Business Communication 2nd edition Rentz Solutions Manual

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

Chapter 2: Getting Positive Responses to Your Communication

Teaching Suggestions

This chapter helps students understand how to communicate appropriately to their audience. Appropriateness can refer to more than just being correct, however. Being appropriate can also mean using language that is respectful of your audience's viewpoints and that seeks to be inclusive of all readers or listeners.

Illustration and demonstration will be very helpful to students' understanding of the wording advice in this chapter. The examples on the PowerPoint® slides augment those in the book, and you can add various examples of your own.

The exercises at the end of the chapter enable students to learn by doing.

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.

The following McGraw-Hill tools are also available to support your business communication instruction:

NEW SmartBook 2.0 personalizes learning to individual student needs, continually adapting to pinpoint knowledge gaps and focus learning on topics that need the most attention. With SmartBook 2.0, learning is more productive and takes the guess work out of what to study in a no-fail environment. The result, students are better prepared for class and coursework. For instructors, SmartBook 2.0 tracks student progress and provides insights that guide teaching strategies and advanced instruction focused on a more dynamic class experience.

NEW Video Capture powered by GoReact embedded in Connect makes it simple for students to record presentations and practice their oral communication skills essential in the business world. GoReact streamlines instructors' ability to provide personalized skill coaching anywhere students should demonstrate their learning. GoReact allows instructors to easily provide feedback, assign grades, and also share recordings with other students in cases where they evaluate their peers.

NEW Writing Assignment Plus tool delivers a learning experience that improves students' written

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communication skills and conceptual understanding with every assignment. Assign, monitor, and provide feedback on writing more efficiently and grade assignments within McGraw-Hill Connect®. Writing Assignment Plus gives you time-saving tools with a just-in-time basic writing and originality checker.

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Learning Objectives

LO 2-1 Use the you-viewpoint to build goodwill.
LO 2-2 Use a conversational style that has the appropriate level of formality and eliminates "rubber stamps."
LO 2-3 Describe ways to be courteous beyond using polite expressions.
LO 2-4 Employ positive language to achieve goodwill and other desired effects.
LO 2-5 Use the three major techniques for emphasizing the positive and deemphasizing the negative.
LO 2-6 Avoid unethical communication practices.
LO 2-7 Cultivate personal qualities that promote ethical behavior.
LO 2-8 Use professional codes of conduct and established approaches to ethical reasoning to help you make ethical decisions.

Key Terms

goodwill
you-viewpoint
you-attitude
conversational language
level of formality
rubber stamps
courtesy
positive words
emphasis
ethics
lie of commission
lie of omission
discriminatory words
credibility
integrity
restraint
code of conduct
Aristotelian ethics
Kantian ethics
utilitarian ethics

Text Summary, Lecture Outline

Showing Consideration

Slides 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5

Conveying information is not the only goal of good business communication. In today's digital age, when messages fly back and forth at lightning speed, it's important to make sure that the "people" content of your messages gets as much attention as the informational content. This chapter will help you communicate in a way that builds goodwill with your business associates and customers.

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The first few slides provide an overview of the chapter objectives and contents.

As you review the objectives for the class, ask students to share a time when they had either a negative personal communication experience with a business or brand, or a negative impression they had after reading a business communication or seeing a particular brand message. What was it that made them feel the way they did?

Problem-Solving Challenge

Have students consider the message to Mr. Morley that was written by Jason, a new hire at a large office-supply company. What in particular is wrong with the way Jason worded the message? How could you help Jason rewrite the message? After the class has gone through the chapter, have them go back and see how they would rewrite the message, and how they would explain the new version to Jason.

Slide 2-5

Just as we found in the last chapter, the key to good communication choices is considering your audience. In this section, we're going to look at three ways you can cultivate a positive relationship with your audience: using the you-viewpoint, employing a conversational style, and being courteous.

Slide 2-6

You-Viewpoint

Writing from the you-viewpoint is a powerful technique for building goodwill.

The you-viewpoint writing emphasizes the reader's interests and concerns—the *you* and the *your*. It deemphasizes the *we* and the *our*.

But you-viewpoint is more than just using the right pronouns. It is an attitude of mind. It places the readers in the center of things—emphasizing their interests and showing concern for them.

The next slide illustrates some ways of using the you-viewpoint at the sentence level.

Slide 2-7

Using the you-viewpoint to create the right effect is demonstrated in these contrasting sentences.

Some claim that using the you-viewpoint is (1) insincere and (2) manipulative. The arguments have merit, for it can be used to the point of being insincere. And it can be manipulative.

But it does not have to be. The you-viewpoint can be positive if you use it with genuine sincerity—and if you use it only to achieve ethical goals.

Ask your students to look at the sentences on the slide again. Do any of these "You" sentences seem manipulative or insincere? Why or why not?

Slide 2-8

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Ask students to read the message on the slide and then respond to these questions:

- How would you have felt if you'd gotten this message? Why?
- What wording is the most problematic in this message?
- How would you revise this message to consider the you-viewpoint?

Slide 2-9

Use Conversational Style

Another technique that helps build goodwill is to write in conversational language.

Many of us change character when we write. Instead of being our natural selves (warm and friendly), we become unduly formal and impersonal, perhaps under the impression that stiff or big words will impress.

In today's ever-shifting business environment, where people often need to establish friendly relations quickly, it is a better strategy to use language that is warm, natural, and personable.

But choosing the right level of formality for your audience is important. A more formal style is appropriate in these situations:

- Communicating with someone you don't know.
- Communicating with someone at a higher level than you.
- Using a relatively formal genre, such as a letter, long report, or external proposal.
- Preparing a ceremonial message, such as a commendation or inspirational announcement.
- Writing an extremely serious message, such as a crisis response or official reprimand.

