

3 Developing a Professional Presence



Apple computers have a lot in common with Lexus automobiles, BMW motorcycles, Starbucks Coffee, and Craftsman tools. Each is a *brand* that receives the highest quality ratings and consistently lives up to expectations.

1 Explain the importance of professional presence and discuss the factors that contribute to a favorable first impression.

2 Define image and describe the factors that form the image you project to others.

3 List and discuss factors that influence your choice of clothing for work.

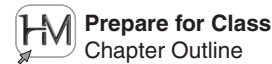
4 Explain how your facial expression, entrance and carriage, voice, and handshake impact your work image.

“Developing a strong personal brand involves all the little ways in which you express your feelings about yourself and present yourself to others.”

—David McNally & Karl D. Speak

Chapter Outline

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AN INTRODUCTION
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5 *Understand how manners contribute to improved interpersonal relations in the workplace.*

Brand Yourself

What do Apple computers and BMW motorcycles have in common? Each is a consumer product with a cult following. These brands have become a form of self-expression for those who own them. They have achieved brand personality through unique design and performance attributes. The Macintosh brand seems to communicate youthful, independent, and creative qualities. BMW motorcycles have a loyal following of riders who feel these bikes are superior in quality, performance, and design. A brand is more than the product. The best brands build an emotional connection with the consumer.¹

Why introduce the concept of brands in a book devoted to human relations? Because branding can play a crucial role in your career success. The authors of *Be Your Own Brand: A Breakthrough Formula for Standing Out from the Crowd* say branding can have a significant impact on your relationships, career, and life.² Developing a strong personal brand involves all the little

KEY TERMS

assumptions p. 56
 business casual p. 61
 career apparel p. 60
 cultural influences p. 57
 etiquette p. 66
 image p. 58
 primacy effect p. 55
 professional presence p. 54
 surface language p. 59
 wardrobe engineering p. 61



Prepare for Class
 Chapter Glossary

Improve Your Grade

Flashcards
 Hangman
 Crossword Puzzle

professional presence A dynamic blend of poise, self-confidence, control, and style that enables a person to command respect in any situation.

ways in which you express your feelings about yourself and present yourself to others.

Dave Olsen, chief coffee guru with Starbucks, was once asked to describe the most important factor contributing to the company's success. Was it the coffee? The employees working behind the counter? The design of the stores? Olsen thought about the question for a while and then said, "Everything matters." When it comes to developing your own personal brand, everything matters.³ ■

PROFESSIONAL PRESENCE—AN INTRODUCTION

- 1 Explain the importance of professional presence and discuss the factors that contribute to a favorable first impression.

There are many personal and professional benefits to be gained from a study of the concepts in this chapter. You will acquire new insights regarding ways to communicate positive impressions during job interviews, business contacts, and social contacts made away from work. You will also learn how to shape an image that will help you achieve your fullest potential in the career of your choice. Image is a major component of brand development.

This is not a chapter about ways to make positive impressions with superficial behavior and quick-fix techniques. We do not discuss the "power look" or the "power lunch." The material in this chapter will not help you become a more entertaining conversationalist or win new customers by pretending to be interested in their hobbies or families. Stephen Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, says that the ability to build effective, long-term relationships is based on character strength, not quick-fix techniques. He notes that outward attitude and behavior changes do very little good in the long run *unless* they are based on solid principles governing human effectiveness. These principles include service (making a contribution), integrity and honesty (which serve as a foundation of trust), human dignity (every person has worth), and fairness.⁴

Professional Presence—A Definition

We are indebted to Susan Bixler, author of *Professional Presence*, for giving us a better understanding of what it means to possess professional presence.

Professional presence is a dynamic blend of poise, self-confidence, control, and style that empowers us to be able to command respect in any situation.⁵ Once acquired, it permits us to project a confidence that others can quickly perceive the first time they meet us. Obviously, to *project* this confidence, you need to *feel* confident.

Bixler points out that, in many cases, the credentials we present during a job interview or when we are being considered for a promotion are not very different from those of other persons being considered. It is our professional presence that permits us to rise above the crowd. Debra Benton, a career consultant, says, "Any boss with a choice of two people with equal qualifications will choose the one with style as well as substance."⁶

Professional Presence at the Job Interview

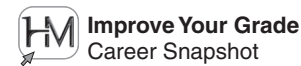
Professional presence has special meaning when you are preparing for a job interview. In most cases you are competing against several other applicants, so you can't afford to make a mistake. A common mistake among job applicants is failure to acquire background information on the employer. Without this information, it's difficult to prepare questions to ask during the interview, and decisions about what to wear will be more difficult.

Keep in mind that regardless of the dress code of the organization, it's always appropriate to dress conservatively. If you arrive for an interview wearing torn jeans and a T-shirt, the person conducting the interview may think you are not serious about the job. The expectation of most employers is that the job applicant will be well groomed and dressed appropriately.

One of the most important objectives of a job interview is to communicate the image that you are someone who is conscientious, so be prepared. If possible, visit the place of business before your interview. Observe the people already working there; then dress one step up in terms of professional appearance. What's most important is that you show that you care enough to make a good impression.



Professional business attire is recommended for interviews and client meetings to convey a clean, well-groomed, and organized image.



The Importance of Making a Good First Impression

As organizations experience increased competition for clients, patients, or customers, they are giving new attention to the old adage “First impressions are lasting ones.” Research indicates that initial impressions do indeed tend to linger. Therefore, a positive first impression can be thought of as the first step in building a long-term relationship.

Of course, it is not just first contacts with clients, patients, customers, and others that are important. Positive impressions should be the objective of every contact. Many organizations have learned that in the age of information, high tech without high touch is not a winning formula.

The Primacy Effect

The development of professional presence begins with a full appreciation of the power of first impressions. The tendency to form and retain impressions quickly at the time of an initial meeting illustrates what social psychologists call a **primacy effect** in the way people perceive one another. The general principle is that initial information tends to carry more weight than information received later. First impressions establish the mental framework within which a person is viewed, and information acquired later is often ignored or reinterpreted to coincide with this framework.⁷

Ann Demarais and Valerie White, founders of First Impressions, Inc. (www.firstimpressionsconsulting.com), note that in a first impression others see only a very small sample of you, a tiny percentage of your life. But to them, that small sample represents 100 percent of what they know of you. And they will weigh initial information much more heavily than later information.⁸

primacy effect The tendency to form and retain impressions quickly at the time of an initial meeting.



TOTAL PERSON INSIGHT

Susan Bixler and Nancy Nix-Rice

Authors, *The New Professional Image*

“Books are judged by their covers, houses are appraised by their curb appeal, and people are initially evaluated on how they choose to dress and behave. In a perfect world this is not fair, moral, or just. What’s inside should count a great deal more. And eventually it usually does, but not right away. In the meantime, a lot of opportunities can be lost.”

The First Few Seconds

Malcolm Gladwell (www.gladwell.com), a best-selling author, learned a great deal about the power of first impressions a few years ago when he let his close-cropped hair grow wild. His life changed immediately. He got far more speeding tickets and was routinely pulled out of airport security lines for special attention. People he met knew nothing about him except that he had shaggy hair, but they were ready to think the worst.⁹

Gladwell was inspired to try to understand what happens beneath the surface of rapidly made decisions. His findings later appeared in *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*. He says most of us would like to think our decision making is the result of rational deliberation, but in reality most decisions are made subconsciously in a split second.¹⁰

Most people assess another person very quickly and then settle on a general perception of that individual. It is very difficult for us to reverse that first impression. Paula rushed into a restaurant for a quick lunch—she had to get back to her office for a 1:30 p.m. appointment. At the entrance of the main dining area was a sign reading “Please Wait to Be Seated.” A few feet away, the hostess was discussing a popular movie with one of the waitresses. The hostess made eye contact with Paula but continued to visit with the waitress. In this situation, Paula immediately formed a negative impression of the hostess, even though no words were exchanged. She quickly left the restaurant. Unfortunately, the hostess may not have been fully aware of the negative impression she communicated to the customer.

Assumptions Versus Facts

The impression you form of another person during the initial contact is made up of both assumptions and facts. Most people tend to rely more heavily on **assumptions** during the initial meeting. If a job applicant sits slumped in the chair, head bowed and shoulders slack, you might assume the person is not very interested in the position. If the postal clerk fails to make eye contact during the transaction and does not express appreciation for your purchase, you may assume this person treats everyone with indifference. Needless to say, the impression you form of another person during the initial contact can be misleading. The briefer the encounter with a new acquaintance, the greater the chance that misinformation will enter into your perception of the other person. The authors of a popular book on first impressions state that “depending on assumptions is a one-way ticket to big surprises and perhaps disappointments.”¹¹

assumptions Ideas that are taken for granted or believed to be true.

Where Is Your Emotional Focus?

Making a good first impression means making the person you meet feel positive about you. When you make contact with someone, it is not uncommon to focus on yourself. You talk to someone at a party or a meeting, and you think about how you feel—whether you are comfortable, bored, nervous, intimidated, and so on. But do you think about the impression you are making on the other person? Do you think about how the other person is feeling during the initial contact? The authors of *First Impressions—What You Don't Know About How Others See You* say that focusing on how the other person feels is the secret to making a positive first impression.¹²

Cultural Influence

Cultural influences, often formed during the early years of our life, lead us to have impressions of some people even before we meet them. People often develop stereotypes of entire groups. Although differences between cultures are often subtle, they can lead to uncomfortable situations. We need to realize that the Korean shopkeeper is being polite, not hostile, when he puts change on the counter and not in your hand. Some Asian students do not speak up in class out of respect for the teacher, not boredom.¹³

Many American companies are attempting to create a new kind of workplace where cultural and ethnic differences are treated as assets, not annoyances. Recently, Walt Disney, known for its squeaky-clean dress and grooming standards, announced it was loosening grooming rules for workers at its theme parks. Under the new policy, male workers can wear braids provided they are above the collar and neatly tied close to the scalp in straight rows. Female workers at Disney have been able to braid their hair for years.¹⁴

Norine Dresser, author of *Multiculture Manners—New Rules of Etiquette for a Changing Society*, notes that it is becoming more difficult for organizations to develop policies that do not offend one ethnic group or another. She argues that it is the collective duty of the mainstream to learn the customs and practices of established minority groups as well as the ways of the latest arrivals from other countries.¹⁵

cultural influences Impressions and ideas usually formed in the early years of life that can lead people to form ideas about other people and things even before they are encountered.



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HUMAN RELATIONS IN ACTION

Snap Judgments and Future Relationships

A group of 164 incoming first-year college students were paired by sex and asked to talk for three, six, or ten minutes. The students were then asked to rate how much they liked the other person, assess how much the two had in common, and make predictions about their future relationship with that person. After nine weeks, the university researchers conducted a follow-up survey and found that the best predictor of the relationships that had developed was how positively the subjects had rated their partners after the first, quick meeting.

TEST PREPPER 3.1

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON P. 317

Multiple Choice

- _____ 1. One of the most important ways to establish a positive professional presence from the very first impression is to:
- avoid eye contact, lest one be thought too aggressive.
 - be the first to speak.
 - wear appropriate attire for the people one will contact and the places one will visit.
 - relax your posture, slumping forward to enhance two-way communication.
- _____ 2. Garry is interviewing for a position at corporate headquarters this morning. How long does he have to create a good impression?
- A few seconds
 - About 5 minutes
 - Around an hour
 - 2 hours at most
- _____ 3. Self-confidence, style, poise, and control are all integral to:
- attractive appearance.
 - professional presence.
 - animal magnetism.
 - self-efficacy.
- _____ 4. “You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.” This statement encapsulates the:
- recency effect.
 - surface effect.
 - control effect.
 - primacy effect.
- _____ 5. Yasuo, an exchange student from Japan, never speaks in class. His professor assumes that Yasuo is bored. In fact, Yasuo’s culture indicates that he is being quiet because:
- he is hostile toward the professor.
 - he holds the professor in contempt.
 - he respects the professor.
 - he lacks language skills.



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THE IMAGE YOU PROJECT

2 Define image and describe the factors that form the image you project to others

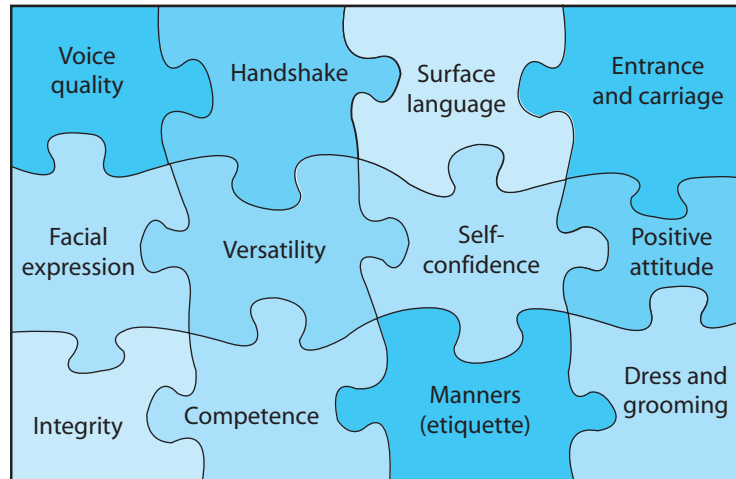
image A term used to describe how other people feel about you. It can reveal your inherent qualities, your competence, and your attitude.

