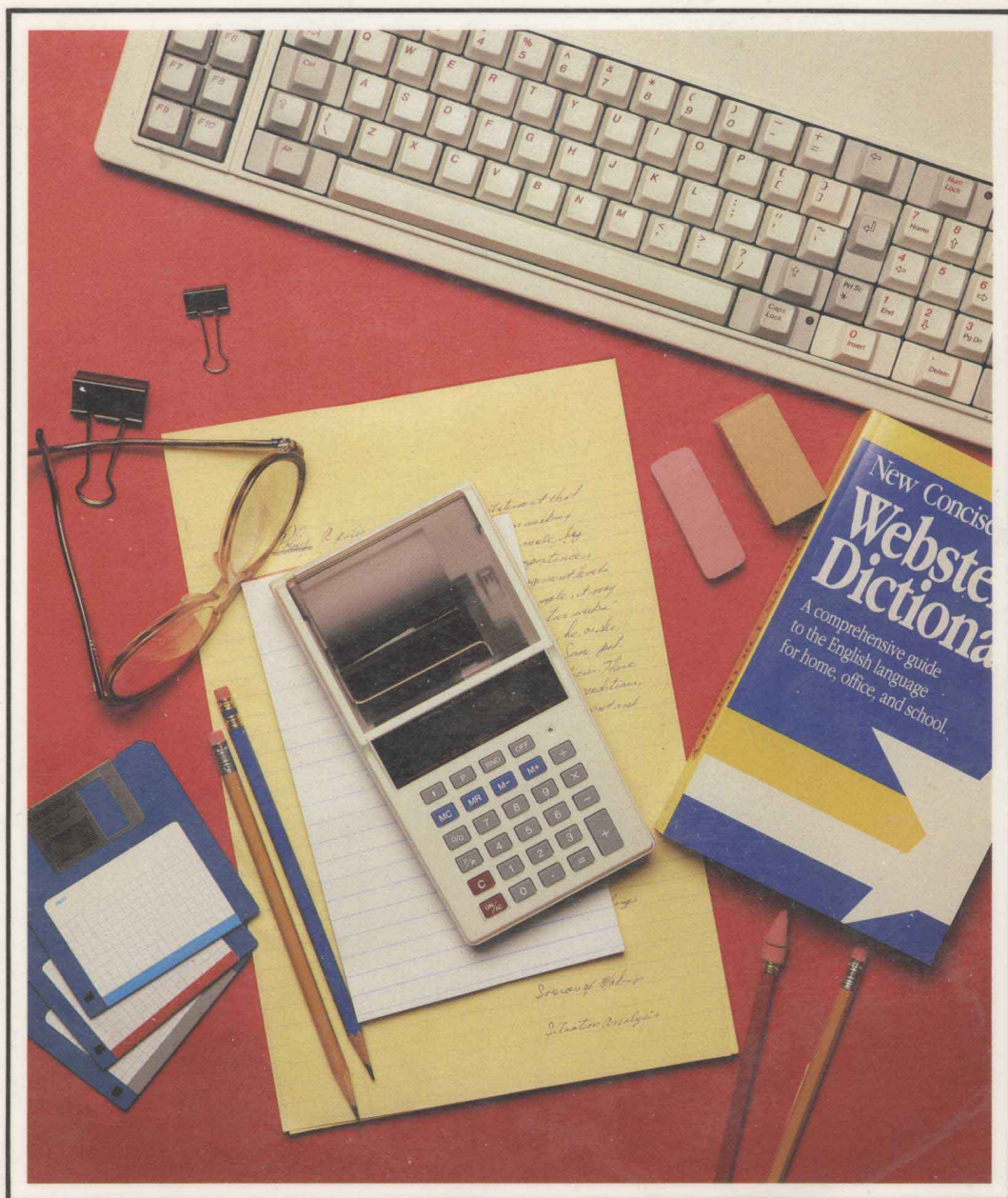


FOURTH EDITION

Business Communications ***with Writing Improvement Exercises***



PHYLLIS DAVIS HEMPHILL

FOURTH EDITION

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

With Writing Improvement Exercises

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*To Charles
and
Anita*

Preface

This book has been used successfully in college classrooms since 1976. It explains basic business communication principles and then gives students practice in applying them. Students are shown how to organize and express ideas in preparing letters, memorandums, reports, proposals and oral communications.

