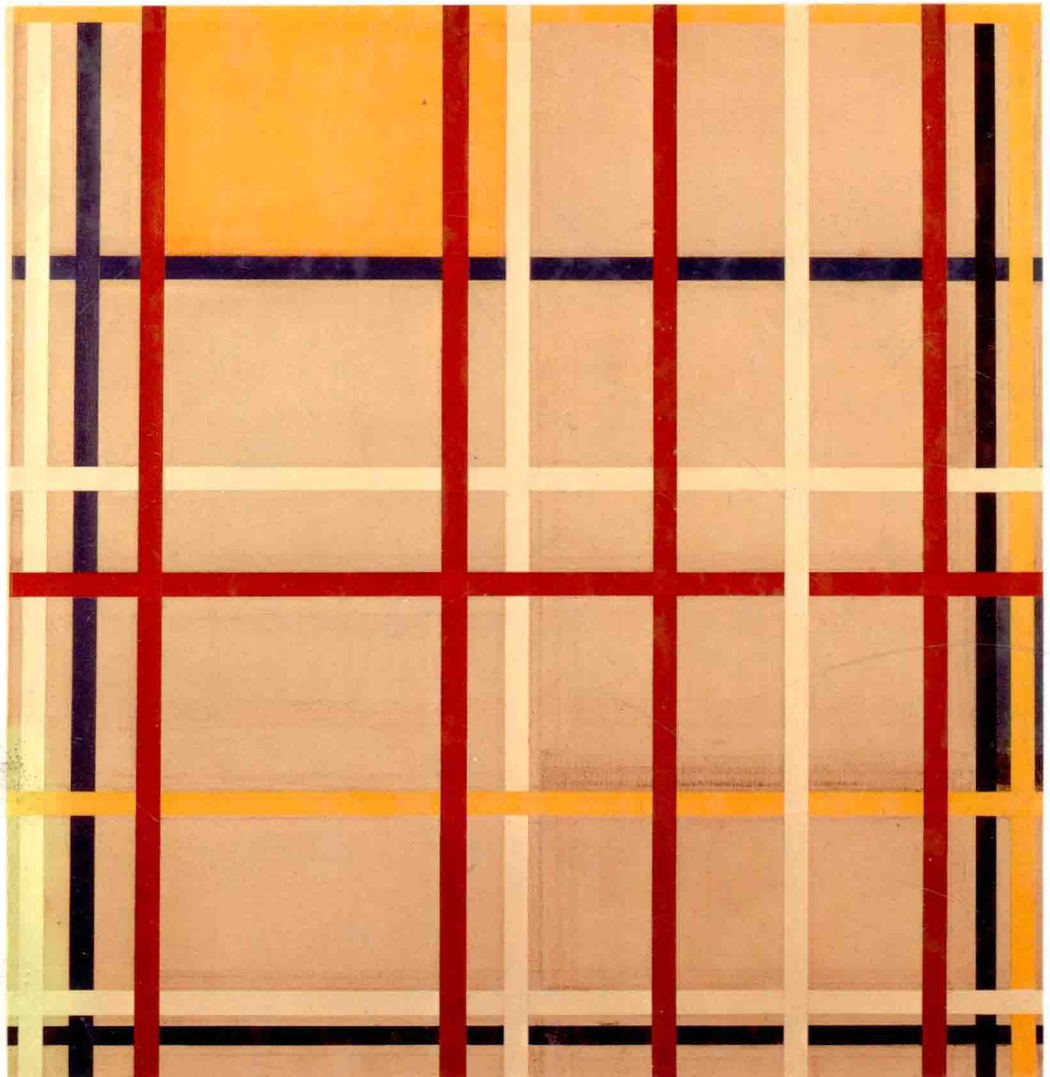


C o n t e m p o r a r y

B u s i n e s s

C o m m u n i c a t i o n

3rd Edition



Scot Ober

THIRD EDITION

Contemporary Business Communication

SCOT OBER

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Senior Production/Design Coordinator: Sarah Ambrose
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To my wife, Diana, with love.