Ask students to suggest revisions for the sentences and phrases on this slide. After gathering some answers, challenge them to provide examples of what would be too informal or casual.

For a homework assignment or class exercise, consider asking the students to develop a WhoPrint of their "writer's persona." A WhoPrint is an advertising term for the consumer that advertising copy targets. For this exercise, they would find an image online that matched their idea of their own writer's persona, and list the values, style, beliefs, activities, and favorite words and phrases of this person. An alter ego of sorts, this persona can lessen the fear of writing because students have a construct in mind when coming to the page. You may even include one of your own in this presentation to entertain students and lighten the mood.

Slide 2-10

Cut Out Rubber Stamps

Also called clichés, rubber stamps are words we use without thought every time a certain situation occurs. That is, we use them like "rubber stamps."

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Because they are used routinely, these words and phrases communicate the effect of routine treatment.

Avoiding rubber stamps is another aid to creating the right effect. Rubber stamps convey the message that the reader isn't special—a message that most people do not like to get.

Ask students how they feel when they receive a message that uses clichés. Invite them to offer alternatives for the phrases on this slide and to talk about why such wording is a problem.

Slide 2-11

Courteous Language

Being courteous includes more than just using polite words. By courtesy we mean respectful and considerate treatment of others. What is considered appropriate will vary among situations, industries, and countries (direct students to check out the Communication Matters feature on "Business Etiquette—It Depends on Where You Are").

One way of being courteous is to avoid blaming the reader. No one likes being accused of negligence, wrongdoing, or faulty thinking.

Remember, when you are in a situation in which you are disappointed with someone or have to provide correction, try to blow off steam before you convey your message. Take a deep breath. Or write an angry message, but then don't send it. Sometimes getting the words out will help you realize that a calmer approach will be more helpful.

Two other helpful strategies for avoiding blaming language are as follows:

- Avoid using *you*.
- Focus on the facts.

This is one of those situations in which passive voice can be helpful, or even desirable. Ask students: Why would passive voice be helpful in this situation? Can you provide an example of a passive voice sentence that could be helpful in this situation?

Slide 2-12

Another way of being courteous in messages is to avoid wording that could insult your readers' intelligence. Remember to always consider the message from their point of view. Ask yourself these questions:

- Would they already know this?
- Would they want to hear this?
- How would I feel if I got this message?

For an in-class exercise, ask students to get a partner. Each pair will need one sheet of notebook or blank paper (the size doesn't really matter). One student will be the instruction giver. The other student will be the instruction receiver.

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Gather the instruction givers together and tell them that they must tell their partners to do certain things to the paper—it doesn't really matter what order they go in. But in all of the instructions they give, they have to take on the role of a parent, and treat their partners as children. (For example, they could start out by saying: "This is a piece of paper, and you can do lots of things with paper. I'm going to tell you some things to do now and you need to follow my instructions exactly. OK?")

You can write examples of directions on a board or tell online students: fold it in half, fold the lower left corner over the upper right corner, turn the paper 90 degrees, fold it in half again, tear a circular shape into the middle of the left side of the paper, fold it into thirds.

The instruction giver should offer constant corrections to the "child" and remind them of instructions. After seven or eight instructions have been given, stop the exercise.

Use this exercise as an illustration of how the tone of communication and the types of words used can make a significant difference in the impression the audience has. (Online students can perform the exercise with a friend or neighbor at home and report on the results.)

Slide 2-13

Respectfulness—Go the Extra Mile

In the hurry of today's business world, it's tempting to communicate as quickly and abruptly as possible. And while getting to the point is also a way of being respectful, being thoughtful about giving your audience the time, attention, and resources they need will go a long way toward creating goodwill.

Direct your students' attention to the From the Tech Desk feature "Courtesy in the Age of Mobile Devices." Read through the points about cell phones and text messaging and discuss with your students. Are any of these ideas surprising to them? Are there any they would disagree with or add to?

Remind students of other positive strategies that will help them create good impressions in their communications: supplying Internet links or other resources, providing extra information instead of leaving it to the reader to find it, attaching maps or schedules that could come in handy, and being aware of and acknowledging special achievements (such as meeting sales goals or celebrating a number of years of service).

Accentuating the Positive

Slide 2-14

In most cases, positive or neutral wording will succeed better than negative wording.

Positive words tend to put readers in a good frame of mind; they build goodwill. Negative words—such as *damage, error, mistake, problem, loss*, and *failure*—produce the opposite effect.

This does not mean that negative words are always inappropriate. They are strong, they command attention, and sometimes you will need to use them.

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This slide offers an overview of ways to emphasize a positive viewpoint. The following slides provide more detail on some of these concepts.

Connect Exercise 2-1 (a-e): Asking for Better Work from Your Boss (Case Analysis and Multiple-Choice Keyboard Navigable Alternate Version).

Summary: Students will answer multiple-choice questions to demonstrate their ability to apply the following principles: using you-viewpoint, using conversational style, employing positive language to achieve goodwill, using positive emphasis.

2-1a

Learning Objectives: 2-01, 2-04, 2-05

Topic Tags: Creating and Employing Positive Language; Using the You-Attitude or Viewpoint

Difficulty: Medium

AACSB: Communication

Blooms: Evaluate

2-1b

Learning Objectives: 2-01, 2-04

Topic Tags: Creating and Employing Positive Language; Using the You-Attitude or Viewpoint

Difficulty: Medium

AASCSB: Communication

Blooms: Evaluate

2-1c

Learning Objectives: 2-01, 2-02, 2-04

Topic Tags: Creating and Employing Positive Language; Using the You-Attitude or Viewpoint

Difficulty: Medium

AACSB: Communication

Blooms: Evaluate

2-1d, 2-1e

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Learning Objectives: 2-01, 2-02, 2-03, 2-04

Topic Tags: Creating and Employing Positive Language; Using the You-Attitude or Viewpoint

Difficulty: Medium

AACSB: Communication

Blooms: Evaluate

Follow-Up Activity: Students can create the email that will be sent to the boss to request more information, using the principles that will be more likely to achieve positive results.