Image is a term used to describe how other people feel about you. In every business or social setting, your behaviors and appearance communicate a mental picture that others observe and remember. This picture determines how they react to you.

Think of image as a tool that can reveal your inherent qualities, your competence, your attitude, and your leadership potential. If you wish to communicate your professional capabilities and create your own brand, begin by scrutinizing your attitudes; only then can you invest the time and energy needed to refine and enhance your personal image.

In many respects, the image you project is very much like a picture puzzle, as illustrated in Figure 3.1. It is formed by a variety of factors, including manners, self-confidence, voice quality, versatility, integrity (see Chapter 7), entrance and carriage, facial expression, surface language, competence, positive attitude, and handshake. Each of these image-shaping components is under your control, though some are harder to develop than others. As you reflect on the image you want to project, remember that a strong personal brand is built from the inside out.

FIGURE 3.1

Major Factors That Form Your Image**Surface Language**

As noted earlier, we base opinions about other people on both facts and assumptions. Unfortunately, assumptions often carry a great deal of weight. Many of the assumptions we develop regarding other people are based on **surface language**, a pattern of immediate impressions conveyed by what we *see*—in other words, by appearance. The clothing you wear, your hairstyle, the fragrances you use, and the jewelry you display all combine to make a statement about you to others.

According to many writers familiar with image formation, clothing is particularly important. Although a more relaxed dress code has evolved in some employment areas, people judge your appearance long before they judge your talents. It would be a mistake not to take your career wardrobe seriously. Bixler suggests that those making career wardrobe decisions should keep in mind that three things haven't changed:¹⁶

1. *If you want the job, you have to look the part.* Establish personal dress and grooming standards appropriate for the organization where you wish to work. Before you apply for a job, try to find out what the workers there are wearing. If in doubt, dress conservatively. Casual dress can convey indifference.
2. *If you want the promotion, you have to look promotable.* A good rule to follow is to dress for the job you want, not the job you have. If you are currently a bank teller and want to become a branch manager, identify the successful branch managers and emulate their manner of dress.
3. *If you want respect, you have to dress as well as or better than your industry standards.* One would expect to find conservative dress standards in banking, insurance, accounting, and law, and more casual dress standards in advertising, sports entertainment, and agriculture. Spend time researching the dress and grooming standards in the industry in which you hope to find a job.

surface language A pattern of immediate impressions conveyed by what one sees.

TEST PREPPER 3.2

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON P. 317

Multiple Choice

- _____ 1. Which of the following is *not* an important component of a person's image?
- Natural hair color
 - Positive attitude
 - Voice quality
 - Surface language
- _____ 2. Ellen wants to be promoted from associate professor to head of the Sociology Department at her college. Ellen should:
- conform closely to the clothing norms for all associate professors of sociology.
 - dress like the college president.
 - let her inner qualities and hard work speak for her.
 - project the appearance appropriate for a department head *before* she seeks the promotion.
- _____ 3. Which one of these image-shaping components is outside of your control?
- Entrance and carriage
 - Surface language
 - Positive attitude
 - Career apparel worn by a fellow worker
- _____ 4. Which one of the following is *not* a component of surface image?
- The perfume or cologne you wear
 - Your hairstyle
 - Your college GPA
 - The jewelry you wear



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SELECTING YOUR CAREER APPAREL

3 List and discuss factors that influence your choice of clothing for work.

Millions of American workers wear a uniform especially designed for a particular job. The judges on the U.S. Supreme Court and the technicians at the local Midas Muffler and Brake shop have one thing in common—both groups wear a special uniform to work. Companies that have initiated extensive career apparel programs rely on uniforms to project an image of consistent quality, good service, and uniqueness.

Enterprise Rent-A-Car, the nation's largest recruiter of college students, requires its 52,000 workers to follow conservative dress and grooming policies. Men, for example, follow twenty-six rules that include no beards (unless medically necessary) and dress shirts with coordinated ties. Female employees follow thirty dress code guidelines, including one for skirt length (skirts must not be shorter than two inches above the knee) and one for mandatory stockings. Why does Enterprise choreograph how its employees look? The company maintains that its personal appearance and grooming standards give it a marketing advantage.¹⁷

The uniforms worn by United Parcel Service employees, airport screeners, and the employees at your local restaurant might be classified as special-design **career apparel**. In addition to special-design uniforms, there is another type of career apparel, somewhat less predictable, worn by large numbers of people in the labor force. Here are two examples:

- A male bank loan officer would be appropriately dressed in a tailored gray or blue suit, white shirt, and tie. This same person dressed in a colorful blazer, sport shirt, and plaid slacks would be seen as too casual in most bank settings.

career apparel A uniform especially designed for a particular job or clothing prescribed by dress code guidelines.



Many American workers wear a uniform that is especially designed for a particular job. This airport security officer wears a uniform that communicates authority. It complements the serious nature of his work.

- A technician employed by an auto dealership that sells new cars would be appropriately dressed in matching gray, tan, or blue shirt and pants. The technician would be inappropriately dressed in jeans and a T-shirt.

Many organizations seek advice about career apparel from image consultants who have received certification from the Association of Image Consultants International (www.aici.org) or Global Protocol, Inc. (www.globalprotocol.com). The demand for etiquette and protocol consultants has increased in recent years.¹⁸

Wardrobe Engineering

The term **wardrobe engineering** was first used by John Molloy, author of *Dress for Success*, to describe how clothing and accessories can be used to create a certain image. This concept was later refined by several other noted image consultants in hundreds of books and articles on dress and grooming. Although these authors are not in complete agreement on every aspect of dress, they do agree on the four basic points presented in Table 3.1. Use this information as a guide. Although you should consider the dress and grooming standards of others in your field, don't give in to blind conformity. As noted by one consultant, "Effective packaging is an individual matter based on the person's circumstances, age, weight, height, coloring, and objectives."¹⁹

The Business Casual Look

The term **business casual** is used to describe the movement toward dress standards that emphasize greater comfort and individuality. Business casual is clothing that allows you to feel comfortable at work but looks neat and professional. It usually means slacks, khaki pants, collared long-sleeved shirts and blouses, and shoes with socks or hosiery. It usually does not include jeans, T-shirts, shorts, sneakers, or sandals.²⁰

wardrobe engineering The activity and decision making regarding how clothing and accessories can be used to create a certain image.

business casual A dress standard that emphasizes greater comfort and individuality.

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TABLE 3.1

Factors Influencing Your Choice of Clothing for Work

Dress codes are undergoing changes, and this complicates the selection of clothing for work. Use the four factors described here for guidance.

1. *Products and services offered.* In some cases the organization's products and services more or less dictate a certain type of dress. For example, a receptionist employed by a well-established law firm is likely to wear clothing that is conservative, modest, and in good taste. These same dress standards would apply to a pharmaceutical sales representative who calls on medical doctors.
2. *Type of person served.* Research indicates that first impressions created by dress and grooming are greatly influenced by unconscious expectations. Throughout life we become acquainted with real estate salespeople, nurses, police officers, and others employed in a wide range of occupations. We form mental images of the apparel common to each of these occupations. When we encounter someone whose appearance does not conform to our past experiences, we often feel uncomfortable.
3. *Desired image projected by the organization.* Some companies establish dress codes that help shape the image they project to the public. Walt Disney Company, for example, maintains a strict dress and grooming code for all its theme-park employees. They are considered "cast members" and must adhere to dress and grooming standards that complement the image projected by Disney theme parks.
4. *Geographic region.* Dress in the South and Southwest tends to be more casual than dress in the Northeast. Climate is another factor that influences the clothing people wear at work.

Some companies are relaxing dress codes and allowing workers to dress casually. Although no precise definition of business casual exists, the following casual dress guidelines are typical.

1. *Wear dressier business clothing when meeting with customers or clients.* You should avoid creating inconsistencies between your message and your appearance. Workers at ProVox Technologies Corporation, based in Roanoke, Virginia, keep company-designed ProVox shirts and khakis in the office for client visits.²¹
2. *Respect the boundary between work and leisure clothing.* Victoria's Secret once sold body-hugging spandex tube tops as workplace wear. Anne Fisher of *Fortune* magazine's "Ask Annie" career advice column says, "As a rule, people should avoid wearing anything that shows so much skin that it distracts other people from their work." How about body piercing, tattoos, orange hair (or other colors not found in nature), three-day stubble, no socks, micro-mini skirts, or rubber flip-flops? In some cases, you will be guided by company policy. At Ford Motor Company, "nonoffensive" tattoos are permitted and body piecing is acceptable if it does not pose safety risks. Subway Restaurants permit "discrete" tattoos, but body piercing is limited to one piercing per ear.²² Of course, some dress code violations fall into the "unwritten" category. If you wear a nose ring to work, you may be sending the wrong message to the person responsible for your next promotion.
3. *Wear clothing that is clean and neat and that fits well.* Casual dress codes tend to emphasize the importance of this guideline.

Do not let “dress-down” influences rob you of common sense. You don’t get a second chance to make a good first impression, so select your casual clothing with care. If you have to ask yourself, “Is this clothing acceptable?” you probably shouldn’t wear it to work.

TEST PREPPER 3.3

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON P. 317

True or False?

- ____ 1. As a general rule, people should avoid wearing anything that shows too much skin to work, as it distracts others in the workplace.
- ____ 2. High-end flip-flops and sneakers are now widely accepted as typical business casual wear.



ACE the Test
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Multiple Choice

- ____ 3. Sara is making an effort to “package” herself so that she will stand out from other job applicants. This process is called:
 - a. career development.
 - b. wardrobe engineering.
 - c. primacy effect awareness.
 - d. branding.
- ____ 4. Which of the following items is often a component of business casual attire?
 - a. Short-sleeved T-shirt
 - b. Khaki slacks
 - c. French-cuffed dress shirt
 - d. Pantyhose

FACTORS THAT MAKE AN IMPACT

- 4** Explain how your facial expression, entrance and carriage, voice, and handshake impact your work image.

Your Facial Expression

After your overall appearance, your face is the most visible part of you. Facial expressions are the cues most people rely on in initial interactions. They provide the clues by which others read your mood and personality.

Studies conducted in nonverbal communication show that facial expressions strongly influence people’s reactions to each other. The expression on your face can quickly trigger a positive or negative reaction from those you meet. How you rate in the “good-looks” department is not nearly as important as your ability to communicate positive impressions with a pleasant smile and eye contact.

If you want to identify the inner feelings of another person, watch the individual’s facial expressions closely. A frown may tell you “something is wrong.” A pleasant smile generally communicates “things are OK.” Everyone has encountered a “look of surprise” or a “look that could kill.” These facial expressions usually reflect inner emotions more accurately than words. The smile is the most recognizable signal in the world. People everywhere tend to trust a smiling face.²³

Your Entrance and Carriage

The way you enter someone's office or a business meeting can influence the image you project, says Susan Bixler. She notes that “your entrance and the way you carry yourself will set the stage for everything that comes afterward.”²⁴ A nervous or apologetic entrance may ruin your chances of getting a job, closing a sale, or getting the raise you have earned. If you feel apprehensive, try not to let it show in your body language. Hold your head up, avoid slumping forward, and try to project self-assurance. To get off to the right start and make a favorable impression, follow these words of advice from Bixler: “The person who has confidence in himself or herself indicates this by a strong stride, a friendly smile, good posture, and a genuine sense of energy. This is a very effective way to set the stage for a productive meeting. When you ask for respect visually, you get it.”²⁵ Bixler says the key to making a successful entrance is simply believing—and projecting—that you have a reason to be there and have something important to present or discuss.

