BCOM 7 7th edition Lehman Solutions Manual

SKU: 9781305401938-SOLUTIONS

2 Focusing on Interpersonal and Group Communication

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL FIND:

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain how behavioral theories about human needs, trust and disclosure, and motivation relate to business communication.
2. Describe the role of nonverbal messages in communication.
3. Identify aspects of effective listening.
4. Identify factors affecting group and team communication.
5. Discuss aspects of effective meeting management.

KEY CONCEPTS

Behavioral theories form the conceptual basis for business communication. Nonverbal communication, listening, and group communication are essential interpersonal skills for success in today's organizations. A team is a group with a clear identity and a high level of member commitment. Groups and teams communicate via both traditional and electronic meetings, which must be managed successfully to insure that organizational goals are met.

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KEY TERMS

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Brainstorming	33	Performing	31
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TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1

Explain how behavioral theories about human needs, trust and disclosure, and motivation relate to business communication

Behavioral Theories and Communication

To communicate effective with others, you must understand them, what motives them, and what can facilitate better communication. Theories from the fields of psychology and sociology provide understanding of human needs and motivations with insight into achieving more effective workplace communication.

- *Maslow's Hierarchy of Need.* A hierarchy of needs through which people progress. Higher needs generally cannot be met if lower ones are not. Communication targeted to specific needs can appeal to receiver's if the receiver's need is identified.
- *Stroking.* The emotional response that occurs in communication interaction, either positive or negative on feelings about one's self or others.
- *Johari Window.* A matrix that can help determine what is known or unknown to self and others. Promotes the idea of increased trust and openness that leads to better communication.
- *Management Styles.* Various management styles, such as Theory X and Theory Y, directive and supportive behavior, and Total Quality Management, suggest various communication practices impact leadership and management effectiveness.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2

Describe the role of nonverbal messages in communication.

Nonverbal Communication

- Illustrate the different components of nonverbal communication. Remind students that nonverbal includes everything except the actual words that occur in an interaction.
- Ask students to watch an interaction from a distance, involving people they do not know. Have them analyze the kind of interaction they viewed based only on what they could see from a distance (they could not hear the words). How much could they decipher? Emphasize that what they learn about the people and the situation is based only on nonverbal behaviors.
- Have students complete Additional Assignment 1 and discuss in class.

Metacommunication

- Discuss how what someone says may not be what is interpreted by the receiver. Ask students what they think might influence different interpretations by different people who receive the same verbal message.
- Have students discuss similar metacommunication situations in their academic, work, and/or personal experiences.

Kinesic Messages

- Discuss messages sent and perceived through nonverbal behavior.

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- Discuss how different kinesics messages can have different meanings to different people, based on culture, background, gender, age, etc. Ask students for examples of situations where they have misread body language or where their body language has been misunderstood.

Understanding Nonverbal Messages

- Demonstrate several nonverbal signals and have students write down what they perceive to be their meanings.
- You might include some of the following: folded arms, raised eyebrows, scratching the head, hands on hips, shrug of shoulders, etc.
- Have students share their perceptions. Were there differences in what students perceived? Explain. How might those signals be interpreted differently when accompanied with various word messages?

Cultural Differences in Nonverbal Communication

- Ask students to consider how other cultures might react to nonverbal messages. Discuss the possible reactions and encourage students to share other examples.

Nonverbal Communication and Gender

- Discuss the differences between the communication styles of men and women. For instance in the United States
    - √ The male approach to tasks is confrontational and results oriented
    - √ The female method of working is collaborative and oriented toward concern for individuals

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 3

Identify aspects of effective listening.

Listening as a Communication Skill

Because of its pervasive nature, listening should be a concern of other disciplines in addition to business communication. In the business communication course, listening instruction should be related to interpersonal and group communication and interviewing practices.
To emphasize that people may not listen as effectively as they think they do, administer the following listening test: (Test reprinted with permission of South Central Bell.)

Directions: Listen carefully because I will read each question only once. Use a pencil and paper to record the answer after each question has been read.