Slide 2-15

Make It Positive

Ask students to offer ideas for how to make these statements more positive by getting rid of negative words and focusing on what can be done, instead of what cannot be done.

As a homework assignment, ask students to take cell phone photos of negative signs or other messages they see around campus or in other places. They can text you a photo with their revision of the sign's language to make it more positive.

Slide 2-16

Positive Positioning

This slide provides an overview of three techniques for softening the blow of negative messages through managing emphasis in the structure of messages.

Ask students: Which technique seems most effective to you? Are any of these methods more noticeable to the reader than others?

Point out that, similar to the use of the you view-point, the danger with employing positive emphasis techniques is the potential to create misleading or manipulative messages. We'll explore more ethical issues in the next section.

Connect Exercise 2-2 (a-e): Striving for Positive Results (Manager's Hot Seat Video Case and Multiple-Choice Keyboard Navigable Alternate Version).

Summary: Students will view a video business conversation and then answer questions to demonstrate their ability to apply the following principles: using you-viewpoint, using conversational style, and employing positive language to achieve goodwill.

2-2a, 2-2b

Learning Objectives: 2-01, 2-02, 2-04

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Topic Tags: Creating and Employing Positive Language; Using the You-Attitude or Viewpoint

Difficulty: Easy

AACSB: Communication

Blooms: Analyze

2-2c

Learning Objectives: 2-01, 2-02, 2-04

Topic Tags: Creating and Employing Positive Language; Using the You-Attitude or Viewpoint

Difficulty: Medium

AACSB: Communication

Blooms: Analyze

2-2d

Learning Objectives: 2-02, 2-04, 2-05

Topic Tags: Creating and Employing Positive Language; Using the You-Attitude or Viewpoint

Difficulty: Medium

AACSB: Communication

Blooms: Evaluate

2-2e

Learning Objectives: 2-01, 2-02, 2-04

Topic Tags: Creating and Employing Positive Language; Using the You-Attitude or Viewpoint

Difficulty: Medium

AACSB: Communication

Blooms: Evaluate

Follow-Up Activity: Students can suggest alternative language for Juan and Rita to use in their conversation with Carlos. Students should offer a suggestion for each of the statements addressed in the questions.

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Communicating Ethically

Slide 2-17

This slide provides an overview of some of the concepts that are presented in the discussion of ethical communication practices.

For an in-class or homework exercise, students could survey recent news stories to find examples of unethical communication practices (of companies, brands, or individuals) being revealed or challenged. Instruct them to report back to you with a brief summary of the situation and one idea for how the communication could have been changed to display ethical practices instead.

Connect Exercise 2-3 (a-e): Ethics in Business Communication (Manager's Hot Seat Video Case and Multiple-Choice Keyboard Navigable Alternate Version). Topic Tags: Avoiding Unethical Communication Practices, Credibility in Business Communications

Summary: Students will view a video business conversation and then answer questions to demonstrate their understanding of ethical communication.

2-3a, 2-3b

Learning Objective: 2-06

Topic Tags: Avoiding Unethical Communication Practices

Difficulty: Medium

AACSB: Ethics

Blooms: Analyze

2-3c, 2-3e

Learning Objective: 2-06

Topic Tags: Avoiding Unethical Communication Practices; Credibility in Business Communications

Difficulty: Easy

AACSB: Communication

Blooms: Analyze

2-3d

Learning Objective: 2-06

Topic Tags: Avoiding Unethical Communication Practices

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Difficulty: Medium

AACSB: Communication

Blooms: Analyze

Follow-Up Activity: Students can role-play the conversation between Gina and Jason, suggesting a better way for Gina to approach her conversation with Jason and a possibility for handling the investment proposal in an ethical manner.

Slide 2-18

Don't Discriminate

We should strive to use nondiscriminatory wording—wording that treats all people equally and with respect.

This means avoiding words that either deliberately or unintentionally make assumptions about or create impressions of groups of people based on race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

Slide 2-19

Use Gender-Neutral Language

One of the more common types of discriminatory wording is sexist wording.

There are several strategies you can use to avoid using gender-specific language.

- Avoid use of masculine (or feminine) pronouns to refer to a group of people that includes both genders.
- Avoid words derived from masculine words (for example: fireman, chairman, man-made).
- Avoid wording that calls undue attention to a person's gender (for example: waitress, stewardess, male nurse).

Direct students to check out the Communication Matters feature "Three Ways to Avoid Sexist Pronouns."

Stereotyping by age and ability is also a fairly common occurrence. Remind students that people with disabilities make up the largest minority group in the world—almost one in every five persons in the United States has a disability of some kind. Being respectful to this group means finding out what terminology each person prefers and also generally putting the person first before mentioning the disability. For example, you could say "those who have hearing impairments" instead of "hearing impaired persons," or say "people who are blind" instead of "blind people."

For a homework or in-class assignment, instruct students to look out for examples of discriminatory language in advertising or other prominently displayed wording. They can copy the wording or photograph the examples and send them to you, including a way of correcting the wording.

