

Communicating at Work

Principles and Practices for Business and the Professions

Eighth Edition



Ronald B. Adler
Jeanne Marquardt Elmhorst

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COMMUNICATING AT WORK: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES FOR BUSINESS AND THE PROFESSIONS

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Communicating at Work

Principles and Practices for Business and the Professions

*This edition is dedicated to Jennie Katsaros,
stalwart editor and good friend.*

out the authors

Ronald B. Adler is on the faculty of Santa Barbara City College, where he specializes in organizational and interpersonal communication. He is the author of *Confidence in Communication: A Guide to Assertive and Social Skills* and coauthor of *Understanding Human Communication*, *Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication* as well as the widely used text *Looking Out/Looking In*. Professor Adler is a consultant for a number of corporate, professional, and government clients and leads workshops in such areas as conflict resolution, presentational speaking, team building, and interviewing.



Jeanne Marquardt Elmhurst lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and has been involved in communication studies for over 15 years. She received her master's degree from the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, then travelled and taught in Asia for three years, sparking her interest in intercultural communication. She has taught at the University of Albuquerque and the University of New Mexico. She is currently an instructor at Albuquerque TVI Community College, where her courses reflect the variety in the communication discipline: business and professional, organizational, listening, gender, intercultural, and interpersonal. Jeanne also provides training for business and government clients.

preface

Few assets are more valuable to career success than the ability to communicate effectively. Technical skills alone aren't enough for job success: The ability to communicate clearly and persuasively and to understand others and work with them smoothly often makes the difference between success and failure, for both individuals and their organizations.

This edition of *Communicating at Work* is aimed at helping all career-minded readers. Novices to the business world will be introduced to skills they will need for on-the-job success. Readers who have ample job experience but recognize that there is always potential for communicating more effectively will also find useful tips and tools.

Continuing Features

The eighth edition of *Communicating at Work* continues the features that have made it the most widely used text in its market:

- A **practical, real-world focus**, with every page containing useful advice and examples about how to communicate effectively.
- A **focus on communication technology** offers tips on when and how to use tools like e-mail, instant messaging, videoconferencing, presentation software, and other technologies.
- **Strong coverage of workplace diversity** helps readers communicate with others from different backgrounds and choose approaches that work for everyone involved.
- An emphasis on **ethical communication** discusses how communicators can achieve their goals in a way that doesn't compromise moral integrity.

New to This Edition

New Chapter: Types of Business and Professional Presentations

Most business and professional presentations differ significantly from the forms taught in college public speaking classes. This chapter provides detailed guidelines for planning and delivering the most important and common types of presentations, including reports, briefings, orientations, proposals, and training. In addition, the chapter offers guidelines for speaking on special occasions, including introducing another speaker, presenting and accepting awards, giving toasts, and welcoming guests.

Streamlined Material

The body of useful information continues to grow, but academic semesters haven't gotten any longer. To keep teaching and learning manageable, the text has been edited throughout to present ideas more concisely, without sacrificing content. For example, Chapter 4 has been reorganized to emphasize listening skills in a briefer, clearer manner. Guidelines for building credibility are presented earlier (in Chapter 10) and more concisely, so speakers can apply them throughout the process of planning a presentation. All methods for organizing a presentation are now presented together in Chapter 11 instead of being split between two chapters.

New and Updated Material

Every chapter contains new material to help readers communicate more effectively on the job. Topics include the costs of poor communication in the workplace, how to avoid the pitfalls of using e-mail, how to deal with unpleasant coworkers, tips for giving feedback constructively, and guidelines for telephone meetings and videoconferences.

- **New Career Tip sidebars** These boxes offer practical advice on a diverse array of topics including cubicle etiquette, getting your message across in less than a minute, when to use logical arguments and when emotional appeals will work best, using a microphone effectively, and how to request a raise.
- **New On the Web sidebars** These provide quick links to websites that support and expand ideas from the text. New topics include: personal networking resources, finding jobs and internships abroad, jargon-detecting software, dealing with sexual harassment, negotiating ethically, virtual meetings, and resources for conducting training.
- **New Quick Guide** This laminated guide, bundled with every new book, offers a handy step-by-step guide for planning the most common types of business and professional communication: meetings, interviews, presentations, and problem-solving negotiations.

Design and Pedagogy

- **New design and illustration program** presents material in an eye-catching way. This edition includes dozens of photographs and cartoons that capture the challenges of communicating at work in a compelling, often humorous manner. For example, new cartoons poke fun at topics including poor downward communication, how technology fosters the spread of rumors, differing organizational cultures, the folly of needless win-lose competition, poor answers to interview questions, and the limitations of PowerPoint software.
- **Improved pedagogy for better learning** Learning Objectives (cognitive and behavioral) now open each chapter, showing readers exactly what they need to learn to master the material in each chapter.

