Excellence in Business Communication 13th edition Thill Solutions Manual

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Chapter Guides

This section provides chapter-by-chapter information about textbook content, with suggested solutions and answers for student questions and activities. Each Chapter Guide includes the following items:

- Chapter overview
- Chapter outline
- Lecture notes organized by Learning Objective, with class discussion questions in selected sections
- Answers to highlight box questions
- Answers to Apply Your Knowledge questions
- Answers to Practice Your Skills activities
- Solutions to cases (complete example solutions for short-message cases; solution guidelines for long-message cases)
- Lesson plan foundations from the Bovée and Thill QuickSwitch textbook transition system

Part 1: Understanding the Foundations of Business Communication

The first four chapters give students a general understanding of why good communication skills are important in business, how today's communication is enhanced through technology, why interpersonal communication is vital but also challenging, how communication is used in teams, and how it can overcome cultural boundaries. As you present this material, stimulate students to personalize basic concepts. Encourage them to think about their own careers and the communication skills they'll need to be successful. Ask members of the class who have work experience to comment on the communication requirements and challenges they have encountered.

Chapter 1: Professional Communication in a Digital, Social, Mobile World

Chapter 1 emphasizes the importance of effective communication, explains what it means to communicate in a professional context, describes the communication process model and the ways social media have changed the nature of business communication, introduces students to three major classes of communication technology, and offers guidance for making ethical choices as a business communicator.

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CHAPTER OUTLINE

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

Communicating as a Professional
- Understanding What Employers Expect from You
- Communicating in an Organizational Context
- Adopting an Audience-Centered Approach

Exploring the Communication Process
- The Conventional Communication Model
- Barriers in the Communication Environment
- Inside the Mind of Your Audience
  - How Audiences Receive Messages
  - How Audiences Decode Messages
  - How Audiences Respond to Messages
- The Social Communication Model

Using Technology to Improve Communication
- The Potential Benefits of Communication Technology
- The Spectrum of Contemporary Communication Technology
  - Social and Workgroup Communication Systems
  - Mobile Communication
  - Intelligent Communication Technology

Committing to Ethical and Legal Communication
- Forms of Unethical Communication
  - Withholding Information
  - Distorting Information
  - Plagiarizing
- Distinguishing Ethical Dilemmas from Ethical Lapses
- Ensuring Ethical Communication
- Ensuring Legal Communication

Developing Skills for Your Career

Applying What You've Learned

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LECTURE NOTES

Section 1: Understanding Why Communication Matters

Learning Objective 1: Explain the importance of effective communication to your career and to the companies where you will work.

Communication is the process of transferring information and meaning between senders and receivers, using one or more forms of media.

For communication to be considered successful, it also must transfer understanding.

Communication can happen in a variety of ways, including

- Successful transfers of information and understanding
- Negotiations in which the sender and receiver arrive at an agreed-on meaning
- Unsuccessful attempts in which the receiver assembles a different message than the one the sender intended

Communication Is Important to Your Career

Even great ideas won't go anywhere without great communication.

The gig economy and other alternative career paths put additional communication responsibility on individual workers.

As professionals take on leadership and management roles, communication becomes even more important.

If you learn to write well, speak well, listen well, and recognize the most appropriate way to communicate in any situation, you'll gain a major advantage that will serve you throughout your career.

Communication Is Important to Your Company

Communication is important to your company in three essentials ways:

- Operations. Every company needs fast, effective communication between managers and staff, within departments, between departments, and between the company and its external business partners.
- Intelligence. Companies need to keep a constant "ear to ground" to be alerted to new opportunities, risks, and impending problems—both internally and externally.
- Relationships. Just as in personal and social relationships, business relationships depend on communication.

Effective communication strengthens the connections between a company and all its stakeholders, which are any persons or organizations significantly affected by the company's business decisions and operations.

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What Makes Business Communication Effective?

To make your communication efforts as effective as possible, focus on making them practical, factual, concise, clear, and persuasive.

Section 2: Communicating as a Professional

Learning Objective 2: Explain what it means to communicate as a professional in a business context.

If you don't have a lot of work experience yet, meeting the expectations of a professional environment might require some adjustment.

Professionalism is the quality of performing at a high level and conducting oneself with purpose and pride.

