Business Communication - A Problem-Solving Approach 1st edition Rentz Solutions Manual

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Part II: Chapter-by-Chapter Lecture Notes & Exercises

Chapter 2: Writing Effectively for Your Audience, Purpose, and Medium

Teaching Suggestions

This material will mostly be covered best by lecture and discussion. But some ideas for writing exercises involving shorter messages have been included. The longer messages are more appropriately handled in the following chapters that review them. What is particularly important is that students understand that good business writing is the result of careful planning, drafting, and revising. Sometimes students may be tempted to see the brevity of many business documents as indicative of the amount of time and effort that is needed to produce the document. Showing students the importance of planning and revising, in particular, will serve them well throughout their careers.

In addition, this chapter discusses forms of communication such as text messaging, instant messaging, and social networking that students are likely familiar with. However, students may not realize how their use of these forms changes when they are in a professional setting. Providing contrasting examples, for instance, of a text sent to a business colleague and a text sent to a friend may be helpful. Students may also be encouraged to write the same message (e.g., a lunch invitation) to two different audiences, a friend and a client, so that they better see how context affects a message.

Connect provides instructors with a variety of ways to customize courses, create assignments, determine grading policies, and receive student work. One of the tools Connect offers is the ability to select and add interactive assignments to your course. Explanations of these assignments and how they support the learning objectives are integrated into the instructor's manual with the relevant subject areas.

Note that Presentation Capture is a good tool available in Connect for oral presentation delivery (either online or face-to-face). McGraw-Hill's Presentation Capture software gives instructors the ability to evaluate presentations and allows students the freedom to practice their presentations anytime, anywhere. Instructors can use the software's fully customizable rubric to measure students' uploaded presentations against course outcomes and give students specific feedback. Peer-review functions are also available. For more information, go to http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=qWtyFlYtRWc.

Another useful tool in Connect is "Writing Assignment," which students can use to submit their homework assignments online. For more information on setting up this service, go to http://createwp.customer.mheducation.com/wordpress-mu/success-academy/create-writing-assignments/.

Learning Objectives

LO 2-1 Understand the importance of skillful writing in business.
LO 2-2 Describe the writing process and effective writing strategies.
LO 2-3 Describe the use of computer tools to facilitate planning messages.
LO 2-4 Describe the use of computer tools to facilitate drafting messages.
LO 2-5 Describe the use of computer tools to facilitate revising messages.
LO 2-6 Describe the purpose and form of letters.
LO 2-7 Describe the purpose and form of memorandums (memos).

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LO 2-8 Describe the purpose and form of email.
LO 2-9 Understand the nature and business uses of other communication media.
LO 2-10 Describe how technology will continue to impact communication in the future.

Key Terms

planning
drafting
revising
recursive
business goals
writing goals
analyze the audience
brainstorm
direct order
indirect order
genres
project planning tools
electronic calendar
database tools
outlining or concept-mapping program
statistical programs
multimedia presentations
online publication
levels of edit
revising
editing
proofread
letters
memorandum (or memo)
email
spam
casual
informal
formal
text messaging
instant messages
social media
cloud computing

Text Summary, Lecture Outline

Slides 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4

You can point out that this chapter will cover advice that applies to writing all kinds of documents, as well as specific advice on the shorter forms of business communication, or "messages": letters, memos, email, text messages, instant messaging, and social media posts.

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Here may be a good place to discuss the evolution of business communication genres. Email, once considered "cutting edge," is now considered standard. Consider asking students with workplace experience which type of communication their company relied on the most.

(Note: For online courses, you can create assignments via Connect in which students can respond to questions posed during class.)

Problem-Solving Challenge
Students are asked to put themselves in the role of Julie Evans, a recent college grad in her first job as an accounts manager at a small company that manufactures windows. As students work through the chapter, ask them to develop three communications from Julie: 1) a letter to an industry client informing them that they are behind on their payments and must bring their account current right away in order to avoid late fees and any freezing of their account; 2) a text message to coworkers on her team to let them know about a current problem with a database; 3) an email to her director to explain the actions taken to deal with the delinquent account.

The Writing Process

Slide 2-5

You might ask students, before discussing this section, to reflect on (write about) their usual process of writing. (If they have trouble doing so, ask them to think about/describe how they tackled a recent writing task.) This exercise can help them see that this chapter contains helpful advice for them—advice that will make their writing more effective and the process itself less stressful.

The writing process diagram helps students see that the process of writing falls roughly into three stages: planning, drafting, and revising.

But the arrows in the model also show that writers should allow themselves to revisit earlier stages as necessary (that is, allow the process to be recursive). To try to make the process rigidly linear is often counterproductive, especially for inexperienced writers.