- √ *In the series of numbers "5–8–4–1–6," the second number is 8.* Yes.
- √ *In the list of words "by-of-in-at-on," the word beginning with "a" is "at".* Yes.
- √ *In the list of names "Adam, Meredith, Timothy, Jack, Suzette," which begins with a "J"?* Jack
- √ *In the series of numbers "8–1–9–5–3," the third number is 9*. Yes.
- √ *Answer true or false to the following: In the list of words "below-go-snow-throw-flow," the third word mentioned is "throw."* False.
- √ *Multiply the number 9 by 2, subtract 3, add 10, and divide by 5. The answer is 5.* Yes.

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√ *Listen carefully to this statement: "Send five box tops with your name and address and 25 cents to Box 45, Denver, Colorado 80200, to receive the special gift offer." The number of cents to be enclosed is 25.* Yes.

Listening for a Specific Purpose

- Discuss the different types of listening.
- Discuss and give examples of the different reasons for listening:
  - √ To interact socially, such as talking with your colleagues about weekend plans.
  - √ To receive information, such as calling a vendor to obtain a price for an item.
  - √ To solve problems, such as discussing with your team members why work must be completed earlier than you had planned.
  - √ To share feelings with others, such as hearing how a co-worker is tired of the two-hour commute to work every day.

Poor Listening Habits

- Discuss poor listening habits.
- Ask students to work in small groups to discuss a situation they have faced that provides evidence of bad listening habits. Ask each group what specific suggestions they could provide that would improve listening in this situation.
- Ask a member of each group to share the listening suggestions with the class. Use these presentations to lead into a class discussion of speaker and listener responsibilities.
- Lead students in a discussion of how to overcome bad listening habits.

Suggestions for Effective Listening

- Discuss effective listening guidelines. Help students identify listening weaknesses and develop a plan for improvement.
- Emphasize the role Kinesics play in active listening. Remind students to pay attention to nonverbal messages, both as a sender and a receiver of a message and to stay physically and mentally involved.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 4

Identify factors affecting group and team communication.

Increasing Focus on Groups

- Lead students in a discussion of how communication in flat organizations differs from that in traditional organizations. Emphasize the need for more lateral (horizontal) communication and how that can be accomplished.

Flat Organizational Structure

- Discuss the barriers that include role vs. status, excessive competition, flat organizational structures that pose new requirements for communication flow.
- When mid-level positions are eliminated, communication must be redirected.

Heightened Focus on Cooperation

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- Competition has been a characteristic way of life in U.S. companies, both externally and internally. What are the reasons for competition? What are the benefits to competition? How does excessive competition diminish, if not eliminate, the success of communication?
- Ask students to share their experiences with competition in their academic and professional lives.
- Discuss the win/lose philosophy of competition and the win/win philosophy of cooperation.

Characteristics of Effective Groups

- Discuss characteristics of effective groups. To illustrate the importance of common goals, ask students what happens in a team project in which two members want to make an "A" and the other two members are satisfied with a "C."
- Ask students what size team they prefer for completing school projects, giving reasons for their preference.
- Ask students to recall a negative team experience they may have had at school or work. Which of the characteristics were lacking in that situation?

Group Roles

- Discuss group roles. Which roles are positive? Which are negative? Can an individual group member play more than one role?
- Ask students to think of a group of which they are members (school, work, family, club, church, etc.) and to identify persons in that group who play each of the discussed roles.
- Does their role change in different groups? Does a group member always choose their role? Explain.
- Reiterate the communication styles of men and women discussed in Chapter 2. How can these differences affect the team dynamic?
- Give a small group of students a topic for a meeting. Have the men in the group be stereotypical "male" communicators and have the women be stereotypical "female" communicators. Have them act out a meeting on the topic you choose. Ask the remaining students to analyze where the breakdowns occur in the meeting process and discuss how to remedy those breakdowns.