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Slide 2-20

Qualities to Cultivate

To be an ethical communicator, you can cultivate certain personal qualities that make ethical behavior the natural choice. Trustworthiness, restraint, bravery, and communication savvy are all qualities that can help you come to ethical decisions in your work and personal life.

Slide 2-21

Ethical Challenge—You Make the Call

For an interesting exercise, break the class into groups and let them role-play this situation. Some groups can be the ones who speak up and others can be the ones who are talking unfairly and then respond to the ones who are speaking out.

Slide 2-22

These are good words to consider: "Write as though you were addressing intelligent people you understand and respect." Even when writing to someone with a low level of education or someone who has made an angry complaint, you will almost always get the best result if you bring out the best in them.

Power Charge Your Professionalism: Make Your Pronouns and Antecedents Agree in Number

First identify the antecedent. Then select the pronoun that agrees with its antecedent. Identify which pronoun-antecedent agreement guide from Reference Chapter A you used in making your choice. (Correct answers are marked in bold.)

Some of these examples ask students to choose between two possible correct answers: creating agreement between his or her and a singular antecedent or creating a gender neutral construction. Consider using this exercise as an opportunity to talk to students about which is a better choice in a certain situation. You may even ask your students to rewrite the sentence to avoid pronoun use altogether.

1. Each employee received (~~his or her~~/**their**) performance review last week.
(**singular antecedent**)
2. The staff gave (~~its~~/**their**) recommendations.
(**collective antecedent acting as individuals**)
3. Joe and Sam shared (~~his~~/**their**) thoughts on Facebook.
(**plural antecedent**)
4. All staff members should focus (~~its~~/**their**) energy on attracting new clients.
(**plural antecedent**)
5. Whenever an employee signs up for one of the company intramural sports teams, (~~he or she~~/**they**) must sign a form releasing the company from any liability.
(**singular antecedent**)

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6. If every member of the committee votes "yes," (**it**/~~they~~) will be the first committee to have a unanimous vote.
(**singular antecedent**)
7. The membership dues and maintenance fees are two separate assessments; (~~it~~/**they**) must be paid for your membership to be activated.
(**plural antecedent**)
8. The condominium association publishes (**its**/~~their~~) bylaws in the January newsletter.
(**collective antecedent acting as one**)
9. Rogers and Associates, Inc. offers health and dental insurance to (**its**/~~their~~) employees.
(**singular antecedent**)
10. When a businessperson gives a professional presentation, (~~he or she~~/**they**) should speak clearly and use visuals to maintain the audience's interest.
(**singular antecedent**)

For further practice, see the "Pronoun and Antecedent Agreement" activity in LearnSmart Achieve, under the heading "Grammar and Common Sentence Problems."

Critical-Thinking Questions

1. **Discuss this comment: "Using the you-viewpoint is ethically shady since the real purpose of business communication is to advance the writer or speaker's goals. Your communication should be honest about that." (LO2-1)**

If it is used insincerely, the you-viewpoint can be dishonest. But it can and should be used sincerely. There is nothing dishonest about one person having a genuine interest in another person, which is what the you-viewpoint is all about.

2. **In what way, if any, could using the you-viewpoint when writing to someone you don't like (for example, someone who has complained unreasonably about something) be justified? (LO2-1)**

Using the you-viewpoint requires you to get into the mind of your reader and consider his or her needs and wants. Writing to people you don't like could help you understand why they are upset and what they need to resolve the situation.

3. **"A message can't sound official unless it has an impersonal style and uses business jargon." Discuss. (LO2-2)**

Answers will vary, but should acknowledge that this statement is false and that in most cases using a conversational yet courteous style will actually communicate a more professional tone, besides helping the message to be effective. If a message is so filled with jargon that the average reader can't understand it, it will fail to communicate.

4. **"If common business phrases apply to a situation, why not use them? Rubber stamps save time, and in business time is money. Plus, people are used to these expressions." Discuss. (LO2-2)**

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The effectiveness of business writing is enhanced by giving the impression of individual treatment. Rubber stamps leave the impression of routine and general treatment. Perhaps using them would save time for some people, but the loss in effectiveness of the message would more than offset any gains.

5. **"Please submit your payment at your earliest convenience." Is this a courteous sentence? Why or why not? (LO2-3)**

This question may produce various viewpoints and the answer could depend on the context of the message. However, though the statement uses courteous language, it could be improved by placing the consideration of the reader before the request: "As soon as it is convenient for you, please submit your payment."

6. **What would be a way of doing more than would be necessary in the following situations? (LO2-3)**

Individual answers will vary in each case. Judge each on its merits, but see sample answers below.

You work as a sales clerk in a retail store. A customer asks you if your store carries a brand that it doesn't carry.

After telling the customer that you do not carry that brand, you could offer the customer similar brands that the store does carry and show them where they are in the store.

You have invited someone to give a talk at your company, and he has just sent you an email in which he said yes. You email him back to say thank you.

After thanking him, you could provide information about places to stay, directions to the event, and any other details that would help him be comfortable coming to speak, such as information about the demographics of the audience.

You've just finished doing a team project, for which you were the leader, and you were really impressed with the members' work.

Thank the team, but also call out the specific contribution each member made and acknowledge their achievements. You could email the boss, with your teammates copied on the message, praising the team. You could even consider giving a small, meaningful gift to each person.

7. **"I'm nervous about deliberately employing positive wording. I think people like writers who shoot straight, and I worry that they'd think I was being deceptive." Discuss. (LO2-4)**

Answers will vary for this question. Certain personality types prefer directness at all times. But most people do not like directness when the situation is negative. Many of us are offended by blunt and harsh treatment and prefer to hear positive statements delivered in a conversational tone. It may take practice to strike a tone that feels comfortable to the writer but will also be effective to the reader.