As the text says, a good rule of thumb is to spend roughly one-third of the writing time in each of the three stages (planning, drafting, revising).

Slide 2-6

Planning the Message

You can point out that the planning stage corresponds to the problem-solving approach represented in Chapter 1, which involved research, analysis, creativity, and judgment. What is the situation? What do those facts mean? What are some possible communication strategies? Which is the best course of action? To be able to answer these questions, the writer will perform these activities:

- Determining goals
- Analyzing the audience
- Gathering information
- Analyzing and organizing the information
- Choosing the form, channel, and format

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Determining Goals: In determining goals, writers should ask themselves what a reader should think, feel, do, or believe as a result of reading a message. The writer's communication goals are very much connected, then, to the writer's business goals.

Audience Analysis: Analyzing the audience is key to any successful business message. Writers need to break down their audience by the audience's characteristics and then tailor a message to meet that audience's need. Writers will ask several questions: Who is my audience? Who will be affected by what I write? What organizational, professional, and personal issues or qualities will affect the audience's response to my message? What organizational, professional, and personal issues or qualities do I have that affect how I will write my message? What is my relationship with my reader? Am I writing to my superior? My colleagues? My subordinates? Clients? (See the Audience Analysis Checklist in Exhibit 2-3.)

Gathering information: Solving a communication problem can be viewed as part of solving a larger business problem. In other words, figuring out what to **say** often involves, as well, figuring out what to **do.** For example, in addition to going over the sample scenario provided in the text, you can ask your students the following: If, as a manager, you wanted to write an effective message to employees about leaving the parking spaces near the company's front door available for the customers, what things would you have to figure out before you could write this message?

Students should come up with such topics as why the employees should do this, when they should start doing it, where they should park, any special incentive (or implied threat?!) that might encourage them to comply, and so forth. The point is that communicators usually cannot simply go with the information at the tops of their heads. They need to plan what goals they want to accomplish and then gather the ideas and information they will need in order to write the messages that will help them accomplish their goals.

Some activities that can help writers gather information include the following:

- Formal research (e.g., surveys, experiments, library research)
- Informal research (such as consulting with others, looking at previous messages for similar circumstances, and so forth)
- Listing pertinent ideas/information
- Brainstorming
- "Clustering" (drawing a diagram of your ideas)

Analyzing and organizing information. Once writers have collected what looks like sufficient information (though they may find later in the process that they need more), they need to analyze it and organize it.

Interpretation and logic help the writer determine what to say and in what order. Clearly, the message's main points need to be based upon the gathered information, and they need to be arranged logically.

Adaptation is critical as well. Which comments in which order will be likely to have the best effect on the reader? The reader's likely reaction will determine whether the message is written in the **direct** or **indirect** order and will also affect the order of the rest of the contents.

Choosing a form, channel, and format: In many textbooks, discussions of form, channel, and format are separate from the discussion about the writing process. But in reality, it is virtually impossible to plan a message without giving at least some preliminary thought to these elements. The medium is not just a container for the message; whether one anticipates writing a letter, email, brochure, web page, or some

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combination of these, and how one anticipates they should look, will significantly affect the planning of the message.

Let students look at the Communication Matters feature titled “Do I Need to Write It?” Can they think of any other reasons for writing a message? Consider different important messages you’ve received in various ways. Maybe a student received a message about a job or about something happening to their company. Or perhaps a student received a message about a particular assignment or his or her grades. If the original message was not written, consider how the situation might have been if it had been written. If the original message was written, consider how a different kind of communication might have been received. What are the pros and cons of the written message in either case?

Connect Assignment 2-1: The Writing Process
Summary: Students will enhance their understanding of the writing process by matching activities to the appropriate stages of the process (planning, drafting, and revising).

Learning Objective: 2-02
Difficulty: Easy
AACSB: Communication
Blooms: Understand

Follow-Up Activity: Students can be prepared to discuss which parts of the writing process they enjoy most and what strategies or practices they employ to make those parts successful.

Slide 2-7

You Make the Call

Students will consider the scenario of a hotel manager having to communicate with guests about an unpleasant situation.

Consider dividing the class into teams of managers, current guests, and former guests. (For online students, consider dividing the students into groups and assigning them roles based on the first letters of their last names: A-H will play the role of the managers, I-P will play the role of current guests, and Q-Z will play the role of former guests.) Let some of the managers and current guests role-play their actions and responses—the managers will craft an announcement about the problem, the guests will act out their responses and/or craft complaint letters. The other managers will respond to complaint letters crafted by the former guests. Students can work together to create their respective messages.

Discuss what steps of planning a message were most important or useful to them in developing their communications.