From Groups to Teams

- Lead a discussion of different types of teams. Remind students that becoming a team is a process that does not occur simply because a group is put together by a manager or supervisor. For a group to become a team, it must go through a development process with four distinct phases—forming, storming, norming, and performing. All teams will not reach their optimum performance level but will settle for the acceptable performance that comes in the norming stage.
- Discuss how corporate team-building has changed and how companies are using off-site physical and mental activities to make on-site teamwork more effective.
- In small groups, have students brainstorm a list of recommendations for using teams effectively. As each team reports its list, record the recommendations on the chalkboard or overhead.
- Discuss team behaviors. Newly formed groups often find it helpful to set aside time to define their purpose, expectations, and roles.
- How can groups experience conformity without sacrificing individual expression?

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Group Conflict

- Deliver an overall perspective on the three types of group conflict: personal, substantive, and procedural.
- Discuss the other factors, competition within a group and social dilemmas, which groups create for members.
- Remind students that cultural differences among group members may be an underlying cause of conflict and can also affect the resolution process.
- Discuss the five basic tactics used to deal with conflict. Which conflict resolution technique is most likely to promote group unity?

Groupthink

- Lead a discussion of the value of conflict in the group process. Stress the following points:
  - ✓ Groupthink is a destructive phenomenon that results when a group develops a single mindset rather than exploring alternative solutions.
  - ✓ Groupthink can result because of pressure to conform and to present a unified front.
  - ✓ The space shuttle Challenger disaster was a prime example of groupthink at work. After the tragedy, numerous persons involved with the project indicated that they had indeed had reservations about the launch, yet the pressure to not further delay the mission influenced them to say nothing to the contrary.
  - ✓ Conflict is a healthy process that counteracts groupthink.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 5

Discuss aspects of effective meeting management.

Meeting Management

- Have you ever heard someone say "I have been in meetings all week, and we haven't accomplished anything!" Managers often spend up to 60 percent of their time in meetings that can sometimes turn into a free-for-all. Effective meetings don't just happen; they occur because the organizer engages in careful planning and attention to specific guidelines.
- Discuss the relative advantages and limitations of face-to-face and electronic meetings.

Suggestions for Effective Meetings

- Brainstorm with students to identify characteristics of ineffective meetings they have been in.
- Reviewing characteristics of ineffective meetings, ask students for suggestions for making meetings more productive.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. ***Identifying Appropriate Listening Styles:*** *Identify a situation you have experienced that would be appropriate for each of the following listening styles: casual listening, listening for information, intensive listening, and empathetic listening. Describe how you could maximize your listening experience in each case.*

After reading student responses, summarize their suggestions for maximizing their own listening. Challenge each student to target several of the suggestions for personal implementation.

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2. ***Gestures:*** *Separate into groups of three to five and take turns using particular gestures, facial expressions, and other body language. Members of the group not delivering the nonverbal communication should try to identify as many possible interpretations of the gesture as they can. Once all group members have had at least one turn, discuss which interpretations you found most surprising and how your individual perspective might be influencing your interpretation of someone else's body language.*

After small group discussions, have each group present one or two of their most surprising interpretations and how those might reflect individual perspective. Below are some further examples and their possible interpretations:

Nonverbal	**Possible Meaning**	**Misinterpretation**
Steeping hands propping arms on the table because tired	I am better than you.	Covering mouth with hand when talking
I think I have bad breath.	I am lying; I have no confidence.	Not making eye contact.
The sun is in my eyes.	I am lying; I am not confident.	Being the only one standing.
I need to stretch.	I have authority over you	

