

## **CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN TODAY'S WORKPLACE**

### **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter 1 focuses on the importance and benefits of becoming an effective business communicator and highlights characteristics of effective communication. A definition of effective communication is followed by a discussion of why communication is important in business, and what it means to communicate effectively in today's global business environment. The eight phases in the communication process are also explored, and the traditional "publishing" model of communication is compared with the newer, more interactive social communication model. Three key ways to improve business communication are addressed in detail: committing to ethical communication, communicating in a world of diversity, and using communication technology effectively. Examples of unethical communication practices and a discussion of how to recognize ethical choices precede a list of questions to help a communicator make an ethical decision. Readers will learn about ways to recognize cultural differences in areas such as cultural contexts, ethics, social customs, and nonverbal communication. The suggestions for polishing both written and oral intercultural skills can help a businessperson communicate more effectively with those of differing cultural backgrounds, as can the list of tips for working in a culturally diverse workforce. Readers are offered an overview of technologies that connect businesses and aspects of using communication technology effectively are presented. The information presented in Chapter 1 provides a base for all the remaining chapters in the text.

### **CHAPTER OUTLINE**

#### Understanding Why Communication Matters

- Communication Is Important to Your Career
- Communication Is Important to Your Company
- What Makes Business Communication Effective?

#### Communicating in Today's Global Business Environment

- Understanding What Employers Expect from You
- Communicating in an Organizational Context
- Adopting an Audience-Centred Approach

#### Exploring the Communication Process

- The Basic Communication Model
- The Social Communication Model

#### Committing to Ethical Communication

- Distinguishing Ethical Dilemmas from Ethical Lapses
- Making Ethical Choices

#### Communicating in a World of Diversity

- The Advantages and Challenges of a Diverse Workforce
- Key Aspects of Cultural Diversity

- Cultural Context
- Legal and Ethical Differences
- Social Customs
- Nonverbal Communication
- Age Differences
- Gender
- Religious Differences
- Ability Differences
- Advice for Improving Intercultural Communication
  - Writing for Multilingual Audiences
  - Speaking with Multilingual Audiences

#### Using Communication Technology Effectively

- Keeping Technology in Perspective
- Using Tools Productively
- Guarding Against Information Overload
- Reconnecting with People Frequently

#### Chapter Review and Activities

## TEACHING NOTES

### Succeeding Through Effective Communication

Communication is the process of transferring information and meaning between *senders* and receivers using one or more written, oral, visual, or electronic channels.

- Internal communication refers to the exchange of ideas within an organization.
- External communication carries information into and out of the organization.

Effective communication yields a number of important benefits for both you and your company:

- Closer ties with important communities in the marketplace
- Opportunities to influence conversations, perceptions, and trends
- Ability to “humanize” otherwise impersonal business organizations
- Faster problem solving
- Stronger decision making
- Increased productivity
- Steadier work flow

Good ideas must be expressed clearly and persuasively. To develop effective messages, be sure to follow these steps:

- Provide practical information
- Give facts rather than vague impressions
- Present information in a concise, efficient manner
- Clarify expectations and responsibilities
- Offer compelling, persuasive arguments and recommendations

### Communicating in Today’s Global Business Environment

This section offers a brief look at the skills employers expect, the nature of communication in an organizational environment, and the importance of adopting an audience-centred approach.

No matter what career field you select, your employer will expect you to be competent at a wide range of communication tasks. Employers expect you to be able to accomplish the following skills:

- Organizing ideas and information logically and completely
- Expressing yourself coherently and persuasively in a variety of media
- Constructing compelling narratives—telling stories, in other words—to gain acceptance for important ideas
- Evaluating data and information critically to know what you can and cannot trust
- Actively listening to others
- Communicating effectively with people from diverse backgrounds
- Using communication technologies effectively and efficiently
- Following accepted standards of grammar, spelling, and other aspects of high-quality writing and speaking
- Adapting your messages and communication styles to specific audiences and situations
- Communicating in a courteous manner that reflects contemporary expectations of business etiquette
- Communicating ethically, even when choices aren't crystal clear
- Respecting the confidentiality of private company information
- Following applicable laws and regulations
- Managing your time wisely and using resources efficiently

Communicating effectively in a variety of organizational contexts requires recognizing important differences between personal and professional communication. It is also necessary to recognize and accommodate the unique characteristics of each organization within which you work.