Professionalism can be broken down into six distinct traits:

- Striving to excel
- Being dependable and accountable
- Being a team player
- Demonstrating a sense of etiquette
- Making ethical decisions
- Maintaining a positive outlook

Understanding What Employers Expect from You

Today's employers expect you to be competent at a wide range of communication tasks:

Acquiring, processing, and sharing information; key skills include

- Digital information fluency—recognizing information needs, using efficient search techniques to locate reliable sources of information, and using gathered information appropriately and ethically
- Critical thinking—the ability to evaluate evidence completely and objectively in order to form logical conclusions and make sound recommendations

Using communication to foster positive working relationships; key skills include

- Listening
- Practicing good etiquette
- Resolving conflicts respectfully
- Communicating with people from diverse backgrounds
- Efficiently using the tools at your disposal

Communicating in an Organizational Context

In the formal communication network, ideas and information flow along the lines of command in four directions; downward, upward, horizontally, and diagonally.

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The informal communication network encompasses all communication that takes place outside the formal network.

Communication in the informal network is healthy and important.

However, if a workplace is rife with rumors and company gossip, this could be a sign that the formal network is not functioning effectively.

Adopting an Audience-Centered Approach

An audience-centered approach involves understanding and respecting the members of your audience and making every effort to get your message across in a way that is meaningful to them.

Also known as adopting the "you" attitude, in contrast to messages that are about "me" (the sender).

Relating to the needs of others is a key part of emotional intelligence, the ability to read other people's emotions accurately and to manage one's own emotions in productive ways.

Etiquette encompasses the expected norms of behavior in any particular situation.

Section 3: Exploring the Communication Process

Learning Objective 3: Contrast the conventional communication process model with the social communication model.

Even well-intentioned communication efforts can fail.

By understanding communication as a process with distinct steps, you can improve the odds that your messages will reach their intended audiences and produce their intended effects.

The Conventional Communication Model

You can view communication as an eight-step process:

1. The sender has an idea.
2. The sender encodes the idea as a message.
3. The sender produces the message in a medium.
4. The sender transmits the message through a channel.
5. The audience receives the message.
6. The audience decodes the message.
7. The audience responds to the message.
8. The audience provides feedback.

The distinction between medium and channel can get a bit murky, but think of the medium as the form a message takes (such as a written message) and the channel as the system used to deliver the message (such as Twitter or email).

Note that this description captures only one cycle of the communication process; a conversational exchange could include dozens of these cycles.

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Considering the complexity of this process, it should come as no surprise that communication efforts often fail to achieve the sender's objective.

Barriers in the Communication Environment

Messages can be disrupted by a variety of communication barriers:

- Noise and distractions, including multitasking
- Competing messages
- Filters, both human and technological
- Channel breakdowns

Class discussion question: Think back to a time you experienced a communication breakdown in a personal or social setting (something you're comfortable discussing with the class). Did you figure out why the breakdown occurred? Was it related to cultural differences, emotional factors, technology, or some other identifiable cause? How might you avoid similar breakdowns in the workplace?

Everyone in an organization can help minimize barriers and distractions.

Take steps to insulate yourself from distractions, including disconnecting from constant message feeds and updates.

Inside the Mind of Your Audience

For an audience member to receive a message, the receiver has to:

- *Sense* the presence of a message.
- *Select* it from all the other messages clamoring for attention.
- *Perceive* it as an actual message.

Selective attention is focusing on a subset of the incoming stimuli or information sources and ignoring others; it can be an important defense against the barrage of stimuli in daily life, but it can also impede desired communication.

Five habits to increase the chances that your messages will be sensed, selected, and perceived:

- Consider audience expectations.
- Ensure ease of use.
- Emphasize familiarity.
- Practice empathy.
- Design for compatibility.

A received message doesn't mean anything until the recipient decodes it and assigns meaning to it.

There is no guarantee that the receiver will assign the same meaning that the sender intended.

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Audiences tend to extract the meaning they expect to get from a message.

Our minds sometimes ignore, deny, or distort incoming information that threatens our perceptions of the world and ourselves.

Culture plays a huge role in how messages are decoded.

Individual beliefs and biases influence the meaning that audiences extract from messages.

Differences in language and usage influence received meaning.

Individual thinking styles affect message decoding.

Audience members will respond in the way you'd like them to if

- they *remember* the message long enough to act on it.
- they are *able* to respond as you wish.
- they are *motivated* to respond.

