Business Communication Today 13th edition Bovee Solutions Manual

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Chapter 2: Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, and Business Etiquette

CHAPTER OUTLINE

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- Characteristics of Effective Teams
- Group Dynamics
  - Assuming Team Roles
  - Allowing for Team Evolution
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- Business Etiquette in the Workplace
- Business Etiquette in Social Settings
- Business Etiquette Online
- Business Etiquette Using Mobile Devices

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LECTURE NOTES

Section 1: Communicating Effectively in Teams

Learning Objective 1: List the advantages and disadvantages of working in teams, describe the characteristics of effective teams, and highlight four key issues of group dynamics.

Collaboration—working together to meet complex challenges—has become a core job responsibility for roughly half the U.S. workforce.

A team is a unit of two or more people who share a mission and the responsibility for working to achieve a common goal.

Problem-solving teams and task forces assemble to resolve specific issues and then disband when their goals have been accomplished.

Such teams are often *cross-functional*, pulling together people from a variety of departments who have different areas of expertise and responsibility.

Diversity of opinions and experiences can lead to better decisions, but competing interests can create tension.

Committees are formal teams that can become a permanent part of the organizational structure.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Teams

Teams are often part of participative management—the effort to involve employees in the company's decision making.

A successful team can provide advantages, such as:

- Increased information and knowledge
- Increased diversity of views
- Increased acceptance of a solution
- Higher performance levels

Teams can also have disadvantages, such as:

- Groupthink—occurs when peer pressures cause individual team members to withhold contrary or unpopular opinions
- Hidden agendas—private, counterproductive motives that undermine someone else on the team
- Cost—aligning schedules, arranging meetings, and coordinating individual parts of a project can eat up a lot of time and money

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Characteristics of Effective Teams

The most effective teams:

- Have a clear objective and a shared sense of purpose
- Communicate openly and honestly
- Reach decisions by consensus
- Think creatively
- Know how to resolve conflict

Ineffective teams:

- Get bogged down in conflict
- Waste time and resources pursuing unclear goals

Two of the most common reasons cited for unsuccessful teamwork are a lack of trust and poor communication.

Group Dynamics

Group dynamics are the interactions and processes that take place among members in a team.

Productive teams tend to develop positive norms—informal standards of conduct that members share and that guide member behavior.

Group dynamics are influenced by:

- The roles assumed by team members
- The current phase of team development
- The team's success in resolving conflict
- The team's success in overcoming resistance

Team members can play various roles:

- Self-oriented roles are played by those motivated mainly to fulfill personal needs—these individuals tend to be less productive than other members.
- Team-maintenance roles are played by those who help everyone work well together.
- Task-oriented roles are played by those who help the team reach its goals.

As teams grow and evolve, they generally pass through a variety of stages, such as these five:

- Orientation
- Conflict
- Brainstorming
- Emergence
- Reinforcement

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Another common model, proposed by Bruce Tuckman:

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing
- Adjourning

Conflict in team activities can result from:

- Competition for resources
- Disagreement over goals or responsibilities
- Poor communication
- Power struggles
- Fundamental differences in values, attitudes, and personalities

Conflict is not necessarily bad.

Conflict can be constructive if it:

- Forces important issues into the open
- Increases the involvement of team members
- Generates creative ideas for the solution to a problem

Conflict can be destructive if it:

- Diverts energy from more important issues
- Destroys morale of teams or individual team members
- Polarizes or divides the team

Destructive conflict can lead to *win-lose* or *lose-lose* outcomes, in which one or both sides lose to the detriment of the entire team.

If you approach conflict with the idea that both sides can satisfy their goals to at least some extent (a *win-win strategy*), you can minimize losses for everyone.