Resources for Students and Instructors

- **Communicating at Work Website, the Online Learning Center at www.mhhe.com/adler8** offers up-to-date links to the constantly growing number of sites with useful information and advice for business communicators. Since some links listed in the “On the Web” sidebars in the text may change, this site will help readers locate the resources they are seeking. The website provides instructors with PowerPoint slides and downloadable supplements and provides students with learning tools to help them master course concepts. Icons in the text direct students to relevant resources on this website, which include self-quizzes, Internet exercises, business document templates, and glossary flash cards.
- **PowerWeb** is a component of the Online Learning Center that brings information on the Internet to a course. It features current articles, curriculum-based material, and research tools. This content, which is password protected, is offered free with new copies of the text.

- **Student CD-ROM** The CD that accompanies the text contains learning tools to help students comprehend and review course concepts. These tools are fully integrated with the text through the use of CD icons in the text margins that notify students which CD tool to use. The CD contains self-quizzes, videos, business document templates, outline tutor, PowerPoint tutor, and glossary flash cards.
- An **Instructor's CD-ROM** (compatible with Macintosh and IBM computers) offers the following resources:
 - An **updated Instructor's Manual, Resource Integrator and Test Bank** by Carolyn Clark provides a wealth of teaching strategies, classroom activities, resources for professors and students, and examination questions. The Chapter Integrator section breaks each chapter down by course objectives and identifies instructional resources relevant to each objective.
 - **PowerPoint** slides of key information from the book allow instructors to present lecture material in computer-generated format.
 - **Computerized testing software** makes it easy to create examinations from the bank of existing questions, as well as allowing instructors to add new ones of their own.
- **Communication Concepts video** provides scenarios of common types of business and professional interaction for analysis. The video is available in VHS format and on the student CD-ROM.
- **PageOut: The Course Website Development Center** All online content for this text is supported by WebCT, eCollege.com, Blackboard, and other course management systems. PageOut was designed for novice instructors who are just beginning to explore Web options. Even the novice computer user can create a course website with a template provided by McGraw-Hill. To learn more about PageOut, ask your McGraw-Hill representative for details, or fill out the form at www.mhhe.com/pageout.

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Proposals

In a **proposal** you advocate that your audience take specific action. Some proposals, like the city council appeal described above, are aimed at external audiences. Other proposals are focused on internal audiences. You might, for example, try to persuade management to support a ride-sharing program or reimburse employees for educational costs, or you might try to convince your boss to give you more staffing support or a raise in pay. (See the Career Tip on page 445 for advice on this subject.)

Whatever the topic and audience, the most straightforward approach for a proposal is the problem-solution approach described in Chapter 11. While the particulars will vary, each section of this two-part approach is likely to include information listed here:

- I. *Introduce the problem*
 - a. Demonstrate nature of problem in terms the audience will understand.
 - b. Show undesirable consequences of the problem.
 - c. Highlight ethical dimensions of the situation (current situation is wrong).
 - d. Provide causal analysis of the situation (how did this develop?).
2. *Provide a solution (with supporting evidence)*
 - a. Describe the positive consequences of your proposal.
 - b. Show how your proposal will avoid bad consequences.
 - c. Highlight the ethical reasons for your approach. Show why it's the right thing to do.
 - d. Address the feasibility of your proposal. Show that it can be done: cost, time, motivation, etc. Include an operational timeline to strengthen the proposal.

Here, in outline form, is how the problem-solution plan would look in the body of a presentation proposing an employee wellness program:

- I. Health-related problems are hurting our company [Problem]
 - A. Health costs are increasing
 1. Insurance premiums are increasing
 2. Out-of-pocket expenses for employees are growing
 - B. Productivity is declining due to employee health problems
 1. Absenteeism is growing
 2. Workers who stay on the job are less productive
 3. Some employees are leaving us due to health problems
- II. A wellness program could reduce the impact of these problems [Solution]
 - A. Elements of a program
 1. Nutrition education
 2. Exercise education
 3. Substance-abuse counseling
 - B. Benefits
 1. Healthier employees
 2. More-productive employees
 3. Lower health costs (insurance and out of pocket)

New Chapter on Business Presentations

Chapter 14, *Types of Presentations*, provides the tools for planning and delivering the most important types of on-the-job presentations including reports, briefings, orientations, training, and proposals.

New Photos and Illustrations

Dozens of photographs and cartoons capture the challenges of communicating at work in a compelling, often humorous manner.