An audience-centred approach means focusing on and caring about the members of your audience (i.e., making an effort to get the message across in a way meaningful and respectful way to them).

An important element of audience-centred communication is etiquette, the expected norms of behaviour in a particular situation. Your behaviour can have a profound influence on your company's success and your career.

- Long lists of etiquette “rules” can be overwhelming. Fortunately, three principles will get you through any situation:
  - Respect
  - Courtesy
  - Common sense

## **Exploring the Communication Process**

Communication is a dynamic, two-way process containing eight steps. It is helpful to understand these steps so that you may improve your own skills and be able to recognize the many places and ways in which communication can fail.

The following eight steps make up the communication process:

1. The sender has an idea.
2. The sender encodes the idea in a message.
3. The sender produces the message in a transmittable medium.
4. The sender transmits the message through a channel.

5. The audience receives the message.
6. The receiver decodes the message.
7. The receiver responds to the message.
8. The receiver provides feedback to the sender.

The communication process described above generally represents the traditional nature of much business communication, which was primarily defined by a publishing or broadcasting mindset.

In contrast, a newer and increasingly effective social communication model has emerged, characterized by communication that is interactive, conversational, and usually open to all who want to participate. Instead of transmitting a fixed message, a sender in a social media environment initiates a conversation by sharing valuable information, and then that information is often revised and reshaped by the web of participants as they share and comment on it.

## **Committing to Ethical Communication**

Business communicators have a responsibility to communicate ethically with audiences.

- Ethics are the accepted principles of conduct that govern behaviour within a society.
- Ethical communication includes all relevant information, is true in every sense, and is not deceptive in any way. Unethical communication can include falsehoods and misleading information (or exclude important information).

Examples of unethical communication include the following:

- Plagiarizing
- Omitting essential information
- Selectively misquoting
- Distorting statistics or visuals
- Failing to respect privacy or information security needs

Deciding what is ethical can be quite complex.

Ethical dilemmas are not the same as ethical lapses.

Every company has responsibilities to multiple groups of people inside and outside the firm, and those various groups often have competing interests. When individuals must choose between conflicting loyalties and weigh difficult trade-offs, they face a dilemma.

- An ethical dilemma involves choosing among alternatives that aren't clear-cut.
- An ethical lapse is a clearly unethical (and frequently illegal) choice.

Employers have a responsibility to establish clear guidelines for ethical behaviour. Many companies establish an explicit ethics policy by using a written code of ethics to help employees determine what is acceptable.

Asking yourself the following questions can help you make an ethical decision:

- Have you defined the situation fairly and accurately?
- What is your intention in communicating this message?
- What impact will this message have on the people who receive it, or who might be affected by it?
- Will the message achieve the greatest possible good while doing the least possible harm?

- Will the assumptions you've made change over time?
- Are you comfortable with your decision? Would you be embarrassed if it were printed in tomorrow's newspaper or spread across the internet?

One helpful way to make sure your messages are ethical is to consider your audience.

## **Communicating in a World of Diversity**

Improving intercultural sensitivity requires the realization of the interaction between culture and communication.

A diverse workforce offers a broader spectrum of viewpoints and ideas, helps companies understand and identify with diverse markets, and enables companies to benefit from a wider range of employee talents. Culture can also create friction, however, because it leads people to assume that everyone thinks and feels the way they do.

Culture is a shared system of symbols, beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations, and norms for behaviour.

Culture affects the way you think which, in turn, affects the way you communicate.