3. ***Performing as a Group: Group Contracts:*** *One way to ensure that a group has the discussion that is necessary to begin on the path of performing is to create a group contract. Creating a group contract can help to ensure that you discuss your expectations of each other, assigned task responsibilities, deadlines for project milestones and the final product, and group member roles. A group contract may also specify a procedure for dealing with problems in the group, such as a failure to meet group expectations, follow procedures, and meet deadlines. To complete a group contract, follow the steps below:*
   a. *You and your group members should discuss and identify your expectations of each other regarding the completion of your team project. These expectations generally include concerns about participation, meeting attendance, meeting deadlines, following procedures and revising individual contributions to the group project. Discussion of group standards regarding the quality of the work expected or the graded desired are also helpful in clarifying expectations and setting goals. A final area of discussion might identify individual assignments or group member roles.*
   b. *If desired, you and your group members should identify the consequences for not fulfilling these expectations. Specifying consequences can be helpful for two reasons 1) it provides an opportunity to empower group members to deal with problems in a proactive way and 2) it mitigates against the enabling of free-riding and social loafing. Examples of consequences might include percentage reductions in an individual's group grade if deadlines are not met or revisions are not made to meet agreed upon standards. Another example of a consequence might be the termination of a group member after a series of group expectations are not met.*
   c. *After discussing group expectations and consequences, each group should detail these in a document that each member signs to show his or her understanding and agreement. The contract should be as specific as possible so that expectations are clear to all group members. For example, you might specify what constitutes poor attendance, inadequate participation, and unacceptable work quality. Ideally, your contract will also provide a list of project milestones and a schedule of project deadlines.*

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Depending upon the group, contract contents may differ. All contracts should include a discussion of group member expectations. This discussion might specify expectations in the following areas: participation, meeting attendance, meeting deadlines, following procedures, revising individual contributions to the group project, quality of work, and individual assignments and/or group member roles. If addressed, a consequences section would specify the results of not complying with each of the identified team expectations. Ideally, the contract would include a schedule for the project with milestones and signatures of each team member.

4. ***Analyze a Team Meeting:*** *After you and your team hold a planned meeting, you may wish to analyze its effectiveness by discussing what you observed, including the communication behaviors and roles each team member played. In performing the assessment, try to consider the issues discussed in the chapter and identify them in your analysis. You might consider the following:*
   a. *What did we do in this meeting that worked well?*
   b. *What happened that we might not wish to repeat? Are there bad habits into which we might fall?*
   c. *What roles did each team member play? How did you determine these roles? Where the roles helpful in achieving group goals? Why or why not?*
   d. *What types of communication behaviors did team members display? For example, was it common for team members to ask questions to clarify understanding (active listening) or did they assume understanding?*
   e. *How well did members attend to both task and socioemotional functions? Were you able to follow and stick to your plan for the meeting? Were the goals of the meeting met? On the socio-emotional side, did members feel valued and supported in their contributions? Were individualistic behaviors avoided?*

Responses will vary depending upon the team. Responses should indicate an understanding of the key group roles—task, socio-emotional or individualistic—and the communication behaviors associated with each.

REVIEW QUESTIONS & SUGGESTED ANSWERS

1. **When a manager says to the sales staff, "Let's try to make budget this year," what are some of the possible metacommunications?**

Some possible metacommunications are as follows: "You didn't make budget last year, but try to do it this year." "I don't have any confidence in your ability to make budget this year, but try anyway." "The budget that upper management has given us is so ridiculous; I don't expect you to make the budget. So don't worry about it."

2. **What roles do culture and gender play in nonverbal communication?**

Nonverbal messages have different meanings from culture to culture, and men and women from the same culture typically exhibit different body language. Such nonverbal behaviors are learned through the example of others.

3. **How is the activity of listening impacted by the particular situation?**

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People satisfy a variety of purposes through listening, including social interaction, receiving of information, problem solving, and sharing of feelings. Each activity calls for a different style of listening.

4. **Discuss six bad listening habits. Which do you think is the biggest challenge for you personally?**

Bad listening habits include faking attention, allowing disruptions, over listening, stereotyping, dismissing subjects as uninteresting, and failing to observe nonverbal aids. Personal responses of students will vary.

5. **What is a possible cause of most conflict between or among groups?**

Lack of understanding about the nature and roles of other persons or groups is a possible cause of most conflict between or among groups. This shortcoming is a communication problem that leads to conflict.

6. **How are a group and a team different?**

The main difference between groups and teams are in member attitudes and the levels of commitment.