The Social Communication Model

The basic communication model shows how a single idea moves from one sender to one receiver.

In a larger sense, it also represents the traditional nature of much business communication, which was primarily defined by a publishing or broadcasting mindset.

In contrast to the publishing mindset, this new social communication model is interactive and conversational.

Customers and other groups are now empowered through social media, which transform passive audiences into active participants in the communication process by allowing them to share content, revise content, respond to content, or contribute new content.

The social communication model changes business communication in profound ways:

- Customers and other stakeholders participate in, influence, and often take control of conversations in the marketplace.
- They rely on each other for information about products, offer technical support, and even participate in group buying using social tools.
- Social media tools can increase the speed of communication, lower communication costs, improve access to pockets of expertise, and boost employee satisfaction.

The social communication model offers many advantages, but it has some disadvantages as well:

- Companies have less control over their messages.
- The complexity of social communication means there are more communication channels to monitor, more work needed to separate valuable information from noise, a greater risk of the spread of false information, and a greater threat of information overload.

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Class discussion question: Is it ethical for social media users to "gang up" on a company after a single customer complains about poor service or a faulty product? What if the company made a rare mistake, but the social media uproar creates the impression that the company routinely disappoints customers?

Section 4: Using Technology to Improve Communication

Learning Objective 4: Identify five major benefits of business communication technology and three major innovations that are reshaping the practice of communication.

Contemporary business communication is a technology-enabled activity.

Your success as a communicator will depend on your comfort and skill with these tools.

You will be able to adapt your experience with digital and social media to the workplace.

The Potential Benefits of Communication Technology

The potential benefits of communication technology can be grouped into five key areas:

- Making communication more effective by helping people craft messages that convey their ideas more clearly and persuasively
- Making communication more efficient by reducing the time and effort needed to create, transmit, and consume messages
- Improving research tools to help communicators discover, process, and apply information
- Assisting communicators with decision-making by guiding them through complex data
- Removing communication barriers so more people can participate in the communication process more easily

However, when tools are designed poorly or used inappropriately, they can hinder communication more than they help.

To use communication technology effectively, bear these five points in mind:

- Keep technology in perspective. Remember that technology is simply a tool, a means by which you can accomplish certain tasks.
- Guard against information overload. Don't send unnecessary messages, and manage your incoming communication channels.
- Use your tools wisely. In addition to distracting employees from work responsibilities, inappropriate use can also leave companies vulnerable to lawsuits and security breaches.
- Use your tools efficiently. Knowing how to use your tools efficiently can make a big difference in your productivity.
- Reconnect with people. Even the best technologies cannot truly match the rich experience of person-to-person contact.

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The Spectrum of Contemporary Communication Technology

Three sets of technology in particular are reshaping the practice of business communication:

- Social and workgroup communication systems. This includes public social media, private/internal social media, and workgroup messaging systems such as Slack.
- Mobile communication. Mobile technology has become an essential part of the digital workplace, giving workers and companies greater flexibility, enhancing productivity and collaboration, and creating more engaging experiences for customers and other users.
- Intelligent communication technology. Business applications of artificial intelligence (AI) are exploding, with many systems designed to enhance the communication experience; the four-page feature "Empowering Communicators with Intelligent Communication Technology" showcases many of these.

Section 5: Committing to Ethical and Legal Communication

Learning Objective 5: Define ethics*, explain the difference between an ethical dilemma and an ethical lapse, and list six guidelines for making ethical communication choices.*

Ethics are the principles of conduct that govern behavior within a society.

Ethical communication (a) includes all the information an audience needs in order to make an informed decision or take an informed stance on an issue and (b) is not deceptive in any way.

Forms of Unethical Communication

Professionals need to be mindful of three forms of unethical communication:

- Withholding information. Examples of this include avoiding taking responsibility for mistakes, presenting an incomplete set of facts when making a proposal, and failing to disclose factors that could affect how audiences interpret information—the widespread adoption of social media has increased the attention given to the issue of transparency.
- Distorting information. Examples of this include using averages to conceal extreme individual values, manipulating trend calculations to suggest future values that the underlying data might not support, or manipulating images to create misleading impressions.
- Plagiarizing. This is presenting someone else's words or other creative product as your own; it can also be illegal if it violates copyright.

In addition to being unethical, some of these choices can be illegal in certain circumstances.