Your Voice Quality and Speech Habits

The tone of your voice, the rate of speed at which you speak (tempo), the volume of your speech, your ability to pronounce words clearly (diction), and your speech habits contribute greatly to the image you project. Consider these real-world examples:

- Regina Tell, court reporter at a liability trial involving Merck & Company's pain-killer Vioxx, said the rapid speech patterns of the attorneys was “killing her.” She reported that they spoke at a rate of over 300 words a minute, or more than 100 words a minute faster than average people speak.²⁶
- Kristy Pinand, a youthful-looking 23-year-old, routinely used “teen speak” when talking to colleagues and clients. Words such as *cool* and *like* were frequently part of her speech pattern. With feedback from her supervisor, she was able to correct the problem.²⁷
- A senior project manager at a major financial-services company was surprised when his boss blamed his thick Brooklyn accent for his stalled advancement in the company. Despite his MBA, the project manager was speaking too fast and skipping many consonants. His frequent use of *deeze* and *doze* created the impression that he was poorly educated and inarticulate.²⁸

A conscious effort to improve your voice begins with awareness. A tape or video recording of your conversations will help you identify problem areas. If you hear a voice that is too monotone, too nasal, too high-pitched, too weak, too insincere, or too loud, you can target the problem for improvement. With practice and the use of a tape recorder, you can change your voice quality and speech habits.

If you routinely receive requests to repeat yourself, the problem may be your accent, or something as simple as your breathing. You may not be breathing correctly, leaving your words soft and inaudible. If you are looking for professional help, consider working with a voice coach or a speech pathologist. You may also want to join Toastmasters International, a professional organization dedicated to effective personal and public communication.

Your Handshake

When two people first meet, a handshake is usually the only physical contact between them. A handshake is a friendly and professional way to greet someone or to take leave, regardless of gender. The handshake can communicate warmth, genuine concern for the other person, and strength. It can also communicate aloofness, indifference, and weakness. The message you send the other party through your handshake depends on a combination of the following factors:

1. *Degree of firmness.* Generally speaking, a firm (but not viselike) grip communicates a caring attitude, whereas a weak grip communicates indifference.
2. *Degree of dryness of hands.* A moist, clammy palm is unpleasant to feel and can communicate the impression that you are nervous. People who have this problem often remove the moisture with a clean handkerchief.
3. *Duration of grip.* There are no specific guidelines for the ideal duration of a grip. Nevertheless, by extending the handshake just a little, you can often communicate a greater degree of interest in and concern for the other person.
4. *Depth of interlock.* A full, deep grip is more likely to convey friendship to the other person. Position your hand to make complete contact with the other person's hand. Once you have connected, close your thumb over the back of the other person's hand and give a slight squeeze.²⁹
5. *Eye contact during handshake.* Visual communication can increase the positive impact of your handshake. Maintaining eye contact throughout the handshaking process is important when two people greet each other.³⁰

Most individuals have shaken hands with hundreds of people but have little idea whether they are creating positive or negative impressions. It is a good idea to obtain this information from those coworkers or friends who are willing to provide you with candid feedback. Like all other human relations skills, the handshake can be improved with practice.

TEST PREPPER 3.4

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON P. 317


True or False?

- _____ 1. As an indication of respect to others, it is important to lower your head upon first meeting business associates.
- _____ 2. Improving your voice and speech habits begins with an awareness of what you say and how you say it.

Multiple Choice

- _____ 3. Alan pays particular attention to his facial expression in business settings because he realizes that it is the second most noticeable part of himself, ranking after:
- a. voice quality.
 - b. self-confidence.
 - c. overall appearance.
 - d. a handshake.

- _____ 4. Which of the following items sends a poor message to the recipient of a handshake?
- a. A firm (not vicelike) grip
 - b. Extending the grip of the handshake just a little
 - c. Making complete contact with the other person's hand
 - d. Avoiding eye contact during the handshake

 **ACE the Test**
ACE and ACE+ Practice Tests

ETIQUETTE FOR A CHANGING WORLD

5 Understand how manners contribute to improved interpersonal relations in the workplace.

Why are so many etiquette guides crowding bookstore shelves? And why are many organizations hiring consultants to conduct classes on etiquette guidelines? Well, one reason is that we need advice on how to avoid annoying other people and what to do if they annoy us. In today's fast-paced, often tense, work environment, we have to work a little harder to maintain a climate of fairness, kindness, and mutual respect.³¹

Etiquette (sometimes called *manners* or *protocol*) is a set of traditions based on kindness, efficiency, and logic.³² Letitia Baldrige, author and etiquette consultant, says, "It's consideration and kindness and thinking about somebody other than oneself."³³ Sometimes we need new etiquette guidelines to deal with our changing world. Today smoking at work is usually prohibited or restricted to a certain area. Meetings often begin with the announcement "Please silence your cell phones and beepers." And the nearly universal use of e-mail has spawned hundreds of articles on e-mail etiquette (see Chapter 4). A diverse work force has created many new challenges in the area of protocol.

Although it is not possible to do a complete review of the rules of etiquette, we will discuss those that are particularly important in an organizational setting.

Dining Etiquette

Job interviews and business meetings are frequently conducted at breakfast, lunch, or dinner, so be aware of your table manners. To illustrate decisions you might need to make during a business meal, let's eavesdrop on Tom Reed, a job candidate having a meal with several employees of the company he wants to work for. After introductions, the bread is passed to Tom. He places a roll on the small bread-and-butter plate to the right of his dinner plate. Soon, he picks up the roll, takes a bite, and returns it to the plate. Midway through the meal, Tom rises from his chair, places his napkin on the table, and says, "Excuse me; I need to make a potty run." So far, Tom has made four etiquette blunders: The bread-and-butter plate he used belongs to the person seated on his right; his own is to the left of his dinner plate. When eating a roll, he should break off one piece at a time and butter the piece as he is ready to eat it. The napkin should have been placed on his chair, indicating his plan to return. (When departing for good, leave it to the left of your plate.) And finally, the words *potty run* are too casual for a business meal. A simple statement such as, "Please excuse me; I'll be back in just a moment," would be adequate.

There are some additional table manners to keep in mind. Do not begin eating until the people around you have their plates. If you have not been served, however, encourage others to go ahead. To prevent awkward moments during the meal, avoid ordering food that is not easily controlled, such as ribs, spaghetti, chicken with bones, or lobster.

Meeting Etiquette

Business meetings should start and end on time, so recognize the importance of punctuality. Anne Marie Sabath, owner of a firm that provides etiquette training

etiquette A set of guidelines or traditions based on kindness, efficiency, and logic.



Improve Your Grade
Audio Glossary

for business employees, says, “We teach people that if you’re early, you’re on time, and if you’re on time, in reality, you’re late.” Showing up late for any meeting will be viewed as rudeness by coworkers, your boss, and your clients. Do not feel obligated to comment on each item on the agenda. Yes, sometimes silence is golden. In most cases, you should not bring up a topic unless it is related to an agenda item. If you are in charge of the meeting, end it by summarizing key points, reviewing the decisions made, and recapping the responsibilities assigned to individuals during the meeting. Always start and end the meeting on a positive note.³⁴

Cell Phone Etiquette

New technologies often bring new annoyances, and the cell phone is no exception. *Cell phone contempt* surfaces in offices, restaurants, houses of worship, and many other places. Cell phone etiquette is based on a few simple guidelines. First, it’s not acceptable to use your cell phone at business meetings, in elevators, or at restaurants. If you receive a call at a restaurant, take the call outside the dining area. When making or receiving a call, talk in a normal speaking voice. Too often cell phone users talk louder than normal because they feel the need to compensate for the size of small phones. Try to confine your calls to private areas; it’s rude to inflict your conversation on people near you.³⁵ Finally, if a coworker or friend insists on “staying connected” at all times and you find this behavior annoying, confront the person. However, choose your words carefully. If a coworker takes a call at a meeting, for example, you might say, “When you answer your cell phone it makes the group feel unimportant and as if we don’t have your full attention.”³⁶

Conversational Etiquette

When you establish new relationships, avoid calling people by their first name too soon. Never assume that work-related associates prefer to be addressed informally



How would you like to be seated next to three people who are talking on their cell phones? If you receive a call at a restaurant, take the call outside the dining area. It’s rude to inflict your conversation on people seated near you.

by their first names. Use titles of respect—Ms., Mr., Professor, or Dr.—until the relationship is established. Too much familiarity will irritate some people. When the other person says, “Call me Ruth” or “Call me John,” it is alright to begin using the person’s first name.

A conversation that includes obscene language can create problems in the workplace. Although the rules about what constitutes profanity have changed over the years, inappropriate use of foul language in front of a customer, a client, or, in many cases, a coworker is a breach of etiquette. An obscenity implies lack of respect for your audience. Also, certain language taboos carry moral and spiritual significance in most cultures. Obscene language is often cited by persons who file sexual harassment charges.³⁷

Networking Etiquette

Networking—making contact with people at meetings, social events, or other venues—is an effective job-search method. Networking is also important to salespeople searching for prospects and to professionals (accountants, lawyers, consultants, etc.) who need to build a client base.

When you meet people at an event, tell them your name and what you do. Avoid talking negatively about any aspect of your current job or your life. In some cases you will need to make a date to call or meet with the new contact later. After the event, study your contacts and follow up.

Send a *written* thank-you note if someone has been helpful to you or generous with his or her time. You might also consider sending a newspaper or magazine article as an “information brief,” since one goal of networking is information exchange.³⁸

We have given you a brief introduction to several areas of etiquette. This information will be extremely helpful as you develop a strong personal brand. Remember that good etiquette is based on consideration for the other person. If you genuinely respect other people, you will have an easier time developing your personal approach to business manners. You will probably also agree with most of the etiquette “rules” we have been discussing. Nancy Austin, coauthor of *A Passion for Excellence*, says, “Real manners—a keen interest in and a regard for somebody else, a certain kindness and at-ease quality that add real value—can’t be faked or finessed.”³⁹ Real manners come from the heart.

Incivility—The Ultimate Career Killer

Civility in our society is under siege. In recent years we have witnessed an increase in coarse, rude, and obnoxious behavior. Unfortunately, some of the most outra-



TOTAL PERSON INSIGHT

Judith Martin Author

“In a society as ridden as ours with expensive status symbols, where every purchase is considered a social statement, there is no easier or cheaper way to distinguish oneself than by the practice of gentle manners.”

geous behavior by athletes, coaches, politicians, and business leaders has been rewarded with wealth and influence.

As noted in Chapter 1, civility is the sum of the many sacrifices we are called upon to make for the sake of living together. At work, it may involve refilling the copier paper tray after using the machine or making a new pot of coffee after you take the last cup. It may mean turning down your radio so workers nearby are not disturbed or sending a thank-you note to someone who has helped you complete a difficult project. Small gestures, such as saying “Please” and “Thank you” or opening doors for others, make ourselves and others more content. Learning to discipline your passions so as to avoid obnoxious behavior will demonstrate also your maturity and self-control.

TEST PREPPER 3.5

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON P. 317

True or False?

- ____ 1. Meeting etiquette requires that you display interest by commenting on each meeting agenda item.
- ____ 2. It is perfectly acceptable to use your cell phone in an elevator or a restaurant.

Multiple Choice

- ____ 3. Conversational etiquette dictates that:
- work-related associates prefer to be addressed informally by their first name.
 - professionals such as medical doctors should never be addressed by their first name.
 - we should use titles of respect—Ms., Miss, Mr., Professor, or Dr.—until the relationship is established.
 - informality is the key to developing rapport.
- ____ 4. Workplace etiquette is more important now than ever because of:
- gender differences.
 - greater diversity in the workplace.
 - health and wellness concerns.
 - increased substitution of virtual contact for face-to-face encounters.
- ____ 5. Which one of the following actions displays poor dining etiquette?
- Placing your napkin on the table when excusing yourself to go to the restroom
 - Using the bread-and-butter plate to the left of your dinner plate
 - Waiting to eat until everyone has been served
 - Breaking off a piece of a roll and buttering the piece before eating it



ACE the Test
ACE and ACE+ Practice Tests



LEARNING OBJECTIVES REVIEW

1 *Explain the importance of professional presence and discuss the factors that contribute to a favorable first impression.*

- Professional presence is a dynamic blend of poise, self-confidence, control, and style. Once acquired, it permits you to be perceived as self-assured and competent.
- People tend to form impressions of others quickly at the time they first meet them (primacy effect), and these first impressions tend to be preserved.
- The impression you form of another person during the initial contact is made up of assumptions and facts. Assumptions are often based on perceptions of surface language—the pattern of immediate impressions conveyed by appearance.

2 *Define image and describe the factors that form the image you project to others.*

- *Image* is a term used to describe how other people feel about you. In every business or social setting, your behaviors and appearance communicate a picture that others observe and remember.
- Image is formed by a variety of factors:
 - manners
 - self-confidence
 - voice quality
 - versatility
 - integrity
 - entrance and carriage
 - facial expression
 - surface language
 - competence
 - positive attitude
 - handshake

3 *List and discuss factors that influence your choice of clothing for work.*

- Image consultants contend that discrimination on the basis of appearance is a fact of life. Clothing is an important part of the image you communicate to others.
- Four factors tend to influence your choice of clothing for work:
 - (1) the products or services offered by the organization
 - (2) the type of person served
 - (3) the desired image projected by the organization
 - (4) the region where you work.