Features of the Fourth Edition:

- New developments in word processing, computers and other electronic media such as fax machines, electronic mail, desktop publishing
- Student guidelines for writing specific types of communications, which become instructor guidelines for grading
- Simple patterns for communications that might be prepared in early years of employment
- Written in readable, understandable and entertaining style with humor and lively anecdotes used when appropriate for illustrating ideas
- Chapter review questions carefully correlated with text
- Valuable tips on finding, keeping and leaving a job; employment resumes, application letters, other employment letters and employment interviews
- More examples of specific types of communication
- More workbook Writing Improvement Exercises which give students immediate opportunity to review and apply what they have learned
- Assignments matching experience level of early college students
- Strong visual impact with more than letters, forms, pictures, drawings, diagrams
- Quick references: “80 Questions Frequently Asked in Employment Interviews,” condensed punctuation rules, commonly misspelled words, encouragement in mastering a word processor, desktop publishing vocabulary and an extensive index
- Planned for teaching and self-study

Organization of the Book

Chapter 1 explains the theory of communication and the advantages of studying business communication. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 discuss the three basic qualities used in preparing effective communications: attractive appearance, good will tone and clear and complete message. Then in an easy-to-follow format, the balance of the book applies these three qualities to preparing specific types of communications.

Acknowledgments

I am truly grateful to a number of people for their encouragement, inspiration, information, example communications and special help in completing this and other editions.

Naming individuals, I first thank Pam Wilder, production editor who steered my last three text editions to completion. She was always cheerful, professional and patient. May she have many pleasant years in her new Florida home.

Next, I thank Hal Balmer, still a Prentice Hall stalwart, who initially prodded me to “try” to write the first workbook textbook in college business communication.

Special thanks to my family members for sharing time and expertise in their fields: my husband Charles F. Hemphill, legal matters; sons Robert D. Hemphill, information and communication technology; and Tom Hemphill, special editing.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to those fine Prentice Hall men and women in the field who help improve education by putting up-to-date texts in the hands of teachers and students.

PDH

I would like to thank my wife Anita for her support and feedback. There is nothing quite so helpful for improving one’s writing as marrying a teacher of composition and literature.

D W McC

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

With Writing Improvement Exercises

Contents

Preface, xi

Acknowledgments, xiii

CHAPTER 1 You and Business Communications: The Communication Theory, 1

Why Study Business Communications? 1

Industrial Age → Information Age, 2

What Next? 3

Business Communications Classes-Prestige Courses, 3

Communication Channels, 3

The Communication Theory, 7

Uses of Business Communications — External and Internal, 10

Review and Discussion, 13

CHAPTER 2 Qualities of a Good Business Communication: Attractive Appearance, 15

Stationery, 16

Methods of Preparing Communications, 17

Letter Placement, 18

Letter Styles, 19

Parts of the Business Letter, 23

Addressing Envelopes, 31

Folding Letters, 33

Estimating Letter Costs, 34

Writing Improvement Exercise: Wasted Words, 34

Review and Discussion, 41

CHAPTER 3 Qualities of a Good Business Communication: Good Will Tone, 45

Creating a Good Will Tone, 46

Prompt Answers, 52

Knowledge of Company Policy, 53

Resale in Business Letters, 53

Names, 53

Good Will = Courtesy = Good Manners, 54

Writing Improvement Exercise: Discourteous → Courteous, 54

Review and Discussion, 59

CHAPTER 4 **Qualities of a Good Business Communication:
Clear and Complete Message—The Letter as
a Whole, 63**

Classifying the Letter, 64

Planning the Letter, 67

Writing the Letter, 69

Transition, 73

Grammar, 75

Summarizing and Listing, 77

Writing Improvement Exercise: Passive Sentences → Active Sentences, 79

Review and Discussion, 83

CHAPTER 5 **Qualities of a Good Business Communication:
The Letter and Its Parts, 85**

“Watch Your Language,” 85

Be Careful with Foreign Correspondence, 86

Avoid Computerese, 88

Write Concisely, 88

Is the Message Clear and Complete? 90

Form Letters and Guide Letters, 90

Mastering the Word Processor, 97

“The Blind Men and the Elephant,” 98

Writing Improvement Exercise: Proofreaders’ Marks, 99

Review and Discussion, 103

CHAPTER 6 **The Routine Information Letter: The “Yes”
Letter, 105**

The Routine Information or “Yes” Letter Plan, 106

Form Letters and Cards for Routine Messages, 107

Types of Routine Information Messages, 107

News Releases, 116

Checkpoints for Routine Information or “Yes” Messages, 118

Writing Assignments, 119

Writing Improvement Exercise: Variety in Sentence Forms, 121

Review and Discussion, 125

CHAPTER 7 **The Negative Communication: The “No”
Letter, 129**

Patterns for the “No” Letter, 129

Tone in Negative Communications, 132

Humor in Negatives, 133

Candor, 134

Hiding Behind Company Policy, 134

Computer Form Letters, 135

Forestalling Complaint Letters, 135
Caveat Emptor vs. Caveat Venditor, 136
Makeup of "No" Letters, 136
Examples of "No" Letters, 137
Your Own Complaint Letter, 142
The Message with the "Bee Sting", 144
Answering — or Not Answering — the "Crackpot," 144
The Negative Negative Letter, 145
The Bachelors and the Buffer, 146
Checkpoints for "No" Letters, 146
Writing Assignments, 146
Writing Improvement Exercise: Negative → Positive, 147
Review and Discussion, 151