Preface

Students don't have to be convinced of the need for high-level communication skills. By the time they enter business communication classes, students know enough about the business environment to appreciate the critical role communication plays in the contemporary organization; they're also aware of the role communication will play in helping them to get a job and be successful on the job. To sustain this inherent interest, students need a textbook that is current, fast-paced, and interesting—just like business itself. Thus, a major objective of *Contemporary Business Communication (CBC)* is to present comprehensive coverage of real-world concepts in an interesting and lively manner.

On the basis of the helpful feedback received from current users around the country and, indeed, around the English-speaking world, changes in the discipline, and, especially, changes in the workplace itself, this edition of *CBC* has been extensively revised to provide students with the skills they need to communicate effectively in the complex and ever-changing contemporary business environment.

Features New to This Edition

Several features have been added to make this edition of *CBC* even more effective for the student and more convenient for the instructor.

Technology Centered

If, in the 1967 movie *The Graduate*, the buzzword was “plastics,” today it is “technology.” And with good reason. Every aspect of contemporary business communication—from determining what ideas to communicate to processing the ideas and sharing them—depends on technology.

What a difference a few years make. Five years ago, if students knew word processing, they were considered technologically literate. Not so, today. Among other skills, today's competent communicator must know how to:

- send and receive (and manage) e-mail;
- access the Internet and World Wide Web;
- format an electronic résumé and search online for a job; and
- give an electronic presentation, perhaps using PowerPoint software.

Students need many of these skills up front, that is, before they study other business communication topics. For example, students may need to log on to the

Internet to find an address (either postal or e-mail) before they write even the simplest letter. Thus, in some ways, technological skills can be considered prerequisite to the more traditional business communication skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

New Technology Chapter New to the third edition of *Contemporary Business Communication* is Chapter 3, “Using Technology to Access and Share Information.” Here, students will learn such topics as how to browse and search the Internet using Yahoo! and Excite; how to evaluate the quality of the information they locate; and how to compose and format e-mail messages for readability. This new chapter concentrates on those skills students need right from the beginning of their study of business communication.

Technology Instruction Infused Throughout However, technological communication skills are neither learned nor practiced in isolation. Integrated into every chapter in the third edition are discussions of the technologies (both their advantages and disadvantages) needed for specific communication skills. For example, students learn how to:

- interpret computerized readability formulas in Chapter 5;
- search online for business information in Chapter 10;
- prepare slides and transparencies using presentation software in Chapter 13;
- access job information and prepare electronic résumés in Chapter 14; and
- document online sources (in both APA and MLA styles) in the Reference Manual.

New Internet Home Pages Complementing this infusion of technological skills in the text is the addition of two new home pages on the Internet—a *BusCom Online Learning Center* for students and a *BusCom Online Teaching Center* for instructors. As illustrated in the Appendix to Chapter 3 on pages 100–101, students can use this online resource to explore the Internet, locate business information, get help with writing, secure job information, and the like.

Instructors using this text can access their own site via a free password. Features in this site will enable instructors to enrich their lectures by discussing “hot-off-the-press” current events items that illustrate a particular chapter concept, preview the PowerPoint slides that illustrate each chapter (which are also available on computer disk), review detailed lecture and supplemental discussion notes for each chapter, and exchange ideas with the author, publisher, and other instructors around the country who are teaching this course.

Emphasis on Work-Team Communication

Fed by global competition (and global opportunities), contemporary organizations are making extensive use of project management, continuous process improvement, and work teams to encourage their employees to work and communicate collaboratively to solve workplace problems. Thus, competent communicators need to develop their interpersonal skills for working in small groups as well as their communication skills in writing and presenting collaboratively.

New Chapter on Work-Team Communication Work-team communication competence is another one of those “up-front” skills students need to benefit completely from the discussion of other business communication topics. Many instructors (in both this and other courses) assign group projects right from the beginning of the term. Unfortunately, the instructor often erroneously assumes students already know how to work together effectively.

In this edition of *CBC*, several topics previously scattered among different chapters have been reorganized, along with substantial new content, into a comprehensive discussion in Chapter 2, “Work-Team Communication.” Included in this new chapter are the following major topics:

- the role of conflict, conformity, and consensus in work teams;
- proven methods for giving constructive feedback;
- diversity and ethical issues in team membership (especially the use of nonverbal messages communicated in different cultures);
- team-writing strategies;
- effective listening strategies;
- planning, conducting, and participating in business meetings; and
- using a professional demeanor and appropriate behavior to maintain effective working relationships, including a new section on dressing appropriately in the workplace (for example, what does “Casual Friday” really mean?).