Slide 2-8

Throughout this section, students will be discussing the different kinds of computer tools that can be helpful in the writing process. It would be beneficial to allow them to try out or at least view examples of these computer tools during the discussion, if possible. (Encourage online students to try out these tools at home. For assignment purposes, they can take screen shots of work they are doing in particular software programs and send those in as part of their assignments.)

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Project planning tools, such as Microsoft Visio, are a great way to visualize the scope of a project. A Gantt chart can contain all of the steps to complete a writing project, but also can help keep track of the progress.

Scheduling tools, such as electronic calendars, can help busy workers plan time for writing. Being able to customize the calendar formats, set automated appointment reminders, and view others' calendars are some of the advantages an electronic calendar has over a printed one.

Many students will be familiar with using Internet databases, company webpages, listservs, and social networking sites to gather information. But **research tools** such as RSS (really simple syndication) readers (Flipboard or Feedly, for example) can help writers automatically pull content from the web and then save that content for later use.

Once you've gathered information, **organizing tools** such as databases can help you organize that data into searchable and sortable categories. You can also organize ideas through the use of outlining or concept-mapping programs (such as Edraw).

Presenting tools can be used in final presentations, but they can also be helpful in the planning stages. Statistical programs (such as SPSS and SAS) and spreadsheet programs (such as Microsoft Excel) can help writers organize data into meaningful pictures that can meet the audience's needs. Writers will also need to consider which type of multimedia program (such as PowerPoint, Camtasia, Jing, etc.) will best suit their needs. Choosing the right technology for a writing task makes part of your job easier.

The next slide offers students a chance to put these tools to work.

Slide 2-9

This can be an in-class group activity or an at-home individual assignment. If in class, give a time limit and see what small groups can come up with in a 10- to 15-minute window. Point out that they don't have to create the final product, just a plan for what they are going to do with relevant information included.

Connect Assignment 2-2: Using Computer Tools That Aid the Writing Process
Summary: Computer tools can help make the writing process more efficient and accurate. In this activity, students will match the name of a computer tool with the part of the writing process in which that tool can be used.

Learning Objectives: 2-03, 2-04, 2-05
Difficulty: Easy
AACSB: Knowledge Application
Blooms: Understand

Follow-Up Activity: Students may choose one part of the writing process and one computer tool and provide a sample of work indicating three points that demonstrate how they effectively made use of that tool to help with the writing process.

Slide 2-10

Drafting Tips

As they draft, writers work out the content, stylistic, organizational, and formatting details.

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Listing students' favorite drafting/writing strategies would be appropriate at this point.

You may want to share the following points with your students:

- It is very important that you are flexible when preparing your drafts. Drafts are the first stages of a long writing process. They are not final documents, so do not distract or slow yourself down too much by trying to make the first draft perfect.
- Instead, use strategies that will enable you to pull your material together fairly easily and quickly into a reasonably well-organized, complete draft.
- Avoid spending too much energy perfecting the early parts of the draft. It can make you forget important pieces and purposes of the later parts.
- Keep moving with your draft; have an understanding that you will draft relatively quickly, you can always go back and revise.

You may want to try the strategy discussed by writer Natalie Goldberg in *Writing Down the Bones.* It's called Keep Your Hand Moving and is good for breaking through perfectionism. You could give students a quick in-class business writing assignment, set a timer, and tell them that they cannot put down their pens or stop writing for 15 minutes. Even if they can think of nothing to say, tell them to write down "I have nothing to say." The idea here is to break through writer's block and keep the hand moving, regardless of the thoughts that arise.

Slide 2-11

If time allows, let students view examples of some of the computer tools as you highlight them.

Remind students: don't be afraid to change the settings in the word processing software. Use the **help feature** to search for topics and learn how to change the defaults to what you need. Remember: this is a draft—you can change it again later.

The **built-in styles and themes** in word processing software such as Microsoft Word can help to ensure consistency in your documents and create a table of contents.

Other features such as Quick Parts, word count, clip art, charts, and more allow writers to customize their documents easily.

It's helpful to be aware of how your readers will receive your document. If they are going to receive electronic versions, you may need to adjust the **save settings** so that the file is able to be opened by all readers. Saving the file as a pdf (portable document format) will allow most readers to open it without a problem.

If you have mobility issues, dyslexia or similar challenges, or simply prefer talking through your thoughts, **speech recognition tools** (such as Dragon Naturally Speaking) can be an excellent help in your writing process.

Encourage students to talk about what their favorite drafting process involves.

A good way to check on students' familiarity with these tools is to give them an already-created document (created in any relevant word-processing program) and have them perform exercises such as these:

- Find out how to change all tabs to a certain distance. Choose a paragraph to change to a list and use tab feature to move list over.

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- Change all headings to Heading style 3. Change style of each body paragraph to be different from the other ones.
- Save as a pdf.
- Let speech reader tool read text.