For the win-win strategy to work, everybody must believe that:

- It's possible to find a solution that both parties can accept
- Cooperation is better for the organization than competition
- The other party can be trusted
- Greater power or status doesn't entitle one party to impose a solution

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Conflict can be resolved through:

- Proactive management. Deal with minor conflict before it becomes major conflict.
- Communication. Get those involved with the conflict actively involved in resolution.
- Openness. Get feelings out into the open before dealing with main issues.
- Research. Get the facts before attempting a resolution.
- Flexibility. Don't let anyone lock into a position before considering all possible solutions.
- Fair play. Insist on a fair outcome that doesn't hide behind rules.
- Alliance. Unite the team against an "outside force" instead of each other.

When attempting to overcome irrational resistance, try to:

- Express understanding
- Bring resistance out into the open
- Evaluate others' objections fairly
- Hold your arguments until the other person is ready for them

Section 2: Collaborating on Communication Efforts

Learning Objective 2: Offer guidelines for collaborative communication, identify major collaboration technologies, and explain how to give constructive feedback.

When teams collaborate, the collective energy and expertise of the various members can lead to results that transcend what each individual could do otherwise.

However, collaborating on team messages requires special effort.

Guidelines for Collaborative Writing

In any collaborative effort, team members coming from different backgrounds may have different work habits or priorities, for example:

- A technical expert to focus on accuracy and scientific standards
- An editor to be more concerned about organization and coherence
- A manager to focus on schedules, cost, and corporate goals

Remember that the ways in which team members differ in writing styles and personality traits can complicate the creative nature of communication.

To collaborate successfully, follow these guidelines:

- Select collaborators carefully.
- Agree on project goals before you start.
- Give your team time to bond before diving in.
- Clarify individual responsibilities.

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- Establish clear processes.
- Avoid composing as a group.
- Make sure tools and techniques are ready and compatible across the team.
- Check to see how things are going along the way.

Technologies for Collaborative Writing

Collaboration technologies range from simple features such as commenting and revision or change tracking, to collaboration solutions such as content management systems that organize and control the content for many websites (particularly larger corporate sites).

A wiki is a website that allows anyone with access to add new material and edit existing material.

Key benefits of wikis include:

- Simple operation
- Freedom to post new or revised material without prior approval

This approach is quite different from a content management system, in which both the organization of the website and the *work flow* are tightly controlled.

Chapter 8 addresses wikis in more detail.

Groupware is an umbrella term for systems that let people simultaneously:

- Communicate
- Share files
- Present materials
- Work on documents

Cloud computing expands the ways in which geographically dispersed teams can collaborate.

Shared workspaces are “virtual offices” that:

- Give everyone on a team access to the same set of resources and information
- Are accessible through a web browser
- Control which team members can read, edit, and save specific files
- Can allow only one person at a time to work on a given file or document to avoid getting edits out of sync
- May include presence awareness

The terms intranet (restricted internal website) and extranet (restricted, but with outside access) are still used in some companies.

Social networking technologies are redefining teamwork and team communication by helping erase the constraints of geographic and organization boundaries.

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Virtual communities or *communities of practice* link employees with similar professional interests throughout the company and sometimes with customers and suppliers as well.

Social networking can also help a company maintain a sense of community even as it grows beyond the size that normally permits a lot of daily interaction.

Mobile brings a new dimension to collaboration by connecting employees and business partners who work part- or full-time outside conventional office environments.

Giving—and Responding to—Constructive Feedback

Constructive feedback, sometimes called *constructive criticism*, focuses on the process and outcomes of communication, not on the people involved.

Destructive feedback delivers criticism with no guidance to stimulate improvement.

When you give feedback, try to:

- Avoid personal attacks
- Give the person clear guidelines for improvement

When you receive constructive feedback, try to:

- Resist the urge to defend your work or deny the validity of the feedback
- Disconnect emotionally from the work and see it simply as something that can be made better
- Step back and consider the feedback before diving in to make corrections
- Don't assume that all constructive feedback is necessarily correct

Section 3: Making Your Meetings More Productive

Learning Objective 3: List the key steps needed to ensure productive team meetings.

