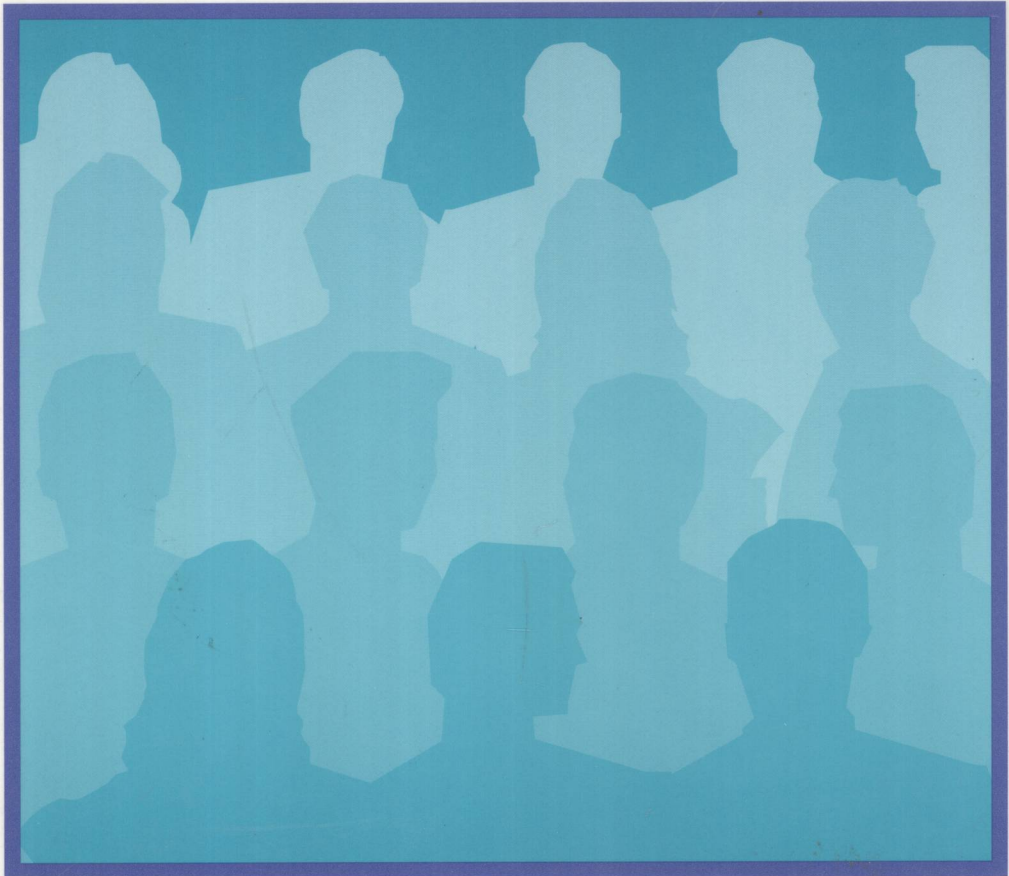


# *CrossTalk*

**Communicating in a  
Multicultural Workplace**



**Sherron B. Kenton  
Deborah Valentine**

F272.92  
K37

教育部高校国外

赠书转运站赠书

# **CrossTalk: COMMUNICATING IN A MULTICULTURAL WORKPLACE**

**Sherron B. Kenton, Ph.D.**

**Deborah Valentine, M.S.**

Foreword by C. Richard Yarbrough  
*Managing Director of Communications  
Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games*



E2009001490

Prentice Hall  
Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458



**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Kenton, Sherron B., 1949–

Crosstalk : communicating in a multicultural workplace / Sherron  
B. Kenton, Deborah Valentine ; foreword by C. Richard Yarbrough.  
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-13-577628-7

1. Communication in management. 2. Intercultural communication.  
3. Diversity in the workplace--Management. I. Valentine, Deborah,  
1948– . II. Title.

HD30.3.K455 1997

302.3'5--dc20

96-27173  
CIP

Editorial/Production Supervision,

Interior Design, and Electronic Paging: *Naomi Sysak*

Acquisitions Editor: *Elizabeth Sugg*

Cover Director: *Jayne Conte*

Manufacturing Buyer: *Ed O'Dougherty*

Managing Editor: *Mary Carnis*

Marketing Manager: *Danny Hoyt*

Director of Production: *Bruce Johnson*

©1997 by Sherron B. Kenton and Deborah Valentine



Published by Prentice-Hall, Inc.