Slide 2-12

Revision Steps

It is probably safe to say that the most common flaw in students' writing processes is that they do not revise enough. Impress upon them the importance of devoting time to this stage. Even very experienced writers and famous authors take a good bit of time to review and polish important documents.

You may want to make the following points:

- Rewriting is a very valuable aspect of the writing process. Remember to break your rewriting down into three "levels of edit"—revision, editing, and proofreading to help you rewrite more effectively.
- With **revision**, you look at top-level concerns. Did you include all necessary information? Is the pattern of organization logical and as effective as possible? Does the overall meaning of the message come through? Is format appropriate? Did you use basic formatting guidelines—formatting by genre and techniques such as use of white space?
- Next, focus on **editing** for style by examining sentences and word choice.
- When **proofreading,** make sure to pay attention to particular mechanical and grammatical elements—spelling, typography, punctuation, or any grammar problems that tend to give you trouble.

Students may not realize or know how to distinguish revising and editing from proofreading. You may bring an example or have students bring drafts and illustrate the differences among (and the necessity of) these three steps in the process.

Also point out the Communication Matters box with the heading "Why Accurately Proofreading Your Own Work Is Difficult." Writers can improve their ability to proofread their own work by changing the type color or font, or printing out the material and editing by hand. These changes have the effect of making the work visually unfamiliar, which helps you to see errors.

Slide 2-13

You Revise It

Let students offer suggestions for revision either out loud or in writing. As an added challenge, ask students to shorten this announcement to a 150-character text, including all necessary information for a clear message to employees.

Slide 2-14

If time allows, let students view examples of some of the computer tools as you highlight them. Provide them with a sample document so they can actually try out some of the tools in class.

You will discuss the benefits of the word-processing features that are listed and how they can help with revising and editing. Be sure to point out the pitfalls of relying too heavily on such features as **auto correct, spell check,** and **grammar and style check.** Remind them that the effectiveness of these tools is

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dependent on the writer making thoughtful decisions about how to adjust the settings to deal with repeated or common errors.

Technology is an important tool for constructing messages. A wide variety of tools can help with planning, gathering and organizing data, presenting, drafting, writing, revising, and editing. It's good to keep these tools in mind as we look at specific purposes and traits of different message types.

Business Message Forms

Slide 2-15

There are many different types of business messages and each has its own unique traits and purpose. As you'll see, every business communication situation requires analysis to determine which type of message will be used.

Ask students to share from their own work experiences or experiences of businesses they know. Which forms of messages are used most often? Are there any that are not used at all in your work? Why?

Letters

Slides 2-16, 2-17

Letters are the oldest form dating from the earliest civilizations—Greek, Egyptian, Chinese.

The genre implies a certain formality, and certainly, letters are the most formal of the business writing forms we discuss.

Before the digital method of messaging arrived, letters were the dominant form of business messaging used for external readers—the people outside the organization. Letters are relatively formal and follow standardized forms. Remember that you want to put your and your company's best foot forward by choosing the letter format complete with an attractive company letterhead and elements of courtesy. The format of the business letter should include: date, inside address, salutation, body, and complimentary close. While some formality is required, you should view your letter correspondence as an exchange between real people—avoid using unduly formal, impersonal writing.

Early emphasis was on a stilted word choice (the "old language of business"). Now the emphasis is on selecting an effective structure and strategy and on using wording that will build rapport between the writer and the reader. Your audience and company culture will determine what is appropriate.

Students may discuss what types of letters they receive and draw conclusions about when sending a letter might be appropriate (vs. an email or other type of communication). You may want to ask students to bring in direct mail letters or another type of letter for analysis during this class or the next.

Students may already be familiar with some kind of letter format. If not, students should review this chapter for examples. Many times students will ask which format is the "right" one. It's important for students to realize that any could be correct but that their companies may dictate format. Exhibit 2-17 presents one option for formatting a letter. More options are presented in Chapter 4.

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Slide 2-18

You Write It

Allow students a brief period of time to construct a short letter. Then have students exchange letters (they can email each other their drafts or use Google docs to share letters) and offer suggestions for revisions.

Memos

Slides 2-19, 2-20

Memorandums are internal company letters. Email has taken over much of their function; however, even though students may think that everyone in a workplace has access to an email, this may not necessarily be the case. Some employees, such as line workers in a factory, are not likely to check their email as they work throughout the day or even regularly before or after work or on breaks.

A memo posted in a highly visible location would be a better communication channel for these employees than email.

Some companies will consider more serious information or "hot news," such as that concerning changes in company policies or recent layoffs, more appropriate for memo than email form. In addition, some memos are actually reports.

Are memos becoming obsolete as email becomes the standard?