High-context cultures rely less on the explicit content of the message and more on the context of nonverbal actions and environmental setting to convey meaning. The primary role of communication in high context cultures is building relationships, not exchanging information.

Low-context cultures rely more on the explicit content and less on circumstances and cues to convey meaning. The primary task of communication in low context cultures is to exchange information.

Legal and ethical behaviours are also affected by cultural context.

Persons from high-context cultures put less emphasis on the written word and consider personal pledges more important than contracts.

Legal systems differ from culture to culture.

Rules governing social customs differ from culture to culture.

Some rules are formal and specifically articulated (e.g., table manners) and some are informal and learned over time (e.g., the comfortable standing distance between two speakers in an office).

Nonverbal communication is a vital part of the communication process

- Nonverbal communication includes everything from facial expressions to style of dress.
- Interpreting nonverbal communication according to your own culture can be dangerous.
- Even simple hand gestures change meaning from culture to culture.

Cultural differences can also influence perspectives on age.

- In some cultures, youth is associated with positive characteristics while age is associated with declining powers and a loss of respect and authority.
- In others, longevity earns respect and increasing power and freedom.

Perspectives on gender also vary across cultures, resulting in vastly different views of men and women in business.

Religious differences can lead to a great deal of controversy since religion is one of the most personal and influential aspects of life.

Working effectively with others whose hearing, vision, cognitive ability and/or mobility differs from yours requires respect and care.

Follow the tips below to communicate more effectively in cross-cultural situations:

- Avoid ethnocentrism (the tendency to judge all other groups according to the standards, behaviours, and customs of one's own group).
- Avoid stereotyping (assigning a wide range of generalized—and often inaccurate—attributes to individuals on the basis of their membership in a particular culture or social group).
- Don't automatically assume that others think, believe, or behave as you do.
- Accept differences in others without judging them.
- Learn how to communicate respect in various cultures.
- Tolerate ambiguity and control your frustration.
- Don't be distracted by superficial factors such as personal appearance.
- Recognize your own cultural biases.
- Be flexible and be prepared to change your habits and attitudes.
- Observe and learn; the more you learn, the more effective you'll be.

To help you prepare effective written communications for multicultural audiences, remember these tips:

- Use plain English
- Be clear
- Cite numbers carefully
- Avoid slang and be careful with jargon and abbreviations
- Be brief
- Use short paragraphs
- Use transitions generously

To help you prepare effective oral messages for those who English is not their native language, remember these tips:

- Speak clearly, simply, and relatively slowly
- Look for feedback but interpret it carefully
- Rephrase if necessary
- Clarify your meaning with repetition and examples
- Don't talk down to the other person
- Learn important phrases in your audience's language
- Listen carefully and respectfully
- Adapt your conversation style to the other person's
- Check frequently for comprehension

- Clarify what will happen next

Today's businesses rely heavily on technology to improve the communication process, and you'll need to know how to use a variety of these technologies on the job. To communicate effectively you'll need to do the following:

- keep technology in perspective
- use technological tools productively
- guard against information overload
- disengage from the computer frequently to communicate in person.

## **OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES STUDENTS OFTEN FACE WITH TOPICS IN CHAPTER 1**

### **PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW**

Getting off to a good start is essential to a successful term. Students will most likely experience some anxiety about the course requirements and content. Taking the time to provide an overview of the various chapters and elements of communication they will study can help overcome this initial uneasiness.

### **PROVIDE IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK**

Although students will typically follow along with an explanation of the model of the communication process presented in the text, take time to discuss the model in class and provide numerous illustrations. Provide examples of feedback that is immediate. (e.g., feedback given in a face to face conversation) versus feedback that is delayed (e.g., a letter to a newspaper editor). Provide examples that illustrate where problems can arise within the communication process. Help students understand that these problems can occur with the sender, the message, the channel, or the receiver. This may also be a good time to have students develop a list of some of the barriers to effective communication that either a sender or a receiver may experience. Discussing the importance of selecting the correct channel for communicating a message will also help students better understand the importance of each step of the communication process.