Work-Team Communication Projects Throughout the text, many end-of-chapter exercises require students to work effectively in teams. Thus, throughout the course, students have an opportunity to practice and refine the team communication skills they learn in Chapter 2. Team projects include both written and oral projects—some of them also requiring the use of the Internet for gathering data needed to solve a problem.

New 5 × 3 Text Organization

The addition of two new chapters (one on technology and one on work-team communication) in the early part of the third edition provided the opportunity to streamline and reorganize the chapters into a 5 × 3 plan—five parts with three chapters each—for a total of fifteen chapters, as follows:

1. **Core Concepts in Business Communication**
 1. Understanding Business Communication
 2. Work-Team Communication
 3. Using Technology to Access and Share Information
2. **Developing Your Writing Skills**
 4. Writing with Style: Individual Elements
 5. Writing with Style: Overall Tone
 6. The Process of Writing
3. **Basic Correspondence**
 7. Routine Messages
 8. Persuasive Messages

9. Bad-News Messages
4. **Report Writing**
 10. Planning the Report
 11. Collecting and Analyzing Data
 12. Writing the Report
5. **Oral and Employment Communication**
 13. Business Presentations
 14. Your Résumé and Job-Application Letter
 15. The Job Interview and Follow-Up

Students learn to communicate by communicating—not by just *reading* about communicating. The fifteen chapters in this edition (down from seventeen in the previous edition) are succinct; yet they contain comprehensive coverage of contemporary business communication topics.

Students will find this organizational plan logical. They first learn the overall framework of business communication and the work-team and technological skills they will use in the remainder of the course (Part 1). They next concentrate on basic writing skills (Part 2) and then apply these skills first to composing shorter documents such as letters, memos, and e-mail (Part 3). Then they move on to composing longer documents—reports (Part 4). Because many oral presentations in the workplace stem from written reports, the chapter on oral presentations follows the report chapters; then, when students near the end of their course, they learn contemporary job-getting strategies (Part 5).

Instructors will also find this organizational plan flexible. Dividing the five major content areas into three-chapter units provides them with a flexible arrangement to mix and match. They can choose the chapters (and select from the many end-of-chapter exercises) that best fit the needs of their particular students.

Additional Features

Your students will benefit from the many new or expanded learning aids that have been incorporated into the third edition.

Developing Revision Skills Because students learn as much (if not more) from rewriting as from drafting, a new feature added to Chapters 6 through 15 is “Help Wanted.” This feature presents a sample student-written draft, marked up with typical instructor comments, which students then revise and resubmit as homework.

The purpose of these exercises is to provide students with *guided* editing practice. The content is a complete business document (instead of isolated sentences), and guidance is provided regarding the writing weaknesses to look for (instead of just providing a complete “bad” document and telling students to revise it). Both rhetorical and stylistic weaknesses are identified for students to correct.

Student-Interest Enhancements Business communication textbooks should be interesting and contemporary. Any business communication instructor who has read the popular Dilbert cartoon strip has probably cut out one or more of the panels to use in class as an illustration of how *not* to communicate in business. Chapter 1 of the third edition opens with a communication profile of Scott Adams, creator of Dilbert; and Dilbert cartoons that reinforce text content appear throughout the text.

Users of previous editions frequently mentioned that students enjoy “Wordwise”—a “fun-with-words” feature that appears in each chapter in the text. All of the Wordwise boxes in this edition are completely new.

Coverage of Communication Ethics A major section on communication ethics has now been added to Chapter 1, but ethics coverage does not stop there. The ethical dimension of communicating is revisited frequently throughout the text—sometimes in the chapter content itself and at other times in a special “Spotlight—On Law and Ethics” box. From learning how to behave ethically while online to making ethical decisions regarding the visual aids one uses, students are constantly reminded that nearly every communication decision a writer or speaker makes has ethical implications.

Retained from the Previous Edition

In addition to these features new to the third edition, many of the features introduced in earlier editions have been enhanced to make them even more effective.

