

# 4

# Navigating the Business Communication Environment

## Chapter Outline

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### Ethics

### Corporate Culture

### Interpersonal Communication

- Listening
- Conversational Style
- Nonverbal Communication
- Etiquette
- Networking

### Time Management

- Techniques
- Multitasking

### Trends in Business Communication

- Data Security
- Electronic Privacy

- Customer Service
- Work/Family Balance
- Environmental Concern
- Globalization and Outsourcing
- Diversity
- Teamwork
- Job Flexibility
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Big Data
- Rapid Rate of Change

### Summary by Learning Objectives

# NEWSWORTHY COMMUNICATION

## Creating a Fresh Environment



**T**he nonverbal communication in a business environment affects what people think and do, even in grocery stores.

Traditionally, grocery stores have been arranged around the typical person's shopping list, with quickly bought items in the front of the store, produce on the side, and meat and dairy in the back. But as more consumers seek fresh and organic items, grocery stores are changing their organizational strategies.

One major change is including packaged goods in the produce

section. Researchers have found that when items such as boxed pasta or bottled juice are on the same shelves as fresh fruits and vegetables, consumers believe those items are fresher and higher in quality.

Grocery stores are building on the "halo effect" of fresh produce by making produce sections larger, including more packaged items with the produce, and redesigning the produce sections to be more appealing to customers.

Some food companies, such as Kraft Foods, are pushing retailers

to change other parts of the stores, as well. Kraft believes items such as cheese and milk should be closer to the produce to communicate that those items are also farm fresh.

The design and arrangement of products in grocery stores can have a huge impact on consumers' perceptions and their purchasing decisions. Creating the right business environment takes time and attention to both verbal and nonverbal forms of communication.

*Source:* Sarah Nassauer, "A Food Fight in the Produce Aisle," *Wall Street Journal*, October 20, 2011, D1.

## Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will know

- LO 4-1** Why ethics is so important in business communication.
- LO 4-2** How corporate culture impacts the business environment.
- LO 4-3** Why interpersonal communication is important.
- LO 4-4** How to use your time more efficiently.
- LO 4-5** What the trends in business communication are.

### Warren Buffett on Ethics



In a letter to Berkshire Hathaway directors, Chairman and CEO Warren Buffett says this about ethics:

"We *must* continue to measure every act against not only what is legal but also what we would be happy to have written about on the front page of a national newspaper in an article written by an unfriendly but intelligent reporter.

"Sometimes your associates will say, 'Everybody else is doing it.' This rationale is almost always a bad one if it is the main justification for a business action. It is totally unacceptable when evaluating a moral decision. Whenever somebody offers that phrase as a rationale, in effect they are saying that they can't come up with a *good* reason. If anyone offers this explanation, tell them to try using it with a reporter or a judge and see how far it gets them.

"... It's very likely that if a given course of action evokes hesitation *per se*, it's too close to the line and should be abandoned. There's plenty of money to be made in the center of the court. If it's questionable whether some action is close to the line, just assume it is outside and forget it."

Quoted from Richard J. Connors, ed., *Warren Buffett on Business: Principles from the Sage of Omaha* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2010), 210.

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In addition to adapting to audiences and building goodwill, business communications are heavily influenced by the environments in which they are created and interpreted. Part of this environment is shaped by national culture, such as the growing concern about business ethics, and part is shaped by corporate culture. Part is shaped by individual behaviors, such as those involved in interpersonal communication. A final part is shaped by widespread trends, such as globalization or the green movement. Technology and information overload, which are perhaps the largest of these trends, are discussed extensively in Chapter 9, along with effective ways to deal with them.

### Ethics LO 4-1

With the official recognition of a serious worldwide recession, along with the subprime mortgage debacle, ethics concerns have become a major part of the business environment. Financial giants such as AIG, Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Wachovia, and Washington Mutual had to be bailed out or went bankrupt. Banks, corporate officials, and rating agencies all were accused of unethical behavior. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) charged Goldman Sachs with fraud on securities linked to subprime mortgages; the firm settled out of court for more than half a billion dollars.

In a much larger lawsuit, Credit Suisse was sued for \$11.2 billion in losses from bundled mortgage securities. According to New York's attorney general, Credit Suisse "kept its investors in the dark about the inadequacy of its review procedures and defects in the loans," a major lapse in business communication. The bank was also accused of misrepresenting information in its SEC filings regarding when problem loans would be repurchased.<sup>1</sup>

Ethics breaches have cost other organizations millions and even billions of dollars.

- GlaxoSmithKline incurred a \$3 billion fine for failing to report drug safety data. Previously the company had pleaded guilty to charges that it knowingly sold adulterated drugs, including the antidepressant Paxil, and paid fines of \$750 million.<sup>2</sup>
- Visa and MasterCard, plus the banks that issue their credit cards, settled for \$7.25 billion over fixing card fees.<sup>3</sup>
- British bank HSBC set aside more than \$2 billion to cover fines and lawsuits in a money laundering case.<sup>4</sup>

- Siemens settled with the government for \$800 million in a bribery case; the document review alone cost an additional \$100 million.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2013, the credit-rating agency Standard & Poor's was sued by the U.S. government for \$5 billion; the suit alleged the agency inflated credit ratings for bundled mortgage securities.<sup>6</sup>

Billionaires fell as well. Bernie Madoff was sentenced to prison in what may have been the biggest Ponzi scheme in history, one that defrauded thousands of investors of billions of dollars. Hedge-fund manager Raj Rajaratnam was convicted of securities fraud and conspiracy in the biggest insider-trading case to that time.<sup>7</sup>

The Ethics Resource Center, America's oldest nonprofit organization devoted to ethical practice, reported in its 2011 National Business Ethics Survey, that 45% of employees surveyed personally witnessed unethical or illegal behavior; 35% of those witnesses did not report it. The most frequent misconducts were misuse of company time, abusive behavior, lying, company resource abuse, violating company Internet use policies, discrimination, conflicts of interest, inappropriate social networking, health or safety violations, stealing, falsifying time reports, benefits violations, and sexual harassment.<sup>8</sup>

Some common reasons for not reporting ethical misconduct are the following: it's standard practice here, it's not a big deal, it's not my responsibility (a particularly common reason for junior employees), and I want to be loyal to my colleagues/manager/company (stated negatively, this reason is "fear of consequences").<sup>9</sup>

On the other side of the coin, positive ethical efforts are also getting attention. The United Nations Global Compact, "the world's largest corporate citizenship and sustainability initiative," focuses on human rights, labor, environment, and anticorruption measures. More than 7,000 businesses in 145 countries participate.<sup>10</sup> The Clinton Global Initiative has brought together 150 heads of state, 20 Nobel laureates, and hundreds of CEOs, who collectively have committed \$63 billion. This money has already impacted the lives of 400 million people in 180 countries.<sup>11</sup>

Other organizations and people also promote ethical efforts:

- The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation received new attention when Warren Buffett announced his transfer of billions of dollars to it. The three philanthropists have attracted still more attention with their efforts to convince other billionaires to pledge the majority of their wealth to philanthropy. The list of those who have made the pledge is posted at [givingpledge.org](http://givingpledge.org); it included 105 pledgers in Spring 2013.
- Google has created Google.org "to help address global challenges." It focuses on problems where Google's "core capabilities" are most useful, such as creating the Google Person Finder, to help people connect after major disasters, and the Flu and Dengue Trends, which provide early warning of possible outbreaks.<sup>12</sup>
- Robin Hood, a venture philanthropy, "robs" the rich (its board members cover all costs, so 100% of money donated goes to fund programs) to help the poor in New York City. In the past 20 years, it has distributed over \$1 billion.<sup>13</sup>
- Merck provides its drug Mectizan "free of charge and in perpetuity" to treat river blindness worldwide. Its donations reach more than 60 million people a year in 33 countries.<sup>14</sup>

### Egg-semprary Communication Ethics?



Scientists at a university diagnostic lab faced an ethical communication problem. Four months before a large salmonella outbreak involving eggs, they were aware that hens at a huge egg-producing business were infected with salmonella.

They reported their findings to the producer requesting the testing. However, because of the lab's confidentiality policy, they were unable to report the presence of salmonella to authorities (salmonella was not a disease that legally had to be reported). What followed was the sickening of 60,000 consumers and the recall of 550 million eggs.

Scientists who worked at the lab told the press later that owners would no longer get their animals tested if the lab lacked the confidentiality policy. They noted that the lab's policy was similar to laboratory/patient policies in human medicine. Under the confidentiality agreements between the lab and people whose animals were tested, going to the authorities would have been unethical and probably would have resulted in firings.

What would you have done in their situation?

Adapted from Hannah Furfaro, "ISU Egg Researchers Discuss Their Role in 2010 Recall," *Ames Tribune*, June 6, 2012, A1; and Ryan J. Foley, "ISU Lab Warned of Salmonella in Eggs," *Ames Tribune*, June 5, 2012, A1.



Figure 4.1	Business Ethics Resources on the Web
<a href="http://www.ethicsweb.ca/resources/business">http://www.ethicsweb.ca/resources/business</a>	
<a href="http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/focusareas/business/">http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/focusareas/business/</a>	
<a href="http://www.businessethicsresources.com/">http://www.businessethicsresources.com/</a>	
<a href="http://www.ethics.org">http://www.ethics.org</a>	
<a href="http://www.ethicsweb.ca/resources/business/codes.html">http://www.ethicsweb.ca/resources/business/codes.html</a>	

While many tech companies invest in computers and computer support for schools, in 1994 IBM launched a new program, Reinventing Education, in the hopes of bringing about some systemic improvements in pedagogy. IBM has invested over \$75 million in this philanthropic endeavor. In addition to the schools involved, IBM profited from the program as well; 45 patents or patent applications resulted from the work as IBM learned new ways to apply technology to tackle huge, complex issues.<sup>15</sup>

Business ethics includes far more than corporate greed, international pacts, and philanthropy, of course. Much of business ethics involves routine practices, and many of these practices involve communication. How can we make our contracts with our clients and suppliers easier to understand? How can we best communicate with our employees? How much should our hospital disclose about infection rates?