7. **Discuss how a flat organizational structure affects communication.**

In a flat organization, communicating across the organizational chart becomes more important than communicating up and down in a top-heavy hierarchy. Communication is enhanced because the message must travel shorter distances. Much of the communication is face to face.

8. **What are some factors to consider in deciding whether to hold a face-to-face meeting or an electronic meeting?**

Geographic dispersion, familiarity of participants with one another, and technical capabilities of participants should all be considered in deciding whether to hold a face-to-face or an electronic meeting.

9. **Why do some teams never reach the highest stage of team development? What can be done to overcome the obstacles to peak team performance?**

Teams fail to reach the highest performance stage because of lack in one or more of the 4 C's: Commitment, Cooperation, Communication, and Contribution. For instance, a team could fall short of the performing stage because of a lack of commitment to common goals. Or a team could stall because the personality styles of each team member have not been explored and their roles have not been well defined. Poor communication can result in low team performance, as can the lack of quality contribution by one or more members.

10. **Why are records such as agendas and minutes important to group success?**

An agenda provides a plan for the meeting to keep everyone informed and to provide for orderly activity. Minutes provide a written record of meeting actions to assure that necessary tracking, follow-up, and implementation occur.

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11. **Review suggestions for making meetings more effective? Provide examples, if possible, from your own experience.**

Suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of meetings include the following: limit meeting time and frequency, make satisfactory arrangements, create and distribute an agenda beforehand, encourage participation, maintain order, manage conflict, seek consensus, and prepare thorough minutes.

FEATURED ASSIGNMENTS

1. ***Assessing the Professional Value of Interpersonal and Group Communication Skills:*** *Considering your career goal, select the three concepts presented in the chapter that you feel will be most important to your professional success. Write a one-page summary, justifying and explaining your selections.*

2. ***Metacommunication:*** *Keep a journal over a period of two to five days that records events involving metacommunication. Describe how each incident influences the understanding of the verbal message involved.*

Form small groups and have students share their most interesting events. Compile a list and give a brief informal presentation to the class. Focus on misinterpretations and how they could have been avoided.

3. ***Cultural Differences in Nonverbal Behaviors:*** *Choose a specific country, such as Argentina, Germany, India, or Thailand. Conduct internet research to find out more about the nonverbal behaviors of which a person doing business in that country should be aware and then summarize what you have learned.*

Student responses to this assignment will vary depending upon the country that is chosen, but they should provide a discussion of how differing values, beliefs and practices may affect communication. Student responses should more narrowly focus on how these cultural differences influence nonverbal behaviors and their meanings.

4. ***Perceptions of Nonverbal Behaviors:*** *Find and observe a speaker. Good sources are television interviews or speeches or speeches on the internet or You-Tube. Identify and analyze the speaker's nonverbal communication. Describe how these nonverbal behaviors affected your perceptions of the speaker. For example, did you like the person? Why or why not? (Please remember to focus on his or her nonverbal communication.) Did you trust the person and believe what he or she had to say? Was he or she interesting? Why or why not?*

Student responses to this assignment will vary depending upon the speech that he or she observes. Nonverbal behaviors that might help to improve likeability could include smiling by the speaker, allowing his or her personality to show through in tone of voice, facial expressions and gestures, and trying to connect with the audience through eye contact, gestures and body language. Trust can be engendered through direct eye contact and an open rather than closed body position. Interest can be improved through similar nonverbal behaviors as those used to engender likeability.

5. ***Identifying Deterrents to Group Success:*** In small groups, discuss negative group situations in which you have participated. These groups could be related to school, organizations, sports

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teams, performing groups, etc. Referring to the chapter information, identify reasons for each group's lack of success. Make a list of the most common problems identified in the team. Compare your list with that of other small groups in the class.

Responses will vary. Students should focus on a lack of common goals, misunderstood role perceptions, group size, or lack of leadership as reasons for groups not succeeding.