Note that the memo format is similar in structure to an email. But traditionally, memos are on paper and more formal than an email. However, since they are internal communications, they tend to be less formal than letters.

Slide 2-21

You Make the Call: Memo or No?

Challenge students to think of circumstances in which a memo might work better than email. For example, if a manager wanted to circulate a printed journal for employees to review, she might attach a memo to the cover of the journal and ask employees to initial by their names in the "To:" line when they have read the journal article in question, and then pass the item on to the next person. Sensitive material might also be distributed within a hard copy memo instead of an email, especially if there were any email security concerns. Your students may come up with other examples.

Email

Slides 2-22, 2-23

The growth of email in the workplace has been phenomenal. It has several **advantages**:

- eliminates telephone tag
- saves time
- speeds up decision making
- is cheap

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- provides a written record

But there are **disadvantages**:

- not confidential
- no authentic signature
- can be misunderstood or used to avoid difficult conversations
- doesn't communicate emotions well
- may be ignored

Questions for possible discussion:
Ask students how they think email has changed the workplace. Can they think of other advantages and disadvantages? Are there any advantages to not using email? Should email be used by employees who sit right next to each other, in place of in-person chats or team meetings? Have they ever received a particularly unprofessional email? How did they respond?

You may also want to bring "bad" work emails in and have students evaluate them.

Discuss the typical parts of an email message and the different ways they can be used. Highlight the tips and tricks of usage of the email form that can help your communications stand out and be received well. This could be a good time to discuss students' pet peeves about email communications. Have you ever received annoying attachments? Or not received an attachment when you would have preferred one? What are good uses of signature blocks? Are there any downsides to them? Describe examples of good and bad email communicators. See the next slide for more ideas.

Slides 2-24, 2-25, 2-26

These three slides provide practical tips to students about how to construct and use emails well (as well as how not to use them).

Ask students to add items to the Email Wall of Shame. Discuss, briefly, "hot button" words or styles that may show emotion/attitude. Ask students to brainstorm some examples of these email mistakes, either ones that they made or times when they were on the receiving end of these issues. Here are some other possible email mistakes to add:

1. Sending long emails
2. Creating long paragraphs
3. Not avoiding emotion
4. Using email when it's not the best communication channel
5. Forgetting that email is a permanent record

Business email messages, no matter what the approach, are more effective when kept short, simple, and constructed in a top-down order (most important to least important). This way, if the reader is scanning for information, he or she does not need to scroll to find your most important information.

Ask students when they might use casual, informal, or formal approaches. Have they ever received a business email that seemed to be written in an inappropriate style for the content or the relationship concerned? What do they consider the most important things to remember when writing an email message in a business context?

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Note that informal language shows up in many of the examples used in Chapters 8–10. Formal style is illustrated in the examples of formal reports in Chapters 11 and 12. Chapter 5 has advice about writing clear, courteous messages, and guides in Reference Chapter A speak to expressing messages correctly.

The Email Etiquette Checklist provides a helpful list of points to consider before sending a message.

Email is a sensitive medium and its quick execution and delivery time leaves it open to errors. Because it's informal and still being defined as a genre, it's vulnerable to etiquette errors.

Ask students if they can remember a time they made one of these errors or received an email with an etiquette error. Are there checks they would add to this list? (Also have them check the From the Tech Desk box titled "Using Good Email Etiquette Helps Writers Achieve Their Goals" for more ideas.)

Slide 2-27

You Send It

Divide the class into two groups and give each group the assigned task as shown in the slide. Let the Group A members either write individual emails or work together to write the email. Then they should send their product(s) to the Group B members and let them respond via email as well.

After the exercise, discuss what factors influenced the drafting of this message? How was email helpful in this particular circumstance? How might it have been unhelpful?

To make the exercise more interesting, advise half of Group A and Group B to write particularly "bad" email examples. Or let Group A write a bad email request and Group B write a good email response. Discuss what made the messages good or bad.

(You could set up a similar exercise between groups of online attendees, or choose the online participants to be Group A and yourself to act as Group B.)

Texts and IM

Slide 2-28

Many individuals use text and instant messaging in the workplace as a quick and efficient means of communication. When using such short messages, writers must be especially careful to ensure messages are not only concise but clear. A helpful activity may be to have students write one message in two ways: once as an email and once as an instant message.

Text and instant messaging are still used much more for non-business rather than business purposes.

But these tools are growing in business use—for quick messages to coworkers, promotions, brand awareness, customer relations, and such. Clearly, as Millennials continue to join the workforce and influence communication, the use of text messaging will increase.

Slide 2-29

Ask students which text is best and why. The scenario is that your boss is in an important meeting and cannot be interrupted, but you've learned that a visiting customer's (Marina Smith) dietary needs will

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mean a quick change in your lunch venue is necessary. Challenge students to come up with another option for this text and text it to you!