4 *Explain how your facial expression, entrance and carriage, voice, and handshake impact your work image.*

- Beyond your clothing choices, many physical factors can influence your workplace image.
 - Facial expressions strongly influence people's reactions to each other.
 - People with confidence, a strong stride, a friendly smile, and great energy carry themselves well.
 - Tone of voice, tempo, volume, diction, and habits all contribute to your image. Any of these can make an unfavorable impression if not delivered correctly.
 - A handshake can communicate warmth, concern, and strength if done correctly, and aloofness, indifference, and weakness when it is not.

5 *Understand how manners contribute to improved interpersonal relations in the workplace.*

- Manners, sometimes called etiquette or protocol, are traditions based on kindness, efficiency, and logic.
- Dining, meeting, cell phone, conversational, and networking etiquette are all important in the workplace.

CAREER CORNER

Q: In the near future I will begin my job search, and I want to work for a company that will respect my individuality. Some companies are enforcing strict dress and grooming codes and other policies that, in my opinion, infringe on the rights of their employees. How far can an employer go in dictating my lifestyle?

A: This is a good question, but one for which there is no easy answer. For example, most people feel they have a right to wear the fragrance of their choice, but many fragrances contain allergy-producing ingredients. In some employment settings, you will find “non-fragrance” zones. Secondhand smoke is another major issue in the workplace because most research indicates that it can be harmful to the health of workers. Rules

regarding body piercings, hair length, and the type of clothing that can be worn to work have also caused controversy. There is no doubt that many companies are trying to find a balance between their interests and the rights of workers. Enterprise Rent-A-Car has placed restrictions on the length of an employee’s hair and established over twenty-five dress code guidelines for its employees. The company believes employee appearance is crucial to its success. The best advice I can give you is to become familiar with the employer’s expectations *before* you accept a job. The company has a responsibility to explain its personnel policies to prospective employees, but sometimes this information is not covered until after a person is hired.

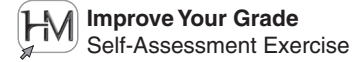
APPLYING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED



1. Many people complain that interrupting has become a major annoyance. You begin speaking and someone finishes your sentence. Marilyn Vos Savant, author of the “Ask Marilyn” column, recommends a technique that can stop interrupters. When someone interrupts you, stop speaking abruptly and say “What?” This will highlight the interruption, and the person who interrupts you will be forced to repeat himself or herself too, which is an unpleasant experience. Repeat this method, if necessary, until the offender lets you complete your sentences. Marilyn Vos Savant says you should save this method for *chronic* interrupters.⁴⁰
2. You have assumed the duties of sales manager at a new Lexus automobile dealership that is scheduled to open in three weeks. You will hire and train all salespeople. What types of career apparel would you recommend to members of your sales team? What grooming standards would you recommend?
3. The first step toward improving your voice is to hear yourself as others do. Listen to several recordings of your voice on a dictation machine, tape recorder, or VCR, and then complete the following rating in the box below. Place a checkmark in the appropriate space for each quality.

Quality	Major Strength	Strength	Weakness	Major Weakness
Projects confidence	_____	_____	_____	_____
Projects enthusiasm	_____	_____	_____	_____
Speaking rate is not too fast or too slow	_____	_____	_____	_____
Projects optimism	_____	_____	_____	_____
Voice is not too loud or too soft	_____	_____	_____	_____
Projects sincerity	_____	_____	_____	_____

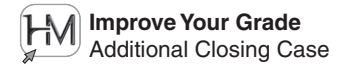
ROLE-PLAY EXERCISE



After spending eight years working for a well-established kitchen design firm, you established your own company. Whitehall Design Kitchens is the area's premier kitchen design studio. You have partnered with the industry's finest artisans and suppliers and can offer exotic veneers, gourmet appliances, unique hand carvings, and modern cabinetry to people who want their kitchen to be an extension of their image and lifestyle. You cater to an upscale clientele who appreciate quality, beauty, and fine craftsmanship. At the present time you employ five design consultants. The newest member of your design team, Dera Corian, is a talented designer who recently com-

pleted the Certified Kitchen Design (CKD) professional designation. She has excellent design skills, but often she does not project the upscale image of Whitehall Design Kitchens. Although she is well paid, Dera likes to shop at discount clothing stores, always searching for a great bargain. Very often her clothing and accessories communicate a "thrift store" image that clashes with the upscale image of Whitehall Design Kitchens. You have decided to meet with Dera and try to encourage her to adopt a wardrobe that is more appropriate for the clientele she serves. You will meet with another class member who will assume the role of Dera Corian.

CASE 3.1



Do You Want to Be Your Own Brand?

About twenty years ago Toyota Motor Company decided to develop a line of luxury automobiles that would compete with Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Cadillac, and Lincoln. After several years of research and development, the Lexus brand was born. Today, Lexus cars are recognized by automobile writers and consumers as the best mass-produced luxury cars. They stand for quality.

Branding, a concept that has been used in the field of marketing for over fifty years, has recently surfaced as a personal development strategy. Using the principles of successful brand development, many people are positioning themselves to stand for something—to say something important about themselves that will affect how others perceive them. The authors of *Be Your Own Brand* note that the concept of brand in business has a well-defined meaning: "A brand is a perception or emotion, maintained by a buyer or a prospective buyer, describing the experience related to doing business with an organization or consuming its products or ser-

vices."⁴¹ In a personal context, you can think of it this way: "Your brand is a perception or emotion, maintained by somebody other than you, that describes the total experience of having a relationship with you."⁴²

The key to understanding the concept of personal and business branding is understanding the nature and needs of a relationship. L. L. Bean has become a major force in outdoor and casual clothing by implementing business practices that build customer loyalty and repeat business. In addition to selling quality products, this company works hard to build a trusting relationship with its customers.

Personal brand development begins with self-management practices that help you create and strengthen relationships with other people. Early in his career, Jerry Seinfeld decided he would never use profanity in his comedy routines. This personal decision forced him to use more creativity, and he became a stronger comedian. Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon.com, recalls an

early life experience that changed the way he viewed relationships. He made a comment to his grandmother that hurt her feelings. Later his grandfather met with him privately and said, “You’ll learn one day that it’s much harder to be kind than clever.”⁴³ This insight has helped Bezos in his professional life.

To develop a distinctive brand that will help you in your interactions with others may require making some changes in your life. To become distinctive, you must stand for something. What you stand for relates to your values. Thus a strong personal brand is generally built from the inside out. But to some extent you can also decide what type of image you want these values to project. This may require changes in your manners, dress, voice quality, facial expression, posture, or behaviors that reflect your integrity.

Questions

1. Given this brief introduction to brand development, would you consider taking steps to develop a distinctive personal brand? Explain your answer.
2. Experts in personal brand development say that employees should align their values with their employer’s values. Do you agree with this recommendation?
3. Association of Image Consultants International says its members help clients achieve authenticity, credibility, and self-confidence. Would you consider hiring a personal consultant to help you grow in these areas? Explain.
4. If you decide to develop a personal brand, what changes will you make in your life?

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Prepare for Class, Improve Your Grade, and ACE the Test. Student Achievement Series resources include:

ACE and ACE+ Practice Tests
 Audio Chapter Quizzes
 Audio Chapter Reviews
 Learning Objective Reviews
 Career Snapshots

Chapter Glossaries
 Chapter Outlines
 Crossword Puzzles
 Hangman Games
 Flashcards

Audio Glossaries
 Internet Insights
 Self-Assessment Exercises
 Additional Closing Cases

To access these learning and study tools, go to college.hmco.com/pic/receSAS.

HM Management  SPACE

4 Improving Personal and Organizational Communications



Over 3000 patients were potentially exposed to hydraulic fluid during surgeries at Duke hospitals. They may have had contact with improperly cleaned surgical instruments.

1 Understand the communication process.

2 Identify and explain the filters that affect communication.

3 Identify ways to improve personal communication, including developing listening skills.

*“Many skills are valuable at work, but one skill is essential:
the ability to communicate.”*

—Eric Maisel, Author, *20 Communication Tips @ Work*

Chapter Outline

- THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS
 - Impersonal Versus Interpersonal Communication
 - Sender–Message–Receiver–Feedback

- ◆ COMMUNICATION FILTERS
 - Semantics
 - Language and Cultural Barriers
 - Emotions
 - Attitudes
 - Role Expectations
 - Gender-Specific Focus
 - Nonverbal Messages
 - Who Is Responsible for Effective Communication?

- ▼ HOW TO IMPROVE PERSONAL COMMUNICATION
 - Send Clear Messages
 - Develop Effective Listening Skills
 - Use Constructive Self-Disclosure

- COMMUNICATING VIA TECHNOLOGY
 - Voice Mail
 - E-mail



4 *Learn how to effectively communicate through technology.*

Unhealthy Communication

Workers employed by Automatic Elevator, a Durham, North Carolina, company, performed routine maintenance on the elevators at two Duke University Health System hospitals. Following the completion of their service, employees of Automatic Elevator emptied used petroleum-based hydraulic fluid into several empty detergent drums. Duke employees discovered the drums, assumed they were surplus stock, and returned them to the original vendor, Cardinal Health, a hospital-supply company. Employees at Cardinal Health failed to detect the contents of the detergent drums and delivered the drums to two Duke hospitals. Later, Duke University Health System administrators found that the used hydraulic fluid was piped into the instrument cleaning systems at both hospitals.

Duke administrators were slow to notify the nearly 3,800 surgical patients who may have had contact with the improperly cleaned surgical instruments. Many of these patients reported

KEY TERMS

active listening p. 87
 critical listening p. 87
 empathic listening p. 88
 feedback p. 77
 impersonal communication p. 76
 interpersonal communication p. 76
 nonverbal messages p. 82
 self-awareness p. 90
 self-description p. 89
 self-disclosure p. 89
 semantics p. 79
 telecommuting p. 92
 virtual offices p. 92



Prepare for Class
 Chapter Glossary

Improve Your Grade
 Flashcards
 Hangman
 Crossword Puzzle

impersonal communication A one-way process that transfers basic information such as instructions, policies, and financial data.

interpersonal communication The exchange of information between two or more people



Improve Your Grade
 Audio Glossary

suffering infections, poor healing, achy joints, weight loss, and extreme fatigue during the months following their surgery. Some of these patients, feeling that Duke should have made more information available sooner, have hired lawyers.¹

Ineffective communication can negatively influence the lives of many people. In this case, literally thousands of people were affected because someone “failed to communicate.” As you reflect on this situation, think about all the frontline employees who were in a position to prevent this crisis.

Effective communication can play a critical role in every aspect of the modern organization. In one form or another, it is the key to improving customer service, resolving conflict, creating productive work teams, improving employee morale, and achieving many other goals. Communication is also the key to effective personal relationships and career success. ■

THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

1 Understand the communication process.

Most people take communication for granted. When they write, speak, or listen to others, they assume that the message given or received is being understood. In reality, messages are often misunderstood because they are incomplete or because different people interpret messages in different ways. The diversity of today’s work force calls for a greater understanding of how to communicate effectively, through technology or face to face, with people from different cultures, countries, and lifestyles. Yet even though people and communication methods may be diverse, the basic communication process remains the same.

Impersonal Versus Interpersonal Communication

In a typical organization the types of communication used to exchange information can be placed on a continuum ranging from “impersonal” on one end to “interpersonal” on the other.² **Impersonal communication** is a one-way process that transfers basic information such as instructions, policies, and financial data. Generally, organizations use this information-delivery process when they use electronic bulletin boards or memos as quick, easy ways to “get the word out.” Their effectiveness is somewhat limited because there is little, if any, possibility for the person receiving the information to clarify vague or confusing information.

Interpersonal communication is the exchange of information between two or more people. Such words as *share*, *discuss*, *argue*, and *interact* refer to this form of two-way communication. Interpersonal communication can take place in meetings, over the phone, in face-to-face interviews, or even during classroom discussions between instructors and students. If interpersonal communication is to be effective, some type of feedback, or response, from the person receiving the information is necessary. When this exchange happens, those involved can determine whether the information has been understood in the way intended. This is one of the reasons that some managers still prefer person-to-person meetings and telephone calls instead of e-mail. The speed of technology can be invaluable when it



TOTAL PERSON INSIGHT

Eric Maisel Author, *20 Communication Tips @ Work*

“Many skills are valuable at work, but one skill is essential: the ability to communicate. Whether you are presenting your ideas at a committee meeting, dashing off fifteen e-mails in a row, chatting with a coworker at a copy machine, evaluating an employee, or closing a deal over the phone, what you are doing is communicating. These exchanges are the backbone and the life blood of every organization and every relationship.”

comes to impersonal information giving, but it cannot replace the two-way, interpersonal communication process when feedback and discussion are necessary.