Well-run meetings can help you:

- Solve problems
- Develop ideas
- Identify opportunities

Meetings are unproductive when they:

- Wander off the subject
- Lack an agenda
- Run too long

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Preparing for Meetings

To increase the productivity of meetings, prepare carefully. Steps include:

- Identify your purpose—whether you need an informational or a decision-making meeting.
- Select participants whose presence is essential.
- Choose the venue and time and prepare the facility.
- Set the agenda. An effective agenda answers three questions:
  - What do we need to do in this meeting to accomplish our goals?
  - What issues will be of greatest importance to all participants?
  - What information must be available in order to discuss these issues?

Conducting and Contributing to Efficient Meetings

Ensure a productive meeting by:

- Keeping the discussion on track
- Following agreed-upon rules, including parliamentary procedure, if appropriate
- Encouraging participation
- Participating actively
- Closing effectively

Putting Meeting Results to Productive Use

The value of a meeting's interaction and discovery usually doesn't (or at least shouldn't) end when the meeting ends.

In formal meetings, one person is appointed to record the minutes.

In small meetings, attendees often make their own notes on their copies of the agenda.

The minutes of a meeting summarize:

- The important information presented
- The decisions made
- The people responsible for follow-up action

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Section 4: Using Meeting Technologies

Learning Objective 4: Identify the major technologies used to enhance or replace in-person meetings.

Replacing in-person meetings with long-distance, virtual interaction can:

- Dramatically reduce costs and resource usage
- Reduce wear and tear on employees
- Give teams access to a wider pool of expertise

Virtual teams have members who work in different locations and interact electronically through virtual meetings.

Basic teleconferencing involves three or more people connected by phone simultaneously.

Videoconferencing combines live audio and video letting team members see each other, demonstrate products, and transmit other visual information.

More-advanced telepresence systems create interaction so lifelike that participants can forget that the person "sitting" on the other side of the table is actually in another city.

Web-based meeting systems combine the best of instant messaging, shared workspaces, and videoconferencing with other tools, such as virtual whiteboards, that let teams collaborate in real time.

The benefits are compelling, but conducting successful virtual meetings requires extra planning beforehand and more diligence during the meeting in order to overcome potential communication barriers.

Section 5: Improving Your Listening Skills

Learning Objective 5: Identify three major modes of listening, describe the listening process, and explain the problem of selective listening.

Effective listening:

- Strengthens organizational relationships
- Enhances product delivery
- Alerts the organization to opportunities for innovation
- Allows the organization to manage growing diversity
- Gives you a competitive edge
- Enhances your performance and influence within your company and industry

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Recognizing Various Types of Listening

You will become a more effective listener by learning to use several methods of listening. For example:

- Content listening emphasizes information and understanding, not agreement or approval.
- Critical listening emphasizes evaluating the meaning of the speaker's message on several levels (logic of the argument, strength of evidence, validity of conclusions, implications of the message, intentions of the speaker, and omission of any important or relevant points).
- Empathic listening emphasizes understanding a speaker's feelings, needs, and wants (without advising or judging).
- Active listening means making a conscious effort to turn off their own filters and biases to truly hear and understand what the other party is saying.

Understanding the Listening Process

Most people aren't very good listeners—in general, people:

- Listen at or below a 25 percent efficiency rate
- Remember only about half of what has been said in a 10-minute conversation
- Forget half of that within 48 hours
- Mix up the facts when questioned about material they've just heard

The listening process involves five separate steps:

- Receiving
- Decoding
- Remembering
- Evaluating
- Responding

Overcoming Barriers to Effective Listening

Good listeners look for ways to overcome potential barriers.

Selective listening is one of the most common barriers to effective listening.

Defensive listening—protecting your ego by tuning out anything that doesn't confirm your beliefs or your view of yourself—is even worse.

To become a good listener, recognize and overcome potential barriers throughout the listening process:

- Avoid interrupting or creating nonverbal distractions that make it hard for others to pay attention.

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- Avoid selective listening, whereby you pay attention only to those topics in which you have an interest.
- Focus on the speaker (because people think faster than they speak, their minds tend to wander).
- Avoid prejudgment, and listen with an open mind.
- Avoid misinterpreting messages because of the lack of common ground.
- Don't rely on your memory.