A Simon & Schuster Company

Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be  
reproduced, in any form or by any means,  
without permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 0-13-577628-7

Prentice-Hall International (UK) Limited, *London*

Prentice-Hall of Australia Pty. Limited, *Sydney*

Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., *Toronto*

Prentice-Hall Hispanoamericana, S.A., *Mexico*

Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, *New Delhi*

Prentice-Hall of Japan, Inc., *Tokyo*

Simon & Schuster Asia Pte. Ltd., *Singapore*

Editora Prentice-Hall do Brasil, Ltda., *Rio de Janeiro*

## CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT

### ANALYZE YOUR AUDIENCE

- Identify all potential audiences
  - Primary audience—actual individual to whom you speak or write
  - Hidden audience—indirect receiver with some power over you
  - Decision maker—most important audience; may rely on secondhand information
- Investigate and learn about each audience
  - Avoid generalizing and assuming
  - Discover personal, professional, and cultural information
  - Be aware of their attitudes about you, your topic, being there to receive your message
  - Determine their wants over your needs
  - Recognize their consistent concerns

### ANALYZE YOUR SITUATION

- Identify and define the problem
- Evaluate the corporate culture
- Assess the external climate

### ANALYZE YOUR OBJECTIVES

- Overall goal from mission statement
- Specific purpose of the communication
- Your hidden agenda

## CHOOSE YOUR OPTIONS

- MEDIA:** HOW SHOULD THE MESSAGE BE SENT?
- SOURCE:** WHO SHOULD DELIVER THE MESSAGE?
- TIMING:** WHEN SHOULD THE MESSAGE ARRIVE?

## COLLECT AND ORGANIZE YOUR INFORMATION

### GUIDELINES

- Consider culture-specific and gender-specific information
- Plan a beginning, a middle, and an end
- Limit the amount of your information
- Restrict your agenda to one issue
- Enhance with visual aids, numbers, and examples
- Tailor your message for each individual audience

## CROSSTALK YOUR MESSAGE

### ORAL MESSAGES

- Take time to warm up
- Use appropriate eye contact
- Talk to your audience, not at them
- Reduce physical barriers
- Move naturally
- Concentrate on your audience, not on yourself
- Show your audience that you care
- Be yourself

### WRITTEN MESSAGES

- Use the Outline Worksheet
- Write as naturally as you speak
- Use active voice sentence structure
- Avoid jargon, slang, and idioms
- Keep sentences short
- Limit to one page
- Read aloud
- Proofread carefully

### ALWAYS

- Respond to cultural expectations
- Avoid biased and exclusive language

## CONFIRM EVALUATION FOR SUCCESS

### GUIDELINES

- Listen carefully to comments
- Take detailed notes
- Ask for specific information
- Paraphrase to confirm meaning
- Notice nonverbal messages
- Correct without overreacting
- Accept responsibility
- Find the truth in the perception
- Say "thank you"

### KENTON CREDIBILITY MODEL

- The audience's perception of your:
  - Goodwill: focus on and concern for them
  - Expertise: education, knowledge, and experience
  - Power: status, prestige, and success
  - Self-presentation: communication skills and confidence



# DEDICATION

For my parents, Mackie and Ben Bienvenu, who told me I could do anything.  
For my daughter, Hillary Tolle, so she will know that anything is possible.  
And, of course, for Ken.

SHERRON B. KENTON

For the best family an author could ever want: Howard, Ann Larie, and William.

DEBORAH VALENTINE

# FOREWORD

My first awareness of the importance of international communication occurred in early 1984. A public corporation with whom I was affiliated was in the process of getting listed on the various stock exchanges around the world, including Japan. The individual in charge of the process was an assistant vice president, and he took with him to Tokyo his top assistant, who in the management hierarchy was a director-level manager.

Before their trip, they dutifully had business cards translated into Japanese, but they found during their meetings that the Japanese were referring their questions and comments to the director-level manager and not to his boss. No matter how hard they tried, they found their hosts maintained the most interest in the subordinate of the two. It was not until their return to the United States that they discovered the translation of the business cards had made the director-level manager a "director" of the operation and his boss, the assistant vice president, an "assistant."

Welcome to multicultural communications!

