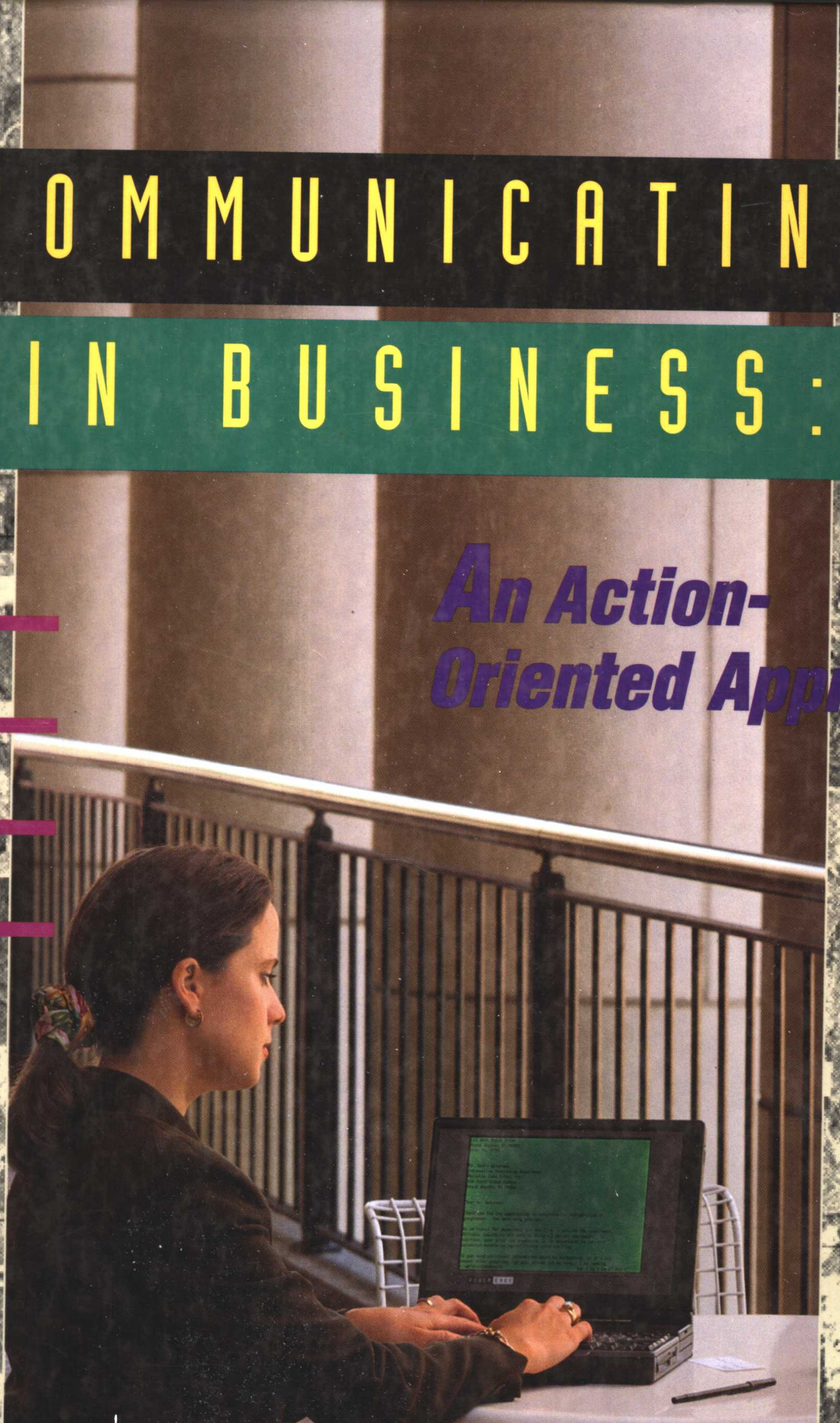
COMMUNICATING IN BUSINESS:

An Action-Oriented Approach



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COMMUNICATING IN BUSINESS

An Action-Oriented Approach

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Students and Instructors

FROM: Stan Wayne and Dave Dauwalder

SUBJECT: An Overview of This Text

We have designed *Communicating in Business: An Action-Oriented Approach* taking into account several facts about modern business organizations:

- There are fewer levels of management.
- Organizations are and must be more action-oriented.
- Decisions are pushed to lower management levels.
- Electronic tools affect the quality, quantity, and immediacy of communication.
- Communication is often more informal.