Sender–Message–Receiver–Feedback

Effective communication is a continuous loop that involves a sender, a message, a receiver, and **feedback** that clarifies the message.³ To illustrate, suppose your friend phones from your neighborhood convenience store and asks for directions to your home. You give your friend the appropriate street names, intersections, and compass directions so that he can drive to your door without getting lost. When your friend repeats his understanding of your directions, you clarify any misunderstandings, and he drives directly to your home. A simplified diagram of this communication process would look like Figure 4.1.

Now suppose you are late for an appointment, and the plumber you had requested three days ago calls you from her cell phone and asks directions to your house. She explains that she has gotten lost in this neighborhood before, and it is obvious that English is her second language. The communication process becomes much more complicated, as shown in Figure 4.2. As your message travels from you to your plumber, it must pass through several “filters,” each of which can alter the way your message is understood. Most communications flow through this complex process.

feedback A reply or return of information that confirms the understanding of a message.

FIGURE 4.1

Diagram of Simple Communication Process

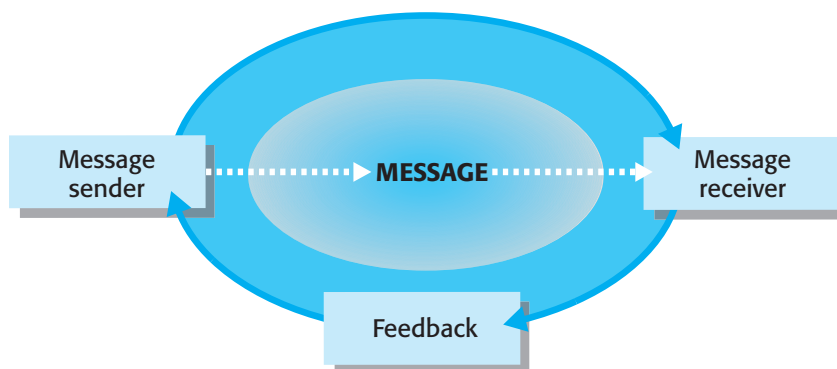
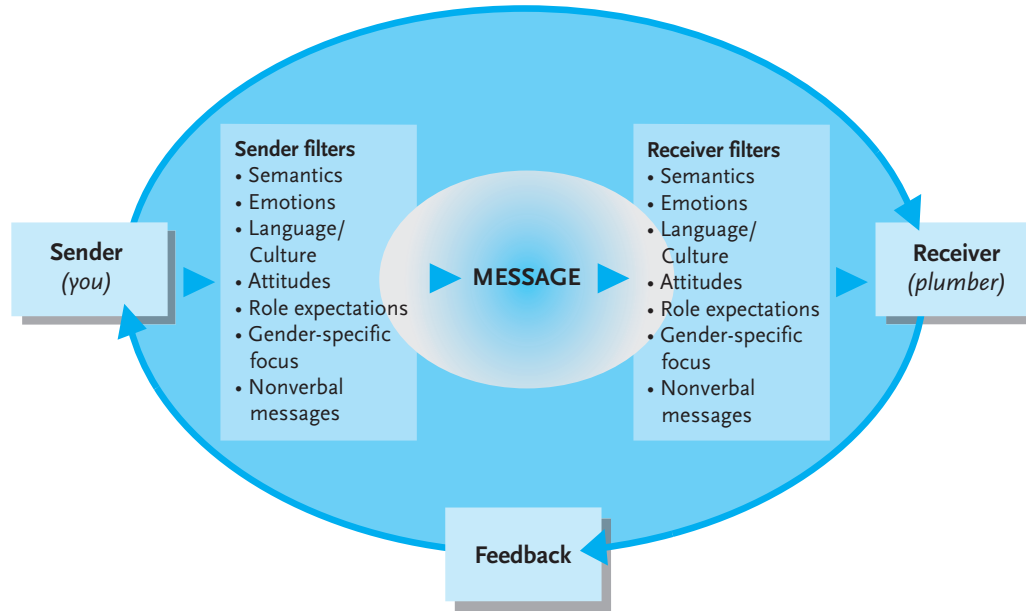


FIGURE 4.2

Diagram of More Complex Communication Process



TEST PREPPER 4.1

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON P. 317

True or False?

- ___ 1. Interpersonal communication typically includes no possibility for feedback in the exchange.
- ___ 2. Most communication processes are complicated by flowing through a variety of filters that influence the way a message is understood.

Multiple Choice

- ___ 3. Which of the following is appropriate content for an impersonal communication?
- Company policy manuals
 - Performance evaluations
 - Layoff notices
 - Complex instructions for using new office software
- ___ 4. Andie and Zane discuss new lunch options in the company cafeteria in Andie's office. Which of the following statements best describes their discussion, using the simple model of the communication process?
- Andie is the sender, and Zane is the receiver.
 - Neither Andie nor Zane is a sender, but both are receivers.
 - Both Andie and Zane are senders and receivers.
 - Neither Andie nor Zane is a receiver, but both are senders.
- ___ 5. Interpersonal communication can be described as:
- one-way.
 - transferring basic information such as instructions or financial policies.
 - sharing or discussing.
 - of limited effectiveness.



ACE the Test
ACE and ACE+ Practice Tests

COMMUNICATION FILTERS

2 Identify and explain the filters that affect communication.

Messages are sent—and feedback is received—through a variety of filters that can distort the intended message. (See Figure 4.2.) When people are influenced by one or more of these filters, their perception of the message may be totally different from what the sender was attempting to communicate. Both sender and receiver must be keenly aware of these possible distortions so that they can intercept any miscommunication.

Semantics

We often assume that the words we use mean the same things to others, but this assumption can create problems. **Semantics** is the study of the relationship between a word and its meaning(s). Words have associated meanings and usages. We can easily understand what words like *typewriter*, *computer*, or *envelope* mean. But more abstract terms, such as *job satisfaction*, *downsizing*, or *internal customers*, have less precise meanings and will be used and interpreted by different people in different ways. The more abstract the term, the less likely it is that people will agree on its meaning.

semantics The study of the relationship between a word and its meaning(s).

- When Enron wanted to cover up questionable business practices, employees developed some creative accounting jargon. One report included the following sentence: “Enron entered into share settled costless collar arrangements. . . . The transactions resulted in noncash increases to noncurrent assets and equity.”⁴
- Corporate employees often use important-sounding jargon that is almost incomprehensible. Better Communications, a firm that teaches writing skills to employers, clipped this statement from a memo circulated at a *Fortune* 500 company: “Added value is the keystone to exponentially accelerating profit curves.”⁵
- Every industry has its own jargon that can be confusing to those outside that industry. The same is true for young people entering the work force who have communicated extensively via Internet chat rooms. They often assume that their Internet jargon, or cyberlingo, is understood by everyone. Cyberlingo is a feature of the online culture that crosses race, gender, and geography, as this language is accepted and understood by young people all over the world. However, when cyberlingo is used in the mainstream of communication within organizations, it can be confusing to those who are unfamiliar with “words” such as *FAQ* (frequently asked questions), *GMTA* (great minds think alike), *IMHO* (in my humble opinion), and *OTOH* (on the other hand).⁶

Language and Cultural Barriers

When organizations throughout the world connect to the Internet, the people within those organizations must be ready, willing, and able to communicate in a multilingual, multicultural working environment. Although English is the dominant language in the global marketplace, everyone must adjust his or her communication style to accommodate the needs of those whose first language is not



Improve Your Grade
Career Snapshot

These Indian employees work at Gecis, an international call center based in Gurgaon. In order to answer calls from outside of India, they must learn foreign accents and be prepared to help customers solve a wide range of technical problems.



English. Keep in mind how muddled a message might get when it is translated from one language to another in the mind of the receiver. To avoid the damage this filter might cause, avoid using industry-specific jargon or culture-specific slang.

The needs of a multicultural work force are getting more attention today because of globalization and employers' growing support for cultural diversity among their workers. The culture in which we are raised strongly influences our values, beliefs, expressions, and behaviors. It also influences the way we interpret the values, beliefs, expressions, and behaviors of others.

When the sender and receiver understand each other's cultural background, both should make the effort to adjust and improve their messages accordingly.

- People living in the United States, Canada, Europe, Israel, or Australia usually prefer direct-approach communication; they tend to say more or less exactly what they mean. Their cultures value clarity, fluency, and brevity in communication.
- Many people from Asia, Arab countries, and much of Africa prefer a more indirect style of communication and therefore value harmony, subtlety, sensitivity, and tact more than brevity. They try hard to connect with their listeners.⁷

Emotions

Strong emotions can either prevent people from hearing what a speaker has to say or make them too susceptible to the speaker's point of view. If they become angry or allow themselves to be carried away by the speaker's eloquence, they may "think" with their emotions and make decisions or take action they regret later. They have shifted their attention from the content of the message to their feelings about it.

You may have had the experience of your spouse or parent angrily demanding to know why you forgot to run an errand. If you allow someone else's anger to trigger your own, the conversation may quickly deteriorate into an argument. The

real issue—what happened and what is to be done about it—is lost in the shouting match. Detaching yourself from another’s feelings and responding to the content of the message are often difficult. It is hard to realize that another person’s emotional response is more likely about fear or frustration than it is about you as an individual. Yet many jobs require that employees remain calm and courteous regardless of a customer’s emotional state. Emotional control is discussed in Chapter 10.

Attitudes

Attitudes can be a barrier to communication in much the same way as emotions. The receiver may have a negative attitude toward the sender’s voice, accent, gestures, mannerisms, dress, or delivery. These negative attitudes create resistance to the message and can lead to a breakdown in communication. Perhaps the listener has an established attitude about the speaker’s topic. For example, a person who is strongly opposed to abortion will most likely find it difficult to listen with objectivity to a pro-choice speaker. Keep in mind, however, that an overly positive attitude can also be a barrier to communication. When biased in favor of the message, the listener may not effectively evaluate the speaker’s information. More is said about the power of attitudes in Chapter 8.

Role Expectations

Role expectations influence how people expect themselves, and others, to act on the basis of the roles they play, such as boss, customer, or subordinate. These expectations can distort communication in two ways.

1. If people identify others too closely with their roles, they may discount what the other person has to say: “It’s just the boss again, saying the same old thing.” A variation of this distortion occurs when we do not allow others to change their roles and take on new ones. This often happens to employees who are promoted from within the ranks of an organization to management positions. Others may still see “old Chuck” from accounting rather than the new department head.
2. Role expectations can affect good communication when people use their roles to alter the way they relate to others. This is often referred to as “position power.” For example, managers may expect employees to accept what they say simply because of the authority invested in the position. Employees are not allowed to question the manager’s decisions or make suggestions of their own, and communication becomes one-way information giving.

Gender-Specific Focus

Gender roles learned throughout childhood can influence the way men and women communicate. After all, boys and girls do grow up in different worlds, and they are conditioned to approach communication in different ways. Girls are socialized as children to believe that talking holds relationships together. As adults, women use conversation to seek and give confirmation and support and to reach a consensus with others. Boys are socialized to maintain their relationships primarily through their activities. As a result, men are more likely to perceive conversation as a form of competition during which they must negotiate to gain the upper hand and protect themselves from being put down.⁸

nonverbal messages “Messages without words” or “silent messages” that are communicated through facial expressions, voice tone, gestures, appearance, and posture.



Improve Your Grade
Audio Glossary

Nonverbal Messages

When we attempt to communicate with another person, we use both verbal and nonverbal communication. **Nonverbal messages** are “messages without words” or “silent messages.” These are the messages (other than spoken or written words) we communicate through facial expressions, voice tone, gestures, appearance, posture, and other nonverbal means. Research indicates that our nonverbal messages have much more impact than verbal messages. The late Peter Drucker, author of numerous management books, said, “The important thing in communication is to hear what isn’t being said.”⁹ He recognized that when someone else is speaking, your understanding of what is said depends very heavily on what you see.

Some people will walk into a meeting with their shoulders slumped forward and head down. They will slouch in their chair, lean their chin on the palm of their hand, play with a pencil or paperclip on the table, or clutch their arms across their chest. Others will walk into the room with chin held high and shoulders back, sit straight in their chairs, and lean slightly forward with both arms “open” to whoever is speaking during the meetings. Experts agree that the words you say during a meeting, no matter how powerful, are often forgotten or disregarded unless your nonverbal presence commands respect.¹⁰ This chapter limits its discussion to the form of nonverbal communication commonly referred to as “body language.” Physical appearance, another powerful form of nonverbal communication, is discussed in Chapter 3.