CHAPTER 8 Sales Letters and Persuasive Requests, 153

Selling in Today's Market, 154
Successful Sales Letters: Product, Prospect, Price, 154
Test Mailings of Sales Letters, 157
The Purpose of the Sales Letter, 157
The Advertising Style Spiral, 158
The Sales Letter Pattern, 159
"How Each Sees the Family Car," 164
Forms of the Sales Letter, 167
Persuasive Claims, 167
Persuasive Requests, 169
Your Own Look at Mail Order Buying, 171
Checkpoints for Sales Letters and Persuasive Requests, 171
Writing Assignments, 172
Writing Improvement Exercise: "We Attitude" → "You Attitude," 173
Review and Discussion, 177

CHAPTER 9 Credit Letters and Collection Letters, 179

Credit Letters, 179
The Four C's of Credit, 179
Legal Aspects of Credit Letters, 180
Granting Retail Credit, 181
Trade Credit Information, 181
Applying for Credit, 182
The Letter Granting Credit, 182
Terms of Credit, 182
The Letter Refusing Credit, 183
Exchanging Credit Information, 183

Collection Letters, 184
Classify Your Accounts, 185
Consider Making Collections in Person or by Telephone, 185

Contact High Officials, 186
Follow Guidelines in Writing Collection Letters, 186
Use the Collection Letter Series, 186
"Here's Your Hat; What's Your Hurry!" 194
Checkpoints for Credit Letters, 195
Checkpoints for Collection Letters, 196
Writing Assignments, 196
Writing Improvement Exercise: Avoid Redundancies: Needless Repetition of the Same or Similar Words, 197
Review and Discussion, 201

CHAPTER 10 Memorandums, 205

Importance of Memorandums, 206
Appearance of Memorandums, 207
Good Will Tone for In-Company Communications, 207
Clear and Complete Messages in Memorandums, 212
Checkpoints for Memorandums, 215
Writing Assignments, 217
Writing Improvement Exercise: Avoiding Redundancies: Needless Repetition of Words or Ideas with Similar Meaning, 218
Review and Discussion, 221

CHAPTER 11 Oral Communications, 223

Telephoning, 223
Dictation, 226
Participation in Meetings and Conferences, 227
The Office Grapevine, 229
Winning the Confrontation, 229
Talks and Speeches, 230
Listening, 233
Oral Communication Assignments, 235
Writing Improvement Exercise: Agreement of Pronoun with the Word it Represents; Sexism in Pronoun Usage, 235
Review and Discussion, 241

CHAPTER 12 Employment Guides: Finding a Job; Holding a Job; Earning a Promotion; Changing Jobs, 245

Finding Yourself, 245
Finding a Career, 247
The Job Market, 248
Importance of Money, 249
Finding a Job, 249
Holding a Job, 253
Earning a Promotion, 254

Changing Jobs, 255
Welcoming the New Employee, 258
Writing Improvement Exercise: Pronouns in Subject and Object Form, 259
Review and Discussion, 263

CHAPTER 13 Employment Resumés and Application Letters; Miscellaneous Employment Communications, 267

The Employment Resumé, 267
The Employment Application Letter, 276
The Employment Interview, 279
Why They Don't Hire, 284
Miscellaneous Employment Communications, 284
Follow-up Communications, 284
Refusal of a Job Offer, 286
Turn Down of Job Applicant, 287
Asking for a Raise, 288
Requests for Employment Reference, 288
Letters of Reference, 289
Letter Requesting Permission to Use Name as Reference, 291
Resignations, 291
Employment Resume Checkpoints, 292
Employment Application Letter Checkpoints, 293
Writing Assignments, 293
Writing Improvement Exercise: Using a Thesaurus to Improve Your Vocabulary, 294
Review and Discussion, 299

CHAPTER 14 Letters You Don't Have to Write But Should, 303

Personal Communications within an Organization, 303
Types of Special Good Will Letters, 303
Thank You Letters and Other Letters of Appreciation, 304
Longhand Correspondence, 308
Communicating with Public Officials, 309
Telegrams, 311
Mailgrams, 311
Writing Assignments, 311
Writing Improvement Exercise: Misplaced Modifiers, 312
Review and Discussion, 317