### **PROVIDE EXAMPLES OF UNETHICAL COMMUNICATION**

Students should all be able to provide examples of unethical business actions; however, they may not have viewed some of these as ethical issues as they relate to communication. Engage students by discussing communication documents such as product warranties, product assembly instructions, customer service documents, telephone conversations, marketing brochures and advertisements, human resource documents (including applications and annual reviews), information on company Web sites, and many others. Stress that some of the examples will be written and some will be oral. Invite students to provide other examples of situations in which ethical issues arise when communicating as a business employee.

### **DISCUSS INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY**

Helping students understand the importance of intercultural sensitivity often becomes a challenging task. During the class coverage of this topic, some students may argue that if a company from another part of the world wants to do business with a U.S. firm, then the other organization should adjust to U.S. business practices. Some will ask why U.S. companies are always expected to give in to the other companies' practices. Other students may suggest that if employees with different cultural backgrounds want to work in U.S. organizations, then they

should be expected to adapt completely to U.S. cultural norms. Provide class time to discuss the benefits a diverse workforce brings to any organization. Focus on the benefits of respecting and acknowledging other cultures. Stress the idea of a win-win solution for companies with different cultural traditions.

#### **EXPLAIN HIGH-CONTEXT AND LOW-CONTEXT CULTURES**

The idea of high-context and low-context cultures will undoubtedly be very new to students. Give various examples of how the context can affect business negotiations, ethical decisions, and the manner in which business is conducted. Since many students may not have travelled extensively, they may not understand how differently business is conducted in other countries. Provide examples of how to conduct business with firms in South America, Japan, Germany, France, and so forth. Or, have students do some research on the internet to find country-specific information about business negotiations, high- and low-context cultures, and social customs (other than just dress and dining issues), all of which they can share with the class.

#### **EXPLAIN STEREOTYPING AND ETHNOCENTRISM**

Although students should be able to define stereotyping, ethnocentrism may be a new concept. Engage students in a discussion of the term, giving examples to distinguish between ethnocentrism and stereotyping. Help students develop an understanding of how both concepts can contribute to ineffective communication.

#### **EXPLORE ORAL COMMUNICATION**

Students may not have had an opportunity to write messages to someone with another cultural background, but they may have numerous examples of communicating orally with someone who speaks more than one language. Lead a discussion about problems and successes they have encountered in these situations and ask what a businessperson can do to reduce those problems. Building on the oral communication discussion, help students develop a list of things they should do and things they should avoid when writing to an intercultural audience.

#### **DISCUSS THE CHALLENGES OF A DIVERSE WORKFORCE**

Some students may be employed by companies with a diverse workforce. Lead a discussion to help the entire class identify the responsibilities a businessperson has to communicate effectively with co-workers. Help students understand that even though employees were born and raised in the Canada, they may not share the same cultural background. Pointing out such differences can help students understand that we all need to follow the tips provided for improving workplace sensitivity.

### **SUGGESTED CLASSROOM EXERCISES**

1. *Get Acquainted.* To help start the class and the term in an enthusiastic manner, ask students to work in teams of two and interview each other. Give students five minutes to gather information about each other. You can either provide a list of facts you want the students to inquire about or invite the class to prepare a list of things they would like to know about each other. Once the students have completed their interviews, ask them to introduce each other using the information they gathered in their brief interviews. To put your students further at ease, you may want to participate by giving them comparable information about yourself. This exercise will help students get to know each other and develop a level of comfort with



classmates early in the term.