I was reminded of that incident when I read **CrossTalk**, this marvelous new book by Sherron Kenton and Deborah Valentine. In addition, I have had similar experiences brought home to me almost daily as managing director of communications for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. My only complaint is that they didn't write this book sooner.

As I have traveled around the world in preparation for the Centennial Olympic Games, I have found that most Americans (particularly those of my generation) are oblivious to other cultures, and in this shrinking universe in which we find ourselves, that is an attitude we, as a nation, can ill afford in the future. Economists say that there are fast becoming only two markets in which to compete: local and international. And if we are to compete successfully in the international marketplace, we had better learn the rules. First and foremost, we must learn to communicate with people who have a culture different from ours, and that is where you will find **CrossTalk** invaluable.

No longer can we assume that everyone thinks as we do, acts as we do, has the same value system we do, or even enjoys the same things we do. Nor should we make the mistake that when we speak or write, we are communicating. Communications involves the *exchange* of ideas.

And now the good news. Authors Kenton and Valentine have successfully withstood the temptation to take an important subject like multicultural communications and write a complicated treatise about it. **CrossTalk** is easy to read, and that is very much to their credit. Come to think of it, that is why they are such superb communicators, and why I can enthusiastically recommend this book to you.

As we prepare to greet a new century and a new world order, many things we have taken for granted in the past will be forever changed. One thing won't change, however, and that is our need to communicate with one another.

You may be holding the most important book on that subject that you will ever read—or need.

C. RICHARD YARBROUGH  
MANAGING DIRECTOR—COMMUNICATIONS  
ATLANTA COMMITTEE FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are most grateful to the following individuals for their contributions to *CrossTalk: Communicating in a Multicultural Workplace*.

Dick Yarbrough, for his time and generosity in writing our foreword

## *Reviewers*

- Dr. Norma Carr-Ruffino
- Dr. Thomas Fernandez
- Dr. Evelyn Pierce
- Dr. Paul Timm

## *Chapter reviewers*

- \* Chapter 2: Dr. Karen Hegtvedt
- \* Chapter 3: Harbert Bernard, Karen Jones, and Andrea Scott
- \* Chapter 4: Dr. David Shaner and Rumiko Mori
- \* Chapter 5: Kristin Lindsey, Lorraine Polvinale, Liliana Roman, and Elsa Valdiviezo de Baules

## *Contributors*

- Clients who provided brilliant applications of our models
- Foreign students for culture-specific examples
- International businesspeople who consented to be interviewed
- Ken Kenton and Howard Valentine for sharing their valuable professional contacts
- Jim Sitlington for his wisdom, encouragement, and humor

Our computer experts, especially Nancy Stauffer and Darrell Felton



## xii ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**Our Emory colleagues** for moral support, especially Dr. Nick DeBonis, Andrea Hershatter, Earl Hill, Donis Leach, Heather Mugg, Nancy Roth Remington, and Dr. Greg Waymire

**Our supportive colleagues in the Association for Business Communication and the Management Communication Association.**

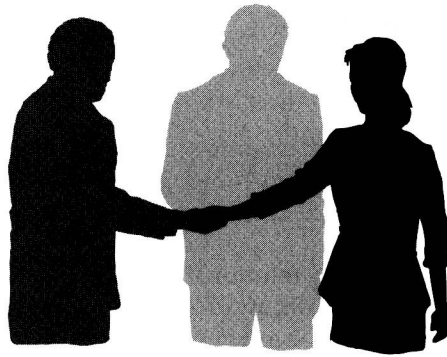
### *Research assistants*

- Amy Kane-Stanley
- Jean de Silva
- Lisa Millar
- Katie Proctor
- Erin Nicholson

### *And last but really first: Our incredible Prentice Hall team:*

- Senior Editor Elizabeth Sugg, who always believed in us
- Production Editor Naomi Sysak, who read our minds
- Copyeditor Robert Fiske
- Carole Horton

# INTRODUCTION



Do you know someone who could have written this?

