




BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

*Strategies and
Skills*

Fifth Edition

James M. Lahiff
John M. Penrose





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FIFTH EDITION

James M. Lahiff

University of Georgia

John M. Penrose

San Diego State University



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PREFACE

Since the first edition of *Business Communication: Strategies and Skills* was published in 1981, the workforce of the United States has grown from 77 million to 196 million people, and the gross domestic product has increased from \$3,030 billion to \$7,250 billion. Although those figures suggest a robust economy, that is only a partial picture; during those same years more than 43 million jobs have been eliminated in the United States. Although many more jobs have been created than lost, the competition for well-paying jobs has never been stronger.

Organizations, both business and nonprofit, now exist in an environment in which change has become a permanent characteristic rather than an occasional occurrence. Concepts such as downsizing, decentralization, employee empowerment, and quality management—once considered somewhat exotic—have become mainstream management approaches for improving efficiency and productivity. It is interesting to note that chaos is a central theme of nearly five hundred books that have been published in the United States during the past ten years, and many of these books have dealt specifically with the management of people. The notion of chaos is thought by many to accurately describe the contemporary organization.

As organizations have changed, so also have the expectations of management for its new employees. For example, the opportunity to acquire basic skills on the job has become a luxury no longer made available by most organizations. New employees are now expected to “hit the ground running,” by being able to contribute immediately to organizational effectiveness.

This fifth edition has been designed with the new managerial expectations in mind. The focus is on the most consequential aspects of communication, and the intent is to give the reader an edge on the competition by developing those communication skills crucial to success in today’s organization.

THE PATH TO A COMPETITIVE EDGE

An underlying premise of this fifth edition is that learning is not a spectator sport, but that it requires commitment and involvement on the part of the reader. The book has undergone an extensive revision, with the intent of increasing its appeal to the student in terms of relevance, ease of understanding, and attractiveness. All of the chapters have been updated and many new examples and assignments added.

The Electronic Office chapter has been completely rewritten and the Cultural Diversity chapter largely so. In recognition of the importance of these topics in establishing a foundation on which to build a repertoire of communication skills, both chapters have been moved to the first section of the book.

Ethical considerations are again integrated throughout the book rather than relegated to a single section. Each chapter includes an “Ethical Dilemma” designed to stimulate class discussion and critical thinking. By the end of their business communication course,

students should recognize that ethics and communication are unalterably entwined. While analyzing each Ethical Dilemma, readers should keep these questions in mind:

- Are any laws being broken?
- Is the situation fair to all parties involved?
- Would I feel guilty if my friends and family learned that I was involved in a similar situation?

Knowledge, communication skills, and a willingness to stretch beyond one's former limits characterize those who succeed in today's business environment. The newest edition of *Business Communication: Strategies and Skills* is designed to facilitate development accordingly.

TEXTUAL FEATURES THAT FACILITATE COMPREHENSION

The following features of the fifth edition are intended to promote the development of communication skills of the readers:

- Learning objectives help readers focus on the most important features of each chapter.
- Opening vignettes serve as a bridge between the chapter objectives and content.
- Marginal notes assist in identifying significant ideas.
- Checklists facilitate the review of information.
- Annotated letters illustrate both effective and ineffective writing strategies.
- New cases provide opportunities for discussion and analysis.
- There are many more written assignments. (Eighty percent of them are new.)
- Key terms are highlighted in the text.
- End-of-chapter listing of key terms and concepts provides an opportunity for an immediate measurement of retention of information.
- New Appendix B illustrates and discusses the standard appearance of business messages.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PACKAGE

The comprehensive instructional support package is designed to facilitate the educational experience for instructor and student. It is intended to improve teaching by providing resources that will enrich the study of business communication. The instructor may choose among the following supplements.

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL This extensive volume contains the following detailed elements:

- Chapter outlines
- Student learning objectives
- Chapter synopses
- Teaching suggestions for each chapter
- Answers to review questions from the text
- Case notes
- Content-related exercises
- Readings on teaching methods
- Transparency masters emphasizing key points from the text

- PowerPoint disk for computer-driven presentation of transparencies
- Sample mid-term and final exams

TEST BANK The organization of this collection of approximately 2000 multiple-choice, true/false, and essay questions and answers follows the organization of the book. Test items are divided by chapters and are presented in the same sequence in which the material is covered within each chapter. The level of difficulty of each question is indicated as is the text page on which the answer can be found. One mini-case problem with several related multiple-choice questions is provided for each chapter.

STUDY GUIDE This supplement was developed to provide additional assistance for students in maximizing their understanding of key principles of business communication and in learning how to apply these principles to real-world problems. This guide provides chapter-by-chapter exercises designed to develop crucial communication competencies.

VIDEOTAPES A series of JWA videotapes provides instruction in methods for dealing with common problematical communication situations. Included in the series are tapes on telephone communication techniques, making business presentations, conducting meetings, dealing with difficult employees, and methods for improving writing. Each videotape is approximately thirty minutes in length.

POWERPOINT The files on this disk allow manipulation of transparency content, display, incorporation of graphics and the ability to create an instructor's own transparency program.

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Publication of the fifth edition of *Business Communication: Strategies and Skills* is a testimonial to the efforts of many highly skilled individuals. Craig Piercy merits special appreciation for his masterful coverage of management information systems in The Electronic Office (Chapter 4). We would also like to thank the following professional educators who made significant contributions to this edition with their thorough and insightful reviews:

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The end-of-chapter cases have proved to be a popular feature of each edition. Thanks to the following individuals, the fifth edition includes additional cases to stimulate thinking and discussion among students:

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Suggestions from students have led to many of the changes reflected in previous editions, and the same is true of this one. Students' active participation in the learning process frequently provides them with insights unavailable to anyone else, and we appreciate their suggestions.

This book is intended to prepare students to meet the ever-rising expectations of today's employers. Its value will extend well beyond the completion of any single course and will continue for as long as one pursues personal and professional development.

James M. Lahiff

John M. Penrose, Jr.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

JAMES M. LAHIFF, PH.D. (Pennsylvania State University), has taught more than five thousand undergraduate and graduate students since coming to the University of Georgia in 1969. During that time he has also conducted training programs involving several thousand supervisors, managers, and executives from many different business and nonprofit organizations, both U.S. and international. As a professor of management, he teaches courses in interpersonal and organizational communication, interviewing, and human resource management. He is the author of many articles and scholarly papers, and he has presented his research findings for various professional associations, foremost of which is the Association for Business Communication (ABC). He has been an active member of ABC for more than twenty years, during which time he has served in a variety of positions, and at present is a member of the board of directors. In addition to this text, he has co-authored books on supervision, management, and communication. The previous editions of this text have also been published in Australian, Canadian, and Japanese editions.

JOHN M. PENROSE, PH.D. (University of Texas at Austin), is Professor in and Chair of Information and Decision Systems Department in the College of Business Administration at San Diego State University. From 1972 to 1988 he was on the faculty of the Graduate School of Business at the University of Texas at Austin, where he served as coordinator of the 11-member business communication faculty. He has also served on the faculties of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and of Ohio University. He is the author of many journal articles, book chapters, and six textbooks in business communication. He was president in 1989 of the Association for Business Communication and has served on the editorial boards of three scholarly journals. As a consultant to business, he has worked with numerous business and nonprofit organizations as a trainer and expert on technical writing, written and oral strategies, and organizational communication.

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