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8. **You work for a mail-order business, and you're emailing a customer to say that the item she wants is not only out of stock but also discontinued. How might you use the three ways of de-emphasizing negative news in your message? (LO2-5)**

Answers will vary, but should make use of these three methods: using positive words, focusing on what can be done (instead of what can't), and managing emphasis—through the structure of the sentences and paragraphs and through using cushioning language—for positive effect.

9. **Imagine that a customer has written to complain about the lack of attention that she received when visiting a paint store. The manager's responding message explains why the sales staff was so busy, offers to make a special appointment with the customer to discuss her decorating needs, and then ends with the following paragraph:**

> **We do apologize again for any inconvenience that this situation caused you. We thank you for your understanding. Please do not hesitate to contact us again if we ever fall short of the superior service that you have come to expect from us.**

If the manager asked for your feedback on this message, what would you say? It's full of polite expressions. Is it a good concluding paragraph? (LO2-1-LO2-5)

Although well intended, this ending is negative. *Inconvenience* and *fall short* are negative words. And the apology brings to mind the negative situation that brought about the complaint. The positive information presented earlier in the message is offset by these negatives.

10. **Consider each of the following communication-related behaviors and decide whether or not you think it is ethically defensible. Could any of the established approaches to ethical reasoning help you make your decision? Would the circumstances influence your answer? (LO6–LO8)**

1. Referring to a female staff person by her first name (e.g., "See Joan at the front desk") but to the higher-ranking employees by their first and last names (e.g., "Jim Smith in Tech Support can answer your question").
2. Sending a male member of the sales team (or an Anglo-American) to give an important presentation because you know the client is gender (or racially) biased.

3. Using your company email account to plan a family reunion.

4. Using your company's instant messaging platform to comment on a coworker.

5. Boning up on hockey (even though you have no interest in it) before meeting with a potential client (or having a job interview with a potential boss) who loves the sport.

6. Waiting to see how everyone else weighs in on a dicey issue (e.g., whether someone should be fired) before giving your opinion.

7. Telling your boss that your coworker held up her end on a team project when she really didn't.

8. Complaining about the boss to your coworkers rather than discussing the issues directly with him or her.

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9. Criticizing your current or past workplace on Facebook, Twitter, or an Internet site.

10. Letting others do more than their share on a group project (but still getting full credit) because you had unavoidable family issues to deal with.

Answers will vary; judge each on its merits. Answers should take into consideration the three main approaches to ethical reasoning:

- Aristotelian: What would the virtuous person do in this situation?
- Kantian: What if everybody did it?
- Utilitarian: What will yield the greatest good for the greatest number?

11. **Study the following case and then assess the fairness of the intern's conclusions about the two job candidates.**

Your company was conducting job interviews to fill a business analyst position. As your company's affirmative action officer, you sat in on the interviews. You also asked your intern to sit in on the interviews, and as a learning exercise, you asked your intern to summarize each candidate's responses and offer their thoughts on the candidates' qualifications.

Below are the summaries the intern submitted to you:

Candidate: Carrie Wright	**Candidate: Marc Chavez**
Question: Tell us about a time when you had to overcome an obstacle to achieve a goal.	
Summary: Carrie told about a time in college when she missed a lot of class and had to postpone an internship because she was ill. She said she proactively worked with her professors to make up the work. She was able to finish her degree requirements because one professor whom she worked with got her an even better internship. Because of him, she was able to graduate on time. See seems like the kind of person who finishes something she starts but is someone who will always be needing help.	**Summary:** Mr. Chavez is older than Carrie and has much more experience to draw on. He told about his goal of earning an MBA with a perfect GPA. Not only did he persuade his previous employer to pay for the degree, he completed the degree and earned a 4.0 despite working full time and having family obligations in the evening and on weekends. He definitely earned his MBA, and being able to do all of this while working and supporting his wife with childcare is impressive. He seems like he could be very forceful.
Question: Tell us why you left your last position.	
Summary: Carrie was a stay-at-home mom for her two children until they went to school. She said it was rewarding to be her children's primary teacher and to witness their "firsts." She said it was also rewarding to organize the neighborhood watch, her children's annual preschool fundraisers, and a story hour in collaboration with the library. She is really devoted to her children. How committed will she be	**Summary:** Mr. Chavez told about staying home with his son after his wife's parental leave ended. It was supposed to be a short-term plan, but he liked it so much, it lasted three years. Like Carrie, he said being at home for his son's first steps, etc. was rewarding. He is definitely a committed family man, who seems to embrace the role of homemaker. He was fortunate that his wife was

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Candidate: Carrie Wright	Candidate: Marc Chavez
to this job? Also, it doesn't seem like the experiences she had in her time off to stay home with her kids is relevant for this job. Would she be able to step up and get into a new role quickly?	able to support the family financially so that he could stay at home with their son and seems genuinely grateful for the experience. Even though he embraces his role, I question why he didn't also use the time off to stay current in his job skills, but he seems like a quick learner.
Question: Tell us why you are interested in this position.	
Summary: Carrie says she is interested because she held a similar job before she stopped working to be with her children. She says she was excellent in her role as a business analyst and wants to get back to work now that her children are in school full time. She says she likes the creativity involved in data analysis and communication. She also likes that this is a company with many opportunities, but it makes me question how committed she is to the business analyst role. Does she have trouble focusing? Sticking to one thing?	**Summary:** Mr. Chavez is interested because he worked as a business analyst before leaving the workforce to raise his son. He enjoys the challenge of making data-based business decisions and improving the work of a company. He has also done research on our company and knows that we have an international presence, which shows that he is interested in staying with the company and growing into additional roles. He also likes that this is a family friendly company.