CHAPTER 15 Planning a Business Report or a Term Paper, 319

Advantages to the Student, Job Applicant and Employee, 319
Unnecessary Reports, 320
Research, 320

Copyright Laws, 327

Review and Discussion, 329

CHAPTER 16 *Writing a Business Report or a Term Paper; Writing Proposals, 333*

Writing a Business Report or a Term Paper, 333

When Writing Comes Hard, 333

Making a Rough Draft of the Report, 337

Revising Your Rough Draft, 344

Compiling the Complete Report, 344

Desktop Publishing, 351

Writing Proposals, 352

Unsolicited Proposals, 352

Solicited Proposals, 352

Review and Discussion, 357

APPENDIX A *Punctuation, 361*

APPENDIX B *Spelling Rules and Spelling Lists, 365*

APPENDIX C *The Vocabulary of Desktop Publishing, 373*

Index, 377

CHAPTER 1

You and Business Communications: The Communication Theory

Why Study Business Communications?

Basically, there are two reasons for learning to prepare good business communications: (1) to benefit you, the student, and (2) to benefit business and industry.

Benefit to Student

In a *Harvard Business Review* article that has become a classic, Peter Drucker, highly respected business management consultant and educator, asks what is taught in college to help a person in future employment and then gives this answer:

...they teach the one thing that is perhaps the most valuable for the future employee to know. But very few students bother to learn it.

This one basic skill is the ability to organize and express ideas in writing and in speaking.... The letter, the report or memorandum, the ten-minute "presentation" to a committee are basic tools of the employee.

Two thousand business executives from all levels of management supported this statement when asked which factors lead to promotion of employees. These people listed ability to communicate as the most important factor, above such other qualities as ambition, drive, education, experience, self-confidence, and good appearance.

Information from many other sources also supports this attitude. For example, a survey of former university business students asked if they had observed people having problems in written communication in their work. The response: 77 percent, "yes"; 14 percent, "no."

Of those answering yes, the following are some of the troubles that were reported:

Given that the individual knows his business, the difference between a shot at the top job and being buried someplace lower is the ability to communicate that knowledge.

I feel that not enough emphasis is being placed on written communication in our colleges. Although most individuals are able to compose a letter of sorts, they are totally lost, particularly in ability to organize anything of substantial length.

I would never wish to sell drive, ambition, and technical expertise short. But, in order to succeed, the ability to communicate properly is more important.

The largest portion [of CPA work] is for record purposes only and is not reviewed or edited for construction, grammar, etc., but only for content A prerequisite for advancement to higher levels is ability to write properly. Poor writing catches up with one eventually.

My business communication course was one of the most useful of my undergraduate courses.¹

Benefit to Business

Many industry leaders believe so strongly in the importance of business communication training that their firms offer their own courses or pay employees' tuition for private college classes in the subject. Among such firms are the American Institute of Banking, the American Savings and Loan Institute, Bell & Howell, Control Data Corporation, New York Life Insurance Company, Sears, and General Electric. When such emphasis is given, a student who has already studied college level courses in business communication will have a potential employment advantage over those who have not, and eventually should have a better chance of promotion.

Whenever representatives of business and industry meet with college educators to determine what courses are most needed by students entering the job market, these business leaders overwhelmingly put "need for communication skills" at the top or near the top of their lists of priorities.

Studies show that those at management or executive level spend at least 25 percent of their time on the job writing or dictating and about the same amount of time speaking. It must be acknowledged that the volume of writing must be kept in check so that the paper work does not bury business. Yet at the same time, we must understand why it is often necessary to write letters and other business messages.

A century ago, communication in business was simple because much work was done by hand, and customers were usually personal acquaintances of the craftsman or business person who was selling a product or performing a service. Also, people performed most of their own work and often prepared in their own homes many materials that are commonly bought today. When society and business became more complex, face to face contact between customers and suppliers became more difficult and time consuming. Writing business letters, reports, and memorandums was a natural development. And communicating by telephone eventually became routine in business.

Industrial Age → Information Age

Today's world has developed rapidly from an **Industrial Age** to an **Information Age**. In and out of business, computers obviously help lead this enriching—but jarring—revolution. Not long ago the multimillion dollar Media Center at Massachusetts Institute of Technology was founded on the concept that all communication methods will eventually combine into one extensive field of interrelated computerized media. This shows the trend of the future.

Business letters, memorandums, and reports will join books, newspapers, movies, television, music, telephones and so forth, forming small or giant networks. Networks can connect and interact locally or internationally on signal.