Class discussion question: Have you ever contributed to "social media outrage" (using your social media accounts to boost the anger about a contemporary issue by forwarding it or liking it) without stopping to think who might have originated the message or what the originator's motives might have been?

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Distinguishing Ethical Dilemmas from Ethical Lapses

An ethical dilemma involves making a choice when the alternatives aren't completely wrong or completely right:

- Two conflicting alternatives that are both ethical and valid
- Two alternatives that lie somewhere in the gray area between right and wrong

An ethical lapse is a clearly unethical choice.

Ensuring Ethical Communication

To ensure ethical communication, three elements need to be in place and work in harmony:

- Ethical individuals
- Ethical company leadership
- The appropriate policies and structures to support employees' efforts to make ethical choices; a code of ethics is an explicit written policy of ethics guidelines that helps employees determine what is acceptable.

Every employee has the responsibility to communicate in an ethical manner.

In the absence of clear guidelines, ask yourself the following questions about your business communication efforts:

- Is my intention honorable, and does it demonstrate respect for my audience?
- Am I giving my readers or listeners all the information they need in order to take an informed stance or make an informed decision?
- Have I considered the effect my message will have on the audience and anyone else who might be affected by it?
- Am I respecting the legal and moral rights of anyone whose information or ideas I am using?
- Could a different approach produce a more positive outcome for everyone involved?

Ensuring Legal Communication

In addition to ethical guidelines, business communication is also bound by a wide variety of laws and regulations, including the following areas:

- Promotional communication. Marketing specialists need to be aware of the many laws that govern truth and accuracy in advertising.
- Contracts. A contract is a legally binding promise between two parties, in which one party makes a specified offer and the other party accepts.
- Employment communication. A variety of local, state, and federal laws govern communication between employers and both potential and current employees.

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- Intellectual property. In an age when instant global connectivity makes it effortless to copy and retransmit digital files, the protection of intellectual property (IP) has become a widespread concern.
- Financial reporting. Finance and accounting professionals who work for publicly traded companies must adhere to stringent reporting laws.
- Defamation. Negative comments about another party raise the possibility of defamation, the intentional communication of false statements that damage character or reputation. (Written defamation is called libel; spoken defamation is called slander.)
- Transparency. To help audiences make informed decisions, various laws now require communicators to disclose financial relationships and other factors that could influence the presentation of their messages.

Class discussion question: Should companies be allowed to advertise to children who are too young to make fully informed choices? If there should be a cutoff age, what should it be and how would it be enforced?

Section 6: Developing Skills for Your Career

Learning Objective 6: Identify six related skills that you will have the opportunity to develop as you work on your communication skills in this course.

In addition to communication, this course provides opportunities to develop six other skills that employers value:

- Critical thinking
- Collaboration
- Knowledge application and analysis
- Business ethics and social responsibility
- Information technology skills
- Data literacy

HIGHLIGHT BOX: APPLY YOUR SKILLS NOW

Practice Your Professionalism

1. Student answers will vary.

2. Student answers will vary.

HIGHLIGHT BOX: PRACTICING ETHICAL COMMUNICATION

Are You My *Adviser* or My *Advisor*?

1. This is a good example of the larger question of whether government regulation or industry self-regulation is the best response to ethical issues. Students can make a valid case in either direction; some might conclude that outlawing specific descriptors is too heavy-handed. One alternative is for industries and professions to promote certifications (such as Certified Financial Planner) and to educate consumers on the meaning of "fee-only financial planner" and other titles.

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2. On the surface, at least, "commission-free" sales do suggest objective advice for customers. However, it's no guarantee that customers will get objective advice. For instance, two competing product lines carried in a retail store could generate different profit margins for the retailer, and store management could push the sales staff to promote one product line over the other.

ON THE JOB: SOLVING COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT AFFECTIVA

1. Affectiva occasionally hosts seminars, online webinars, and other events at which potential customers can learn more about the company's solutions. One such event is designed to help market researchers understand how to use emotion analysis in their work. Assume this is the announcement for this event:

   Let's Get Emotional: How to Incorporate Facial Responses in Your Market Research Methodology

   Surveys aren't the industry standard anymore: in fact, relying on this data alone doesn't stand up to what's coming next. Imagine the future of market research where respondents no longer have to manually input their thoughts and reactions to content, but you will be able to tell right from the expressions on their faces. Join us on September 24 for a free 1-hour webinar and live Q&A to learn more.