Many of us could communicate more clearly, more accurately, and more credibly if we became more conscious of our body language. We can learn to strengthen our communications by making sure our words and our body language are consistent. When our verbal and nonverbal messages match, we give the impression that we can be trusted and that what we are saying reflects what we truly believe. But when our body language contradicts our words, we are often unknowingly changing the message we are sending. If a manager says to an employee, “I am very interested in your problem,” but then begins to look at her watch and fidget with objects on her desk, the employee will most likely believe the nonverbal rather than the verbal message.

You can improve your communication by monitoring the nonverbal messages you send through your eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, and personal space.

Eye Contact

Eyes transmit more information than any other part of the body. Because eye contact is so revealing, people generally observe some unwritten rules about looking at others. People who hold direct eye contact for only a few seconds, or avoid eye contact altogether, risk communicating indifference. However, a direct, prolonged stare between strangers is usually considered impolite, even potentially aggressive or hostile. Continuous eye contact is especially offensive in Asian and Latin American countries. As a general rule, when you are communicating in a business setting, your eyes should meet the other person’s about 60 to 70 percent of the time. This timing is an effective alternative to continuous eye contact.

Facial Expressions

If you want to identify the inner feelings of another person, watch facial expressions closely. A frown or a smile will communicate a great deal. We have all encoun-

tered a “look of surprise” or a “look that could kill.” Most of our observations are very accurate. However, facial expressions can be intentionally manipulated. When a person is truly happy, the muscles used for smiling are involuntarily controlled by the body’s limbic system. When you force a smile, the cerebral cortex (under voluntary control) activates and the person appears to have a “fake” look when he or she smiles. That is why actors often recall a past emotional experience to produce the emotional state they want.¹¹ If we are able to accurately assess the facial expressions of others and draw conclusions accordingly, we can be sure that others are doing the same to us.

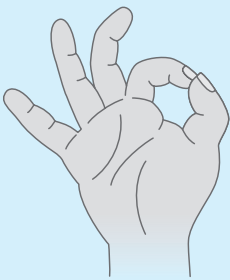
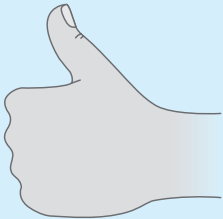
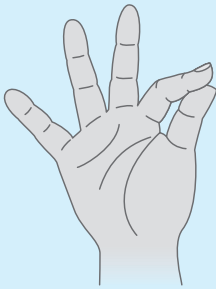
Gestures

Gestures send messages to people about how you are reacting to them and to the situation in which you find yourself. They often add an element that is perceived as a lively speaking style that keeps the attention of others. In some cultures, if you fail to gesture, you may be perceived as boring and stiff.¹² Be aware that some gestures that may be common in one culture may have dramatically different meaning to people from another culture. The examples in Figure 4.3 illustrate how the same gesture can have very different meanings.

FIGURE 4.3

Same Sign, Different Meanings

Source: Atlanta Committee for Olympic Games, by Sam Ward, *USA Today*. Taken from Ben Brown, “Atlanta Out to Mind Its Manners,” *USA Today*, March 14, 1996, p. 7c. Copyright © 1996 *USA Today*. Reprinted with permission.

	<p>OK SIGN France: You’re a zero; Japan: Please give me coins; Brazil: an obscene gesture; Mediterranean countries: an obscene gesture.</p>		<p>THUMBS-UP Australia: Up yours; Germany: the number one; Japan: the number five; Saudi Arabia: I’m winning; Ghana: an insult; Malaysia: The thumb is used to point rather than the finger.</p>
	<p>THUMB AND FOREFINGER Most countries: money; France: Something is perfect; Mediterranean: a vulgar gesture.</p>		

Personal Space

Research conducted by Edward Hall provides evidence that people use the space around them to define relationships. It is possible to make others uncomfortable by standing too close to them or too far away from them. A customer may feel uncomfortable if a salesperson stands too close. A job applicant may feel uncomfortable if the interviewer maintains a distance of several feet. Hall identified four “zones” of comfortable distances that help us understand this nonverbal effect on others:¹³

1. *Intimate distance* includes touching to approximately 18 inches from another person. Most people will respond with defensiveness when strangers intrude into this territory.
2. *Personal distance* ranges from 18 inches to 4 feet. This distance is usually reserved for people we feel close to, such as spouses or close friends.
3. *Social distance* is 4 to 12 feet and is used for most business meetings and impersonal social gatherings. Business can be conducted with a minimum of emotional involvement.
4. *Public distance*, which usually involves one-way communication from a speaker to an audience, is 12 to 15 feet.

Hall’s research involved the culture of only the United States and should prove helpful to those from other cultures who are attempting to communicate better with Americans. Americans should realize that the distances Hall describes may be different when they are attempting to effectively communicate with those from another culture. For example, Asians are accustomed to close contact. Watch for signals of discomfort, such as leg swinging, foot or finger tapping, and gaze aversion, caused by invading the other person’s space.¹⁴

Who Is Responsible for Effective Communication?

The sender and the receiver share *equal* responsibility for effective communication. The communication loop, as shown in Figure 4.2, is not complete if the message the receiver hears, and acts upon, differs from the one the sender intended. When the sender accepts 100 percent of the responsibility for sending a clear, concise message, the communication process begins. But the receiver must also accept 100 percent of the responsibility for receiving the message as the sender intended. Ideally, receivers should provide senders with enough feedback to ensure that an accurate message has passed through all the filters that might alter it.

TEST PREPPER 4.2

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON P. 317

Multiple Choice

- _____ 1. Zelda, a native of Katmandu, speaks Hindi more slowly than her coworkers, whose first language is Hindi. She also assumes that the meaning of a Hindi word is its dictionary definition and does not readily understand connotations and colloquialisms. Which of the obstacles to good communication affects Zelda most?
- Role expectations
 - Language and cultural barriers
 - Attitudes
 - Gender-specific focus
- _____ 2. "Did you finish the monthly report yet?" asks Jenna of her coworker, Phil. "No," he replies through clenched teeth, as he looks down at his desk. Which of the following probably has the greatest impact on Jenna?
- Phil's nonverbal message
 - Phil's semantics
 - Phil's gender-specific focus
 - Phil's culturally based meaning
- _____ 3. Hakeem is dismayed to discover that he offended coworkers by standing 2 feet away from them during business conversations. In the United States, what distance would have been more appropriate?
- 12 to 18 inches
 - 15 to 20 feet
 - 25 to 100 feet
 - 4 to 12 feet
- _____ 4. If a manager says to an employee, "You don't need to know why. I expect you to do this because I told you so," which communication filter is being displayed?
- Emotions
 - Role expectations
 - Nonverbal messages
 - Semantics
- _____ 5. If Casey's manager says, "Good job!" but simultaneously frowns, Casey will likely believe
- that Casey's manager is unhappy with Casey's performance.
 - that Casey's manager is pleased with Casey's performance.
 - that there is something wrong with Casey's manager.
 - that Casey's manager is trying to trick Casey.

**ACE the Test**

ACE and ACE+ Practice Tests

HOW TO IMPROVE PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

- 3** *Identify ways to improve personal communication, including developing listening skills.*

Now that you understand the communication process and the various filters messages must pass through, you can begin to take the necessary steps to improve your own personal communication skills.

Send Clear Messages

Send clear, concise messages with as little influence from filters as possible so that you can avoid being misunderstood. A new employee stood before the paper shredder in her new office. An administrative assistant noticed her confused look

and asked if she needed some help. “Yes, thank you. How does this thing work?” “It’s simple,” said the assistant and took the thick report from the new employee and fed it through the shredder. “I see,” she said, “but how many copies will it make?” This kind of miscommunication could easily have been avoided if both parties had followed these simple rules:

- *Use clear, concise language.* Avoid slang, jargon, or complex, industry-specific semantics that the receiver might not understand. Tailor your messages to your receivers by using words and concepts they understand.
- *Use repetition.* When possible, use parallel channels of communication. For example, by sending an e-mail and making a phone call, you not only gain the receiver’s attention through dialogue but also make sure there is a written record in case specific details need to be recalled.
- *Use appropriate timing.* An important memo or e-mail may get no attention simply because it is competing with more pressing problems facing the receiver. When you need someone’s cooperation, be acutely aware of his or her schedule and workload so that you can avoid causing any inconvenience or frustration. Timing the delivery of your message will help ensure that it is accepted and acted on.
- *Consider the receiver’s preferences.* Some people prefer to receive information via e-mail, and others prefer telephone calls or face-to-face contact. Monitor and discover the preferences of those you communicate with on a regular basis, and adjust your communications with them accordingly.

Develop Effective Listening Skills

We may be born with the ability to hear, but we have to learn how to listen. We may think we are good listeners, but the truth is that most people don’t listen at all. Too often we simply speak and then think about what we are going to say next, rather than concentrating on what the other person is trying to say. For example:

- At Hewlett-Packard, employees take listening courses in which they listen, mirror back what they heard, and then elaborate on what it meant. Participants learn that two customers might say similar things, but their messages might have totally different meanings because they have had their own unique experiences that influence their messages. Two employees experiencing a similar frustration at work may take their concerns to management for corrective action. Yet each employee has a unique perspective on the problem, and both need to be heard before management can take effective, appropriate action.



TOTAL PERSON INSIGHT

Ken Johnson Author (www.listen.org/quotations/quotes_effective.html)

“Listening effectively to others can be the most fundamental and powerful communication tool of all. When someone is willing to stop talking or thinking and begin truly listening to others, all of their interactions become easier, and communication problems are all but eliminated.”



HUMAN RELATIONS IN ACTION

Career Advice

A recent college graduate wrote to Anne Fisher, career advice columnist for *Fortune* magazine, and asked: "I just graduated from Yale and am about to start my first real job, and I'm curious about something. If you had to pass along just one piece of advice on which to build a career, what would it be?"

Anne answered, "I've always liked Albert Einstein's dictum: 'If A equals success, then the formula is $A = X + Y + Z$. X is work. Y is play. And Z is, Keep your mouth shut.' Or as my dad used to say, 'Nobody ever learns anything while they're talking.' If you make it a habit to listen more than you speak, you can't go too far wrong."

- Effective listening can often evoke creative, "out-of-the-box" ideas. An engineer at Hewlett-Packard took his listening-skills training seriously and started "coffee talks" in his department every Friday afternoon to improve the listening skills among his coworkers. The resulting lively conversations generated new ideas that stimulated the creation of new products that led to millions of dollars in profits.¹⁵
- A well-known furniture company delivered hundreds of desks to its customers, but many of the desks arrived damaged and unusable because of inadequate packaging. The company's crate builder estimated that one desk model alone was returned twenty times per month. The company lost hundreds of thousands of dollars when it had to replace the damaged desks. Why didn't the company identify this problem earlier? Senior managers simply did not listen to the concerns from the packaging department or from their customers. They took action only after a customer called complaining that the same desk was ruined twice.¹⁶

Active Listening

Active listening is fueled by curiosity and requires your complete concentration on what you are hearing, body language that exhibits your listening attitude, and feedback as to what you think the speaker is trying to tell you. In some cases a simple statement such as "Please tell me more about that" will help you become an active listener. Susan Scott, author of *Fierce Conversations*, offers this advice: "Dig for full understanding. Use paraphrasing and perception checks; don't be satisfied with what's on the surface."¹⁷ When you become an active listener, you will make fewer mistakes, learn new information, and build stronger relationships.

If you would like to pursue additional resources to help you become a better listener, access the information available through the International Listening Association at www.listen.org. In addition, carefully examine Table 4.1, Active Listening Skills, and make every effort to implement its recommendations when you are interacting with others. You may be surprised by the impact you can make.

Critical Listening

To add depth to your active listening skills, consider honing your critical listening skills. **Critical listening** is the attempt to see the topic of discussion from the

active listening Listening that involves complete concentration on what one is hearing, body language that exhibits a listening attitude, and feedback as to what one thinks the speaker is trying to say.

critical listening The attempt to see the topic of discussion from the speaker's point of view and to consider how the speaker's perception of the situation may be different from one's own.