To remember material, you must first capture it in short-term memory, then successfully transfer it to long-term memory.

Use four techniques to store information in long-term memory:

- Associate new information with something closely related.
- Categorize new information into logical groups.
- Visualize words and ideas as pictures.
- Create mnemonics.

Section 6: Improving Your Nonverbal Communication Skills

Learning Objective 6: Explain the importance of nonverbal communication, and identify six major categories of nonverbal expression.

Nonverbal communication is the interpersonal process of sending and receiving information, both intentionally and unintentionally, without using written or spoken language.

Nonverbal cues affect communication in three ways:

- Strengthen a verbal message
- Weaken a verbal message
- Replace a verbal message

Recognizing Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication can be grouped into six general categories:

- Facial expression
- Gesture and posture
- Vocal characteristics
- Personal appearance
- Touch
- Time and space

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Using Nonverbal Communication Effectively

To be a better speaker and listener, pay closer attention to nonverbal cues in every situation:

- Be aware of the cues you send when you're talking.
- Be aware of the cues you send when you're not talking (through clothing, posture, and so on).
- Be aware of the cues you receive when you're listening.

If something doesn't feel right, ask the speaker an honest and respectful question.

Section 7: Developing Your Business Etiquette

Learning Objective 7: Explain the importance of business etiquette, and identify three key areas in which good etiquette is essential.

Etiquette is now considered an essential business skill.

Poor etiquette can:

- Destroy morale and drain productivity
- Drive away customers, investors, and other critical audiences
- Limit your career potential

Business Etiquette in the Workplace

Workplace etiquette includes a variety of behaviors, habits, and aspects of nonverbal communication.

Personal appearance may be thought of as an element of etiquette and sends a strong signal to managers, colleagues, and customers.

Personal appearance guidelines include:

- Matching your style of dress to the situation
- Dressing modestly and simply
- Paying close attention to cleanliness and avoiding the use of products with powerful scents
- Following company policy regarding hairstyle
- Smiling genuinely at appropriate times

Telephone etiquette is essential for overcoming the lack of visual contact and feedback:

- Be conscious of how your voice sounds.
- Be courteous when you call someone; take into account that you are interrupting.
- Convey a positive, professional attitude when you answer the phone.

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Business Etiquette in Social Settings

When meeting people, learn about their cultural customs beforehand.

When introducing yourself, include a brief description of your role in the company.

When introducing two other people, remember to:

- Speak both their first and last names clearly.
- Offer some information to help them ease into a conversation.
- Introduce the lower-ranking person to the senior-ranking person.

When conducting business over a meal, be sure that you:

- Choose foods that are easy to eat.
- Avoid ordering alcoholic beverages or save them until after business is concluded.
- Leave business papers under your chair until entrée plates have been removed.
- Choose topics of conversation carefully (avoid politics, religion, or other emotional topics),
- Avoid going overboard when chatting about personal interests.
- Don't complain about work.
- Avoid profanity.
- Avoid deeply personal questions.
- Be careful with humor.

Business Etiquette Online

Learn the basics of professional online behavior to avoid mistakes that could hurt your company or your career. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- Avoid personal attacks.
- Stay focused on the original topic; don't hijack threads.
- Don't present opinions as facts, and support facts with evidence.
- Follow basic expectations of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
- Use virus protection and keep it up to date.
- Ask if this is a good time for an IM chat.
- Watch your language and keep your emotions under control.
- Avoid multitasking while using IM and other tools.
- Never assume privacy.
- Don't use "reply all" in email unless everyone can benefit from your reply.
- Don't waste others' time with sloppy, confusing, or incomplete messages.
- Respect boundaries of time and virtual space.
- Be careful with online commenting mechanisms.