Many basic, daily communication decisions involve an ethics component. Am I including all the information my audience needs? Am I expressing it in ways they will understand? Am I putting it in a format that helps my audience grasp it quickly? Am I including information for all segments of my audience? Am I taking information from other sources accurately? Am I acknowledging my sources? Figure 4.1 lists some web resources that deal with business ethics.

Figure 4.2 elaborates on ethical components of communication. As it suggests, language, graphics, and document design—basic parts of any business document—can be ethical or manipulative. Persuading and gaining compliance—activities at the heart of business and organizational life—can be done with respect or contempt for customers, co-workers, and subordinates.

In these days of instant communication, you, like the organization in which you work, must always act in an ethical manner. Consequences for not doing so are becoming more common as disgruntled colleagues/employees now have ample means for whistle-blowing.

There are also positive reasons for ethical behavior. In addition to moral reasons, there are business ones. As the Ethics Resource Center notes, customers and employees are attracted to ethical businesses. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, a professor at Harvard Business School, argues in her book, *SuperCorp: How Vanguard Companies Create Innovation, Profits, Growth, and Social Good*, that companies desiring to do good have a competitive advantage. In fact, a benevolent viewpoint provides a wider view of society and thus awareness of new opportunities for growth and innovation by solving the problems of unmet needs.

Many religions and philosophers have offered advice on how to be ethical. Some of the more familiar advice is the Golden Rule (do unto others as you would have them do unto you) and the utilitarian principle that an action should produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. Business leaders have also given advice. Warren Buffett has offered the newspaper criterion: how would you feel if your actions were on the front page of a national newspaper? (For more Buffett guidelines, see the sidebar on page 88.)

**Figure 4.2****Ethical Issues in Business Communications**

<b>Manner of conveying the message</b>	<b>Qualities of the message</b>	<b>Larger organizational context of the message</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the language clear to the audience? Does it respect the audience?</li> <li>• Do the words balance the organization's right to present its best case with its responsibility to present its message honestly?</li> <li>• Do graphics help the audience understand? Or are graphics used to distract or confuse?</li> <li>• Does the design of the document make reading easy? Does document design attempt to make readers skip key points?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the message an ethical one that is honest and sensitive to all stakeholders?</li> <li>• Have interested parties been able to provide input?</li> <li>• Does the audience get all the information it needs to make a good decision or is information withheld?</li> <li>• Is information communicated so the audience can grasp it or are data "dumped" without any context?</li> <li>• Are the arguments logical? Are they supported with adequate evidence?</li> <li>• Are the emotional appeals used fairly? Do they supplement logic rather than substitute for it?</li> <li>• Does the organizational pattern lead the audience without undue manipulation?</li> <li>• Does the message use good sources? Are the sources used honestly? Are they documented?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the organization treat its employees? How do employees treat each other?</li> <li>• How sensitive is the organization to stakeholders such as the people who live near its factories, stores, or offices and to the general public?</li> <li>• Does the organization support employees' efforts to be honest, fair, and ethical?</li> <li>• Do the organization's actions in making products, buying supplies, and marketing goods and services stand up to ethical scrutiny?</li> <li>• Is the organization a good corporate citizen, helpful rather than harmful to the community in which it exists?</li> <li>• Are the organization's products or services a good use of scarce resources?</li> </ul>

Tony Hsieh, the founder and CEO of Zappos, offers this useful ethics guideline:

*As a guiding principle in life for anything I do, I try to ask myself, What would happen if everyone in the world acted in the same way? What would the world look like? What would the net effect be on the overall happiness in the world?* [Hsieh's italics]

This thought experiment has been useful to me when thinking about whether to share how we do things at Zappos, or whether to get upset at the waitress who accidentally got my order wrong, or whether to hold the door open for a stranger who's a slightly inconvenient distance away.

The same questions are just as important for deciding what not to do, even if not doing anything is the default choice.<sup>16</sup>

A widely used system by philosopher Michael Davis for ethical decision making offers these tests for options in an ethical dilemma:

- **Harm:** Does this option do less harm than any other?
- **Publicity:** Would I want my choice of this option published in the news?
- **Defensibility:** Could I defend my choice of this option before a congressional committee or a committee of my peers?
- **Self-application:** Would I still think this choice good if I were one of those adversely affected by it?

**Rule 34: Don't Plagiarize**

"Do not plagiarize" should have been included in *Unwritten Rules of Management*, the book by William Swanson, CEO of Raytheon. In 2004, Raytheon gave employees free copies of the book, which contained 33 rules. The book quickly became widely read by professionals and executives because of its humorous approach. However, an engineer at Hewlett-Packard discovered that 13 of the rules had been previously published by W. J. King in his 1944 bestseller, *The Unwritten Laws of Engineering*. Further findings uncovered that the additional rules were obtained from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and humor editorial writer Dave Barry.

Swanson apologized for the mistake, which, he states, began when he asked employees to create a presentation from a file. The presentation was a great hit, which led to the creation of the 33 rules—one for each year he worked for Raytheon. Unfortunately, the rules were not original and the sources were not properly cited.

How can you avoid plagiarism?

Adapted from Lisa Takeuchi Cullen, "Rule No. 1: Don't Copy," *Time*, May 15, 2006, 41.

- **Colleagues:** What do my colleagues say when I suggest this option as my solution?
- **Profession:** What might my profession's governing body or ethics committee say about this option?
- **Organization:** What does the company's ethics officer or legal counsel say about this option?<sup>17</sup>

## Corporate Culture LO 4-2

Another strong influence on the business environment is corporate culture (see Chapter 2 for ways to analyze corporate culture). Corporate cultures vary widely. They range from formal—with individual offices, jackets, and hierarchical lines of command—to informal—with open office space, casual attire, and individually empowered workers. Characteristics of popular corporate cultures include flexible work arrangements, profit sharing, information sharing, good training, health insurance, and wellness programs.

Both large and small companies get positive publicity for their corporate cultures.

- Google is known for company gyms, well-stocked snack rooms, restaurants, and casual work attire.
- Ogilvy & Mather's Canton, China, office has a carnival theme to remind employees of the company's mission to "stay fresh." The décor includes a full-size carousel, carousel horses throughout the office, circus lights, and a fake Ferris wheel, whose carriages serve as small meeting rooms.<sup>18</sup>
- Dealer.com offers subsidized meals at its café, with organic and locally grown food, wellness seminars on exercise and stress management, chair massages, bike rentals, tennis and basketball courts, fitness center, and half-price ski passes. The company supports its sports teams, including softball, volleyball, soccer, bowling, and dragon-boat racing.<sup>19</sup>

Two companies in the same field may have very different cultures. When Procter & Gamble bought Gillette, the company expected a smooth marriage between the world's number one toothbrush, Oral-B, and the world's number two toothpaste, Crest. But cultural differences caused problems. Gillette employees found P&G's culture rigid, its decision making slow. Gillette employees also had to learn P&G's famous acronyms, such as CIB (consumer is boss) and FMOT (first moment of truth, when consumers notice the product). P&G people sent memos, Gillette people called meetings.<sup>20</sup>



Some employees use exercise balls as desk chairs. The balls require employees to use core muscles to maintain posture. Employees say they are also fun because they can bounce.

Wise companies also use effective corporate cultures to retain hourly workers. Hotels lose two-thirds of their hourly workers annually, according to hotel survey firm Market Metrix. Each departure costs midrange hotels about \$5,000 in lost productivity, recruiting, and training. But Joie de Vivre Hospitality has a turnover rate that is half the industry average. The CEO attributes the low rate to a corporate culture that listens to employees, enacts some of their suggestions, and tries to make work fun. In addition to awards, the company sponsors parties, annual retreats, and regularly scheduled dinners. It also offers free classes on subjects such as Microsoft Excel and English as a second language.<sup>21</sup>

Corporate culture is at the heart of the customer service focus at Zappos, the Internet footwear retailer. The company nurtures a touch of weirdness to make work more fun. That same touch of weirdness also encourages innovation. To increase serendipitous interactions, all employees enter and exit through the reception area, not other building doors. Logging in to the company computer requires completing the short multiple-choice test to name the randomly selected employee whose picture is displayed.<sup>22</sup> Tours of corporate offices are always unique, because teams are always changing their décor:

You might find a popcorn machine or a coffee machine dressed up as a robot in our lobby. As you passed through different departments, you might find an aisle of cowbells . . . , a makeshift bowling alley . . . , employees dressed up as pirates, employees karaokeing, a nap room, a petting zoo, or a hot dog social. You might see a parade pass by because one of our departments decided that it was the perfect day to celebrate Oktoberfest.<sup>23</sup>

## Interpersonal Communication LO 4-3

Within the corporate environment, interpersonal communication skill is one major reason some people are more likely to be successful than others. Much important communication occurs in hallways, at the coffee machine, and in break rooms. Successful professionals communicate well with different categories of people—co-workers, bosses, clients—in a variety of settings. To do so, they cultivate skills in diverse areas such as listening, conversation, non-verbal communication, and networking. They also practice skills in conflict resolution and teamwork (see Chapter 8 for a discussion of these latter two skills).

These skills are part of what Daniel Goleman has widely popularized as emotional intelligence in his books on the subject. He presents much evidence to show that while intelligence and expertise are necessary to climb to the top in organizations, once at the top, emotional intelligence, not IQ, predicts the star leaders.<sup>24</sup>

### Listening

Listening is crucial to building trust. However, listening on the job may be more difficult than listening in class. Many classroom lectures are well organized, with signposts and repetition of key points to help hearers follow. But conversations usually wander. A key point about when a report is due may be sandwiched among statements about other due dates for other projects.

In a classroom you're listening primarily for information. In interchanges with co-workers, you need to listen for feelings, too. Feelings such as being rejected or overworked need to be dealt with as they arise. But you can't deal with a feeling unless you are aware of it.

Listening errors also can result from being distracted by your own emotional response, especially when the topic is controversial. Listeners have to be aware of their emotional responses so they can clarify the speaker's intent

### Thoughtful Perks



As part of their corporate culture, some companies have thoughtful perks:

- On-site day care and after-school care.
- Fitness center and pool.
- On-site laundry pickup and delivery.
- Free lunches and snacks.
- Unlimited paid vacation.