The 3Ps Microwriting Activities

Microwriting activities—step-by-step analyses of typical communication tasks—proved to be one of the most popular features of previous editions. Beginning with the first writing chapter (Chapter 6), each chapter of the third edition contains a 3Ps microwriting activity, including a *Problem* (a situation that requires a communication task), *Process* (step-by-step guidance for accomplishing the communication task), and *Product* (a fully formatted finished document).

The 3Ps microwriting activities require students to focus their efforts on developing a strategy for any message (even e-mail messages) before beginning to compose it; and they serve as a step-by-step model for composing the end-of-chapter exercises.

The 3Ps microwriting activities within each chapter all contain the solutions to the process questions. The 3Ps microwriting exercises at the end of the chapter (plus additional ones in the *Instructor’s Resource Manual*) pose process questions and then require the student to provide the solutions. This format more actively engages the student in the problem-solving process.

Urban Systems: An Ongoing Case Study

As in previous editions, every chapter in the new edition ends with a case study involving Urban Systems (US), a small entrepreneurial company whose primary product is Ultra Light, a new paper-thin light source that promises to revolutionize the illumination industry. A company profile (complete with a photograph of each major player) is contained in the Appendix to Chapter 1, and each chapter presents a communication problem faced by one of these managers. As students systematically solve these fifteen case studies, they face communication problems similar to those typically found in the workplace. The continuing nature of the case study provides these positive learning experiences:

- Students are able to use richer contextual clues to solve communication problems than are possible in the shorter end-of-chapter exercises.
- Students become intimately familiar with the managers and the company and must select what is relevant from a mass of data, thereby learning to handle information overload. (New to this edition are requirements for locating additional needed information on the Internet.)
- Because the same situations frequently carry over into subsequent chapters, students must face the consequences of their earlier decisions.
- Many cases require students to solve the same communication problem from two different perspectives—thereby enhancing the process of audience analysis.

These cases provide realistic opportunities for practicing work-team communication and critical-thinking skills.

Continuing Text Examples and End-of-Chapter Exercises

At the beginning of each chapter, profiles of actual business communicators provide “An Insider’s Perspective” of the communication situations that arise in today’s organizations. Students learn about the communication challenges facing employees in organizations as diverse as CNN/CNNfn, The Wilderness Society, 3M, Domino’s Pizza, and Royal Caribbean International. In addition to end-of-chapter review and discussion questions based on these “Insider Perspectives,” new to this edition are the 3Ps microwriting exercises relating to them. These exercises build students’ critical-thinking skills in the early chapters and then give them an opportunity to practice their writing skills in later chapters.

Communication problems in the real world do not occur in a vacuum. Events have happened before the problem and will happen after the problem that affect its resolution. Thus, in this edition continuing examples are often used throughout the chapters (or even carried forward from one chapter to the next) in both the text and the end-of-chapter exercises. For example, in Chapter 7, students first assume the role of buyer and write a claim letter; then, in a later exercise, they assume the role of seller and respond to that claim letter by writing an adjustment letter.

These continuing examples and exercises are realistic because they give a sense of following a problem through to completion. They’re interesting because they provide a continuing thread to the chapter. And they reinforce the concept of audience analysis because students must first assume the role of sender and later the role of receiver for the same communication task.

Annotated Models and Checklists

Full-page models of each major writing task appear in this edition, shown in complete, ready-to-send format so that students become familiar with the appropriate format for every major type of writing assignment. Each model provides marginal step-by-step composing notes as well as grammar and mechanics notes that point out specific illustrations of the grammar and mechanics rules presented in the Reference Manual. In addition, the eighteen checklists scattered throughout the text provide brief, step-by-step outlines for completing specific types of communication tasks.

Complete Package of Instructor Support Materials

Accompanying the third edition of this text is a full array of instructor-support materials.

Instructor's Annotated Edition

Complementing the “easy-to-learn” approach of the student text is the “easy-to-teach” approach of the *Instructor's Annotated Edition* of this text. *CBC* is the first major business communication text to offer this special resource, which provides specific teaching aids right at the point where you need them. Included in the margin of the *IAE* (but not in the student text) are numerous brief anecdotes and quotations gathered from contemporary business publications that you can use to enrich your lectures. Marginal notes also include teaching tips and references to supplementary instructional materials available in the teaching support package. In addition, miniature copies of the PowerPoint slides are shown in the margins of the *IAE* so that you can see immediately what presentation materials are available for each section of the text.

