

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 01: Business Communication in the Digital Age

1. Which of the following statements about communicating in today's digital world is *least* accurate?

- a. The digital world is highly connected.
- b. A growing number of workers must be available practically around the clock.
- c. Communication generally flows one way, from businesses to consumers.
- d. Information is often stored in remote locations.

ANSWER: c

2. Communication skills are

- a. not important in technical fields.
- b. critical to effective job placement, performance, career advancement, and organizational success.
- c. required only for high-level positions.
- d. not important in a down economy.

ANSWER: b

3. Which of the following statements about writing skills is *most* accurate?

- a. Writing skills in today's workplace are an advantage, but they are not a necessity.
- b. Only the very top level of salaried employees need good writing skills.
- c. Having good writing skills can improve your chances for promotion and can result in higher earnings.
- d. Today's communication technologies have made writing obsolete.

ANSWER: c

4. What is the *most* accurate statement about being an effective communicator in the digital age?

- a. Digital workplace writing can be much more casual than traditional business writing.
- b. Don't worry about your daily texts, Facebook postings, and tweets because they're not "real" writing.
- c. Because most business is conducted face-to-face, you don't have to be a grammar expert.
- d. Realize that because of social media and other online technology, your writing will be on display more than ever before; and it must be professional and correct.

ANSWER: d

5. The 21-century economy is based mainly on

- a. information and knowledge.
- b. physical labor.
- c. a supply of raw materials.
- d. capital.

ANSWER: a

6. Knowledge and information workers must be able to think critically, make sound decisions, and

- a. make a minimum number of tweets per day.
- b. communicate information to others.
- c. install software programs.
- d. lift heavy objects.

ANSWER: b

7. Thinking creatively and critically means

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- a. agreeing with your supervisor at all times.
- b. going with your gut instinct.
- c. being able to make decisions quickly.
- d. having opinions that are backed by reason and evidence.

ANSWER: d

8. Which of the following statements is *least* accurate?

- a. You should plan for lifelong learning and constant training.
- b. Employees should expect employers to provide them with a clearly defined career path.
- c. Most workers today will not find nine-to-five jobs or receive predictable pay increases.
- d. Workers must be willing to continually learn new skills.

ANSWER: b

9. The most successful job candidate in today's competitive job market

- a. should have at least a 2.0 grade point average.
- b. realizes that writing skills are not important except at the highest levels of management.
- c. can design a really "killer" website.
- d. is able to communicate effectively about work that is increasingly complex and intellectually demanding.

ANSWER: d

10. The most significant trends in today's dynamic workplace include global competition, team-based projects, flattened management hierarchies, new communication technologies, and

- a. union participation and regulation.
- b. more homogeneous workforces.
- c. expectations of around-the-clock availability.
- d. stricter dress codes.

ANSWER: c

11. Which of the following statements about social media is *most* accurate?

- a. Social media are still relatively new and untried communication channels for some businesses.
- b. Most businesses today have discarded old media and instead use social media exclusively for communicating and marketing.
- c. Social media networks first attracted industries built on tradition and formality.
- d. Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter offer no advantages for businesses.

ANSWER: a

12. What type of technology makes it possible to locate and identify a computing device as soon as users connect to the network?

- a. Cloud computing technology
- b. Blogs, podcasts, and wikis
- c. Telephony
- d. Presence technology

ANSWER: d

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13. Gerard's company will no longer store its data using in-house hardware and software; instead, data will be stored online at a remote location. This type of technology is called

- a. telephony.
- b. an open office.
- c. cloud computing.
- d. Web conferencing.

ANSWER: c

14. Kendra is responsible for updating her company's Facebook page with information about products, promotions, and special events. Kendra is using a communication medium called

- a. presence technology.
- b. blogging.
- c. social media.
- d. Web conferencing.

ANSWER: c

15. "Around-the clock availability"

- a. means that you will be paid for working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- b. means that you may be expected to work long hours without extra compensation and be available practically anytime and anywhere, should a crisis strike at work.
- c. is illegal under U.S. law.
- d. refers only to websites, not people.