*My professional peers consider me to be a successful manager. However, I find myself in a position at work where I am not as effective as I want to be. There was a time when I believed that I could motivate any subordinate or persuade any client assigned to me.*

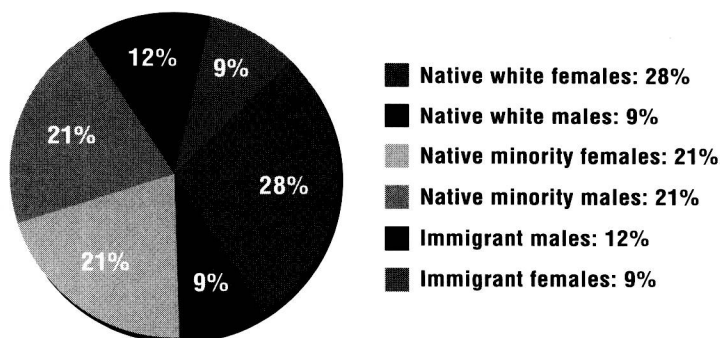
*In the past few years, the faces have changed. My office and my clients' offices include Asians and Latinos and African Americans and women where there used to be mostly white men. Not too long ago, everyone at work looked and talked a lot like I do.*

*I'm an educated, open-minded guy with years of work experience, but my experience doesn't seem to apply with people who are so different from me. I consider myself a good communicator, but I'm missing something when I try to persuade or manage people from so many different cultures.*

*What I need is a quick but credible reference to help me get ahead of my competitors. It doesn't seem to exist! What do you recommend?*

## WHY WE WROTE THIS BOOK

In 1995, the Census Bureau reported that in 1994 nearly one in eleven U.S. residents was foreign born. In 1990, *Time* magazine predicted the following percentages of people would enter the U.S. workforce before the year 2000:



In addition, as technology advances, our business world continues to interconnect, with Americans investing more than \$486 million in other countries, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Survey of Current Business, July 1993.

As a result of increasing relationships with individuals whose culture is different from our own, our communication challenges grow proportionately greater. The response from the academic community has been to inundate the industry with an excess of complicated theories and strategies and models about communication in many different situations, in many different forms, with many different people. The result is too much information that is too complicated and too difficult to apply.

We offer, instead, one straightforward, strategic model for effective business communication. The **CrossTalk** Communication Model applies to writing, speaking, interviewing, and small group interaction. We then apply this flexible model to different situations with different people through understanding the cultural variables of each target group.

Our purpose is to make it easier and more effective for workplace professionals to speak, write, interview, or meet with other business professionals whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own.

We begin with these assumptions:

- Most of our readers were born or live or work in the United States. We consider ourselves American, and yet most of us are the product of a blend of cultures.
- A large proportion of our potential readers' cultural roots are European.
- The major audiences with whom our readers communicate have cultural roots that are European, African, Asian, or Latino.

Therefore, we have the following goals:

- To assist our readers in understanding their own cultures, particularly in terms of communication behaviors

- To help our readers become more aware of and sensitive to cultural differences in communication
- To present one basic communication model that is easy to use no matter what culture or mix of cultures you are addressing
- To enhance the applications to specific cultures with additional information on gender differences in workplace communication
- To illustrate the model and its applications with relevant examples from business situations

## HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

We have structured **CrossTalk** as follows:

### CHAPTER 1: THE **CrossTalk** COMMUNICATION MODEL

We offer one straightforward, strategic model for effective business communication that can be applied to writing, speaking, interviewing, and small group interaction. The resulting Kenton Credibility Model assesses perceived credibility.

### CHAPTERS 2 THROUGH 5: APPLICATIONS OF THE **CrossTalk** COMMUNICATION MODEL WITH AUDIENCES WITH DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

As a speaker, writer, interviewer, or meeting facilitator, you are faced with a multitude of audiences with cultural backgrounds that are different from your own. This book enables you to identify the cultural background of these receivers of your oral and written messages and then to specifically apply each point of the model to that individual or group.

Obviously, there are gender differences in all cultures. However, following the lead of Norma Carr-Ruffino in *Managing Cultural Differences* (Thomson Executive Press, 1996), we are addressing gender within the framework of our discussion of audiences with roots in the European culture (Chapter 2). In the United States, the majority of workers have roots in the European culture, much of which has evolved into what we generally consider to be the American culture.

In addition, the chapters that apply the **CrossTalk** Model to audiences with roots in African (Chapter 3), Asian (Chapter 4), and Latino (Chapter 5) cultures contain “gender notes” (☺) at appropriate points throughout the application of the model.