TABLE 4.1

Active Listening Skills

1. **Develop a listening attitude.** Regard the speaker as worthy of your respect and attention. Drop your expectations as to what you are going to hear or would like to hear. Maintain good eye contact and lean slightly forward. Don't rush the speaker. Be patient and refrain from planning what to say in response until the speaker has finished talking.
2. **Give the speaker your full attention.** This is not easy because the messages you hear are often spoken at a much slower rate than you are able to absorb them. This allows your mind to roam. Your senses are constantly receiving extraneous information that may divert your attention. To stay focused, you may want to take notes, if it is appropriate to do so.
3. **Clarify by asking questions.** If something is not clear because the speaker has referred to a person or an event that you are not familiar with, ask him or her to back up and explain. If you want the speaker to expand on a particular point, ask open-ended questions such as "How do you feel about that?" or "Can you tell us some ways to improve?"
4. **Feed back your understanding of the speaker's message.** Paraphrase, in your own words, your understanding of what the speaker has just said: for example, "Do you mean . . . ?" "Am I right in assuming that we should . . . ?" "What I hear you saying is . . ." or "In other words, we . . ."

speaker's point of view and to consider how the speaker's perception of the situation may be different from your own. To improve your ability to critically view new information, be sure to listen for evidence that challenges as well as confirms your own point of view. This is especially important when there is no opportunity for feedback, such as when you are viewing "tabloid" television, listening to network TV news "sound bites," or reading Internet blogs. Analyze the source of the information and determine its validity and credibility. Ask yourself, "Why have I been given this information? Is it relevant, or am I just being used to advance the agenda of another person or group?" Critical listening skills will help you avoid perpetuating erroneous information simply because you heard it through gossip, saw it on TV, or read it on the Internet.

All of the communications filters identified in Figure 4.2 tend to distort your ability and willingness to listen, so activating your critical listening skills will take some effort. To help you in this skill development process, ask yourself:

- Does the speaker's reasoning make sense?
- What evidence is being offered to support the speaker's views?
- Do I know each point to be valid based on my own experience?
- Is each point based on a source that can be trusted?¹⁸

Empathic Listening

Another dimension to becoming a better listener involves empathy, which means understanding another person's feelings. Many workers today face serious personal problems and feel the need to talk about them with someone. They do not expect specific advice or guidance; they just want to spend some time with an empathic listener. Stephen Covey, the noted author and consultant, described **empathic listening** as listening with your ears, your eyes, and your heart.¹⁹ If you want to practice empathic listening, adopt the following practices:

empathic listening Understanding another person's feelings; empathic listening involves your ears, your eyes, and your heart.

- *Avoid being judgmental.* Objectivity is the heart and soul of empathic listening. The person is communicating for emotional release and does not seek a specific response.
- *Acknowledge what is said.* You do not have to agree with what is being said, but you should let the person know you are able to understand his or her viewpoint.
- *Be patient.* If you are unable or unwilling to take the time to hear what the person has to say, say so immediately. Signs of impatience send a negative message to the person needing to talk.²⁰

We live in a culture where empathic listening is quite rare. Interrupting has become all too common as people rush to fill every gap in the conversation. Nevertheless, empathic listening is greatly valued by those with personal or work-related problems—people want to spend time with a good listener.²¹

Use Constructive Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure is the process of letting another person know what you think, feel, or want. It is one of the important ways you let yourself be known by others. Self-disclosure can improve interpersonal communication, resolve conflict, and strengthen interpersonal relationships.

It is important to note the difference between self-disclosure and self-description. **Self-description** involves disclosure of nonthreatening information, such as your age, your favorite food, or where you went to school. This is information that others could acquire in some way other than by your telling them. Self-disclosure, by contrast, usually involves some degree of risk. When you practice self-disclosure, you reveal private, personal information that cannot be acquired from another source. Examples include your feelings about being a member of a minority group, job satisfaction, and new policies and procedures.

The importance of self-disclosure, in contrast to self-description, is shown by the following situation. You work at a distribution center and are extremely conscientious of safety. You take every precaution to avoid work-related accidents. But another employee has a much more casual attitude toward safety rules and often “forgets” to observe the proper procedures, endangering you and other workers. You can choose to disclose your feelings to this person or stay silent. Either way, your decision has consequences.



This supervisor listens carefully to an employee who needs assistance. He will ask questions and use his active listening skills to acquire the information needed to help the employee with a work-related problem. Active listening is a skill that can be learned.

self-disclosure The act of revealing or exposing the self or aspects of the self.

self-description The disclosure of non-threatening information.



TOTAL PERSON INSIGHT

Albert J. Bernstein and Sydney Craft Rozen

Authors, *Sacred Bull: The Inner Obstacles That Hold You Back at Work and How to Overcome Them*

“It’s great when employees can read the subtle nuances of your behavior and figure out exactly what you require of them. But let’s face it: Most people aren’t mind readers. Even if they’re smart, they may be oblivious to what’s important to you—unless you spell it out for them.”

Benefits Gained from Self-Disclosure

Before we discuss self-disclosure in more detail, let us examine four basic benefits you gain from openly sharing what you think, feel, or want.

1. *Increased accuracy in communication.* Self-disclosure often takes the guesswork out of the communication process. No one is a mind reader; if people conceal how they really feel, it is difficult for others to know how to respond to them appropriately. People who are frustrated by a heavy workload but mask their true feelings may never see the problem resolved. The person who is in a position to solve this problem may be oblivious to what's important to you—unless you spell it out.
2. *Reduction of stress.* Sidney Jourard, a noted psychologist who wrote extensively about self-disclosure, states that too much emphasis on privacy and concealment of feelings creates stress within an individual. Too many people keep their thoughts and feelings bottled up inside, which can result in considerable inner tension. When stress indicators like blood pressure, perspiration, and breathing increase, our immune function declines. The amount of stress that builds within us depends on what aspects of ourselves we choose to conceal. If you compulsively think about a painful human relations problem but conceal your thoughts and feelings, the consequence will likely be more stress in your life.²²
3. *Increased self-awareness.* Chapter 1 stated that self-awareness is one of the major components of emotional intelligence at work. Daniel Goleman, author of *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, defines **self-awareness** as the ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on others.²³ Self-awareness is the foundation on which self-development is built. To plan an effective change in yourself, you must be in touch with how you behave, the factors that influence your behavior, and how your behavior affects others. A young Asian associate at a financial services firm learned from her supervisor that she was perceived as not being assertive enough in her dealings with clients. As she reflected on this feedback and listened to views expressed by her female peers, the associate became aware of how her cultural background influenced her communication with clients. This feedback motivated her to modify her communication style.²⁴
4. *Stronger relationships.* Another reward from self-disclosure is the strengthening of interpersonal relationships. When two people engage in an open, authentic dialogue, they often develop a high regard for each other's views. Often they discover they share common interests and concerns, and these serve as a foundation for a deeper relationship.

self-awareness Knowledge of oneself: one's thoughts, feelings, emotions, likes, and desires.

Guidelines for Appropriate Self-Disclosure

In the search for criteria to determine appropriate self-disclosure, many factors must be considered. How much information should be disclosed? How intimate should the information be? Under what conditions should the disclosures be made? The following guidelines will help you develop your self-disclosure skills.

1. *Use self-disclosure to repair damaged relationships.* Many relationships are unnecessarily strained. The strain often exists because people refuse to talk about real or imagined problems. Self-disclosure can be an excellent method of repairing a damaged relationship.

If your actions have caused hurt feelings, anger, or deep-seated ill will, an apology may be in order. A sincere apology can have a tremendous amount of

healing power. In addition, it may set the stage for improved communications in the future.

2. *Discuss disturbing situations as they happen.* Your reactions to a work-related problem or issue should be shared as soon after the incident as possible. It is often difficult to recapture a feeling once it has passed, and you may distort the incident if you let too much time go by. Your memory is not infallible. The person who caused the hurt feelings is also likely to forget details about the situation.
3. *Select the right time and place.* Remarks that otherwise might be offered and accepted in a positive way can be rendered ineffective not because of what we say but because of when and where we say it.²⁵ When possible, select a time when you feel the other person is not preoccupied and will be able to give you his or her full attention. Also, select a setting free of distractions.
4. *Avoid overwhelming others with your self-disclosure.* Although you should be open, do not go too far too fast. Many strong relationships are built slowly. The abrupt disclosure of highly emotional or intimate information may actually distance you from the other person. Your behavior may be considered threatening.



“I’ve had enough reports for one day.
Bring me some gossip.”

© Mike Baldwin / Cornered / www.CartoonStock.com

TEST PREPPER 4.3

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON P. 317

True or False?

- ____ 1. An important component of active listening is mentally preparing your response to a speaker as he/she is talking.

Multiple Choice

- ____ 2. One of the best techniques to improve message clarity is to:
- a. send a message one time only, to avoid information overload.
 - b. use parallel channels of communication.
 - c. respond to messages quickly, without overthinking the response.
 - d. send all messages as early in the morning as possible.
- ____ 3. Which of the following skills is used by active listeners?
- a. Clarifying points by asking questions
 - b. Using active verbs instead of passive verbs
 - c. Accepting what is said by the speaker
 - d. Listening for evidence that supports your point of view
- ____ 4. At the end of their discussion of the productivity problems in Ron’s department, Cole restates Ron’s concerns: “In other words, Ron, we need to train your workers.” Which aspect of active listening does Cole’s statement exemplify?
- a. Giving the speaker full attention
 - b. Developing a listening attitude
 - c. Confirming understanding of the speaker’s message by using feedback
 - d. Clarifying by stating an opinion
- ____ 5. When practicing empathic listening, a listener would do which one of the following?
- a. Ask, “Does the speaker’s reasoning make sense?”
 - b. Ask, “Is evidence being offered that supports the speaker’s views?”
 - c. Send an e-mail to confirm the conversation as a practice of parallel communication
 - d. Acknowledge that he/she understands the speaker’s point of view



ACE the Test
ACE and ACE+ Practice Tests

COMMUNICATING VIA TECHNOLOGY

4 Learn how to effectively communicate through technology.

virtual offices Networks of workers who are connected by the latest technologies. These workers can “set up shop” wherever they are—at home, on an airplane, in a motel room—and communicate with coworkers via e-mail, cell phone, instant messaging, fax, or some other method.

telecommuting An arrangement that allows employees to work from their homes and enables people scattered all over the world to stay connected.



Improve Your Grade
Audio Glossary

Videoconferencing allows workers in different locations to have virtual meetings so team members and clients can visually connect.



The traditional memos, letters, phone calls, and face-to-face conversations seem to be the exception rather than the rule in today’s high-tech communications environment. Many organizations now maintain **virtual offices**, networks of workers connected by the latest technology. These workers can “set up shop” wherever they are—at home, on an airplane, in a motel room—and communicate with coworkers via e-mail, cell phone, instant messaging, fax, or some other method. **Telecommuting**, an arrangement that allows employees to work from their homes, enables people scattered all over the world to stay connected.

The advantages of using these technology-based communication alternatives are obvious. Time efficiency is unsurpassed because people can transmit simple or detailed information across all time zones, and receivers can retrieve the information at their convenience. Cost-effectiveness is unsurpassed because fiber-optic and satellite transmissions cost the consumer virtually pennies compared to traditional transworld phone calls.

In all the frantic speed with which information now flows, many people forget that communication still must be carefully created before it is transmitted. Voice mail can be frustrating and time-consuming if it is not handled properly, and poorly written e-mails can leave the impression that the sender is either poorly educated or careless.

Voice Mail

Now that everyone is adjusting to the opportunities that immediate communication systems offer, nothing is more dismaying than playing phone tag (the exchange of several voice mails without successful transmission of the message). Whether you are on the sending or the receiving end, though, there are ways to avoid this counterproductive exercise in frustration.

When people call you and connect with your voice mail, be sure your recorded message includes your full name and when you will be retrieving your messages. If, for some reason, you will not be returning your calls for an extended time, edit your standard message to reflect this information so that your friends, customers, and colleagues will understand the delay and avoid repeated calls and duplicate messages. Forward your calls to another person’s extension, if possible, or explain how the caller can reach a live person if the call is urgent. When you retrieve your messages, write down essential information, prioritize the messages in the order of importance, and return all of the calls as soon as possible.

When you are connected to another person’s voice mail, state your full name, *a brief explanation of what information or action you need from that person* (the component most often neglected), your phone number, and the best time to reach

you. All four components are necessary in order to avoid phone tag. Then, if the receiver reaches your voice mail when calling back, he or she can simply leave you a voice message with the information you wanted. The communication loop is complete.

E-mail

Technology has accelerated the pace of exchanging information today. People want answers and action now! Therefore, e-mail has become the standard format for most business and personal communication. In some cases, however, e-mail may be slower than a phone call or face-to-face meetings because you may have to wait days for a response to your message; plus, it takes time to compose an effective and accurate message.

E-mail takes careful planning and new writing skills. Those who read your e-mail will make judgments about your intelligence, competence, and attitude whether you want them to or not. Therefore, you need to carefully monitor not only what you write about but also how you word your messages. Here are some guidelines to follow:

Know Your Company's Policies

Most organizations monitor their employees' e-mail carefully. Keep in mind that even deleted messages live on indefinitely in the company's hard drives and may resurface. E-mail that might be sexually offensive could be considered sexual harassment and have serious ramifications.