Social Media and Future Technology

Slides 2-30, 2-31

Exhibit 2-24 is also featured in the textbook. Discuss which social media sites, apps, or blogs students see businesses using successfully. Ask students to volunteer to show their social media pages. Or find profiles of anonymous people on Facebook or show anonymous Twitter posts and ask the students for critique. Find profiles of business pages on Facebook or business Twitter posts. Talk about what makes a good post or a good profile in any of these accounts. Discuss what judgments you might make about a person or company based on the kinds of things they say or the pictures they post on social media. Remind students that if an anonymous person's life can be so easily accessed, then they, too, can be vulnerable to this level of accessibility.

To discuss usage of social media, consider asking students what activities they've used Facebook and other social media sites for in the workplace.

Companies may have official pages or accounts from which they post approved product promotions, giveaways, and information. They may also use social media to connect with other businesses and to evaluate potential employees or monitor the behavior of current employees.

But companies may also be known by the informal posts made by their own employees on their own time. Some companies have strict guidelines in their employee handbooks about what workers are allowed to post concerning the company's products or environment—even on their own personal pages.

Challenge the students to discuss the ethical issues involved in mixing personal and business use of social media. Should companies be allowed to restrict the personal posts of their employees? Do employees have the right to say whatever they want about their employers in a public forum?

Consider asking your students to talk about the difference between posting a negative statement about a company on social media and making that same statement by a) taking out a full-page ad in a newspaper; b) calling the local television news station with an anonymous tip; or c) calling several friends to complain. What is the difference between these kinds of communication? Which one might have more influence on potential customers or potential and current employees?

In what industries might an employee's personal social media presence play a greater role or pose more of a risk? (Consider occupations such as a teacher, doctor, police officer, etc.)

Extra exercise: A fun exercise for the class might be to set up and design a class Facebook group page. Students could be divided into design, administrator, publicity, and news groups and could be tasked with keeping the class Facebook page up to date with information about assignments, tests, and challenges, as well as encouraging posting articles, images, cartoons, etc. that are related to business communication practices and especially business social media practices.

Connect Assignment 2-3: Personal Activities on Company Time
Summary: Employees need to be aware of their companies' policies regarding the use of company-owned technology for personal reasons. Students will consider concepts of corporate communication and issues of power and ethics as they evaluate the arguments in the provided case study to come to a conclusion about the fairness of the employee's termination discussed in the case.

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Learning Objective: 2-09
Difficulty: Medium
AACSB: Technology
Blooms: Understand

Follow-Up Activity: Students can create one of the following, based on their answer about the case: 1) an amendment to the company policy statement that allows personal use of company systems and equipment in certain defined cases, or 2) an official letter of termination, clearly explaining the reasons for the termination in a polite and professional manner.

Slides 2-32

Social Media Warnings

Students may be interested in discussing ethical issues involved when employers use social networking pages to screen applicants.

It may also be interesting to mention that the social site RateMyProfessor.com has been used to make hiring decisions for new faculty. Knowing this, would students change their reviews at all? This could certainly lead to rich conversation.

Slide 2-33

You Make the Call

Encourage students to share their own experiences with using social media in the context of work—either as a tool for work or as a distraction from their work. What are the problems—for either the company or the employee—with using social media at work for personal use? What might be the possible benefits?

Slide 2-34

Technology is changing at such a pace already, you can anticipate further rapid advancements in business use of technology to support or enhance communication.

Innovative **social media** sites are continually being developed and reaching out to attract new audiences. Where will Pinterest, Snapchat, and Instagram be in five years? In what ways will these sites shape how we communicate with one another, either for personal use or for business use?

Mobile business solutions are already changing the way people access and use companies' products and services. Reports have varied, but roughly one-sixth of all U.S. holiday retail sales last year were completed online, and that number has been increasing each year. Many people now deal with all their personal business, from scheduling doctor's appointments to depositing checks, through websites or mobile apps. This impacts their familiarity with releasing personal information online and how they communicate about traditionally formal business transactions such as loan negotiations, insurance claims, product complaints, and more. Ask students to think of ways that the increased use of apps and websites (which often have "chat" features to enable easy access to customer representatives) for personal business transactions may affect how companies communicate with external or internal audiences.

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Storing things "in the **cloud**" has become a familiar term for both businesses and individuals. What are some of the benefits to working in the cloud? What are some of the disadvantages? How do you think cloud computing has affected communication?

Note that Chapter 12 discusses more thoroughly how technology has increasingly facilitated collaborative writing in the workplace.