2. *The Communication Process.* Assign students to work in teams. Each team should prepare its own interpretation of the communication process by drawing a communication model and labeling the various parts. Have the teams share and discuss their models with the rest of the class. This activity can help students comprehend the communication process while emphasizing that different ways of illustrating a concept or process can be acceptable.
3. *Ethical Communication.* Assign students to work in teams of 2-3. Each team should prepare a list of ethical and unethical business communication examples it has heard or read about in recent months. Students may also include some examples from their places of employment. To help students get started, you may want to mention some communication examples from Tyco, ENRON, WorldCom, Martha Stewart's company, and other organizations that have come under fire in recent years for unethical communication actions. Based on examples the teams identify, conduct a discussion about committing to ethical communication, recognizing ethical choices, and making ethical choices.
4. *Culture.* Ask students to assume that they have travelled to another part of the country and have stopped to talk with a resident of the region. Ask students to prepare a list of the points they would mention if the local resident asked the students to describe the culture in which they currently live. This activity should generate some lively discussion about the various aspects of culture, especially if some class members are from different parts of Canada or from different countries. Students may also begin identifying misconceptions that others may have about the students' local culture, thus leading to a discussion of stereotyping and ethnocentrism.
5. *Intercultural Sensitivity.* Assign student teams to research a particular culture to identify differences in social customs and preferences or rules for conducting business. Make sure some of the students research high-context cultures and others research low-context cultures. Ask each team to share its findings in class. Use these findings as a basis for a discussion of high- and low-context cultures, social customs, and ethical issues in other cultures.
6. *Intercultural Sensitivity.* Invite a panel of businesspeople who grew up in different cultures to address your class. Ask panel members to comment on cultural differences in such areas as context, ethics, social customs, and nonverbal communication. Also ask them to share their knowledge about rules for conducting business in their cultures. If the panel contains persons from several different cultures, this should encourage a significant amount of discussion about intercultural communication.
7. *Teamwork Exercise.* Divide students into groups of 6-8 and give each group a ball. Tell the group that its "mission" is to make sure each member of the group touches the ball at least once and that the team completing the task the fastest wins. (Students will often pass the ball around the group as fast as possible. Give them several chances to try new techniques or, if they do not seem to be trying new techniques, encourage them to do so. Generally, one or two groups will figure out that if one person holds the ball in the centre and the other students touch the ball simultaneously, they have discovered the quickest way to complete the task.)

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE (p. 17)

1. Effective communication benefits you and your organization in the following ways: faster problem solving; stronger decision making; increased productivity; steadier workflow; stronger business relationships; and improved response from colleagues, employees, supervisors, investors, customers, and other important audiences.
2. An audience-centred approach means focusing on and caring about the members of your audience—making every effort to get your message across in a way this is meaningful and respectful to the audience. Adopting an audience-centred approach makes your messages more effective.
3. Ethics are the accepted principles of conduct that govern behaviour within a society (they define the boundary between right and wrong). Ethical communication includes all relevant information, is true in every sense, and is not deceptive in any way.
4. Cultural context affects communication in profound and fundamental ways. In high-context cultures, communication relies less on the explicit content of the message and more on the context. In low-context cultures, communication relies more on message content than on message context.
5. Technology can't match the rich experience of person-to-person contact. Visiting with others in person allows you to pick up on nonverbal cues and engage in a more meaningful conversation. Communicating in person also allows you to become more than a voice on the phone or a name on a screen.

## APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE (p. 17)

1. This exercise should help students organize their thoughts about how communication keeps organizations running, what business tasks require communication, and how communication benefits business organizations. Students should also realize that effective communication helps employees feel as if they are a part of the business process because they feel supported in their efforts and rewarded for their accomplishments; they also believe that their comments, suggestions, and problems will receive fair consideration, so any problems among co-workers are quickly and easily resolved. Knowing the company's objectives and having clear instructions on how to accomplish their tasks makes employees confident in their work.
2. Since an audience-centred approach means focusing on and caring about the members of your audience, including making every effort to get your message across in a way this is meaningful and respectful to the audience, featuring readers' comments on a corporate blog allows the audience to participate in the conversation. This question can help students better understand the difference between a traditional communication model (with a publishing mindset) and a social communication model, focused on initiating interaction among a variety of participants.
3. This situation puts you in an ethical dilemma. Your boss, however, has committed an ethical lapse by taking credit for your work. You must weigh the potential ramifications for bringing the situation to light, particularly on your personal career with the company. Students will

offer a variety of solutions, but the key is guiding them to realize that such ethical questions sometimes arise in the business world, and they must develop a personal code of ethics that allows them to act and communicate honestly. It is also important for students to distinguish between the ethical dilemma presented in the question and possible ethical lapses that could follow.