ANSWER: b

16. What has led to the increase in the number of companies that operate globally?

- a. The rise of new communication technologies and advanced forms of transportation
- b. The removal of trade barriers
- c. Saturated local markets
- d. All of these (the rise of new communication technologies and advanced forms of transportation, the removal of trade barriers, and saturated local markets)

ANSWER: d

17. Which of the following statements about global competition is *least* accurate?

- a. Only medium and large companies compete globally.
- b. Many traditional U.S. companies generate more profit abroad than locally.
- c. If necessary, multinational companies should adjust their products to different palates.
- d. Successful communication in global markets requires developing new skills and attitudes.

ANSWER: a

18. For years businesses have been flattening their management hierarchies. This flattening means that

- a. information must flow through more layers of management.
- b. it takes longer to make decisions.
- c. various areas within an organization have little contact with one another.
- d. employees at all levels must be skilled communicators.

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ANSWER: d

19. Which of the following statements about team-based management is *least* accurate?

- a. Many companies use cross-functional teams to empower employees and boost their involvement in decision making.
- b. When individuals on teams don't share the same background or training, working relationships can become strained.
- c. Some organizations form ad-hoc teams that solve particular problems and then disband once they have accomplished their objectives.
- d. Companies that use team-based management prefer to train employees in teamwork skills rather than hire new workers who already possess these skills.

ANSWER: d

20. Which of the following statements about workplace diversity is the *most* accurate?

- a. Teams with diverse membership are more likely to create the products that consumers demand.
- b. The number of older workers is decreasing.
- c. More men pursue higher education than women.
- d. A diverse staff is less able to respond to changes in the customer base in local and world markets.

ANSWER: a

21. Lucy works in an office that has nonterritorial workspaces. This is new to her, and she would like to display good open office etiquette. What should she do?

- a. Speak in a soft voice and wear headphones to cut down on noise.
- b. Try to get to the office first each morning so that she always gets the best desk.
- c. Engage in a lot of chitchat to get to know her coworkers better.
- d. Eavesdrop as often as possible to learn about the company culture.

ANSWER: a

22. Which of the following statements about today's work environments is *least* accurate?

- a. The "anytime, anywhere" office requires only a mobile phone and a wireless connection.
- b. Many home office workers now take part in "coworking" and share communal office space with others.
- c. You won't find open workspaces or flexible workstations in traditional offices.
- d. Working from home or on the road makes communication skills even more important.

ANSWER: c

23. The three basic functions of business communication are to

- a. inform, entertain, and impress.
- b. inform, persuade, and promote goodwill.
- c. inform, persuade, and explain.
- d. inform, instruct, and entertain.

ANSWER: b

24. What is the *most* common business communication function?

- a. To persuade
- b. To inform

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- c. To promote goodwill
- d. To dazzle

ANSWER: b

25. What statement about communicating in today's work environment is *least* accurate?
- a. Today's organizations use e-mail, instant messaging (IM), texting, and interacting with social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to speed up the flow of communication.
  - b. Web chats are rapidly becoming the preferred communication channel for online customer service.
  - c. Hard-copy memos and letters still outnumber other forms of communication.
  - d. Smartphone owners outnumber users of basic mobile phones in the US.

ANSWER: c

26. Which of the following statements about communication in today's business organizations is *most* accurate?
- a. Many companies used intranets to communicate with customers, outside vendors, and governmental agencies.
  - b. Smartphones and tablet computers are prevalent in the workplace but do not have the capabilities to replace laptops and personal computers.
  - c. Wireless access is increasingly blanketing entire office buildings, airports, hotels, restaurants, school and college campuses, cities, and other public spaces.
  - d. The most common workplace use of tablet computers is blogging.

ANSWER: c

27. Which of the following is an advantage of written communication?
- a. Creates a permanent record
  - b. Provides immediate feedback
  - c. Is more personal than oral communication
  - d. Is effective for delivering nonverbal cues

ANSWER: a

28. Which of the following is *not* an advantage of oral communication?
- a. Provides immediate feedback
  - b. Promotes easy recall
  - c. Can be adjusted to the audience
  - d. Supplies nonverbal cues

ANSWER: b

29. Which of the following statements comparing oral and written communication is *least* accurate?
- a. Written communication is preferred when a permanent record is needed.
  - b. Written messages are generally more organized and well-considered than oral messages.
  - c. One advantage of oral communication such as a face-to-face meeting is that it allows for immediate feedback.
  - d. Oral communication is preferred when presenting formal or complex ideas.