### Worker-cise



In a new furniture trend in corporate culture, many new workstations have been designed to help employees exercise on the job. Some popular new products are workstations that are connected to a treadmill, allowing people to walk or run while working, and giant balls that employees must balance on while sitting at their desks.

However, "active workstations" may be hurting productivity and may even cause issues of hygiene, etiquette, and liability. A study by the Mayo Clinic showed that medical transcriptionists slowed down by 16% if they typed while walking instead of sitting. A similar study by the University of Tennessee found that fine motor skills decreased by 11% while walking on a treadmill.

The University of Kentucky put together rules for using active workstations. The rules suggested that users wear proper shoes to walk in, walk slowly (less than 2 miles per hour), muffle the noise of the treadmills, practice good hygiene, and keep a traditional desk and chair.

Adapted from Jen Wieczner, "Falling Down on the Job?" *Wall Street Journal*, January 29, 2013, D1-D2.



and also allow time for cooling off, if necessary. A you-attitude is as helpful for listening as it is for writing. Listening is more effective if the listener focuses more on understanding than on formulating a reply. Thinking about your own response too often causes you to miss important information.

Some listening errors also happen because the hearer wasn't paying enough attention to a key point. Be aware of points you need to know and listen for them.

Inattention and emotions can cause listeners to misinterpret a speaker. To reduce listening errors caused by misinterpretation,

- 
- Paraphrase what the speaker has said, giving him or her a chance to correct your understanding.
  - At the end of the conversation, check your understanding with the other person. Especially check who does what next.
  - After the conversation, write down key points that affect deadlines or how work will be evaluated. Sometimes these key points need to be confirmed in an e-mail.
  - Don't ignore instructions you think are unnecessary. Before you do something else, check with the order giver to see if there is a reason for the instruction.
  - Consider the other person's background and experiences. Why is this point important to the speaker? What might he or she mean by it?
- 

Listening to people is an indication that you're taking them seriously. **Acknowledgment responses**—nods, *uh huhs*, smiles, frowns—help carry the message that you're listening. However, remember that listening responses vary in different cultures.

In **active listening**, receivers actively demonstrate that they've understood a speaker by feeding back the literal meaning, the emotional content, or both. These strategies create active responses:

- 
- Paraphrase the content. Feed back the meaning in your own words.
  - Identify the feelings you think you hear.
  - Ask for information or clarification.
  - Offer to help. ("What can I do to help?")
- 

When dealing with problems, instead of acknowledging what the other person says, many of us immediately respond in a way that analyzes or attempts to solve or dismiss the problem. People with problems need first of all to know that we hear that they're having a rough time. Figure 4.3 lists some responses that block communication.<sup>25</sup> Ordering and threatening both tell the other person that the speaker doesn't want to hear what he or she has to say. Preaching attacks the other person. Minimizing the problem suggests the other person's concern is misplaced. It can even attack the other person's competency by suggesting that other people are coping just fine with bigger problems. Even advising shuts off discussion. Giving a quick answer minimizes the pain the person feels and puts him or her down for not seeing (what is to us) the obvious answer. Even if it is a good answer from an objective point of view, the other person may not be ready to hear it. And too often, the off-the-top-of-the-head solution doesn't address the real problem.

**Figure 4.3** Blocking Responses versus Active Listening

Blocking response	Possible active response
<b>Ordering, threatening</b> “I don’t care how you do it. Just get that report on my desk by Friday.”	<b>Paraphrasing content</b> “You’re saying that you don’t have time to finish the report by Friday.”
<b>Preaching, criticizing</b> “You should know better than to air the department’s problems in a general meeting.”	<b>Mirroring feelings</b> “It sounds like the department’s problems really bother you.”
<b>Minimizing the problem</b> “You think <i>that’s</i> bad. You should see what I have to do this week.”	<b>Asking for information or clarification</b> “What parts of the problem seem most difficult to solve?”
<b>Advising</b> “Well, why don’t you try listing everything you have to do and seeing which items are most important?”	<b>Offering to help solve the problem together</b> “Is there anything I could do that would help?”

Active listening takes time and energy. Even people who are skilled active listeners can’t do it all the time. Active listening can reduce the conflict that results from miscommunication, but it alone cannot reduce the conflict that comes when two people want apparently inconsistent things or when one person wants to change someone else.

## Conversational Style

Deborah Tannen, a linguist who specializes in gender discourse, uses the term **conversational style** to denote our conversational patterns and the meaning we give to them: the way we show interest, politeness, appropriateness.<sup>26</sup> Your answers to the following questions help reveal your own conversational style:

- How long a pause tells you that it’s your turn to speak?
- Do you see interruption as rude? Or do you say things while other people are still talking to show that you’re interested and to encourage them to say more?
- Do you show interest by asking lots of questions? Or do you see questions as intrusive and wait for people to volunteer whatever they have to say?

Tannen concludes that the following features characterize her own conversational style:

- Fast rate of speech.
- Fast rate of turn-taking.
- Persistence—if a turn is not acknowledged, try again.
- Preference for personal stories.
- Tolerance of, preference for simultaneous speech.
- Abrupt topic shifting.

Different conversational styles are not necessarily good or bad, but people with different conversational styles may feel uncomfortable without knowing why. A subordinate who talks quickly may be frustrated by a boss who speaks

### Serendipitous Interpersonal Communication



Some organizations are thinking of new ways to get their employees to meet each other. They hope these chance encounters will encourage creativity, collaboration, and innovation.

Some companies use architectural features, such as crowded break rooms that cause employees to literally bump into each other or centralized bathrooms. Others use creative features, like trivia games in elevators, to get employees talking to each other.

Efforts don’t have to cost a lot of money. National Public Radio holds “Serendipity Days,” during which employees—from departments as disparate as HR, news, and engineering—meet to think of new projects. At marketing agency CTP, employees swap offices and desks in the summer to foster cross-departmental interactions.

Adapted from Rachel Emma Silverman, “The Science of Serendipity in the Workplace,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 1, 2013, B6.

### Interpersonal Skills for Doctors



The risk of being sued for medical malpractice lies not so much with training, credentials, or even the number of mistakes made. Rather, it depends on doctors' interpersonal skills. Again and again, patients in malpractice suits say they were rushed, ignored, or treated like objects.

A study of surgeons showed that those who had never been sued

- Made orienting comments at visits, so patients knew what was going to happen and when it was best to ask questions.
- Practiced active listening ("Tell me more about that").
- Laughed and were funny during visits.

The difference was all in how they talked to their patients; there was no difference in amount or quality of information.

Adapted from Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2007), 40–43.

slowly. People who talk more slowly may feel shut out of a conversation with people who talk more quickly. Someone who has learned to make requests directly ("Please pass the salt") may be annoyed by someone who uses indirect requests ("This casserole needs some salt").

In the workplace, conflicts may arise because of differences in conversational style. If people see direct questions as criticizing or accusing, they may see an ordinary question ("Will that report be ready Friday?") as a criticism of their progress. One supervisor might mean the question simply as a request for information. Another supervisor might use the question to mean "I want that report Friday."

Researchers Daniel N. Maltz and Ruth A. Borker believe that differences in conversational style (see Figure 4.4) may be responsible for the miscommunication that often occurs in **male–female conversations**. Certainly conversational style is not the same for all men and for all women, but research has found several common patterns in the U.S. cultures studied.<sup>27</sup> For example, researchers have found that women are much more likely to nod and to say *yes* or *mm hmm* than men are.<sup>28</sup> Maltz and Borker hypothesize that to women, these symbols mean simply "I'm listening; go on." Men, on the other hand, may decode these symbols as "I agree" or at least "I follow what you're saying so far." A man who receives nods and *mmms* from a woman may feel that she is inconsistent and unpredictable if she then disagrees with him. A woman may feel that a man who doesn't provide any feedback isn't listening to her.

Research has also shown that in the United States men tend to interrupt more than women; women tend to wait for a pause in the discussion before speaking. When former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was asked to give advice to professional women hoping to rise in the ranks, she replied, "Learn to interrupt."<sup>29</sup>

**Figure 4.4**

Different Conversational Styles

	Debating	Relating
Interpretation of questions	See questions as requests for information.	See questions as way to show interest and keep a conversation flowing.
Relation of new comment to what last speaker said	Do not require new comment to relate explicitly to last speaker's comment. Ignoring previous comment is one strategy for taking control.	Expect new comments to acknowledge the last speaker's comment and relate directly to it.
View of interrupting	See interrupting as one way to organize the flow of conversation.	See interrupting as disruptive to a conversation.
View of indirectness	Appreciate directness	See indirectness as maintaining camaraderie, as giving other people choice in a conversation.
Definition of topics	Tend to announce topics directly. Interpret statements about side issues as effort to change the topic.	Tend to define topics gradually, progressively. Interpret statements about side issues as effort to shape, expand, or limit the topic.
Response to someone who shares a problem	Offer advice, solutions.	Offer solidarity, reassurance. Share troubles to establish sense of community.

Source: Based on Deborah Tannen, *That's Not What I Meant!: How Conversational Style Makes or Breaks Relationships*, Rei Rep ed. (New York: Harper Perennial, 2011).

## Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication—communication that doesn't use words—occurs all the time. Smiles, frowns, office décor, who sits where at a meeting, the size of an office, how long someone keeps a visitor waiting—all these communicate pleasure or anger, friendliness or distance, power and status.

Researchers have begun to study a category of nonverbal communication called **social signals**—tone of voice, gestures, proximity to others, facial expressions—as keys to business success. Researchers can study these signals in individuals and then predict accurately who will win raises or business plan contests. The more successful people are more energetic and positive. They do talk more, but they also listen more, drawing other people out.<sup>30</sup>

Most of the time we are no more conscious of interpreting nonverbal signals than we are conscious of breathing. Yet nonverbal signals can be misinterpreted just as easily as can verbal symbols (words). And the misunderstandings can be harder to clear up because people may not be aware of the nonverbal cues that led them to assume they aren't liked, respected, or approved.