Connect Assignment 2-4: Choosing the Right Channel
Summary: Although choosing the right channel is an activity that relates specifically to the writing process as discussed in Learning Objective 2-02, this exercise will prompt students to think through what they've learned about the effectiveness of various kinds of communication—including social media and other technology—that transpires between companies and their clients. Students will read the scenario and then answer ten questions to help them decide what type of communication will meet their goals.

2-4a
Learning Objective: 2-02
Difficulty: Medium
AACSB: Analytical Thinking
Blooms: Analyze

2-4b, 2-4c
Learning Objective: 2-02
Difficulty: Hard
AACSB: Analytical Thinking
Blooms: Analyze

2-4d, 2-4e, 2-4f, 2-4g, 2-4h, 2-4i, 2-4j
Learning Objective: 2-02
Difficulty: Medium
AACSB: Analytical Thinking
Blooms: Analyze

Follow-Up Activity: Using the information provided in the scenario, instruct students to create the communication piece that will be sent to the clients.

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Power Charge Your Professionalism: Use the Right Word

1. Ling is conducting the training sessions to (**ensure/**~~insure~~) all employees know how to use the new intranet portal.
2. Once you (~~except~~**/accept**) the terms of the license agreement, you can download your new software.
3. Even though the instructions did not (~~implicitly~~**/explicitly**) provide a deadline, everyone assumed the forms were due at the end of the month.
4. Did Rick's email **(imply/**~~infer~~) that we would all be getting a raise this year?
5. Last Thursday Kerstin (~~lead~~**/led**) the hospital's board of directors on a tour of the remodeled emergency room.
6. Business letters are usually sent on company letterhead, but personal letters are usually sent on (~~plane~~**/plain**) paper.
7. Paying extra on a loan (**principal/**~~principle~~) each month can help you pay off the loan more quickly.
8. Even though we send most of our messages electronically, we still use (~~stationary~~**/stationery**) for our printed messages.

For further instruction on using the right word, see "Using the Homophones Correctly" in the "Grammar and Common Sentence Problems" module of LearnSmart Achieve.

Critical-Thinking Questions

1. **Explain why writing can be more difficult than other forms of communication. (LO1)**

   In written communication, the words must do the whole job of transmitting the message of the writer clearly. The writer cannot rely on facial expressions, body language, or voice to set the tone. To be an effective business writer, you must be able to capture complex circumstances and put them into words. This calls for diligence and creativity to do the research, critical thinking, and problem solving that is required. Writing may also be considered more difficult because the written message is often recorded and examined more closely than a message delivered orally.

2. **Describe ways in which the writing process might be recursive. (LO2)**

   The stages of crafting a written message are interconnected. You may begin drafting parts of your message while you are planning what you are going to say. Or you may have to interrupt a draft to go and collect more information. You may have to revise and edit an introductory section before the rest of the draft is complete. The writing process is a flexible one.

3. **Explain how technology can help the writer with both creative and tedious writing tasks. (LO2–LO5)**

   Students should answer with several examples of both creative and tedious writing tasks and what specific technology tools help with those tasks. Technology can help with routine tasks such as creating a writing schedule on an electronic calendar or entering data into a searchable database. Technology such as RSS readers can help you gather information, but also might provide inspiration for other writing projects. Outlining and concept-mapping can seem boring, but gathering your ideas into a visual order in such a program may produce new connections and

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original ideas about how to approach your project. Presentation and design software can allow you to be creative with formatting and constructing your report.

4. **Identify specific software tools that assist with constructing written messages. Explain what each does. (LO3)**

   Project planning tools, such as Microsoft Visio, give a writer the ability to identify all the tasks needed to complete a project and to determine how much time a task will take. They can also help track your progress and your project budget.

   Electronic calendars can help you plan time for your writing and allow you to coordinate your schedule with other project collaborators by viewing shared calendars, scheduling meetings, setting appointment or deadline reminders, and so forth.

   RSS readers pull content from around the web based on the subject matter you subscribe to. They can collect the information into one spot and save it for later reading.

   Databases will give you a place to organize the facts and other pieces of information that you've gathered for your project. If the database is customized well for your project, you can search and sort the data by various relevant categories.

   Outlining and concept-mapping programs, such as Edraw, allow you to group related ideas and rearrange them into a meaningful order. Statistical programs and spreadsheet programs, such as Excel, can also let you organize raw data into simple tables or helpful visuals such as charts and graphs.

   As you consider how your final message will be presented, you might use multimedia presentations such as PowerPoint or Camtasia. These programs allow you to incorporate video, images, music, and audio narration into your presentation.