We've seen the use of microcomputers, pagers, fax machines, e-mail, voice-mail, and cellular phones enhance the speed, if not the processing and quality, of business communication. The transmission of documents that in a former era took days or weeks via correspondence now happens in minutes via electronic media. This puts an ever-higher premium on communication that is clear, accurate, and precise to facilitate sound business decisions.

These facts have formed the backdrop and theme of our text. While we systematically cover the standard topics usually taught in this course, we do not cover communication as an end but as a means for successful business action. In Chapter 1, *Communication, Information, and Action*, you'll read about the central importance of communication in organizational life, an idea that we emphasize through all other chapters. Our intent is to focus student and instructor attention on the decision-making/business action purposes of communication and how to shape communication and action using modern business tools.

The Text

We know that business communication courses take up a standard set of topics, including basic communication theory, correspondence writing, report writing, and employment communication. These topics make up the heart of our text, but always with a practical emphasis on *communication for productive decision making*. In every chapter you'll find that we stress the *how-to* of each skill, with many examples to serve as models for putting these ideas into practice yourself. We have incorporated many pedagogical devices to help you use this text as a learning tool. In every chapter you'll find:

- **An Executive Summary.** Rather than including a summary at the end of the chapter, we have placed this summary in the beginning of each chapter. This summary serves both as a preview of the chapter's content and as a way to review concepts after reading the chapter.

- **A Business Transaction.** After each executive summary, we have included what we call business transactions. These are descriptions of communication situations that the chapter itself deals with. We leave each transaction open-ended, and provide a *Business Transaction Result* at the end of the chapter. Here you'll see the conclusion of the situation set up in the chapter's opening.

- **Marginal Notes.** We have systematically incorporated these notes throughout every chapter. What they do is highlight and summarize the significant points made in specific paragraphs. They are another way to help our readers review chapter content.

- **Ethics and Legal Alerts.** Besides marginal notes, in every chapter you'll find what we call *Ethics Alerts* and *Legal Alerts*. We have included these to call attention to communication issues and situations that have ethical or legal ramifications. In Chapter 1, you'll also find a general discussion of ethics issues.

- **Corporate Communication.** To provide you with sidelights and additional information to the main text discussions, we have included sidebars throughout, which we call *Corporate Communication*. These cover everything from advice from professional writers on writing to communication technology of the future to communication and total quality management.

- **Examples.** The heart of this text is its examples showing actual models of the techniques we present. One of the features that we believe will make this book a valuable reference that students will want to hold on to is the large number of examples—memos, letters, reports, résumés, and other documents—along with analyses of what kinds of written communication work well and what kinds don't.

- **Technology.** Computers, software, faxes, e-mail, laser printers, copy machines—these are the electronic tools of modern business communication. Besides including an early chapter describing these tools, we mention their use in nearly every chapter, with advice on making use of them.

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- **Techniques Inventories.** Near the end of each chapter, you'll also find another kind of box that briefly summarizes the techniques presented in each chapter. These inventories of techniques and skills are yet another way to review what you've learned in each chapter.

- **Questions for Discussion and Review.** To help you test your mastery of specific points we raise in each chapter, we include questions that cover the chapter's main points. If you can answer all of them, you probably have a good understanding of each chapter's content.

- **Communication Incidents and Assignments.** These conclude each chapter. They are brief cases that describe either incidents that require handling, or specific assignments similar to those you might be given by your boss. In either case, our purpose is to give students plenty of practice trying out the chapter's principles and techniques. There are usually about 15 to 25 of these assignments per chapter.

All these pedagogical elements, combined with our conscientious coverage of every communication topic of interest and importance to organizational life, make this a comprehensive and practical text and reference.