A Practical, Real-World Focus

career tip

Cubicle Etiquette

As the comic character Dilbert has shown the world, daily life in a cubicle has its challenges. These tips can help you manage the communication dynamics of cubicle life.

Privacy

Treat others' cubicles as if they were private offices. Don't hang in without invitation or permission—just as if there were a door. Never read the occupant's computer screen or browse items from the desk just because you have access. Let others know when you aren't available by a "Do Not Disturb" sign or by your lack of eye contact. Resist the urge to shoot out an answer to another cubicle dweller's question just because you overheard it. Remember that whatever you say can be heard by others, so conduct meetings and personal conversations elsewhere. Keep conversations with your banker, family, doctor, and/or sweetheart out of the cubicle. Be polite enough to not listen to others' conversations, and certainly don't repeat any-

thing overheard. Don't use a speaker phone in a cubicle; it is rude to the person on the other end and to your colleagues.

Noise

Don't add to the noise of a cube farm. Keep your voice on the low side. Set your phone ringer on low and turn it off when you are away from your desk. Don't let your cell phone ring when you are on another call. Keep radios or CDs as low as possible, so the sound doesn't carry, and use a screen saver without sounds.

Olfors

Your favorite scent (whether perfume, lotion, aftershave, or hair product) may be someone else's allergen, so think about its effect on others. Don't bring strong-smelling foods or gum bags with dairy scents into the cubicle. Keep your shoes on. Try to eat in lunch areas, not at your desk as your hungry or sick colleagues may not appreciate the odor of your food.

In addition to reflecting status and power, the physical layout of an organization also shapes the ways its members interact with one another. For example, the temperature and humidity of a room can have profound effects on the success of communication. One study revealed that as temperature and humidity increase, impressions of a speaker's attractiveness decline.¹⁰ Understanding this fact can help you avoid scheduling presentations or meetings in hot, stuffy rooms, where the results may be doomed before a word is spoken.

Another way in which environments shape communication is proximity. The distance that separates people is perhaps the most important factor in shaping who talks with whom. Other things being equal, officemates will talk with one another more than with the people next door, and workers in the same area deal with one another more than with similarly employed people in another area. Researcher Thomas J. Allen studied workers in research facilities, medical laboratories, and business schools. He found that the frequency with which a person spoke to colleagues was a direct function of the distance between their desks.¹¹ In addition to the simple distance separating people, the difficulty of negotiating that distance can also reduce interaction.¹² Centers that must be turned, doors that have to be opened, and counters that block access keep people apart. One manager described the obstacle course that separated him from his boss's office:

I go from my office past the occupant and down the hall to the other end of the building. I take the elevator to mezzanine, get off, and take another one to meet my-

Career Tips

Career Tips give practical advice on how to be more successful in work-related situations. New topics include cubicle etiquette, when to use logical arguments, and how to request a raise.

Presentations

Coverage includes basic steps for organizing business presentations and preparing PowerPoint presentations.

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Part Five Making Effective Presentations

Table 11-2 Checklist for Organizing and Supporting a Presentation

- I. Introduction
 - A. Captures attention of audience
 - B. Gives audience reason to listen
 - C. Sets appropriate tone
 - D. Establishes speaker's qualifications, if necessary
 - E. Introduces them and previous content
- II. Body
 - A. Body uses clear, most effective organizational pattern:
 1. Chronological
 2. Spatial
 3. Topical
 4. Cause-effect
 5. Problem-solution
 6. Criteria satisfaction
 7. Comparative advantages
 8. Motivated sequence
 - B. Main points are stated in complete sentences
 - C. All points help develop thesis
 - D. Body contains no more than five main points
 - E. Each main point contains only one idea
 - F. Main points are parallel in structure
- III. Transitions
 - A. Refer to both recent and upcoming material, showing relationship between the two
 - B. Emphasize important ideas
 - C. Clarify structure of speaker's ideas
 - D. Ease in all necessary parts of presentation
 1. Between introduction and body
 2. Between main points within body
 3. Between body and conclusion
- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Reviews thesis and main points
 - B. Concludes with effective closing statement

If you have trouble planning a transition that links preceding and upcoming material smoothly, the reason may be that the ideas aren't logically related and the organizational plan you've chosen is flawed. Review the organizing patterns on pages 344-352 and the rules for main points on pages 352-354 to be sure that the structure of your presentation's body is logically suited to the topic. Transitions should also call attention to themselves. You should let listeners know that you're moving from one point to another so that they will be able to follow the

A-28

Appendix 2 Business Writing

FIGURE A2-4
Functional
Résumé Focusing on
Demonstrated
Skills

From www.gemini.com/usa/resume_sample_1.html.