Conclusions

Either candidate could do the job, and each comes with certain strengths. Mrs. Wright is personable and engaging. She seems like she can focus on the job at hand and accomplish what she is assigned. My concern is that she is still young in her career and may be a flight risk if something more attractive comes her way. I am also concerned that she won't be able to balance her family and job priorities. Mr. Chavez is older and more experienced, which makes him more stable. My concern is that he seems set in his ways. I'm not sure how flexible or relatable he is.

Answers will vary; however, responses should highlight several unfair conclusions about the candidates:

- Addressing Carrie Wright as "Mrs." makes an assumption that she is married and prefers to be addressed with a married title. Use "Ms." when unsure of which courtesy title a woman prefers.
- Reaching very different conclusions about each individual's home life. The intern seems to give Marc Chavez more credit for staying home to provide child care than he gives to Carrie Wright. Marc Chavez is a devoted father who made an honorable decision and Carrie Wright's dedicated to her children is seen as a possible weakness and may impact her ability to do her job.
- Indicating that Carrie Wright is ambitious and will leave because she is "young in her career" is essentially the same thing as judging someone based on their age.
- Using rubber stamp phrases like "committed family man" is making social judgments.

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- Assuming Marc Chavez is not relatable and set in his ways simply because he is older.

Skills-Building Exercises

Using the You-Viewpoint (LO2-1)

Rewrite the following using the you-viewpoint. You may need to add additional material. (Answers will vary, but should demonstrate understanding of and effective use of the you-viewpoint.)

1. **As required by company policy, I am denying your refund request because you needed to have submitted the warranty agreement within two weeks of your purchase.**

Thank you for your support of our products. As noted on the warranty agreement, company policy requires that agreement to be submitted within two weeks of your purchase date in order for refund requests to be accepted. Though we cannot provide a refund at this time, we would be happy to exchange your purchase for another product of equal value that better meets your needs. Please contact Bill in Customer Service and he will be glad to help you with your situation.

2. **We will be pleased to deliver your order by the 12th.**

Your order will arrive by the 12th.

3. **We have worked for 37 years to build the best lawn mowers on the market.**

Need a lawnmower you can depend on? Buy one from a company that has spent the past 37 years building the best lawn mowers in the market.

4. **Today we are shipping the goods you ordered February 3.**

Your order from February 3 has shipped today!

5. **Instead of stopping us in the hallway to ask for IT support, send us an email, or else we will have trouble keeping track of your service request.**

IT support is available for you whenever you need it. Simply send an email to the helpdesk detailing your issue. This will allow us to track your request and service it as soon as possible.

6. **(From an email to employees) We take pleasure in announcing that, effective today, the Company will give a 20 percent discount on all purchases made by employees.**

Effective today, all employees will receive a 20 percent discount on all purchases from the Company. Thank you for your service.

7. **We are happy to report approval of your application for membership in our club.**

Your membership has been approved. Welcome to the club!

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8. **We do our best to provide the best customer service possible.**

Your support is important to us, so we strive to provide the best customer service we can.

9. **Since we no longer stock this item, we must give you store credit instead of a refund.**

We are happy to provide you with a store credit for the item you are returning, since we no longer stock that particular item.

10. **We give a 2 percent discount when payment is made within 10 days.**

If you make payment within 10 days, a 2 percent discount will be credited to your account.

11. **I am pleased to inform you that I can grant your request for payment of travel expenses.**

Your request for travel expenses has been granted.

12. **We cannot permit you to attend classes on company time unless the course is related to your work assignment.**

You may attend work-related classes on company time as part of your employee benefit.

Using a Conversational Style (LO2-2)

Rewrite the following in a conversational style. (Answers will vary, but should demonstrate effective use of conversational style wording.)

1. **I hereby acknowledge receipt of your July 7 letter.**

Thanks so much for your letter of July 7.

2. **Please be so kind as to reply at your earliest convenience.**

We'll look forward to receiving your reply.

3. **Attached please find the receipt requested in your May 1st inquiry.**

Inside you'll find the copy of the receipt you requested on May 1.

4. **In reply to your letter of July 13, permission to quote from our report is hereby granted.**

Thanks for your July 13 letter. You may quote from our report, as requested.

5. **I would deem it a great pleasure to accept your kind offer to chair the committee.**

I'd be pleased to chair the committee. Thank you for the offer.

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6. **Please be advised that, with regard to above invoice, a payment of $312 has been credited to your account.**

Regarding this November 2 invoice, $312 has been added back to your account.

7. **Kindly advise the director as to your availability for participation in the program by May 12.**

Please let the director know by May 12 if you plan to participate in the program.

Using the Right Level of Formality (LO2-2)

Reword the following sentences to achieve a more appropriate level of formality. (**You may need to recast the whole sentence**.) (Answers will vary, but should reflect an understanding of the proper tone.)

1. **(In a report that several managers will read) The customers' evaluations of our service were pretty mixed, with some being really positive and others not so positive.**

The customers' evaluations were mixed, ranging from very positive to somewhat negative.

2. **(In an email message to your division head—whom you do not know well—to congratulate her on receiving a prestigious award from a professional society) Way to go, Melissa! You do us all proud!**

Congratulations on your award, Melissa!

3. **(In a sales message) Our products are awesome, and they don't cost a lot of money.**

Our products use the best materials available, and they are highly affordable.

4. **(In a response to a proposal from a vendor who wants to be your company's HR contractor) I got your proposal. I'll give it a look-see and get back to you ASAP.**

Thank you for your proposal, which we received today. I'll review the details of the proposal with the team and get back to you directly.