   You want to summarize this announcement in a single tweet, with a maximum length of 200 characters, including spaces. (The original is 401, so you need to compress it by half.) A URL will be included in the tweet, but don't worry about it for this assignment. Which of the following is the most effective summary?

   a. No. This summary doesn't include any information about Affectiva's emotion measurement; a vague hint about "what's coming next" is not compelling.
   b. No. This has the same weakness as (a), plus it doesn't give the date of the webinar.
   c. No. This summary is factual but not as compelling as (d).
   d. **Yes.** This summary provides a compelling reason to attend the seminar, and it provides important details.

2. The culture in the Affectiva headquarters is conscientious and professional but with a generally informal "vibe." However, as with any company, individual employees vary in how closely their own styles and personalities fit the corporate culture. For example, the new accounting manager in your organization tends to communicate in a formal, distant style that some find off-putting and impersonal. Several people have expressed concerns that the new manager "doesn't fit in," even though she's doing a great job otherwise. How should you respond to the situation?

   a. No. These people aren't just complaining—they're expressing concern about the future of the company's culture. A company is more than just the sum of its various job functions; the people in those roles also need to work together in some degree of harmony. Therefore, the people raising this issue believe they have a valid concern.
   b. No. Demanding that someone change her personal communication style is only going to generate confusion and resentment. Moreover, the company might eventually lose a valuable employee if the manager decides she can't fit in.

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c. **Yes.** Newcomers can often benefit from a helpful introduction to a company's culture. The manager might simply be communicating in a style that was expected in her previous employment.
d. No. If her style is causing concern, ignoring the situation isn't going to make it go away.

3. The science behind Affectiva's AI tools is beyond the grasp of many of its customers in the business arena. The company generally does an excellent job of translating the science into audience-friendly language that business professionals can appreciate, but lately you've noticed that one of the company's scientists tends to slip into some heavy math and science during customer presentations and media events. When you mention it during a casual conversation, he explains that he is trying to emphasize the superiority of Affectiva's solutions, and it's up to users to get better educated about the tools they use. How should you respond?
   a. No. This response is too broad and will cause confusion. Everyone else in the company is doing a good job at this task, so there is little point in issuing guidelines that might suggest they need to do better.
   b. **Yes.** This response engages with the employee in a constructive way and presents the situation as a business dilemma that can be solved with a logical, customer-focused response.
   c. No. This is a waste of resources. Any employee tasked with talking to customers needs to have the right skills for the job.
   d. No. Customers don't need to be able to understand the deep science behind business AI in order to use it effectively. Plus, the scientist's motivation wasn't to help them learn how to use it, but rather to emphasize its technical strengths.

4. Affectiva occasionally gets inquiries from companies that would like to apply its emotion-sensing technology in ways that are incompatible with the company's ethical positions, such as monitoring employees without their consent. You have just received one of these inquiries; how should you respond?
   a. **Yes.** This statement is clear and direct without being condescending or insulting. The passive construction "is not available for invasive applications" makes the point without pointing a finger at the audience.
   b. No. This is dishonest, so it violates Affectiva's principles, and the person making the inquiry would probably know better.
   c. No. This condescending statement will only alienate the audience.
   d. No. This is a weak response that would probably just trigger another inquiry because it doesn't address the inquirer's question.

APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1-1. Communication is sometimes considered a negotiation of meaning rather than a transfer of meaning because in some cases the receiver doesn't understand (or perhaps believe) the message on the first attempt. In these cases, the sender and receiver continue to exchange information until mutual understanding is achieved. **[LO-1] AACSB: Written and oral communication**

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1-2. No, managers should not try to shut down an informal communication network that is spreading negative gossip or false rumors. Rather, they should understand why the network is spreading this damaging information and respond with clear, accurate, and complete information. Trying to shut down an informal network will probably not succeed, and it will only fuel suspicion that those in power are hiding something. **[LO-2] AACSB: Written and oral communication**

1-3. The most important step to take to ensure that high schoolers and their parents respond positively to messages promoting a new tutoring service is to make sure the messages are about them and their needs. Why would students and parents consider paying for a tutor and what benefits do they expect from the service? Your own qualifications should serve as support points, not as the primary message. In addition, the messages should fulfill the five criteria of effective messages listed in the chapter: practical, factual, concise, clear, and persuasive. **[LO-3] AACSB: Written and oral communication**