HUMAN RELATIONS IN ACTION

E-mail Tips

- Do not send e-mail when you are angry or exhausted.
- When a face-to-face meeting is necessary, do not use e-mail as a substitute.
- When receiving large amounts of e-mail, selectively choose which ones you want to read by scanning the subject lines and deleting those that do not need a response.
- Make every attempt to create e-mail messages that are error free. Messages that contain errors may misrepresent your competence and give the wrong impression.
- Do not use e-mail to share rumors or innuendos or to say anything sensitive or critical that touches on someone's job competence.
- Avoid using unprofessional abbreviations such as BCNU for "Be seeing you," GG for "Got to go," or J/K for "Just kidding."
- Confine junk e-mail or personal e-mail to your friends and home computer and never transmit it through your company's computer system. Junk e-mail often contains attachments with viruses that could potentially shut down your entire organization.

Keep work-related messages professional and avoid sending personal e-mail messages on company time. A young analyst working in the Carlyle Group's Seoul office sent friends an e-mail in which he described his glamorous life that included a "harem of chickies," bankers catering to his "every whim," and other comments. Several people receiving the e-mail forwarded it to others in the financial community. Excerpts of it even appeared in the *New York Times*. The analyst was promptly fired.²⁶

If you plan to join the millions of people who have created their own Web log, or blog, pay attention to your employer's policy. IBM has developed an eleven-point policy for employees who develop their own blog. Three of the IBM policy points are:

- Identify yourself and write in the first person. You must make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of IBM.
- Don't cite or reference clients, partners, or suppliers without their approval.
- Respect your audience. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, or obscenities.²⁷

Keep in mind that the information you include in your blog will be public for a long time.

Create an Appropriate E-mail Address

Carefully design your e-mail address to give the impression you want to convey. Addresses such as Crazylady@____.com or Buddyboy@____.com may be acceptable for personal e-mail but should never be used in a business setting. Your organization will generally have a specific format for your e-mail address that includes variations of your first and last names.

Although this may seem obvious, *always* make sure you are sending an e-mail to the correct address. This quick double-check will prevent delays and embarrassment for everyone involved if your message contains negative or potentially libelous comments about colleagues, or semiprivate information.

Use the Subject Line

One of the best ways to set the stage for effective communications is to learn how to appropriately use the *Subject*: line available on all e-mail messages. It usually appears next to the sender's name on the receiver's screen. This brief introduction to your message will cue the receiver as to the probable content of your message. If your message is time-critical, add *Urgent* to the subject line, but be careful of overuse. When responding to another person's e-mail, be sure to forward the original subject line so that the receiver knows you are responding to his or her original request.

Watch Your Language

The biggest clue to your competence will be the words you use. The following are important things to remember when communicating:

- Be sure all words are spelled correctly and that there are no typographical errors. E-mails filled with typing errors convey an attitude of disrespect toward the reader.
- Be sure that you have selected the appropriate word—when choosing, for example, from there/their/they're; sight/site/cite; then/than; which/witch;

and so on. Do your verbs agree with their subjects? If your writing skills are limited, use software that includes grammar- and spelling-checkers.

- Keep your messages brief by summarizing your main points, indicate the action or response you are seeking, and be sure you provide all the details the receiver needs.
- Be very careful about the tone of your messages. Remove any potentially offending words and phrasing from your documents. Some people feel that they have to use stronger language to get a message across because the receiver cannot “hear” them. If you use solid capital letters in your e-mail, though, readers may think you are shouting at them.²⁸
- The missing element in e-mail and other electronic communication is rapport, that bonding state that is easier to establish in person or by phone. Facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures—important social cues—are missing in e-mail.²⁹ Neither the sender nor the receiver can assume anything about the correspondent’s frame of mind. Readers will not be able to tell if you are serious or being sarcastic, prying or simply curious, angry or merely frustrated. After creating your message, reread it as a stranger might. If words or phrases might be misconstrued, rewrite it so as to make clear exactly what you mean to say.

If your organization has been kind enough to provide you with Internet access and e-mail capabilities, respect the gift and use your account properly. In the information age, e-mail etiquette is just as important as other forms of business etiquette.³⁰

TEST PREPPER 4.4

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON P. 317

True or False?

- _____ 1. You should limit voice mail messages to 6 seconds or less, leaving only your name and phone number.
- _____ 2. Rapport is easier to establish via e-mail than over the telephone.
- _____ 3. In a virtual office, workers are connected to one another via the latest technology and do not have to be in the same physical location.



ACE the Test

ACE and ACE+ Practice Tests

Multiple Choice

- _____ 4. To use voice mail effectively, a worker should:
 - a. keep messages a minimum of one week.
 - b. always leave the outgoing greeting the same, lest callers become confused.
 - c. jot down the essentials while listening and then delete the messages.
 - d. use the system-default recorded greeting rather than recording in his/her own voice.
- _____ 5. Using capital letters throughout an e-mail message is the e-mail equivalent of:
 - a. shouting.
 - b. using profanity.
 - c. asking for confidentiality.
 - d. sexual harassment.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES REVIEW

1 *Understand the communication process.*

- Even with the major advances in technology-based communication, human involvement is necessary for successful communication in a work setting.
- Impersonal one-way communication methods can be used effectively to share basic facts, policies, and instructions.
- When feedback is necessary, interpersonal communication that involves a two-way exchange should be used.

2 *Identify and explain the filters that affect communication.*

- Messages are sent—and feedback is received—through a variety of filters that often distort the messages.
 - Semantics
 - Language and cultural barriers
 - Strong emotions
 - Negative attitudes
 - Role expectations
 - Gender roles
 - Nonverbal messages

3 *Identify ways to improve personal communication, including developing listening skills.*

- The sender and the receiver share equal responsibility for effective communication.

- Individuals can make their messages clearer by choosing words carefully, using repetition, timing the message correctly, and considering the receivers' preferences.
- Personal communication can also be improved by the use of active, critical, and empathic listening skills.
- Self-disclosure is the process of letting someone know what you think, feel, or want. Self-disclosure increases your accuracy in communication, reduces stress, increases self-awareness, and builds stronger relationships.

4 *Learn how to effectively communicate through technology.*

- Memos, letters, phone calls, and face-to-face conversations have been replaced, in many situations, by time-efficient and cost-effective, technology-based communication alternatives.
- Virtual offices, networks of workers connected by the latest technology, are now quite common.
- The increase in the use of e-mail, voice mail, teleconferencing, and other high-tech communication methods often creates human relations problems. Employees often forget that communication must still be carefully created before it is transmitted.

CAREER CORNER

Q: I have just been “released” from the job I held for twelve years because my company was bought out by our competitor. I am highly skilled, competent, and dependable, but it’s been a long time since I went on a job interview, and I’m scared to death. How should I communicate my strengths and commitment to a prospective employer? What happens if I blow it?

A: Fear is your greatest enemy, so be confident that many employers want to know that you are available. Remember that no one wants to hire a “victim,” so do not refer to your “release” or your previous employer in a negative way. Memorize a positive statement that explains why you are looking for a new opportunity. It should focus on your strengths rather than on why you were released: for example, “My computer skills far exceeded the needs of my company’s new owner.” Be

aware that your degree, references, wardrobe, and handshake get you in the door, but that interviews today often include probing questions that test your ability to react and respond quickly. Most interviewers expect applicants to ask their own series of questions, such as: How does this position fit into the organizational structure? Why is the position vacant? What are the opportunities for advancement? If you want the job at the conclusion of the interview, ask for it! Be sure to send a follow-up note to the interviewer that reemphasizes your strengths. If you feel you blew it, contact the interviewer by phone or letter to correct misleading or misinterpreted information. This type of persistence will show that you sincerely want the job. If you don’t get the job, consider the interview a great practice session and enter the next one with renewed confidence!

APPLYING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED



1. During the next week, study the listening habits of students in another class in which you are enrolled. Keep a journal of your observations by identifying the nonverbal behaviors you witness. Are they barriers to effective communication between the instructor and the student or do they enhance communication? How do you believe the students’ nonverbal behaviors might affect the relationship between the instructor and the students?
2. Print out the most recent e-mails that you have sent or received and bring them to class. Analyze their effectiveness in terms of the e-mail tips in this chapter. Did the messages violate any of the tips? If so, which ones? How could these messages be improved?
3. Many times we take the conversation away from others and make it our own. This practice wastes time

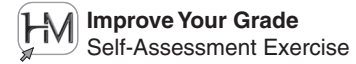
and is a major relationship killer. Here is how it works: At the beginning of the conversation, you tell the other person about a problem you are dealing with and, before you finish the story, the other person says, “I know what you mean,” and then describes a personal experience that may or may not have anything to do with your problem. Once the other person takes over the conversation, a valuable exchange of ideas is probably lost. During the next week, monitor your conversations with friends, family members, and coworkers. How often did the other person attempt to take the conversation away from you? How often did you attempt to take over the conversation?³¹

4. To increase self-awareness in the area of communication complete the self-assessment form found on the website college.hmco.com/pic/receSAS.

ROLE-PLAY EXERCISE

This role-play exercise is designed to improve your active listening skills. Carefully study Table 4.1, Active Listening Skills, and prepare to meet with another class member who wants to talk about his or her career plans. As this person talks, make every effort to apply the four active listening skills. Once the other person has finished speaking, discuss your career plans. When both of you have

finished talking, discuss whether each felt the partner was really engaged in active listening. Did either of you find that the other person was distracted and not really paying attention? Be prepared to share your insights with your role-play partner, your instructor, and other class members.



Improve Your Grade
Self-Assessment Exercise

CASE 4.1

Fluid Communications

At the beginning of this chapter, you were introduced to the problems the administrators at Duke University Health System experienced when they discovered that for two months their surgeons had unknowingly used instruments that had been washed in a mixture of water and used hydraulic fluid instead of detergent and then sterilized with heat. Initially, no one noticed the mistake because the detergent containers had not been relabeled and the detergent normally used and the hydraulic fluid were the same color and were both odorless. Because surgical instruments are routinely treated with lubricants to prevent rusting, hospital administrators did not detect the problem despite complaints from medical staff that the surgical instruments seemed *unusually* slick and oily.

A few hours after the discovery, however, a crisis team had gathered to determine how to handle the

potentially devastating situation. Within one week, letters went out to all 3,800 affected patients and their physicians apologizing for the mixup and telling them that it should pose little risk to their health. They were invited to call a hotline to report any changes in their health. A website was created to offer them information about the effects of hydraulic fluid on the body. The goal of the crisis team was to balance the urgency of getting the information out with the need for accuracy, especially in a world of business scandals where corporate attorneys prefer that top executives say nothing and public relations advisers want leaders to be frank.

Behind the scenes, Duke's Infection Control physicians began a vigilant surveillance program to monitor any spike in infections among the affected patients. The hotline calls were recorded, monitored, and ana-



Improve Your Grade
Additional Closing Case

lyzed. Scientists were brought in to conduct a chemical analysis of the used hydraulic fluid and to determine how it might harm humans. Surgery complications, new illnesses, and unusual complaints were analyzed and compared against normal rates for these problems. Despite these efforts, patients contacted attorneys and formed a support group claiming that Duke officials failed to take their concerns about ongoing health problems seriously.

In hindsight, hospital administrators admit they should have been more responsive to their patients' concerns. They discovered that sharing scientific results was not enough and that they needed to sympathize with their patients by considering not only their medical issues but also their concerns and anxieties. Dr. Michael Cuffe, Duke's vice president for medical affairs and patient-physician liaison, reported that administrators were doing all the right things internally, but they were not telling their patients what steps were

being taken and did not provide the appropriate feedback to their concerns. Cuffe believes that patients who wanted to visit in person and talk about their concerns should have had that opportunity.³²

Questions

1. Dr. Cuffe stated: "I see a heightened need to make sure the administration hears the concerns of patients. Not that they're deaf to it. But that's what needs to improve."³³ What steps could Duke administrators, or managers of any other organization, take to make sure the concerns of customers are heard?
2. How could the original problem have been intercepted before it became a health care crisis?
3. What filters were in place to block effective communication between the hospital administrators, medical staff, and affected patients?

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Prepare for Class, Improve Your Grade, and ACE the Test. Student Achievement Series resources include:

ACE and ACE+ Practice Tests
Audio Chapter Quizzes
Audio Chapter Reviews
Learning Objective Reviews
Career Snapshots

Chapter Glossaries
Chapter Outlines
Crossword Puzzles
Hangman Games
Flashcards

Audio Glossaries
Internet Insights
Self-Assessment Exercises
Additional Closing Cases

To access these learning and study tools, go to college.hmco.com/pic/receSAS.

HM Management  SPACE