Instructor's Resource Manual

The *Instructor's Resource Manual* presents useful guidelines and additional teaching materials, including chapter overviews, supplemental lecture notes, answers to review and discussion questions, suggestions for and sample solutions to chapter exercises, fully formatted solutions to all letter-writing exercises, solutions to Urban Systems cases, sample reports, additional microwriting samples, and answers to all exercises in the Reference Manual. More than fifty transparency masters include solutions to selected in-text exercises.

PowerPoint Slides

Nearly 250 PowerPoint slides include summaries of key concepts, good/bad paired examples, and supplementary information, including answers to selected exercises. These slides are all new or updated for this edition and contain original material rather than duplicates of textbook examples.

Overhead Transparencies

Close to one hundred acetate transparencies are also available, including summaries of key concepts, writing examples, and text figures.

The BusCom Online Teaching Center

The *BusCom Online Teaching Center* (a Web site designed for instructors) can be accessed via a free password provided to instructors using this text. The site provides current event items that illustrate a particular chapter, the PowerPoint slides for pre-viewing and downloading, detailed lecture and supplemental discussion notes for

each chapter, and a forum for exchanging ideas with the author, publisher, and other instructors who are teaching this course.

Test Bank and Computerized Test Bank

The *Test Bank* and computerized testing program contain approximately 1,200 test items, including multiple-choice, short answer, true-false, revision exercises, and writing cases. The computerized test bank allows instructors to prepare examinations consisting of any quantity and combination of questions. Using the program, the instructor selects questions from the test bank and produces a test master—and alternate versions, if desired—for easy duplication.

Video Case Studies

Five video cases, relating to each part of the textbook, give students an opportunity to view interesting and well-known companies in action. These videos reinforce text concepts by directly relating particular business communication concepts to the footage being shown. In addition, for each video case, discussion questions and suggested writing assignments are provided.

Complete Package of Student Support Materials

The BusCom Online Learning Center

The *BusCom Online Learning Center* (a Web site designed for students) gives students an online resource and guide to the world of Internet business communication. Here they will be able to learn more about the Internet, find links to help them locate reliable business information, find links to online writing labs, complete exercises designed to help them learn more from the course, and learn more about available jobs and employers.

BusCom Writer

BusCom Writer provides a set of interactive computer modules that guide students through the development of ten basic business documents. Based on the textbook's 3Ps (Problem/Process/Product) microwriting model, each module presents students with a unique business situation; guides them step-by-step through the process of analyzing the situation, developing communication goals, and preparing the document; and then prompts them to proofread, revise, and print out the finished product.

Grammar II CD-ROM

The *Grammar II* CD-ROM (by ProOne Software, a division of Sofsource, Inc.) supplements the grammar and mechanics coverage in the text through interactive review and reinforcement exercises. More than 500 practice problems and samples with step-by-step explanations and individualized feedback are provided.

The Business Communicator's Guide to the Internet

This supplementary booklet, available for shrink-wrapping with the text, provides students with a detailed introduction to the Internet. It specifically covers the use of key Internet tools and features, Internet browsers, e-mail, discussion lists, news-groups, and the like, by focusing on the specific needs of business communicators.

The Business Communicator's Guide to PowerPoint

This supplementary booklet, also available for shrink-wrapping with the text, provides students with a detailed introduction to this powerful presentation tool and emphasizes techniques for creating effective business presentations.

The American Heritage Dictionary

The American Heritage Dictionary is an invaluable resource for college and career success. The best-selling third edition is the most complete, up-to-date, and heavily illustrated dictionary available. Instructors may order the hardcover, thumb-indexed *American Heritage College Dictionary*, Third Edition, in a shrink-wrapped package with *Contemporary Business Communication*. Also available is a brief hardcover version, *The American Heritage Concise Dictionary*, Third Edition, which also may be shrink-wrapped with *Contemporary Business Communication*.

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