Amy Matthews

Recent Graduate
Dix C-2119
Cambridge, MA 02138
617-552-0100
amathews@harvard.edu

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| OBJECTIVE | To contribute my education and health management skills in a position with a growing and dynamic firm. |
| EDUCATION | BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
Major: Health Sciences
Minor: Management
Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 2002 |
| RELEVANT COURSES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Anatomy & Physiology I • Human Anatomy & Physiology II • Health Policy • Organizational Analysis and Health Care • Health Care Management • Human Resource Management |
| Health Management Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Served as Assistant to the Director of the Stoney D. Hunsley Street Center Foundation • Functioned as Public Health Representative for the Cambridge Area Public Health Administration • Coordinated Harvard University Public Health Awareness Week (Fall, 2002) |
| Communications Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Served as a phone-a-thon caller on several occasions, soliciting donations from Harvard alumni and parents for Harvard University • Documented for a public campaign, distributing literature door-to-door, building fund-raising and making phone calls to local |
| Management Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handled all back-office management functions, including employee relations and accounting • Directed client relations, order processing and routine upkeep of the firm • Coordinated efforts between customer needs and group personnel • Designed all market research analysis and reports for our client • Designed suggestions and duties for other team members • Presented market research results to client with suggestions of improvement |
| Leadership Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in Youth Leadership Program, a group dedicated to developing leadership skills through diverse programming • Served as International Coordinator for the newly formed student council • Elected Vice President of the Management for Professionals, a group that increases and coordinates educational programming for business school students |
| Systems Abilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft Office • Microsoft Publisher • Microsoft Word • Microsoft Excel |

Expanded Coverage of Business Writing

Includes tips on choosing the best format for résumés and job applications, via both traditional channels and the Internet. Business document templates on the student CD-ROM provide additional tips and templates so students can create cover letters, résumés, agendas, and memos.

career tip

Working in Virtual Teams

1. Use time zones to your advantage. Handing off work to team members further to the west allows greater cooperation than working in the other direction. Remember Asia is a day ahead of the United States; Europe is half a day behind.
2. Use e-mail to express some of the emotions, personal thoughts, and feelings that you would otherwise face in face-to-face communication. Doing so can build camaraderie and the human feeling that virtual teams may lack without face-to-face communication.
3. Consider using "back channel" (telephone, personal e-mail) to confer directly with one or more team members when you need to deal with issues and relationships personally in a way that will save the group time and effort.
4. Do a trial run of any technical support-transfer files, check that they can be opened, see whether anything is lost in transmission, check that all versions of equipment interact with other team members' versions.
5. Be sure that you get input from all team members—it is possible that those who are more

comfortable with the technology of the virtual team will "speak" more than those who have more expertise in the team area, but not with the technology being used. As in a face-to-face group, a gatekeeper needs to be sure everyone is having input.

6. Be cautious: As a new employee, it may be easy to "synchronize" or be placed on too many committees or teams, especially virtual ones. Your work may be less than your best if you overextend yourself.

7. Be aware of cultural differences in communication style. These exist in cyberspace as well as in face-to-face communication. Remain yourself of style differences in high- and low-context cultures, expectations of leaders and team members, preferences for direct and indirect means of expression. Learn to read between the lines of those who may not directly criticize your idea or offer advice.

Source: Adapted from Kathleen Matarazzo, "Tip for Teams," *Compuserworld* 11 (April 28, 1995): p. 72.

Approaches to Working in Groups and Teams

Throughout most of the history of organizations, the importance of centralized leadership in groups went unmentioned. The common thinking was that one ingredient in effective group functioning was the presence of a leader who could motivate members and make final decisions. Recently, however, experts in business and professional communication have come to recognize another approach to group functioning that puts most or all of the power into the hands of members. Since both of these approaches—centralized and decentralized—are common in today's workplace, the following pages will look at how communication operates in each one.

Centralized Leadership

The difference between effective and ineffective leaders can be dramatic. A failing team gets a new coach and, with the same players, begins winning against the same opposition; a demoralized division gets a new sales manager and orders increase; a production crew gets a new supervisor and workers who once spent

Tips for using presentation software.

on the web

Technology for Virtual Meetings

For single teleconferences, most phone companies provide a service where three or more people can hold a conference call. Users can set up these conferences on a pay-per-use basis or in some cases have unlimited teleconferencing for a single monthly fee. Check with your telephone provider for details.