ANSWER: d

30. The most prevalent communication channel in the workplace today is
- a. texting.

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- b. e-mail.
- c. face-to-face meetings.
- d. Facebook.

ANSWER: b

31. Which of the following is an example of an internal organizational communication?

- a. A tweet sent to a customer about a private sale that will take place tomorrow
- b. A Facebook page advertising a company's products
- c. A meeting of all department managers
- d. An annual report sent to company stockholders

ANSWER: c

32. Which of the following is an example of external organizational communication?

- a. An employee performance appraisal
- b. A brochure sent to a prospective customer
- c. A report recommending a change in company procedure
- d. An e-mail message to employees about an upcoming training seminar

ANSWER: b

33. *Media richness theory* attempts to classify media in organizations according to

- a. how much the media cost to use.
- b. how technologically advanced the media are.
- c. how widely the media are used in the workplace.
- d. how much clarifying information they are able to convey from a sender to a recipient.

ANSWER: d

34. Which of the following is considered a rich medium?

- a. E-mail message
- b. Face-to-face conversation
- c. Flyer or poster
- d. Blog

ANSWER: b

35. Of the following, the *least* rich communication media are

- a. face-to-face meetings and conversations.
- b. e-mail messages.
- c. flyers or posters.
- d. telephone calls.

ANSWER: c

36. Daniel must handle a complex organizational issue. Which of the following media would be *best* for this purpose?

- a. Videoconference
- b. E-mail message
- c. Telephone conversation

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- d. Face-to-face meeting

ANSWER: d

37. *Social presence* is defined as

- a. how extroverted a person is.
- b. how well a company uses social media for communication.
- c. the degree of “salience” (being there) between a sender and receiver using a communication medium.
- d. a person’s ability to get along with others.

ANSWER: c

38. What is the *least* accurate statement about social presence?

- a. Media with high social presence convey warmth and are personal.
- b. Social presence is greater in asynchronous communication than in synchronous communication.
- c. Social presence can mean how much awareness of the sender is conveyed along with the message.
- d. Social presence is greatest face-to-face, and less so in mediated and written communication.

ANSWER: b

39. Mina wants to use the communication medium with the highest social presence. Which of the following should she choose?

- a. E-mail
- b. Blog posting
- c. Discussion forum posting
- d. Live chat

ANSWER: d

40. A free exchange of information helps organizations

- a. respond rapidly to changing markets.
- b. build employee morale.
- c. serve the public.
- d. do all of these (respond rapidly to changing markets, build employee morale, serve the public).

ANSWER: d

41. Which of the following is an example of horizontal communication in an organization?

- a. Six marketing reps meet to discuss ideas for targeting new customers.
- b. An accounting clerk submits a progress report about a current project to her supervisor.
- c. An employee suggests to her supervisor a way to improve customer service.
- d. A supervisor sends an e-mail message to all division employees detailing the newest procedure for submitting expense claims.

ANSWER: a

42. Which of the following is an example of upward communication in an organization?

- a. Three administrative assistants meet to discuss possible software upgrades.
- b. A department manager sends a text message to his employees about a new overtime policy.
- c. A warehouse worker suggests to his boss a way to improve employee morale.

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- d. The CEO sends an e-mail message to all employees inviting them to a company picnic.

*ANSWER: c*

43. Which of the following is an example of downward communication in an organization?

- a. A business professor submits a conference report to her dean.
- b. Four accountants meet to discuss the quarterly financial reports.
- c. Members of a task force submit a progress report to the CEO.
- d. The CFO sends information about a new accounting regulation to employees in the accounting department.

*ANSWER: d*

44. To improve communication and to compete more effectively, many of today's companies have

- a. eliminated the grapevine.
- b. restructured and reengineered themselves into smaller operating units and work teams.
- c. discouraged free-flowing communication.
- d. increased the number of levels in the communication chain.

*ANSWER: b*

45. Naoko has just moved to the United States and is taking a class to improve her English skills. What organizational communication barrier is she trying to overcome?

- a. Lack of communication skills
- b. Long lines of communication
- c. Differing frames of reference
- d. Ego involvement

*ANSWER: a*

46. Bert is CEO of an organization with many layers in the chain of command. He is looking for ways to reduce these layers so that he can communicate more directly with the first-line employees. What organizational communication barrier is he trying to overcome?