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Business Etiquette Using Mobile Devices

The way you use your mobile devices sends a message—positive or negative—about your professionalism and respect for others. Avoid these:

- Selecting obnoxious ring tones
- Talking loudly in open offices or public places
- Using your phone right next to someone else
- Making excessive or unnecessary personal calls during work hours
- Invading someone's privacy by using your camera phone without permission
- Taking or making calls in restrooms and other inappropriate places
- Texting while someone is talking to you
- Allowing incoming calls to interrupt meetings or discussions
- Using voice commands or voice dictation in ways that interrupt other people

ETHICS DETECTIVE (p. 37)

Solving the Case of the Missing Team

Students' answers will most likely vary. Those who place the good of the organization before themselves will agree with the colleague who stated that the goal of the team was to solve a problem for the company and not seek personal recognition. Those who are most interested in advancing their own careers, as the person described in the story, will most likely agree that Mueller behaved in an unethical manner. You might want to ask students if Mueller had taken one minute to introduce each team member to the board, would they be satisfied with his decision?

HIGHLIGHT BOX: COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES (p. 53)

Whose Skin Is This Anyway?

Students will no doubt have a range of opinions on this matter, and those opinions will be influenced by their experiences as employees and as consumers, and by their relative depth of perspective in matters of business. Any considered response to this question must include context and common sense, however. For example, one would be hard-pressed to mount a strong defense for body art and other appearance choices that openly clash with the brand image and customer experience that a company is spending thousands or millions of dollars to create and protect. Employees who choose to work in customer-facing positions are "constrained" in other ways as well (they most likely aren't allowed to swear or smoke in front of customers, for example), so on the face of it, having stricter standards of appearance for these employees does not seem unreasonable.

This question is more nuanced than the previous issue; but again, it comes down to a matter of context and common sense. A building supplies wholesaler and a bank might both cater to a clientele fond of body art, but brand message and customer experience mean two different things to these two businesses.

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COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT CEMEX (p. 58)

Individual Challenge

This is a chance for students to demonstrate an understanding of resolving conflict and the purposes of collaborative writing. All three communication choices offered in the text have potential shortcomings. Calling her out of the blue could create even more tension and misunderstanding, particularly if language is a barrier. Sending an email precludes the use of vocal characteristics to help convey meaning and increases the chances that she might misinterpret your message. Inserting a sarcastic comment on the wiki not only avoids the problem but also allows the firm to see your comments. Of the three, we can eliminate the sarcastic comment, because it doesn't solve the problem. The choice between phone and email would come down to the nature of the relationship and any knowledge of language compatibility issues. The optimum solution could be to send an introductory email expressing your concern in calm, non-defensive language and proposing that you have a phone conversation to iron out any misunderstandings.

Remember the rules for resolving conflict:

- Proactive management
- Communication
- Openness
- Research
- Flexibility
- Fair play
- Alliance

When considering the form of your message, students should make sure to discuss the benefits of collaborative writing but not patronize their colleague; rather, they should make sure that she knows they appreciate the interactive nature of the wikis and her attention to their postings, but that they're noticing she's making several changes that don't seem necessary.

Team Challenge

The guidelines developed by the team should incorporate the following points about collaborative writing that apply to this scenario:

- Restate the agreed upon project goals.
- Clarify individual responsibilities. (This will help others realize that the grammatical and mechanical errors will be corrected before the final report is submitted.)
- Remind everyone about the process that was established at the beginning of the project.
- Reassess whether the group even needs to be writing together.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE (p. 58)

2.1. Few activities in business today are the sole focus of a single individual, so successful teamwork is vital to virtually everything a company does. Even individual salespeople who travel from customer to customer outside the office rely on a support staff to coordinate schedules, provide

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customer service, and help with other tasks. Similarly, marketing and research teams rely on feedback from the salespeople. Moreover, many tasks are just too large for any single person, and many others require input and insights from multiple employees. As a result, successful teams can improve productivity, creativity, employee involvement, and even job security.

2.2. Groupthink is the willingness of team members to set aside personal opinions and values to go along with the rest of the team, because belonging to the group seems more important than making the right decision. Groupthink can lead to poor-quality decisions and ill-advised actions, sometimes inducing people to act unethically.