5. **(In a complaint letter to your health-insurance provider) No way should I have to pay this bill out of my own pocket!**

Due to the circumstances described, this procedure should be covered fully by my policy.

6. **(In an email to an employee about missing a deadline) I need your information, Jane! Our project is gonna be a fail if we can't pull it together by the end of the month.**

Jane, it's important for the project and for the team that you send your information to me by the end of this week so we can include it in the final report.

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7. **(In a thank-you message to a CEO for letting you interview him for a class project) Thanks again, Mr. Adams, for the super-useful information.**

Thank you, Mr. Adams, for providing such useful information.

Rewriting for Courtesy and a Positive Effect (LO2-3–LO2-5)

Underscore all negative words in these sentences. Then rewrite the sentences for a more positive effect. Use your imagination to supply situation information when necessary. (Negative words have been underscored. Rewritten sentences will vary—judge answers on their merits.)

1. Your misunderstanding of our January 7 email caused you to make this mistake.

2. We hope this delay has not inconvenienced you. If you will be patient, we will get the order to you as soon as our supply is replenished.

3. We regret that we must call your attention to our policy of prohibiting refunds for merchandise bought at discount.

4. Your negligence caused the damage to the equipment.

5. You cannot visit the plant except on Saturdays.

6. We were disappointed to learn from your July 7 email that you are having trouble with our Model 7 motor.

7. Our Stone-Skin material is less weak than the fabric used by other brands.

8. Even though you were late in paying the bill, we still allowed the discount.

9. We were sorry to learn of the disappointing service you have had from our salespeople, but we feel we have corrected all mistakes by firing the incompetent personnel.

10. We have received your claim that our product was defective and have thoroughly investigated the matter.

11. We have received your undated letter, which you sent to the wrong office.

12. I regret to have to say that I will be unable to speak at your conference, as I have a prior commitment.

13. Do not walk on the grass.

Avoiding Unethical Communication Practices (LO2-6–LO2-8)

Prepare a short report for your instructor on a company or other type of organization that was recently involved in an ethical scandal. What behavior caused the scandal? What pressures, if any, were on the organization to behave this way? How easy/desirable would it have been for them to

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have avoided this behavior? Was this a cut-and-dried case of bad ethics, or do you think it was more complex than that? Be sure to cite your sources in the report.

Judge answers based on merit.

Avoiding Discriminatory Language (LO2-6)

Change these sentences to avoid discriminatory language. (Suggested changes are marked below.)

1. **We are collecting money for a gift for our postman postal worker, who'll be retiring this month.**

We are collecting money for our postal worker, who will be retiring this month.

2. **A successful writer adapts his communication style to different audiences.**

Successful writers adapt their communication styles to different audiences.

3. **The committee consisted of a businessman, a banker, and a female lawyer.**

The committee consisted of a businessperson, a banker, and a lawyer.

4. **A good administrative assistant screens all telephone calls for her the boss and manages the boss's his schedule.**

A good administrative assistant screens all telephone calls for the boss and manages the boss's schedule.

5. **If Ms. Adams is not in, Joe at the front desk can help you.**

Please see either Ms. Adams in reception or Mr. Brown at the front desk for help.

6. **Any worker in violation of this rule will have a letter of reprimand put in his personnel file.**

Workers in violation of this rule will have letters of reprimand placed in their personnel files.

7. **Two company representatives attended the conference: a Hispanic engineer and one of our younger managers.**

Two company representatives attended the conference: an engineer and one of our managers.

8. **Three people applied for the job, including a Baby Boomer and a Gen Xer.**

Three people applied for the job.

9. **These parking spaces are strictly for use by the handicapped.**

These parking spaces are strictly for use by those with disabilities.

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10. **He is one of the best gay designers in the city.**

He is one of the best designers in the city.

11. **As a Gen Yer, she is very social-media savvy.**

She is very social-media savvy.

12. **The position was filled by a well-educated housewife who was returning to the workforce.**

The position was filled by Karen Smith, who has relevant experience in this industry.

Using Resources for Ethical Reasoning (LO2-8)

Find the code of conduct for professionals who work in the area you hope to work in or the code of conduct for a company you'd like to work for. Read it carefully, and then write a short report for your instructor in which you summarize and comment on its contents. Did anything about it particularly impress or surprise you? Was anything left out that you thought should be included? Do you think it would actually help people in the field or the company behave in the right way? Attach a copy of the code of conduct to your report.

Judge each report on its merits.

Problem Solver to the Rescue: Selling Your Company's Services to Professors

Students should reference Exhibit 1-6, "Planning Your Communication Strategy: A Problem-Solving Approach" and the advice in Chapter 2 to inform their answer. Not all questions in the Chapter 1 exhibit apply to this specific scenario, but the problem-solving heuristic will provide them with a starting point to understand the questions they will need to consider in this scenario. You may want to tell students to select questions that apply to this situation. Also, you may want to explain to students that they might need to make some inferences about what the sender and receiver know and the context of the message.

Teachers are encouraged to have students critique the message, rewrite it, or both. Below is a summary of the key points students will need to consider in their critique and one example of how students may rewrite the message.

Overall Critique:

Due to the lack of information provided by the anonymous writer, the specific goal of this message is not entirely clear to the reader, Professor Kathy Rentz. From what we can tell, the writer seems to be trying to reach out to Dr. Rentz in order to sell her a product or service from his online course production company.

Like the scenario in the problem solver case in Chapter 1, the writer does not demonstrate a complete understanding of the audience or situation, and the result is a message that, at best, does not meet the

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needs of the audience and is not effective, and at worst, wastes the reader's time and could potentially anger or frustrate a potential client.

The following sections describe more specific breakdowns in his problem-solving process and highlights how the writer demonstrates a lack of consideration for his message recipients.