- a. Lack of trust between management and employees
- b. Long lines of communication
- c. Closed communication climate
- d. Ego involvement

*ANSWER: b*

47. Melinda was recently hired as manager of a small retail establishment. She immediately noticed that employees seem afraid to speak with her. She wants her employees to feel comfortable coming to her about anything. What organizational communication barrier is she trying to overcome?

- a. Lack of trust between management and employees
- b. Top-heavy organizational structure
- c. Turf wars
- d. Lack of communication skills

*ANSWER: a*

48. Which of the following is an example of an informal organizational communication channel?

- a. A supervisor gives a performance appraisal to her subordinate.



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- b. An employee suggests to his supervisor a way to increase productivity in his department.
- c. Research and development team members hold a virtual meeting to discuss ideas for future products.
- d. An employee starts a blog to share her personal work experiences, opinions, and observations.

ANSWER: d

49. Which of the following statements about formal and informal communication channels is *most* accurate?
- a. All relevant organizational information should flow through formal communication channels.
  - b. A free exchange of information within organizations should be avoided because it can lead to chaos.
  - c. Managers should do everything possible to avoid grapevine communication within an organization.
  - d. Companies should monitor social media sites to see what customers and others are saying about the company.

ANSWER: d

50. Sandra owns a medium-sized financial services firm. She would like to make the best use of the grapevine for communication. What advice would you give her?
- a. Use the grapevine for delivering only good news.
  - b. Stay away from the grapevine and let employees use it privately.
  - c. Increase the amount of information delivered through formal channels.
  - d. Eliminate the grapevine entirely and allow formal communication only.

ANSWER: c

51. Peter has started a new job and has noticed that there is a lot of gossip in his new workplace. He wants to come across professionally. What is the *best* advice you can give him?
- a. Listen to all the gossip he can to learn more about his new workplace.
  - b. Avoid getting involved, even if he hears inaccurate gossip being spread about a coworker.
  - c. Attack any rumors about himself aggressively.
  - d. Don't use the informal grapevine for any kind of workplace communication.

ANSWER: c

52. Covering up incidents, abusing sick days, lying to a supervisor, taking credit for a colleague's ideas, and inflating grades on a résumé are examples of
- a. breaking the law.
  - b. actions necessary to get ahead today.
  - c. unethical actions.
  - d. workplace distrust.

ANSWER: c

53. Which of the following statements about laws is *least* accurate?
- a. People in accounting and finance should be aware of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.
  - b. Anything published on the Internet is in the public domain and can be used freely.
  - c. Assume that anything produced privately after 1989 is copyrighted.
  - d. The concept of fair use gives individuals limited rights to use copyrighted materials without requiring permission.

ANSWER: b

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54. Ethical business communicators strive to tell the truth, label opinions so that they are not confused with facts, are objective, communicate clearly, use inclusive language, and

- a. ensure that communication flows upward, downward, and horizontally.
- b. give credit when using the ideas of others.
- c. encourage feedback.
- d. choose appropriate channels of communication.

ANSWER: b

55. Alyssa has been asked by her boss to sign off on financial statements that she believes are false. Although she feels uncomfortable doing this, she's afraid that she'll be fired if she doesn't comply. Into what ethical trap has Alyssa fallen?

- a. Rationalization trap
- b. Ends-justify-the-means trap
- c. False necessity trap
- d. Doctrine-of-relative filth trap

ANSWER: c

56. Mickey Monus knew that his company Phar-Mor was destined for greatness; he, therefore, felt it was okay to manipulate the accounting records to show a profit instead of a loss to get the company through the rough times. Into what ethical trap did he fall?

- a. Rationalization trap
- b. Ends-justify-the-means trap
- c. False necessity trap
- d. Doctrine-of-relative filth trap

ANSWER: b

57. Chandra spent part of her workday booking flights and accommodations for her vacation next month. She tells herself that this is okay because all of her colleagues use the Internet for personal business at work, and they do it far more than she does. Into what ethical trap did she fall?

- a. Rationalization trap
- b. Ends-justify-the-means trap
- c. False necessity trap
- d. Doctrine-of-relative filth trap

ANSWER: d

58. Steven included on his résumé the job title "Vice President of Reprographics." A reference check uncovered that he was actually a copy machine operator at Kinko's. Into what ethical trap did he fall?