6. ***Analyzing Group and Team Experiences:*** As a team, visit the website of the Institute for Performance Culture at http://teaming-up.com. From the Free Resources menu tab, click on "Are you a True Team?" and together take the survey. Some of the items may not relate to your short-term project team but will provide you with ideas of issues faced in real-world work teams. Discuss the evaluation report produced from your survey. Send your instructor an email message, summarizing what your team survey revealed and how you will use the information to improve your team performance.

When student teams take this survey, ask them to click the "Next" tab at the end of the survey. Students should consider the five types of groupings outlined on the web site. Email messages about this activity should focus on what the teams learned about themselves as individuals and about how they work together as a team. They should also outline some strategies for improving themselves as a team.

7. ***Boosting Team Effectiveness:*** *Research and read a selection of three articles on corporate teambuilding activities. In class, get into groups of three to five individuals and share the activities you've read about. Then, determine which of the activities has the most potential for building a high-performance team.*

Summarize group responses for class discussion. Responses should focus on addition of off-site physical activity such as ropes courses or trust-building exercises to help team collaboration on the job. Students might also look at local activities available to build teams, such as miniature golf courses, paintball facilities, or rollerblading parks.

8. ***Documenting Meeting Activities:*** Attend a meeting of an organization of your choice, obtain a copy of the agenda, and prepare minutes of the meeting. Submit your meeting documentation in class.

Evaluate the minutes for completeness. Follow up with a class discussion of the importance and purposes of meetings.

9. ***Analyzing a Meeting for Effective Behaviors:*** Attend a meeting of an organization of your choice. Compare the activities of the attended meeting with the "Suggestions for Effective Meetings" presented in the chapter. Email your instructor, describing the meeting attended and summarizing how well the meeting reflected the chapter suggestions and how it might have been more effective.

Responses will vary. Students should focus on how well the meeting manager (a) limits the running time of the meeting, (b) sets the agenda and distributes in advance, (c) encourages participation, (d) maintains order, (e) manages conflict, (f) seeks consensus, and (g) aids in preparing thorough minutes.

10. ***Groupthink:*** Recall a time when a group of which you were a member suffered from groupthink. How did you handle it? Were you swept up and afraid to voice a contrary opinion,

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or did you speak out with an alternative idea or solution? Email your examples and reactions to your instructor.

Responses will vary.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

1. ***Nonverbal expressions:*** *Generate a list of phrases and nonverbal expressions peculiar to their culture that groups from another culture might not understand. Identify any conflict situations that could arise from the misinterpretation of the collectively understood terms. Consider also how group norms play a part in the understanding of collective culture. Be prepared to present one item from your list as the topic for a 5-minute presentation to the class.*

Phrases and nonverbal examples will vary, but students should focus on which levels of conflict will arise because of these differences. Discuss the importance of being aware of cultural differences and how conflict can be avoided with careful attention to others' cultures.

2. ***Communicating Nonverbally in a Job Interview:*** *Locate an article on the internet or on one of your library's databases that gives useful suggestions for ensuring that your nonverbal behavior in a job interview makes a favorable impression.*

Expand the list of recommended nonverbal messages and their interpretations. Share your list with the class, complete with demonstrations, in an informal presentation.
Presentation formats will vary. Encourage students to be creative by setting up a mock job interview and having both the interviewer and interviewee exhibit positive and negative nonverbal behaviors during the interview. Or ask one group to model negative behaviors and the other to model positive behaviors.

Additions to the positive behavior list might include:
- Using a firm handshake—I am confident in myself and my abilities.
- Nodding and giving feedback while someone is talking—I am listening; I care about what you have to say.
- Wearing clean, well-pressed business attire with shoes that have been shined—this interview is important to me.

Additions to the negative behavior list might include:
- Standing while everyone else is sitting—I am better than you; I have authority over you.
- Talking with a hand over the mouth—I am lying: I am not confident in what I am saying.
- Biting fingernails—I am nervous or anxious.
- Looking at the door or a watch frequently—Hurry up! I have better things to do with my time.