Finally, we recognize that differences that affect communication exist *within* the major cultures. Therefore, each chapter includes information about these differences as “intracultural notes.” (☹)

## APPENDIXES

In keeping with our purpose of providing a quick reference and a credible source, the appendixes provide charts and examples to supplement the material in the chapters.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Read the first chapter. You may race through thinking, “I know that,” or “I do that.” Good. That means you are a basically successful communicator with education, experience, and common sense. Keep in mind, however, that even one or two new ideas can make the competitive difference for your career.

Now, think about your day tomorrow. Whom will you manage or motivate or persuade? With this book, you can be better prepared to communicate with the following audiences:

- Men and women with roots in the European culture
- Men and women with roots in the African culture
- Men and women with roots in the Asian culture
- Men and women with roots in the Latino culture

Chapters 2 through 5 offer pragmatic applications of the **CrossTalk** Communication Model for these groups who will receive your oral and written messages.

The appendixes contain worksheets, examples, and other culture-specific information for quick referencing.

## IN SUMMARY

We wrote this book because business managers and executives with excellent communication skills are highly valued in today’s workplace. But the corporate environment has evolved into a complex and challenging arena staffed by increasingly diverse personnel. “Knowing the rules” or “getting the facts” is not enough.

**CrossTalk:** *Communicating in a Multicultural Workplace* gives you what you want so that you can do what you need to do: manage, motivate, and persuade people who look and think and sound different from you.

# CONTENTS

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>FOREWORD</b>  | <b>IX</b>   |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>   | <b>XI</b>   |
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>  | <b>XIII</b> |
| <b>CHAPTER 1: THE <b>CrossTalk</b> COMMUNICATION MODEL</b>         | <b>1</b>    |
| <b>CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT</b>                                    | <b>2</b>    |
| Analyze Your Audience  | 2           |
| Identify All Potential Audiences                                   | 3           |
| Investigate and Learn About Each Audience                          | 3           |
| Analyze Your Situation   | 5           |
| Identify and Define the Problem                                    | 5           |
| Evaluate the Corporate Culture Surrounding the Problem             | 5           |
| Assess the External Climate  | 6           |
| Analyze Your Objectives  | 6           |
| <b>CHOOSE YOUR OPTIONS</b>   | <b>8</b>    |
| Media Options: How Should the Message be Sent?                     | 8           |
| Source Options: Who Should Deliver the Message?                    | 8           |
| Timing Options: When Should the Message Arrive?                    | 10          |
| <b>COLLECT AND ORGANIZE YOUR INFORMATION</b>                       | <b>12</b>   |
| <b><b>CrossTalk</b> YOUR MESSAGE, ORAL OR WRITTEN</b>              | <b>13</b>   |
| Oral Messages  | 14          |
| Written Messages   | 15          |
| A Word About Inclusive Language                                    | 16          |
| <b>CONFIRM EVALUATION FOR SUCCESS</b>                              | <b>17</b>   |
| Credibility  | 19          |
| <b>IN CONCLUSION</b>   | <b>19</b>   |
| <b>SUGGESTED READINGS ON BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION</b> | <b>21</b>   |