¹Homer Cox, "The Voices of Experience: The Business Communication Alumnus Reports," *The Journal of Business Communication*, Summer 1976, p. 35ff.

Communication networks focus beyond the individual's desktop. Given the necessary electronic equipment and networking capabilities, workers can send computer data, hold video conferences at their desks, send copies of charts, graphs and pictures, and even transfer funds. Further technological advances are coming.

The vice president of Information Systems of a major corporation recently said that people in the computer industry are convinced the automobile industry has not concentrated on the working efficiency of their machines the way the computer industry has. According to this charge, if those automotive giants had made the same improvements as the computer industry in the last 20 years, we would all be driving cars that cost less than \$1000 and getting more than 200 miles per gallon.

What Next?

A major Washington newsletter reports that fiber optic telephone lines with high clarity and reliability are replacing copper wire for sending information all over the world. Satellites will fill in where fiber optics will not go.

More and more, compatibility standards are making it possible for computers to talk to each other. Pocket-size computers with the power of current desktop personal computers will be hooked up to phones, bringing your office with you anywhere you go. Voice activated computers should once again free both hands for driving while still making it possible to communicate from your car. Laptop computers that cost \$3000 in 1990 will cost about \$600 by the mid-90s.

Business Communication Classes = Prestige Courses

In a business communication journal, Joel Bowman of Western Michigan University stated, "Good language skills are no longer sufficient for success in communication . . . graduating seniors need to know how to use computers to solve communication problems."²

As employers continue to demand that employees write better, business communication classes have become prestige courses on the job market. Completion of college business communication classes is a plus on any employment resumé. If you can write clearly in an organized manner, your work will stand out because of the obvious general lack of such talent. To people upstairs, organized writing means organized thinking. With today's information boom, there is always room at the top for people who can write.

Because of the new easy operation and efficiency of desktop computers and word processors, increasing numbers of people at management and other executive levels are writing, composing, and creating sophisticated communications at their own desktop computers. They made diagrams, charts and electronic spreadsheets—much more than writing simple memos.

Communication Channels

To learn to communicate effectively, it is helpful to understand something about the various communication methods or **channels**, and also the ideas behind the communica-

²Joel Bowman, "And Not a Shot Was Fired . . .," *Bulletin of the Association for Business Communication*, December 1987, p. 33.

tion theory. The following channels will be studied: nonverbal, oral, written, combining oral and written, and newer communication methods.

Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication—that is, communication without words—is frequently more effective than any spoken or written message. (The word *verb* originally meant *word*; therefore, *nonverbal* means *without words*.) Nonverbal forms of sending messages include such things as red and green traffic lights, road pictographs directing traffic around the world, police and fire sirens, the telephone ring, and the telephone busy signal. Although no words are used, each provides a clear message.

Another extremely effective means of nonverbal communication is the use of **body language**, which was originally given the scientific name *kinesics*. Body language is used in many forms, such as nodding or shaking the head, raising eyebrows, pointing thumbs down, pointing a finger, raising a fist, winking, smiling, frowning, glaring, kissing, clapping, or shaking hands. In fact, body language can often transmit a stronger message than verbal language. For example, if a man is asked if he likes another man, he might say, “Of course I like him.” But if he should at the same time use a “thumbs down” gesture, or make a motion with his forefinger as if to slit his own throat, this would totally contradict the spoken verbal message.

Sign language such as that used for communicating with the deaf is considered a means of verbal communication because, although signs are used, communication is taking place by means of words.

Oral Communication

The chief advantage of **oral (spoken) communication** is that it furnishes an opportunity for a speedy and complete exchange of ideas—in other words, immediate feedback. This gives an opportunity to clarify any matters that may be questionable.

The first and highest level communication channel is speaking in person, face to face. This channel rates high because, besides exchanging words, we can see all signs of body language. Also, when we hear another person speak, we can get additional information from noticing vocal cues of tone, loudness, pronunciation, emphasis, grammar usage, and so forth.

Telephoning, the second level communication channel, is not always as completely effective as face to face because of the absence of body language. But the telephone does furnish vocal cues and an opportunity for immediate feedback. Use of the telephone for business communication continues to grow because of the telephone’s convenience and its real or imagined economy.

Written Communications

Written or printed communication such as letters, memorandums and reports, are generally considered the third level communication channel. Some of these communications are prepared on paper (hard copy), and others are stored on computer disks or displayed on computer terminals. Although these visual communications lack some advantages of personal oral messages, written ones are frequently preferred.

A business communication is often too important not to be put in writing. Correspondence within a company, contacts between customers and clients, monthly statements,