Several commercial sites offer an array of virtual meeting features. Here is a sampler:

Internet.com (www.internet.com) lets you set up a private network of co-workers (and also clients, if you wish). Members of this internet can view a private document library containing reports, presentations, photos, and other files uploaded by any person in the group. There is an instant messaging feature and also a discussion board where members can post and respond to messages asynchronously. This site also provides shared contact lists and 25 MB of free storage space.

WebEx Meeting Center (www.webex.com) allows users to create teleconferences, add video to meetings, give software demonstrations, deliver presentations via the Web and share computer applica-

tions. Anyone in the meeting can view and edit shared documents or take meeting participants on a Web tour.

The **Grease website** (www.grease.com/products/greasepreview) uses e-mail or instant messaging to send "invitations" to other users to join a "shared space" that runs across local PC hard drives and lets users communicate and collaborate through voice, text messages, threaded discussions, drawing and word processing tools, and file sharing.

My PlaceWare (www.myplaceware.com) provides a virtual meeting room with many of the features in other sites listed here. It also offers a "white board" where meeting participants can sketch out items for one another to view.

With a relatively small investment, you can hold teleconferences via the Web. One option is to buy special software and access it from your own Internet server. Another approach is to rent the software from a service bureau and use its server. One such service is **e-conference** (www.e-conference.com).

teleconferences, in-house computer networks can make chat sessions easy. Free instant messaging is the quickest and easiest way to hold an online meeting. Just create a "buddy list" of the people with whom you want to talk, and you can meet online whenever you want. Sophisticated programs for meetings include a document sharing capability which allows users to view and add to the same computer file. (See the nearby "On the Web" box for more information about technology for online meetings.)

Virtual meetings have many advantages when compared to the face-to-face variety.¹² Most obviously, they allow people to interact far more quickly, easily, and affordably than would otherwise be possible. Virtual meetings are easier to schedule, and they take less time than in-person sessions since participants don't have to worry about getting to and from the meeting site. The relative ease of holding virtual meetings makes it possible to include people who otherwise wouldn't be able to attend. Finally, the less personal nature of meetings encourages lower status members to participate in discussions more freely and stand their ground on controversial issues.

Along with these advantages, virtual meetings have some important drawbacks when compared to the in-person variety. Participants have less access to one another's nonverbal feedback, increasing the chances of misunderstandings. Just as importantly, they may exclude participants who don't have access to the necessary technology. Even when they do have all the technology, some participants who

Technology in the Workplace

Technology is constantly changing the business environment. This text covers the latest developments and offers guidelines and advice for using the new technologies.

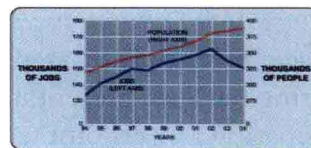


FIGURE 12-11
Multiple-Line
Graph

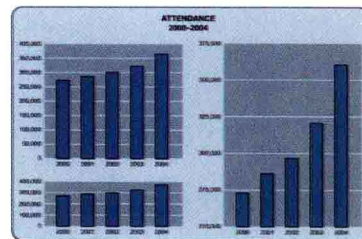


FIGURE 12-12
The same data can be illustrated by varying the horizontal and vertical size and area of a graph. These graphs were created by using Microsoft PowerPoint.

On the Web boxes provide links to websites that support the text material. New topics include personal networking resources, finding jobs and internships abroad, and dealing with sexual harassment.

ethical challenge

Responding to Sexual Harassment

Imagine that the following incident happened to you, or to a female colleague who seeks your advice. Decide which of the seven alternatives listed on pages 89–90 is the most effective and appropriate response.

Susan Carter is one of the few female partners in a New York consulting firm. During an out-of-town planning meeting in her hotel room, the client makes a clumsy pass, knocking her over. He later apologizes, but Susan is unable to simply forget the incident.

The next day, Susan's boss, Justin Peale, calls to ask how her meeting went. She knows from the office grapevine that Justin only put her on this key account

with reluctance, feeling that the clients would feel more comfortable working with a male account representative. Susan knows that telling her boss about the incident could prejudice him against giving her future assignments. On the other hand, she knows that keeping quiet compromises her dignity and that not reporting the incident may result in the client's firm being exposed to future lawsuits. What should she do?

For a more detailed account of this incident and commentary by several executives, see J. Margetta, "Will She Fit In?" Harvard Business Review, March/April 1997, pp. 18–32.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the text, and in "Ethical Challenge" boxes, students are invited to consider ways of incorporating ethical considerations in day-to-day work contexts. New topics include ethics involving honesty and facilitating ethical dilemma decisions.