- a. Self-deception trap
- b. Rationalization trap
- c. False necessity trap
- d. Doctrine-of-relative filth trap

ANSWER: a

59. When faced with an ethical dilemma, what is the *first* question you should ask?

- a. What would my family, friends, and coworkers think?
- b. Would I take this action if I were on the opposite side?

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- c. Is the action I am considering legal?
- d. Would a trusted advisor agree with this action?

ANSWER: c

60. Because your department has not reached its sales quota, your boss has asked you to change figures to show that sales were higher than they actually were. Which of the following questions is *not* important as you decide what to do?

- a. Is the action you are considering legal?
- b. Are there better alternatives?
- c. Would family, friends, or coworkers approve?
- d. What is the best channel of communication to use in responding to your boss?

ANSWER: d

61. Communication today generally flows one way—from companies to the public.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: False

62. In making hiring decisions, employers often rank communication skills among the most-requested competencies.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: True

63. Today's new communication technologies have made writing skills less important than in the past.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: False

64. You are born with the abilities to read, listen, speak, and write effectively.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: False

65. The 21st-century economy depends mainly on information and knowledge.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: True

66. Knowledge and information workers are paid for their ability to engage in physical labor and lift heavy objects.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: False

67. Only workers at the highest levels of management are expected to think creatively and critically.

- a. True

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b. False

*ANSWER:* False

68. Flattened management hierarchies allow companies to react more quickly to market changes.

a. True

b. False

*ANSWER:* True

69. Diverse workforces are more likely to create the products that consumers demand.

a. True

b. False

*ANSWER:* True

70. The three primary business communication functions are to inform, to persuade, and to entertain.

a. True

b. False

*ANSWER:* False

71. Communication in today's workplace is shifting from one-sided, slow forms of communication to interactive, instant, less paper-based communication.

a. True

b. False

*ANSWER:* True

72. E-mail is rapidly becoming the preferred communication channel for online customer service.

a. True

b. False

*ANSWER:* False

73. One advantage of oral communication over written communication is that oral communication can be more easily adjusted to the audience.

a. True

b. False

*ANSWER:* True

74. One disadvantage of written communication is that the paper trail it leaves can be dangerous.

a. True

b. False

*ANSWER:* True

75. External communication includes sharing ideas and messages with superiors, coworkers, and subordinates.

a. True

b. False

*ANSWER:* False

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76. Maxwell is sending an e-mail message to the Securities and Exchange Commission to ask about a specific Sarbanes-Oxley regulation. This is an example of internal communication.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* False

77. According to media richness theory, face-to-face conversations are the richest because they provide more helpful cues and allow for immediate feedback.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* True

78. Social presence is greater in asynchronous communication (e-mail, forum post) than in synchronous communication (live chat, IM).

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* False

79. Information flows through formal communication channels in three directions: downward, upward, and spiral.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* False

80. Organizations with free-flowing, open communication tend to be more successful.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* True

81. Melinda, a company department manager, frequently communicates via text messages with other department managers within the company. This is an example of an upward flow of communication.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* False

82. David, a payroll clerk, came up with an idea for processing payroll more efficiently and presented it to the Human Resources Department manager. This is an example of an upward flow of communication.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* True

83. A company's CEO has developed a five-year strategic plan and will share it with all employees. This is an example of downward communication.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* True

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84. Jennifer's poor listening skills cause her to miss much of what her colleagues say during meetings. The organization communication barrier she is experiencing is a lack of communication skills.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* True

85. To improve information flow, many of today's companies have decreased the number of operating units and managers, thereby shortening lines of communication.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* True

86. Managers can use the grapevine productively by sharing bad news as well as good news.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* True

87. Being ethical makes good business sense.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* True

88. Some states have passed "Plain English" laws that require businesses to write policies, warranties, and contracts in language comprehensible to average readers.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* True

89. Deanna frequently uses her work computer to check and update her personal Facebook page; however, she feels what she is doing is acceptable because her colleagues use their computers much more than she does for personal activities. Deanna has fallen into the self-deception ethical trap.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* False

90. Robert has altered figures on his firm's financial statements to make revenues for the quarter look higher. He thinks that doing this will cause an increase in his firm's stock price, which will make stockholders happy. He has fallen into the ends-justify-the-means ethical trap.