4. This question will help students consider the growing problems faced by employees from foreign cultures. The discussion should be lively with regard to just how much the company is responsible for learning about and adapting to the cultural backgrounds of its employees. You might suggest that the company offer some basic guidance to its Canadian employees about Vietnamese culture, explaining the differences between low- and high-context cultures as well as offer specific guidance on differences in nonverbal messages and social customs between the cultures to avoid possible misunderstandings.
5. Students will offer a variety of situations deriving from the challenges of intergenerational communication. The goal of the discussion should be to ascertain their grasp of intergenerational sensitivity and to help them perceive the value and advantages, rather than only the challenges, of a multigenerational workforce.

## **PRACTISE YOUR SKILLS (p. 18)**

### **Activities**

1. In these memos or speeches of introduction, students should include information about their majors, hobbies, likes, dislikes, and future career plans. This activity should give you an idea of the level of your students' writing or speaking skills, as well as help you get to know them.
2. This question provides a good opportunity to discuss the advantages and limitations of utilizing social media for business communication. Students should be encouraged to explain how the content of their messages reflects the demands of a social communication model and medium.
3. In completing this exercise, students should recognize the often significant differences between how they prioritize their own personal and professional qualities and how a prospective employer might prioritize them.
4. Student answers might mention that every employee is a representative of the organization and employee behaviour should protect the company's reputation; thus, all employees should receive etiquette training. Answers might also focus on the changing workplace with more emphasis placed on teams and flattened management hierarchies; with these changes, more and more employees might be coming into contact with high-profile clients.
5. This exercise challenges students to apply their understanding of the communication process. Ask them to be specific about how they encoded and transmitted the idea they

wanted to share; also ask them to explain exactly how they knew whether the message had been accurately decoded.

Students might identify such barriers as a difference in perception due to differences in age, background, culture, or language; a lack of credibility, precision, congeniality, or control; a lack of information about the audience; a misunderstanding caused by unfocused, incoherent, or sloppy communication; one party being sidetracked or bringing up unnecessary information; an inability to relate new information to existing ideas; or the noise from environmental distractions, including the emotional states of the people involved or a person's poor listening ability.

6. Students should avoid the tendency to simply explain how widespread the use of social media has become, and how easy it is to utilize the technology. Instead, they should be encouraged to adopt an audience-centred approach that clearly explains the potential benefits of embracing social media as a means of improving the company's relationship with current and potential customers.
7. The ethics of each situation may be decided as follows:
  - a. De-emphasizing negative test results is an ethical lapse that could affect lives in some situations; for example, when women suffered from defective breast implants.
  - b. Using equipment at home would be ethical, especially if permission was obtained.
  - c. Helping a friend would be ethical, unless "privileged" information was being conveyed without permission.
  - d. Using allocated funding for unnecessary purchases is unethical. It would be better to justify the need for next year's budget than to preserve it by cheating.
8. Students might mention the employees should always consult a company's code of ethics (if one exists) before writing anything associated with the company. Students opposed to the ban may argue that it is an individual's ethical responsibility to alert the public to serious concerns about an organization and that a policy that bans criticism is unfair and unjust. Additionally, they might note that a blog containing valid criticism of the company may appear as more authentic and credible than blogs that just praise a company. Others supporting the ban may argue that any external communication about a company must be examined by that company since an employee could post something untrue; moreover, if employees are being paid to blog, then the company has a right to edit content.
9. This exercise asks students to consider a possible ethical dilemma: choosing among alternatives that aren't clear-cut. Students might mention that if employees are violating company policy, then they should be reported; however, others might mention that the boss is unfairly taking advantage of the fact that this person has numerous friends within the company.