5. **Word processing programs are the writer's primary tool. Identify five basic features and two advanced features useful to business writers. (LO3–LO5)**

   Each student's answer should be evaluated on its own merit, as there are many possible features they might choose to use as examples. Here are some possible responses: Five basic features that can help you craft business messages are *help*, *find and replace*, *auto correct*, *spell check*, and *grammar and style check*. The *help* feature can show you how to adjust formatting settings or learn any other part of the program you are not clear about. *Find and replace* will assist you in finding common or repeated errors and replacing them with your corrections. This takes much less time than trying to find them manually. *Auto correct* can also be used to automatically correct errors you find yourself making over and over again. *Spell check* and *grammar and style check* can be used at the end of your writing to find typical spelling and grammar errors. Advanced features such as *comments* and *track changes* can help you to collaborate with others on a project, allowing comments and editorial changes while keeping a record of your original work. And managing the *styles* feature can help you designate certain themes and templates for your work that can allow you to make formatting changes easily.

6. **Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of spelling checkers and grammar and style checkers. (LO5)**

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These checkers are very helpful in catching many incorrect spellings and structure problems. They each usually offer suggestions for corrections or give you the option of adding to the program's dictionary or changing something in the settings of the program to deal with terminology or constructions that might be particular to that piece of writing. However, the spell checker will not catch words that are spelled correctly, but just misused, such as *desert* for *dessert*. Similarly, though the grammar and style checker can identify possible problems, it's up to the writer to make decisions on what is being used correctly and what is not—so the writer still needs to have a good understanding of grammar. The main disadvantage to such checkers comes when the writer relies too heavily on these features to fix potential issues automatically without paying careful attention to what is being fixed. Also, proofreading is still required, due to the aforementioned problem in not being able to identify misused words.

7. **Brainstorm some practices or policies that businesses might develop for using the information rights management (IRM) tool effectively. (LO5)**

   Evaluate each student's answer on its merits. An answer should show an understanding of the benefits offered through the use of IRM tools, such as setting reader permissions and controls, and setting expiration dates for permissions. For example, a business might have a policy that only allows editorial ability to be given to a certain level of management or certain teams. They also might come up with a set period of time for expiration dates on all documents or declare that all form templates be designated as read-only.

8. **How have text messaging or other technologies affected your writing? (LO2, LO9)**

   Some would argue that text and IM-speak are causing a breakdown of the English language. But others would say that they are providing opportunities for students to gain more writing experience and are exciting examples of the evolution of language. You will have to evaluate each student's answer on its merit. The answers will depend on the student's personal experience; however, you may expect to see responses that talk about writing becoming less formal, more concise, written in bulleted style, utilizing more slang or abbreviated terms (text language), etc.

9. **How will technology continue to affect business writing? (LO10)**

   Evaluate each student's answer on its merits. A typical answer might include such elements as shown here.

   As email, text, IM, and social media become more and more widely used, many more messages that used to be delivered in formal, hard copy forms may convert to these new technologies. For instance, many customers no longer think first of writing a letter to complain about a product. Instead, they may hop online and send an IM via a company's customer service chat feature, and get an immediate reply. However, while some writing may become less formal, there will always be a place for more formal communication to be exchanged between certain parties and in certain settings.

   The use of more online technology and cloud computing may change business communication in other ways, by increasing familiarity with doing business online, which may mean communicators have to become more aware of security issues and archiving issues.

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Skills-Building Exercises

1. **Investigate your school and/or local libraries to determine what current (or future) computer sources will help you find information about businesses. Report your findings to the class. (LO2, LO3)**

   Individual answers will vary.

2. **Compile an annotated list of at least 10 websites with good links to sources of business information (e.g., labor statistics, stock market trends). Three of these links should be for local business information. (LO2, LO3)**

   Individual answers will vary.

3. **Select a multimedia technology, and as your instructor directs, write a memo discussing considerations for accommodating audiences with special needs (e.g., those with visual, hearing, or mobility impairments). (LO3, LO7)**

   Individual answers will vary.

4. **Choose a feature from your word processor (such as index, table of contents, templates, or citation manager) that you have not used much. Learn how to use it and create an example of its use in a business document. Write a brief description of its application and then teach your classmates to use the feature. (LO2, LO4)**

   Individual answers will vary.

5. **From a current business magazine, find an article that relates to communication in business. As your instructor directs, write a one-paragraph reaction to it and post it to a blog, post it to the "Comments" section of an online article, or submit your reaction in memo format. (LO2, LO7, LO9)**

   Answers will vary but should reflect appropriate stages of the planning, drafting, and revising processes.

6. **Find a recent news article about a company's unsuccessful use of social media. As your instructor directs, write a memo or email in which you describe the situation, analyze what led to the failure of the message, and offer suggestions for what the company should have done differently. (LO2, LO7, LO8, LO9)**

   Individual answers will vary, but students should keep emails or memos to a maximum of 300 words. The subject line should be clear and descriptive, and the message should be constructed with the most important point stated first.

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