Communication Often Presents Ethical Challenges

One writer observed, "The trouble with business ethics is that many people think the phrase is an oxymoron. They hear it, giggle, and say things like, 'You mean like military intelligence, eh?'"³⁰ Despite this cynical attitude, there is a growing recognition that behaving ethically is an essential part of being an effective, promotable employee. Scandalous business practices led to the downfall of major corporations like Enron and WorldCom, and have cost others millions of dollars. As a result of these ethical lapses, sensitivity to communicating in a principled way has grown, and several hundred corporations and organizations now include an ethics officer in their organizational chart who reports directly to the chairman.³¹

Doing the ethical thing isn't always easy. On a personal level, you are likely to face conflicts between what you believe is right and what is practical. For instance, you might have to deal with a customer or colleague whose business or approval you need, but who is behaving badly—perhaps making sexist or racist remarks. After a trip together, co-workers turn in inflated expenses and expect you to do the same. Your team is under pressure to finish a project, but you recognize potential safety issues being shortcut. Besides personal challenges, sooner or later you are likely to experience situations like these where others in your organization behave in ethically questionable ways. Do you speak up when a colleague makes promises to clients that you know the company can't keep? Should you challenge your boss when he or she treats other employees unfairly or illegally? badly?

A blanket obligation to communicate ethically can be too vague to be helpful in specific situations. Some ethicists suggest these questions to help you decide how to behave in a principled manner:³²

Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperative: Could our society continue to function if everyone acted in this fashion?

The Utilitarian Rule: Does this action do the most good for the most people over the greatest period of time?

The Golden Rule Standard: Is this the way in which I would want to be treated by others?

on the web

Business and Professional Ethics

Ethics Updates (<http://ethics.sandiego.edu/index.html>) offers multiple links to ethical theory and applied ethics information. Click on "Case Studies" to choose from over 90 case studies and the opportunity to join online discussions for each.

The Institute for Business and Professional Ethics (www.depaul.edu/ethics) promotes ethical behavior through teaching, training, and research. Its website includes links to *Business Ethics Magazine*, *The Online Journal of Ethics*, a newsletter, and ethics articles.

The U.S. Office of Government Ethics' website (www.usoge.gov) includes specific ethics topics (gifts,

honoraria, supplementing income), "What's New in Ethics?", workshops, and training materials.

The Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions, CSEP (www.iit.edu/departments/csep/), presents a newsletter, Ethics Across the Curriculum, Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl, and Online Ethics Codes (over 800 codes indexed by over 24 fields of study).

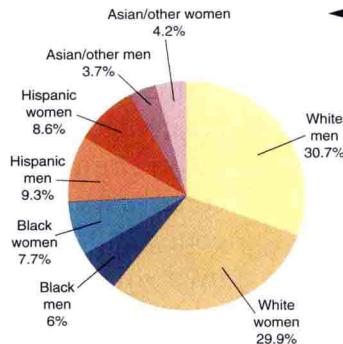
The University of British Columbia's Center for Applied Ethics (www.ethics.ubc.ca/links/index.htm) offers another variety of ethics resources.

Focus on Diversity

FIGURE 2-1
U.S. Multiethnic
Workforce

From Howard N. Fullerton, Jr., and Mitra Toossi, "Labor Force Projections to 2010: Steady Growth and Changing Composition," *Monthly Labor Review* Online 124 (November 2001). <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2001/11/art2full.pdf>.

Persons Entering Workforce, 2000-2010



Working with people from different backgrounds is more important and more common than ever. *Communicating at Work* encourages cultural understanding by exploring issues of diversity throughout.

on the web

Learning about World Cultures

Brigham Young University's Kennedy Center has produced a series of "Culturegrams"—brief profiles of key information for travelers visiting over 100 countries and regions, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. Each pamphlet begins with a simple map and background on geography, history, climate, and other basic information. Communication-related information profiles personal appearance, gestures, greetings, visiting, eating, and other useful topics. For example, in Somalia, men greet each other by firmly shaking hands three times before putting that hand to their hearts. More information about Culturegrams is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.culturegrams.com>.

Finding information about a variety of cultures within the United States and internationally can be a challenge. For culture-specific information about traveling and doing business in other countries you

can use websites of the U.S. State Department (<http://travel.state.gov/links.html>), United Nations (www.un.org), and National Geographic Society (www.nationalgeographic.com). For information on over 40 countries, see The Embassy Page (www.embpage.org), International Business Consortium (<http://cobe.boisestate.edu/ib>), Virtual Tourist (www.vtourist.com/webmap), Global Business Basics (www.getcustoms.com/articles), and Executive Planet (www.executiveplanet.com).