Defining the Problem

The writer doesn't seem to have conducted an adequate amount of research to understand why Dr. Rentz is an appropriate audience. Specifically, the writer doesn't seem to have a sound understanding of why Dr. Rentz might need the services of this particular company. The writer clearly doesn't understand every facet of this situation because their second section asks a critical question of the reader: "I wanted to ask you if you have an online course based on your work in Project Management & Writing area?" Before reaching out to Dr. Rentz, the writer should have consulting college registration records or college websites to determine whether or not Dr. Rentz teaches online courses and if there is an online course related to project management and writing. An employee at an online instructional company marketing to college professors should have these research skills. If the answer to this question is no, then this entire email has been a waste of time. When reaching out to individuals or groups of whom a writer has limited knowledge, writers must take the time to conduct general research on the nature of the audience, situation, and problem.

The writer does not appear to have leveraged *prior knowledge* when writing this sales email. One could assume that cold sales emails like this one have been sent by employees of this organization before, so the writer should have consulted previous messages of this type or reached out to other employees to determine if there is a message the writer could use as a template.

Generating and Evaluating Options

The writer does not seem to have chosen an appropriate *main goal*: to begin a conversation with a potential client about how the company's products or services could solve a specific problem. In a cold communication like this one (a communication situation where the writer and recipients do not know each other and have little to no connection) the main goal is to initiate dialogue. The writer needs to understand that the likelihood of making the reader a client with one email is very low; instead, the writer should view this email as the first communication toward a larger goal of making this person a paying customer. To this end, the writer should consider this email as a first step, with a potential second communications including further emails or phone conversations. As you can see in the revision, the goal has changed. Instead of asking the reader to take initiative and "ping" him, a better approach would be to ask the reader to set up a 10-minute phone call to discuss their products.

When approaching a stranger, a writer needs to build their credibility. In this case, the writer here needs to answer an important question: Why should Dr. Rentz trust you? In business relationships, trust is essential, so the writer needs to build that trust through demonstrating competence and providing some supporting evidence for the good work that they do. In the revision, you'll notice the writer address their own work and their reputation.

The writer does not have a clear and effective *structure* for this message. As written, these thoughts don't seemed to be organized coherently (in relationship to each other) with a purpose in mind. The

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message reads like the reader wrote the ideas as they came into their head instead of considering the needs to the reader as they organized their thoughts. In the revision, each section has a clear goal and like ideas are grouped together. As mentioned in Chapter 2, restraint is important in communication and the original email does not project a feeling that the reader was controlling their ideas.

Building the Solution and Designing the Message

The writer does not take the time to design an effective message and, as a result, the message demonstrates a lack of attention to the you-viewpoint. The design of the message is one that puts the onus on the reader to interpret the message and to act on the message. As mentioned above, the message is written in a structure that the reader needs to work to find information they need.

In addition, the original email doesn't demonstrate a close attention to style. In a situation when the writer does not know the recipient, a more formal tone is appropriate in order to show the reader respect and courtesy. There are several elements of this email that are too informal for this type of situation and audience:

- "Ping me" is a jargon reference to getting in touch with someone. Twice the writer asks Kathy to "ping" him which is much too informal when communicating with someone the writer does not know who is also a college professor.
- "Thanks" is a less formal version of the more appropriate "thank you"
- Emojis like the smiley face at the end of the email should only be used in the most informal of communications (e.g. text messages with friends).
- "really amazing" is an informal and vague way to express quality of product. In this case, the writer is taking the advice of accentuating the positive to the extreme.

Finally, the message needs proofreading. The most glaring error is the wrong name in the greeting. The recipient is Dr. Kathy Rentz, and the greeting reads "Hi Charles." One can imagine that the audience won't read very far if the greeting is addressed to someone else. This error demonstrates a lack of attention and a carelessness on the part of the writer. In this case, a formal greeting of "Dr." or "Professor" is considerate and appropriate (the writer could determine if the person had a specific title by taking the time to perform a Google search before sending). Additionally, the level of formality is too informal: the writer should use "hello" instead of "hi" in the greeting. Messages to external individuals or groups require an extra level of attention to detail because, as mentioned above, the quality of the written message reflects on the organization (not to mention the reader, a university writing professor, will be attuned to such errors).

Notice that the revision follows a much more formal style and one that demonstrates respect for the reader and her expertise. Further, the new message is concise, showing respect for her valuable time.

Rewrite:

Subject: Sharing Your Knowledge Beyond the Classroom

Hello, Dr. Rentz.

Have you ever thought about how to reach a wider audience with your expertise and course content? Have you been considering how to engage different audiences with your professional writing courses?

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My name is [Full Name] and I'm a project manager for [Company Name], a leader in online course development and production. In addition to helping hundreds of companies meet their training needs, we've worked with faculty at colleges and universities across the country to help them share their expertise beyond the classroom. Whether your goal is to assist other faculty in your field, enhance the skills of those in the nonacademic workplace, or build your professional brand as an influencer, we can provide solutions that will support your course development, increase the impact of your content, and strengthen the overall educational experience. With our help, faculty in a wide range of academic areas have benefited more viewers than they ever thought possible. This increased exposure has also led to consulting work, speaking engagements, and more.

I've included a link below to a short video that will give you a sense of our services and provide some examples of our work. We have a team of professional videographers and educational technology experts on staff to design and produce high quality educational materials. You can also click here [include link to appropriate website for bio] to find out more about me and my experience as a project manager supporting educators and subject experts.

If you would like to find out more about how we can support your goals, please reply and I'll get you on my schedule immediately.

Sincerely,

[Full Name]

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