

Fourth Edition

Herta A. Murphy

Herbert W. Hildebrandt

# EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

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To my husband, Gene — H. M.  
To my wife, Dee — H. H.

## EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

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# Preface

This fourth edition, like its popular, widely adopted predecessor, emphasizes that the purpose and the receiver of every message profoundly affect its content, organization, and style of presentation. In keeping with this theme, the book's broad subject matter is practical, ethical, and thorough. Condensed wherever possible, it is integrated with significant new materials, updates, and revisions. Its organization, visual aids, and clear conversational style make meaningful reading easy.

## Purpose and Approach

Anyone preparing for or already in a business or management job that requires effective communication will find this book useful as both a text and a reference guide. Its goal is to help you communicate through sound, honest written and oral business messages that receivers can easily understand and to which they will react favorably. It is designed to develop a better understanding of human behavior and to improve abilities for analyzing, researching, organizing, writing, revising, dictating, speaking, and listening.

Abundant teaching and learning aids demonstrate key concepts for written and oral communications. In-depth explanations suggest *what* to do and *why*. Hundreds of examples—many with marginal notations—show *how*, and how not, to do. Chapter title pages list main topics, helpful for both preview and review. Footnoted bibliographies suggest sources for further readings. The unique, well-liked checklists provide concise summary guidelines for most types of messages. They are to be used only as *reminders*, not as “*recipe lists*,” because each message requires careful planning. End-of-chapter and appendix exercises range from simple to complex thought-stimulating activities for a wide variety of situations.

This book is suitable for students in universities and colleges, community colleges, business schools, continuing-education centers, and special training programs for executives, middle-management, or supervisory personnel. Whether you communicate as a business executive, professional person, government employee, administrative assistant, club officer, or an individual consumer, the text has useful material for you. It is ample for one- or two-semester courses, and adaptable for short courses that cover only selected chapters pertinent to particular student needs. The extensive learning aids—along with the thorough Instructor's Manual—are also timesavers for faculty.

## Special Features

The fourth edition contains these features and changes:

1. A new section on nonverbal communication and a communication model in Chapter 2 help present a more detailed concept of the communication process. As in the previous edition, nonverbal impressions are mentioned also in several other chapters.
2. The business reports chapters have been strengthened by new or revised explanations of and examples on—among others—executive summary abstracts, short reports, title choices, an outline table, documentation, bibliographies, and editing procedure. Many other topics lauded by users of the previous edition are retained.
3. Oral communications—new and revised topics—occupies three chapters instead of two. One now includes various kinds of speeches plus specific suggestions on delivery, physical behavior, and vocal qualities; also listening—the common faults, desirable habits, and results. A new chapter on successful problem-solving meetings focuses on both leaders and participants. A third chapter features interviews—especially the employment interviewer's responsibilities; extended uses of modern electronic telephone equipment; and dictation methods. In addition, the book stresses that the 7-C principles, preparatory steps, and organizational plans apply also to oral messages.
4. A unique feature is the exceptionally thorough updated coverage on job application letters, résumés, interviews, follow-up messages, and legal aspects—in Chapters 12, 13, 21, and Appendix A. The wealth of options and specific aids are useful not only to graduates but also to experienced managers.
5. Three new chapters emphasize modern office technology, communication on social issues, and intercultural concerns—all matters increasingly important for the effective business communicator.
6. For increased emphasis on integrity and ethics, we have added new material, examples, and student exercises.
7. Recent cost figures on business letters, Mailgrams, telegrams, long-distance phone calls, E-COM mail, and losses on inadequately addressed mail help impress on students the importance of effective oral and written communications.
8. Discussion on “nonsexist expressions” has been broadened to “non-discriminatory,” including race, ethnic origin, and physical features—in keeping with laws.
9. To allow space for the new materials, several long chapters on letters have been condensed cautiously without sacrificing overall content.
10. Wherever desirable, all subject matter has been updated or revised. Though examples and exercises are based on actual business situations, most names, addresses, figures, and products mentioned in them have been changed—to protect anonymity.

## **Plan of Organization**

This 24-chapter text begins with six background-for-communicating chapters, which constitute Part One. They introduce you to the importance, process, “C” principles, planning steps, deductive and inductive organization, costs, and media of written and oral business communications.