Supplements

To assist teachers in using this text, we include the following supplements:

- **Instructor's Manual.** Prepared in collaboration with Professor Jim Rucker of Fort Hays State University, we have carefully planned this resource to support you as an instructor in using our text. We have included the following:
  - *Letters from the Authors.* We have written these as informal letters or memos from the authors to the teacher, with the purpose of explaining the whats and whys of the chapter. Our general purpose is to help you get inside our heads so you can see why we did what we did.
  - *Chapter Summary.* This will be a reasonably detailed outline of the chapter that an instructor can use to help prepare lecture notes or as a review of a chapter's content.
  - *Suggested Lecture Topics.* These will include suggestions for how to cover material in the text and information for covering topics not in the text. It also will include examples and references on new topics for use in class. Some transparencies will be available to illustrate these topics. Many of these transparencies will not duplicate text material.

   - *Suggested Answers to all Communication Incidents, Assignments, and Discussion Questions.* We know this is a very useful part of the IM. It has been carefully prepared, sometimes with suggested solutions and sometimes with directions and ideas for helping you to help students find the answers or solutions.

- **Test Bank.** Working with Professor Kathy Black of Bowling Green State University, we think we've included a particularly well-done test bank. For each chapter, you'll find around 30 multiple-choice questions and 10 short-answer questions. The test bank includes correct responses for the multiple-choice questions and written responses for the short-answer questions. This test bank is available from your Austen/Irwin representative in Computest computerized format.

- **Software.** Also available from your Austen/Irwin representative is special business communication software. The instructor's manual includes information for implementing this software in your course.

- **Videos.** Two hours of videos from the Irwin Business Communication video series are available to adopters of the text. Videos cover such topics as writing correctly and the power of listening. Contact your representative for a preview.

- **Transparencies.** There will be about 100 transparencies illustrating documents and figures from the text as well as a variety of items from the teaching tips section of the Instructor's Manual. About 60 percent of these will be new and different from figures in the text.

Acknowledgements

Every author will tell you that an undertaking like this textbook is very much a collaborative effort. Many people have played a role in making this text a reality, and we are very pleased to be able to publicly acknowledge them and thank them for their help. John Woods, a professional book development specialist, guided every step of this project's creation. He tirelessly and enthusiastically worked with us to plan, execute, problem-solve, and produce the final book and its supplements. We are pleased to have worked with him. Bill Schoof, one of the great people of college publishing and the president of Austen Press, supported us throughout the book's development. Paula Cannon of Grove City High School in Ohio and Kenneth E. Delp of Tempe, Arizona helped us all during the planning and development of this book, and we want to thank them for their counsel and support. Once we submitted the manuscript for production, we were fortunate to have Brad Greene and Wendy Davis turn our word processed document into the attractive four-color printed book before you.

Finally, we want to especially thank and take note of the contributions of several of our colleagues who read parts or all of the manuscript during its development. These reviewers include: Professor Joe Arn, University of Central Arkansas; Professor Marsha Bayless, Stephen F. Austin State University; Professor Kathy Black, Bowling Green State University; Professor Lillian Chaney, Memphis State University; Professor Edna Jellesed, Lane Community College; Professor Gary Kohut, University of North Carolina, Charlotte; Professor Wallace Kramer, Niagara Community College; Professor Keith Kroll, Kalamazoo Valley Community College; Professor Laura MacLeod, Indiana State University; Professor Peter Meggison, Massasoit Community College; Professor Carolyn Rainey, Southeast Missouri State University; Professor John Rehfuss, California State University, Sacramento; Professor Jim Rucker, Fort Hays State University; Professor Robert Schramm, University of Wisconsin, Whitewater; Professor Lila Waldman, Murray State University; and Professor George Walters, Emporia State University. This is a much better book because of their help.

Feedback

As you use this book, you will discover two things about it. One is how well it works; the other is how we might improve it. We encourage you to write us with your questions, compliments, concerns, and suggestions for improvement. We know that we succeed with this book to the degree that we help you become better communicators. So let us know how we did. Here's where you can reach us:

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Thanks for using our book to learn about communicating in business.

Stan Wayne Dave Dauwalder

Stan Wayne and Dave Dauwalder

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PART 1

Business Organizations and Communication

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