Learning about nonverbal language can help us project the image we want to present and make us more aware of the signals we are interpreting. However, even within a single culture, a nonverbal symbol may have more than one meaning.

In the business world, two sets of nonverbal signals are particularly important: spatial cues and body language.

**Spatial Cues** In the United States, the size, placement, and privacy of one's office connotes status. Large corner offices have the highest status. An individual office with a door that closes connotes more status than a desk in a common area. Windows also may matter. An office with a window may connote more status than one without.

People who don't know each other well may feel more comfortable with each other if a piece of furniture separates them. For example, a group may work better sitting around a table than just sitting in a circle. Desks can be used as barricades to protect oneself from other people.



(a) (left) "THE REAL THING: A real smile involves the whole face, not just the mouth. While muscles pull the corners of the mouth up (1), an involuntary nerve causes the upper eyefold (2) to relax." (b) (right) "THE SOCIAL SMILE: When faking, the lips are pulled straight across (3). Though this creates cheek folds (4) similar to those of a real smile, the lack of eye crinkles (5) is a dead giveaway."

Quoted from Andy Raskin, "A Face Any Business Can Trust," *Business 2.0* 4, no. 11 (December 2003): 60.

### Liar Detection



Although not infallible, these are signs of lying:

**Body language:** Physical cues such as sweating and fidgeting may be telling.

**Details:** False stories often lack details. Pushing for details increases chances the liar may slip up.

**Unpleasantness:** Liars are less cooperative, pleasant, and friendly than truth tellers. They also make more negative statements and complaints.

**Eye contact:** Failure to make eye contact is often a sign of lying.

**Stress signs:** Dilated pupils and a rise in voice pitch may be present.

**Pauses:** Most liars will have pauses in their stories as they make them up.

**Inconsistencies:** Ask suspected liars to repeat their stories; listen for inconsistencies.

Adapted from Elisabeth Eaves, "Ten Ways to Tell if Someone Is Lying to You," *Forbes*, July 22, 2010, [http://www.forbes.com/2006/11/02/tech-cx\\_ee\\_technology\\_liar\\_slide.html](http://www.forbes.com/2006/11/02/tech-cx_ee_technology_liar_slide.html).



### Authoritative Body Language



Carol Kinsey Goman, author of *The Silent Language of Leaders: How Body Language Can Help—or Hurt—How You Lead*, offers these tips to increase your image of authority:

- Keep your head straight up. Head tilts show concern or interest for individuals, but may be processed as submission signals in power situations.
- Expand your space. Stand tall, spread your elbows a little, widen your stance, and spread your materials on the table at the next meeting. Authority is demonstrated through height and space.
- Use the tonal arc, in which your voice rises in pitch through a sentence but drops back down at the end. Ending on a higher pitch often indicates uncertainty or a need for approval.
- Look serious when the subject is serious. Smiles are frequently inappropriate in power situations.
- Do not nod to express listening or engagement; nodding undercuts authority.
- Minimize movements, especially gestures.
- Have a firm handshake.

Adapted from Carol Kinsey Goman, "10 Common Body Language Traps for Women in the Workplace," *On Leadership* (blog), *Washington Post*, May 2, 2011, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/on-leadership/post/10-common-body-language-traps-for-women-in-the-workplace/2011/03/03/AFIOGFbF\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/on-leadership/post/10-common-body-language-traps-for-women-in-the-workplace/2011/03/03/AFIOGFbF_blog.html).

**Body Language** Our body language communicates to other people much about our feelings. Our facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, posture, and body positions all telegraph information about us. In the United States, **open body positions** include leaning forward with uncrossed arms and legs, with the arms away from the body. **Closed or defensive body positions** include leaning back, sometimes with both hands behind the head, arms and legs crossed or close together, or hands in pockets. As the labels imply, open positions suggest that people are accepting and open to new ideas. Closed positions suggest that people are physically or psychologically uncomfortable, that they are defending themselves and shutting other people out.

People who cross their arms or legs often claim that they do so only because the position is more comfortable. But notice your own body the next time you're in a perfectly comfortable discussion with a good friend. You'll probably find that you naturally assume open body positions. The fact that so many people in organizational settings adopt closed positions may indicate that many people feel at least slightly uncomfortable in school and on the job.

Some nonverbal communications appear to be made and interpreted unconsciously by many people. Researchers at MIT are showing that when we get excited about something, we have more nervous energy. Another such signal is fluency, or consistency. Consistency in motions (such as in surgery) or tone (speech) tells us who is expert, or at least well practiced. Such signals are hard to fake, which may explain their influence.<sup>31</sup>

Body language is complicated by the fact that nonverbal signs may have more than one meaning. A frown may signal displeasure or concentration. A stiff posture that usually means your co-worker is upset may today just be a sign of sore back muscles.

Our own body language can even influence us. Smiling, even when we don't want to, can make us feel better about what we are doing. Uncrossing



Body language can give big clues about our attitudes.

folded arms (a common sign of resistance) to accept a cup of coffee, business card, or paper copy of a document can make us less resistant to the other person. Standing tall or assuming an expansive posture can make us feel more confident.<sup>32</sup>

Misunderstandings are even more common when people communicate with people from other cultures or other countries. Knowing something about other cultures may help you realize that a subordinate who doesn't meet your eye may be showing respect rather than dishonesty. But it's impossible to memorize every meaning that every nonverbal sign has in every culture. And in a multicultural workforce, you may not know whether someone retains the meanings of his or her ancestors or has adopted the dominant U.S. meanings. The best solution is to ask for clarification.

## Etiquette

Some people falsely think that etiquette consists of a bunch of stuffy old-fashioned rules. They are wrong. Good manners mean treating people with respect. In the office that means respecting people's space by not peering over their cubicle wall, not handling their stuff, and never borrowing anything from them without asking. In open offices it means lowering your voice on conversations and phone calls so the whole office doesn't have to hear. It also means not sneaking up on people using headphones. In the break room, it means sharing limited spaces such as refrigerators, making a new pot of coffee when you take the last cup, and cleaning up your messes.

Good manners include saying *please*, *thank you*, and *you're welcome*. They include making customers feel welcome and standing up to greet newcomers. They include returning shared equipment promptly and filling the printer with paper when you empty it.

For most people, the biggest etiquette breach in the workplace involves misuse of technology. Set your cell phone on vibrate. Refrain from texting during meetings. In fact, don't multitask when you are engaged in any interpersonal communications. When you do so, you are sending a clear message to other people that they are not as important as your phone messages, e-mail, or websites. This restriction also applies when you are on the phone; most people can tell if you are multitasking.

## Networking

A much underappreciated skill in the business environment is **networking**, the ability to connect with many different kinds of people. Most of us can relate to the people in our immediate work group, although even there differences in ability to connect impact performance. But true networking is creating connections with still more people. It involves creating connections before they are needed, creating diverse connections in widely spread areas, knowing which people to turn to when you need additional expertise, knowing people outside the company.

Good networkers know who will help them cut through red tape, who can find an emergency supplier, who will take on extra work in a crisis. Informal conversations, about yesterday's game and Li's photography exhibit as well as what's happening at work, connect them with the **grapevine**, an informal source of company information. Participation in civic, school, religious, and professional organizations connects them to a larger environment. They attend conferences, trade shows, fund-raisers, and community events. They use social networking sites such as LinkedIn (see Chapter 9 for more on electronic networks).

### Gossip Networking



Although it has a tarnished reputation, gossip can benefit both individuals and organizations, research shows. Gossiping is a form of networking. According to Joe Labianca, a professor at the University of Kentucky's Center for Research on Social Networks in Business, the more workers gossip, the better their understanding of the work environment and the higher their peers rate their influence. Gossip disseminates valuable information about workers, such as who doesn't do their share or who is impossible to work with.

And guess what? Managers gossip, too. In fact, they may have more "gossip partners" than nonmanagers.

Adapted from Giuseppe Labianca, "It's Not 'Unprofessional' to Gossip at Work," *Harvard Business Review* 88, no. 9 (September 2010): 29.

Networking becomes even more important as you climb the corporate ladder. Good managers interact with their employees continually, not just when they need something. They listen to lunchroom conversations; they chat with employees over coffee.

Much research shows that networking is crucial to job success. In *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman tells of research in a division at Bell Labs to determine what made the star performers in the division. Everyone in the division had a high academic IQ, which meant that IQ was not a good predictor of job productivity (although academic knowledge and IQ are good predictors of success on earlier career ladder rungs). But networking skill was a good predictor. The stars put effort into developing their network, and they cultivated relationships in that network *before* they were needed.<sup>33</sup>

Goleman identifies three different kinds of workplace networks: conversational (who talks to whom), expertise (who can be turned to for advice), and trust (who can be trusted with sensitive information such as gripes). Unsurprisingly, the stars of an organization are often heavily networked in all three varieties.<sup>34</sup>

Good networkers share certain interpersonal communication behaviors.

- 
- Use you-attitude to see things from the other person's perspective.
  - Actively seek ways to help other people.
  - Adapt their behavior and attitude to the people around them.
  - Subtly mirror the postures, behaviors, and emotional states of people near them.
  - Share some personal and emotional information about themselves, a sharing that helps build trust.
  - Capitalize on the benefits of physical proximity—trading some phone calls for actual office visits, attending both informal and formal gatherings.
  - Understand the importance of connecting with people outside their own social and professional circles.
- 

One study showed that people with these skills penetrated the center of their workplace network in just 18 months; people lacking in these skills took 13 years.<sup>35</sup>

## Time Management LO 4-4

As your work environment becomes more complex, with multiple networks, responsibilities, and projects, good time management becomes crucial. The ever-increasing number of messages that must be answered as well as the distractions and interruptions that are part of open-plan offices all add to time problems. Although much time management advice sounds like common sense, it is amazing the number of people who do not follow it.

### Techniques

Probably the most important time management technique is to prioritize the demands on your time, and make sure you spend the majority of your time on the most important demands. If your career success depends on producing reports, news articles, and press releases about company business, then that is what you need to spend the majority of your time doing.