The questions that need to be asked before the employee makes a decision include: has the situation been defined fairly and accurately, what is the intention of communicating this information, what impact will this information have on the people who are affected by it, will this information achieve the greatest possible good while doing the least possible harm, will this decision seem unethical in the future, and are we comfortable

with this decision (would both parties be proud to describe the situation to someone they respect)?

Students might also wish to discuss whether or not the company has a code of ethics, whether or not employees are aware of company policies and the consequences for violating them, and whether or not the boss has asked others to report this type of information to her as well.

10. Students should focus their evaluation of the situation on the differences in communication style between high-context and low-context cultures. The Japanese manufacturer's representative clearly has a problem with the terms of the deal and is expressing that concern indirectly. Coming from a high-context culture, he is interested in building relationships. The boss of the Canadian toy company, coming from a low-context culture, misinterprets the and focuses on conveying information—the terms of the contract—rather than realizing that the issue could be that the manufacturer's representative may have a problem with the one-sided nature of the proposed agreement.

After studying the examples included in this chapter, students also may recognize the dropped eyes, soft tone, and vague answers as the Japanese businessperson's way of showing respect and saying no indirectly so that the Canadian negotiator would be able to save face.

11. Students will come up with a variety of examples. Remind them of the importance of an audience-centred approach that respects the appropriate level of formality and avoids cultural-based expressions and idioms.
12. Students should find this assignment interesting. A number of books are available on international business communication, and many of them provide country-by-country information. As an option, you may suggest that some students pick two countries and compare their customs, describing the similarities and differences in nonverbal communication, meeting protocol, decision-making processes, and so on. To make this activity more focused, assign each student or team one type of business practice, such as gift giving, and ask them to describe how that practice varies in a dozen or so countries.
13. The role-playing should reveal how easily we slip into ethnocentric and stereotypical viewpoints—which interfere with business communication even when the difference is one of age, gender, or physical ability. To deal with the problem, try to view issues from the other person's perspective.
14. To improve the discussion that this exercise can generate, consider assigning different services to different students. The wide variety of services students will access can provide powerful evidence of how widespread the social communication model has become.
15. This four-part exercise will teach students about the specific generation they research as well as the generations researched by classmates. They will learn which qualities the generations share as well as the differences, especially in communication styles, and consider the advantages of a multigenerational workforce, as each one possesses specific strengths that the others lack.

## **BUSINESS COMMUNICATION NOTEBOOK**

### **APPLICATIONS FOR SUCCESS**

1. Every culture has its own style of humour, making it difficult for humour to cross cultural boundaries. Humour also often requires exceptional knowledge of a language and easily can be misinterpreted by someone from a different culture. It is best to play it safe and avoid humour.
2. Before doing business with a different culture, you should know its protocol concerning a variety of customs, including forms of address, hierarchy, names, and titles; forms of greeting and introduction; business card exchange; gift-giving; gestures and body language; time, space, and punctuality; meeting and seating; hosting and being hosted; scheduling appointments; business entertaining; dining and drinking etiquette, including giving toasts; and proper cyber-communication etiquette.
3. Examples of gift-giving taboos include never giving a gift the receiver can't reciprocate, especially in Asian cultures. In China, one should never give a gift wrapped in white or black. One also should not give a gift to the opposite gender within a business context, because it implies a more personal meaning.

### **RUNNING CASES**

Running Cases for this chapter can be found on p. xx of this manual, along with suggested answers. The same cases are available directly to students through MyCanadianBusCommLab.

### **MyCanadianBusCommLab**

See the information on p. x of the preface to this Instructor's Manual for information on incorporating MyCanadianBusCommLab into your course.