2.3. Employees and companies can take advantage of social networking technologies by erasing the constraints of geographical and organizational boundaries, as well as enabling and enhancing teamwork.

2.4. The advantages of virtual meetings are lower costs and resource usage, reduced wear and tear on employees, and access to wider pools of expertise than might be willing or able to attend meetings and job teams in person.

2.5. The listening process consists of receiving (actually hearing the message), decoding (assigning meaning), remembering (storing the message for future reference), evaluating (weighing the ideas), and responding (reacting to the message).

2.6. Someone using content listening is trying to understand and retain the speaker's message. Someone using critical listening is trying to understand and evaluate the meaning of the speaker's message. Someone using empathic listening is trying to understand the speaker's feelings, needs, and wants, and to appreciate his or her point of view.

2.7. An individual can communicate nonverbally through the use of facial expression, gesture and posture, vocal characteristics, personal appearance, touching behavior, and time and space.

2.8. Mobile devices present unique etiquette challenges because of their ubiquitous and personal nature and because etiquette expectations can differ so widely. Younger employees who grew up in the digital era may think nothing of using their devices whenever and wherever, but others, particularly older employers and managers, may have much more sharply defined boundaries when it comes to mobile usage. In general, because mobile technology enables communication and other work and personal uses virtually everywhere at any time, users need to be more sensitive to how their actions can interrupt or offend others.

APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE (p. 58)

2.9. Answers will vary, but students should recognize the opportunity to turn the conflict into a constructive means for bringing important issues into the open, increasing the involvement of other team members, and generating creative ideas for solving a problem.

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2.10. In the email message, students should discuss the benefits of social networking (e.g., connecting people across organizational boundaries) and how networking technology is an essential element of the network organizational structure.

2.11. Nonverbal communication can reinforce the points you're trying to make in the meeting (or it can interfere if it clashes with your words). For example, a meeting leader might reinforce a call to order by standing up to say, "Let's begin." Other nonverbal signals include using hand gestures and changing voice tone to emphasize topics, nodding to show approval, or raising an eyebrow to indicate reservations. Nonverbal signals also regulate the flow of conversation. For example, to discourage an out-of-turn speaker, depending on the culture, such signals might include facially expressing interest or boredom, covering lips with a finger, or frowning. At the same time, a motion of the hand or widening curious eyes could encourage a speaker to continue.

2.12. Students should recognize the different, sometimes vastly different, contexts of in-person and online communication. Online communication is a leaner medium, with fewer visual cues, so it doesn't support the level of immediate feedback that helps keep emotions and behaviors in check during in-person conversations. Online media create a certain emotional distance that can lull people into forgetting that another human being is on the other side of the conversation. And, of course, if people are communicating online anonymously, the potential for rude behavior skyrockets as people feel free to engage in unsocial behavior in the belief that their hidden identities render them immune from consequences.

2.13. This is a tricky and potentially unnerving scenario for a new employee to navigate because you might not be fully aware of cultural norms regarding the use of mobile devices in company meetings. The audience behavior could be a sign that people are deeply engaged with the content of the presentation and are taking notes or sharing information in real time via a backchannel of some sort. Of course, they also could be openly ignoring you or rejecting you and your message.

As the speaker in this situation, start by using your best judgment to get the "feel of the room," taking into consideration the nature of your relationship to the attendees. For example, if you're a lower-ranking employee, you might need to accept the behavior and move on as best you can. One possible response would be to stop your presentation and ask if you are providing the information people expected to get from you. The verbal and nonverbal responses from attendees should give you some clues. For example, some might confirm that they are indeed taking notes or live-sharing the meeting with absent colleagues. On the other hand, you might get uncomfortable silence and averted eyes, which would tell you that people aren't paying attention or are otherwise not on board. However, you could turn this into an opportunity to explain that as a new employee, you would like to learn as much as possible to help the company and your colleagues. You could ask people to explain why the presentation isn't meeting their needs, then either adjust on the fly, if you can, or offer to reschedule with a revised presentation. This is a risky move, of course, but displaying this level of honesty and concern for your audience would enhance your reputation as an individual with integrity.