**Figure 4.5**

Stephen Covey's Time Management Matrix. Covey advises putting significant time into quadrant II.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	<b>I</b> ACTIVITIES: Crises Pressing problems Deadline-driven projects	<b>II</b> ACTIVITIES: Prevention, PC activities Relationship building Recognizing new opportunities Planning, recreation
Not Important	<b>III</b> ACTIVITIES: Interruptions, some calls Some mail, some reports Some meetings Proximate, pressing matters Popular activities	<b>IV</b> ACTIVITIES: Trivia, busy work Some mail Some phone calls Time wasters Pleasant activities

Source: Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 150–54. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Randy Pausch, in his highly popular video and book *The Last Lecture*, makes this point about prioritizing most eloquently. His lecture is a moving reminder to make time for friends and family. His colleagues noted that he would regularly tell his students they could always make more money later, but they could never make more time.<sup>36</sup>

In *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, a book which remained on the best-seller list for over two decades, Stephen Covey presents a useful time management matrix that sorts activities by urgency and importance (see Figure 4.5). Obviously we should focus our time on important, urgent activities, but Covey also advises putting significant time into quadrant II, important but nonurgent activities, which he calls the heart of effective management. Quadrant II activities include networking, planning, and preparing.<sup>37</sup>

Figure 4.6 offers other common tips for time management.

**Figure 4.6**

#### Time Management Tips

- Keep lists—both daily and long term. Prioritize items on your list.
- Ask yourself where you want to be in three or five years and work accordingly.
- Do large, important tasks first, and then fill in around them with smaller tasks.
- Break large tasks into small ones. Remember that you do not always have to work sequentially. If you have been putting off a report because you cannot decide how to write its introduction, start with the conclusions or some other part that is easy for you to write.
- Find blocks of time: Set your phone to voice mail, ignore e-mail, avoid the break room, move discretionary meetings. Put these blocks at your most productive time; save e-mail and meetings for less productive times.
- Avoid time sinks: some people, long phone conversations, constant e-mail checks.
- Decide at the end of today's work session what you will do in tomorrow's session, and set yourself up to do it. Find the necessary file; look up the specifications for that proposal.
- At the end of the week, evaluate what you didn't get done. Should you have done it for promotion, goodwill, ethics?



### As the Old Song Says, "I Got Rhythm"



One of the newest electronic security methods is keystroke authentication. It turns out that your typing pattern, the pressure of your fingers on the keys and your typing speed, is unique. It allows you to prove electronically that you are who you say you are.

Keystroke patterning has a long history. The military began using it more than a hundred years ago to identify individual senders of Morse code by their tapping rhythms. As the location of those senders shifted, military trackers got data on enemy movements.

Currently, the biggest users of keystroke patterning are banks and credit unions, which are employing it in addition to standard password authentication. Since identity theft has become such a major problem, banks and credit unions are under a federal mandate to use stronger authentication measures to protect online customers.

Adapted from Kathleen Kingsbury, "Telltale Fingertips: With Biometrics, How You Type Can Allow Websites to Know Who You Are—Or Aren't," *Time Bonus Section*, January 2007, A10; and Perry Beeman, "Keystrokes Yield ID Clues," *Des Moines Register*, June 11, 2012, 1A.

## Multitasking

Many workers believe they can manage some of their time-crunch problems by multitasking. Unfortunately, decades of research on the subject show that this is a false belief. It is particularly false when long-term learning or communication tasks are involved.<sup>38</sup> Just think of all the e-mails that get sent to unintended audiences while the writer is multitasking, or all the phone calls for which the caller, busy multitasking, forgets who is being called or why in the short time between dialing and pickup.

Research shows that when we think we are multitasking, we are really switching back and forth between tasks. And there is always a start-up delay involved in returning to a previous task, no matter how brief the delay. These delays may make it faster to do the tasks sequentially, in which case we will probably do them better, too. In fact, some research shows it can take up to 50% longer to multitask.<sup>39</sup> Other research shows that multitasking hurts overall attention and memory, even when not multitasking.<sup>40</sup>

When we return to a task following an interruption—either from someone else, like a phone call, or from ourselves, like a visit to Facebook—it may take us more than 20 minutes to get back into the original task.<sup>41</sup> Sometimes, we do not get back to the task correctly. Pilots who are interrupted in their preflight checklist may miss an item when they return to it. One crash, in which 153 people died, has been blamed on an error resulting from such an interruption.<sup>42</sup>

Some companies are allowing employees to schedule three to four hours a week for focused work. During that time, employees are allowed to ignore e-mails, phone calls, and meetings except for urgent matters.

## Trends in Business Communication LO 4-5

Both business and business communication are constantly changing. One of the biggest changes for most people is the shift to electronic communications. This all-encompassing trend is the subject of Chapter 9. Related to this shift are trends in data security and electronic privacy. Other trends are customer service, work/family balance, environmental concern, globalization and outsourcing, diversity, teamwork, job flexibility, innovation and entrepreneurship, and big data. As this list of trends suggests, rapid change itself is another major trend in the business environment.

## Data Security

As business communication becomes increasingly electronic, concerns about data theft mushroom. Just as individuals take steps—like not providing important identification numbers by e-mail—to prevent identity theft, organizations take steps to protect their data. The need for them to do so becomes always more urgent as hackers continue to produce more sophisticated software.

- Names, birthdates, and possibly credit card numbers for 77 million people were stolen from Sony.
- 12 million Apple IDs were stolen from the laptop of an FBI agent.
- 6 million passwords were stolen from LinkedIn, which was using an outdated form of cryptography.
- Hackers gained access to 3.6 million state tax returns in South Carolina.<sup>43</sup>

Not all hacking attacks are to gain individuals' data. The Department of Homeland Security reported almost 200 serious attacks on power, water, and other utilities in 2012.<sup>44</sup>

Hackers are not responsible for all the lost data. Lost or stolen laptops and smartphones containing sensitive data also add to the problem. Flash drives, because of their small size, are an even bigger problem. Corporate security measures may include bans on personal electronic devices. Some companies are even disabling extra USB connections to ensure employees cannot attach these devices. Others are performing random checks of laptops to look for unauthorized or unsecured files and using scans of fingerprints, eyes, or faces to limit and track access to specific computers.<sup>45</sup>

Data security problems affect individuals, too. When hackers get names and e-mail addresses, they can send **phishing messages**, e-mails that try to lure receivers to send sensitive information. When hackers can connect the names and addresses to actual firms the readers use, such as banks and stores, the phishing e-mails look so official that even executives and professionals are convinced to respond.

## Electronic Privacy

As organizations respond to growing security concerns, their efforts often encroach on workers' privacy. Organizations are monitoring many different kinds of electronic interactions. According to a survey by the American Management Association of 304 companies,

- 73% store and review e-mail.
- 66% monitor Internet usage.
- 65% block inappropriate websites.
- 48% use video surveillance.
- 45% record time spent on phone and numbers dialed.
- 43% store and review computer files.<sup>46</sup>

The same study also showed that 45% track keystrokes (and time spent at the computer). Because of findings from such monitoring, some companies are blocking access to particular websites, especially Facebook, YouTube, sports and online shopping sites. Many organizations claim that heavy usage of these sites slows company communications such as file transfers and e-mail.

Other surveillance techniques use GPS (global positioning system) chips to monitor locations of company vehicles, as well as arrival and departure times at job sites. Records from E-ZPass, the electronic toll collection system, are being used in courts as proof of infidelity. Workers may tell their spouses they are in a meeting, but E-ZPass has a record of where and when their vehicle entered or exited that day.<sup>47</sup> Cell phones and computers give approximate location signals that are accurate enough to help law enforcement officials locate suspects.

The division between corporate data security and personal privacy has become increasingly complex and blurry. Corporate surveillance does not necessarily stop when employees leave their offices or cars. It can continue to the company parking areas and even employees' homes. Companies such as Google, Delta Air Lines, and even Burger King have fired workers for content on their personal blogs. Although many workers believe their blogs are

### Hack Attack



The Sony networks were hacked in April 2011, compromising 100 million accounts, exposing customer credit card numbers, and forcing Sony to shut down the networks for a month until the damage was repaired. It was the second-largest data breach in the United States.

Unlike other companies, Sony had taken hackers to court and threatened others with lawsuits. Other technical companies have been trying to make a truce with hackers: Google pays hackers who discover bugs; Microsoft permits hackers to unlock its Kinect gaming system.

While the company did not know who attacked the system, the following message was left by the hackers: "We are legion." That phrase is the motto of Anonymous, the hacker collective.

Adapted from Michael Riley and Ashlee Vance, "Sony: The Company That Kicked the Hornet's Nest," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, May 16, 2011, 35–36.

protected by the First Amendment, in most states companies can fire employees for almost any reason except discrimination.<sup>48</sup>

A survey by the American Management Association found that over a quarter of companies fired employees for e-mail misuse.<sup>49</sup> New technologies make it increasingly easy for companies—and lawyers—to track employees. “E-discovery” software can aid searchers in sorting millions of documents and e-mails in just days to find relevant ones for court cases. They go far beyond finding specific words and terms. In some of the best, if you search for “dog,” you will also find documents with “man’s best friends” and even the notion of “walk.” Other programs can find concepts rather than just key words. Still others look at activities—who did what when, who talked to whom—to extract patterns. They find anomalies, such as switching media from e-mail to phone or a face-to-face communication, or when a document is edited an unusual number of times by unusual people.<sup>50</sup>

Other media are also connected with privacy issues.