- a. True
- b. False

*ANSWER:* True

91. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ or information worker engages in mind work and is paid for his or her education and ability to learn.

*ANSWER:* knowledge

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92. The three primary functions of business communication are to inform, to persuade, and to promote \_\_\_\_\_.

ANSWER: goodwill

93. \_\_\_\_\_ communication includes exchanging ideas and messages with superiors, coworkers, and subordinates.

ANSWER: Internal

94. \_\_\_\_\_ communication includes exchanging ideas and messages with customers, suppliers, the government, and the public.

ANSWER: External

95. Telephone calls, conversations, interviews, meetings, and conferences are all forms of \_\_\_\_\_ communication.

ANSWER: oral

96. E-mail messages, memos, letters, and reports are all forms of \_\_\_\_\_ communication.

ANSWER: written

97. \_\_\_\_\_ richness theory attempts to classify media in organizations according to how much clarifying information they are able to convey from a sender to a recipient.

ANSWER: Media

98. Media with high \_\_\_\_\_ presence convey warmth and are personal.

ANSWER: social

99. Official information among workers typically flows through formal channels in three directions: \_\_\_\_\_, upward, and horizontally.

ANSWER: downward

100. Policies, procedures, directives, job plans, and mission goals flow \_\_\_\_\_ from managers to employees.

ANSWER: downward

101. Feedback from employees to management forms the \_\_\_\_\_ flow of communication in most organizations.

ANSWER: upward

102. Workers at the same level coordinate tasks, share information, solve problems, and resolve conflicts through \_\_\_\_\_ communication.

ANSWER: horizontal

103. The \_\_\_\_\_ is an informal channel of communication that carries organizationally relevant gossip and functions through social relationships.

ANSWER: grapevine

104. \_\_\_\_\_ refers to the conventional standards of right and wrong that prescribe what people should do.

ANSWER: Ethics

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105. Under the concept of \_\_\_\_\_ use, individuals have limited rights to use copyrighted material without requiring permission.

*ANSWER:* fair

106. \_\_\_\_\_ are verifiable and often are quantifiable; opinions are beliefs held with confidence but without substantiation.

*ANSWER:* Facts

107. Ethical business communicators are \_\_\_\_\_ when they recognize their own biases and strive to keep them from distorting a message.

*ANSWER:* objective

108. \_\_\_\_\_ English laws require businesses to write policies, warranties, and contracts in language comprehensible to average readers.

*ANSWER:* Plain

109. \_\_\_\_\_ language is language that does not discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of their sex, ethnicity, disability, race, sexual orientation, or age.

*ANSWER:* Inclusive

110. In falling into the \_\_\_\_\_ trap, people try to explain away unethical actions by justifying them with excuses.

*ANSWER:* rationalization

111. Explain why having strong writing skills is important in today's digital world.

*ANSWER:* Student answers will vary and should touch on some or all of the following points.

Writing skills can be your ticket to work—or your ticket out the door. Two thirds of salaried employees have some writing responsibility. However, about one third of them do not meet the writing requirements for their positions. Businesses desperately need employees who can write well. Effective writing skills can be a stepping stone to great job opportunities, or, if poorly developed, may derail a career. Writing is a marker of high-skill, high-wage, professional work; if you can't express yourself clearly, you limit your opportunities for many positions. Long gone are the days when business was mostly conducted face-to-face and when administrative assistants corrected spelling and grammar for their bosses. Although interpersonal skills still matter greatly, writing effectively is critical. Ever since the digital revolution swept the workplace, most workers write their own messages. Writing matters more than ever because the online media require more of it, not less.

112. Describe five trends occurring in today's dynamic workplace and discuss how communication skills are related to those changes.

*ANSWER:* Students will select five of the following and answers will vary.

- Social media and changing communication technologies: To use new communication technologies, including social media, the Internet, e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, voice mail, telephony, smartphones, powerful laptop computers and tablets, satellite communications, wireless networking,
- 1) teleconferencing, videoconferencing, blogs, wikis, and presence technology effectively, skilled business communicators must develop a tool kit of new communication skills including how to select the best communication channel, how to use each channel safely and effectively, and how to incorporate the latest technologies and search tools efficiently.