3. ***Locating Information on Nonverbal Communication in Other Cultures:*** *Locate one or more articles from library databases or the Internet that discuss nonverbal communication in various cultures. Compile a list of body language and behaviors that have different meanings among cultures. Discuss how ignorance of these differences might affect interpersonal communication.*

Encourage students to share their findings in small groups and compile a list of gestures that have different meanings. Have each group share one or two gestures with the class and discuss the various meanings.

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4. ***Communicating with Diverse Cultures:*** *Choose a culture that differs from your own then describe your beliefs, attitudes and perceptions about that culture. Now conduct internet research or interview someone from that culture to find out more about it and its values, beliefs and practices. After learning more about the culture, what misperceptions did you hold about it? How might this knowledge help you to improve your communication with people from this culture?*

Student responses to this assignment will vary depending upon the culture that is chosen, but they should provide a discussion of how differing values, beliefs and practices may affect communication. Encourage students to share their findings in small groups or with the class.

5. ***Analyzing Limitations of Electronic Communications:*** *Consider a distance learning conference or course in which you have participated. How were nonverbal communication, listening, and other factors different from what you have experienced in traditional class settings? How do your experiences relate to the conducting of electronic meetings?*

Have students discuss their impressions about the distance interaction and identify the relative advantages and disadvantages.

6. ***Maximizing the Effectiveness of Virtual Teams:*** *Consider the significance of this statement "Certain personality types are more likely to thrive in the virtual team experience." Develop a list of personality attributes that would enable a person to work effectively as part of a virtual team. In a short written or oral report, share your list, justifying your selections with facts and references.*

Personality attributes listed might include discipline, detail orientation, and timeliness; these are complimented with strong written communication skills, problem-solving ability, and a comfort with technology. The links provided in the text enrichment provide a wealth of information about effective virtual team membership.

7. ***Using Instant Messaging (Chat) to Communicate:*** *Following directions from your instructor, participate in an online chat with your class about one of the following topics: (a) how to overcome listening barriers, or (b) guidelines for effective group communication.*

Grading of this assignment should focus on content, rather than format. Completeness of the message and attention to what the assignment requested in the way of information should be the key criterion for evaluation.

CASE ASSIGNMENT

The case for Chapter highlights how eBay is using new concepts in improving customer satisfaction, promoting teamwork, and performing in the global marketplace to become a company where $1,400 worth of goods are traded every second.

Growing faster in its first decade than any other enterprise in the history of capitalism, eBay has exploded as a global online marketplace connecting buyers and sellers 24/7. Founded in 1995, eBay now conducts more transactions every day than the Nasdaq Stock Market and has annual revenues of more than $4 billion.

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EBAY CONNECTS A WORLDWIDE MARKET

EBay has become a marketing phenomenon. It has empowered people to create their own businesses and has changed the way people think about junk they once might have sold at garage sales. More importantly, it has demonstrated that trust between strangers can be established over the Internet. According to eBay spokesperson Hani Durzy, "The Internet has leveled the playing field in terms of commerce, allowing individuals, small business, and big corporations to all compete against each other." As it redefines consumer culture, the tremendously successful auction site stirs debate over its impact on society. Is it a portal to a new, global society? Does it elevate materialism above all other belief systems? Does it define who we are as a society?

Growing faster in its first decade than any other enterprise in the history of capitalism, eBay has exploded as a global online marketplace connecting buyers and sellers 24/7. Founded in 1995, eBay now conducts more transactions every day than the Nasdaq Stock Market and has annual revenues of more than $4 billion. In the 1990s, people thought e-commerce would be dominated by big players, but instead the last decade has produced a market driven by individuals and small businesses.

Nearly 160 million registered users in 33 markets can scan 55 million items at any time, and about $1,400 worth of goods are traded on the site every second. eBay has also created jobs, with more than 724,000 Americans saying they earn all or most of their income selling goods online through eBay. The site has provided people with the opportunity to start their own businesses at reduced costs by using eBay to buy needed equipment and to sell their goods. Founder and chairman, Pierre Omidyar, acknowledges that running eBay has never been just about managing employees. It's also about guiding and understanding the ever-growing community of eBay sellers. eBay is known for listening to its customers. The company's feedback system allows buyers and sellers to evaluate each other based on the quality of their dealings. PayPal, the part of eBay that allows individual sellers to accept credit card payments, was a direct result of customer demand; in the near future, eBay listings, which are now static web pages, will have sound and video.