- 
- Google has begun combining user data from web searches, Gmail messages, Google + postings, YouTube viewings, and Android phone data to make comprehensive user profiles.<sup>51</sup>
  - E-books allow sellers to track not only which books you buy, but how often you open them, how many hours you spend reading them, how far you get in them, and what you underline in them.<sup>52</sup>
  - Some Twitter users have found the hard way that their messages are not private. Paul Chambers lost his job and was convicted of threatening to blow up an airport after sending a joking tweet to his friends.<sup>53</sup>
  - Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick was charged with perjury and forced to resign after text messages he sent were used against him by prosecutors.
  - Officials investigating the Boston Marathon bombing used photos from private cell phones, as well as security cameras, to identify the bombers.
  - Employees have also been fired for posting on their personal Facebook site disparaging comments about their employers.
  - Even “old” technology can threaten privacy. Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich was impeached on the basis of taped phone conversations.
- 

Although more individuals are starting to sue over their firings, and a few are winning, the legal scale is still weighted in favor of employers. In 2010 the Supreme Court ruled that searches on work equipment are reasonable and not a violation of Fourth Amendment rights.

Some companies help individuals protect their privacy by offering services that delete messages and documents from multiple phones at a set time. Users can set an expiration time for their messages, which will be used to delete the messages from their own phones, the recipients’ phones, and the messaging service’s computer servers.<sup>54</sup> Other companies, for example, allow users to choose what kinds of ads they will see or to opt out. Companies such as Microsoft and Mozilla are beginning to include do-not-track features in their popular Internet browsers, to keep advertisers and others from monitoring online habits.<sup>55</sup>

In 2009, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) endorsed industry self-regulation to protect consumer privacy. Websites and companies that collect consumer data such as searches performed and websites visited are to (1) clearly notify consumers that they do so, (2) provide an easy way to opt out, (3) protect the data, and (4) limit its retention, but breaches of these guidelines

continue to occur.<sup>56</sup> Recently Facebook settled with the FTC about privacy changes deemed “unfair and deceptive.” The settlement included privacy audits for 20 years.<sup>57</sup>

A highly publicized study by the *Wall Street Journal* of the 50 most popular websites in the United States found that those sites installed 3,180 tracking files on the test computer. Twelve sites, including Dictionary.com, Comcast.net, and MSN.com, installed more than 100 tracking tools each. Some tracking files could track sensitive health and financial data; other files could transmit keystrokes; still other files could reattach trackers that a person deleted. Apps on smartphones are performing similar trackings.<sup>58</sup>

## Customer Service

One effect of the recession was to push more businesses into focusing on their customer service. Amazon, for instance, is well known for its mission to be “Earth’s most customer centric company.” But it is far from alone. Customer satisfaction is increasingly important for all businesses; in fact, it is a leading indicator of financial success.<sup>59</sup> Companies with higher scores on the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) tend to see better sales and stock performance than do companies with lower scores.<sup>60</sup> In an age where unhappy customers can share their experiences with thousands on social media, focusing on customer satisfaction is vital.

Improving customer service doesn’t always mean spending extra money. Companies are learning to cross-train employees, so they can fill in where needed. Other companies are giving extra attention to their best customers to keep them loyal. Walgreens is training its pharmacists to work more closely with patients with chronic illnesses such as diabetes.<sup>61</sup> A tried and true way of improving customer service is increasing the oral communication skills of sales reps and customer service agents. See Chapter 3 for more on customer service.

## Work/Family Balance

In addition to improving customer satisfaction, businesses are also focusing on their own employees. To reduce turnover, and increase employee satisfaction, companies are trying to be more family friendly by providing flextime, telecommuting, time off for family needs, and extended breaks for caregiving. Deloitte has initiated a program bringing teams together to decide schedules, including telecommuting, flextime, and compressed workweeks. Ernst & Young pays for some child care costs incurred from travel or overtime work. Procter & Gamble allows all office employees to shift their workday up to two hours earlier or later.<sup>62</sup>

At times, employees find ways other than physical presence to demonstrate their commitment and enthusiasm for organizational goals. Thanks to technology advances, employees can use laptops, e-mail, or cell phones to do work at any time, including weekends and evenings. The downside of this trend is that sometimes work and family life are not so much balanced as blurred.

Some employees are also expected to conduct business 24 hours a day because of different time zones of workplaces. The flexibility of employees is necessary in an age of downsizing and globalization, but it means that families are being impacted.



Many organizations promote virtual offices, which allow employees to work from home.



### Ethical Hacking for Facebook



Facebook is now rewarding its ethical hackers with Visa cards for catching “bugs” in their system. The card values range from \$500 to \$5,000, depending upon the peril of the bug. While many other technological companies do not buy information from hackers, Facebook paid hackers \$190,000 in six months; the largest award was \$24,000.

Bug hunters find the work to be an enjoyable challenge, and with the financial incentive attached, it can become a helpful addition to a regular paycheck.

Other technology companies are using similar tactics to catch bugs. Google has already paid \$700,000 in fees to bug hunters, and Microsoft is organizing a contest to develop a new type of security technology. The prize? \$250,000.

Adapted from Robert Levine, “Black Bounty for Facebook’s Bug Hunters,” *Bloomberg Businessweek*, January 30, 2012, 40–41.

The issue of work/life balance leapt into the news when Yahoo’s CEO notified employees that they were no longer allowed to work from home. An internal memo explained,

To become the absolute best place to work, communication and collaboration will be important, so we need to be working side-by-side. That is why it is critical that we are all present in our offices. Some of the best decisions and insights come from hallway and cafeteria discussions, meeting new people, and impromptu team meetings.<sup>63</sup>

After some expressions of outrage, business articles started noting that Yahoo had a corporate culture problem for both office workers and telecommuters. The CEO found empty parking lots and office floors during work hours. Too few telecommuters were logging into the company’s system.<sup>64</sup>

The debate over telecommuting has been ongoing. Proponents point out that home environments can provide quiet, uninterrupted time for concentrated thought. Opponents note that working at home invites misbehaviors such as doing private tasks on company time and makes successful collaborative work harder. Both sides generally agree that telecommuting involves trust (an established record of productivity) and specific outcomes. One final caveat: a Stanford University study showed that home workers were 50% less likely to get promoted than office workers.<sup>65</sup>

Most of the studies of telecommuting are self-reported studies. The only scientific study with randomized groups was in a Chinese travel company where half of the employees’ earnings was based on call and order volume.<sup>66</sup>

## Environmental Concern

As climate change becomes an issue of increasing concern, more and more companies are trying to soften their environmental impact. They do so for a variety of reasons in addition to environmental concerns. Sometimes such awareness saves money; sometimes executives hope it will create favorable publicity for the company or counterbalance negative publicity.

Many marketing experts say that green advertising is now just standard operating procedure.<sup>67</sup> Environmental activist groups such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth go even further. These groups have sharply and publicly criticized some large companies for exaggerating their commitment to the environment. One study claims that 95% of the “green” products it examined made claims that were lies, unsupported by proof, or couched in meaningless language (“all-natural”).<sup>68</sup>

Various research studies show that token environmental efforts negatively affect public opinion.<sup>69</sup> But there is nothing “token” in the environmental efforts of some major companies. For instance, Levi Strauss is trying to reduce its environmental impact in everything it does, including asking its customers to wash their jeans less often. PepsiCo is working to limit its own water use; it is also working to help conserve water in communities around the world. In spring 2013 it announced it had met its goal of helping provide access to safe water for 3 million people in developing countries and had set a new goal of helping an addition 3 million by 2016.<sup>70</sup>

## Globalization and Outsourcing

In the global economy, importing and exporting are just a start. More and more companies have offices, stores, and factories around the world.

- McDonald’s serves food in over 119 countries on six continents.<sup>71</sup>
- UPS serves more than 220 countries and territories.<sup>72</sup>
- Coca-Cola sells its beverages in more than 200 countries.<sup>73</sup>
- Walmart has 6,155 stores outside the continental United States, including ones in Central America, South America, Africa, Europe, and Asia.<sup>74</sup>

The site of the store, factory, or office may not be the site of all the jobs. A data center in Washington can support many workers in India as businesses are outsourcing domestically and globally. **Outsourcing** means going outside the company for products and services that once were produced by the company's employees. Companies may outsource work such as technology services, customer service, tax services, legal services, accounting services, benefit communications, manufacturing, and marketing. Outsourcing is often a win-win solution: the company saves money or gets better service, and the outsourcers make a profit. In *The World Is Flat*, Thomas Friedman says, "The accountant who wants to stay in business in America will be the one who focuses on designing creative, complex strategies.... It means having quality-time discussions with clients."<sup>75</sup> He sees the work of the future as customization, innovation, service, and problem solving.<sup>76</sup>

All the challenges of communicating in one culture and country increase exponentially when people communicate across cultures and countries. Succeeding in a global market requires **intercultural competence**, the ability to communicate sensitively with people from other cultures and countries, based on an understanding of cultural differences. To learn more about international communication, see Chapter 7.

## Diversity

Women, people of color, and immigrants have always been part of the U.S. workforce. But for most of this country's history, they were relegated to clerical, domestic, or menial jobs. Now, U.S. businesses realize that barriers to promotion hurt the bottom line as well as individuals. Success depends on using the brains and commitment as well as the hands and muscles of every worker.

In the past decade, we have also become aware of other sources of diversity beyond those of gender, race, and country of origin: age, religion, class, regional differences, sexual orientation, and physical disabilities are now areas of diversity. Helping each worker reach his or her potential requires more flexibility from managers as well as more knowledge about intercultural communication. And it's crucial to help workers from different backgrounds understand each other—especially in today's global economy. To learn more about diversity and the workforce, read Chapter 7.

## Teamwork

More and more companies are getting work done through teams. Teamwork brings together people's varying strengths and talents to solve problems and make decisions. Often, teams are cross-functional (drawing from different jobs or functions) or cross-cultural (including people from different nations or cultural groups served by the company).

Teams, including cross-functional teams, helped Sarasota Memorial Hospital resolve major problems with customer and employee satisfaction. For example, team members from the emergency room recorded every step in the process from pulling into the parking lot through decisions about patient care, and then they eliminated unnecessary steps. The ER team then worked with the laboratory staff to improve the process of getting test results. At Michelin, the French tire maker, teams bring together people from the United States and Europe. The exchange between the two continents helps employees on both sides of the Atlantic understand each other's perspectives and needs.<sup>77</sup>



Many businesses, such as McDonald's, now serve food in Asian countries.