1-4. Businesses are investing in AI-driven communication tools because these systems promise one or more of the potential benefits of communication technology listed in the chapter: making communication more effective by helping people craft messages that convey their ideas more clearly and persuasively; making communication more efficient by reducing the time and effort needed to create, transmit, and consume messages; improving research by helping communicators discover, process, and apply information; assisting communicators with decision-making by guiding them through complex sets of data; and removing communication barriers so more people can participate in the communication process more easily. **[LO-4] AACSB: Information technology**

1-5. This situation is an ethical dilemma because it does not present one alternative that is clearly right and one or more other alternatives that are clearly wrong. Both options (informing employees now about the possibility of a layoff or waiting until you are sure) have positive and negative elements that can help or harm various stakeholders. For example, if you share the possibility of a layoff, some key employees could leave now, which could hurt the company's prospects and perhaps increase the need for a layoff, which would then harm even more employees. Conversely, if you don't tell employees about the possibility of a layoff and it eventually comes to pass, you have deprived them of some of the time they could've been using to find new jobs, which will increase stress on them and their families and possibility harm them financially. **[LO-5] AACSB: Ethical understanding and reasoning**

PRACTICE YOUR SKILLS

Message for Analysis: Analyzing Communication Effectiveness [LO-1] AACSB: Written and oral communication

1-6. Students will recognize this document as ineffective because it presents so many barriers to effective communication. The blog

- Creates emotional barriers right from the first sentence (accusing employees of lying and cheating, later calling them names), preventing readers from perceiving the intended message

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- Presents a restrictive and authoritarian attitude, reflecting an environment that discourages open communication and thus discourages employee candor
- Expresses bias or prejudice (in the slur against women employees)
- Reflects the author's anger and defensiveness ("I simply have no choice")
- Assumes bad intentions on the part of the employees, underlining the lack of audience-centered thinking
- Uses vague, confusing language (More than three times during what period? Will have to answer to the author for what specific penalties?)
- Polarizes workers by inciting conflict between "punctual" employees and others

Exercises

1-7. Look for information about students' majors, hobbies, likes, dislikes, and future career plans. The email messages, blog posts, or social networking updates will give you an idea of the level of your students' writing, in addition to helping you learn more about your students. **[LO-1] AACSB: Written and oral communication**

1-8. This question provides a good opportunity to discuss the advantages and limitations of utilizing social media for business communication, specifically the length limitations imposed by a channel such as Twitter. Students should be encouraged to explain how the content of their messages reflects the expectations of the social communication model. **[LO-1] AACSB: Information technology**

1-9. This exercise reveals how well students can translate the chapter material into a practical analysis of business communication—the first step to crafting more effective messages of their own. Look for descriptions of specific communication elements, such as solid logical argumentation, persuasive emotional appeals, successful integration of audio and video components, or an audience-centric message. **[LO-1] AACSB: Written and oral communication**

1-10. In completing this exercise, students should recognize the often-significant differences between how they prioritize their own personal and professional qualities and how a prospective employer might prioritize them. **[LO-2] AACSB: Reflective thinking**

1-11. This message needs to communicate the importance of the situation without preemptively offending anyone (since there have been no instances of etiquette mistakes and only a general concern about them). The first paragraph could provide the general manager with a brief overview of the situation, describing how customers come in contact with production personnel and explaining the potential damages to sales that could result from etiquette mistakes. The second paragraph could then follow with an explanation of how etiquette training would minimize the risk of lost sales. Depending on the circumstances and the writer's relationship with the recipient, the message might also propose a solution, such as adapting the sales department's etiquette training course for re-use in the production department. **[LO-2] AACSB: Written and oral communication**

1-12. Before writing the report, the team will want to know:

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a. The audience's culture (so that cultural biases can be avoided)
b. The audience's level of knowledge about the subject (so that the report's style, content, organization, and tone will address that level)
c. The environment in which the report will be received (to compensate for any noise interference)
d. Whether the report will be read directly by the intended audience or will first pass through several layers of gatekeepers (so that anticipated distortions can be minimized before the report is read and summarized by gatekeepers)
e. The audience's gender and family status (because childcare as an employment benefit may be viewed from a different perspective by parents and nonparents, for instance)