EBay continues to expand worldwide. In about 15 percent of current transactions, the buyer and seller are in different countries. With this ratio steadily increasing, eBay has a tremendous power to connect the Third World with the industrialized world. Omidyar says that the most significant lesson demonstrated by eBay is "the remarkable fact that millions of people have learned that they can trust a complete stranger. That's had an incredible social impact. People have more in common than they think." To be effective in the ever-changing environment of business, you will need to have an understanding of human behavior and its influences on organizational and group communication.

Since Meg Whitman joined eBay as CEO in 1998, revenues have exploded, and eBay has become a household word throughout much of the world. Meg Whitman had never even heard of eBay when she agreed to interview. She hoped her headhunter would call back with something more promising. Little did she know that the firm she had never heard of would become one of history's fastest growing companies with her at its helm.

Under her democratic leadership, the collective intelligence and enthusiasm of 160 million customers determine and drive the daily actions of the company's 9,300 employees. "At eBay, it's a collaborative network. You are truly in partnership with the community of users. The key is connecting employees and customers in two-way communication. We call it "The Power of Us."

A key belief underlying Whitman's leadership is that people are basically good and can be trusted. A second of her guiding principles for management is to never assume you know more than the marketplace or community, because you don't. To learn more about the growing community of Chinese Internet users, Whitman has made several trips to China, listening and trying to understand how the country actually works.

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It's debatable as to whether great leaders are born or bred, and in Whitman's case the mystery continues. Following completion of an MBA at Harvard, Whitman began her career in brand management at Procter & Gamble, where she learned to always put the customer first. Through holding positions with several other firms before joining eBay, including Bain, Disney, StrideRite, and Hasbro, Whitman learned how to get things done in places where she was not well known or well established. This required listening, learning, collaboration, and building business relationships. She credits Disney's late president and chief operating officer, Frank Wells, with teaching her the importance of executive humility.

Although nurturing, no one mistakes Whitman's sensitivity for weakness. In fact, she is a strong believer in maintaining boundaries. An example is her decision to ban the sale of weapons on eBay. According to Tom Tierney, eBay director, "Meg is a hybrid, and that's the model for the future, a decisive general manager with an open-minded influencer." In 2004, *The Wall Street Journal* and CNBC recognized Meg Whitman's unusual talent by naming her as the business leader of the future; and in the same year, *Fortune* named her the most powerful woman in American business. Whitman sums up her leadership philosophy simply: "Executive leadership is a span of influence, not of control."

Sources: Johnson, K. S. (2005, October 21). eBay exec at Tech Week for e-commerce pep talk. *The Denver Post*, p. C-03; Meyers, W. (2005, October 31). Keeping a gentle grip on power. *U.S. News & World Report, 139*(16), 78; Shapiro, S. (2005, September 4). If everything is for sale, what does it say about us? Internet auction site eBay is both sacred and profane—and distinctly American. *The Baltimore Sun*, p. 7F; Maney, K. (2005, March 22). 10 years ago, eBay changed the world, sort of by accident. *USA Today,* p. 1B; Meyers, W. (2005, October 31).

Questions

1. **Explain what Meg Whitman means by "The Power of Us."**

Whitman espouses the value collaboration and teamwork of all the people involved with eBay—employees, buyers, and sellers. She values the basic good in all people and partnerships to support her business.

2. **What factors contributed to the leadership style exhibited by Whitman?**

According to Whitman's leadership principles, people are basically good and can be trusted. She also believes in never assuming you know more than the marketplace or community so that a leader does not alienate anyone.

3. **What does "executive humility" mean?**

By Whitman's definition, executive humility is using listening skills, collaboration, and building relationships to influence others to act a certain way, rather than trying to use power as an executive to force them to act.

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