Increasing emphasis on teamwork is a major reason given by organizations such as AT&T, Intel, Hewlett-Packard, and the U.S. Interior Department for calling telecommuting workers back to the office.<sup>78</sup> To learn more about working in teams, see Chapter 8.

## Job Flexibility

In traditional jobs, people did what they were told to do. But today, jobs that are routine can readily be done in other countries at lower cost. Many U.S. jobs have already been subject to such “offshoring,” and more are sure to follow. The work that remains in the United States is more likely to be complex work requiring innovation, flexibility, and adaptation to new learning.

Today’s workers do whatever needs to be done, based on the needs of customers, colleagues, and anyone else who depends on their work. They help team members finish individual work; they assist office mates with pressing deadlines. They are resourceful: they know how to find information and solution ideas. They work extra hours when the task demands it. They are ready to change positions and even locations when asked to do so. They need new skill sets even when they don’t change jobs.

At Sarasota Memorial Hospital, food service workers do more than bring food to patients; they open containers, resolve problems with meals, help patients read their menus, and adjust orders to meet patients’ preferences. This attentiveness not only serves the patients, but it also is part of a team-spirited approach to patient care that in this case frees nurses to do other work.<sup>79</sup> The experience at Sarasota Memorial is backed up by research suggesting the most effective workers don’t see work as assigned tasks. Instead, they define their own goals based on the needs of customers and clients.<sup>80</sup>

Your parents may have worked for the same company all their lives. You may do that, too, but you have to be prepared to job-hunt throughout your career. That means continuing to learn—keeping up with new technologies, new economic and political realities, new ways of interacting with people.

## Innovation and Entrepreneurship

As global competition increases, and industrial milieus change ever more quickly, innovation becomes more and more important. Xerox was known for photocopiers, but with paperless offices, the company had to change. Now Xerox offers new services, such as managing E-ZPass and red-light camera systems for many states.<sup>81</sup>

Researchers say that innovation/creativity is a process that can be learned. Ideo, the world-famous design firm with hundreds of design awards, says the first step is empathy, or you-attitude, with customers, both internal and external ones. This empathy is gained by getting out of the office and mingling with the users of your products and services.<sup>82</sup>

The next step is to generate ideas, lots of ideas, and to keep track of those ideas. Idea generation is most effective when individuals draw upon a large volume of diverse ideas and when organizations bring together a diverse group of people. The best problem solutions frequently come from combining existing ideas and from people who know enough to understand the problem but who are not in the specific area of the problem.<sup>83</sup> Websites such as InnoCentive allow organizations to find problem solutions through crowdsourcing; 74% of the public challenges (organizations can limit the challenges to specific sets of people, such as a group of employees) on InnoCentive pay cash awards to solvers.<sup>84</sup>

After the ideas comes feedback, phrased in positive tone. The chairman of Ideo recommends starting with “I like...” and then moving on to “I wish....”



Once these ideas have coalesced into a concrete plan, it is time to take the first step to making the idea a reality. Experts suggesting plunging in with a small step that can be tackled immediately.<sup>85</sup>

One Ideo client, the giant health care provider Kaiser Permanente, now has its own innovation center that follows the Ideo way. That center tackled the all-too-common problem of medication errors, which harm more than 1.5 million people in the United States each year. A team shadowed doctors, nurses, and pharmacists as they prescribed, administered, and filled medications. They made videos; they kept journals. And they discovered that interruptions were the cause of most errors. So the team brainstormed solutions, including “Leave Me Alone!” aprons and red “Do Not Cross!” lines in front of medication stations. The program has reduced interruptions by 50%.<sup>86</sup>

Many other companies also rely on all employees for suggestions. A classic article in the *Harvard Business Review* made famous the examples of 3M (where researchers can spend 15% of their time on ideas that don’t need management approval), Thermo Electron (where managers can “spin out” promising new businesses), and Xerox (where employees write business proposals competing for corporate funds to develop new technologies).<sup>87</sup> Google is famous for its 20% rule: technical employees can spend about 20% of their time on projects outside their main job, and even their managers cannot remove that free margin.<sup>88</sup>

The spirit of innovation is inspiring some workers to start their own businesses. The U.S. Census Bureau counted 21.4 million nonemployer businesses (self-employed workers without employees).<sup>89</sup> In fact, these businesses are the majority of all U.S. businesses. These entrepreneurs have to handle all the communication in the business: writing business plans; making presentations to venture capitalists; drafting surveys; responding to customer complaints; and marketing the product or service.

## Big Data

One of the forces driving innovation in some companies is big data. **Big data** is the term for the enormous amount of data generated by our electronic communications—e-mails, texts, instant messages, tweets, apps, web searches, Facebook postings, and GPS signals from phones. The amount is measured in petabytes (one quadrillion bytes, or “the equivalent of about 20 million filing cabinets’ worth of text”) and exabytes (one billion gigabytes).<sup>90</sup> As of 2012, each day sees the creation of about 2.5 exabytes of data; the volume is doubling about every 40 months. Experts estimate that only about 0.5% of this data is analyzed.<sup>91</sup>

Some of the uses of this data are well known: game developers use it to add more attractive features, Amazon uses it to steer us to other purchases we might like, Google uses it to help us find websites and to help advertisers find us, shipping firms use data from truck sensors to shorten routes and cut gas consumption. But the extent of usage is less well known. By monitoring billions of searches (for items such as cough medicine), Google is faster at predicting locations of flu outbreaks than the Center for Disease Control.<sup>92</sup> Inter-Continental Hotels used its data to launch a new marketing campaign with over 1,500 different customized messages.<sup>93</sup> Walmart is estimated to collect more than 2.5 petabytes of data hourly from customer transactions.<sup>94</sup>

To use big data effectively, organizations need to have specific goals in mind; they cannot just randomly collect and analyze data. They also need personnel who can find patterns in large data sets and translate those patterns into useful information for managers, who will act on the data. Finally, they need employees who are adept at understanding visuals and data displays (see Chapter 16).

## Data Mining Competitions



Kaggle was created to provide data mining competitions for those who enjoy working on solving data problems. An organization will give Kaggle the problem or question it wants answered, the necessary data set, and the prize for the winning person or group.

Companies that have hired Kaggle to run these competitions have included Deloitte, Ford, and Microsoft. Participants may include “geeks” from places like IBM and MIT, but participants from other fields, such as archeology and glaciology, also compete.

A few of the data competitions that Kaggle hosted were from

- Wikipedia for predicting the number of edits an editor will make.
- The Australian government for predicting traffic over the next 24 hours.
- Allstate for improved models to price automobile insurance.

Each of these competitions offered a \$10,000 prize, but smaller companies with smaller prizes also post on Kaggle.

The largest prize offered is from the Heritage Provider Network: \$3 million will be given to the person who can most accurately predict which patients will be admitted to a hospital within a year based upon past insurance data.

Adapted from Ashlee Vance, “Fight Club for Geeks,” *Bloomberg Businessweek*, January 9–15, 2012, 37–38.



## Rapid Rate of Change

As any employee who has watched his or her job shift can testify, change—even change for the better—is stressful. Even when change promises improvements, people have to work to learn new skills, new habits, and new attitudes.

Rapid change means that no college course or executive MBA program can teach you everything you need to know for the rest of your working life. You'll need to stay abreast of professional changes by reading trade journals as well as professional websites and blogs, participating in professional Listservs, and attending professional events. Take advantage of your company's training courses and materials; volunteer for jobs that will help you gain new skills and knowledge. Pay particular attention to your communication skills; they become even more important as you advance up your career ladder. A survey of 1,400 financial executives found that 75% considered oral, written, and interpersonal skills even more important for finance professionals now than they were just a few years ago.<sup>95</sup>

The skills you polish along the way can stand you in good stead for the rest of your life: critical thinking, computer savvy, problem solving, and the ability to write, speak, and work well with other people are vital in most jobs. It's almost a cliché, but it is still true: the most important knowledge you gain in college is how to learn.

## Summary by Learning Objectives

### LO 4-1 Why ethics is so important in business communication.

The economic news continues to create concern over lapses in business ethics. On the other hand, positive ethical efforts are also increasing.

### LO 4-2 How corporate culture impacts the business environment.

Corporate cultures range from informal to formal and impact such widely diverse areas as worker performance and sales.

### LO 4-3 Why interpersonal communication is important.

Interpersonal communication includes such areas as listening, conversational style, body language, etiquette, and networking. Its importance in career success is receiving new recognition.

### LO 4-4 How to use your time more efficiently.

Time management skills are also crucial to job success. Probably the most important time management technique is to prioritize the demands on your time, and make sure you spend the majority of your time on the most important demands.

Decades of research on multitasking show that it does not increase job performance and may actually hinder it.

### LO 4-5 What the trends in business communication are.

Twelve trends in business, government, and non-profit organizations affect business and administrative communication: data security, electronic privacy, customer service, work/family balance, environmental concern, globalization and outsourcing, diversity, teamwork, job flexibility, innovation and entrepreneurship, big data, and rapid change.

## Continuing Case

The All-Weather Case, set in an HR department in a manufacturing company, extends through all 19 chapters and is available at [www.mhhe.com/locker11e](http://www.mhhe.com/locker11e). The portion for this chapter asks students to create a message introducing a change in the problem-solving environment at the company.

## Exercises and Cases

\*Go to [www.mhhe.com/locker11e](http://www.mhhe.com/locker11e) for additional Exercises and Cases.

### 4.1 Reviewing the Chapter

1. What are some positive ethical efforts that are getting attention? (LO 4-1)
2. What are some ethical components of communication? (LO 4-1)
3. What are some elements of corporate culture? How do they affect business? (LO 4-2)
4. What are some ways to improve interpersonal communication? (LO 4-3)
5. What are some communication signals you might receive from specific body language cues? (LO 4-3)
6. What are some ways to manage your time more efficiently? (LO 4-4)
7. What are 12 trends in business communication? What do these trends mean for you? (LO 4-5)
8. What are some electronic privacy issues that could affect you at your workplace? (LO 4-5)

### 4.2 Protecting Privacy Online

As companies demand ever more accurate audiences to whom they can pitch their products and services, the debate over online tracking versus privacy continues.