[LO-2] AACSB: Interpersonal relations and teamwork

1-13. Regarding the issue of employee blogs and information that is critical of an employer, a much stronger case can be made for placing such restrictions than for not doing so. Publicly aired criticism of internal company matters is likely to cause harm to the company (by scaring away potential customers, employees, or investors, for instance) while probably doing little to resolve whatever situations a blogger might be upset about. In fact, an argument can be made that criticizing one's own employer in public is unethical, since employees are paid to further the company's interests, not their own. If they are unhappy in their jobs, they have a responsibility to either work to improve the situation through appropriate channels or to find other employment. **[LO-2] AACSB: Information technology**

1-14. This exercise challenges students to apply their understanding of the communication process. Ask them to be specific about how they encoded and transmitted the idea they wanted to share; also ask them to explain how they assessed whether the message had been accurately decoded.

Students might identify such barriers as a difference in perception due to differences in age, background, culture, or language; a lack of credibility, precision, congeniality, or control; a lack of information about the audience; a misunderstanding caused by unfocused, incoherent, or careless communication; a miscommunication resulting from one party being sidetracked or constantly bringing up unnecessary information; an inability to relate new information to existing ideas; or the noise from environmental distractions, from the emotional states of the people involved, or from a person's poor listening ability. **[LO-3] AACSB: Written and oral communication**

1-15. Students should be able to find examples of business-appropriate social media usage in just about any industry, even "old-school" manufacturing (which is often very high-tech these days, of course). Their persuasive arguments should incorporate the three essential areas in which communication is important to any company: enhancing operations, gathering intelligence, and building stakeholder relationships. These points can be refined by pointing out the specific ways that social media can enhance communication.

1-16. Students should evaluate the websites using the criteria for effective business communication and the discussion of the audience-centered approach in the chapter. For example, a website that isn't

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mobile friendly (meaning the presentation isn't simplified for smaller screens and touch/swipe controls) doesn't do a good job of meeting the needs of mobile users. **[LO-4] AACSB: Information technology**

1-17. To improve the discussion that this exercise can generate, consider assigning different services to different students. The wide variety of services students will access can provide powerful evidence of how widespread the social communication model has become. **[LO-5] AACSB: Information technology**

1-18. Students should comment on how well they think these AI tools captured their emotional states, how easy they were to use, and how they think businesses might use them. Keep in mind that these free demo tools may not be as powerful or refined as the versions that Affectiva provides to its customers. **[LO-5] AACSB: Information technology**

1-19. Students should recognize that the boss's request itself is potentially unethical, putting the employee in a situation of policing his or her colleagues—which will surely lead to circumstances in which the employee is forced to be disingenuous with colleagues (for example, not saying anything to a colleague who steals office supplies but then reporting the behavior to the boss). The employee would want to consider the following in a discussion with the boss: the uncomfortable situation this request will create for the employee; the effect this informal assignment would have on workplace dynamics; the damage to the employee's career prospects or ability to work with others if colleagues find out about such reporting; and last but not least, the fact that asking employees to spy on one another is a misguided way to solve a problem (e.g., ethics training and making employees aware of the costs of their decisions would be a much more enlightened approach). **[LO-6] AACSB: Ethical understanding and reasoning**

1-20. The ethics of each situation may be decided as follows:

a. Keeping quiet about the possible environmental hazard would be an ethical lapse that could possibly affect lives if not wildlife.
b. Stretching the truth, even "a bit," is never ethical.
c. Helping a friend would be ethical, unless "privileged" information were being conveyed without permission.
d. Using allocated funding for bogus purchases is unethical. It would be better to justify the need for next year's budget than to preserve it by cheating.

[LO-6] AACSB: Ethical understanding and reasoning

1-21. Students should be able to identify dozens of potential violations of Cisco's *Code of Business Conduct*. Three examples include entering into or sustaining a business relationship that creates a conflict of interest with an employee's professional responsibilities at Cisco, providing financial information that is not accurate or not objective, and discussing confidential information with an outside party who is not bound by a nondisclosure agreement. The *Code* lists several ways that employees can share their concerns. **[LO-6] AACSB: Ethical understanding and reasoning**

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ASSISTED GRADING QUESTIONS (accessed in MyLab Business Communication)

1.32. Visit MyLab Business Communication for suggested answers. **[LO-3] AACSB: Written and oral communication**

1.33. Visit MyLab Business Communication for suggested answers. **[LO-4] AACSB: Information technology**

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