### **GRAMMAR-ON-THE-GO**

*Grammar-on-the-Go* will help students communicate clearly and effectively in any business setting whether they are working part time, volunteering, or applying for jobs. This standalone workbook, offering both instruction and exercises, keeps its focus on the essential English skills need to succeed in today's workplace.

## CHAPTER 1 POP QUIZ

### True-False

1. Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages. (True)
2. In the first step of the communication process, the sender transmits the message. (False)
3. The primary characteristic of the social communication model is that it reflects a *broadcast* or *publishing* mindset. (False)
4. Selective misquoting may involve omitting damaging comments to paint a better picture of you or your company. (True)
5. An ethical dilemma is making a clearly unethical or illegal choice. (False)
6. By adopting an audience-centred approach, the writer presents the message in a way that emphasizes the writer's point of view, not the reader's. (False)
7. In a low-context culture, people rely more on the context of nonverbal actions and environmental setting to convey meaning. (False)
8. Making ethical choices across cultures involves adapting to another culture's traditions. (False)
9. Simple hand gestures convey the same meaning in every culture. (False)
10. Ethnocentrism allows communicators to correctly interpret the customs of another culture. (False)

### Multiple Choice

11. Which of the following is a tangible benefit of effective communication in an organization?
  - a. Faster problem solving
  - b. Increased productivity
  - c. Enhanced professional images and stronger brands
  - d. **All of the above**
12. The U.S. workforce includes growing numbers of people with various ethnic backgrounds. This will require the effective communicator to:
  - a. Communicate in team-based organizations
  - b. Communicate in an age of information
  - c. **Communicate within a culturally diverse workforce**
  - d. None of the above

13. Which of the following most correctly describes the order of the communication process?
- a. **The sender has an idea, the sender encodes a message, the sender transmits the message, the receiver gets the message.**
  - b. The sender transmits the message, the sender receives feedback, the receiver decodes the message.
  - c. The sender has an idea, the receiver decodes the message, the receiver gets the message.
  - d. The sender transmits the message, the sender encodes the message, the receiver sends feedback.
14. Which of the following questions is NOT a question that can help you make an ethical communication decision?
- a. Is this message legal?
  - b. Is this message feasible?
  - c. Is this a message you can live with?
  - d. **All are questions that can help you make an ethical decision.**
15. Which of the following is an *incorrect* example of how cultural context affects business communication?
- a. Executive offices are shared and open to all in high-context companies.
  - b. **Objective data are valued over subjective relationships in a high-context company.**
  - c. Meetings have fixed agendas and plenty of advanced notice in low-context companies.
  - d. Workers rely on detailed background information in low-context companies.
16. Informal social rules are:
- a. Specifically taught “rights” and “wrongs” of how to behave.
  - b. **Usually learned by watching how people behave and then imitating that behaviour.**
  - c. Another way to describe dining manners.
  - d. Avoided by cultures that condemn materialism.
17. When communicators assume that their own cultural background is superior to all others, they are using which of the following concepts?
- a. Stereotyping
  - b. **Ethnocentrism**
  - c. Accurate assumptions
  - d. Social status
18. When speaking to someone whose first language is different from yours, you should:
- a. **Use objective, accurate language.**
  - b. Use slang and clichés.
  - c. Ask the listener, “Is this too difficult for you?”
  - d. Speak rapidly since the listener is accustomed to rapid speech in his or her first language.
19. When writing to someone whose first language is different from yours, you should:
- a. Include lengthy sentences, using many compound and complex sentences.
  - b. **Use figures instead of writing numbers out in words.**
  - c. Include slang, idioms, and jargon.
  - d. Do none of the above, since these are things to avoid in intercultural written communication.



20. Cultural diversity includes all of the following *except*:
- a. Age differences
  - b. Nonverbal communication
  - c. Ability differences
  - d. All of the above**