## **CHAPTER 2: WHAT IF YOUR AUDIENCE IS A MAN OR A WOMAN WITH ROOTS IN THE EUROPEAN CULTURE? 22**

### **CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT 23**

#### **Analyze Your Audience 24**

Identify all Potential Audiences: Primary, Hidden,  
and Decision Makers 24

Investigate and Learn About Each Audience 24

#### **Analyze Your Situation 29**

Identify and Define the Problem 29

Evaluate the Corporate Culture Surrounding the Problem 30

Assess the External Climate 31

#### **Analyze Your Objectives 31**

### **CHOOSE YOUR OPTIONS 32**

Media Options: How Should the Message Be Sent? 32

Source Options: Who Should Deliver the Message? 33

Timing Options: When Should the Message Arrive? 35

### **COLLECT AND ORGANIZE YOUR INFORMATION 36**

#### **CrossTalk YOUR MESSAGE, ORAL OR WRITTEN 38**

Oral Messages 38

Written Messages 40

### **CONFIRM EVALUATION FOR SUCCESS 42**

Listening Behavior 43

Attributing Success and Failure 43

Accepting Responsibility and Blame 44

Filtering Good and Bad News 44

Soliciting and Evaluating Feedback 45

Credibility 47

In Summary 49

### **IN CONCLUSION 49**

### **SUGGESTED READINGS ON GENDER DIFFERENCES AND THE EUROPEAN CULTURE 50**

## **CHAPTER 3: WHAT IF YOUR AUDIENCE HAS ROOTS IN THE AFRICAN CULTURE?**

**51**

### **CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT 52**

#### **Analyze Your Audience 52**

Identify All Potential Audiences: Primary, Hidden,  
and Decision Makers 53



|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Investigate and Learn About Each Audience                                   | 54        |
| Analyze Your Situation  | 57        |
| Identify and Define the Problem   | 57        |
| Evaluate the Corporate Culture of the African Firm                          | 58        |
| Assess the External Climate   | 58        |
| Analyze Your Objectives   | 60        |
| CHOOSE YOUR OPTIONS   | 61        |
| Media Options: How Should the Message Be Sent?                              | 62        |
| Source Options: Who Should Deliver the Message?                             | 64        |
| Timing Options: When Should the Message Arrive?                             | 64        |
| COLLECT AND ORGANIZE YOUR INFORMATION                                       | 65        |
| <b>CrossTalk</b> YOUR MESSAGE, ORAL OR WRITTEN                              | 66        |
| Oral Messages   | 66        |
| Written Messages  | 66        |
| CONFIRM EVALUATION FOR SUCCESS  | 67        |
| Credibility   | 69        |
| IN CONCLUSION   | 69        |
| SUGGESTED READINGS ON THE AFRICAN CULTURE                                   | 70        |
| <b>CHAPTER 4: WHAT IF YOUR AUDIENCE HAS ROOTS<br/>IN THE ASIAN CULTURE?</b> | <b>71</b> |
| CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT  | 72        |
| Analyze Your Audience   | 72        |
| Identify all Potential Audiences: Primary, Hidden,<br>and Decision Makers   | 73        |
| Investigate and Learn About Each Audience                                   | 73        |
| Analyze Your Situation  | 78        |
| Identify and Define the Problem   | 78        |
| Evaluate the Corporate Culture of the Asian Firm                            | 78        |
| Assess the External Climate   | 80        |
| Analyze Your Objectives   | 82        |
| CHOOSE YOUR OPTIONS   | 83        |
| Media Options: How Should the Message Be Sent?                              | 83        |
| Source Options: Who Should Deliver the Message?                             | 85        |
| Timing Options: When Should the Message Arrive?                             | 87        |
| COLLECT AND ORGANIZE YOUR INFORMATION                                       | 88        |
| <b>CrossTalk</b> YOUR MESSAGE, ORAL OR WRITTEN                              | 89        |
| Oral Messages   | 89        |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Written Messages   | 91         |
| CONFIRM EVALUATION FOR SUCCESS   | 92         |
| Credibility  | 94         |
| IN CONCLUSION  | 95         |
| SUGGESTED READINGS ON THE ASIAN CULTURE                                      | 95         |
| <b>CHAPTER 5: WHAT IF YOUR AUDIENCE HAS ROOTS<br/>IN THE LATINO CULTURE?</b> | <b>96</b>  |
| CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT   | 97         |
| Analyze Your Audience  | 97         |
| Identify all Potential Audiences: Primary, Hidden,<br>and Decision Makers    | 97         |
| Investigate and Learn About Each Audience                                    | 98         |
| Analyze Your Situation   | 103        |
| Identify and Define the Problem  | 103        |
| Evaluate the Corporate Culture of the Latino Firm                            | 103        |
| Assess the External Climate  | 105        |
| Analyze Your Objectives  | 107        |
| CHOOSE YOUR OPTIONS  | 108        |
| Media Options: How Should the Message Be Sent?                               | 108        |
| Source Options: Who Should Deliver the Message?                              | 111        |
| Timing Options: When Should the Message Arrive?                              | 112        |
| COLLECT AND ORGANIZE YOUR INFORMATION  | 113        |
| <b>CrossTalk YOUR MESSAGE, ORAL OR WRITTEN</b>                               | <b>114</b> |
| Oral Messages  | 114        |
| Written Messages   | 115        |
| CONFIRM EVALUATION FOR SUCCESS   | 115        |
| Credibility  | 117        |
| IN CONCLUSION  | 117        |
| SELECTED READINGS ON THE LATINO CULTURE                                      | 117        |
| <b>APPENDIXES</b>  | <b>118</b> |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>  | <b>208</b> |