In Part Two each of the four chapters presents letters and memos organized by a basic pattern—direct request, good news, bad news, or persuasive request. Included are inquiries, claims, recommendations, adjustments, credits, orders, favors, announcements, and transmittals.

Part Three, five chapters, includes written and oral special messages—about sales, solicited and unsolicited; job applications, interviews, follow-ups by applicants and employers; collections; goodwill. You will see how the four plans for organizing are adaptable to these messages, depending upon their purpose and circumstances.

Part Four consists of three expanded chapters on various short and long reports and proposals. They cover planning steps, research, organization, visual aids, essential parts, documentation, format, and qualities.

In Part Five three chapters on oral communications present specific suggestions for conferences, oral reporting, platform speaking, listening, interviewing, telephoning, instructing, and dictating.

Part Six, three chapters, focuses on significant concerns—modern office technology, social issues, intercultural communication.

Appendixes include a brief discussion on legal aspects, writing mechanics, style, and symbols for marking letters, memos, and reports.

## **Acknowledgments**

To the countless persons who have made suggestions and contributions we are heartily grateful. Our sincere thanks go to the executives and staff members who have provided hundreds of illustrative materials from business and industry; to students who have brought examples from their employment and organizational experiences; and to our American Business Communication Association colleagues, whose ideas, preferences, research, and writings along with those of other scholars through the years have influenced the scope of this book by enriching our knowledge during our combined more than 60 years’ teaching and other responsibilities in communication.

Among those deserving special acknowledgment and thanks are the conscientious reviewers who offered constructive comments on the previous edition or the manuscript for this edition: Professors William J. Buchholz, Bentley College; Fay Beth Gray, Arkansas State University; Donna Kienzler, Iowa State University; Roberta Passenant, Berkshire Community College; Muriel Rada, Metropolitan Technical Community College (Omaha); Otto W. Taylor, New York State University; Dona Vasa, University of Nebraska; Judy West, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga.

Furthermore, we are thankful to the many instructors across the United States whose responses to our questionnaire gave helpful insights regarding their needs. Because courses necessarily vary in content and length, some topics that most instructors emphasize and value highly others must omit entirely. So we have tried to include in this comprehensive text as many useful materials as space allows for both basic and management-oriented courses.

To Professors Frank R. Jackle, American Graduate School of International Management, and Hilda Jones, Oregon State University, we express appreciation for their helpful, constructive opinions. Also we are grateful to four Cleveland State University professors—John E. Binnion, Bella G. Clinkscale, Kenneth R. Mayer, and Edward G. Thomas—who wrote challenging exercises for eight chapters. We thank as well three University of Washington colleagues: L. R. Goldberg for reviewing and improving the updated appendix on legal aspects; Virgil Harder for his suggestions; and Phyllis A. Needy, placement coordinator, for her views on current sensitive employment matters. We extend gratitude to Joanne Ripple, Shirley McCoy, and Robert Suh, University of Michigan, for their help in typing, editing, and research. Also, to the authors and companies that have given permission to quote from their publication and whose names are mentioned in footnotes, we express sincere thanks.

In appreciation of the thousands of students who have given reliable feedback about text content and assignments, we dedicate this revision to all its users who want to improve their oral and written communication ability.

**Herta A. Murphy**  
**Herbert W. Hildebrandt**

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# **PART ONE**

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- **CHAPTER 2:**  
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- **CHAPTER 3:**  
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**Appearance and Uses of Business Message Media**





## Importance of Effective Communications in Business

- I. “LIFE BLOOD” OF EVERY ORGANIZATION**
  - A. Internal Communication**
  - B. External Communication**
- II. BENEFITS IN YOUR CAREER AND PERSONAL LIFE**
  - A. A Valuable Job Requirement**
  - B. An Essential for Promotion**
  - C. A Help for Meeting Personal Responsibilities**
- III. VOLUME AND COST OF WRITTEN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN THE UNITED STATES**
  - A. Elements in Overall Costs**
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  - C. Possible Savings by Improvements**
- IV. THE CHALLENGE OF COMMUNICATING FOR BUSINESS**
  - A. Developing the Right Attitude**
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