1. Working in small groups, discuss some of the challenges you see to protecting your privacy on the Internet.
  - Should companies be allowed to track your online activity? Is it OK if they notify you they are tracking you? Do you like targeted placement ads, similar to Google's recommendations for you? Where do you find a balance between allowing Internet sites to use your information to provide better service and protecting your privacy?
  - Are employers justified in monitoring employees' e-mail, Twitter, and Internet usage on company machines?
  - Are employers justified in monitoring employees' Facebook accounts? Do you think it is fair when employees get fired for comments they post on their Facebook site?
2. The Federal Trade Commission is considering a "Do Not Track" option. Like the Do Not Call Registry, it would offer consumers a way to avoid some electronic marketing. See <http://www.ftc.gov/opa/reporter/privacy/donottrack.shtml> for more information. If such an option becomes available, would you use it? Suppose that big websites such as Google or Facebook started dropping Do Not Track customers. How would that action influence your opinion? Write an e-mail to your instructor explaining your decision.

### 4.3 Following Trends in Business Communication

Pick three of the trends discussed in this chapter and explain how they have impacted business communications in an organization where you—or a friend or family member—have worked.

**As your instructor directs,**

- a. Share your information in small groups.
- b. Present your group findings to your classmates.
- c. Post your information online for your classmates.

### 4.4 Applying Ethics Guidelines

Reread the ethics guidelines by Warren Buffett ("Warren Buffett on Ethics," page 88) and Tony Hsieh (page 91). In small groups, apply them to some business ethics situations currently in the news or occurring in your discipline.

- How would the situations be handled by Buffett? Hsieh?
- Do you approve of those solutions?
- Do you find one statement more helpful than the other? Why?

## 4.5 Making Ethical Choices

Indicate whether you consider each of the following actions ethical, unethical, or a gray area. Which of the actions would you do? Which would you feel uncomfortable doing? Which would you refuse to do?

Discuss your answers with a small group of classmates. In what ways did knowing you would share with a group change your answers?

1. Taking home office supplies (e.g., pens, markers, calculators, etc.) for personal use.
2. Inflating your evaluation of a subordinate because you know that only people ranked *excellent* will get pay raises.
3. Making personal long-distance calls on the company phone.
4. Updating your Facebook page and visiting the pages of friends during business hours.
5. Writing a feasibility report about a new product and de-emphasizing test results that show it could cause cancer.
6. Coming in to the office in the evening to use the company's computer for personal projects.
7. Designing an ad campaign for a cigarette brand.
8. Working as an accountant for a company that makes or advertises cigarettes.
9. Working as a manager in a company that exploits its nonunionized hourly workers.
10. Writing copy for a company's annual report hiding or minimizing the fact that the company pollutes the environment.
11. "Padding" your expense account by putting on it charges you did not pay for.
12. Telling a job candidate that the company "usually" grants cost-of-living raises every six months, even though you know that the company is losing money and plans to cancel cost-of-living raises for the next year.
13. Laughing at the racist or sexist jokes a client makes, even though you find them offensive.
14. Reading the *Wall Street Journal* on company time.

## 4.6 Analyzing Business Ethics

New Oriental Education & Technology Group offers Chinese students intensive courses to prepare for SAT, GRE, and TOEFL exams. The object of the courses is to enable the students to achieve scores that will get them into American colleges and universities. The courses provide traditional prep help, such as cramming vocabulary words, but they also offer more controversial techniques.

- The courses avail themselves of websites where students download the test questions they remember immediately after the exam. Because the tests do recycle some questions to ensure score consistency over time, the courses can prep students for actual exam questions.
- They provide tricks (e.g., females in the test passages are always smarter than males) that help students choose correct answers just by looking at the choices, without understanding the passages.
- Since many of the students are good at math, they recommend that five minutes into the math section, their students should flip back to the reading section and finish it. Flipping is prohibited, but this timing helps students escape the attention of the proctors, who look for it at the beginning and end of each test section.

- They help students prepare essays and speeches on topics—such as biographies of famous Americans—that can be memorized and adapted to many situations, thus avoiding extemporaneous performances.

The upside of these efforts is that many of the students do fulfill dreams of getting into American schools. The downside is that many of these same students have such poor English skills that they cannot understand the lectures or participate in class discussions. Nor can they write class papers without help. Unfortunately, they score so well that they even sometimes test out of the transitional programs many schools have to help students with shaky English skills.<sup>96</sup>

Is New Oriental an ethical business?

What would Warren Buffett say (see page 88)?

What would Tony Hsieh say (see page 91)?

How does New Oriental fare using Michael Davis's tests (see page 91)?

What are New Oriental's effects on its students?

Why do American schools accept these students?

What could be done to make the situation more ethical?

## 4.7 Analyzing Communication Ethics

Reread the "Egg-semplary Ethics" sidebar, page 89. In small groups, discuss what you would have done in that situation.

- What aspects of the situation would have made you break the confidentiality agreement?
- What aspects of the case would make you keep quiet?

- Apply the tests in Michael Davis's ethical decision-making system (page 91). Which tests most help you to decide what you would do in this situation?

- Did everyone in your group reach the same conclusion? What reasons were most commonly given?

#### 4.8 Analyzing Corporate Culture: I

Some businesses are deciding not to hire people with visible body art. Do you think such policies are allowable expressions of corporate culture, or are they

a form of discrimination? Discuss your answers in small groups.

#### 4.9 Analyzing Corporate Culture: II

Go to *Fortune's* "100 Best Companies to Work For" website: <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/best-companies/>.

Look up six companies you find interesting. What are unique features of their corporate culture? What features

seem to be common with many companies? Which features did you find particularly appealing? Write an e-mail for your instructor containing your findings.

#### 4.10 Analyzing Customer Service

Go to a business on campus or in your community where you can observe customer service for a half hour. Make sure you observe at least three different kinds of service.

- Where did you go? Why?
- What categories of service did you observe?
- What examples of good service did you see?

- What examples of service that could be improved did you see? How would you improve it?
- If you were the manager of the business, what changes would you make to impact customer service? Write an e-mail to your instructor containing your findings.

#### 4.11 Analyzing Nonverbal Communication

Choose one of your courses and make notes on nonverbal communications you see in the classroom.

- What are some dominant traits you see among the students?
- What are some interesting behaviors you see in individual students?
- Does the nonverbal communication differ from the beginning and end of the class?

- What are nonverbal communications from the instructor?
- Overall, what does the nonverbal communication in the classroom tell you about student learning in that class? Write an e-mail to your instructor containing your findings.

#### 4.12 Analyzing Body Language: I

Go to [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com) and search for "Body Language." Watch the Ted Talk by social psychologist Amy Cuddy, "Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are." After watching the video, break into small groups and discuss the following questions.

- When have you made a judgment about someone based upon that person's nonverbal communication? Describe the situation: What were they doing? What did you think of them?
- Think back to the last stressful evaluative experience you had (such as an interview or class presentation). How did you feel during that time? Do you remember how you were standing or sitting?

- Practice some power poses. Each person in your group should practice a power pose for two minutes. After those two minutes, have each person present his or her career goals in a one-minute presentation to the rest of the group. Observe each other carefully. How does each person look? Discuss body language and presence.
- Outside-of-class activity: Tell your friends about the Ted Talk by Amy Cuddy, and encourage them to try their own power poses. Take pictures of them in their power poses and bring to class for discussion.



### 4.13 Analyzing Body Language: II

Go to a location such as your campus or city library where you can watch people at work and rest. Spend a half hour observing examples of body language around you. Make sure your half hour includes examples of at least one group at work, individuals at work, and individuals relaxing.

- What interesting examples of body language did you note?
- What were some common features of body language?

- Did you see any unique body language?
- Could you make assumptions about group relations based on the body language you saw exhibited by members of the group?
- How did the body language of individuals who were relaxing differ from that of the group members?

Write an e-mail for your instructor containing your findings.

### 4.14 Analyzing Your Time Management

For two days, write down exactly how you spend your time. Be specific. Don't just say "two hours studying." Instead, write how long you spent on each item of study (e.g., 15 min. reviewing underlinings in sociology chapter, 20 min. reviewing class notes, an hour and 20 min. reading accounting chapter). Include time spent on items such as grooming, eating, talking with friends (both in person and on phone), texting, watching television, and sleeping.

Now analyze your time record. Does anything surprise you? How much time did you spend studying? Is it enough? Did you spend more time studying your

most important subjects? Your hardest subjects? Did you spend time on projects that are due later in the term? Did you spend time on health-related items? Do you see items on which you spent too much time? Too little time? Did you spend any time on items that would fit in Stephen Covey's quadrant II (see page 101)?

**As your instructor directs,**

- a. Share your findings in small groups.
- b. Write an e-mail for your instructor containing your findings.

### 4.15 Analyzing the Business Environment Where You Work

In an e-mail to your instructor, describe and analyze the business environment at an organization where you have worked. Use this chapter as a guide for content. What

aspects of the environment did you like? Dislike? What aspects helped your job performance? What aspects hindered your job performance?

### 4.16 Participating in a Networking Event

In this exercise, you are going to participate in a networking event, an abbreviated "talk and walk."

To prepare for the event,

- Create business cards for yourself, using a computer application of your choice.
- List people in your class whom you would like to meet (give a visual description if you do not know their names).
- Make a list of questions you would like to have answered.
- Collect materials to use for taking notes during the event.

During the event, you will have six three-minute sessions to talk with a fellow student and exchange business cards. Your instructor will time the sessions and tell you when to change people. Remember that the other person also has questions she or he wants answered.

After the event, analyze what you have learned. Here are some questions to get you started:

- Who was the most interesting? Why?
- Who did you like the most? Why?
- Who would you most like to have on a team in this class? Why?
- Did you meet anyone who might become a professional contact? Explain.
- What lessons did you learn about networking?

**As your instructor directs,**

- a. Share your analyses in small groups; then prepare an informal oral report for the class.
- b. Write your analysis in an e-mail to your teacher.
- c. Write your analysis in an e-mail to post on your class website.

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