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- "Anytime, anywhere": 24/7/365 availability offices: As you rise on the career ladder, you may be expected to work long hours without extra compensation and be available practically anytime and anywhere, should a crisis strike at work. In many industries information workers are expected to remain tethered to their workplaces with laptops, tablets, and smartphones around the clock and on weekends.
- The global marketplace and competition: Successful communication in global markets requires developing new skills and attitudes. These include cultural knowledge and sensitivity, flexibility, and patience. If necessary, multinational companies even adjust their products to different palates.
- Shrinking management layers: Today's flatter organizations require that every employee be a skilled communicator. Frontline employees, as well as managers, participate in critical thinking and decision making. Nearly everyone is a writer and a communicator.
- Collaborative environment and teaming: When companies form cross-functional teams, individuals must work together and share information. These employees must develop strong interpersonal, negotiation, and collaboration skills.
- Growing workforce diversity: Business communicators must be able to interact with many coworkers who differ from them in race, ethnicity, gender, age, and many other ways.
- Virtual and nonterritorial offices: Working in open offices, having flexible working arrangements, telecommuting, and being a member of virtual teams all require the need for even stronger communication skills. Staying connected involves sending messages, most of which are written, meaning that one's writing skills are constantly on display.
- 2) available practically anytime and anywhere, should a crisis strike at work. In many industries information workers are expected to remain tethered to their workplaces with laptops, tablets, and smartphones around the clock and on weekends.
  - 3) developing new skills and attitudes. These include cultural knowledge and sensitivity, flexibility, and patience. If necessary, multinational companies even adjust their products to different palates.
  - 4) communicator. Frontline employees, as well as managers, participate in critical thinking and decision making. Nearly everyone is a writer and a communicator.
  - 5) work together and share information. These employees must develop strong interpersonal, negotiation, and collaboration skills.
  - 6) must be able to interact with many coworkers who differ from them in race, ethnicity, gender, age, and many other ways.
  - 7) communication skills. Staying connected involves sending messages, most of which are written, meaning that one's writing skills are constantly on display.

113. Explain *media richness theory* and given an example of a rich medium and a lean medium.

ANSWER: Student answers will vary.

Media richness theory attempts to classify media in organizations according to how much clarifying information they are able to convey from a sender to a recipient. The more helpful cues and immediate feedback the medium provides, the richer it is. The richest media are face-to-face conversations and meetings. The leanest media are newsletters, flyers, bulletins, and posters.

114. Compare and contrast formal and informal channels of organizational communication.

ANSWER: Student answers will vary.

Information flows formally in organizations in three ways:

- 1) Downward flow: Information flowing downward generally moves from decision makers, including the CEO and managers, through the chain of command to workers. This information includes job plans, policies, procedures, and feedback about employee performance.
- 2) Upward flow: Information flowing upward provides feedback from nonmanagement employees to management. This information includes such items as progress reports and suggestions.
- 3) Horizontal flow: Lateral channels transmit information horizontally among workers at the same level. These channels enable individuals to coordinate tasks, share information, solve problems, and resolve conflicts.

Information also flows informally in organizations, most commonly through the grapevine, an informal channel of communication that functions through social relationships and carries organizationally relevant

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gossip. The grapevine can also be used by managers as an excellent source of information about employee morale and problems.

115. Describe the five ethical traps that business communicators often face when making ethical decisions and give a workplace-related example of each.

*ANSWER:* Student answers will vary.

- 1) False Necessity Trap: People act from the belief that they are doing what they must do. For example, an employee inflates his or her sales figures because he or she is afraid he or she will lose his or her job.
- 2) Doctrine-of-Relative-Filth Trap: Unethical actions sometimes look good when compared to worse behavior by others. For example, you add a little bit to this month's expense account, but you know that many of your coworkers pad their expense accounts much more every time they submit them.
- 3) Rationalization Trap: In falling into the rationalization trap, people try to explain away unethical actions by justifying them with excuses. For example, you sneak out of work a little bit early several times a month, but you feel you deserve to because you work so hard while you're in the office.
- 4) Self-Deception Trap: Individuals fall into the self-deception trap when they try to make themselves look better than they are. For example, to impress potential employers, a job applicant says she worked longer at a job than she did.
- 5) Ends-Justify-the-Means Trap: Taking unethical actions to accomplish a desirable goal is a common trap. For example, a supervisor starts false rumors about an unproductive employee so that he or she has a reason to fire the employee, which will boost productivity in the department.