For an interesting account of 10 faux pas in intercultural communication, go to www.marybosrock.com/fauxpas.htm. For excellent books on intercultural business and living in general and in specific countries, visit Intercultural Press (www.interculturalpress.com). Click on "Hot Links" for even more informative intercultural sites.

Table 2-1 Cultural Traits Influencing Communication on the Job

	U.S.	Japan	Mexico
Social unit	Individual	Group	Family
Authority structure	Egalitarian	Hierarchical	Hierarchical
Basis for authority	Competence	Seniority	Trust
Style of negotiation	Direct	Indirect	Indirect
Decision making	Individualistic	Consensus	Authoritarian
Attitude toward conflict/competition	Seeks	Avoids	Avoids
Importance of personal relationships	Beneficial	Essential	Essential
Basis for status	Money/competence	Title/position	Title/position
Rate of formality	Medium/low	High	High
Sense of history	Low	High	High
Importance of time	High	High (in business) Low (in personal matters)	Low

Source: Adapted from E. R. McDaniel and L. A. Samovar, "Cultural Influences on Communication in Multinational Organizations: Managerial Case Study," in *Intercultural Communication: A Reader* (ed. John L. A. Samovar and E. R. Porter [Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1987]).

statements and perspectives. Even when we acknowledge cultural variation, the fact remains that not everyone in a culture behaves identically. Figure 2-2 shows both the overlap in communication practices and the range of behavior within each one. Ignoring cross-cultural similarities and intra-cultural variation can lead to stereotyping people from different backgrounds, exaggerating and caricaturing the other culture, and judging its communication practices as radically different and implicitly wrong.

Formality Americans take pleasure in their informality and their quickness in getting on a first-name basis with others. First names are seen as friendly and indicative of kindness and attachment. With the exception of a few countries including Thailand and Australia, business exchanges with persons from other countries tend to be much more formal. The U.S. retailing giant Wal-Mart made the strategic decision not to hire greeters in its German stores, even though U.S. shoppers enjoy being welcomed to their entry in stores. Martina Menz, managing supervisor of the German public relations firm hired by Wal-Mart to manage its European debut, explained why: "As a German, I find the idea of being greeted at the door uncomfortable. I would feel awkward if someone I didn't know started talking to me."¹⁵

The use of titles varies around the world. Other than the custom of addressing physicians and surgeons as "Doctor," not many titles are used in the United States. In many other countries, though, titles are an important way of showing respect. In Mexico the abbreviated title on business cards requires some skill to understand. "Lic." for example, stands for *licenciado*, a title used for someone with a general

quick guide to communicating at work

Parenthetical references refer to pages in *Communicating at Work* where each tip is discussed in detail.

EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING

Before the Interview

1. Define your goal as specifically as possible. (174-175)
2. Consider the setting, time, place, etc. (182-184)
3. Identify/analyze the other party. (175-177)
 - Knowledge, self-concept, view of you, attitude about the subject
4. Consider the structure. (177-178)
 - Highly structured, moderately structured, or unstructured
5. Prepare a list of topics to be discussed and likely questions. (178-182)
 - If you are the interviewee, anticipate questions.
 - Consider question types: open/closed, fact/opinion, direct/indirect, hypothetical.
 - Avoid loaded and leading questions.

During the Interview

1. Begin with sociable greeting to build rapport. (185)
2. Include orientation. (Clearly reason for the interview; information needed; how it will be used.) Describe appropriate length of interview. (185-186)
3. During body
 - Interviewer should control focus of conversation and follow up with secondary questions as needed. (186-188)
 - Interviewee should give clear, detailed answers; correct misunderstandings; correct own errors; and ask questions as necessary. (188-189)
4. Conclude the interview with review of results, establish future actions, and close with pleasantries. (189)

SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

Planning a Meeting

1. Decide whether a meeting is appropriate. (289-290)
2. Choose the right attendees. (292)
 - Seek optimal size of group. Include only essential people and exclude unproductive members, if possible.
3. Schedule enough time for tasks at hand. (291-292)
4. Choose/propose meeting time and location convenient for most members. (291)
5. Arrange the necessary room and facilities. (291)
 - Convenient for attendees; necessary facilities (e.g., Internet connection, flip chart, etc.); free from distractions.
6. Circulate agenda. (291-294)
 - Distribute far enough in advance to give members sufficient notice.
 - Include particulars of meeting (date, time, length, location, attendees).
 - Provide sufficient background information.
 - List goals for each item.

New Quick Guide to Communicating at Work

This handy reference tool, bundled with every new book, offers a step-by-step guide for planning the most common types of business and professional presentations: meetings, interviews, and problem-solving negotiations.