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PRACTICE YOUR SKILLS (p. 59)

Message for Analysis

Here is one way of reorganizing and rewording the information provided to create a well-organized agenda:

AGENDA
Budget Committee Meeting
December 12, 2015, 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 3

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting (5 minutes)

III. Director Reports

A. Real Estate Director's Report: A closer look at cost overruns on Greentree site (10 minutes)

B. Finance Director's Report on Quarterly Revenues and Expenses (15 minutes)

IV. New Business

A. Discussion of Cost Overrun Issues (20 minutes)

B. Discussion of Additional Quarterly Budget Issues

C. Presentation of Divisional Budget

V. Announcements

VI. Adjournment

Exercises

2.14. In the presentation, students should discuss challenges such as how to ensure that employees present a positive image of the organization through the messages they send. The exercise provides a good opportunity to analyze how the team negotiated the process of developing the presentation and agreeing upon content, organization, and other aspects.

2.15. Although this member's response indicates he wants to be seen as playing a task-facilitating role, he actually seems to be playing a self-oriented role. Students may offer a variety of ways to deal with this situation. For example, next time the member calls for a vote prematurely, the student—who is the leader—can politely intervene and suggest that the vote be postponed until all members have had their say.

2.16. Encourage students to implement the guidelines for effective collaborative writing listed in the chapter. At least one team is likely to attempt writing as a group. If so, having them describe the experience is a helpful way for everyone in the class to gain a better understanding of the challenges associated with attempting to do so.

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2.17. This exercise gives students the opportunity to imagine their responses to an uncomfortable situation when they probably have little personal or positional power to deal with it. This group is clearly dysfunctional, so students need to consider this larger context as well—do they really want to fit in with this group, or perhaps just "go along to get along" long enough to find another position? Looking for opportunities to quietly lead by better example is another avenue to consider. There is also the important matter of compromising one's personal values, given that at least one of the behaviors described (taking credit for others' ideas) is unethical. A workable solution under the circumstances could be to take a bolder and more aggressive approach to being heard, without compromising one's ethics or resorting to rudeness.

2.18. This exercise gives students an opportunity to practice listening, observing nonverbal cues, and critiquing a group in action. To answer the questions, students will have to pay attention to a number of things occurring at the meeting. By comparing notes with a partner, students will see that a person's own background and listening skills influence the type and content of the notes he or she takes. What is obvious to one person may be worth noting to another. Similarly, poor listeners tend to have superficial notes.

2.19. Students should try to be as inclusive as possible without making the situation unreasonably uncomfortable. Consider two options: they might ask the speech-impaired person to team up with one or more other employees and let that team report as a unit; or they might provide an alternative way for this person to communicate during meetings, such as using presentation slides. Most important, since this communication challenge surely exists outside formal meetings, students may suggest working closely with the person to explore ways to help him or her contribute to the department's work flow.

2.20. In addition to providing an opportunity for collaboration, this exercise encourages students to take an audience-centered approach to a topic with which they are likely to be very familiar. The teams should look beyond simple textual instructions or static maps and explore options such as video, animation, or even GPS waypoints.

2.21. This assessment provides students with information about their listening skills. If you choose to discuss the results of the self-assessments in class, be sure to ask students to identify instances of selective listening, prejudgment, and selective perception.

2.22. Students will discuss how nonverbal messages need not be human gestures; they also include the appearance of written messages. Students will consider how letter and memo quality is often judged first by overall appearance. You may want to refer students to Appendix A for a discussion of the importance of formatting and laying out business documents.

2.23. Students' memos should address the following points:

- Etiquette is now considered an essential business skill. Nobody wants to work with someone who is rude to colleagues or an embarrassment to the company.
- Shabby treatment of others in the workplace can be a huge drain on morale and productivity.

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- Poor etiquette can drive away customers, investors, and other critical audiences—and it can limit one's career potential.
- Students should also include the etiquette advice included in this chapter.

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