Thought-Provoking Theme Boxes

Boxes highlight important chapter concepts.

career tip

How Much Time Does It Take to Plan a Presentation?

Mark Twain once said, "It usually takes more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech." This humorous observation highlights a truth about virtually every presentation: Success comes from careful planning, and planning takes time.

Almost every inexperienced speaker underestimates the amount of time necessary to create an effective presentation. Most experts use the hour-per-minute rule of thumb: Expect to spend about 1 hour of preparation time for every minute you will be speaking. Some professionals suggest a more modest 10-to-1 ratio between preparation and speaking time. "If I'm building a new presentation from scratch, you're probably talking about at least 10 hours of research and development for one hour of delivery time," says corporate trainer Bob Pike.

Experts agree that the way you spend preparation time is more important than the actual number of hours you spend. Most suggest that analyzing your audience is essential. Even for 1-hour speeches he has delivered many times before, Pike spends at least 2 to 3 hours researching the specific audience he will be addressing. He often asks key clients to fill out questionnaires that identify their specific interests, level of knowledge, any topics, or even specific words he should avoid.

Speakers are like athletes: Time spent planning and practicing is an investment that produces winning results.

For more information on presentation planning, see Dave Zetzkus, "Check Work: How to Make the Most of Your Preparation Time," *Presentation*, February 2002, pp. 32-40.

Handling Difficult Questions

1. You know that an employee has been leaving work early for the past several months. You hope he will volunteer this information, without your having to confront him. During a performance appraisal, how can you raise the issue with this employee?
2. You are conducting a series of half-hour interviews with consumers, exploring their attitudes toward a variety of social issues, as part of a market research

ethical challenge

- project for your employer. In the first few minutes of one session, the interviewee makes several racist comments. How do you respond?
3. You are interviewing for a job you really want. The employer asks about your experience with a particular type of database software. You don't know much about this type of program, but you are confident that you can teach yourself before the job begins. How do you reply to the interviewer?

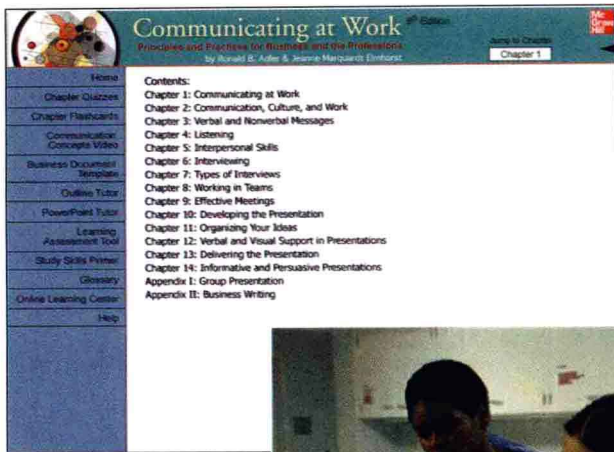
on the web

Resources for Demographic Analysis

Resources for demographic analysis are plentiful. The Pew Research Center (www.people-press.org) conducts independent research on attitudes toward public policies and news. You'll find the interactive typology (<http://people-press.org/tit/>) useful to view characteristics of various types of voters/audiences and you can participate in an interactive exercise to "type" yourself. The NES (National Election Studies) Guide to Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior hosts out-

standing graphs and charts on characteristics of the electorate at www.umich.edu/~nes/nesguide/nesguide.htm. Gallup Polls on a variety of topics are at www.gallup.com and the latest U.S. Census Bureau figures are at www.census.gov. Additional information from the National Survey of Family Growth from the National Center for Health Statistics is at www.nchs.gov/nchs/mfng.htm.

Media Resources for Students and Instructors



The new *Communicating at Work* CD-ROM and the Online Learning Center provide a variety of resources to help students review key course content. Icons in the margins of the text prompt students to use corresponding features on the CD and the book's website.



The CD-ROM is packaged free with every new copy of the book and includes:

Self-Quizzes—Self-scoring quizzes allow students to assess their understanding of chapter concepts.

Videos—Six 5-minute segments illustrate key points found in the text:

1. Defensive/Supportive Communication
2. Aggressive/Assertive Communication
3. The Job Interview
4. Small Group Communication
5. Presentation Techniques
6. Nonverbal Messages

Business Document Templates—Provide templates for résumés, cover letters, agendas, and memos.

Outline Tutor—An interactive program that shows the various parts of an outline and makes it easy for users to insert appropriate content into the parts of the outline.

PowerPoint Tutor—Presents the basic steps in creating and using a PowerPoint presentation.

Glossary Flash Cards—Students can review key terms.